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The acceleration of migration and movement

To Salman Rushdie, ‘the distinguishing feature of our time’ is ‘mass migration, mass displacement, globalized finances and industries’ (Rushdie, 2002, 425). This is a formula that has acquired a central position in contemporary literary and cultural studies where the second half of the twentieth century is emphasised as an epoch-making era in which mass migration and global movement has been picking up speed and volume. The conjunction of several historical events are often pointed out as lending credence to the claim. Among these are the massive diasporas caused by the Second World War, the demise of the British empire and the subsequent migration from the former colonies to the West. These events were followed by an accelerated globalisation of the world economy, creating a tremendous, highly mobile international work force and an enormous traffic of illegal immigration as a consequence of the growing maladjustment between the developed and the underdeveloped regions of the globe. Finally, the increased speed and capacity of modern means and modes of communication and transportation, such as international air travel, telephones, satellite TV and the Internet, is seen as having intensified the mobility around the world of people, commodities, capital, information and all sorts of cultural texts.

So, our age is supposed to be an age of unparalleled mobility, migration and border crossing. Reading the literature of globalisation, the whole world appears to be on the move. It is the grand spectacle of a virtual surge of people flowing across the surface of the globe: refugees, exiles, expatriates, international vagrants, guest workers, immigrants, globetrotting travellers and package tourists, wanderers of all kinds.
crisscrossing the planet and all its national, ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic borders. It seems that we are witnessing a massive international and transnational defeat of gravity, an immense uprooting of origin and belonging, an immense displacement of borders, with all the clashes, meetings, fusions and intermixings it entails, reshaping the cultural landscapes of the world’s countries and cities.

Some of these processes have been under way for centuries: since the journeys of discovery and the European imperial expansion, and since the mass migrations to the Americas, the slave trade and the colonial system of indentured labour. The difference between then and now, however, is the scale and the speed of the process. At V. S. Naipaul’s arrival in Britain in 1950 the immigrant population amounted to 25,000. Today it is 4.6 million (French, 2008, 67). Such numbers prompt Edward Said to say that we can see the truth of Paul Virilio and Gilles Deleuze’s notions of ‘nomadic practice’ and ‘counter-habitation’ played out on ‘the political map of the contemporary world’ (see Said, 1994, 395, 402).

Accordingly, the human condition is no longer defined in the humanities by traditional identity markers like nationality, origin, settlement, dwelling, roots, birthplace or bloodlines. Ulrich Beck sees this as a long overdue rectification of a fundamental epistemological error in human thinking where such notions of fixed identities and relations caused ‘the global historical norm of the permeation and intermingling of cultures’ to be ‘falsely portrayed as the exception’ or ‘completely erased from our consciousness’ (Beck, 2004, 68). Now an advanced understanding of what it is to be human is allegedly expressed in the figure of the migrant, ‘the “borderline” figure of a massive historical displacement’, as described by Homi Bhabha, a figure who is supposed to be in a state of uprooted, nomadic, transnational and transcultural fluidity (Bhabha, 1994, 320). ‘We pretend that we are trees and speak of roots’, says Salman Rushdie, ‘Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles. Roots...are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places’ (Rushdie, 1983, 85–6).

Not only is the migrant figure presumed to illuminate the long concealed truth of human nature, exposing how movement is the norm rather than the exception, and how we are fundamentally creatures of movement rather than settlement; the international migrant is also promoted, accordingly, as a figure of late-Enlightenment human liberation. To Said:

It is no exaggeration to say that liberation as an intellectual mission...has now shifted from the settled, established and
domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. (Said, 1994, 403)

Movement and migration, and all the ideas that come with it of the human condition of restlessness and new mobile identity formations, has had a noticeable impact on literary production too. It has even engendered a new type of writing, it is sometimes argued, in the form of a contemporary literature of migration. Said, for instance, sees ‘a splendid cohort of writers that includes such different figures as Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul’ as ‘chroniclers’ of ‘[e]xiles, émigrés, refugees, and expatriates uprooted from their lands’. They ‘[open] further the door first tried by Conrad’ (Said, 2000, xiv). Rushdie too points out how ‘a new novel is emerging, a post-colonial novel, a de-centred, transnational, inter-lingual, cross-cultural novel’ (Rushdie, 2000, 57).

Migration literature as a literary genre

What, then, are the proposed characteristics of this new type of writing? In a recent publication, Migration and Literature, Søren Frank summarises a list of general themes and formal features that may put together a rough image of what contemporary migration literature is imagined to be within this emerging field of study.

Thematically, the migration novel engages with human identity, cultural identity, national identity and globalisation processes, says Frank, in all of which ‘[h]istory and geography become fundamental components’ (see Frank, 2008, 17–19). The characters of migration literature invariably ‘cope with migration’ in different ways, from the experience of migration and the uncertainty of displaced identities as ‘destructive, agonizing, and painful’ to the experience of migration and displacement as ‘productive, fascinating, and appealing’, but in general, the migration novel works from a perspective of ‘rewriting...identities in order to evoke their impure and heterogeneous character’ (Frank, 2008, 18, 19). Stylistically, migration literature ‘not only reflects but also helps create an intratextual migratory world’ in the sense that the ‘enunciatory strategies’ of migration novels ‘reveal a complex play with multiperspectivism, wandering consciousnesses...as well as intratextual border crossings between story and discourse’ (Frank, 2008, 19). The novels are characterised by a ‘plurality of discursive tracks' insofar as
'a variety of discourses and styles are combined into highly complex compositions.' In this way 'discursive borders are constantly relativized and transgressed...intensifying the work’s migratory character' (Frank, 2008, 20). Moreover, ‘the migrant’s experience of several languages’ is supposed to constitute ‘a Bakhtinian heteroglossia ... and an awareness of the world’s high degree of constructedness’. On the whole, language is employed in the migration novel to ‘destabilise doxa as it is constantly set in motion, varied, and impurified through the double awareness of two or more languages’ (Frank, 2008, 20).1

Another distinguishing feature of the contemporary migration novel, which is less explicit in Frank’s typology, and which will be the focal point of this book, is the discursive accentuation of cultural hybridity, which typically manifests itself in tropes and thematisations of the experience of cultural in-betweenness, processes of intermixture, fusions or doublings of two or more cultures or two or more systems of signification. In particular, this book will be concerned with certain assumptions of hybridity as a special mode or language of representation. When seen as a mode or language of representation, hybridity discourse is often purported to generate the kind of complex, multiplicitous, nomadic proliferation of identity and movement of meaning that Frank points to. It is supposed to illuminate reality, individual and collective identity, language and its own act of representation as in a migratory state of uncertainty and constant mutation and metamorphosis.

