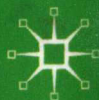




# Migration and Literature

*Günter Grass, Milan Kundera,  
Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjærstad*

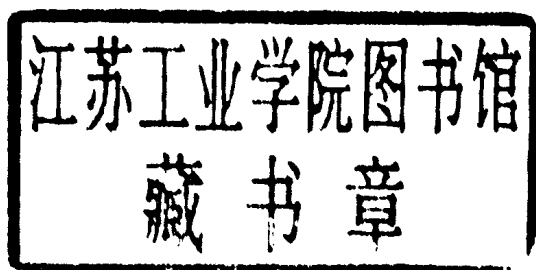
SØREN FRANK



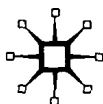
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Günter Grass, Milan Kundera,  
Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjaerstad

Søren Frank



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MIGRATION AND LITERATURE  
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# Prolegomena: Toward a Literature of Migration

For your *Bildung* you should choose the most difficult and splendid problem, but as subject for a dissertation choose no more than a very limited and remote corner.

—Nietzsche: Letter to Paul Deussen, 22 June 1868

During the twentieth century, we witnessed the revenge of a new nomadic life form over the hitherto hegemonic settler life-form. Today, Daedalus has once again put on his wings in order to challenge the force of gravity and soften the roots of belonging, whereas Odysseus's homecoming (a return to and of the same order) no longer seems possible in our contemporary world of rapid transformations. And yet, one of the defining myths of Western culture is that rather than with the feet on which we move, we imagine ourselves equipped with roots intended to keep us in place. However, the main protagonist in the twentieth century turned out to be the migrant. No longer to be looked upon as anomalous, migration has actually become the norm and has resulted in a profound renegotiation of the concepts of identity, belonging, and home.

Is this a good thing? It probably depends on who you are, but it seems pointless to dispute the fact that the twentieth century was an age of migration. Events such as the two world wars, the countless number of regional wars, the process of decolonization, and the emergence of totalitarian regimes played a major role in bringing about the waves of migrants, refugees, and exiles that crisscrossed the globe during the twentieth century. In addition, technological developments from the late nineteenth century until today (e.g., Greenwich mean time [GMT], telegraph, telephone, railway, automobile, airplane, radio, television, internet, etc.) have made traveling

and communication possible on a scale previously unimaginable. The consequences are there for everyone to see: the world is accelerating and contracting at one and the same time; material and immaterial borders are blurring and becoming permeable; the old nation-states are imploding while new ones are emerging; the global permeates the local, while the local dissipates into the global; and the production of human identity is informed by new coordinates. It is a time of the redrawing of maps, of intense deterritorializations and reterritorializations: people are passing borders, but borders are also passing people.

Besides the immense consequences for society and humanity in general, these technological developments and world-scale events have also had a deep impact on literary history in that we can trace an increase in the number of migrant authors within "the world republic of letters." By choosing to split up the post-World War II period into two volumes—one dealing exclusively with migrant authors, entitled *1948–2000: The Internationalization of English Literature*, and one dealing primarily with "core English" authors, entitled *1960–2000: The Last of England?—The Oxford English Literary History* not only confirms the numerical escalation of migrant authors, but also testifies to their growing literary, sociological, and phenomenological importance. Besides leading to a problematization of the way in which literary studies and literary historiography are traditionally organized in accordance with nationally based curricula, the growing number of authors belonging to two or more countries imposes upon us the task of clarifying the thematic and formal distinctiveness of migrant literature vis-à-vis nonmigrant literature, which is precisely one of the primary ambitions of this book.

I will also argue that a general transformation is taking place in the way much literature is written, both as a result of the influence migrant authors exert on nonmigrant authors and as a consequence of the intensified mobility and extraterritoriality in our globalized world. As Rebecca Walkowitz claims, it is the literary system as a whole that is influenced by the political and social processes of migration and not merely the part of the system that involves books written by migrants.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, "migration literature" refers to all literary works that are written in an age of migration—or at least to those works that can be said to reflect upon migration. The point is that whether we favor social context or literary content/form, the distinction between migrant and nonmigrant writers becomes increasingly difficult to uphold: "The literature of migration is not written by migrants alone," Leslie Adelson states simply.<sup>2</sup>

So, using as a starting point the assertions that the twentieth century was an age of migration and an era during which more and more authors

had migrant backgrounds, this book seeks to examine the *distinctiveness* of literature written by migrants; in addition, it claims as one of its main theses that there is a *tendency* in nonmigrant literature to reflect themes and employ discursive strategies often thought of as typical of migrant literature. This book therefore proposes a shift in terminology from “migrant literature” to “migration literature”—that is, a move away from authorial biography as the decisive parameter, emphasizing instead intratextual features such as content and form as well as extratextual forces such as social processes.

