

## *A Pleasant and Likeable Guest*

On May 19 we had a special guest at our university for the Contemporary Writers' Forum. We were glad to welcome Prof. Nilufer Bharucha from the University of Mumbai (we still know it as Bombay), India.

Nilufer Bharucha started writing short stories in her twenties and she published her first stories in a well-known magazine in India, while she was doing her M.A. at university. She introduced us to some famous Indian writers and then she gave us an overview of the Parsi Zoroastrians in India. Her short stories deal with the Parsi, now an Indian minority.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. the Parsi arrived as refugees from Pars in southern Iran. They believe in the Zoroastrian religion with its God of Light called Ahura Mazda. During the British colonial period the Parsi were a wealthy colonial elite with a high social status. From 1947 onwards, in the post colonial period, they were downgraded in their social status and many of them moved westwards. They are now a tiny ethno-religious minority.

With all this new information about the Parsi and their life in India we read the beginning of her short story "The Benediction" and we had the task to write an ending for the story. I found this very challenging, because she is such a famous author. But she was genuinely interested in our writing and that made her a very pleasant and likeable teacher.

*Julia Giehl*