Although many migration novels appear to invite readings that focus on hybridity – as Mita Banerjee rightly argues, this kind of fiction ‘both caters to and is read in terms of theoretical conceptions of hybridity’ – this may not be relevant for all migration novels (Banerjee, 2002, 302). In Fictions of Migration, Roy Sommer has set himself the brave task of identifying several types of novel within the general notion of migration literature. He proposes the two overall categories of the ‘multicultural’ and the ‘transcultural novel’. Both varieties counter essentialist ideas of homogeneous national cultures, but whereas the former views cultural flux and unbelonging as a problem that deprives the individual of the stability of homeland and rootedness, the transcultural novel is thoroughly anti-essentialist and celebrates uprootedness and cultural fragmentation as liberatory processes which thrust identity into perpetual becoming (see Sommer, 2001, 75–6). Sommer further divides the two overall categories into several subcategories. The ‘multicultural novel’ is subdivided into the ‘migration novel’ (which deals with diasporic experiences as in Caryl Phillips’ The Final Passage), and
the ‘multicultural Bildungsroman’ (which deals with second generation immigrants and their searches for identity within their host cultures as in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* (Sommer, 2001, 75). He subdivides the ‘transcultural’ novel into two types, both of which ‘engage collective identities with an increasing amount of scepticism’: the ‘historical revisionist novel’ (which deconstructs colonial history from a multiperspectival angle as in David Dabydeen’s *A Harlot’s Progress*) (see Sommer, 2001, 76–7, 157, 136, my translation) and the ‘transcultural-hybrid novel’ (exemplified by Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*) (Sommer, 2001, 76–7, my translation). Among these four categories, it is only the last one, the ‘transcultural-hybrid novel’, which explicitly deals with issues of hybridity, while hybridity, according to Sommer, may in fact be playing no significant role in any of the other variations of the migration novel (see Sommer, 2001, 14, 162). In view of that, the ‘transcultural-hybrid’ migration novel is the primary concern of this book.

Among other characteristics, Sommer sees the transcultural-hybrid novel as entailing ‘visions of the dissolution of fixed cultural identities’ and the assertion of ‘cosmopolitan hybridisation’ and ‘ethnic fragmentation’ as counter-models to ‘exclusive national or ethnic identities’ (Sommer, 2001, 49, 48, my translation). Moreover, Sommer sees novels of transcultural hybridity as closely affiliated with Bhabha’s theories of hybridity insofar as they aim for a constant ‘in-betweenness’, a ‘borderless cosmopolitanism’ and assert ‘transnational’ and ‘transitory’ identities (Sommer, 2001, 51, 58, 54, 52, 54, my translation). In a way the transcultural-hybrid novel may be said to intensify the features Frank identifies as characteristic of migration literature: the rewriting of identity as impure, intensified by formal multiperspectivism and transformation, semantic instability and restlessness.

Sommer is right to suggest *The Satanic Verses* and *White Teeth* as prototypes of the transcultural-hybrid novel. To give a few other examples, novels that may be added to the list (at least for the reason that these novels are often celebrated for asserting the characteristics of the transcultural-hybrid novel) include Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands / La Frontera*, most of Rushdie’s other novels, especially *Shame* (1983) and *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995), M. G. Vassanji’s *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* (1992), Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988), Fred Wah’s *Diamond Grill* (1996), in addition to the novels I am going to look at later: Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* (1989), Jamal Mahjoub’s *The Carrier* (1998), and, although in a quite different way, V. S. Naipaul’s *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987).
As much as my book is concerned with suppositions of how transcultural-hybrid novels may intentionally produce hybrid discourses that radically destabilise meaning and identity, I am also concerned with how these features are in many cases conjured up in readings and theorisations of this kind of literature and what values and ideas such readings commonly ascribe to hybridity. Once again, this pertains particularly to the representational capacities that are associated with hybridity, but also to the radical changes of worldviews migration novels are commonly assumed to be capable of generating. In this respect, the book will be particularly critical of celebratory readings of migration literature and transcultural hybridity discourses. Typically such readings propose the contemporary transnational and transcultural migrant as a global hero-figure of almost messianic qualities, as a new kind of fluid, complex, multiple, open, inclusive identity, replacing old identities and cosmologies of stability and belonging with the uncertainty of a liminal position in-between two or several cultures. By virtue of these qualities the transcultural migrant hero is assumed to be endowed with a special, inclusive vision and sensibility, a double-vision that is particularly conducive for the heterogeneous complexity and perspectival uncertainty of novelistic modes of representation. As Andrew Smith puts it, ‘it is the “double perspective” of the migrant that is taken to expose [the] “relativity”’ of all ‘cultural facts and values’ in seeing them as ‘mutable, contested, and shaped in and through storytelling’ (Smith, 2004, 248) – as for instance when André Aciman triumphantly declares that exiles ‘are in permanent transience’ because they ‘see double, feel double, are double’ (Aciman, 1999, 13).

Bakhtin and Deleuze as philosophical underpinnings

When entering the field of migration literature, it is immediately evident that Mikhail Bakhtin and Gilles Deleuze are sources of inspiration for a lot of the notions and ideas in circulation in theorisations and celebratory readings of this kind of fiction. This is not surprising since in Bakhtin’s and Deleuze’s theories there is a strong association of literature with movement, migration and cultural diversity – in fact the very terminology we find in Bakhtin and Deleuze may in itself explain their popularity in present-day studies of the migration novel. Bakhtin speaks of ‘linguistic homelessness’ and of the novel as a cacophony of voices and languages, as a decentred heteroglossia, and Deleuze’s poetico-geographical terms, such as root-networks, nomads, movement, speed and lines of
flight, territories and borders, in-betweennesses and multiplicities; he
speaks of the world as in a state of flux, ‘from the drifting of continents
to the migration of peoples’ (Deleuze, 1993, 64).

To Bakhtin, the novel grew out of an increased international mobility
of trade, travel, immigration and capitalist unrest, which triggered a col-
lusion and interchange of multiple languages and cultures, a ‘thorough-
going polyglossia’ that would diffuse or disintegrate the dominance of
national myth with all its implications of purity, unity and centrality.
Consequently, a multitudinous mingling of voices entered literature as
a reflection of the modern world and, with this new heteroglot novel,
the limited, isolated, monoglot consciousness of national cultures was
replaced by a new cross-cultural and multilingual sense of reality (see
Bakhtin, 1929, 19; 1941, 11, 12; 1935, 358; 1940, 60–1).