\* \* \*

Before proceeding any further, I would like to present a “reader’s guide” to what follows in this introduction as well as in the book as a whole. In the following I explain migration as my chosen conceptual point of departure and discuss the methodological implications that such an approach entails. Subsequently, I touch upon some theoretical reflections on the relationship between aesthetics and sociology in order to establish migration as a concept of both aesthetic and sociological relevance before briefly introducing the material to be analyzed to support the theses of this study. The next step entails a discussion of the concept of migration, and this is followed by reflections on the principles of selection with regard to my choice of material. After that I will briefly introduce scholars who have worked on the relationship between literature and migration, but at the same time I will point out in what way my understanding of migration differs from traditional understanding. This is followed by a discussion of methodological considerations in which I attempt to outline my reading strategies for the analytical chapters to come. Then follows a more precise definition of the concept of migration as employed in this book.

I move on from there to propose five thematic and three stylistic subcategories that are significant for determining the distinctiveness of migration literature. What is more, in relation to each of the subcategories, I explain the criteria and qualities required if we are to speak of migration literature. This delineation of constitutive elements and qualities functions as a framework for the subsequent analysis of the novels. In the last part of the introduction, I will introduce the theoretical positions of Georg Lukács and Gilles Deleuze, especially some of their aesthetic concepts and thoughts on novelistic form that I find relevant for developing a more thorough definition of the migration novel and that will inform my reading of the novels.

After the introduction I will move on to the core of the study, which is the analysis of four contemporary novelists, Günter Grass, Milan Kundera,



Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjørstad. I have chosen to devote a chapter to each author, and I present them in chronological order—that is, Grass is followed by Kundera, Rushdie, and, finally, Kjørstad. I will focus on two or three novels by each author, and, in the course of my analysis, I will bring in theoretical reflections of a more specific nature when it seems relevant and productive. This means that the theoretical problems discussed or only briefly touched upon in this introduction will be elaborated, illustrated, and supplemented throughout the book. Finally, in addition to summarizing some of the main analytical “results,” the book concludes with a brief discussion of the role and method of comparative literature and literary studies in general in an age of globalization and hypercanonization.

\* \* \*

In his seminal essay “Philology and *Weltliteratur*” (1951), Erich Auerbach outlines a methodology for the future of literary scholarship in which the key notion is *Ansatzpunkt*. The *Ansatzpunkt*, or the “point of departure,” is like the striking of a chord, a preliminary note, which determines what follows. The point of departure represents a distinct angle and an innovative grip that provides the literary scholar with a principle of selection.<sup>3</sup> To Auerbach, the original point of departure is of great importance in twentieth-century literary studies, primarily because the amount of accessible material constantly increases in the globalized world market of literature, making it impossible for the literary scholar to survey the totality of material at his or her disposal. But from this problem of quantity follows a problem of epistemology: it becomes increasingly difficult for the literary scholar to locate patterns of order in the unmanageable body of material.

Implied in Auerbach’s description is that the *Ansatzpunkt* functions as a prism with the necessary ability to link authors or works hitherto not seen in relation to one another. In addition, it enables the critic to shed new light on these authors or works precisely because of the affiliations made possible through the *Ansatz*. The question of *linkage* relates to the problem of synthesis, of establishing a pattern within a chaotic system, and here Auerbach evokes a twofold method consisting of intuition and personal commitment grounded in historical experience. The question of *illumination* relates to the problem of quality and relevance, and here Auerbach speaks of the *Strahlkraft* of the good point of departure. In order to possess this illuminating power, the point of departure must be both dynamic and rooted in concrete material—that is, it should not spring from some theory or historical period, because that would be a case of the abstract-general subsuming the specific. Furthermore, the point of departure must be

selected from a confined and attainable body of material, and the analysis of this material must be able to organize and shed new light on a larger body of material. That is, a good point of departure must be both precise and intrinsically related to its object; it cannot be abstract in itself; and it should nonetheless point to general perspectives. To sum up: The problem posed by the immensity of material is solved by the good point of departure because it is capable of both synthesis and radiance.

