

TWENTIETH-CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY MIGRANT FICTION

Displacement - Exile - Immigration - Border Crossing - Diaspora

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Institute of Cultural Studies and Hungarian Literature

Hours: Wednesday, 12.00 – 13.30

Spring 2020/2021

Code: TBA

Room: A/322

How did literature deal with migratory experiences throughout the 20th century? Does it make sense to talk about migrant fiction, and if yes, what is it? Did migration affect literary representation and literary techniques? Are the experiences of displacement, immigration, border crossing, and exile expressed similarly regardless of time and space, or do these come with historically bound textual strategies? What role does storytelling play in coming to terms with migrant experiences? This course is a series of exercises in interpreting migration narratives from world literature translated into English that address issues of work migration, exile, refuge, diaspora and related subjects in a global context.



We will read and analyze novels, memoirs and short stories from the 20th and 21st centuries that present displaced subjects in liminal situations. We will consider practices of subjectification in various social and political contexts, and confrontations with novel cultural environments and related coping strategies, and the function of language in these processes. We will pay particular attention to the dynamics of cultural transfers, dispossession, loss, nostalgia, remembrance, escapism, hospitality, sympathy, sharing, compassion, estrangement. The questions we ask often respond to contemporary issues relevant to virtually everyone in the global village. How did social and familial conflicts evolve over social imaginaries? How were national, ethnic and sexual identities negotiated? How did real and imaginary transgressions affect the subject and the community?

By confronting such questions, students will develop skills to work across a variety of cultural contexts, and will acquire a nuanced understanding of historical contexts and key theoretical concepts central to issues of displacement and migration. They will get practice in articulating and publicly discussing their critical opinion in a multicultural environment.