To Deleuze the highest aim of literature is to leave, escape, cross the
horizon and enter another life. True literature, the kind of literature
that does not conform to or confirm the codes of the established state
of things, is ‘rhizomatic’ literature. The rhizomatic novel sets things in
motion, puts things, systems and thoughts to flight (see Deleuze and
Parnet, 1977, 36, 74–5). Like Bakhtin’s notion of the heteroglot novel,
the rhizome operates with multiplicity and indeterminacy, violating
any logic of unified meaning or being. Deleuze contrasts the rhizome
with what he calls the root-book. Rather than a central root, the rhi-
zone is a subterranean stem with an irreducible, decentred, intangible,
mazelike net of roots – significantly differing from tree trunks with
their bifurcating branches and common roots. The root-book is an
authoritarian or ‘major literature’ exercising a ‘major usage of language’,
which means that it speaks in the standard, normative tongue: a pure
language, policing the established codes of signification and, with that,
preserving the dominant social order and its stratifications (Deleuze
and Guattari, 1975, 23, see 26–7). In short, like the Bakhtinian ideas of
national myth, the root-book involves a strong territorialisation of the
dominant worldview, confirming doxa.2

Like Bakhtin, Deleuze also associates subversive multiplicity with
the crossing and disintegration of cultural and linguistic borders. With
Guattari he famously speaks of a ‘minor literature’ written by migrants,
immigrants and minorities, living in a language which is not their own
(see Deleuze and Guattari, 1975, 19). Minor literature practices a non-
standard language usage that deterritorialises the constant, fixed and
fixating norms and rules of the major tongue. Minor literature is rhi-
zomatic. It involves a linguistic deviance, an impoverished vocabulary,
an improper use of grammar, an unadorned, minimalistic style, which
turns it into a sign machine that avoids closure, that keeps pushing language to its limits, breaking down signification and multiplying meaning potentials. Minor literature is thus supposed to radically disrupt the purity and homogenising unity of major cultures.

What Paul de Man says about Bakhtin is true of Deleuze as well. It goes for both of them that they are ‘bound to exercise a powerful attraction on a type of literary criticism that stems from a rebellion against the constraints of transcendental and monological systems’ (de Man, 1983, 102). This is certainly the case when they are employed in celebratory readings and theorisations of migration literature. When it comes to the assumptions of hybridity as the specific mode of representation that I have referred to as a central concern in this book, they are often expressed in a Bakhtinian or Deleuzian language. Roger Bromley, for instance, sees Bakhtin’s ideas of ‘double-voiced discourse’, his ‘merging of voices’, as analogous with ‘Said’s “double vision”’ and as a ‘means of challenging the oppositional presumptions of border, division, exclusionary thought and absolute difference’, and he sees Bhabha’s notions of ‘a “space in-between”’, ‘indeterminacy’ and ‘the interstitial’ as examples of Deleuze’s ‘nomad thought’, ‘against boundary, limit and demarcation’ (Bromley, 2000, 122, 2, 100). Likewise, Nikos Papastergiadis says that:

Bakhtin’s attention to the mixture of languages within a text... demonstrates a new level of linking the concept of hybridity to the politics of representation. The language of hybridity... always undoes the priorities and disrupts the singular order by which the dominant code categorises the other. (Papastergiadis, 1997, 267, emphasis added)

And Said speaks in Deleuzian terms when he calls for:

an investment neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy. (Said, 1994, 337)

The ‘migrant turn’ in post-colonial studies

As it happens, hybridity theory and the characteristics of the transcultural-hybrid novel, as identified by Sommer and expressed in the common use in the field of Bakhtin’s and Deleuze’s poetics, have had an enormous impact on post-colonial theory and the ways in which transcultural migration literature is commonly read. In fact,
a certain euphoria has been developing since, roughly, the late 1980s when we could almost speak of a ‘migrant turn’ occurring shortly after the establishment of post-colonialism as an academic area of study. At that time the thematic and theoretical momentum in post-colonial studies shifted from the insurgent politics of decidedly anti-colonial writings and readings to the discourses of hybridity and global migration. That is, the study of the literature of the anti-colonial struggle and the emerging national literatures of former colonies gave way to the celebration of migration, bordercrossing and hybridity as central to the explanation of the post-colonial experience. Roger Bromley adeptly summarises this central academic conflict by contrasting Homi Bhabha and Aijaz Ahmad:

What is at stake in the argument between Ahmad and Bhabha is...a dispute between the anti-colonial intellectuals who remain in the colonised space to engage in an ongoing internal struggle based on class, caste, gender and ‘mentality’, and the globalising, diasporic, post-colonial intellectuals who choose to move to the metropolis and, arguably, engage in a post hoc celebration of their situation as somehow symptomatic of the wider migrant experience. (Bromley, 2000, 102)

Over the years, the ‘migrant turn’ has in fact become so successful that the very term ‘post-colonial’ is often used as a synonym for transcultural migration literature and analysis, altogether pushing the anti-colonial aspect back into the periphery. As Ella Shohat observed in 1992, we have been witnessing a ‘foregrounding of “hybridity” and “syncretism” in post-colonial studies' that centre on ‘the multiplicity of identities and subject positionings which result from displacements, immigrations and exiles’ (Shohat, 1992, 108). This is a literature and a theory, she says, that supposes a ‘going beyond anti-colonial nationalist theory’, positing ‘no clear domination’ and ‘no clear opposition’ (Shohat, 1992, 99–101).

Seen from the point of view of transcultural migration literature, anti-colonial literature had a legitimate purpose in liberating colonised subjects from their immediate oppressors, but its discourse is regarded as counterproductive in the long run. Anti-colonial discourse is seen not as an assertive discourse, but as a reactive discourse animated by the political anger of the slave against the master. It is seen as a discourse of ressentiment, in Nietzschean terms, not a creative and self-transformative will to power, but a will to power over another: anti-colonial discourse is
seen as the mere reversal of fixed hierarchies and relations of power and, as such, incapable of ever yielding a discourse that can liberate us from a simple politics of retaliation and binary structures – the replacement of one authoritarian or major culture by another.

This is where the post-colonial theory of hybridity and readings of the migrant hero are assumed to offer something else. In contrast to being steeped in the politics of reactive forces, the alleged wonders of transcultural migration literature and its transgressive discourse as a special mode of representation are supposed to set the post-colonial apart, entirely, from partisan agendas, offering a new pro-creative vision of the world that defies the polarised positions of both master and slave, West and East, of imperialism and anti-colonial nationalism. It enunciates the will to a productive third space of hybridity where the binarisms of cultural politics are suspended altogether. As Laura Chrisman put it in her critical review of post-colonialism in 1995, ‘the term “post-colonial”... occludes or erases the overtly political dynamics contained in the term “anti-colonial”’ with the supposed result of delivering post-colonialism ‘from the messy business of political alignment and definition’ (Chrisman, 1995, 210). A year before that, Benita Parry had pointed to how ‘“difference” has been diverted by a postmodernist criticism as a theoretical ruse to establish a neutral, ideology-free zone’ (Parry, 1994/2002, 134).

