10th ASNEL Summer School
‘Spaces of Projection’
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Universities of Bern and Basel, Switzerland
http://spacesofprojection.wordpress.com

Seminar: “Refuge(e) Spaces”

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Escape, exile and migration belong to some of mankind’s oldest experiences and are, in fact, considered as “the ‘normal’ state of affairs” (Essed/Frerks/Schrijvers) in the field of Migration Studies. As such, it may not be surprising that from Euripides’s tragedy The Children of Herakles to more recent productions such as Timberlake Wertenbaker’s Credible Witness, Eve Ensler’s Necessary Targets and Ariane Mnouchkine’s Le Dernier Caravansérail, the figure of the refugee and asylum seeker has been one of the most important protagonists of ancient and contemporary drama. In this seminar we will concentrate on the dramatisation of refugees and ‘refugeeness’ in postcolonial theatre and drama and we will explore and problematize textual and visual inscriptions of different refuge(e) spaces. Whether we are confronted with spaces such as the undercarriage of a plane on its way from Pakistan to London in Amrit Wilson’s Survivors, a brothel in the Democratic Republic of Congo in Lynn Nottage’s Ruined or the garden of an English church graveyard in Tanika Gupta’s Sanctuary, whether we travel with Punjabi refugees and labour migrants from India via Africa to England in Tara Arts’s Journey to the West or whether we encounter the plight of African refugees in South Africa in Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking by Cape Town’s Magnet Theatre, all plays share an engagement with refugee and migrant discourses while often already carrying the ambiguity of refuge(e) spaces in their titles. In our reading of the plays we will analyse the playwrights’ dramatic strategies in dramatising gendered and racialised spaces and we will also draw on the (field)work of anthropologists, sociologists and urban geographers in order to examine the constructed nature of categories and concepts such as ‘refuge(e)’, ‘victim’, ‘border’, ‘home’, ‘non-place’ and ‘dis/location’. In addition, we will be concerned with the recent academic and political interest in plays and performances by refugees and asylum seekers. In both cases – plays by and plays about refugees – one of the central questions will be whether theatre can provide a space in which to address issues of new cultural and political spaces for intercultural encounters and cross-cultural exchange.

Please read the plays in advance. The plays will be made available in a reader.
**Reading List**

**Primary**


**Secondary**


