

Literature, Mobility, Imago:

Twenty-First-Century (E)migration

Experiences of Lithuanians and Latvians

Summary

(E)migration is a common phenomenon in the current environment of liquid modernity that is ruled by the laws of fragmentation, instability, and transience. However, one should not think that there was a time when Lithuanians and Latvians were sedentary: genetically, the Aestii tribes attributed to the Indo-Europeans were nomads and active vagabonds. In the course of centuries, the Balts lived under the influence of other nations and developed the genes of both resistance and adaptation; they entertained visionary models of moving their compatriots beyond the borders of their geographical territory. When Lithuania and Latvia re-established their independence, and especially when they accessed the European Union in 2004, history made a full circle and the demographic upheaval repeated itself: we are having new mass emigration from the Baltic countries and the literature it produces. As the emigrant becomes a significant personage of post-modernity and a protagonist of numerous (e)migration books, contemporary (e)migration literature deserves separate analysis as an abundant corps of information. Modern emigration differs from the Balts' earlier mass migration experiences in that it is a two-way street in which the agents are referred to as shuttle migrants. The terms used in the monograph – (e)migration and (e)migrants – distinguish modern moving subjects from other waves of emigration, which were mostly one-way and involved either economic migrants or post-war émigrés. As a definition, (e)migration marks the circular nature of modern travelling, but at the same time it does not lock the moving subjects in strictly-defined category of 'migrants', which has acquired different nuances and associations of meaning since the migrant crisis of 2015.

The monograph addresses the field of collective twenty-first-century (e)migration experiences in literary works and attempts to refine various cross-sections and models of argumentation. Efforts were made to include as broad a spectre of works about Lithuanian and Latvian emigration as possible. Research is focused on about fifty contemporary Lithuanian and Latvian texts about emigration that chronologically cover the period from 2000 to 2018, especially the years after the accession of the Baltic countries to the European Union, when the walls opened and both voluntary emigration and the amount of literature reflecting it increased.

The ternary phrase *Literatūra, mobilumas, imago* (Literature, Mobility, Imago) was chosen for the title as the core of critical study. *Mobility* implies the movement of modern Lithuanians and Latvians and their representative flexibility, and the mobility of images; *literature* refers to their fictional (essayist, journalistic) realisation in texts, which is frequently imagined and condensed, because modern (e)migration literature has become the site of mobility narrative, or mutual influences and ethnic reflections of different nations. The *imago* component points to the methodological vector of the monograph, that is, to imagology, which helps to follow the unfolding relationship between the *I* imagined by oneself and others and the *I* depicted in (e)migration literature, to make the ethnic character of the Latvian/Lithuanian speak, and to assess the impact of the established attitudes and stereotypes on our imagination. Numerous *Others* – those to whom people emigrate and those with whom they emigrate (Russians, Poles, Latvians, and others) – found their way to the research lab.

In the theoretical chapter 'Imagologija kaip instrumentas (e)migracinio identiteto specifikai tirti' (Imagology as an instrument of research into the specifics of (e)migration identity), the theoretical provisions underlying literary imagology are introduced into broader methodological circulation in Lithuania. Its essential concepts (self-image, *hetero* image, stereotype) are expounded, and the method is positioned in the field of other disciplines of literary theory and

analysis. The concepts of imagology have been entrenched in contemporary literary theory since the appearance of the seminal works of the representatives of the so-called Aachen school, namely Hugo Dyserinck, Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, Manfred Beller, as well as their recent successor Joep Leerssen, a professor at the University of Amsterdam. The introduction of a new point of view leads to the deliberation on what impulses imagology resources can provide to the analysis of the mobile images in the ever-growing Lithuanian and Latvian (e)migration literature and of the changing self-image of Lithuanians and Latvians. In (e)migration literature, imagology facilitates recognition of taxonomic knots in collisions and conflicts between different nations and offers an opportunity to take a look at how the writers convert themselves into the 'other' and what sort of 'Baltic' imagotopics they use. At this point, the capabilities of comparative imagology come to aid – not only as a possibility to compare Lithuanian and Latvian literatures, but also as distilling one's own national characterology through comparing (oneself) with other nations and absorbing the traits of their identity. Imagology is introduced as a method helpful for the analysis of the social-political legacy of the Soviet period as a code of experience (or memory) and for revealing the themes of changing identity, nomadic mentality, confrontation of values, and the like. Another important methodological vector in this monograph is postcolonialism, which is associated with imagology through the conceptual leitmotifs of identity, cultural differences and interruptions, and power relations. The sociological vector of the development of imagology that imparts an additional methodological substratum to the traditional analysis of literature is also relevant to the theme analysed. Zygmunt Bauman's postulates of cultural philosophy and suppositions of the Lithuanian sociologist Vytautas Kavolis were referred to on a number of occasions as binding theoretical threads.

