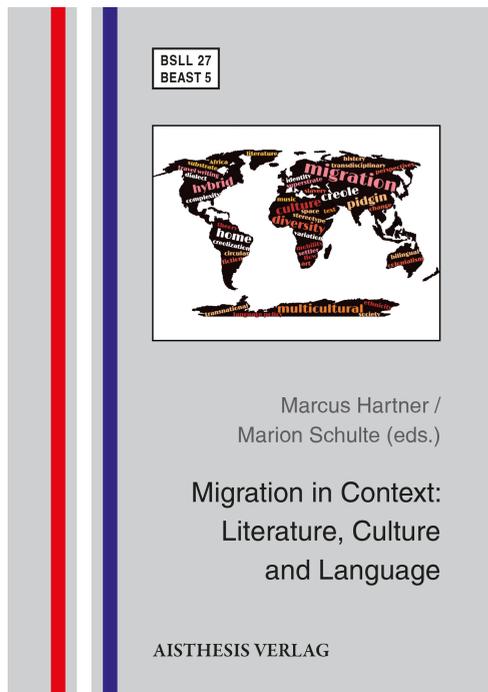


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Marcus Hartner / Marion Schulte (eds.)

Migration in Context: Literature, Culture and Language



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Bielefeld, June 2016

MH, MS

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Introduction: Migration From a Transdisciplinary Perspective

MARCUS HARTNER/MARION SCHULTE

Over the past decades migration has been a highly controversial topic in political and cultural discourse in many Western societies. Though politicians and the media tend to discuss the topic primarily as a recent phenomenon, population movements of various types “have always been part of human history” (Castles/Miller 1993: 43). They have contributed to shape the nations, languages, and cultures of this planet, and continue to do so up to the present day. “Our world”, as Banerjee/Heide/Stein (2001: 213) point out, “is defined by a plethora of ‘migrations,’ both material and figurative.” Due to the many forms and facets of migratory movements, as well as their long history and global scale, the academic investigation of these phenomena goes far beyond the scope of any single discipline. Migration is, in other words, a truly transdisciplinary phenomenon that requires study from a variety of perspectives simultaneously. Consequently, it has been taken up by a proliferation of extremely heterogeneous academic fields of study, including, for example, psychology, history, sociology, political science, linguistics and literary studies.¹

Though many voices (e.g. Brettell/Hollifield 2007, Han 2006) emphatically foreground the interdisciplinary dimension of research into migration, practical considerations often prevent individual studies from engaging with a wide spectrum of theoretical positions. Given the overwhelming number of heterogeneous approaches, individual disciplines rather tend to establish theories and conceptual frameworks tailored and trimmed to their specific research interests and methodological challenges. On the one hand, this is a perfectly sensible strategy for work in academia – any given scholarly investigation can only engage with a limited number of different conceptual and methodological paradigms. On the other hand, all forms of such conceptual eclecticism inevitably run the danger of creating closed, autopoietic systems of communication and investigation.

Although this conflict is a feature of research into migration in general, it is particularly characteristic of the study of the phenomenon in British and American literature and language departments in Germany. There is a common interest in migratory movements and their contexts, effects and implications that span literary and cultural studies, linguistics, and didactics. At the same time, both research and teaching proceed largely independently of one another, despite the fact that they often take place within the same department or faculty. This naturally has to do with the aims and objects of research, which often differ significantly. Syntax and word formation, at first glance, have little to do with the aesthetics of prose fiction. Even when addressing identical regions and historical

¹ For general introductions to the study of migration and migration history, see, for example, Harzig/Hoerder (2009) or the standard work by Castles/Miller (2009). The handbook by Sam/Berry (2006) presents an excellent overview of psychological approaches to the phenomenon, while Oswald (2007) provides a helpful introduction from the perspective of sociology. Bommers/Morawska (2005) discuss the interdisciplinary nature of migration research.

time spans scholars seem to be concerned with fairly distinct phenomena. While linguists, for example, might be interested in processes of creolisation and pidginisation in Caribbean languages, literary scholars might focus on the transnational entanglements of literature, politics and identity in the Caribbean contact zone. The terms, concepts, and research methods employed in both groups naturally differ considerably. However, this example also illustrates the obvious thematic overlap between both lines of research: The diachronic process of linguistic creolisation in Caribbean language communities clearly cannot be separated from the political and cultural history of this region. Its literature and art, like its languages, emerge from the complex historical meeting of different ethnicities and cultures.

