



Transnationality and Modes of Production in Theatre Studies

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ABSTRACT – Transnationality and Modes of Production in Theatre Studies – This paper presents an argument in favor of a transnational approach which also examines modes of production within theatre studies in Brazil. Drawing on discussions that took place in July, 2018, at the *Philanthropy, Development and the Arts* international conference in Munich, we point to new possibilities that may enrich various fields of theatre research. In several cases discussed at the conference and summarized in this article, seemingly local issues and practices revealed their recurrence in other parts of the world (Brazil included), thus demonstrating their interconnection within transnational networks and circuits. In conclusion, it is suggested that the study of theatre from the perspective of transnationality and modes of production may also constitute an action in defense of research, and of the cultural milieu itself, particularly in countries that are living through reactionary periods, as is the case for Brazil today.

Keywords: **Transnationality. Theatre Studies. Philanthropy. Modes of Production. Theatre for Development.**

RÉSUMÉ – Transnationalité et Modes de Production dans les Études Théâtrales – Cet article examine l'importance d'une vision qui est transnationale et englobe en même temps les modes de production du théâtre dans les études théâtrales au Brésil. Basé sur un compte rendu des discussions qui ont eu lieu en juillet 2018 lors de la conférence internationale *Philanthropy, Development and the Arts* à Munich, l'article présente de nouvelles possibilités pour les différents domaines de la recherche théâtrale. Dans plusieurs exemples discutés lors de la conférence et résumés dans cet article, les problèmes et pratiques qui semblaient locaux se sont présentés comme récurrents dans plusieurs pays, parmi lesquels le Brésil, démontrant leur connexion avec les réseaux et les flux transnationaux. Enfin, il est suggéré que l'étude du théâtre sous l'angle de la transnationalité et des modes de production peut constituer une action de défense de la recherche et du milieu culturel, en particulier dans des pays en proie à des processus réactionnaires comme le Brésil.

Mots-clés: **Transnationalité. Études Théâtrales. Philanthropie. Modes de Production. Le Théâtre pour le Développement.**

RESUMO – Transnacionalidade e Modos de Produção nos Estudos Teatrais – Este artigo investiga a importância de um olhar que seja transnacional e ao mesmo tempo inclua os modos de produção nos estudos teatrais no Brasil. A partir do relato das discussões que ocorreram em julho de 2018 na conferência internacional *Philanthropy, Development and the Arts*, em Munique, o artigo levanta novas possibilidades para os diversos campos da pesquisa teatral. Em vários exemplos apresentados na conferência e sintetizados no presente artigo, questões e práticas que pareciam locais se mostraram como recorrentes em distintos países, inclusive no Brasil, evidenciando sua conexão com redes e fluxos transnacionais. Por fim, é sugerido que o estudo do teatro pela perspectiva da transnacionalidade e dos modos de produção pode constituir uma ação de defesa à pesquisa e ao meio cultural, principalmente em países que passam por processos reacionários como o Brasil.

Palavras-chave: **Transnacionalidade. Estudos Teatrais. Filantropia. Modos de Produção. Teatro para o Desenvolvimento.**

Introduction

Brazilian theatre studies still encounters obstacles in terms of international reach and interaction, as compared to the relations that prevail in other fields of knowledge. There are at least two factors that have contributed to the maintenance of this situation, both of which are linked to Brazilian academic tradition.

The first factor refers to the way our theatre historiography remains bound to the idea of a national theatre. This historiography emerges from ideological contexts of the making of a nation and is committed to the definition of the specificities of Brazilian art. The founding features of theatre historiography in this South American nation encouraged the development of a view in which dramaturgical works, and the perspectives used to study them, were defined within national borders, with a subsequent concentration of research on local expressions. There has been recent pioneering work intent on broadening this scope; scholars such as Maria Helena Werneck and Angela de Castro Reis (2012) give fundamental impetus to a novel transnational focus demanding further development¹.

A second significant factor in explaining our academic isolation is the scarce attention that has been paid to the relationship between the aesthetics of theatre and socioeconomic contexts. This historiographical and sociological lacuna makes itself felt particularly from the modern period onward. As research moves closer to contemporary processes, the breach widens². This recurrent disregard for social data has also limited the possibilities of establishing greater points of contact between the various fields of theatre studies and other areas of knowledge.

Based on a critical account of an international conference on Philanthropy, Development and the Arts, this article seeks to contribute to the development of new perspectives in Brazilian theatre studies, examining the interaction between artistic processes and their socioeconomic and transnational contexts. The July, 2018 *Philanthropy, Development and the Arts: Histories and Theories*³ conference provided us an opportunity to perceive that academic isolation is not an exclusively Brazilian problem, but a specificity of the study of the arts around the world, and of the theatre arts in particular. During the conference, which was held in Munich, we exchanged pa-

pers and experiences with twenty researchers from five continents, all of whom were engaged in expanding theatre studies beyond national or exclusively aestheticist frameworks.