The above-mentioned theoretical pillars assist in grouping the references analysed into several concentric layers of thematic imageries that are directly or indirectly related with specific historical

and social conditions and ideological choices: geographical, social, climatological, culinary, ethnic, linguistic, and others. The examined cross-sections can be conditionally referred to as a typology of (e)migration identity, yet these are just guidelines that have been singled out without any claims of presenting a completed picture of (e)migration experience of a Lithuanian or a Latvian. As Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' and the theories of liquidity developed by Bauman have shown, it is difficult to define even the nations residing in a geographical territory, and to do that with the satellites of a nation scattered abroad is an extremely complex task.

Set in literary texts, the mobility of the residents of the Baltic countries and the confusion it implies stimulate a literary scholar to ask questions: how do we describe ourselves when we are in intercultural spaces and what auto-characteristics and traits of character do we attribute to ourselves? How do others describe us? What images convey ethnic self-reflection in the trans-national environment, is it still relevant, and what functions does it perform? We are interested in what pre-images of national imagination form the national character of a Lithuanian or a Latvian, which after-images broadening the ethnic identity add to literature after the countries' accession to the European Union and with our national character further developing under permanent tension between national and supra-national identities, and how language responds to these transformations.

Two theses are advanced and verified through examples in the chapter 'Užburtas ratas ar vilties diaspora? Lietuvių ir latvių (e)migracijos procesų palyginimas' (A vicious circle or a diaspora of hope? A comparison of Lithuanian and Latvian (e)migration processes). The first thesis is that in perceiving emigration, Latvians reveal themselves as light sceptics, and Lithuanians as fundamental pessimists; the second thesis suggests that modern cultural representations (literature, theatre, cinema) is an under-actualised domain of diaspora research. The chapter opens with a discussion of the trends of Lithuanian and Latvian migration through the

generalisation of the data supplied by sociological and demographic surveys in both countries, and especially based on the monographs *Užburtas ratas? Lietuvos gyventojų grįžtamoji ir pakartotinė migracija* (A Vicious Circle? Return and Repeat Migration of the Lithuanian Population, 2012) and *Latvijas emigrantu kopienas: Cerību diaspora* (Communities of Latvian Immigrants: A Diaspora of Hope, 2015). The comparison leads to the conclusion that although the nature and quantitative indices of Lithuanian and Latvian migration are quite similar, the attitude to the situation is fundamentally different. In Lithuania, emigration is seen as ‘a diaspora of despair’, while in Latvia it is approached more as an unfulfilled potential as Latvians do not escalate the problem of migration so much and place a greater emphasis on the scenarios of success. The author takes a look at how (e)migration processes and the shift in identity are reflected in literary works written by modern Lithuanian and Latvian (e)migrant authors and suggests that in detailed analysis of contemporary emigration, modern emigration literature and culture should be consulted along sociological data as an important bank of social, anthropological, ideological, and psychological information.

The third chapter, ‘Nei sava, nei kita: nulinė tapatybė šiuolaikinių baltų (e)migrantų literatūroje’ (Neither self nor other: zero identity in the literature of contemporary Baltic (e)migrants) focuses on the images encoding modern displaced identity. The author suggests an epistemic shift from the hybrid identity typical of the post-war émigrés to the immanent zero identity characteristic of contemporary migrants. The analytical section expands on the meanings of being stuck in limbo, of anonymity brought about by technological changes, and of being a social zero. By employing spacious metaphors and charging them with imagological content, Lithuanian and Latvian writers turn the constant tension between the inner identity, the physical body, and its visible representation of a migrant into a problem. An undefined identity can also be signalled by assumed, technology-mediated, or suppressed identification. Analysis of the abundance of images recording the intermediary state and/or virtual

reality (airport, suitcase, computer screen, mask, a fake passport) and manifestations of social estrangement (freeganism, squatting, and the like) leads to the conclusion that the zero aspect is a permanent and underlying condition defining the identity of the contemporary Baltic emigrants. It results in empty walking masks incapable of creating an integral personal project, and not in full-blooded characters.

