

**Review of *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror Meditations through Migration*, Edited by Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl, ISBN: 978-0-367-56911-2, Routledge. 2022.**

**Mehrdad Vasheghani Farahani<sup>1\*</sup>**

Leipzig University, Germany

 <https://doi.org/10.22034/mic.2023.164330>

---

## Book Review

Received:  
29 November 2022

Accepted:  
01 January 2023

Published Online:  
11 January 2023

Copyright:  
©2023 Mehrdad Vasheghani  
Farahani

### To cite the article:

Vasheghani Farahani, M.  
(2023). Review of *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror Meditations through Migration*, Edited by Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl, ISBN: 978-0-367-56911-2, Routledge. 2022., *Media and Intercultural Communication: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 1(1), 83-86.  
<https://doi.org/10.22034/mic.2023.164330>

---

<sup>1</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7665-2054> |  [mehrdadfarahani1365@gmail.com](mailto:mehrdadfarahani1365@gmail.com)

\* PhD, Department of Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

This is an open access article distributed under the [Creative Commons Attribution License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). This allows for unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, providing that the original author(s) and source are properly credited.

During the dark retinue of Nazi (1933-1945) in Germany, many innocent people lost their lives, and many were forcibly exiled from their home countries (Bazyler & Alford, 2007 & Mayda, 2010). This unwanted upsurge of immigration resulted in the clash of different cultures and languages. New immigrants' adaptation to the host culture(s) remains a contentious hence uncharted line of research. The key question at stake is how refugees deal with ethnic, religious, and cultural affiliations in their target destinations and how they portray knowledge transfer and cultural translations.

Spotting this obvious gap, the current edited volume is a nascent call for further study. Under the general editorship of Korbel and Strobl, this volume offers the vital role of artistic and academic refugees from national socialism acting as cultural mediators between different cultures to agents of knowledge between their home and host communities. It investigates the Exiners and Chaimowicz who were fiercely expelled from their homeland and forced to embark on a new life elsewhere. The impetus behind publishing this stimulating work of scholarship stems from the fact that it examines, at length and in detail, the hybrid ways through which refugees directed and mediated their immigration and how they portrayed their immigration in their art and science as well as translation. The ensemble of eleven case studies presents an overview of the various aspects of knowledge mediation, cultural translation, and immigration from central Europe and beyond.

This value laden manuscript is best located in the critical nexus between burgeoning history of knowledge, transnational history, and exile, on the one hand, and cultural transfer studies and translation, on the other hand. Throughout the chapters, the authors deal thoroughly with the ways in which refugees envisaged, organized and mediated their immigration and how they portrayed themselves in the target culture through translation. Structurally framed into three parts that are further subsumed into 13 case studies, the current edited volume adds enormously to the existing literature in this area of knowledge. The authors have successfully convened a lineup of preeminent scholars to compile a trendsetting work of scholarship that pushes the boundaries in strand of research.

The first part of the volume is thematically split into four case studies that delve into the general concepts of network, family, friendship, and relations. The authors of this part retell stories of people who had to leave their home countries and unwantedly act as translators as well as cultural mediators in different languages. The chapters of the first part run gamut of thematic issues of immigration, expel and exile, war and cultural mediation in different geographical contexts including Australia, China, and Germany.

In the first chapter, Bienmann conducts an inquiry into the biography of a Jewish family. The inquiry shines light on the way the family used their Jewishness to migrate to fascist Italy and the United States, among others. In the subsequent chapter, Finder investigates the life of Jakob Rosenfeld, a bourgeois Jewish physician in inter-war Vienna who was exiled from his home country of Austria, migrated to China, and passed away in Israel. Finder explores how Rosenfeld's valuable experiences gained during his time in the army helped him function as a mediator between Chinese, central European, and Jewish cultures. The chapter concludes that his Jewish spirit is a key to understanding Jakob Rosenfeld's strong feelings in his political propensity to the liberation army.

In the next chapter, Prager discusses Slaka Viertel, an actress who has lived transnationally in four countries. Prager focuses on Viertel's life as a case study with the prime purpose of comparing

gendered images in the USA and Europe. Having spent years in places as diverse as Galicia, Vienna, Berlin and California, Viertel exemplifies a refugee who had to function as a mediator between Europe and the United States. The last chapter by Steinberg analyses German publications on the topic of exile. He sheds light on the aspects of refugee movement from central Europe in the 1930s and 1940s and how this collective thread has been represented in German-speaking press.

Under the title of *Strategies of Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer*, the second part of the edited volume consists of four units focusing on cultural translation and knowledge mediation from Central Europe to geographically various parts of the world. Andrea Strutz scrutinizes selected biographies of refugees (six case studies) from Austria, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. By analyzing the knowledge background of six influential figures in art and music, Strutz demonstrates that individuals' prior knowledge and area of expertise were of great assistance for them to trigger their careers in the new cultural venue.