The conference was organized by a group led by Professors Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt, directors of the Centre for Global Theatre Histories, at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich (LMU). This international meeting was one of the activities pertaining to the project *Developing Theatre: Building Expert Networks for Theatre in Emerging Countries after 1945*⁴, funded by the European Research Council. In order to aid in the construction of global parameters that enable transnational and transcultural perspectives on theatre, the Developing Theatre Project fosters new approaches to theatrical processes and institutions, beyond the traditional study of plays and performances. The project introduces the concepts of *epistemic community*, *expert networks* and *techno-politics* to historical theatre research (Balme, 2017). The scope of the project is the development of professional theatre in emerging countries since the end of World War II. Its particular focus is the massive involvement of institutions and governments on both sides of the Cold War divide in the historic process of professionalizing the theatre, through internationally-coordinated development and modernization programs. Major international actions and investments, such as those carried out by the Rockefeller Foundation to aid Nigerian theatre during the 1950s, are among the topics whose exploration requires the interaction and cooperation of researchers from different countries, through the Developing Theatre Project⁵. The project also adopts a transdisciplinary perspective that examines theatre production, cultural policies, socio-economic contexts, globalization processes, and so forth.

We were invited to present papers at this conference due to the organizing committee's interest in themes and approaches that converge with our own⁶. Gustavo Guenzburger used his case study of Petrobras as a patron of the arts through the Brazilian government's Rouanet Law to demonstrate some of the deadlocks of cultural production in Brazil. The panorama revealed by his study is analogous to experiences in other countries, but in some ways, singularly different from any other cultural policy in the world (Guenzburger, 2020). Clara de Andrade shared her transnational perspective on the expansion of the Theatre of the Oppressed, foregrounding its interaction with French cultural policies for social development of the 1970s

and 1980s and how it has remained one of the most implemented theatrical methodologies worldwide (Andrade, 2017).

By sharing papers at the Philanthropy, Development and the Arts conference, a variety of points of contact were forged between researchers from different parts of the world, all looking for new approaches to the study of the arts. The methodological possibilities that emerged at this meeting, and the potential they offer in facing current challenges in performing arts research in Brazil, encouraged us to write this article. Our central contention is that, through the development of a transnational perspective that takes modes of production into account, Brazilian theatre studies may impact research from other countries, and vice versa. Through our critical account of some of the papers presented at the Munich conference⁷, in the pages that follow, our hypothesis will be tested and discussed.

Philanthropy and the Challenges of Contemporary Cultural Policies

The Munich conference was enhanced and impacted by the presentations of two keynote speakers, both experts on the relationship of the large American foundations to 20th century U.S. foreign policy. The first speaker was Professor Volker Berghahn⁸, from the History Department at Columbia University, New York; the second was Professor Inderjeet Parmar⁹, from the Department of International Policy at the University of London. The two scholars used historical and political analyses to demonstrate the trajectory of the three great North American foundations of the 20th century – Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie –, revealing their connections to the efforts of the U.S. business elite in building networks of interests and power, both nationally and internationally. The contact between specialists in other fields with arts scholars had a profound effect on the conference, judging from the debates it stimulated. While the keynote speakers focused on the activity of major U.S. philanthropic institutions, many of the other researchers at the conference presented studies related to the on-site effects and results of cultural policies arising from these processes, in countries such as Nigeria, the Philippines and South Korea.

For our purposes of introducing some socioeconomic patterns of theatrical production into Brazilian theatre studies, comparable to those of other countries, there are some facts on the trajectory of these foundations

that stand out. Firstly, there is a lacuna in our theatre historiography as to the influence that these foundations once had on what has been referred to as the modernization of Brazilian theatre, through international study grants awarded to influential professionals such as José Renato, Augusto Boal and Antonio Abujamra. Other data that can enrich our understanding of Brazilian theatre appear in studies on the relations of North American foundations to the State, and to ideas of the public, the private and democratic freedoms. To understand these connections, we should keep in mind that Brazil's indirect incentives, such as the Rouanet Law, were originally inspired by the North American model of tax deductions (Guenzburger, 2020).

Hence, it is fruitful to look into the trajectory of American foundations to uncover connections to the implementation and functioning of Brazilian cultural policies. In both countries, there is a prevailing libertarian idea that the individual, rather the state, should be responsible for selecting cultural projects. Economically, this also translates into financial responsibility on the part of civil society, albeit in partnership with the State, through tax deductions. The North American system that grants deductions to those who make private donations operates in various social arenas, including culture. Such a system has historically facilitated not only the existence of institutions of support linked to large corporations, but also a whole ecology of small donors – mass-philanthropy – that provides the bulk of philanthropic resources that are mobilized within the U.S., including those directed toward culture and the arts.

This ideal of a civil society active in the choices and financing of cultural projects never came to fruition in Brazil, largely due to the historical particularities of its tax deductions in the cultural arena. In the U.S., practically everyone – individuals and companies – pay some taxes, and everyone who does is eligible for donation-based deductions. In Brazil, under the Rouanet Law and other local laws that are patterned after it, only 2% of the largest companies are able to make use of legal deductions, which in turn are almost always deducted in full from their tax obligations. The result is that, in the Brazilian version, large companies choose cultural projects that are paid in full by the Treasury, through the mechanism of exemptions. In the case of theatre and many other cultural segments, this policy, which could hardly be called public, has been the last to survive the current fiscal

crisis – precisely because it is not legally subject to governmental budget constraints. The elitist and anti-liberal bias of this mechanism of disincentive to private investment in culture is not perceived nor understood by Brazilian cultural agents themselves, much less by the population in general.