In line with critics like Shohat, Chrisman and Parry, this book is particularly critical of readings of migration literature that make such sweeping claims for the representational capacities of post-colonial migration and hybridity. It is critical of the suppositions that a hybrid and migratory mode of representation transcends all centralisations of meaning and binary structures or circumvents any kind of alignment or ideological affiliation. It is critical of what Shohat summarises as the ‘“in-between” framework’ of hybrid and migratory discourse: its ‘fleeting quality’, its ‘dizzying multiplicity of positionailities’, its ‘globalizing gesture’, its ‘slippery political significations’ and ‘depoliticizing implications’ (see Shohat, 1992, 107, 104, 99–101). Secondly, the book is sceptical of how celebratory readings tend to valorise difference, mixture, multiplicity and transgressive movement while more or less uncritically renouncing notions of cultural sameness, coherence, continuity and rootedness. Readings and theorisations that build on such celebratory presumptions typically trumpet a ‘rhetoric of wandering’, as Tim Brennan put it already in 1989, which is ‘rife with allusions to the all-seeing eye of the nomadic sensibility’ (Brennan, 1989, 2).
As an alternative to a celebratory or triumphalist approach to migration literature and transcultural hybridity as a language of representation, the book will offer a critical reading practice pivoting around the following objectives (which will all be explained in more detail in the remainder of this introduction):

1. Hybridity will be read not as an exceptional language of discursive transgression and liberation, but as a language that has in many cases become dominant and normative.
2. Accordingly, the book will identify how the supposed uncertainty and multiplicity of hybridity is contaminated by forces of discursive centralisation, significantly reducing its proposed radicality and destabilising capacity.
3. It will note how hybridity as a language of representation is often infected by hyperbolic tendencies which causes the creation of new centralisations of meaning as well as politicised and hierarchising dualisms, for instance between the rootless and the rooted, the migratory and the sedentary, stillness and movement, hybridity and purity, heteroglossia and monoglossia.
4. It will also engage critically with a central binary opposition implied in migration and hybridity discourse between being and becoming, which casts the hybrid, nomadic and heteroglot as the only force of change as opposed to a supposed unchanging sameness of the settled and the rooted.
5. Finally, the book will aim to explore the dynamic and complex readings that may arise if we dialecticise the binaries in transcultural hybridity discourse between the nomadic and the settled, the hybrid and the pure, the heteroglot and the monoglot and between the supposedly discontinuous difference of becoming and the continuous sameness of being.

Because of the way in which their ideas of literature seem directly or indirectly to sponsor many of the suppositions of celebratory readings of migration literature, Bakhtin and Deleuze provide a lot of the theoretical scaffolding of the book. Yet, the book will not simply refute Bakhtin and Deleuze and their ideas of literature and literary modes of representation. While I will engage critically with the often poorly digested, run-of-the-mill jargon that characterises the deployment of Bakhtin and Deleuze in the field, I will also try to bring forth other sides to their theories that may pave the way for richer and more nuanced readings of transcultural-hybrid migration literature (in accordance with point five).
Re-engaging hybridity discourse and theory

In 1994 Bhabha thought that what was most urgently needed was ‘a translational “migrant” knowledge of the world’ (Bhabha, 1994, 306). It is safe to say that since then, ‘a translational “migrant” knowledge of the world’ has, in fact, become the norm. Ideas of cultural heterogeneity, flux, relativity, etcetera, now appear to reign supreme over ideas of cultural homogeneity, not only in the field of post-colonialism but in academia writ large. Apparently, this was already happening at the time when Bhabha was writing *The Location of Culture*. A year before Bhabha’s book, in 1993, Stuart Hall observed a paradoxical centring of marginality: ‘migranthood’, he said, has taken centre stage, has become ‘the representative modern experience!’ and as a consequence ‘more and more people now recognize themselves in the narratives of displacement’ (Hall, 1993, 115, 114, 117). However, regardless of when exactly a ‘migrant knowledge of the world’ was taking centre stage, the fact that it did is a mixed blessing: it means, on the one hand, as Eva Hoffman points out, that ‘we have come to value...uncertainty, displacement, the fragmented identity’ (Hoffman, 1999, 44). On the other hand, ‘[n]omadism and diasporism have become fashionable terms in intellectual discourse’ and ‘[w]ithin this conceptual framework, exile becomes, well, sexy, glamorous...’ (Hoffman, 1999, 44). In other words, the downside of their success is that concepts like hybridity, nomadism, diaspora, heteroglossia and so on, have become buzzwords in cultural and literary studies, along with their rise to dominance, and in this way they have come to be taken for granted as common sense, as terms of truth obfuscating the need of further reflection. Sometimes it seems we are facing an almost automatic valorisation of hybridity. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse observes, since it ‘has become an ordinary experience’ and ‘crossovers are now common in all spheres of life’, ‘[h]ybridity is fast becoming a routine, almost trite point of reference in studies of global culture that speak of the “mongrel world” and the “hybridity factor”’ (Pieterse, 2001, 237, 236). Spivak goes even further. Having become a privileged and routinised mode of conceptualisation, ‘triumphalist hybridism’ oils the wheels of ‘the ideological state apparatus’ (Spivak, 1999, 319n.).

Hybridity has been subject to a lot of criticism, with good reason. It is accused of elitism, proposed by ‘a new cultural class of cosmopolitans’ (Pieterse, 2001, 225), just as it is accused of being an extension of the free market discourse of late global capitalism. As Hutnyk expresses it, ‘the cultural effervescence of hybridity...facilitates corporate multiculture’ and it ‘lulls us to sleep’ as a ‘panacea for putting up
with socio-economic disparities’ (Hutnyk, 2005, 97). Yet, I agree with Pieterse, and a critic like Marwan Kraidy, that a lot of this criticism takes the form of an unconstructive ‘antihybridity backlash’ which, as Kraidy puts it, ‘rests on a priori dismissal at the expense of serious engagement’ (Kraidy, 2005, 70). To Pieterse, the backlash involves ‘wholesale repudiations of hybridity thinking’ where hybridity is seen ‘at best as academic nonsense, at worst as a pernicious affirmation of hegemonic power’ (Pieterse, 2001, 224, 221). Secondly, in addition to the downright refutation of hybridity theory, Pieterse identifies an unfortunate tendency in the backlash to revive outdated national romantic ideas of identity: the ‘baffling’ revival of ‘19th-century parochialism’ re-imagining ‘an ethnically and culturally compartmentalized world’ (Pieterse, 2001, 221).

