

*The Palgrave Handbook of Theatre and Migration*. Edited by **Yana Meerzon** and **S. E. Wilmer**. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. Pp. xxvii + 775. £219.99/\$279.99 Hb.

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In these times of increasing movement of people due to climate change, wars, pandemics and economic crises, this handbook is a timely intervention in theatre and performance studies. A large volume of sixty chapters broadly covers themes such as refugees, migrants, exile, globalization, or cosmopolitanism.

The field of theatre and migration has slowly been developing since the start of the twenty-first century but is yet to be fully recognized as a distinct discipline. Editors Yana Meerzon and S.E. Wilmer successfully make a case for it. This new publication is the first systematic survey of the field and considers theatre more broadly to include visual and performing arts, feeding off the previous scholarship on migration and inter/transcultural theatre such as Meerzon's previous book *Dramaturgy of Migration* (2020) edited together with Katharina Pewny. Meerzon and Wilson explain that they wanted to expand on the notion of migration by playing with the word's ambiguity and there are apparently over hundred and fifty different interpretations in the book's contributions. (p.7-10) By employing the concept of empowerment, they also wanted to demonstrate how refugees can realize their potential through arts, especially given the unprecedented number of refugees today. (p.5)

The handbook is divided into six sections starting with a range of essays defining themes and concepts of this subfield that are varied in their methodologies. This is followed by essays on early representations of migration, moving onto more contemporary concerns such as migration and nationalism, colonialism, forced displacements, refugees, and culminating in studies on migration in transnational context. In general, the handbook strikes a fine balance between what is already widely acknowledged and innovations in the field.

The first part sets out key concepts such as exile, post-migrant theatre or climate migration. Silvija Jestrović deals with the performative potential of the famous Ilya and Emilia Kabakovs' sculpture *The Eternal Immigrant* to understand the aesthetics of solidarity with exilic experience while also recounting her personal experiences of encountering a Lebanese migrant family at the border in the former Yugoslavia. Azadeh Sharifi provides a historic overview of the German post-migrant theatre movement along with an acute critique of mainstream institutions and funding structures toward migrant theatre makers. Paul Rae's essay explores various ways through which performing artists reflect on the challenges of climate migration, primarily with examples from Kiribati. His inclusion of a film case study on two islanders facing rising sea levels connects well to the editors' wider understanding of theatre and performance.

Elsewhere, there are more historical approaches to the subject of migration. Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei proposes 'vertical migration' (p.230) to discuss how knowledge is transmitted through historical contexts using case studies that draw on Noh theatre. Kasia Lech examines how nineteenth-century Polish theatre makers in exile have used the notion of 'motherhood' to reflect on their identity, their relationship with their homeland and their longing and belonging.

Other notable and innovative contributions in terms of theories and methodologies include Art Babayants' mapping of immigrant theatre in Canada that showcases how some artists resist the term 'immigrant' while others embrace it. Dramaturge, Guy Cools, theorizes intercultural dance works by Sidi-Larbi Cherkaoui and Akram Khan through Daniel Sibony's notion of 'in-betweenness' or 'entre-deux' (p.393). This theory makes a rare appearance in Anglophone theatre scholarship. Jorge A. Huerta focuses on the development of two bilingual productions by a Chicano theatre troupe as a social practice within migrant communities.

Robert Boroch and Anna Korzeniowska-Bihun compellingly adopt military anthropological framework to examine Ukrainian theatre in migration.

In their introduction the editors articulate well the key terms and concepts in the field, and it is fascinating to read how these are adopted and challenged by contributors. The inclusion of one or two detailed essays on the process of creating work with migrants or about migration, would have been beneficial to the 'practice as research' field. There are some omissions regarding geographical coverage. For example, there are no essays about Filipino theatre given many productions dealing with one of the largest labour migrants communities abroad. No doubt this will be addressed in the forthcoming series the editors are planning. These minor details do not diminish the importance of this foundational publication.

With such contrasting contributions, this handbook will appeal to scholars in anthropology, history, sociology, environmental or postcolonial studies along with theatre and performance scholars and artists looking for inspiration. It is an essential publication addressing migration through theatre and performance as one of the most pressing challenges of our time.