

# THE SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FORCED MIGRATION

A Multi-Media Educational Tool

Winter 2021

## Stories: An Educational Tool to Learn About Migration

**Target audience:** high school (grades 9-12)

**Keywords:** literature, personal narrative

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Literature forces us to recognize the humanity of other people, even fictional people, and it can sometimes unearth deeper truths than non-fiction can. Literature's capacity to generate empathy — rather than sympathy, or worse, disgust — makes it an indispensable source for understanding forced migration, particularly when we read works by people who have experienced the effects of forced migration.

The concept of migration often appears in fictional stories. Besides the stories that are written by those who have experienced a life as a refugee or a migrant and that focus on telling the reality of migration through them, there are numerous stories that contain the concept of migration and/or migrant characters. Migration sometimes brings joyful adventure to protagonists, while it sometimes causes tragic endings. In any way, migration plays a key role in deepening stories and making them diverse. What can we learn about migration through fictional stories?

The sources in this section are intended to be read and analyzed by high school students to deepen their understanding of migration and experience critical thinking. However, as it is always so, the sources are great for people of all ages.

**Moshin Hamid, *Exit West* (2017)**

This book is about the love story of a couple, Nadia and Saeed, who travel around the globe. At the beginning of the story, the two live in an unnamed city where a civil war is going on. People all over the world, including the couple, travel through magical doors, which lead them to anywhere on the globe, in order to flee from danger and to find a better life.

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## Sample Discussion Questions

- Why do Nadia and Saeed decide to leave the country and why does Saeed's father not make the same decision?
- The residents of each town that Nadia, Saeed, and other migrants visit show different attitudes towards them. What are the differences and why do they change?
- Nadia and Saeed sometimes act differently to people whom they meet at the places where they migrate to. Why?
- How does their journey of migration influence Nadia and Saeed, and their relationship?

## Resources to deepen your understanding of the literature

- [“Exit West: Maria Höhn/Matthew Brill Carlat,”](#) (July 7, 2020), Vassar ACS,(video)
- [“From Refugees To Politics, Mohsin Hamid Writes The Change He Wants To See,”](#) (March 8, 2017), *Fresh Air, National Public Radio* (Podcast) Anne Brice, [“‘Exit West’ author Mohsin Hamid: ‘Migration is what our species does.’”](#) *Berkeley News*, September 1, 2020.

Keiichiro Hirano, [At the End of the Matinee](#) (2016)

Satoshi Makino, a classic guitarist who tours around the world, and Yoko Komine, a journalist who travels around the world to gather news, fall in love. Their love story takes place in Tokyo, New York, Paris, and Bagdad.

## Sample Discussion Questions

- How does migration influence Satoshi, Yoko and their relationship?
- How does migration influence one's life plan?

Jhumpa Lahiri, [“When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,”](#) in [Interpreter of Maladies](#) (1999)

Mr. Pirzada is a professor living in New England who has come from Dhaka. In the 1970s, in which the story is set, Dhaka was a part of Pakistan and East Pakistan was fighting for independence. Mr. Pirzada often visits Lila, an Indian American girl, and her family and talks about his work, life, and family.

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## Sample Discussion Questions

- Why do Mr. Pirzada and Lila's family get along? How is their relationship related to what happens in their home countries? If Mr. Pirzada was from West Pakistan (or countries other than those in South Asia), how would their relationship change?
- Lila's mother and father have different thoughts on the education at Lila's elementary school. How and why? Is it related to their immigration history?

## Resources to deepen your understanding of the literature

- Keith Wilhite, "[Blank Spaces: Outdated Maps and Unsettled Subjects in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies.](#)" *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* (2016)
- Chandrima Karmakar, "[The Conundrum of 'Home' in the Literature of the Indian Diaspora: An Interpretive Analysis.](#)" *Sociological Bulletin* (2015)
- Elizabeth Jackson, "[Transcending the Politics of "Where You're From": Postcolonial Nationality and Cosmopolitanism in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies.](#)" *Ariel: a review of international english literature* (2012)

In addition, there exist stories that should be examined critically. Some fictional stories contain (often unintentional) negative stereotypes based on race, gender, migration status, and so on. Here are examples of how to critically analyze such sources.