During our encounter with researchers from other parts of the world, we faced the daunting challenge of explaining the peculiarities and contradictions of the Brazilian system to them. This also enabled us to perceive that the Brazilian tendency to conflate public and private bears some resemblance to strategies of concealing the relations between the State and the large foundations in U.S.. In Dr. Berghahn's lecture, he mentioned that the cooperation of foundations with U.S. government agencies, such as the CIA, was always carried out in a more or less confidential way – and even became the cause of a 1967 scandal involving the Ford Foundation¹⁰. Both Volker Berghahn and Inderjeet Parmar also demonstrated, through their presentations, how this blurring of boundaries between government and foundations was important in embedding political and state interests within the major actions of international philanthropy¹¹.

The ambiguity of the relationship between market and government is also an important topic in the case of the Petrobras Cultural Program that was the object of our conference presentation¹². In addition to the many questions the Rouanet Law raised for foreign researchers, it also drew attention to the specific problems of the system's largest user, Petrobras. Petrobras criteria for choosing cultural projects largely oppose the general logic that other companies employ in their use of the Rouanet Law, especially with regard to theatrical productions. This can be explained by some particularities in the history of this Brazilian, partially State-owned oil company.

Petrobras was born in the 1950s, out of a national-populist movement (*Our oil belongs to us!*) which not only linked populist notions of people and nation, but also promoted state investment in the economy. According to this logic, capitalist interests could thus be accommodated to national and popular ones. This ideological model has to some extent persisted within the institution as a corporate culture, and can be considered responsible for some of its success.

In the field of cultural investment, and especially as patron of the theatre, this ideological framework makes a semi-state company combine brand strategy – the capitalist part of the company – with social investment – the public or nationalist part. Petrobras cultural management prioritizes, for example, projects that conjoin socio-educational values, intangible heritage and popular traditions. This type of project is usually overlooked by the private companies that make use of the Rouanet Law. The latter usually seek media results – particularly true in the field of theatre – and the occasional sponsorship of cultural projects that have little continuity over time. In the case of Petrobras, some Brazilian artists and groups that have received national and international acclaim for their innovative role have enjoyed the semi-state firm's continued support over the years¹³. This type of policy brings the oil company's actions closer to those of some of the major foundations on U.S. soil. However, during the early months of 2019, under the command of President Bolsonaro's neoliberal and far-right government, Petrobras announced the suspension – and likely end – of cultural project sponsorships, including the aforementioned long-term projects.

Thus, emerging from the case of *Petrobras Cultural* and the Rouanet Law is a Brazilian tendency to misunderstand the responsibility of public and private sectors in investing in human development. In 20th century Brazil, the statist option for development was a determining factor in the success of the oil industry. In 21st century Brazil, undefined and indeterminate roles leave the responsibility for investment in culture in limbo.

Throughout our participation in the conference on Philanthropy, Development and the Arts, we were inevitably drawn into comparing Brazilian uncertainty to the extreme incisiveness and durability of cultural policies – linked to transnational marketing interests – that characterized the performance of the great North American corporations over the 20th century.

Christopher Balme, in his welcoming speech at the conference, showed how cultural policies have included an effort to develop and maintain communication networks connecting intellectuals and artists from around the world, especially with regard to the growth of professional theatre in emerging countries. Large corporations, acting through foundations that partnered with agencies linked to the U.S. government, put into practice a strategy that foresaw networks of the artistic-intellectual milieu as a

fundamental field in the dispute for market hegemony that took shape as of the post-war period¹⁴.

We have seen, thus far, the transnational perspective of the Munich conference expands our understanding of contemporary cultural policies. In the next section, we discuss the way this approach raises some hitherto unimaginable epistemological possibilities for the field of theatre historiography.

Transnational Networks and New Historiographies for Theatre

In presenting research of her own that is part of the Developing Theatre Project, Nic Leonhardt showed how, in the 1950s, Rockefeller Foundation investments for the institutionalization and professionalization of theatre in the Philippines were part of a clear strategy of American legitimation in the post-war era. This German scholar provided a case study of director and playwright Severino Montano. From thorough analysis of documents from the Rockefeller Archives, Leonhardt identified that the grants that the Foundation awarded to Montano spurred the creation of the Theatre Department at the Philippine Normal College, as well as the Arena Theatre movement, both of which were geared toward the training of actors, directors, playwrights and theatre technicians.

Leonhardt also went on to map the Philippine theatre director's international travels for purposes of study, exchange and network construction that were financed by the U.S. corporation. Her research exemplifies the way in which some of the networks that were strategically built or used by large foundations such as Rockefeller strengthened professional theatre in emerging countries by selecting and financing the work of local experts. She shows that, beyond money, at stake in the establishment of these cultural bridges was the circulation and implantation of ideas in a post-war world¹⁵.

