

und Jabbars verquaste Wortdrechselei ist nun weder witzig noch feuilletonistisch genug, um damit des Lesers Lebenszeit zu verschwenden.

Bleiben die Anfänger und Laien der historischen Disziplinen, die solche Themen und Diskurse neu erwerben müssen. Diese sind Interessenten, die dieses Buch womöglich tatsächlich zur Information über postmoderne Historiographie zu lesen versuchen. Aber statt Argumenten und erklärender Offenheit finden sie nur Fallenstellerei. Sie werden Probleme haben, Worthülsen und Buzzwords von echter Analyse zu unterscheiden. Sie werden vielleicht auch nicht die künstliche Wand erkennen, die Jabbar zwischen deutscher Moderne und französischer Postmoderne aufbaut. Sie werden sich fragen müssen, welche Aussagen hinter all den langen Sätzen nun tatsächlich stecken und dann vielleicht erkennen, dass der Autor auf die Interessen jeglicher potentieller Leserschaft nicht viel Rücksicht nimmt. Damit wäre dann auch die Frage beantwortet, ob es nicht doch besser wäre, Foucault und Marx, Benjamin und Lyotard im Original zu lesen. Und wenn es ein Roman sein soll: David F. Wallace, Thomas Pynchon oder Roberto Bolaño bieten Erbaulicheres. Jabbars Stilübungen haben nichts vom Sprachrausch der zeitgenössischen literarischen Meister und taugen auch nur wenig als Judith Butler-Imitat. Zumindest beantwortet der Autor unfreiwillig die Frage, wie es klingt, wenn man Wissenschaft im Stile von David Foster Wallace schreibt: nicht gut nämlich. Ein Trost ist immerhin, dass es der Autor unterlassen hat, auch den Umfang des postmodernen Mammutromans zu imitieren.

**Pascal Gin/Walter Moser (eds.),
Mobilités Culturelles. Regards Croisés
Brésil et Canada / Cultural Mobilities.
A Cross-Perspective between Brazil
and Canada (= Transferts culturels /
Cultural transfers, Ottawa: University
of Ottawa Press, 2011, 360 S.**

Reviewed by
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The notion of cultural mobility has gained increasing importance over the last decade, signifying a rising interest in new avenues for transdisciplinary research on questions related to the conditions of globalisation, transnational migrations, and new types of material and virtual mobility for processes of cultural transfer. However, in contrast to the more technical term of cultural transfer, the notion of cultural mobility remains conceptually much more diffused, neither determining a clear empirical field of study nor defining a particular theoretical and methodological approach. Instead it expresses an urge to study the interrelated dynamics and effects of processes of globalisation with respect to their cultural dimensions. At the same time, it leaves open how the 'cultural' might precisely be determined or understood. This conceptual vagueness demonstrates the strength but also the weakness of the bilingual volume, which has grown out of an on-going collaboration between Canadian and Brazilian researchers, initiated in 2002 by the Research Chair in Literary and Cultural Transfers at the University of Ottawa.

Whereas the volume mainly focuses on cultural representations of mobility in terms of visual or literary artwork, the editors do not restrict their approach to artistic representations and circulations. With the aim to open up a broader field of theoretical debate, the volume also includes articles on historical and contemporary processes of cultural transformation related to nation building, migrations and diasporic experiences, as well as political restructuring and transformations of urban space in Brazil and Canada. The editors achieve a certain closure of this broad topical opening by giving special attention to meta-critical artistic reflections on the political implications of mobility.

In the first part of the volume this meta-critique is articulated on a practical level, analysed by articles that refer to examples of civic movements, political and artistic 'urban interventions' (Janine Marchessault on contemporary art practices in Toronto; Ivete Lara Camargos Walty on street journals in Brazil and their translocal networks; Ludmila Brandão on political initiatives to spatially regulate the sector of urban informal petty trade; Annie Gérin on an "ecosophical" arts movement in Ottawa; Angélica Madeira on the constitution of the artistic field as part of the creation of a new capital: Brasília). Most of the theoretical references in the first section, conceived by the editors as the more "empirical" part, refer to concepts of (urban, public, social) space, its creation, regulation and contemporary global restructuring. They show a particular concern to political histories of spatial transformation, urbanism and globalisation, "subaltern circulations", as well as economic and material aspects of mobility and its (re-)sources, potential and

limitations. The first article by Ismail Xavier on the link created between a particular place (the sertão) and the experience of migration in cinematic representations since early Brazilian nation building, however, is an exception, since it provides a profound analysis of historical transformations without elaborating on theoretical concepts.

