

Intercultural Workshop

Nilufer Bharucha, a professor at the University of Mumbai in India, is a Parsi short story writer. She is a specialist on Rohinton Mistry, who is a Parsi author as well. She has also worked as a guest professor for universities around the world. Combining her academic and creative interests, Prof. Bharucha conducted an unusual intercultural workshop for the University of Siegen's "Contemporary Writers' Forum."

After introducing the Parsi context, Nilufer Bharucha read the beginning of her short story *The Benediction*. *The Benediction* shows the cultural as well as the generational conflict of Parsi Zoroastrians in India. Once the wealthy elite in colonial society, the ethno-religious minority group has lost influence and its reputation has deteriorated.

The style of the story is interesting: the author mixes English, which is still the language of education in India, with phrases from Indian dialect. The dialect indicates the place of the action, as well as the Ganesha statue. Without these cultural indicators, it would be difficult to recognize where the story takes place.

Nilufer Bharucha's writing presents key aspects of Parsi Zoroastrian life, such as their religion. Because of that, it was good that she told us about the culture and history of the ethno-religious minority before reading *The Benediction* to us. Without the basic knowledge, it might have been difficult to understand the story.

Katrin Gerbe