Competing scenarios of the existence of the modern human are considered in the fourth chapter, 'Vertybiniai pokyčiai šiuolaikinėje (e)migrantų literatūroje: turėti, būti ar atrodyti?' (Shifts in values in contemporary émigré literature: to have, to be, or to appear. The underlying assumption is that the dominating causes of economic migration determine the dominance of possessing in contemporary émigré literature. Consumption as an impulse of happiness is more characteristic of former post-Soviet societies of shortage that still fail to realise the imagological nature of such happiness and the illusory sense of possession. Mostly, the Baltic immigrants belong to the unprivileged class in the social structure of receiving countries, so their desire to show off and to prove their advantage externally is very strong. Symbolic power and self-realisation are boosted with the help of labels of expensive things, cars, heavy make-up, and clothes. Other contemporary shifts in values, which are emerging in the émigré literature, are identified in this chapter: a blurred notion of freedom, the loss of dignity and self-respect for the sake of money, and the imperatives of slavery (the imagotopics of the dog). Such behavioural tendencies (distorted notions of power, domination, prestige, dignity, and freedom) bares the common problems of post-Soviet societies, reveals the erosion of existence, disarranged values, and sometimes the reverse of these two social forms when having replaces being. The new egoistic ideals of freedom of contemporary emigrants point to the disappearing communal thinking, weakening statehood mentality, and the entrenching cult of egocentricity. The model of being, an alternative to having, is less frequent in emigration narratives and manifests itself most often as an attribute of academic migration. It is not the material and physical property that is important to the

paradigm of being, but the *cultural* property, active self-creation, and the inner becoming of the personality.

In the fifth chapter, 'Ką signalizuoja dabartinės (e)migracijos literatūra? Baltiškios imagerijos slinkty's' (What is signalled by the current (e)migration literature? The shifts in the Baltic imagery) emphasis moves to the actualisation of the images of ethnicity and nationality (honey, the Pensive Christ, Žalgiris, Lāčplēsis, Eglė the Queen of Grass-snakes and others) in the literature of the new wave of (e)migrants. Here, attention is confined to the discussion of the evolution of the concept of ethnicity through the identification of the aspects most relevant to the analysis of the situation of small nations and of the creative work of the emigrants. It has been found that the switch from ethnocentrism to post-nationalism declared in the academic milieu cannot be unambiguously acceptable to Lithuanians and Latvians as small ethnic groups. A search for conservation and fluctuation trends of the images considered as canonically 'Baltic' is conducted with emphasis on how a new sense is given to the displaced identity and which images encode the continuity or transformation of ethnic self-awareness. In literary representations, the atrophy of national and ethnic consciousness, the changing forms of expression of the Baltic images, and their creative deployment in new contexts are observed. Folkloristic and mythological expressive forms and the symbols of archaic Baltic faith are becoming fewer and fewer, the historical paradigm of ethnicity is no longer invoked, and the language is less frequently considered a symbolic value-related support to the ethnic identity. Adapted to the norms and standards of the new host society, traditional ethnic and national images often lose their (common) Baltic dimension; there emerge other premises for self-identification (an Eastern European, a menial labourer).

The question of how nations perceive other nations is highly relevant to imagology, and this is the reason why two chapters are devoted to the issue of this stereotypical 'imagined' representation. The chapter 'Lietuvių ir latvių abipusė reprezentacija (e)migracijos literatūroje: tipai ir stereotipai' (Mutual representation of Lithuanians and Latvians

in (e)migration literature: types and stereotypes) is concentrated on the extent and manner that the two Baltic nations, Lithuanians and Latvians, depict one another; whether the territorial proximity and a common ethnic heritage remain important factors in defining the relationship of closeness and building Baltic solidarity in emigration; how national stereotypes and prejudice affect mutual representations; what possibilities of mutual understanding between 'brother nations' are proposed by (e)migration texts. An assumption is made that in a more alien context Lithuanians and Latvians should feel closer to each other because they are connected by common Baltic origin, the political experience of the Soviet period, regional proximity, linguistic similarity of the Baltic languages, the modern mythology of '*latviai-broliukai*' (Latvians-brothers), etc. In those rare instances when the writers choose to display the 'fraternal' Baltic nation in literary representations, it is characterised positively or at least neutrally, and this is determined by the use of earlier character types and constant imagery resources. On the other hand, the familiar imagotypes of 'brothers' is expanded by the status of the Latvians as 'brothers-in-craft', which revises the traditionally established perception of the Latvians as 'employers' and of the Lithuanians as 'servants' or 'hired labourers'. To sum it up, a Lithuanian sees a Latvian – and a Latvian sees a Lithuanian – as a foreigner only at a certain level: they can be given the status of the 'mirror other' or 'one's other' in the category of foreignness, which results from a lower social, linguistic, and cultural barrier. Lithuanians' relation to Latvians is more intimate, more emotional, and more open, and Latvians' attitude, although friendly, is more pragmatic and of a tongue-in-cheek nature. The types of the Lithuanian and the Latvian found in the texts can be conditionally generalised as a juxtaposition of the 'practical individualist Latvian' and the 'emotional collectivist Lithuanian'.

