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Literature and Migration

Art in general and literature in particular are imaginary spaces where emotions to do with social phenomena can be studied. Migration can be explored via fictional prose, via novels.

Migrant and migration literature are not new, yet with social and political changes they gain new dimensions. I intend to talk about the role of literature in understanding migration as a social phenomenon. I argue that postcolonial literature is to a degree migration literature, hence postcolonial theories, postcolonial interpretations of novels, and decolonizing processes themselves are parts of migration studies. To my mind, Welsh's concept of transculturality is a useful tool in deeper understanding the phenomenon of migration. I differentiate between spatial and temporal transculturality, inspired by James Meeks spatial and temporal immigration (in LRB January 5, 2016).

By spatial transculturality I mean the physical migration of people, taking along ideas and value systems, and also the migration of lines on the map in the course of political change. Temporal transculturality to my mind is the mutual co-influence of - not cultures, because that would suggest existence of monocultures - cultural legacies, beliefs and value systems of the past. This complex form of migration can be studied via literature.

Bio: Zuzana Luckay Mihalcinova is a humanities scholar. She has a degree in literature and a PhD on dignity. Her research focus is the correlation of dignity and human dignity. She is a researcher at Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies.

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