The critical re-engagement with hybridity discourses in this book is not just another hybridity backlash. Rather, like Pieterse, I propose a ‘critical hybridity’ (Pieterse, 2001, 239). I intend to critically engage with what Kaplan has referred to as the ‘[u]nexamined ideologies of travel and displacement [that] pervade the burgeoning literature of postmodern geographies’ (Kaplan, 1996, 146), not by rejecting hybridity altogether but by finding new ways in which we may read hybridity in transcultural migration novels that avoid both the triumphant hybridity hype and the of parochial nineteenth-century notions of ethnic and cultural purity that Pieterse is concerned about. Like Kraidy, to whom hybridity is ‘the cultural logic of our globalisation’, I aim for a ‘productive corrective to some of the excesses of hybridity theory’ without turning essentialist (Kraidy, 2005, xii, x). The short version of my purpose in this regard is that I want to show that value-laden conceptualisations of hybridity, movement, migration, difference, pluralism and rootlessness are as problematic as emotive conceptualisations of purity, stillness, origin, sameness, oneness, roots and homeness. We must work against any tendency to a singular grammar in all of such terms.

What Kraidy refers to as the ‘excesses of hybridity theory’, I would refer to as a certain hyperbole within the field of migratory hybridity or a rhetorical exaggeration of its central concepts, tropes and metaphors: nomadic movement and metamorphosis, heterogeneity and multiplicity as conceptual perspectives from which rooted and settled identities are seen as fixed and backward-looking. Hyperbole serves purposes of persuasion. It is efficient in counter-political contexts, but it simplifies the world, it does not grasp the world’s complexity. Hence, and in spite of its campaign against binary structures of thinking, the hyperbolic tendencies of hybridity discourse cause it to create its own dichotomies. Rushdie does so, for instance, when he suggests two ways
of perceiving cultures (of which he thinks the latter is the right one): we can choose to see cultures as *either* ‘separate, pure, defensible entities’ *or* as ‘mélange, adulteration, impurity, pick’n’mix’ (Rushdie, 1999, 297). In the field of migration literature dichotomies not only tend to be established between the hybrid and the pure, but also between movement and stillness, the migratory and the settled, rootlessness and rootedness, heterogeneity and homogeneity, difference and sameness, becoming and being.

For that reason, the first move in my critical reengagement with the discourse of transcultural hybridity is to highlight and counter its dichotomising tendencies as they come across in theory as well as in readings of migration literature and in the discursive engineering of transcultural-hybridity novels themselves. I do not suggest that we transcend such binarism or search for other conceptualisations of a third space as I do not believe that we will ever be able to, or should, completely rinse our thinking from contrasts and binarisms. Rather, the second move in my critical reengagement with discourses of hybridity is to bring together the dichotomous poles they operate with, not to fuse these poles in a transcendentally balanced third space but to make them enter into an asymmetric dialectic in which each side of the binary is contaminated by the other but in an uneven fashion. Within this asymmetric dialectics, dichotomous poles cease from serving as states or *conditions*, being reactivated, instead, as dynamic *forces*. For instance, the implication of a finite *condition* or a state of self-sufficiency in nouns like ‘monoglossia’ or ‘heteroglossia’ or ‘homogeneity’ or ‘heterogeneity’ is replaced by the dynamic infinity of the present participle (or adjectival) when we start speaking of heterogenising and homogenising forces. Or as noted by Tabish Khair, who is inspirational for this line of thinking:

> hybridization is not the same as hybrid. Hybridization is an active term that connotes an on-going process, while the hybrid... is a static description. The hybrid *is*; it is not the endless process of *becoming*. (Khair, 2001, 90)

Notably, in my optics, each force, of heterogenisation or homogenisation, is contaminated by the other within a culture or discourse or novel. A grammatical-semantic manoeuvre like that may altogether result in other, more complex readings of migration literature than a one-sided celebration of hybridity, heteroglossia, rhizome and the nomadic as *conditions*, which leaves us but with the option of stating whether a work or
a discourse is hybrid or not, or heteroglot or not, whether it is a rhizome or a root-book.

What is most urgently needed today, as I see it, is therefore not an exclusive "migrant" knowledge of the world, countering an exclusive sedentary knowledge of the world. Rather, it is a dynamic 'knowledge' that dialogises or dialecticises migration and dwelling, movement and stillness, the nomadic and the sedentary, heterogeneity and homogeneity, heteroglossia and monoglossia, the minor and the major, for example. In this regard, I will show how Bakhtin and Deleuze themselves offer more complex approaches to the concepts we commonly encounter in the widespread short-hand deployment of their most popular terms. For instance, I will show how Bakhtin's notions of discursive centripetality and centrifugality offer exactly the kind of epistemological conversion of heteroglossia and monoglossia from pure conditions to dynamic forces by rearticulating heterogeneity as a force of centrifugality and homogeneity as a force of centripetality.

Hybridity itself is a highly problematic term in this connection. It is used haphazardly in the field of migration literature to denote or connote states of both cultural fusion and multiplication, or amalgamation and doubleness. Robert Young puts it this way: 'hybridity is itself an example of hybridity, of a doubleness that both brings together, fuses, but also maintains separation' (Young, 1995, 22). Thus, there is a central contradiction (which largely goes unnoticed in readings of transcultural-hybrid migration literature) between, on the one hand, the fusion of cultures that is signalled by hybridity and, on the other, the cultural expansion and doubling, or the cultural heterogeneity, that is also often associated with it.

Lisa Lowe has tried to explain the simultaneity of fusion and doubleness in hybridity. She points out that hybridity and heterogeneity 'appear to be synonymous in their relationship to that of "identity"', that is, they are both opposed to homogeneity, sameness and oneness. Yet, Lowe goes on to say that hybridity and heterogeneity can also be precisely distinguished (Lowe, 1991, 138). She contrasts hybridity with all kinds of notions of cultural purity, with 'cultural "essence"', while she sees heterogeneity as a contrast to the erasure of cultural difference by the sameness of cultural assimilation and absorption (see Lowe, 1991, 146). In this book hybridity and heterogeneity form a pair insofar as they both signal a crisis of identity and homogeneity. When consciously championed in migration literature, they involve assertions of difference in opposition to the idea of a homogeneous sameness, or single-voiced discourse, whether this be difference understood as
hybrid uncertainty or difference understood as heterogeneous multiplicity. Notably, I see hybridity and heterogeneity as interconnected in the sense that hybridity plays host to heterogeneity; that is, hybridity contains a multiplicity of voices and languages that clash and fuse – like a ‘dialogized heteroglossia’, to borrow a term from Bruhn and Lundquist (Bruhn and Lundquist, 2001, 30). Without an appreciation of a certain degree of heterogeneity within hybridity, we would actually lose sight of the fact that there are more than one language or voice or cultural element at play in the hybrid discourse or culture, and, consequently, hybridity would appear as an integrated oneness or sameness. In this regard, a crucial concern in the book’s theoretical position is the relative strength or weakness of the visibility of heterogeneity within the hybrid discourse or cultural text – the visibility of difference as opposed to the visibility of sameness.

Within the analytical framework of this book, hybridity itself may therefore be seen as a force of homogenisation as well as a force of heterogenisation, all according to the relative strengths of the forces of difference and sameness within the hybridising constellation or discourse or gaze. In my optics, Khair’s notion of hybridisation (as opposed to the ‘hybrid’) may either be governed by a centripetal movement towards cultural sameness and homogeneity or a centrifugal movement towards cultural difference and heterogeneity, (directly, by deliberate design, or indirectly, by forces superior to any conscious intent).