In institutional history, the deeper connection between language, literature and culture is, of course, part of the reason why research into literature and language came to be situated within the same academic structures (i.e. German departments, English departments etc.). In the meantime, however, developments in research, particularly the necessity of ever increasing specialization, have significantly widened the gaps between these fields of study. Despite this trend, however, we believe that the disciplines and research traditions represented in such departments can profit from remembering their common origin and taking their mutual affinities seriously. The traditional notion of ‘philology’ in its original sense as a comprehensive discipline spanning literature and language may today be anachronistic. Nevertheless, we hold that the fields under discussion can profit from a spirit of cooperation. Accordingly, this volume investigates forms and contexts of migration from the perspectives of British and American literary and cultural studies, linguistics and didactics, thus, mirroring the organisational structure of many English departments. Situated at the intersection of those disciplines, the volume faces the challenge of having to negotiate between different research interests and diverse theoretical and methodological paradigms.

1. Migration in Literary and Cultural Studies

In the context of literary and cultural studies the main focus of past research has been on exploring the connection between migration, its representation and political implications. In the context of British studies these topics have mainly been addressed from the perspective of postcolonialism. Research within this paradigm is oriented towards Anglophone literatures across the globe and is primarily concerned with “the effects of colonialization on cultures and societies” (Ashcroft/Griffiths/Tiffin 2013: 204). Initiated by Said’s seminal *Orientalism* (1978), postcolonialism has developed into an elaborate and theoretically diverse field of study, and many of its major theoreticians such as Bhabha and Spivak have been heavily influenced by post-structuralist theory.² The paradigm continues to be of key importance and influence, particularly with respect to literature from and about the postcolonial world. In Great Britain, however, texts dealing with immigration have come to be discussed under the label of *Black British Literature* or *Black and Asian British Literature* (cf. Dabydeen/Wilson-Tagoe 1997; Innes 2002). This steadily growing body of literary texts specifically addresses the experiences of migrants

² For introductions to postcolonial studies and literatures, see, for example, Childs/Weber/Williams (2006); Benson/Conolly (2005); and Ashcroft/Griffiths/Tiffin (2002 and 2013).

and their offspring in the United Kingdom. It is fundamentally concerned with processes of marginalization and racism and often traces the opportunities and challenges of growing up with a multicultural background in modern British society. While the investigation of Black British literature continues to draw on postcolonial concepts and/or concerns such as notions of identity and hybridity, it has also led to new and creative developments: Steven Vertovec's concept of "super-diversity", for example, tries to address new forms of immigration in western industrial nations (2007), and the works by Sommer (2001, 2007), Stein (2004) and Frank (2010) combine postcolonial theory with concepts from narratology and/or genre theory – just to name a few emerging fields of research.³

While British studies is, thus, characterized by texts and theories from the contexts of postcolonialism and Black British literature, American studies has developed a different influential paradigm for engaging with the nexus of migration and multiculturalism. The so-called "transnational turn in American Studies" (Fishkin 2005) has led to a significant re-adjustment and widening of scholarly perspectives on processes of globalization, intercultural exchange and the crossing of borders. By discarding national frameworks of analysis in favour of international and/or global perspectives, transnational approaches arguably are not only better suited to deal with the complex migration history of the Americas, but also seem more apt to capture today's forces of globalization.⁴ Furthermore, the focus of transnationalism on the crossing of real and imaginary borders connects to another prominent paradigm in the study of migration: The so-called 'spatial turn'.⁵ Inspired by the work of such critics as Foucault (1967), de Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1991), the spatial turn draws attention to the constructed nature of geographical, social, private and imaginary spaces as locations of cultural contact. In this context, concepts such as Bhabha's (1994) 'third space' or Pratt's (1991) 'contact zones', have been particularly influential.

2. Migration, Language Contact and Language Change

Migration is often the cause of language contact, and, as a result, of language change. Language contact and its consequences have received considerable attention from linguists coming from different research traditions and fields, because it is so pervasive and influential. Thomason (2001: 8), for example, claims that "there is no evidence that any languages have developed in total isolation from other languages."