This issue appeared in a similar way in the work of German researcher Jan Creutzenberg, a professor at Ewha Womans University in South Korea. The focus of his paper was director and playwright Yu Chi-jin's interaction with the Rockefeller Foundation. By granting resources to Chi-jin for the creation of the Seoul Drama Center in the 1950s and 1960s, the Foundation attempted to stimulate restoration of the post-war South Korean theatre scene. Given the fact that U.S. policies have exerted influence on South

Korea's cultural sphere continuously since the end of World War II, as part of a global effort in the face of communism, Creutzenberg also examined the ways in which geopolitical agendas, cosmopolitan ambitions and financial interests contributed to the emergence of a new notion of the contemporary in South Korean theatre. In his view, the intersection of the Western avant-garde and the legacy of traditional performances, formulated at the Seoul Drama Center, provides evidence of an ideology oriented toward globalization¹⁶.

Researches presented by Nic Leonhardt and Jan Creutzenberg at the Munich conference were revealing of a common pattern in the theatrical modernization processes in the Philippines and South Korea during the 1950s and 1960s: the implantation and development, in different ways, of theatre in an arena format. In the case of the Philippines, Rockefeller Foundation investments enabled growth and dissemination on a national scale of practices, knowledge and methodologies of theatre-in-the round, which made Severino Montano the great modernizer and propagator of theatre in his country. According to Leonhardt (2019), Montano was probably inspired by the ideas of the book *Theatre in the Round*, by U.S. director Margo Jones, although he never admitted that influence. The Filipino director said that to perform in the arena format meant recovery of a secular tradition of his country, and of Asia itself. Despite the wide reach of his work, Severino Montano never managed to fulfill his dream of building a national theatre in the capital city of Manila.

In the South Korean case, Creutzenberg (2019) states that director Yu Chi-jin has always openly expressed his enthusiasm for Margo Jones' ideas, especially in the context of the campaign that raised funds needed for the construction of a national theatre in arena format. This project, which involved the support of several institutions including Rockefeller, came to fruition with the opening of the Seoul Drama Center in 1962. During its early days, the theatre built by Chi-jin did not have the success that the director intended in terms of the internationalization of the South Korean scene. It was not until the 1970s that the site would gain importance, through a modernization process led by a new generation of artists mixing elements of tradition with global influences.

This recurrence of arena theatres, in the same period and in different countries, suggests possibilities for a new approach to the historiography of

Brazilian theatre, specifically related to the arrival of this trend in Brazil. Director and playwright José Renato, after experimenting with the arena format as a student at the São Paulo School of Dramatic Art, based his proposal on Jones' aforementioned book, which arrived in Brazil from the United States through the critic Décio de Almeida Prado. This experience led Zé Renato to found the *Teatro de Arena de São Paulo* in 1953, intensifying work in the arena format – initially through a foreign repertoire and later launching a national dramaturgy (Magaldi, 1984).

Thus, in Brazil, as well as in other emerging countries, the search for a national theatre was conjoined with ideas of modernization and renewal, through the direct influence of cosmopolitan avant-gardes that were in circulation at time. The Brazilian case therefore confirms findings from Leonhardt's and Creutzenberg's studies: theatre layout in arena format was not restricted to national manifestations in the United States, the Philippines, South Korea or Brazil, but became a transnational trend that, as of the 1950s, made its way around the world.

The early trajectory of Brazilian director Augusto Boal reinforced this transnational connection of the *Teatro de Arena* to the cosmopolitan avant-garde – a connection that Boal would later expand to other networks working on a global scale, with the creation of his Theatre of the Oppressed. During the decade of the 1950s, Boal spent some time studying in New York, acquiring experience in playwriting through John Gassner's seminars at Columbia University and in the Stanislavsky method, through classes he attended at the Actor's Studio. Upon returning to Brazil, Boal joined the *Teatro de Arena*, where he shared his newfound approach with numerous professionals, teaching seminars on dramaturgy and creating workshops on naturalistic acting.

The network of contacts that Boal wove at the international level during the 1950s and 1960s, as well as his subsequent life in exile, certainly contributed in the following decades to the transnational expansion and the growing legitimization of the Theatre of the Oppressed worldwide (Andrade; Balme, 2020). Since his years at the *Teatro de Arena*, Boal had gained recognition in international theatre circles, touring with the group to the United States – thanks to Joanne Pollitzer's and Richard Schechner's initiatives – and enjoying repeated participation in the International Festival of Nancy, in France, at the invitation of the festival director of that period,

Jack Lang. During the late 1970s, when Augusto Boal was in exile in Paris, author and critic Emile Copfermann, his French publisher, was a key mediator in introducing the Theatre of the Oppressed to the French public. Copfermann presented Boal's work to the artistic and intellectual world and helped to establish increasingly solid bridges through influential names such as Jack Lang himself – soon to become Minister of Culture to French President François Mitterrand (Andrade, 2014; 2017).

The paper we presented at the Munich conference, discussing the Theatre of the Oppressed's institutionalization and expansion in France¹⁷, showed that the new French political and cultural context was especially favorable to the survival and spread of Boal's method. This context awarded the Theatre of the Oppressed an opportunity to integrate their practices with the new state policies created by a socialist government. During the early 1980s, the financial support provided by Mitterrand's public policies for culture made a robust contribution to the Theatre of the Oppressed's (TO) expansion throughout France, through projects carried out in social centers around the country. Embracing policies of cultural democracy, TO found the means to institutionalize and to multiply, exponentially and autonomously. It then expanded beyond the French borders, spreading to a variety of countries in Europe, Africa and Asia and developing transnational networks of practitioners (Andrade, 2017).