The *Ansatzpunkt* for this book is migration, a concept that had come to play an increasingly significant role in the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century in relation to politics, economics, geography, culture in general, and literature in particular. I will argue that migration is capable of acting as a “synthesizer” (which differs from a “totalizer”) in the bringing together of four otherwise distinct novelists. What is more, migration as *Ansatzpunkt* enables me—by the sheer fact of bringing these canonized authors together—to illuminate them in new ways just as it makes it possible to shed light on much of contemporary literature as it arguably bears traces of migratory thematics and stylistics.

To paraphrase Georg Lukács in his foreword to *Entwicklungsgeschichte des modernen Dramas* (1911), I would say that the fundamental questions posed in this book are the following: Does a modern novel of migration exist, and, if so, what style does it have? However, in Lukács’s historical-philosophical approach, style is from the outset intrinsically related to the social sphere. Each epoch has its own aesthetic form, so to speak: “But in literature what is truly social is form. [. . .] Form is social reality, it participates vivaciously in the life of the spirit, and therefore it does not operate merely as a factor acting upon life and molding experiences, but also as a factor that is in its turn molded by life.”<sup>4</sup> What is expressed here is a belief in the mutual dependence of worldview and form. In “Zur Theorie der Literaturgeschichte” (1910), he says, “Every form is an evaluation of and a judgment on life, and it draws this power and strength from the fact that in its deepest foundations form is always an ideology. [. . .] The worldview is the formal postulate of every form.”<sup>5</sup> In the present study, I argue specifically that the concept of migration functions as a bridge linking aesthetics and sociology, as migration relates to both theme and form.

A few pages further on in “Zur Theorie der Literaturgeschichte,” Lukács actually formulates the exact opposite view when he describes form as the petrification of a moving life. That is, form is not considered the “truly social,” rather, form and aesthetics are autonomous phenomena characterized by their insularity. In his discussion of Lukács’s text, Franco Moretti claims that Lukács actually radicalized this second version of his concept of form in the years between publication of *The Soul and the*

*Forms* (1910) and *The Theory of the Novel* (1916/1920). I am not sure, though, that I can follow all of Moretti's conclusions in his elaborations on Lukács's idea of form:

In *Theory of the Novel* the *historicity* which is consubstantial with the novel means that the formal accomplishment of a novel is always and only "problematic": a "yearning" for form rather than its attainment. Between Life and Form, history and forms, the young Lukács digs an ever-deepening trench. Life is "movement," form "closure." Life is "concreteness" and "multiplicity," form "abstraction" and "simplification." Form is, in a summarizing metaphor, petrified and petrifying: life is fluid, ductile, "alive."<sup>6</sup>

Here, Moretti actually points to Lukács's idea of the unattainability of formal perfection in *The Theory of the Novel*, only to argue that this means a deepening trench between life and form. However, as I see it, Lukács sticks with his idea of the interdependence between sociology and aesthetics when in *The Theory of the Novel* he speaks of the novelistic form as "something in process of becoming [etwas Werdendes, als ein Prozeß]."<sup>7</sup> The restless and migratory form of the novel is thus an aesthetic attempt to answer the questions posed by the new social and cultural condition characterized as the age of migration.

Moretti himself is clearly influenced by Lukács's idea of the interdependence of sociology and aesthetics, and in his own work he attempts to practice what he calls "sociological formalism." To practice sociological formalism most productively means turning one's attention toward the study of the temporary structures that usually go by the name of genres (i.e., cycles situated between the flow of events and the structure of the *longue durée*). Here, literary texts are seen as historical products organized according to rhetorical criteria—that is, according to Moretti, a Darwinian combination of random variation and necessary selection: "In our case: *rhetorical innovations*, which are the result of chance; and a *social selection*, which by contrast is the daughter of necessity."<sup>8</sup> Performing literary criticism understood as a historical discipline thus calls for concepts that are both historiographical and rhetorical: "These would enable one to perform a dual operation: to slice into segments the diachronic continuum constituted by the whole set of literary texts (the strictly historical task), but to slice it according to formal criteria pertaining to *that* continuum and not others (the strictly rhetorical task)."<sup>9</sup>

If we turn our attention toward the present study, it seems legitimate to characterize it as a study of a special (sub)genre or cycle—that is, the migration novel. As George Steiner argues in *Extraterritorial* (1971), it is indeed

plausible to speak of a whole genre of twentieth-century Western literature as extraterritorial—that is, a literature about exiles and migrants written by “poets unhoused and wanderers across language.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, this book specifically attempts to combine a definition of the genre’s internal laws (the formal criteria) and its historical range (the segment of a continuum)—that is, it attempts to combine the questions of “how” (the formalist) and “why” (the sociologist). Moretti states:

But will they agree, the formalist and the sociologist? Yes, if the sociologist accepts the idea that the social aspect of literature resides *in its form*, and that the form develops according to its own laws; and if the formalist, for his part, accepts the idea that literature *follows* great social changes—that it always “comes after.” To come after, however, does not mean to repeat (“reflect”) what already exists, but the exact opposite: to *resolve* problems set by history.<sup>11</sup>

This passage sums up Moretti’s idea of sociological formalism. On the one hand, Moretti ascribes a formal autonomy to literature, admitting that it develops in accordance with its own immanent laws. On the other hand, he upholds the interdependence between aesthetics and sociology in that literary form in a way reacts to historical transformations, not by a delayed reflection of history but by attempting to resolve (by formal-technical means) the problems that history produces. “Shaped from without, as well as from within . . .”<sup>12</sup> *Through its form* the migration novel specifically sets out to *express* the content of our experiences of interculturalism and globalization (i.e., “shaped from without”) and to *resolve* the problems posed by these same experiences (i.e., “shaped from within”). So, its form “reveals the direct, almost tangible relationship between social conflict and literary form. Reveals form as a diagram of forces; or perhaps, even, as *nothing but force*.”<sup>13</sup>

\* \* \*

This book sets out to explore migration and the concept’s explanatory power in relation to four contemporary novelists. One of its working theses is that migration is exactly what is *both social and formal* in their novels. As Azade Seyhan remarks, descriptions referring to authorial background “such as *exilic*, *ethnic*, *migrant*, or *diaspora* cannot do justice to the nuances of writing between histories, geographies, and cultural practices.”<sup>14</sup> Hence, migration is not only to be understood in relation to authorial biography. Rather, the concept of migration is able to encapsulate the overall thematic and stylistic elements of the novels, as when Edward Said speaks of

“a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy.”<sup>15</sup> This “migratory energy” has two interdependent aspects in that it functions both as a mimesis of the contemporary world (sociology, “why”) and as an immanent formal feature (aesthetics, “how”).

The four novelists are Günter Grass, born in Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland) in 1927, emigrated to Düsseldorf, Germany, in the Western occupied zone in 1945, lived in West Berlin for several years, but is now living in northern Germany; Milan Kundera, born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1929, emigrated to Rennes, France, in 1975, and has been living in Paris since 1978; Salman Rushdie, born in Bombay (Mumbai), India, in 1947, emigrated to London, England, in 1961, went into hiding in 1989 because of the death sentence issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and is currently living in New York; and Jan Kjørstad, born in Oslo, Norway, in 1953, where he still lives. In my analysis I will focus on *The Tin Drum* (1959) and *Dog Years* (1963) by Grass; on *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), and *Ignorance* (2000) by Kundera; on *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), and *The Satanic Verses* (1988) by Rushdie; and on *The Seducer* (1993), *The Conqueror* (1996), and *Oppdageren (The Discoverer)* (1999) by Kjørstad.

It was during my work on *Salman Rushdies kartografi* (2003) that I came upon the idea of examining the contemporary novel in relation to migration. An inspirational impulse for the present study is Rushdie's essay on Grass from 1984 in which he describes Grass as one of the principal exponents of a so-called literature of migration.<sup>16</sup> Rushdie promotes a conception of migration that is more inclusive than the usual understanding of migration as a person moving from one (fixed and determinable) place to another. Instead, migration refers to both an author's and a character's spatial as well as temporal movements, just as it is used to describe the dynamic textual strategies and thematic focal points of the literary work. Following much the same line of thought, Kjørstad argues in his essay “Fram for det urene” (“Bring on the Impure”) that the twentieth century sees the development of an “impure” novel in which religions, cultures, genres, and languages mix as a result of the world's spatial contraction and temporal discontinuity.

In its traditional use, migration refers to very specific events—for example, the seasonal migration of birds or the (voluntary or involuntary) geographical uprooting of people. However, etymologically the concept of migration originates from the Latin *migrare*, meaning simply “to wander” or “to move”—that is, movement per se. Migration as employed in this study thus signals *oscillatory and inconclusive processes* that manifest themselves on different levels in the literary work—for example, in relation to personal, national, and cultural identity, language, narrative form, and enunciation.