The Poles also play a role in the dynamics of self and *Other*, and they are discussed in the seventh chapter of the monograph, '*Lenkai lietuvių ir latvių veidrodyje – stereotipizacijos triumfas*' (The Poles in the mirror of the Lithuanians and Latvians: the triumph of

stereotypisation). Comparing the participation of the Poles and the Latvians in the imagination and identification model of a Lithuanian, one can say that Lithuanians are associated with Latvians by the paradigmatic relationship of attraction, and with the Poles by that of repulsion. The image of the Pole contains a significantly larger load of otherness and even a suggestion of hostility. One can say that in the imagination of Lithuanians, Latvians, and other foreigners, the Pole is a representative of the worst fame and the lowest reputation. A rethinking of stereotypes demands a critical approach, an intellectual effort, and self-reflection. Meanwhile, the attitude of the emigration writers betrays stagnation: they do not attempt to take a well-argued look, to penetrate, and to grasp, and therefore the Pole is seen, *a priori*, as a negative character. The Poles are neither caricatured nor openly ridiculed (possibly, just mocked), but the main value-related projections of the Pole's image are positioned in the field of negative images: a menial labourer, an alcoholic, foul-mouthed, a lowlife, and a loser. The canonically constant elements in the image of the Poles' character point to them being unreliable and amoral cheats. Only in very rare cases the writers convert the image of Polishness by attributing the meanings of 'one's own' to it. Identification with the Poles most often happens by invoking the meanings of 'neighbourliness' on confessional grounds and/or along historical-political axes.

The (e)migration narratives impart relevance to the comprehensive relationship between climatic conditions, the appearance of the Balts, and the social peculiarities attributed to them outside their homeland. These correlations are analysed in the eighth chapter, 'Baltų veidai: klimato, fizionomikos ir nacionalinio charakterio sąsajos' (Faces of the Balts: links between the climate, physiognomy, and the national character). The imagery of colours, which serves as the starting point for this chapter, offers the opportunity to characterise Lithuanian and Latvian (e)migrants at racial, social, mental, and visual cross-sections. The idea of using colour images in the analysis of emigration prose was prompted by the well-known cartoon 'Rainbow in Poland' showing

several gloomy and thoroughly disappointed individuals against the background of Soviet-style blocks of flats built of reinforced concrete panels gazing at a rainbow of seven different shades of grey. This cartoon is an extremely apt illustration of the theme discussed. A short introduction to the relation between imagology, the theory of climate, and studies on physiognomy is followed by a discussion of the relationship between the climate of the Baltic countries, the mimicry, and personal characteristics of the Balts, the impact of climate on the representation of bodies, and conscious exercising of the physiognomy as a strategy to mimic the *Other*. The longing for winter and snow, recurring metaphors of silence and greyness suggest that the Northern ethos and temperament best typify the national character of the Balts. The moderate character is the consequence of both a harsh climate, overcast and rainy weather, and by what is inscribed and preserved in the nation's genetic, political, and social memory. The chapter ends with an attempt to find answers to the rhetorical question: when will the rainbow regain its colours? The author asserts in-depth mental stability at the level of the self-image and that of the *hetero* image: not before the immigrants from the former Soviet bloc start respecting themselves by recognising a moderate character as an integral part of their own identity; they will not attempt uncritical similarity with the locals; not before the (e) migrants acquire social dignity and move from the dominating status of a menial labourer to the category of social 'whites'; not earlier than in foreign imagination Lithuania and Latvia dissociate themselves from straightforward Soviet allusions and liberate themselves from the reputation of 'a third country', because the current tradition of stereotypical approach betrays imperative social and even racist imagining of the host societies directed at Eastern Europe.