This transnational expansion of the Theatre of the Oppressed was part of a global shift in the notion of culture and the funding of the arts. At that time, there was a broad move in theatre questioning the model of high culture, leading to projects in which theatre became redefined as a tool for social development. In fact, Augusto Boal found ways to systematize and disseminate his method on a transnational scale at the very moment that TO started to be practiced as a social methodology, contributing directly to the field of Theatre for Development (Andrade; Balme, 2020).

Theatre for Development was also addressed by other presentations at the Munich conference. Kennedy C. Chinyowa, professor at Tshwane University of Technology, in Pretoria, South Africa, discussed problems related to social art interventions aimed at reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS in Malawi – a country that has one of the ten highest virus contamination rates in the world.

Chinyowa examined the Art and Global Health Center sponsored project, *Make Art / Stop Aids* and argued that, although research demonstrated the benefits that applied theatre initiatives had for participants, basic contradictions also emerged, frustrating intervention efforts. In his view, although the Art and Global Health Center has had good intentions as a sponsor of social projects in rural communities, its philanthropic position is fraught with inconsistencies. According to Chinyowa, projects by organizations outside the community tend to lose the focus on the local people who are meant to benefit from them, creating a financing model that ends up becoming more oppressive than liberating¹⁸. From his extensive on-site research and his own standpoint as a researcher born in Zimbabwe, Dr. Chinyowa brought out the issue of philanthropy's paternalistic view on other cultures. His observations became fundamental reflections for the entire conference, and particularly relevant to those interested in philanthropic projects based in Brazil¹⁹.

Networks that bring art and cultural projects together as tools for development make theatre studies' need for social science tools evident. On the other hand, this social approach is still insufficiently explored within research on other forms of theatre. Within academia, what is referred to as *art theatre* has most often been examined from an exclusively aesthetic perspective. However, in a case study presented in Munich to which we now turn, the potential contribution of a sociological gaze, for analysis of objects linked to the idea of an avant-garde theatre, becomes clear.

New Theatre Epistemologies

At the Munich conference, Helleke Van den Braber, professor at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands, presented her case study on the letters that the English playwright Edward Gordon Craig exchanged with patrons and sponsors²⁰. The focus of this research alone would already draw attention in a country like Brazil, where sponsorship is as universal a paradigm in theatre production as it is ignored by academic research. Van den Braber uses the Craig case to show how, at the beginning of the 20th century, commitments between patrons and artist were a necessity for the professionalization of a certain type of theatre, which sought autonomy from the commercial resort to the box office²¹.

According to the information that Van den Braber was able to uncover, Gordon Craig had at least 32 patrons or sponsors from whom he obtained greater or lesser tangible and intangible benefits. The 450 letters analyzed by the researcher furnish evidence of diverse business and linguistic strategies involving pecuniary exchange and the negotiation of status and prestige. The study of these strategies reveals, for example, an unknown facet of Craig, as an aesthetically revolutionary artist who requested sponsorship over the years, yet without ever mentioning the word *money*. Such a term could never be used explicitly in negotiations, as it would be tarnishing both for the aristocratic patron and for the artist detached from the instrumentality of commercial theatre.

In analyzing these legitimation strategies, Van den Braber located Gordon Craig's search for sponsorships within the dynamics of disputes over social position as conceptualized by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2011). According to Bourdieu's theory, the material detachment of art is the criterion used by old and powerful segments of bourgeois society in order to validate their cultural habits, their social positions and their power in the face of other ascendent social groups. The more connected that art is to the idea of high culture, and the less attached to interest in commercial returns, the stronger its role as guarantor of this game of distinction and social dispute.

In this case, Van den Braber's research confirmed methodologies that we are just beginning to use in Brazilian theatre research, particularly in relation to the new standards of artistic legitimation that Brazilian theatre has adopted since the 1980s. The sociology of cultural practices and habits has proved to be a crucial tool for understanding the arrival or emergence of postmodernist and post-dramatic aesthetics in Brazil, and for the comprehension of experimentalist trends, their consolidation and consequent changes in the means of theatre production (Guenzburger, 2020).

This type of sociological approach has thus far been shown to be the most capable of casting light on a theatre that migrated from mass-audience and box office-oriented practices to a curatorial and marketing dynamics centered on sponsorship. It is only the study of the tensions and games of social legitimation of a theatre that is in flux that can explain, for example, the success, controversy and the aesthetic shifts triggered by the presence of director Gerald Thomas in Rio de Janeiro, who left a promising career in New York to return, in 1985, to his home country.

Bourdieu's sociological approach aided us in mapping internal conflicts in the field of theatre, and thereby making sense of Thomas's triumphant return in all its complexity, situating it within the reorganization of Brazilian society in the post-dictatorship period. Like Gordon Craig from Van den Braber's study, the Gerald Thomas who emerges from our sociological mapping is revealed as a player who was able to foresee the new rules of legitimation in theatre. He can thereby be defined as an inventive, cosmopolitan director who created and imported not only a new aesthetics, but – more importantly – the means for its realization in Brazil. In this sense, Thomas became the first big name in the era of sponsorship of Brazilian theatre, an era that, albeit threatened, persists today (Guenzburger, 2019; 2020).