With Auerbach to provide me with the idea of a principle of selection, I use migration as my distinct angle. As for the more specific reasons behind the choice of Grass, Kundera, Rushdie, and Kjørstad: Grass is chosen because the role of migration and intercultural negotiations in his novels has been somewhat neglected. The role of emigration and exile in Kundera's novels may have received a fair amount of critical notice, but it is my intention to draw attention to and discuss a number of seemingly internal paradoxes in Kundera's writings in order to provide nuance to the understanding of the complex roles of emigration and exile in his work. Rushdie represents the self-evident choice, as he quite simply epitomizes the migrant author: not only does he constantly portray migrants in his novels, but he also reflects theoretically upon the migrant condition in essays and thus offers a range of elaborated concepts and useful insights. It is my intention, however, to challenge those readings of Rushdie that tend to focus too unequivocally on the fictional characters and their rootlessness, and instead to emphasize the significance of novelistic form and Rushdie's renegotiations of being rooted. As for Kjørstad, on the one hand he exemplifies the phenomenon of, and fascination with, migration permeating the contemporary literary system as a whole—hence he can and should be read as an author writing transnational literature from *within* the nation; on the other hand, Kjørstad is a unique phenomenon in Scandinavia, as no other (widely read) author from that part of the world has attempted so thoroughly to thematize the modern nomad identity and the glocalization of the nation and so radically to revolutionize the form of the novel.

I will also argue that my "circumscribed and comprehensible" body of material has the ability to illuminate the larger corpus of migration literature, because, among other things, of the constellation's multicontextual rootings and each author's accredited status on the literary world stage. Moreover, I believe that when brought together in a comparative study, the four authors' different (multi)national backgrounds might trigger some interesting transversal communications, thereby offering a complex image of "Europeanness." This image, as we shall see, portrays the European territory as a sort of "beyond of" space or space as process. The European territory is thus considered an unfinished potentiality, and partly because of this spatial incompleteness, the identity of Europe should be regarded as a Sisyphian work that is always in the making.

According to Auerbach, a historical period should not in itself form the *Ansatz*. I would argue that the same holds true here as well. It has not been the period that has deductively determined the concept of migration and the selection of novelists. Rather, it has been the particular novels of Grass, Kundera, Rushdie, and Kjørstad that have inductively provoked the idea of

migration's important role. This being said, it cannot (and should not) be denied that migration is to some degree an epochal concept (determining a segment of the continuum of all literary texts); but this is not the same as asserting that it had not played a role before the twentieth century. Migration is indeed both a *historical* and a *transhistorical* concept: historical in that the twentieth century and beyond can be described as "the age of migration," and transhistorical in that mankind and literature have always migrated. Edward Said, considering the role of migration and exile in history, thus speaks quite rightly of a question of "scale."<sup>17</sup> The acceleration of the phenomenon implies a shift from individual cases (Ovid, Dante, Voltaire) to collective waves, the latter certainly applying to the post-World War II situation of decolonization and globalization.

Finally, one might feel inclined to ask, Why only novels? Why not poetry or drama? Two answers: The first would readily accept the relevance of examining and including poetry and drama, but would then conclude that a selection had to be made, and that hopefully the selection of these four novelists would prove its worth in the course of the book. The second would be slightly more provocative as it would claim, as Christopher Prendergast does, that the novel is "the most buoyantly migratory" genre—that is, the genre most adept at incorporating migratory elements into its form (but also the genre that most easily crosses national borders).<sup>18</sup>

\* \* \*

While I have found methodological inspiration of a more general character in Auerbach and his idea of the necessity of an intuitively grasped and innovative *Ansatz* with the ability to illuminate and synthesize without totalizing, another great critic from his generation has provided me with support of a more specific kind—that is, regarding the relationship between literature, migration, and exile. I am referring to Harry Levin and his 1959 essay "Literature and Exile," in which he ascribes to writers in exile a privileged position as witnesses to human experience. Furthermore, Levin backs the idea of epochality when he speaks of the accumulation of exilic writing on such a scale that "it speaks with the voice of our time."<sup>19</sup> Finally, Levin also touches upon the role of the literary scholar in an era in which the corpus of accessible literature not only increases but also undergoes extensive transformation, meaning that the accumulation of migration literature not only calls for a redrawing of the map of literary history but also challenges the way literary studies is often organized in nationally separated contexts.