The ninth chapter, 'Moters problema, moteriškumo ir nacionalumo sankirtos' (The woman issue, intersections of femininity and nationality), aims at identifying the shift from the common perception of contemporary (e)migration to the specific experience of female displacement. Based on the methodological lining proposed by

imagology, the first part of this chapter addresses the family as a weakening cell of society, social transformation of stereotypical gender roles and the principle of motherliness, collisions between woman's self-image and the imposed *hetero* image of an Eastern European, which encompasses a whole repertoire of loaded stereotypical images: provocative appearance and the codes of dressing, make-up, and loose behaviour. The focus is placed on the literary works reflecting on the relationship between emigrant mothers and the children they left behind that is often depicted as dramatic, because emigration and leaving one's child unfolds as a project hardly compatible with motherhood, and the absence of parents has a traumatic impact on the psyche of such children. Combined with literary sociology (Vytautas Kavolis), imagology helps to disentangle connections between femininity and nationality. A rupturing relationship with the mother is metonymically interpreted as a weakening relationship of the modern human with his or her geographical homeland. In emigration, the growing distance from one's mother leads to moving away from the nation's self-awareness. Metaphors of a barren female body are interpreted as a model of the emptying homeland; the emigrants' breaking relations with their homeland, tradition, and national projections are reconsidered in the light of the arguments of changing femininity. Among the aspects discussed is not only the theme of babies not born in the homeland but also of the emigrants not being buried here, thus actualising the paradigms of both homeland-birth and homeland-death. The view is voiced that losing the connection with the body of one's homeland rejects the canon of the homeland as *indigenous* place of residence – the in-depth and rooted country and the only country of residence. From the experience of national community, the force of gravitation is pulling, ever stronger, towards the understanding of the atomised body of an individual.

Special emphasis is placed on the original version proposed by the Latvian writer Laima Kota, which is based on the Baltic mythical and cultural world-view the relevance of which lies in rejecting the canon of nationalism as masculinity, which is common in the discourse of

cultural studies. The writer's artistic decision to invoke the figure of the saviour woman-goddess can be seen as a hint that only by adhering to one's deep mythological and cultural codes and by relying on the matriarchal vision of the world common to the Balts it is possible to save the national state from the deluge of globalism and from the threat of dilution of the ethnic identity.

With the theoretical regime of literary imagology turned on, the experiences of collision with racial, sexual, and cultural otherness emerge in literature and they actualise such aspects as provincialism, gender, race, imagined power, white supremacy, and relations of the body and identity. These cross-sections are analysed in the tenth chapter, 'Juodieji baltai svetur, konservatyvumas ir (ne)tolerancija' (The black Balts abroad, conservatism, and (in)tolerance). Analysis of manifestations of conservatism and tolerance adds new traits to the ethnic self-portrait of Lithuanians and Latvians. The books by (e)migrants reveal complex relations between ideological openness and insularity: the desired freedom and inculcated conservatism, the controversy between the values of (rejected) patriotism and (still unrecognised) internationalism, a conflicting relation between stable continuity and interruptions of sexuality and ethnicity. As for marriage to a dark-skinned man or a Muslim, it is not only official legalisation of one's love to a foreigner, but also an ideological penetration by the *Other* into what is inherited, ordinary, and familiar. An important aspect in the context of intolerance is homosexuality, which still triggers a homophobic reaction and is attributed to the category of 'abnormality' and 'second-class', although external attempts are made to integrate a tolerant attitude towards it. A negative representation of homosexuality is especially characteristic of the texts by Lithuanian emigrants. The novels raise the issue that Lithuania does not accept homosexuals as an integral part of its society. Part of the emigrants can be considered 'gender emigrants' banished by discrimination and the discomfort it produces. They leave for multicultural cities where societies have more liberal attitudes and are more tolerant of the diversity of sexual

orientations. The analysed literary examples point to a fairly stable panorama of racial and sexual recognition and belonging, which, although it bears the traits of conservatism, is gradually changing and gravitating in the direction of tolerance.

