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Introduction

The editors

This volume of collected essays is the result of the contributions of junior researchers and established academics from Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, Canada and France who have critically engaged a considerable variety of migration-related issues during the international conference on “Discourses on Migration and Mobility” held on 25-26 November, 2016 in Hammamet, Tunisia. The growing presence of these discourses on the radar of cultural, literary and media studies articulates the need to examine, evaluate and reassess dominant discourses in favour of thresholds and contact zones. The interdisciplinary theme this collection of essays addresses is meant to bring under scrutiny the multi-dimensional aspect of migration and mobility in a globalised world dominated by trans-national movement and cross-border mobility. The collected articles will build upon the initial power and intensity of recent scholarship to further explore the politics and poetics of migration and mobility as represented in literary works as well as with regard to other discourses and academic fields.

Locating migration and mobility at the cross-roads between literary, cultural and media studies, this compilation offers a vibrant research platform for scholars from different areas of study to provide critical input on the versatile patterns of migration and mobility. However, as migration and mobility could offer gateways of hope, they could possibly entail piercing traumatic experiences. Our understanding of migration and mobility trespasses the

cartographic mapping (i.e. physical and geographical dimensions) to address aesthetic, conceptual and discursive representations. Seeking a connection between cultural identities, political sensitivities and comparative studies, authors of the different articles prospect to lay the foundations for a constructive dialogue covering a multiplicity of migration-related issues.

Drawing on a wide range of critical frameworks, contributors to this compendium have equally sought to address the ramifications of major political and social upheavals in various parts of the world and the number of international migrants and internally displaced people that has soared in the last few years. From Africa, the Middle East, the Americas and the Caribbean, huge waves of migrants put their lives at risk trying to reach the shores of “a promised land”. This new international movement has contributed to the emergence of new discourses on migration and mobility.

Discourses on Migration and Mobility

Reasons for Change in Discourse on Migration and Social Mobility

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Abstract

The prospects of migration have changed and so did the meaning of the “promised land”. From a migration of settlement where people moved from one country to another for work reasons in a legal way, we are witnessing a different form of migration of whole generations that put their lives at risk and that have only one objective: to leave their homelands. This was the case of thousands of young Algerians in the 1990’s. The phenomenon has dramatically increased over the last few years with Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans and other populations seeking the “promised land” at whatever price. This new international movement of populations gave birth to a different discourse on migration and social mobility. Indeed, the discourse has shifted from labeling these populations as a labour force to naming them as ‘terrorists’ and to considering them as the cause of unemployment in host countries. Also, the phenomenon has contributed to the rise of political extremism and xenophobic societies. Our paper is an attempt to understand the change in the discourse on migration and an inquiry into the causes of this change. Also, it seeks to comprehend the amalgam between social mobility and migration on one hand, and phenomena like criminality and terrorism on the other hand. One way out of the dilemma would be to consider migration as a positive phenomenon likely to do much good to ageing European societies and to foster development in poor countries.

Keywords: Migration, social mobility, change in discourse, causes of change.