

AV

Komparatistik

Jahrbuch
der Deutschen Gesellschaft
für Allgemeine und Vergleichende
Literaturwissenschaft

2020/2021

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ISBN 978-3-8498-1811-1
ISSN 1432-5306

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AISTHESIS VERLAG

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Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Vorstands
der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Allgemeine
und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft
von Annette Simonis, Martin Sexl und Alexandra Müller

AISTHESIS VERLAG

Bielefeld 2022



Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische
Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

© Aisthesis Verlag Bielefeld 2022

Postfach 10 04 27, D-33504 Bielefeld

Satz: Germano Wallmann, www.geisterwort.de

Druck: MAJUSKEL MEDIENPRODUKTION GMBH, Wetzlar

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Print ISBN 978-3-8498-1811-1

E-Book ISBN 978-3-8498-1812-8

ISSN 1432-5306

www.aisthesis.de

intensiv auseinandergesetzt hat, zum Beispiel die Klassiker Corneille, Racine und Molière, die Aufklärer Voltaire, Rousseau und Diderot sowie die Romantikerin Madame de Staël, sondern auch Vermittler wie sein Freund Karl Friedrich Reinhard, die Redakteure der von Goethe geschätzten Zeitschrift „Le Globe“, die Vertreter des Saint-Simonismus und auch französische Naturwissenschaftler, mit denen sich der Naturforscher Goethe auseinandersetzte.

Im dritten, knapp 140 Seiten umfassenden Kapitel untersucht Buck abschließend kenntnisreich die Wirkungsgeschichte Goethes in Frankreich. Hierbei lenkt er das Augenmerk auch auf Aspekte, die vielen Literaturwissenschaftlern, die sich zwar mit Goethes Werk, nicht aber mit der französischen Kulturgeschichte auskennen, nicht unbedingt geläufig sein dürften. So schildert er nicht nur die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit Goethe und seinem Werk bei französischen Autoren wie Barbey d'Aurevilly, Paul Claudel, Maurice Barrés, André Gide, Paul Valéry und Romain Rolland, sondern beleuchtet auch die Goethe-Rezeption französischer Musiker und Künstler sowie den Goethe-Diskurs in der französischen Germanistik und bei Vertretern der in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts bekanntlich noch stark positivistisch ausgerichteten „Littérature Comparée“ (Fernand Baldensperger, Jean-Marie Carré).

Zum Schluss seines bei aller Gelehrsamkeit flüssig geschriebenen Buches über „Goethe und Frankreich“ kommt Theo Buck zu dem Fazit, dass der Umgang mit der französischen Sprache, Kultur und Lebensart von Jugend an Bestandteil von Goethes Alltag gewesen sei. Wenngleich er von Frankreich selbst nur wenig, von der Weltstadt Paris sogar überhaupt nichts gesehen habe. Da Sprache und Geistesleben Frankreichs vorrangig zum Erfahrungshorizont und zum Bildungsgut Goethes gehört hätten, könne man, so Buck arg pathetisch, „ohne Übertreibung feststellen, daß er dadurch auf seltene Weise mit französischem Wesen vertraut war.“ (394)

Ein nützliches Personenregister und eine knappe Bibliographie der wichtigsten Primär- und Sekundärliteratur zum Thema runden das Buch ab. Weitere Literaturhinweise finden sich in den über 500 Anmerkungen.

Horst Schmidt

Christopher Ian Foster. *Conscripts of Migration. Neoliberal Globalization, Nationalism, and the Literature of New African Diasporas*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019. 194 p.

With *Conscripts of Migration*, Christopher Ian Foster presents a study of contemporary African migrant literature “from an anti-nationalist and African diasporic perspective” (4). The compound neologism ‘migritude’—first theorized by Jacques Chevrier (2004)¹—is composed of ‘migration’ and ‘Négritude’. Thus, this term linguistically marks an in-between, namely, a liminal, hybrid, or third space, which also determines the theoretical and thematic orientation of

¹ Jacques Chevrier. “Afriques(s)-sur-Seine: autour de la notion de ‘migritude.’” *Notre Librairie. Revue des littératures du Sud* 155/156 (2004): pp. 96-100.

the book. However, in contrast to the meaning the conceptualizations ‘liminality’, ‘hybridity’, and ‘third space’ convey in postcolonial theory, Foster is concerned with the systemic and material aspects of immigration, among others, rather than with aspects concerning individuals and identity politics. He aims especially at connecting migration and empire, racism, nationalism, and colonialism, as well as at showing that “[c]olonial racial hierarchies indeed refract into the present as anti-immigrant discourse – which amounts to newly flexible coding for anti-black and brown” (62).

