Priscilla Duarte, Ricardo Gomes (Brazil)

To Those Who Will Come After Us

Odin Teatret’s first trip to Venezuela in 1976 in order to participate in the Caracas Festival marked the beginning of the group and Eugenio Barba’s strong and long-lasting relationship with Latin America. Odin’s first contact with Brazil took place in 1978, when group members Roberta Carreri and Francis Pardellhan came to Salvador (Bahia) to study capoeira and the dances of the Orixás, as part of their creative process for the performance The Million.

However, it was the presence of Eugenio Barba, accompanying the groups Farfa and Canada Project, in 1987, during a trip to São Paulo, Campinas and Rio de Janeiro, which made a profound impact on a young generation of Brazilian theatre practitioners. The performances, lectures, film exhibitions and workshops organised by Barba and the members of Farfa and The Canada Project1, alongside the presence of the Italian groups Teatro tascabile di Bergamo and Teatro Potlach (who also visited the country during the same year), introduced Brazilian artists to the field of theatre anthropology and the concept of Third Theatre for the first time.2 The impact was such that a number of groups were formed or developed new approaches to their work.3 Since then, the reference to theatre anthropology became an integral part of the practices of many Brazilian theatre groups and scholars. Exchanges and barters between Odin Teatret and Brazil have multiplied, highlighting the vocation of Barba and his actors in terms of creating artist networks.

This historical first meeting was marked by the ‘political opening’ of the military dictatorship that had governed Brazil from 1964 to 1985. This ‘slow and gradual’ opening was determined by the generals, and was not the ‘ample and unrestricted’ process of democratisation demanded by civilian society. The opening had been preceded by the harshest period of the military regime, including the violent repression of the student movement of 1968. As is customary under dictatorships, artists had been censored, silenced, persecuted, banished from the country, exiled and even murdered; many theatre groups were destroyed. On this scorched earth, Brazilian theatre was reborn from the ashes. While the groups that had made history in the 1960s no longer existed or were scattered, the new groups that would strike out fresh paths over the following years, many of them severely marked by the experiences of 1987, were taking their first steps.

We were young students on the Performing Arts Undergraduate Programme at UNIRIO, in Rio de Janeiro, and felt immersed in a theatre environment drained of its liveliness. Our contact with the ideas and practices of Odin Teatret and the Italian groups introduced us, and many of our generation, to the tenets of Group Theatre. This had a major impact on the history of Brazilian theatre, introducing new practices and theatrical concepts, such as theatre anthropology, training and the dramaturgy of the actor, and inspired us to look afresh at the embodied techniques of our own culture. Encouraged to follow these paths, some Brazilian artists, including the authors of this text, went to visit the teachers in their home countries. Some of us stayed for brief periods, others for many years, and a select few moved permanently abroad.4 The groups and artists that developed their professional careers back home continued to encounter Odin Teatret and other European Third Theatre groups thanks to the many Brazilian tours these groups undertook over the years.

In 2021, stemming from the professional network established over many years by Odin Teatret and Brazilian groups, artists and scholars, we organised a series of online meetings. During a dramatic year, in which Brazil suffered from the disastrous handling of the COVID-19 pandemic by the government, compiled by a chaotic political, economic and social situation leading to severe shortages in terms of healthcare, culture, education, environmental practices, citizenship, human rights, food insecurity, a theatrical event appeared on the horizon like dry land (or perhaps a floating island),

1. The groups Farfa (directed by Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Odin Teatret actress) and The Canada Project (directed by Richard Fowler) were part of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, alongside Odin Teatret.
2. These tours across Brazil, undertaken by Eugenio Barba and the groups Farfa and The Canada Project, in June 1987, and Teatro tascabile di Bergamo and Teatro Potlach, in May 1987, were an initiative of Luis Ouvio Burnier, founder and first director of Lume Teatro, based in Campinas (SP), who had convinced the Italian Culture Institutes of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to sponsor the events. In 1988 and 1989, Tascabile, Potlach, and also Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Ponsedera, another Italian group connected to the Third Theatre, performed throughout Brazil, not only in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but also in cities like Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Salvador (Bahia), Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais) and Belém (Pará).
3. Another significant moment was the 8th session of ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology, in Londrina (Paraná), in 1994 - until today the only of the 16 sessions of ISTA to be held outside of Europe. On this occasion, Eugenio Barba began his collaboration with Brazilian dancer Augusto Omolu (1963-2013), who remained a member of the artistic staff of ISTA and, in 2002, became an actor of Odin Teatret.
4. Some few examples of these travels back and forth of Brazilians in direct contact with European groups, strictly connected to our experiences, with no pretension of painting a complete picture of this reality (that would demand historical research which isn’t within the objectives of this account). In 1989, the authors of this article left Rio de Janeiro for Bergamo (Italy) for an informal internship at the Teatro tascabile di Bergamo. It was the beginning of a relationship in which the teachers, over the period in which we worked with the TTB (1989-1994; 2003-2007), became friends and colleagues. This relationship has been maintained by our group, Teatro Daodokai, founded in 1996, in Rio de Janeiro, whose debut performance Pedro e o Lobo, drew on the Indian theatre-dance techniques learned at Tascabile and in India.

