

## Report

### **“Fächerübergreifender Unterricht zum Themenschwerpunkt “Automobil” an der TU Chemnitz für die Klassenstufe 11 des Johannes-Kepler-Gymnasiums”**

The Chemnitz University of Technology, in collaboration with Johannes Kepler Gymnasium, organized a “Fächerübergreifender Unterricht” – on the topic “Automobile” for the students of the 11<sup>th</sup> form. The event took place over five days, spanning from the 27<sup>th</sup> until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017, which included lectures and workshops that were held by professors and lecturers from different departments and faculties of the university. Although, the topic of the week was the “Automobile”, which does not deal directly with the study of humanities, the Chair of English Literatures arranged a lecture and a three-partite workshop in order to demonstrate ideas and forms of representation of the car in a postcolonial context.

Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten opened the session with a lecture on the “Representations of the ‘Postcolonial’ Car”, or Postcolonial Automobility”. During the lecture, Prof. Sandten familiarized participants with the concepts of ‘literary representation’ and ‘postcolonialism’, and moreover, focused on the question of how an automobile can be approached from a humanist prospective. On the following day, Prof. Sandten, held the first workshop, which was titled “The Postcolonial Car and/in the Short Story”. During the seminar, students were introduced to the concept of a short story and the typical elements of a short story. The second part of the workshop was dedicated to reading and analysis of the short story, “Engine Trouble” (1972), written by an Indian author, R.K. Narayan. Participants, with the help of the instructor, discussed the main research questions to the text and defined the role of the “automobile” in the story, the way in which the “car” was presented in an Indian setting, and the symbolic meaning of an engine. After the lunch break, the students had the second part of the workshop on “The Postcolonial Car in Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008)”, held by another member of the English Department, Dr. Eike Kronshage. Dr. Kronshage briefly presented the novel to the students and focused on the meaningful characteristics of the novel such as the work’s

symbolism of Western elements and the effects of colonization in the text, the image, role and perception of the car, the representation of the Indian caste system, and a more detailed analysis of the plot. On the next day, the third part of the seminar on “The Car in Popular Culture” was presented by Mandy Beck, M.A.. The instructor familiarized participants with the notions of “Popular” and “High Culture”, referred to several samples of audio- and videotexts and focused on the cultural features of New Zealand. Furthermore, the students watched several scenes from two movies, *Boy* (2010) and *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* (2016), and came to the conclusion that, depending on the context, the car signified different meanings such as freedom/autonomy, fun/relaxation, daily routine as well as imprisonment/dependence. Apart from mentioned inferences, this seminar addressed the contrast between Western and Eastern ideas and perceptions of cars and (auto)mobility.

After a one-hour break, students met in the computer lab in order to create their own presentations about the overall content of the workshop and to review what they had learned throughout the three parts of the seminars. Participants were subdivided into smaller groups and gathered the information given by the instructors in order to form their own opinions and to create a fifteen-minute presentation. On the final session of the “Fächerübergreifender Unterricht” the students presented their projects and shared the results of their work and thoughts on the entire week to the audience of the university and their classmates. During the workshop which the Chair of English Literatures offered, participants learned about cultural peculiarities of countries such as India and New Zealand and discovered the influence of colonization on these nations. The students were actively engaged in the analysis and discussions of literary representations of the “automobile” and its symbolic functions in different text genres. Eventually, the students obtained new knowledge about the ways in which class, race, and technologies are perceived by different cultures.

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