As African literature in the 21st century “increasingly figures immigration as a conscripting force in terms of race, gender, and sexuality” (7), rather than as the free choice of a few affluent cosmopolitan and upper-middle-class individuals, Foster’s book covers a significant desideratum within literary and cultural studies. Among the comparatively under-researched field of migrature literature, he counts “the work and ideas of a disparate yet distinct group of younger African authors born after independence in the 1960s” who have mostly “lived both in and outside Africa” and who “narrate the world of the immigrant within the context of globalization” (9). However, the authors and protagonists of migrature literature are not Taiye Selasi’s “Afropolitans”, “working and living in cities around the globe”, who “belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many”.² Rather, these non-elite, often working-class, sometimes ‘illegal’ and ‘undocumented’ economic migrants and refugees do not belong to any geographical location (anymore) nor do they feel completely at home in any. This leads to them confronting “issues of migrancy (forced or not), diaspora (forced or not), errantry, departure, return, racism against immigrants, identity, gender, sexuality, and postcoloniality” (9) while considering “the modes, structures, conditions, and subject-positions of being migrant” (29). To them, the global economic and political policies of Europe and the United States look more like a “‘modern apartheid’ than a ‘global village’” (53). Or, in Emily Apter’s words, the experiences of these migrants show the “darker side of globalization”.³

Foster is very explicit about his resistance to conflating “hybrid elite cosmopolitan writers—often not subject to the same kinds of institutional apparatuses managing immigration that refugees or economic migrants are—with the majority of immigrants or migrant writers” (63). However, he is not only concerned with the difficult experiences of a ‘modern apartheid’, but also with the fact that these migrature authors, despite or precisely because of their experiences, often forge “a migrant humanism—the recapturing of the category of ‘immigrant’ as positive and human against the abject dehumanization of migrants throughout the world” (56).

By primarily discussing the works of female and queer authors, Foster fills a blind spot which had already been present within the first generations of

2 Taiye Selasi. “Bye-Bye Barbar.” *The LIP Magazine* (3 March 2005). <https://web.archive.org/web/20210821062515/https://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/2005/03/03/bye-bye-barbar/> [21 Aug. 2021].

3 Emily Apter. *Against World Literature. On the Politics of Untranslatability*. New York: Verso, 2013. p. 104.

Négritude writing and scholarship, thus correcting “the lack of focus on women of color and gender” (34). The rediscovered godmothers of Négritude, Paulette and Jeanne (Jane) Nardal (‘the Nardal sisters’), testify to this omission (see, for example, Sharpley-Whiting’s *Négritude Women*, 2002). Overall, Foster’s selection of primary literature is reminiscent of both standpoint and intersectional theories, whose common denominator lies in their focus on power dynamics between dominant and dominated groups, as well as within their tendency to privilege the knowledge production of those (multiply) oppressed demographics—due to their gender, sexuality, race, class, or religion, among other factors. The focus of *Conscripts of Migration* further resonates with the argument Sonali Perera makes, namely, that “in the contemporary historical moment, the ‘new proletariat’ is best represented by the figure of the woman worker in the periphery”.⁴ However, Foster’s selection of authors and their works also shows that there is a variety of different iterations of intersecting oppression and that instigating a hierarchy of oppressions, or ‘Oppression Olympics’, does not prove useful. Gender, race, and class stand out as dominant, but sexual orientation and religion also play an important role in some of the texts. For example, queer Somali writer Diriye Osman and most of his fictional characters are black, gay, and Muslim (see Chapter 5).

Conscripts of Migration can be described as an activist-academic venture that achieves two goals: Building upon the works of Stanley Diamond (1974), David Scott (1995), and Talal Asad (2015),⁵ Foster initiates “a theory of [global] conscription” (12) by showing “that immigration is structural, historical, and that it functions as a racializing technology of neoliberal globalization” (28). While he does not use “conscription” literally, as in the sense of the mandatory enlistment into a military service, he has chosen this strong term deliberately in order to emphasize the systemic nature of global migration movements “whose subjects are already conscripted by particular conditions before they decide to move or not move” (147).⁶ Foster’s theory of global conscription, the foundations of which are presented in Chapter 1 and 2, is also meant to serve as a kind of antithesis to ‘Afropolitanism’.