Teatro Potlach organised an eight-month long workshop at their headquarters in Fara Sabina (Italy), between 1987 and 1988, for ten young actors, four of them Argentinean and six from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Marcus Acauãn, Gilda Cuzzi, Júlio Adrião, Dinah Kleva, Júlio stayed in Italy for many years and collaborated with the group Abraxa Teatro. Gilda and Marcos settled in Italy and were, for some time, part of Teatro Potlach. After years with his own company, Gurgapius, Marcus Acauãn has recently reignited his collaboration with Teatro Potlach.

Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos, born in Unubuzinho (Paraíba), participated, in 1988 and 1989, in two workshops, one lasting one month and another lasting three, with Roberta Carreri, at Odin Teatret, in Dramark; later, in 1992, he directed, with his Grupo Os El, from João Pessoa (Paraíba), the play Vau de Sarapatelhã, based on the short story Sarapatelhã, by Guimarães Rosa, bringing theatre anthropology into dialogue with Brazilian cultural references.
It was possible to bring together young and veteran groups, local collectivities, poetic languages, aesthetic choices, pedagogical approaches and survival differences, it was possible to observe common traits in terms of ethical and political experiences would often elicit a strong emotional response. During the Encounters, the taking place both created a historical archive and broadened our audience-base (11/22 to 26). The ability to ensure that the activities were available online immediately after taking place both created a historical archive and broadened our audience-base emphatically.

Each day of the Programme was incredibly rich and frequently surprising: meetings took place between artists who often had not seen one another for a very long time, artists that had not previously met struck up connections, and the memory of shared experiences would often elicit a strong emotional response. During the Encounters, the complex and diverse realities of different participants were revealed, yet despite these differences, it was possible to observe common traits in terms of ethical and political positions, poetic languages, aesthetic choices, pedagogical approaches and survival strategies. It was possible to bring together young and veteran groups, local collectivities and international networks, permanent headquarters and nomadic occupations, the construction of identity and the necessity for alterity. We were invited to think of Group Theatre as a form of *aquilombamento* and to articulate the cultural action with the singularity of the territory in which one acts as an agent of transformation, and going beyond it. Through the prism of realities represented, it was possible to gain a greater understanding of counter hegemonic theatrical movements, particularly in a country where support and access to culture are so unequal. We brought together groups from small towns such as Alfa Floresta (located in the State of Mato Grosso, in the Mato Grosso Amazon, in Central-Western Brazil) and Petrolina (located in the State of Pernambuco, on the margins of the São Francisco River, in the Brazilian North East), with others from large urban centres such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Thus, though many artists were not included in this first edition of the event, as is inevitable in any curatorship, it was possible to bring together a very significant sample of theatre practitioners who identify in some way with the tenets of theatre anthropology and the Third Theatre.

In the wake of the Encounters, the energetic quality produced by the exchanges that took place continues to reverberate, creating successive ripples, like a stone thrown into water. A movement was produced: a desire for continuity and shared experience. As artists, we are used to this sensation at the end of a (proximal) theatre festival, where groups meet and share both knowledge and affection. But, we have also all seen, on certain occasions, that a sudden enthusiasm can be akin to a bonfire, that consumes itself and extinguishes. It is necessary today, more than ever, to join forces in an exhausted world in which many seem to conspire against our existence as human beings and as artists, to ensure that the lit flame does not die out. The development of events is promising: after the Encounters, participant artists and scholars met remotely and gave the emerging movement a name - Terceiro Teatro Brasil (Third Theatre Brazil). Many pathways to concrete actions were discussed, and an ample network of artists, groups, scholars and universities emerged.

The Third Theatre Brazil movement has come to life, thanks to the teachings, rebellion and non-conformism of a bunch of young misfits - an immigrant director and his aspiring actors, who had all been rejected by the local theatre conservatory. This group, Odin Teatret, emerged in Oslo, in Norway, and established itself in Holstebro, Denmark, in the 1960s. Today, the reasons for non-conformism and restlessness may have changed, but the fire has not gone out. 