Levin claims that, apart from Georg Brandes's *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature* (1872–90), hardly any attempt has been made

to grasp the collective significance of migration literature. In the introduction to *The Emigrant Literature* (1872), the first volume of *Main Currents*, Brandes characterizes the comparative approach in the following way: "The comparative view possesses the double advantage of bringing foreign literature so near to us that we can assimilate it, and of removing our own until we are enabled to see it in its true perspective."<sup>20</sup> Brandes's description of the literary comparatist is remarkably close to that of the dual role of the migrant author who offers a foreign voice to a local material just as he or she makes a foreign material more familiar to his or her new local environment. Levin concludes: "It will take many such volumes, probably written by many collaborators, to chronicle the literary migrations of the twentieth century on a scale commensurate with their importance in our lives."<sup>21</sup> This book should be regarded as a modest attempt to rise to Levin's challenge.

Since Levin made his appeal, many scholars—among whom Edward Said and Homi Bhabha are among the most prominent—seem to have heeded his challenge. A vast amount of scholarly literature on the role of migration and exile in literary history has thus been written within the past fifty years or so. Characteristic of this literature, however, is that it deals primarily with colonialism/postcolonialism, which means that migration is regarded as a phenomenon strongly related to people who were formerly colonized, most notably by the British Empire. Postcolonialism is, admittedly, an important element of the overall image of the twentieth century as the age of wandering, but it is, I will argue, not the only context relevant to literature and migration.

Two problems arise from the tendency to regard migration more or less exclusively in relation to postcolonialism. The first problem concerns migration literature written in English (or any other colonial language) but which cannot be analyzed in any meaningful way with the aid of the "old" vocabulary of postcolonialism. As Roy Sommer has shown in his exemplary *Fictions of Migration* (2001), this is the case with much contemporary "ethnic" literature in Britain that has been written by second- or third-generation immigrants for whom dichotomies such as center-periphery and foreigner-native are no longer valid (the same obviously applies to the current situation of, for example, the "Maghreb" writers in France and the "Turkish" writers in Germany). Hence, Sommer develops new analytical tools for this kind of literature in the British context and operates with two general subcategories of the intercultural "fiction of migration": the multicultural novel informed by pluralistic ethnocentrism and the transcultural novel informed by cosmopolitan universalism.

The second problem concerns literature written outside the sphere of postcolonialism and either outside or on the borderlines of the traditional



British, French, or German contexts—that is, the kind of *Weltliteratur* the ageing Goethe spoke to Eckermann about in 1827. Goethe's (partly Eurocentric) idea of world literature as a phenomenon related to both quality (universal appeal/value, masterpiece) and sociology (internationalization of market, importance of translation) is evidently of relevance to this book, whose aim is to present a comparative study that includes such different trajectories and contexts as India-England-United States (postcolonialism), Czechoslovakia-France (Communism), Poland-Germany (Nazism), and Norway-World (globalization in general), with all the complexities of divergent, clashing, and merging languages, cultures, territories, and histories that this amounts to between and within each author's artistic profile. As Auerbach reminds us, "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation."<sup>22</sup> I find these words highly appropriate for the task that lies ahead of us, not merely in this study but also in literary studies in general.

Hence, it has been fully intentional on my part to link authors from entirely different contexts in terms of both geography, culture, and language in the belief that migration provides the grip that can hold the diverse parts together in a hopefully meaningful and prolific pattern. This multicultural and multicontextual commitment is strongly related to my belief in the necessity of reading literature outside the confines of the national context (but without discarding the local specificity). This being said, it requires a sensitive balancing act not to fall into the universalist trap on the one side—in which migration comes to mean exactly the same regardless of the context (as in a Morettian global wave that is dependent on geographical continuity)—or the nationalist trap on the other side, in which migration is viewed exclusively as bound up within a local context, thus ignoring the impulses and tendencies that constantly travel across national borders (as in a Morettian local tree that is dependent on geographical discontinuity). In short, my aim is to show, on the one hand, that certain uniformities in terms of style and theme apply to the four novelists as a result of wavelike interbreeding (caused by fellow authors as well as post-World War II society in general) and, on the other hand, that there are diversities that can be traced back to the local specificities of their respective contexts.

I will attempt to practice what Said calls a "global, contrapuntal analysis"—that is, an integrative analysis (on a global scale) that is not modeled on a "symphony" but on an "atonal ensemble."<sup>23</sup> We are not talking about the old comparative and binary approach of retrieving identities (influences) and highlighting differences (nativist essences). Instead, this multicontextual approach is characterized by its alertness toward a multiplicity of simultaneous dimensions. This means that it takes into account historical, geographical, and rhetorical "strategies," thereby revealing a complex