Complementing this ambitious theoretical endeavor, Foster presents the first book-long “introduction to, and survey of, migritude literature” (12) which he develops through close readings of the following contemporary texts by diasporic

4 Sonali Perera. *No Country. Working-Class Writing in the Age of Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. p. 79.

5 Stanley Diamond. *In Search of the Primitive. A Critique of Civilization*. New Jersey: Transaction, 1974; David Scott. “Colonial Governmentality.” *Social Text* 43 (Autumn 1995): pp. 191-220; Talal Asad. “Reflections on Violence, Law, and Humanitarianism.” *Critical Inquiry* 41/2 (Winter 2015).

6 Although Foster does not use “conscription” in its literal sense which implies strong military connotations, there are several overlaps and reference points which he mentions, as, for example, the “literal conscription of West African subjects into the French army in World War I, to which the [infamous] ‘black threat on the Rhine’ refers” (pp. 60-61), or the African conscripts of the Italian colonial army, the so-called “askaris”, or black soldiers (cf. pp. 144-145).

African authors: the multimodal text *Migritude* (2010) by South Asian Kenyan writer Shailja Patel (Chapter 2); *The Belly of the Atlantic* (orig. *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique*, 2003) by Senegalese-French novelist Fatou Diome (Chapter 3); the novel *Little Mother* (orig. *Madre Piccola*, 2007) by Somali-Italian author Cristina Ali Farah (Chapter 4); the collection of short stories *Fairytales for Lost Children* (2013) by queer Somali writer Diriye Osman who grew up in diasporas in Kenya and Britain (Chapter 5); and the semi-biographical account *Black Mamba Boy* (2010) by Somali-British writer Nadifa Mohamed (Chapter 6). In contrast to transnational and diaspora studies, the focus of the various text analyses lies not only on “travel or displacement across national boundaries” (especially from the Global South to the Global North), but also on “intranational movement” (148, emphasis in original), e. g., Somalis in Kenya or in Yemen.

Foster's excellent close readings in the Chapters 2-6 are not presented within a vacuum, but are productively contextualized both geographically as well as historically, and, above all, in terms of literary history. He mentions antecedent texts, writing traditions, and genres that overlap with migritude literature (e. g., slave narratives, Négritude writings, *Buer* and *banlieu* literature of the 1980s and beyond, and modernist-return-from-exile narratives), as well as numerous intertextual references. Although Foster's close readings focus on individual texts, they are comparative in their design, as references to other texts are often made in passing. An exception to this are Chapters 5 and 6, where Foster presents an in-depth comparison of his selected primary texts, *Fairytales for Lost Children* (Osman) and *Black Mamba Boy* (Mohamed), with Nuruddin Farah's novel *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), and Claude McKay's *Banjo* (1929), respectively. Nadifa Mohamed's inclusion of McKay's “wandering protagonist Banjo” (147) in her twenty-first century migritude novel *Black Mamba Boy* could also be considered a case of “interfiguralität”.⁷

It is also worth noting that Foster does not engage in a narrow and exclusive focus on literature, which might be especially relevant to scholars of comparative literature who have intermedial research interests. He repeatedly makes references to films (e. g., to Fred Kuwornu's 2011 documentary *18 Ius Soli*, or to Jennie Livingston's documentary *Paris is Burning*) as well as to visual art. An illustration from Marco Di Prisco's 2014 digital quadriptych of African immigration to Italy (all of which are discussed in Chapter 4 along with the novel *Little Mother*), *Postcard from Rosarno, Italia*, is featured on the book cover of *Concepts of Migration*. However, the intermedial approach is also partly inherent to the literature Foster discusses. Works such as *Migritude*, which “is based on Patel's one-woman performance-theater show” (34), or *Fairytales for Lost Children*, in which each short story is “followed by an illustration along with Arabic script created by the author” (124), already include or refer to other media. Furthermore, the (mis)quoting of music or song lyrics, such as Roy Orbison's “You

7 Cf. Wolfgang G. Müller. “Interfiguralität. A Study on the Interdependence of Literary Figures.” *Intertextuality*. Ed. Heinrich F. Plett. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991, pp. 101-121; Paula Wojcik. “Interfiguralitätsstrategien: Fontanes realistische Melusine als transfigurations Phänomen.” *arcadia* 55/2 (2020): pp. 210-238.