Similarly, only a perspective that considers this game of influences in the field of cultural policies during the post-dictatorship period can explain the different receptions given to Augusto Boal and Gerald Thomas, two directors who returned to Brazil, and to the city of Rio de Janeiro, in 1985. In fact, insight into the tremendous differences in the way the two artists were received is the precise result of the epistemological tools used here. Thomas, a successful young director in New York avant-garde theatre, was welcomed home as a returning genius in the 50 quotes, interviews and reports of our survey of *Jornal do Brasil*, the major vehicle of the press in circulation in Rio de Janeiro at that time. Boal, after fifteen years of political exile and the acquisition of worldwide fame for his Theatre of the Oppressed, resumed his successful career as a director in conventional theatre in Brazil, and became the target of a persecutory campaign by that same newspaper. Boal's reputation as someone identified with the traditional left and returning from exile after international success had direct influence on the reception of his first play after his return – *O corsário do rei* (*The king's corsair*). The intense debate it provoked within the media and in the theatre milieu of the time became a trigger for a debate on cultural policy and its relationship to the State. Post-dictatorship Brazilian society's rejection of any form of state interference in culture ensured that Boal, as a stage director, was unable to find a place within the 1980s art theatre world. This situation was exacerbated by the incompatibility of Boal's ideas and the new system of legitimation of cultural marketing that was on the rise (Andrade, 2014).

Thus, unlike Gerald Thomas, the theatre developed by Augusto Boal while in exile achieved legitimacy within the field of the theatre as social development, rather than as entertainment art. This difference can be captured only through an understanding of particularities – how the aesthetics and discourse of each of these artists related to the new modes of theatre production and the growing Brazilian neoliberalism of the 1980s.

Museums and Ambiguities between Public and Private

In 21st century Brazil, neoliberalism applied to cultural policy unfolds through a mixture of privatizing discourse and cuts in government investment. The United States system is always taken as an example, a symbol of free culture because it is based on the market. Brazilian ignorance regarding the nuances, exceptions, contexts and problems arising from the North American private promotion of culture helps to create and maintain this myth. The Brazilian federal government's immediate response to the devastating fire at the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro in 2018 illustrates this ideological posture: blame was placed not on the financial neglect of the museum, but through the fact that it is state-owned and managed. Two days after the fire (Brasil, 2018a; 2018b), the federal government extinguished the Institute of Brazilian Museums (IBRAM), a key agency in public policy making and the product of historic struggles in Museology, and went on to create a private institution that was named Brazilian Museum Agency (ABRAM). The new project became private fundraising for museum endowment, following the North American model. Yet in implementing this change, the Brazilian government ignored both the feeble history of private investment in culture in the country – the lack of interest in anything besides complete tax exemption – and the serious problems that this privately-funded model has created in other parts of the world.

The problematic relationship of American museums to the art philanthropy market was exemplified in at least two presentations at the Munich conference. Professor at the State University of California, the Israeli Nizan Shaked demonstrated²² that the characterization of *public interest* is used to justify fundraising by American museums, but it is abandoned once criteria of artistic choice are implemented, and through the opacity of financial transactions. Shaked showed that this system – somewhat analogous to the Brazilian Rouanet Law – uses the notion of *public utility* to serve the private

agendas of a certain caste of art market agents. Often, the cultural agents who determine which artists are valued by museums are the very investors who profit by buying and selling their works in the private market of art collectors. This elitist system based on tax exemption results, among other things, in aesthetic limitations and omissions in museum collections, in addition to ideological restrictions on culture as a whole²³.

Some of these restrictions were sharply apparent in University of Florida Dr. Antonio Cuyler's paper on fundraising and cultural equity in the United States²⁴. He demonstrated that there, too, philanthropy for the arts can be a factor in increasing inequalities. In the USA, large cultural non-profit organizations with annual budgets of over 5 million dollars represent only 2% of the market, yet receive more than 50% of all donations. A mere 10% of total donations go to the arts that benefit marginalized populations, such as low-income people with special needs, or the black, Latin, LGBTQI + and others²⁵.

Far-Right, Neoliberalism and Cultural Conservatism

With the recent election of a far-right government in Brazil, the tendency for the State to increasingly withdraw its support to the arts and culture is clear. Firstly, neoliberal ideology is taken very seriously by the contemporary right in emerging countries. Despite historic state participation in the industrial development of these countries, today their political classes largely consider the minimal state as a condition for development and stability. Secondly, the rise of cultural conservatism has put the role of the State as a promoter of culture in check, while demanding it act as an agent of moral regulation, in the form of censorship of the arts. The political base of Brazil's Bolsonaro government is largely dominated by radical neo-Pentecostal evangelical leaders who are waging a real cultural war against artists and teachers today, treating them as corruptors of moral custom and parasites who thrive on public money. In the case of theatre, the Rouanet Law has been seen, within this discourse, as a great support for leftist or opportunistic artists.