In the second part, a critique is offered on a more explicitly theoretical level through various articles referring to artwork that reflect upon mobility as a condition for modernities and cosmopolitanisms in the plural (Smaro Kamboureli on a novel about pioneering experiences of the Canadian wilderness; Eurídice Figueiredo on contemporary Brazilian novels; Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida on transnational literary fiction; Hudson Moura on transnational lives and intercultural cinema). This section mainly concentrates on immaterial aspects brought forward by literature and visual arts representing and reflecting on mobility as an inherently contradictory "ethos of modernity" as well as a condition for the emergence of "new forms of cosmopolitanism" (Figueiredo, p. 235). It also includes an article by Mônica Dantas on contemporary dance and bodily techniques to creatively engage in the encounter and anthropophagic ingestion, digestion and incorporation of a cultural 'other'. What these articles have in common is a sense of the "emancipatory function" of mobility (Gin, p. 345) for the individual subject, which seems more existentially bound to the "heavy spatiality" of the infrastructure needed for various systems of mobility than to any territorially defined culture. This kind of emancipatory experience of mobility, however, is in contrast to the more hegemonic functions and systematic

constraints highlighted especially in the first section of the volume.

Although the various contributions indicate the relevance of certain common dimensions of analysis (e.g. space, practice, modernity, subjectivity), the editors' explicit aim to reflect on "conceptual instruments" and to elaborate upon an "adequate theoretical framework" (Moser, p. 3) for the study of cultural mobility is neither realised systematically nor coherently. The introduction to the volume is telling in this respect: instead of outlining the elements of a common conceptual framework for all the contributions, it illustrates with concrete examples the variety of meanings mobility can acquire as an aesthetic experience in the way it is evoked and materialised through contemporary artwork exhibited at the spectacular complex of the Inhotim Institute in Brazil that, unfortunately for the reader unfamiliar with the site, remains decontextualised with respect to its specific socio-political location and history. More helpful in giving an orientation are the short overviews at the beginning of each of the two parts of the volume, although the introduction of the second part and the conclusion of the volume by Pascal Gin are so heavily loaded with theoretical references that the specific value and particular perspectives provided by the contributions become somewhat lost.

With regard to bringing forward a transdisciplinary approach to the study of cultural mobility – instead of introducing a minimal definition of art (Moser, p. 5) – it could have been more helpful for the reader if the editors had reflected on the significance of their own disciplinary location in the fields of modern languages,

comparative literature, cultural transfer and translation studies for advancing the study of particular, namely artistically mediated cultural dimensions of mobility. Nevertheless, the cross-perspective on Brazil and Canada turns out to be particularly fruitful not only with regard to a comparison of historical and contemporary forms of mobility, but also because the contributions relate to a broad range of theoretical debates on globalisation that bring together francophone and anglophone traditions of critical thought. Not the least in this respect, the volume is a worthwhile and inspiring contribution to a field of transdisciplinary interest and growing cross-disciplinary exchange.

Karl Kaser: *The Balkans and the Near East. Introduction to a Shared History* (= *Studies on South East Europe*, Bd. 12), Wien: LIT, 2011, 405 S.

Reviewed by
Isa Blumi, Leipzig

The increasingly lucrative textbook market targeting large undergraduate "introductory" (and mandatory) courses has spread to the study of "World History" over the last decade. Evidence of the greater sensitivity to teach college-age students how to think of an integrated world includes a competitive explosion in world history textbooks. Most authors aim to decentering the Euro-Atlantic world in favor of a more inclusive narrative of human exchange. A subgenre of this movement has been the growing in-