Got It" (77), or the spiritual "Let My People Go" (163), fulfills an important function in some of the texts Foster discusses.

Another decidedly comparative focus lies in the inclusion of texts in different languages, namely, English, French, and Italian. Foster notes that he has read most of the Francophone texts not in the original but in their English translation and highlights that "in the spirit of transnationalism and the multilingual literatures of the diaspora, it is still important to cross (in both senses of the word) the colonial linguistic boundaries that demarcate 'Francophone,' or 'Italo-phonie,' or 'Anglophone,' even at the disadvantage of reading in translation" (52-53). While Foster considers the inclusion of translations in his analyses primarily as a compromise, a parallel reading of an original and its translation can also hold advantages; in general, but also specifically with regard to the books in Foster's selection. This becomes particularly clear, for example, when he compares passages from the English translation of Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* with its French original, thereby revealing how intertextual references are often more difficult to discern in the translated version of the novel (e.g., "les mirages" refer more clearly to Ousmane Diop Socé's novel *Mirages de Paris* than "illusions", 75), or how Ros Schwartz and Lulu Norman's translation of the N-word manages to maintain and convey "the term's politicized and violent history" (ibid.).

Such parallel readings of original and translation can also raise the reader's awareness towards phenomena of translation within the narrative itself: towards global creolizations (for example, we learn that the word "checkpoint" has been creolized into most languages, 104), untranslatability, "cultural mistranslation" (165), or meaningful silences ("Say nothing at all and there is nothing to translate." (108, quoting Souleymane Bachir Diagne)),⁸ as well as towards the nuances of meaning that are lost in translation. Foster, for instance, draws the reader's attention towards the fact that, in Diome's *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique*, song lyrics are deliberately rendered in English ("*Everything you want, you've got it!*"), albeit not quite correctly as the song is misremembered and also misinterpreted by a Senegalese-French character (the original is Roy Orbison's "You got it") (77). Another striking example lies in the adaptation or translation of names. The protagonist in Cristina Ali Farah's novel *Little Mother* was christened "Dominica" by her Italian mother and renamed "Axad" by her cousin Barni, which is the Somali version of the same name, which means Sunday. That Dominica initially, to survive and assimilate in Italy, decided to abandon "Axad", thus forgetting "the Somali language as well as the cultural signifiers she was brought up with as a child" (100), shows that there is much more at stake than simply translating a name into another language.

For all those who have read Johnny Pitts' excellent *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe* (2019), it might prove interesting to learn of Léonora Miano's earlier use of the term "Afropéans" in her play *Écrits pour la parole* (2012), which opens a broader, and decidedly transnational and multilingual, history of this African-European neologism (83). Such "travelling concepts" can further support

8 Souleymane Bachir Diagne. Response to Emily Apter. "Translation, Checkpoints, Sovereign Borders." Lecture, Columbia University, October 24, 2013.

Foster's emphasis on the importance of crossing colonial and linguistic boundaries with whatever options that are accessible (e. g., reading in the original, parallel reading of the original and its translation, or reading in translation). Foster himself lists Régine Michelle Jean-Charles' translation of Miano's *Écrits pour la parole* in his bibliography, although it is not entirely clear—and this constitutes a formal point for criticism—which publication he was working with here. It was not possible to find a published and official English translation. In addition to the unclear or insufficient information on translations, references were also missing in some cases, which can cause confusion, especially in combination with (presumably) incorrectly printed names, as, for example, in Chapter 4 where a Jennifer Lloyd is associated with the concept of “global apartheid” (94), but in the bibliography only a Jena [sic] Loyd is given who is also spelled incorrectly, with only one ‘n’.

However, such occasional inaccuracies do not diminish the overall high quality and innovativeness of Foster's monograph. His theory of global conscription and his analyses of migrature literatures will be enriching for students and researchers in various disciplines, including literary and cultural studies, comparative literature, world literature studies, mobility studies, black and queer diaspora studies, among others. *Conscripts of Migration* can be seen, above all, as an important complement and counterweight to the numerous recent publications on Afropolitan literature.⁹ The analytical framework Foster proposes through the concepts of ‘conscription’ and ‘migrature’ could (and should) be applied to more countries, more linguistic and cultural areas, more ‘routes and roots’.

