

# Editorial

## Migrants and Literature

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the new series of *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology*, and also as our 50th issue, we start the year with the thematic issue “Migrants and Literature”. In this interdisciplinary thematic issue we wanted to bring together three research fields – anthropology, migrations and literature. Inspired by the present relevance of the intensive migration flows since World War II, we have attempted to make a theoretical contribution by looking at migrations through the prism of literary works interpreted from an anthropological theoretical and methodological perspective.

The anthropology of migrations is a long-established field with a significant body of theoretical and empirical research. The relationship between anthropology and literature has intensified since the 1980s, when many anthropologists recognized that literary works of fiction and non-fiction were rich in socio-cultural descriptions and analyses deserving anthropological interpretation. Literature dealing with migrants, their experiences and life stories, comprises numerous works that already form a distinct thematic corpus ranging from autobiographies, anthropological prose and essays to novels, stories and poems.

On this occasion, we have decided not to address the problem of how this literature should be labelled – whether migrant, immigrant, emigrant, migration, gastarbeiter, intercultural or hybrid literature, or literature by foreigners, literature of foreign lands, literature of exile, etc. – and have not offered a final opinion on the matter. Some of these labels allude to the authors’ migrant biographies, other labels refer to the works’ thematic basis and storylines, or to both of these simultaneously. The discussion also raises the question of whether migrant writers write in their native language or the adopted language of the host country, and the question of whether, if they are migrants but do not write about their own or others’ migrant experiences, they belong to migrant literature and whether they should be considered migrant writers at all, etc. In any case, the debate on the appropriate name(s) for this literary genre would appear to us to be motivated more by political and ideological purposes and constructions than by literary criteria. For the science of anthropology, this is ultimately a minor consideration. It approaches literary works about migrations/migrants as a source for a socio-cultural analysis of this phenomenon.

This issue aims, on the one hand, to present a number of writers from Serbia and the former Yugoslavia who have emigrated and, on the other, to provide an

anthropological analysis of literary works about migrants from Serbia and the former Yugoslavia, regardless of the time and the reasons of their emigration. By coincidence, all the authors writing for this issue have opted to write about writers and their works from the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

The first paper in this issue, *Where is My Place? Authors from the Former Yugoslavia in Contemporary German Literature* by Ivana Pajić and Mirjana Zarifović Grković, provides a detailed discussion and theoretical framework for the origin of the above-mentioned terms for this kind of literature, and also looks at the oeuvre of several contemporary ex-Yugoslav writers in Germany writing in the German language. Gordana Ilić Marković's paper *I Feel Well on the Wrong Track: Milutin Doroslovac – Milo Dor* is a study of the migrant biography and varied creative work of this well-known and respected Serbian writer who lived and worked in Austria. The next two papers – Dragana Antonijević's *Viennese Hallways in Darko Markov's Bleak Vision* and Ana Banić Grubišić's *Between Two Worlds: An Anthropological Analysis of the Gastarbeiter Novel The Taxi Driver of München* – analyze novels that belong to gastarbeiter literature and describe the clash between the worlds of the gastarbeiter and the native population in Austria and Germany, on the one hand, as well as those of different generations of migrants. These two papers provide, respectively, an analysis of Darko Markov's novel *Twilight in the Viennese Hallway 2*, and of the Croatian gastarbeiter and taxi driver Romano Mrkić's novel *The Taxi Driver of München*.

This, as it were, "German block" of papers is followed by two papers analyzing novels by Serbian writers in Canada: in the paper *The Novel Snowman by David Albahari: An Anthropological Reading*, Marija Brujić gives an anthropological reading of well-known writer David Albahari's novel about immigrant's nostalgia and alienation, while Maja Ćuk looks at the English-language collection of stories *Yesterday's People* by the Bosnian-Serb writer Goran Simić in the paper *Elusive Better Future: Identity Crisis Among Immigrants in Yesterday's People*.

Next is Mladena Prelić's paper *Ičvič's Travels: Representations of Identity in Petar Milošević's Novel London, Pomaz*, which looks at an unusually written novel by the Serbian-Hungarian writer Petar Milošević which mixes the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets and different languages. In her paper *B. Wongar's Literary Work and Life from an Ethnological and Anthropological Perspective*, Gordana Gorunović writes about the extraordinary life and work of the Serbian writer, ethnographer-amateur and adventurer Sreten Božić alias B. Wongar, who spent a major part of his life among Australian Aboriginal people to whom he devoted his literary works. The issue closes with Nina Kule-

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nović's paper "*We All Carry Inside Us Many Identities, a Multitude of These Selves of Ours*": *An Anthropological Analysis of Bekim Sejranović's Novel The Diary of a Nomad* on the Bosnian-Croatian writer Bekim Sejranović, who emigrated to Norway.

It is our hope that this thematic issue will inspire more extensive future research into migrant/migration literature through the prism of anthropological, sociological and literary analysis.

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