As the historical absence of a tradition of private philanthropy merges with recent cuts in public resources, the economic strangulation of sectors such as science, technology and culture is now a reality in Brazil. A political

emptying of intellectual activity is not merely a consequence, but a goal of such a project. While in Brazil this process may still be in an initial stage and with no definite end in sight, researchers from other countries have exposed similar realities in much more advanced stages.

Two weeks before the conference in Munich, we were in Belgrade, Serbia, for the annual conference of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR). The 2018 Conference theme was enunciated as *Theatre and Migration – Theatre, Nation and Identity: Between Migration and Stasis*. Contact with Turkish researchers and artists provided us with an idea of the severity of censorship and the constriction of cultural policies in Turkey²⁶. If we consider that Turkey is one of the few countries in the world – alongside China, Russia, Germany and part of Eastern Europe – with a tradition of state theatres and casts, the situation of recent transformation implemented by the Erdoğan government within the sector, especially after the purges that followed the coup attempt in 2015, is ominous. At the previous IFTR congress, held in São Paulo, in 2017, there was an online panel with Turkish university professors who had recently been forced into exile. Turkey's ultraliberal discourse on the economy coupled by its ultraconservatism in customs, employed by political forces linked to radical Islamism and supporting Erdoğan, shares some traits with the neo-Pentecostal grammar that supports the current Brazilian government. The most obvious of them, thus far, has been the attack on teachers and artists not aligned with the government, and the consequent impossibility of a democratic public sphere for national debates²⁷.

Concluding Remarks

The examples discussed in this paper demonstrate how the inclusion of socioeconomic and transnational contexts can enhance the scope and communication of theatre studies. Issues and practices that seem to be exclusively local reveal themselves as recurring in several parts of the world. Likewise, research approaches and methodologies applied in a given country prove useful for discussions of vastly different realities, insofar as institutional and production contexts are not neglected.

We have examined here the characteristic Brazilian conflation of public and private responsibilities for investing in culture, through a comparison of the cultural policies of Petrobras and the major American founda-

tions. Yet this same kind of ambiguity affects museum policies in the United States, where public resources feed a market that yields high profits for private investors.

A transnational perspective also allows for a new historiographical approach to the São Paulo Arena Theatre movement. In the light of cases of the Philippines and South Korea, the São Paulo group is no longer seen solely as a symbol of the struggle for a *truly Brazilian* theatre²⁸, but as part of global tendencies to modernize national theatres.

Augusto Boal's mediating role, connecting Brazil to cosmopolitan avant-gardes that favored such tendencies, becomes clear when we examine his international trajectory: first as *importer* of acting and playwriting knowledge, and later as creator and *exporter* of theatre methodologies that circulated around the world. The global nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed can only be captured through a perspective that accounts for both the transnationality of networks and the method's adaptability to worldwide changes in the modes of funding theatre and culture.

Furthermore, our examination of the different receptions that were given to two prodigal sons, Augusto Boal and Gerald Thomas, in the Brazil of the New Republic, uncovered the need for a sociology of the modes of production in theatre. This tool appears as the only one that is capable of explaining, in this case, both media rejection of theatre labelled as left-wing and the adaptability of avant-garde theatre to a new world of cultural marketing in post-dictatorship Brazil.

In addition to the methodological confirmation that emerges from the cases discussed here, something more crucial stands out from our critical account of the Munich conference: a challenge regarding the very survival of theatre and culture production and research. Our exchange with researchers from Turkey shows that, in countries that are undergoing similar reactionary processes, such as the one that is unfolding in Brazil today, theatre activities are also targeted by the government and certain sectors of civil society. This must be seen as a global phenomenon with specific characteristics in each context.

In this new reality, teachers and artists become the target of attack²⁹ and are obliged to justify and defend the existence of their activities, which face serious threat. The path suggested at the Munich conference, as well as

within this article, aids in such defense by establishing new and necessary connections. If we want to understand transnational circuits in theatre, arts, education and culture, we must reflect on the material and social conditions that maintain these circuits, and which, at present, are under assault.

Artists and researchers who work with theatre and culture from this expanded perspective are, in doing so, already manufacturing tools to ensure their resistance and survival in the near future. Faced with the growing wave of regressive ideologies, it is up to intellectuals and professionals of arts and culture to build their own forms of solidarity and their own movements of resistance – acting, creating and researching – through transnational networks.

Notes

- ¹ The book that introduces the foundations of the Global Theatre Histories program to Brazil, *Rotas de Teatro entre Portugal e Brasil – Theatre Routes between Portugal and Brazil* (Werneck; Reis, 2012) thus becomes an exception in the field of Brazilian theatre historiography. The editors' quest to build transatlantic bridges, by observing theatre circuits of the 19th and early 20th centuries, broadens the historical horizons of Brazilian theatre, extending it beyond the idea of nation. The current applications of this focus to the study of other topics of our historiography includes not only the discovery of new commercial routes taken by performances and companies and the trajectories of artists and theatrical entrepreneurs, but the study of the diversity of international exchanges of methods, ideas, policies and knowledge which were also a constitutive element of modern and contemporary theatre (Andrade, 2017; Andrade; Balme, 2020; Guenzburger, 2020).
- ² In an effort to fill in this gap, we have recently put together an edited volume (with Isabel Penoni), *Cenas cariocas: modos, políticas e poéticas teatrais contemporâneas – Rio's Scenes: contemporary modes, policies and theatrical poetics –*, to be published in 2020 by Garamond Ed. (Andrade; Guenzburger; Penoni, 2020).
- ³ Conference website available at: <<https://philanthropyconference2018.wordpress.com>>. Last accessed on September 16, 2020.