In terms of its structure, the book is also suitable for cross-reading. Foster provides an index, and the individual chapters can also be read on their own. For example, if readers are particularly interested in the Francophone (diasporic) African literary tradition, they will read Chapter 3. If, on the other hand, they want to learn more on African-Italian diaspora literature, they will focus on Chapter 4. Although these chapters mainly revolve around Senegalese-French and Somali-Italian migrant experiences, and, specifically, around Fatou Diome's novel *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* and Cristina Ali Farah's *Madre Piccola* respectively, Foster offers a valuable and broader literature survey, in which he repeatedly refers to Dominic Thomas' seminal works on ‘Black France’ and to Alessandra Di Maio's article “Black Italia”, among others.¹⁰ However, the introduction

9 Cf. James Hodapp [Ed.]. *Afropolitan Literature as World Literature*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020; Eva Rask Knudsen/Ulla Rahbek. *In Search of the Afropolitan. Encounters, Conversations, and Contemporary Diasporic African Literature*. London/New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016.

10 Cf. Dominic Thomas. *Black France. Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007; Dominic Thomas. *Africa and France. Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013; Alessandra Di Maio. “Black Italia: Contemporary Migrant Writers from Africa.” *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*. Ed. Darlene Clark Hine/Tricia Danielle Keaton/Stephen Small. Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009, pp. 119-144.

(Chapter 1) should accompany these selective readings, as it includes the theoretical backgrounds and frameworks, together with Chapter 2, which additionally discusses the development of Négritude to migritude.

On a stylistic level, the direct, accessible, and yet figurative language stands out positively. Foster successfully links the metaphorical and conceptual connections between quotations of the primary works to his theoretical and cultural frameworks and conclusions. For example, this is the case when he comments on a quote from a novel in which a migrant woman from Morocco vomits upon first entering her shabby little apartment in Paris as follows: “Migritude literature is predicated upon the vomiting up of colonial myths like the ‘Mirage of Paris’ fed and swallowed by colonists and colonizer alike since the dawn of imperialism” (66). Now, this is just one example among many which induce a kind of lightness/irony that brings both humour and accuracy into the book’s literary and theoretical ventures. It is also fitting for a book that argues for the political power and activist potential of literature that the author regularly marks his own speech through the use of the first-person pronoun “I”. Through this, the reader immediately recognizes when to read the author’s opinions as such and, even more importantly, that he takes responsibility and accountability for his utterances.

Sandra Folie

Sebastian Zilles. *Die Schulen der Männlichkeit. Männerbünde in Wissenschaft und Literatur um 1900*. Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2018. 378 S.

Das Geschlecht der *Gender Studies* war lange Zeit weiblich. Aus der feministischen Philosophie und Kulturtheorie hervorgegangen, widmeten sich die *Gender Studies* über viele Jahre hinweg primär Fragen der Konstruktionsbedingungen und politischen Implikationen von Weiblichkeit. Etwa seit der Jahrtausendwende zeichnet sich in der *Gender*-orientierten Literaturwissenschaft allerdings ein zunehmendes Interesse auch an Fragen der kulturellen Konstruktion von Männlichkeit ab. Die *Masculinity Studies* – wie die Mehrzahl der jüngeren, kulturwissenschaftlichen *Studies*-Disziplinen ursprünglich ein US-amerikanischer Import – gewinnen auch in der germanistischen Literaturwissenschaft zusehends an Bedeutung.

An dieses Forschungsparadigma schließt Sebastian Zilles mit seiner Dissertation an, die sich der Verhandlung von Männerbünden in Wissenschaft und Literatur um 1900 widmet. Der Titel *Schulen der Männlichkeit* nimmt dabei auf sinnige Weise die Grundthese der Arbeit vorweg: Männlichkeit nämlich werde, so Zilles, im weltanschaulichen Diskurs um 1900 keineswegs als unproblematisch gegeben angesehen, sondern bilde vielmehr eine fragile Größe, die allererst hergestellt werden müsse – eine Aufgabe, die vor allem „homosozialen Institutionen und Verbänden“ zudedacht sei, „die in der Schulzeit beginnen, über Jugend- und Freizeitverbände verlaufen und mit dem Eintritt in Studentenverbindungen bzw. in das Militär enden.“ (13) Im Anschluss an die einschlägigen Arbeiten von Walter Erhart versteht Zilles die von den Männerbünden