The languages involved in a contact situation are usually subject to change as a result of that contact. This change may affect one or both of the languages involved (Matras 2009). The extent and structural quality of this change depends on a number of factors,

³ Another interesting development is the application of 'transcultural' theory to the study of migration (e.g. Schulze-Engler/Helff 2009; Doff/Schulze-Engler 2011). For recent work on migration, see also Rupp (2010) and Helff (2013). However, the number of works on Black British Literature is too large to be discussed in detail in this short overview.

⁴ Despite a common interest in global contexts and interconnections between nations and cultures, transnational approaches in literary and cultural studies are conceptually heterogeneous. For an overview, see, for example, the contributions in Hebel (2012); Fluck/Pease/Rowe (2011); and the introduction by Jay (2010).

⁵ For an introduction, see Hallet/Neumann (2009) and Bachmann-Medick (2007: 284–328).

among them the intensity of the language contact situation, speaker attitudes (Thomason 2001), and the structural similarity of the languages involved (Matras 2009). These factors interact, and it is impossible to predict exactly which feature of a language will be affected by language contact. There are, however, certain tendencies. Content words, e.g. common nouns, are generally borrowed more easily than grammatical words like prepositions or bound elements like affixes. Such tendencies are expressed in borrowing scales or hierarchies (e.g. Thomason/Kaufman 1991).

The change that occurs in a language contact situation includes spontaneous code switching, but also the borrowing of linguistic structures from one language into another, and even the creation of new languages. Such new languages are frequently called contact languages and encompass pidgins, creoles and mixed languages. These phenomena primarily relate to changes in the structure of a language, but other results of language contact have a socio-cultural dimension. Language contact may, for example, lead to the abandonment of one language in favour of another, either in all social contexts or domains or only in certain ones and therefore also to the extinction of languages, often referred to as 'language death' (e.g. Romaine 2010). The opposite, language creation, is also a possible outcome of language contact, however. Pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages as well as multi-ethnolects are examples for new languages that have arisen due to language contact (Bakker/Matras 2013).

Linguists study both the structural properties of language change and the socio-cultural conditions under which it occurs. A few examples will illustrate the variety of approaches: Corrigan (2010) works within the generative framework to shed light on the similarity of pidgins, creoles and other languages with regards to a common grammatical theory; Schröder (2003) analyses the status of Cameroon Pidgin; Muysken (2010) investigates socio-linguistic scenarios for language contact; and Wichmann and Wohlgenuth (2008) research the integration of loan verbs in different languages across the globe. All of these different approaches have contributed to a better understanding of the reasons, mechanics and consequences of language contact and change. The very number of differing approaches and linguistic areas that are involved in research on language contact also show that even within a single discipline, this phenomenon is discussed from different angles and with different research goals and methodologies.

3. Migration in Context

The brief and incomplete sketch of research in literary and cultural studies and in linguistics presented above provides an impression of the immense conceptual diversity in the study of migration. Given the multiplicity of approaches, this volume does not seek to present a comprehensive overview of the field. Spanning languages, histories and literatures in the Americas, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations its chapters neither compile an exhaustive inventory of (historical) migration experiences, nor present a full survey of relevant theoretical approaches. The volume rather aims at illustrating the wealth of contributions British and American studies has to offer to this exciting and important field of research.⁶ For this purpose, it highlights select forms, (historical) contexts and aspects of migration on both sides of the Atlantic in a way

⁶ The idea for this book emerged during a lecture series on migration held at Bielefeld University in 2013. Several contributions in this volume are based on talks given during that lecture series.