**Aladdin (1992), Walt Disney Pictures, directed by John Musker and Ron Clements**

Aladdin is a young man in a fictional Arab kingdom Agrabah who lives on the street and makes his living by theft. One day, he meets a beautiful princess Jasmine in a market and falls in love with her. Getting help from a Genie in a magic lamp, he pretends to be a prince Ali and tries to marry her. However, Jafar, a greedy Vizier of Agrabah, attempts to expel Aladdin, get the magical power of Genie, and dominate the kingdom.

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## Sample Discussion Questions

- List negative stereotypical expressions of Arab people demonstrated in this film. (Hint: the lyrics of Arabian Nights, the behaviors of people in Agrabah, and the depiction of Sultan.)
- What are the differences between protagonists (Aladdin and Jasmine) and other characters? (Hint: skin colors, physical features, and accents.)
- What can you identify from the film about the American view towards Arab countries and Arab people (including migrants from Arab countries)?
- How might the stereotypes present in the movie affect the audience's perspective on the film or on migration and migrants in general?

## Resources to deepen your understanding of the literature

- Marvin Wingfield and Bushra Karaman, "Arab Stereotypes and American Educators," in *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*, edited by Enid Lee, Deborah Menkart, and Margo Okazawa-Rey, Teaching for Change, (2007)
- Shaheen, Jack Shaheen, *Reel bad Arabs:: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, (2001)
- Michael Cooperson, "The Monstrous Births of Aladdin." *The Harvard Review of Middle Eastern and Islamic Affairs* 1:1 (1994): 67-86.
- Henry Giroux, *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* (1999)

## The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, Disney (1996)

Quasimodo, who lives in the Notre-Dame Cathedral and works as a bell ringer, is a hunchback man and dreams of going outside. When he goes to the town of Paris one day, he falls in love with Esmeralda, a beautiful gypsy dancer. When she is to be captured by the archdeacon of Notre-Dame, Frollo, Quasimodo and Captain Phoebus try to save her.

## Sample Discussion Questions

- How is the background of Quasimodo, who is a son of a Roma woman, depicted? How does it influence the story?
- How does the background of Esmeralda, who is a Roma woman, influence decision makings of the characters?

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- How are the Roma people depicted in the movie?

Resources to deepen your understanding of the literature

- Christina Grigore, ["Notre Dame: Let's Tell a New Story about Esmeralda and 'the Gypsies'"](#) *Newsweek*. April 23, 2019
- To learn more, see [Free Movement and Belonging in Europe: The Situation of the Romani Peoples.](#)

Alessandro Baricco, [\*Silk\*](#) (1996)

The story is set in mid-19th century France, where the epidemic of Pébrine, a silkworm disease, is spreading. Hervé Joncour is a merchant who travels around the world to buy healthy silkworm eggs and sell them in Lavilledieu, France. One day, Hervé Joncour travels to Japan, where Pébrine has not outbroken yet, and his wife Hélène waits for him back home. In Shirakawa, Japan, Hervé Joncour meets a beautiful girl and falls in love with her. In later years, the civil war begins following the meiji restoration and they get caught up in the confusion.

Sample Discussion Questions

- List the features of migration in the 19th century presented in this novel.
- How do those features influence a mutual-understanding between Westerners and Japanese people?
- What do you understand about "Orient" and "Otherness" from this novel?

Resources to deepen your understanding of the literature

- Robert Rushing, ["Alessandro Baricco's 'Seta': Travel, Ventriloquism and the Other."](#) *MLN* 1(2003)
- Rosalind R. James and Zengzhi Li, ["Pébrine."](#) *Science Direct* (2012)
- Atsushi Kawai, ["The Meiji Restoration: The End of the Shogunate and the Building of a Modern Japanese State,"](#) *nippon.com.*, November 29, 2018
- ["The Aizu War and Wakamatsu Castle."](#) National Diet Library, Japan (2008)