Centrifugal and centripetal forces in hybridity discourse

As already pointed out, a particular concern in this book is the presumption of migratory hybridity as a particular language of representation. Monika Fludernik says about Bhabha in this regard that he shares Bakhtin’s interest in ‘the destabilization of authority... with the politics of narration’ and, like Bakhtin, he envisions this through ‘the splitting of the authorial voice’ (Fludernik, 1998, 21). However, whereas Bhabha routinely splits the ‘authorial voice’ of ‘imperial-colonial discourse’ (Fludernik, 1998, 21), he never splits the voices of authors or narrators of migration texts, which he takes for granted as naturally hybrid, fragmented, heteroglot and therefore overtly and successfully split and decentralised already. Sceptical of this alleged achievement, my concern is the splitting of the representing or ‘authorial’ voice in transcultural migration literature – the splitting of the voice of the supposedly heterogeneous, transcultural migrant author, narrator or character, who is consciously and deliberately laying claim to a highly ambiguous and
prolific discourse or mode of representation, or, at least, commonly celebrated in that way by many readers.

Bhabha suggests that hybridity ‘causes the dominant discourse to split along the axis of its power to be representative, authoritative’ (Bhabha, 1994, 162). What happens if the ‘representative, authoritative’ voice or discourse of hybridity is split? When Bhabha splits the ‘dominant discourses’ of colonialism or imperialism, texts that intend to be pure or to signal purity turn out to be actually heteroglot, subverted by their immanent différance, by all the significations they wish to exclude. The other way round, I propose to show that if we split the ‘dominant discourses’ in post-colonial literatures of the ‘transcultural-hybrid’ kind, discourses or texts that intend to be hybrid and heteroglot, or signal these qualities, actually turn out to be affected by forces of discursive centralisation, by forces of homogeneity and centripetality. The hybrid and heteroglot text does not return to a pure monoglossia as a pure monoglossia is impossible. Rather, asymmetric forces of centrifugality and centripetality cause meaning in its general discursive economy to be either gravitating towards a monoglossia or levitating towards a heteroglossia, depending on which forces come across as the strongest in the text, or in the context. In this respect, a substantial part of the analyses of the three novels that follow the book’s theoretical part will consist in identifying homogenising and heterogenising forces within the discursive economies of their languages of hybridity.

From another angle, and this is the second major concern in the book, the splitting of the migrant’s voice or vision, or the splitting of the hybrid discourse in a migration novel, does not lead to a singular becoming (which would presuppose a static being of the rooted, the homogeneous and the monoglot); rather, it leads to several speeds of becoming – once again depending on the relative strengths of the forces of homogenisation and heterogenisation in the discourse or text.

The question of becoming

To sum up, migration literature, as seen from the point of view of a celebratory reading, has two overlapping capacities in its mode of representation. Firstly, transcultural hybridity literature is seen as dis-establishing all kinds of discursive monopolisations of power, whether Western imperialism or anti-colonial nationalism; secondly, the doing away with ressentiment and partisan discourses in the novel, the doing away with binaries and locked systems of representation and the act of putting meaning to flight, is envisioned as triggering new lines of
becoming, or new lines of change, that are devoid of all power games of cultural sameness hitherto – hence all the references in the field to transition, transformation, metamorphosis, mutation, flux and the defeat of stability and certainty.

Deleuze’s lines of flight means that you put something to flight, that you put a system to flight in order to see something new or make something new happen: ‘To fly is to trace a line, lines, a whole cartography. One only discovers worlds through a long, broken flight’ (Deleuze, 1987, 36, emphasis added). Correspondingly, migration literature is often read as offering the discovery of something new; as Andrew Smith says, post-colonial studies treat migration ‘generally in terms of its epiphanies: new insight, new knowledge, a new understanding of the relativity of things’ (Smith, 2004, 257, emphases added). Bhabha, for instance, in the essay entitled ‘How Newness Enters the World’ (which is a title he takes from a recurrent catchphrase in The Satanic Verses), sees hybridity as ‘an empowering condition...insurgent and ironic’ and its third space of the in-between as full of ‘innovative energy’ (Bhabha, 1994, 324, 315, emphases added).

To Bhabha, ‘the massive historical displacement’ of ‘postcolonial migration’ is primarily ‘a “translational” phenomenon’ (Bhabha, 1994, 320). Hence, he sees the ‘“newness” of migrant or minority discourse’ as a newness that is brought about by ‘cultural translation’. It is the ‘indeterminate temporality of the in-between’ of translation, its ‘unstable element of linkage’, which ‘has to be engaged in creating the conditions through which “newness comes into the world”’ – ‘the constant state of contestation and flux caused by differential systems of social and cultural signification’ (Bhabha, 1994, 326, 325). This newness is first and foremost to be understood as a movement and transmutation of meaning and ways of understanding the world, very similar to Deleuze’s ideas of putting a system to flight. Bhabha states that translation creates:

that movement of meaning...that, in the words of de Man ‘puts the original in motion to decanonical it, giving it the movement of fragmentation, a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile’. (Bhabha, 1994, 326)

Secondly, by ‘viola[ting] the system of naming’, the ‘migrant discourse’ sets the material world afloat, causes it to change, to become something else (see Bhabha, 1994, 322).

This something else is most often envisioned as a new dawn of cultural fragmentation and multiplicity and permanent exilic uprooting
as a new mode of living – replacing any rootedness in national or ethnic collectivities. Hence, the newness offered by ‘migrant discourse’ is often expressed as the opening up of our minds and self-perceptions towards a ‘new transnational world’ which is a ‘new society...characterised by mass migrations’ where ‘new hybrid and transitional identities are emerging’ (Gomez-Peña quoted in Bhabha, 1994, 313). It is no less than the becoming of ‘a new international culture’, ‘a new international space’, ‘the movement of a migrant history’ into ‘an interstitial future’, into ‘the languages and landscapes of migration and diaspora’, into ‘a metropolitan world “becoming minority”’, ‘a postcolonial, migrant community in-difference’ (Bhabha, 1994, 327, 335, 337, see also 306–11). And it is third space narratives, like Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, that ‘extend[ ] our senses’ beyond ‘the Heim of the national culture and its unisonant discourse’ (Bhabha, 1994, 236, 312, see also 328). Appositely, a migrant character in *The Satanic Verses*, who is speaking on behalf of those who have ‘crossed the oceans’ and ‘crossed the skies’, announces that:

we are here to change things...We have been made again: but I say that we shall also be the ones to remake this society, to shape it from the bottom to the top. (Rushdie, 1988, 414)