that emphasises both the differences and correspondences between various approaches in literary and cultural studies, linguistics and didactics. This structure fulfils several important functions: Firstly, by addressing distinct forms, facets and representations, the volume emphasises in a performative way that migration is not a single phenomenon that can be comprehensively studied in a strictly chronological or systematic fashion. We believe that the term is best understood as a heuristic label encompassing a plethora of phenomena related to the translocation and meeting of peoples and cultures across various kinds of borders. This means, secondly, that aspects of migration cannot be studied in isolation from their specific historical, cultural and theoretical backgrounds: Migration – as the volume underlines – needs to be seen in context. Moreover, the following chapters and their discussion of selected examples and aspects, go beyond addressing the diversity of the large conceptual domain of migration. Thirdly, it illustrates the existence of affinities and correspondences across diverse forms of the phenomenon. By presenting a rich assortment of topics, methods and theories, the following chapters illustrate the wealth, diversity and connectedness of approaches to migration in British and American studies. The contributions establish a conceptual network of explicit and implicit interconnections which interrelate diverse migration phenomena in the sense of Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance. It is from the blending of such interconnections that a multidisciplinary approach, such as the one presented in this volume, can profit. We hope that the interplay of the case studies presented in the articles collected here will contribute to a deeper and more complex understanding of migration in context, while at the same time establishing cross-disciplinary links within British and American literary and cultural studies, linguistics and didactics.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section mainly focuses on linguistic and didactic questions, and opens with a discussion of one of the most fundamental effects of migration: Whenever and wherever people move from one place to another languages are brought into contact. This process fundamentally shapes the development of the languages that are involved in these contact situations, but it also influences the politics of language and language teaching.

The contribution by Marion Schulte examines how the English language has been influenced by language contact as a result of migration. The Anglo-Saxons spoke Germanic dialects that changed considerably in the following millennium, largely due to contact with the Celts who already lived in the British Isles when the Anglo-Saxons arrived, to the Vikings who raided and later settled in Britain, and to the Normans who conquered England in the eleventh century. These three contact situations influenced the English language to very different degrees, however, and the differences in the linguistic consequences are linked to differences in the social relations between the various groups involved in migration and contact. The importance of social aspects are stressed by many of the contributions in this section – they may lead to the creation of new languages, as is illustrated by Anne Schröder's discussion of mixed languages; they determine which linguistic patterns are perceived as prestigious or non-prestigious (see Vivian Gramley's contribution on rhoticity in the US); and they are an important factor in shaping the outcome of language contact situations, as is pointed out by Stephan Gramley. But social aspects also influence language politics, as the contributions by Nathan Devos and Isabella Seeger show.

Anne Schröder demonstrates how language contact can not only lead to significant change in existing languages, but also to the creation of new languages. She considers mixed languages in particular and distinguishes them from other language contact phenomena. Camfranglais, spoken in Cameroon, and resulting from the contact between English and French in a postcolonial setting, serves as an illustration of the issues connected with mixed languages. Vivian Gramley's contribution is a case study of how migration can influence a particular phonological pattern, here rhoticity in the United States. She considers the distribution of rhoticity across different dialects in the US, shows that rhoticity is often a result of migration, and that the existence or non-existence of post-vocalic R can be a marker of social class in these dialects. The dialects vary with regard to which pattern, rhoticity or non-rhoticity, has higher prestige, however, so that rhoticity may be seen as prestigious in one dialect, but as non-prestigious in another. Stephan Gramley tries to bring such considerations together in proposing a typology of linguistic consequences of language contact situations. He analyses a number of language contact situations with regard to factors that influence the linguistic results of these situations. Whether languages shift or are retained, for example, is affected by the relative strength of the factors power and prestige, solidarity and cohesion, and relative size and time of establishment.

The next two articles present political and educational facets of language and migration. Nathan Devos's contribution outlines bilingual education policies and programmes in the United States over four centuries and shows how the influx of various groups of immigrants has affected these policies. Four different periods are distinguished from the seventeenth century to the present, and for each of these periods the influence of one particularly important immigrant group, e.g. Puerto Ricans in the middle of the twentieth century, is presented in detail. Isabella Seeger's starting point is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which informs the language teaching curricula in Europe. The CEFR calls for the integration of students' experiences in the second language teaching classroom. Seeger stresses that migration is an experience made by many students in the secondary schools of North Rhine-Westphalia, and investigates whether the curricula and text books reflect the migration experiences of students. She also suggests ways in which the curriculum for English as a foreign language in North Rhine-Westphalia might reinterpret the CEFR.