The twelfth chapter, 'Kalba ir nesusikalbėjimas' (Language and misunderstanding), addresses various phenomena and expressions of the emigrants' language, speech, and linguistic inability. The aim is to determine how an alien linguistic environment affects the identity landscape of the contemporary (e)migrant and how the performative identity of the contemporary mobile subject influences language usage. Attention is given to the additional content that linguistic norms and codes acquire in emigration, to how the inability to identify or express one's thoughts in a non-native language diminishes the individual's (immigrant's) representational power and influence. The logic of power that unfolds through the language is analysed on the basis of the concepts yielded by postcolonialism and imagology, and on the power scheme. The author looks into linguistic paradoxes (*lapsus linguae*) provoked by intersections of languages and into the ways of how the crumbling skills of the native language and changed or distorted personal names can be directly related with cultural integration and assimilation. Another issue discussed in this chapter is how linguistically hybrid sociolects (e.g., the language of immigrant construction workers) or medialects (the language of modern social networks) affect the techniques of the 'literary language' when they become part of literature. Linguistic games and extensions practised by writers can determine genre modifications of literary forms: in playing with language and genre resources, the writers crossbreed different language codes and the planes of low and high styles. Also, language functioning is associated with diverse identity perturbations. Language and heritage, the personal name and identity, linguistic expression and (e)migrant's representational power are closely connected and mutually interacting elements. Unable to speak the languages of the receiving country, the immigrants remain outsiders, the small protagonists of a tragic fate (underdogs) imprisoned

between the linguistic environment they have lost and a new (poorly understood) linguistic surrounding.

The conclusions of the monograph, 'Nuo pokario išėivijos iki šiūolaikinės (e)migracijos' (From the post-war diaspora to contemporary (e)migration) generalise about the differences between the communities of the post-war émigrés and of contemporary emigrants as they appear in literature. Young contemporary emigrants feel cramped not only geographically and culturally; they stretch such boundaries as ethnicity, tolerance, and language, and they give sense to agrarian, natural, and ethnic metaphors and associations in new ways. Post-war writers had a direction and their own setting within which they spoke their own language, were nostalgically oriented to the past, and fought against the loss of their identity; contemporary authors are multi-directional, free, and no longer bound to the territory. They are concerned not about the country's independence, but about their independence from the country. Earlier, being an émigré was a mission and a cultural prestige; a modern emigrant is a trademark devalued by the public opinion, a definition that no longer appeals to influence and a good reputation. Before, an émigré writer was more of a cultural role, and now it is a social part. The post-war émigrés opposed the Soviet reality, because they perceived themselves as an alternative to faceless Soviet masses; meanwhile, post-Soviet emigrants as contemporary literary personages have the pejorative label of the East European attached to them. This is how the negative *hetero* image is established, and eventually it starts affecting the self-image. In general terms, the profiles of the post-war diaspora and of contemporary emigrants can be described by a juxtaposition of enlightened individual vs. menial labourer.

The post-war émigrés attributed themselves to the nation, and the majority of present-day emigrants split off of their own will and reject the tangled network of roots of their ancestors. The theme of roots and uprooted plants in contemporary emigration literature is no longer central, while the act of moving is less traumatising due to the possibility of coming back. In post-war émigré literature,

the characters' identities are unstable and affected by the loss; the present-day characters are not as fragmented and, therefore, the tragic themes of split personality and consciousness (schizophrenia) caused by existential tension, depression, losing one's mind, or suicide as extreme liberation, which would flash in post-war émigré novels as a recurrent paradigm, disappear from the texts of contemporary emigration.

The constant paradigm connecting both waves of emigrants is loss and vulnerability, except that after the war it was spiritual and now it is physical. In the modern era of prosperity and rationality, depiction of the *spiritual* stress, the atrophy of consciousness, and emotional crisis is replaced by that of *physical* sickliness and disability caused by overworking and excessive slavery that carries a tinge of masochism when work substitutes living. Since the past is no longer a structure providing a meaning to identity, one looks back less and less often.

To sum it up, contemporary (e)migration is entirely different, and the literature it inspires is different as well. It is a new form of physical displacement lacking in intellectual content, because its underlying cause – work, economic or academic tourism – is also different. In contemporary literature, sharp conflicts between 'here' and 'there', between sensations of (in)dependence and destabilisation, and cultural and linguistic barriers no longer exist because the movement is free: one can leave, return, change the place of residence and the country of destination any time. Today's (e)migrants are nomads: they have multiple homes and become homeless multiple times. They no longer feel displaced: to them, being elsewhere or the opportunity to wander in the world is a privileged status. It is the classic ethnicity that they find suffocating and claustrophobic. Their movement is often circular and not linear. Since their existential situation is not longer very tense and acute, contemporary emigrant literature is quite often lacking in depth of thought.