This book looks at how the triggering of this new becoming is often ascribed to the special migrant vision mentioned above, the way a hybrid double-vision, or ‘stereoscopia’, is frequently proposed at the centre of the transcultural-hybrid novel enunciated by the migrant author, the narrator or a central character. But I will also ask the question of *how fast* this new becoming is; at what speed does this transcultural change or this newness happen? In Bhabha and in celebratory readings of migration novels one certainly gets the impression of an assumed *immediacy* of change and of an accelerated speed of becoming across the planet – an unquestioned supposition of migrant and hybrid becomings as accelerated change and a spectacular rhizomatic sprouting. As Banerjee puts it, migration and uncertainty are spoken of in the post-colonial field as ‘the epitome of a profound sense of rupture’ (Banerjee, 2002, 70, emphasis added), not a slow transition or a slow becoming, but a *rupture*, a becoming with the sudden speed of discontinuous disruption. My book will question the assumptions of such heady transnational or transcultural becomings. It will offer ways in which we can speak of several speeds of becoming instead, of slow becomings as well as fast. But before I explain a bit more about *how* I
will do this, I would like to further clarify what I mean by ‘different speeds of becoming’, which is an expression that will crop up many times along the way.

When I speak of different speeds of becoming, it refers primarily to the speed with which old systems of thinking are replaced by new ones (as in the above where a thinking of cultural sameness is replaced by a thinking of cultural hybridity, difference and heterogeneity). To put it in another way, it refers to how fast our recognition of something (our ability to confirm our instructed cognition of a thing or reconfirm a supposed unchanging sameness of something) is replaced by a re-cognition of that thing (a readjustment of our ways of viewing it). The further implication of this is that new perceptions or new cognitions of the world cause us to refurbish the world and our places in it. Or, to put it differently, our re-cognition of the world is assumed to cause a material reshaping of the world: a reshaping of self-perception results in self-alteration and a reshaping of the collective imaginary results in wider material or socio-cultural alterations. This is what Stuart Hall means when he says that ‘representation is conceived as entering the construction of things; and thus culture is...as important as the economical or material “base” in shaping social subjects and historical events’ (Hall, 1997, 5–6).

So, ‘speeds of becoming’ refers principally to the speed with which old recognitions of a culture through old, habitual systems of thinking are replaced by re-cognitions of that culture through new frames of mind, discourses or modes of representation. How fast is this offered re-cognition, then, how radical is it, how radically does it deviate from the discourses and modes of representation it purports to disrupt in order to facilitate a new cultural or material becoming? As regards the novel, it is a question of what the transcultural hybrid novel can do to our habitual recognition of the world. To Deleuze the novel is a sign machine that produces certain effects on the reader, and, in a wider scope, on the cultures in which it is read. As Bruce Baugh explains it, to Deleuze, ‘the primary function of language is to affect others’ and the novel’s language use is supposed to generate forces that have profound ‘effects on the ideas and feelings of the reader’ and ‘in their best instances, readers are able to put these forces to work to overcome the inhibiting and restrictive effects of the dominant social forces’ (Baugh, 2000, 49, 34). Rushdie sees the novel in this way, as essentially a mode of inquiry, which ‘by asking extraordinary questions, opens new doors in our minds’ (Rushdie, 1990b, 423). The question remains of how widely flung these doors are and how swiftly.
Fast and slow speeds of becoming: organic and intentional hybridity

The argument of this book is in concert with Bhabha as concerns the idea that it is cultural translation that performs the midwifery of bringing cultural newness into the world. However, as opposed to Bhabha, I will not only be speaking of the possibility of accelerated becomings; I will also be speaking of very slow becomings. Unlike Bhabha, who sees ‘the performativity of translation as the staging of cultural difference’ (Bhabha, 1994, 325, emphasis added), I see translation first and foremost as an operation of incorporating difference into a structure of sameness, as a domestication of difference that turns a foreign text into a text of one's own, whereby difference is constantly effaced within the continuity of a culture's sameness – just as a language like English continues to be English although it has always been hybridised by incessantly incorporating foreign words into its vocabulary. The speed with which a transcultural discourse is capable of transforming, say, a national host culture then depends on how radically sameness is discontinued, or how much difference or foreignness survives the cultural translation that takes place, how visible foreignness remains despite the process of domestication, how much foreignness is ultimately allowed to redefine what the culture in question is. The greater the centrifugal or heterogenising force of the transformative discourse, the greater the potential speed of change, and, the other way round, the greater the centripetal or homogenising force of the transformative discourse, the slower the speed of change.

In this regard my book operates with two kinds of hybridity. Following in the footsteps of scholars like Robert Young and Pnina Werbner, I will propose that we employ at least two forms of hybridity in our reading of transcultural migration literature: organic hybridity and intentional hybridity (both terms are taken from Bakhtin). Organic hybridity constitutes the unconscious processes by which difference is incorporated into a culture which causes it to change slowly over long stretches of time, as in the incorporation of foreign words into a language. Intentional hybridity, on the other hand, is a highly conscious form of hybridity, a conscious highlighting of or affirmation of hybridity, as in Bhabha's theorisation of hybridity and as in the explicit foregrounding of hybridity as a force of difference in the transcultural-hybrid migration novel. Whereas organic hybridity is slow speed, it follows that intentional hybridity is, at least, intended as proposing a high-speed epistemological and ontological transformation. It deliberately aims to disrupt
sameness and forces of centripetality or homogenisation by asserting the centrifugal forces of difference, foreignness, heterogeneity, always resisting their disappearance through assimilation. As Bhabha expresses it, ‘I want to foreground the “foreignness” of cultural translation’ (Bhabha, 1994, 325, emphasis added).

However, as much as intentional hybridity intends to assert difference and foreignness, I find that when we split its voice, dissect its mode of representation, it is still contaminated by forces of sameness or caught up in the processes of organic hybridity, the processes of domesticating difference, which causes a far slower speed of becoming than initially advertised, signalled or envisioned. In this way we may note how a complex continuum between intentional and organic hybridity emerges, the asymmetry of forces of centrifugal heterogeneity and centripetal homogeneity effecting various speeds of becoming, from the gravitational slowness of organic hybridity to the levitating acceleration of becoming in the forms of intentional hybridity that most successfully accomplish a release of difference.5

It is my conviction that with the differentiation between organic and intentional hybridity, we can make a decisive step away from the simple dichotomies of hybridity versus purity, heterogeneity versus homogeneity and becoming versus being. Once again we avoid any implications of states and conditions by turning time, speed and processuality into primary parameters in our thinking of hybridity. Within this scenario the assertion of post-colonial hybridity is no longer to be read as a separate opposite to cultural purity, but as a hybrid becoming within a dynamic space of a slower, organic hybridity.