- ⁴ Project website: <<http://developing-theatre.de/>>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ⁵ Maria Helena Werneck's participation on the editorial board and other activities at the Centre for Global Theatre Histories reinforces her pioneering role in advancing a transnational approach to theatre studies in Brazil. This article is one of the fruits of the long-standing intellectual exchange that we have maintained with Professor Werneck. We are grateful to her for having brought this transnational perspective into our own researches.
- ⁶ This invitation led to collaborative work during the first half of 2020. This article was finished during the period we (authors Clara de Andrade and Gustavo Guenzburger) were in Munich as Visiting Fellows at the Centre for Global Theatre Histories & Developing Theatre Project. See <<https://gth.hypotheses.org/1178>>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ⁷ The conference featured a large panel with 21 presentations. Some of the papers presented there have been selected for discussion in this article because of the possibilities they offer for comparisons and analogies with Brazilian cases and approaches.
- ⁸ Abstract available at: <https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/berghahn_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ⁹ Abstract available at: <https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/parmar_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ¹⁰ In his book *America and the intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, Berghahn (2001) provides an account of what was going on behind the scenes, and the consequences of press revelation of several secret operations involving the Ford Foundation and the CIA.
- ¹¹ In *Foundations of the American century: the Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations in the rise of American power*, Inderjeet Parmar (2014) shows how the concealment of government connections was important in building the foundation's image of independence. Parmar points out three fictions that both guided and resulted from this process, and which led to the conceptualization of these major American foundations as *non-state, non-commercial and non-ideological (or scientific)*.

- ¹² Abstract available at:
<https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/guenzburger_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ¹³ In the performing arts, examples are *Grupo Galpão*, *Grupo Corpo*, *Cia Armazém*, *Cia de Dança Deborah Colker* and others. Some of these groups continued to receive sponsorships from Petrobras even after 2012, when the company ran into deficit and thus no longer able to use the Rouanet Law. In 2019, all of these groups and companies lost their sponsorships, cut off by new company guidelines.
- ¹⁴ In a recent article, Christopher Balme (2019) demonstrates this logic through the example of Nigeria, where young artists, expatriate go-betweens and the theatre studies department at Ibadan University received support from the Rockefeller Foundation, aligned with the Council for Cultural Freedom which, in turn, was funded by the CIA.
- ¹⁵ In a recent article, Nic Leonhardt (2019) describes this network logic in the case of Severino Montano, as well as the national scope of the Montano Arena Theatre project in the Philippines.
- ¹⁶ Abstract available at:
<https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/creutzenberg_abstract1.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ¹⁷ Abstract available at:
<https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/andrade_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ¹⁸ Abstract available at:
<https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/chinyowa_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ¹⁹ Dr. Chinyowa provides reflections on this type of contradiction in a 2013 article (Chinyowa, 2013).
- ²⁰ Abstract available at:
<https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/van-den-braber_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ²¹ Dr. Van den Braber (2017b) has recent articles on 19th century patronage models and on the relationship between Gordon Craig and his patron Marguerite Caetani (Van den Braber, 2017a).

- ²² Abstract available at: <https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/shaked_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ²³ In a 2019 article, Dr. Nizan Shaked argues that this type of contradiction in the way American civil society organizes itself around the third sector is part of a spectrum of vulnerabilities that have favored the rise of *Trumpism*, neo-fascism, or what she prefers to call *econo-fascism* (Shaked, 2019).
- ²⁴ Abstract available at: <https://philanthropyconference2018.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/cuyler_abstract.pdf>. Last accessed on: September 16, 2020.
- ²⁵ In a 2019 article, Dr. Cuyler suggests that foundations take on a strategic leadership role in the search for *creative justice*, which he defines as “[...] the manifestation of all people living creative and expressive lives on their own terms” (Cuyler, 2019).
- ²⁶ In 2014, the authors were invited to give workshops at the Antalya International Theatre Festival in southern Turkey. The names of Turkish researchers and artists we met in Turkey, Germany and Serbia are not mentioned here, as a measure of precaution against possible retaliation.
- ²⁷ In 2016, intellectuals and academics who signed a petition against the *massacre and deportation of the Kurdish people* became victims of persecution, imprisonment, dismissal and prosecution by the government (Weaver, 2016).
- ²⁸ This is the general characteristic by which the *Teatro de Arena of São Paulo* is known in Brazilian theatre history.
- ²⁹ Regarding the war on artists in Brazil, a good summary can be found in a recent report by the newspaper *O Globo* (Aragão, 2020). With reference to ongoing attacks on the Brazilian scientific community, the most emblematic case thus far was that of the director of the National Institute for Space Research (Inpe), Ricardo Galvão, exonerated by President Bolsonaro after providing information on deforestation in the Amazon (Pontes, 2019).

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