

CALL FOR PAPERS

Thinking Migration and Postmigration in Europe through Colonialism, Empire, and *Race*

Workshop on 7th and 8th of November 2022

Institute for Theatre Studies,
Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich

Organized by the ERC-Project "T-Migrants"

Migration has been a highly popular topic within the discipline of theatre and performance studies for years. The most recent events - the war in the Ukraine – brought migration once more into the limelight of public concern and academic discussion. Moreover, with hundreds of Nigerian students from the Ukraine stuck at the Polish border and refused entrance to the EU, public debates in Europe about so called "deserving" and "undeserving" migrants and the racialization of the figure of the migrant sparked off once more. Sociologist Gurinder K. Bhambra (2017) has pointed out, that this distinction "renders invisible the long-standing histories of empire and colonialism that already connect those migrants, or citizens, *with Europe*" (369). Extending the concept of the state and its associated political community to be congruent with imperial boundaries instead, allows us to research migration as part of the colonial project and as a "colonial tool of governing the population in racial, ethnic, national, religious, and cultural terms" (Gutierrez Rodriguez 2018). In other words, looking at migration through the framework of colonialism and empire rather than the nation-state, those labelled as "migrants" become an integral part of European history rather than its external "other".

Little research in our field focused on migration and post-migration has so far studied these phenomena through the lens of colonialism, empire, and race. The historiography of theatre migration, for example, often ignores the fact that those European theatre makers who migrated in the nineteenth century to Abya Yala, the land known to us as the US, migrated to a country that came into being based on the dispossession and displacement of the indigenous population. In that sense, theatre migrants from Europe would also need to be understood as (at least partly) complicit in the settler colonial project of the US. Similarly, does most of the theatre scholarship on contemporary post-migrant theatre and multicultural theatre in Europe depart from a national framework ignoring the fact that "European states have been multicultural for as long as they have been imperial" (Bhambra 2017:236). Subsequently, contemporary discourses and scholarly debates on multicultural and post-migrant theatre would benefit from a critical engagement with the question how these forms of theatre "affected discourses of colonial representation in (European) theatre" (Sharifi 2018:54) today.

This workshop aims at introducing the analytical categories colonialism, empire, and race for theatre studies' research on migration and postmigration. The workshop addresses the following questions: What changes in our understanding of migration and post-migration once we think these phenomena through the concepts of colonialism, empire and race? What kind of new understanding of theatre migration and post-migrant theatre emerges once the nation-state and the colonies are

positioned in the same analytical framework? What does a theatre history that is told through the analytical framework of colonialism, empire, and race tell us about the postcolonial and multicultural present of European theatre today?

We welcome historiographical contributions as well as papers on contemporary theatre performances and discourses dealing with topics of migration and asylum. We strongly encourage postgraduate students to apply.

Possible topics for this workshop are:

- The entanglement of the histories of colonialism and migration in theatre research
- Postcolonial and decolonial views on (post-)migrant theatre
- Critical readings of the concept *race* in theatre research on migration and theatre
- The impact of postcolonial and decolonial theory for the study of migration and theatre migration and vice versa
- Decolonizing theatre research and theatre discourses on migration/asylum/refuge
- Postcolonial readings of the concepts “migrants”, “citizen”, “theatre migration”, “post-migration theatre”

Instead of presentations, the two-day workshop will be based on a discussion of pre-circulated papers. A publication of selected papers is planned. Travel cost will be reimbursed and accommodation for the duration of the workshop provided.

If you are interested in participating, please send your abstract (300 words max.) and a short bio till **15th of July** to: l.skwirblies@lmu.de

Literature

Bhambra, Gurinder K. “The current crisis of Europe: Refugees, colonialism, and the limits of cosmopolitanism”, *EUR Law J.* (2017), 23, 395-405.

Gutierrez Rodrigues, Encarnacion. “The Coloniality of Migration and the ‘Refugee Crisis’: On the Asylum-Migration Nexus, the Transatlantic White European Settler Colonialism-Migration and Racial Capitalism”, *Refuge* (2018), 34:1.

Sharifi, Azadeh. “Multilingualism and Postmigrant Theatre in Germany”, *Modern Drama* (2018), 61:3.