The second section of the book begins with three contributions which address cultural and literary aspects of different historical instances of migration. Jutta Schwarzkopf opens the section on "Literary and Cultural Aspects of Migration" with a historical investigation of mass migration during the period of industrialization in England. Her discussion of this crucial episode in British cultural history takes its point of departure from a study of a single industrial town in the north of England, Preston, and is complemented with the immigration history of one specific family. In her analysis, Schwarzkopf emphasizes the strategies migrants employed in order to cope with the conditions they found in their new places of residence. Her contribution thus emphasizes migrant agency and illustrates that migrants were not merely passive victims of large-scale socioeconomic processes but actively tried to shape the contexts they found themselves in.

Several of the processes and strategies described by Schwarzkopf are relevant far beyond nineteenth century England and are echoed in a number of the articles in this

volume. The aspect of migrant agency, for example, is taken up by Astrid Haas, who shows how individual migrants significantly influenced German immigration to Texas in the nineteenth century. Her article investigates the narrative construction of Texas in three different German travelogues, claiming that those texts contributed substantially both to the contemporary public debate about migration to Texas in Germany and the migratory practices of Germans who were planning to move there. Intercontinental migration, it turns out, shares certain characteristics with internal migration.

Taking us from Texas to South Africa, Patricia Skorge's contribution combines historical and literary analysis. She critically engages with the narrative of the so-called '1820 settlers', a group of British immigrants to South Africa who left Britain during the time of socio-economic upheavals discussed by Schwarzkopf. Coming to South Africa they were assigned to settle in the 'Zuurveld', an area in today's Eastern Cape Province. The first part of Skorge's contribution traces how these settlers developed an identity based on a mythical story that paints a heroic picture of industrious settlers bravely facing the dangers of the frontier – a myth that silences and rewrites the appropriation of land from the native amaXhosa people by means of force. In the second part of her article Skorge demonstrates that J.M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* has to be read against this historical background. She convincingly argues that the novel engages with and subverts the 1820 settlers' myth, particularly with respect to the symbolic and literal appropriation of land so central to the history of South Africa.

Staying in the field of contemporary literature but moving back to Britain, the article by Marcus Hartner is concerned with the construction of national identity in British migration novels that take the form of the novel of development. He shows that although this genre is principally concerned with the construction of individual migrant identity, images of the fictional migrants' countries of origin nevertheless often play an important role. His analysis of several contemporary novels demonstrates how stereotypical images of a protagonist's mother country often serve as a foil for the literary representation of multicultural British society and invite national comparisons between Britain and the respective country of origin. These comparisons often turn out unfavorable for the latter and thus negatively influence the way those countries are imagined and evaluated.

Hartner's contribution specifically highlights the transnational dimension of migration literature, a topic also taken up by Julia Andres in her article on *Caramelo*, a novel by the Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros. Her contribution makes a case against popular understandings that conceive of migration from Mexico to the US as a uni-directional movement with fixed points of departure and arrival. Andres uses Cisneros' novel as an example of the portrayal of migration as a circular, non-finite process in which acts of border crossing can become acts of fusion rather than of separation. This notion of the possibility of transnational or multilocal belonging expressed by *Caramelo* not only relates her article to the preceding analyses of British fictions of migration but also to Wilfried Raussert's subsequent discussion of the transnational grassroots movement of Fandango Sin Fronteras.

In his contribution, Raussert extends the volume's scope beyond literature and language by turning to a discussion of music and identity politics. His analysis of the musical tradition of Fandango Sin Fronteras based in local but interconnected (diaspora) communities north and south of the conflicted US-Mexican border once more takes up a transnational perspective that connects his contribution to the preceding ones. Yet, by

specifically focusing on the transversal flows of actors and sounds across regional and national boundaries, Raussert not only highlights the fact that musical and artistic styles generally tend to transcend political borders; he also illustrates how participatory music, such as fandango, can serve as a means of translocal community-building driven by common political concerns.

The transnational dimension of art addressed by Raussert is also taken up in the volume's final contribution by Betsy van Schlun. Her article engages with the movements of primarily American artists and writers to Europe in the context of the simultaneous emergence of Modernism in the early twentieth century. It follows a number of Modernist artists and writers such as Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein and T.S. Eliot into their voluntary exiles and explores not only their choices of place but also probes the impact of this self-imposed exile on their work. Thus, the contributions by Raussert and van Schlun conclude the volume with a vivid reminder that art is seldom contained by national boundaries and that both art and migration always have a political dimension that cannot be neglected in any attempt to see migration in context.

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