Since the concepts of intentional and organic hybridity remain rather poorly developed, explained in depth neither by Bakhtin, Young nor Werbner, a great deal of the theoretical part of the book is dedicated to a proposition of how we may understand these terms and their dynamics. Deleuze will be employed in this respect, along with a few other scholars, to flesh out the ways in which we can speak of hybridity in terms of different speeds of becoming in deliberate releases of difference and organic domestications of difference.

**Choice of literary works**

The book has two major parts. After Part I, which theorises organic and intentional hybridity, difference, sameness and speeds of becoming, I will move on to analyse three migration novels, engaging the theoretical perspectives I introduce and develop in Part I. The three novels are,
as mentioned, Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989), Jamal Mahjoub's *The Carrier* (1998) and V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987). These novels have been chosen for their combined inclusion of migratory experiences from across the world to reflect the global nature of migration literature: together they traverse India and the United States, the Middle East and Denmark, and, finally, the Caribbean and England. All three novels deal with the movement of ‘the Other’ to the West, in fact to the rural heartlands of the Western nations that play host to the migrant protagonists of the novels.

In each of the novels I will look at the relations between migrants and the cultures to which they migrate and, in this respect, the speeds of becoming that are ascribed to the central heroes’ hybridising and heterogenising gazes, the speeds with which they are assumed to metamorphose, transform and recaulk the sameness and the traditional recognition of their host cultures. In this respect the primary settings of the works are important. The rural heartlands in all three novels seem to represent the last stronghold of a homogeneous national identity that, apparently, has disappeared from the metropolitan centres in the three novels (New York, Copenhagen and London).

However, one of the most important criteria of selection is that the three novels represent various degrees and uses of, and indeed perspectives on, transcultural-hybridity discourse. Thus intentional hybridity comes across in very different forms in the three novels as do the speeds of becoming. Whereas the hybridising and heterogenising discourses in *Jasmine* and *The Carrier* are employed to confront or deterritorialise the sameness of the host culture in celebration of transcultural lines of becoming, the migratory language in *The Enigma of Arrival* is far less triumphant. Both Mukherjee and Mahjoub employ an explicit discourse of in-betweenness and discontinuity, of a stereoscopic, third-eye-view of the world, that is supposed to release the centrifugal forces of difference against all forces of sameness, while the discourse in Naipaul’s novel acknowledges the continuity of the homogenising forces of identity formation in rural England. Hence, in *The Enigma of Arrival* all the centrifugal forces of difference released by the arrival of the migrant are close to being swallowed up entirely by a local economy of cultural sameness. In a way Naipaul attempts a non-intense hybridising gaze or discourse or mode of representation which shows that intentional hybridity need not only be a highly centrifugal form of hybridity. In fact Naipaul’s novel may be read as a celebration not of a highly conscious hybridity, but of the centripetal forces of organic hybridity that may generate a unifying centre of
identity despite a reality ruled by forces of discontinuity and heterogeneity. In *The Enigma of Arrival* the processes of organic hybridity are therefore far more visibly part of the novel’s overall enunciation than in the two other works where it can only be read in the margins of their central discourses or languages of representation. The three novels cross-compare in numerous other ways. Mukherjee’s and Naipaul’s novels, for instance, engage with discourses or representational modes that signal two very different speeds of becoming. Whereas *Jasmine* is a novel of extreme speeds of migration and metamorphosis, movement and change in Naipaul are extremely slow, almost, at times, getting close to a virtual standstill. What makes Mahjoub’s novel special in relation to Mukherjee’s is that *The Carrier* frames its transcultural, migratory discourse or hybridising mode of representation, thus problematising the assumptions of doubleness and in-betweenness in the migrant’s vision. In *The Carrier* the migrant hero’s stereoscopic vision is evidently reduced to a one-eyed telescopic vision. In Naipaul’s novel, there is also a self-conscious discourse that highlights its own conjecture, but whereas a discourse of difference is framed in *The Carrier*, the discourse framed in *The Enigma of Arrival* is predominantly a discourse of sameness. Finally, both *The Carrier* and *The Enigma of Arrival* differ from *Jasmine* insofar as their migrant gazes incorporate a temporal dimension that considers the vertical distribution of difference, a distribution of heterogeneity and hybridity across time and historical eras. In comparison *Jasmine* deals almost exclusively with contemporary migration and difference as distributed horizontally across present spatial or geographical borders.

In all three novels I split the migrant voices of narration, or at least I highlight this splitting as Mahjoub and Naipaul may be said largely to split their migrant voices themselves. This manoeuvre causes heterogenising and homogenising forces to show. In *The Carrier* forces of centrifugality and centripetality are explicated primarily in the reduction of the stereoscopic vision to a telescopic vision. In *Jasmine* the high speed transformation and discontinuity on the surface of the novel turns out to be contaminated by so many continuities and homogenisations at a silent formal and semantic level of the text, slowing down the novel’s capacity for generating high speeds of becoming and actually causing its intentional hybridity to be subliminally governed by the centripetality of organic hybridity or the domestication of difference into a cultural sameness. In *The Enigma of Arrival* the continuity on the surface of the text is contaminated by so many discontinuities at a deeper formal and semantic level.
Although I would have liked to examine more than three works, I found that the tracing of discursive dynamics and speeds of becoming in the novels demanded a close reading that would not have been possible if each analysis had been granted less space. The three analyses are in effect six analyses as each analysis breaks on the middle, so to speak, where they shift from a migratory reading, following the novels’ intentional releases of difference, to a sceptical reading that traces the forces of sameness in each novel.

* * *

Derrida says in *Monolingualism of the Other* that whenever we attempt to point things out ‘more directly’, we run ‘the risk of misnaming them’ (Derrida, 1996, 37). In this book I will be naming, identifying, certain problems of migratory discourses of hybridity and heterogeneity as well as I will be pointing out what other scholars have been saying about these discourses, and in the mere act of naming different ideas, positions and assertions, I will be running the risk of misnaming them. In this event, let it be known from the outset that I have no intention with my criticism to fix or reduce any voices in the field or any theorisations or readings of migration literature. All I intend is to zoom in on some tendencies in our general understandings of and approaches to transcultural hybridity and migration literature that need to be redressed. In spite of my critical readings, let it also be known that I think all three novels are fine literary works, and, as for people who may appear to be in the firing line more often than others, like Rushdie and Bhabha, let it be known that this is no summary of all they have to say. Any criticism is, once again, a criticism of general tenors and tendencies. It is my hope that the book, in spite of its insufficiencies and shortcomings, in spite of any misnomers and the incompleteness of its grasp, may succeed at least in inspiring others to continue similar studies of migration literature and hybridity theory – with or against what I have had to say.

Before I move on to a closer analysis of organic and intentional hybridity, I will set out by briefly airing some examples of celebratory notions of hybridity, which leads me on to a summation of the critical responses to post-colonial hybridity as well as recent constructive suggestions of how to develop hybridity theory from here.
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