

EDITORIAL en-

Theatre and Dictatorship in the 20th Century

452°*F*'s tenth issue aims at creating a space for discussion and reflection on the links between theatre and dictatorship. There were indeed many societies that suffered some kind of dictatorial regime during the 20th century and theatre proved to be a useful tool in all of them. As opposed to other genres, theatre's potential lays in its immediacy and collectivity – theatre is based on the direct, unmediated transmission of a message to a group of people, created, as such, for the sole purpose of receiving it. This idiosyncrasy of theatre allows a politicization of audiences to a greater degree than other genres do. Aware of that, both dictatorial regimes and their opponents have taken advantage of theatre, either to impose obedience or to promote dissent under totalitarian contexts. The contributors of this issue have focused on theatre's uses for contestation to a broad and representative array of dictatorial regimes.

In the invited article, “Censura e resistência: o teatro de grupos amadores na cidade de São Paulo”, Roseli Figaro unpins the functioning of theatre censorship in Brazil during the *Estado Novo* and the military dictatorship, as well as during the fragile democratic period in between. To do so, the author examines the corpus of amateur theatre in the city of São Paulo, addressing it as a generator of social cohesion and including the witnesses of practitioners. Further to these valuable materials, Figaro's article describes the preservation of censorship materials and illustrates the study of censorship in today's Brazil. Gina Beltrán Valencia offers another perspective on the Latin-American continent in her article «Antígona Pérez y el sensacionalismo: la desarticulación de un sistema totalitario». This work delves into the links between power and rebellion in a framework of dictatorship. To do so, Beltrán Valencia analyzes *La pasión según Antígona Pérez: crónica americana en dos actos*, a play that dialogues both with Christianity and tragedy and which rewrites *Antigone* in the imaginary republic of Molina, a universalizing metaphor for the diverse Hispano-American dictatorships of the 20th century.

Three articles convey a detailed overview of the situation of theatre under the Iberian dictatorships. In «El Teatro español sobre apropiación de menores. La puesta en escena como espacio de identidad y memoria», Luz C. Souto addresses 21st Century dramatic reconstructions of the stealing of children of defeated Spanish-Civil-War combatants during Franco's regime. Souto's article explores the construction of memory through theatre and how audiences become agents in this process. «La polémica teatral en *Destino* (1959). Néstor Luján, Josep Maria de Sagarra y la Agrupación Dramática de Barcelona», by Blanca Ripoll Sintés, studies the situation of Catalan theatre during the high tide of Franco's regime, breaks down the causes of its decadence and enumerates the different proposals by intellectuals to revive playwriting in Catalonia's own language. This broad and well-documented overview of Catalan theatre under the dictatorship addresses the links between theatre, intelligentsia, the press and public institutions, and shows the difficulty of reconstructing Catalan theatre in Franco's extremely nationalistic Spain. Lastly, Ana Cabrera's «A memória e o esquecimento: A censura do Estado Novo em Portugal perante três peças de autores espanhóis» details the functioning of the Portuguese censorship system during the *Estado Novo* and reveals the implications of censorship in theatrical reception. To do so, the author analyses three Spanish plays,

which allows her to comment on the relationship between Spanish and Portuguese dictatorships and thus provides an interesting Iberian perspective.

A last group of articles addresses the situation in the Eastern European former Soviet block. In «The Belarus Free Theatre: Performing Resistance and Democracy», Kathleen Elphick analyses the situation of theatre in post-Soviet Belarus. While promoting inane National Theatres that neutralize progressive thought, Lukashenko's regime has banned performances by the Belarus Free Theatre outright. Clandestinely and in private apartments, the company carries out nonetheless a performative form of resistance in their shows, which usually revolve around quotidian yet silenced and taboo subjects in Belarus. For her part, Christine Korte's work, «Castorf staging Limonov: Performativity and Neo-Totalitarianism at the Berliner Volksbühne», focuses on the staging of the novel *Fuck Off, Amerika*, by Russian author Limonov, at Berlin's Volksbühne. The article draws on the show's criticism, and ultimately equation, of both Capitalism and Communism. Moreover, Korte tackles the role of the Volksbühne both as bastion of radical and anti-bourgeois theatre and as opposition to the process of reunification and gentrification of Germany's capital. Theatre director Castorf's use of totalitarian rhetoric, both from the extreme right and left, is pointed as a strategy to agitate consciousness in the frame of the on-going *Americanization* of the city.

This selection of articles addresses the intricate links between theatre and dictatorship in a manifold manner. Manifold because the articles study different societies and give voice to regions particularly afflicted by dictatorial barbarism in the last century: Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula and Eastern Europe. Manifold because the selection of works approaches the epistemological duality of theatre, engaging with its literary as well as staging angles. Manifold because the study of the links between theatre and dictatorship is undertaken both from a framework of chronological coexistence, as well as from an a posteriori reflection on the past. Manifold because theatre is understood by its impact on the individual, as a space of memory and identity and by its links with institutions (the press, censorship, the venues). And finally, manifold because dictatorship is understood not only as the container, but also as the content of drama. Together, these articles provide a surprising myriad of approaches to a monograph, primarily intended as a space for reflection on such a crucial subject as the links between stage and tyranny.

A miscellaneous section featuring five articles rounds off the monograph. In «De la caverna platónica a las prisiones modernas: Visión y oscuridad en la literatura, el cine y el arte políticos del siglo XX» Patrícia Vieira analyses the links between luminosity, blindness, totalitarianism and resistance by means of an itinerary across the concepts of blindness, ethics and politics in 20th Century literature, art and political film. For her part, Amanda Ruiz Navarro's «Reescriptura i reivindicació a les *Horacianes* de Vicent Andrés Estellés» focuses on the process of rewriting Horatio in Vicent Andrés Estellés' book of poems *Horacines*, by which Andrés Estellés managed to bypass censorship and introduce certain elements of political criticism. In the next article, «Tragedia y retórica entusiasta en el *Empedokles* de Hölderlin», Martín Rodríguez Baigorria situates the notion of enthusiastic rhetoric as the main motivation for conflict in Hölderlin's work by analyzing the two first sketches of *Der Tod des Empedokles*. In her article «Comparación entre la poesía existencial de posguerra de España y Corea del Sur», Elia Rodríguez López lays out a comparative study between the existential post-war poetry of two very distant cultures, Spain's and Korea's, which reflects the mutual experience of a civil war and the ensuing existential crisis. Finally, in «La Literatura y las catástrofes históricas del siglo XX, un novedoso objeto de estudio comparatista», Paula Simón considers the relationship between testimonial literature about concentration camps and comparative literature, to highlight how the latter's notions of interdisciplinary and transversality can provide new perspectives on the former.

I cannot finish this editorial without briefly noting, self-complacently, that 452°F has reached its

tenth issue. This landmark not only confirms the vitality of a publication born five years ago with an innovative, transversal and multilingual spirit, but also proves the unconditional commitment of its editorial board, the seriousness of the project and, in brief, the success of a well-done job. I am therefore not using empty rhetoric when I congratulate the whole team and everyone who has a part in the journal and contributes to the titanic task of publishing 452°F. Let's celebrate. And let's carry on.

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