By the same token, Kathrin touches upon the issue of refugees from central Europe in Portugal with a designated focus on the role of women. The impetus of this research was the excursion of Refugees after Hitler came into power in the 1930s. Among these refugees were artists seen as reminiscent of art and modernity in the host culture. However, these refugees had a negligible impact on the target society as they believed their stay in Portugal was temporary. Of this wave of refugees, only a fraction ended up staying in Portugal. This chapter concludes that due to the significant differences between the refugees and the majority of the Portuguese population, they left in pursuit of a new land where they could be better acclimatized to the host culture. In the last chapter of the second part, Andrea Meyer Ludowisy retells the story of William Rose, a preeminent British translator, who functioned as a principal actor in creating and leading the network of German-speaking writers and poets who migrated to the UK during the Second World War. Ludowisy successfully sheds light on the complexity of cultural translation and how knowledge transfer can be facilitated by a third party.

As part of a broad and comprehensive study on the effects of Jewish immigrants and Holocaust survivors, the third part of this volume by Cooke and Hirsh deals with actors of transfer and mediation. The authors utilize the transnational life of Louis Kahan to unearth the reception of his artistic works in various contexts. By reading Jewish émigré designers as well as a close reading of their work, Cooke and Hirsh conclude that the networks created by refugees had massive impacts on Nazism and Holocaust as demonstrated in their artistic works.

The last part of this edited volume includes four chapters which center on actors of transfer and mediation. Steven Cooke and Anna Hirsh write a chapter about unveiling the effects of Louis Kahan a refugee artist, custom and fashion designer who had to flee Vienna with the destination being Australia. He had to witness the war for many years as he was a member of French Foreign Legion in North Africa. The artistic life of Kahan and his transnational life is a pertinent way of exploring the reception of his works in transnational contexts as well as uncovering how his invaluable trainings, artistic works and practices accompanied him in his long and bizarre journey.

In the same fashion, Jeremy Leong investigates the artistic works of Erwin Felber, a Vienna-born refugee who gained the position of music professorship at Shanghai University. Felber was among the many refugees who decided to stay in China after the war and gain an academic job there. Leong

demonstrates that the music was far more than a source of entertainment and enjoyment in the refugee society. It served to attest the cultural identity of the refugees in an unfamiliar Sinitic milieu. Wieder's chapter familiarizes readers with the exile experiences of Hedy Krilla who had sublime experience as an actor in pre-Nazi Austria, Germany, and France before he had to leave Europe. In her new destination in Argentina, not only did she become a very well-known actress in German and French speaking communities, but also he could find her way to exploit her exile experience to facilitate the modernization of an independent theater in Argentina.

Markus Helmut Lenhart investigates the lives and firsthand experiences of Melitta and Victor Urbancic who fled from Vienna to Iceland in 1938. Working as composer, conductor, teacher and music scholar, this study shows how they managed to mediate and utilize effectively their musical knowledge gained in central Europe to become an integral part of postwar Iceland. The last chapter of the third part deals with the challenges of Arnold Schoenberg in the new context of exiled composers in America. Melina Paetzold focuses on Ingolf Dahl (1912–1970), a multifaceted musician unknown in Europe, but famous in America- and his alternative approach to cultural and knowledge transfer between central Europe and the United States. More specifically, Paetzold deals with the question of how Dahl, through his translations and teachings, impacted the music scene in America. The writer of the chapter concludes that because of his latent artistic talents, Dahl could reach a wide audience who helped him create a critical interconnectedness between central Europe and America in terms of knowledge transfer.

Through the chapters, it becomes obvious that this gripping book is an excellent fit for researchers of the history of World War two in Europe and history of arts and their critical rapport with translation. In addition, kudos must be given to the high quality of the print which makes reading this book enjoyable. This book has a lot to offer to bridge the wide gap in history, arts and translation; however, it fails to provide competent readers with a chance to embark on empirical research on areas like immigration, translation, history and culture. Therefore, this book is of little value to those who do research-based studies in translation. Considering the content of the book as well as the topics, it becomes immediately conspicuous that this book is geared to the expert in such fields as cultural translation and history and has little value, if any, to the newcomers in these strands of research.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### References

- Bazyler, M. J., & Alford, R. P. (2007). *Holocaust restitution: Perspectives on the litigation and its legacy*. NYU Press.
- Mayda, A. M. (2010). International migration: A panel data analysis of the determinants of bilateral flows. *Journal of Population Economics*, 23(4), 1249–1274. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-009-0251-x>