

Review of: "Ukrainian Theatre in Exile: A Case Study, Poland"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review of the Article: "Ukrainian Theatre in Exile: A Case Study, Poland" by Robert Boroch and Anna Korzeniowska-Bihun

The article "Ukrainian Theatre in Exile: A Case Study, Poland" by Robert Boroch and Anna Korzeniowska-Bihun presents a thorough examination of the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the Ukrainian theatre community, focusing on those who found refuge in Poland. It offers a nuanced exploration of how Ukrainian theatre artists, displaced by conflict, have continued their creative endeavors abroad, contributing to both cultural resilience and diplomatic efforts.

Summary and Analysis

Boroch and Korzeniowska-Bihun begin by contextualizing the massive influx of Ukrainian refugees into Poland following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Among these refugees were numerous artists, including theatre directors and playwrights, whose cultural contributions have historically been targeted by Russian aggression.

The article delineates three main strands of Ukrainian theatre activity in Poland: (1) the use of Ukrainian dramaturgical materials by Ukrainian artists, (2) Polish theatre makers incorporating Ukrainian materials, and (3) Ukrainian artists participating in Polish cultural institutions. These activities underscore a significant cultural exchange and collaboration between Poland and Ukraine, highlighting the aesthetic and independent value of Ukrainian culture within Europe.

A key argument made by the authors is the role of theatre as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and national consciousness. They assert that Ukrainian theatre in exile serves as a counter-narrative to Russian propaganda, showcasing Ukraine as a cultural and historical community rather than a mere ideological construct. The authors introduce the concepts of "anthropological aggression" and "anthropological defense," describing how theatre becomes a form of cultural resistance against the hybrid warfare tactics employed by Russia.

Critical Evaluation

The article provides a comprehensive overview of Ukrainian theatre's adaptation and resilience in the face of geopolitical turmoil. The authors effectively use historical parallels and contemporary examples to illustrate the strategic importance of cultural activities. The analysis of collaborations between Ukrainian and Polish theatres is particularly insightful, as it not only highlights the solidarity between the two nations but also emphasizes the broader implications for cultural diplomacy in times of crisis.

However, while the article is rich in detail, it occasionally assumes a level of prior knowledge about specific theatrical and geopolitical contexts that may not be accessible to all readers. Additionally, the discussion could benefit from more direct quotes and narratives from the artists themselves, providing a more personal perspective on their experiences and challenges.

Conclusion

"Ukrainian Theatre in Exile: A Case Study, Poland" is a valuable contribution to the discourse on cultural resilience and the role of the arts in geopolitical conflicts. Borocho and Korzeniowska-Bihun articulate the importance of theatre as a tool for cultural diplomacy and national identity, offering a compelling case for the significance of artistic endeavors in the broader struggle for cultural preservation and independence.