6. The term “*aquilombamento*” refers to the quilombos (communities formed in colonial Brazil, stemming from situations of territorial, social and cultural resistance of black enslaved peoples that fled for freedom and organised in autonomous communities) and is a variant of the notion of “quilombism”, formulated by Abdias do Nascimento: “The Quilombo doesn’t mean escaped slaves. The Quilombo means fraternal and free reunion, solidarity, coexistence, existential communion. We repeat that the *quilombo* society represents a step in human and social-political progress, in terms of economical egalitarianism. The known historical precedents confirm this statement. As an economic system,quilombism has been the Brazilian adaptation of communitarianism and/or the African tradition of ujamamaa. In such a system, the production relationships differ basically from those prevalent in the exploitative work economy we call capitalism, founded on the reason of profit to all cost, especially the profit obtained from black African enslaved blood.” (Nascimento, Abdias. *Quilombismo: um conceito científico histórico-social*. In: Nascimento, Abdias. *O quilombismo: documentos de uma militância pan-africanista*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1980, p. 263).
be driven by different factors, but the fundamental questions remain the same. When? Where? How? What for? Why do we make theatre? It is our responsibility to search for our own answers, in resonance with the values of this strange art that has resisted so many adversities, uniting those of us present today with the ones who will come after us.

Translated by Maria Duarte, reviewed by Patrick Campbell

Antonis Diamantis, Irene Koutsaki (Omma Studio Theatre, Crete, Greece)

Centre of Theatre Anthropology

2nd International Conference of Theatre Anthropology

On Saturday the 28th of August 2021, the presentation of the 2nd International Conference of Theatre Anthropology took place online because of covid restrictions. The Conference was organised by the Centre of Theatre Anthropology (Crete, Greece) and was realised in collaboration and with the support of the Technical University of Crete, TUC/MUSIC, Laboratory of Distributed Multimedia Information Systems and Applications; TIM-Theatre in Mathematics, an Erasmus project that aims at the creation of a teaching methodology integrating drama and mathematics; The Hellenic Theatre/Drama and Education network, an association of teachers and artists for the promotion of research and practice of theatre, educational drama and other performing arts within formal and non-formal education. Its dual aim is to promote the performing arts in order that they can gain a central role in schools and to contribute to the development of approaches and techniques, viewing theatre as an art form, a learning tool and a tool for social intervention. TENet-Gr was founded in 1998 in Athens as a network of teachers and artists and is registered as a non-profit organisation.

The conference started with a short speech by Nektarios Moumoutzis, on behalf of the Technical University of Crete. The professors and MA in Theatre Studies that spoke at the conference were: Ioanna Lioutsa (PhD Theatre Studies, School of Arts, University of Peloponnese), Katerina Papageorgiou (MA of the programme “Theatre and Society: Theory, Scenic Action and Didactics”, School of Fine Arts, University of Peloponnese), Naya Boemi (Educational Coordinator at Theatre Education), Giannis Mitrou (professor of the Department of Visuals and Applied Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Performance Artist, Artistic Director of the International Laboratory of Performing Arts Alma Kalma, Psychoanalyst). At the end of the conference, the film director Magdalene Remoundou presented her documentary Who is Eugenio Barba.

Book presentation:
The Blind Horse. Dialogues with Eugenio Barba and other writings by Iben Nagel Rasmussen

On Monday the 17th of January 2022, in Athens, the Centre for Theatre Anthropology and Dodoni Publications, invited Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Odin Teatret actress and teacher to present the Greek edition of her book: The Blind Horse. Dialogues with Eugenio Barba and other writings, translated by Antonis Diamantis and Irene Koutsaki. The book was introduced by Manolis Seiragakis, Assistant Professor of Theatreology at the University of Crete and excerpts from the book were read by actor Aris Biniaris, director Antonis Diamantis, actor Irini Koutsaki, and actor and director Georgia Karlatira.

Luciana Martuchelli, Filipe Lima (Brazil)

A Arte Secreta do Ator, 2021

A Arte Secreta do Ator is a masters-in-residence created 15 years ago and, until 2019, it was always realised in Brazil. We annually welcomed about 30 artists from all parts of the world, who had the opportunity to live together with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley and learn about theatre anthropology from those who created it.

Many of these directors and actors who have been at A Arte Secreta do Ator have created group and solo performances, theatre festivals and other connections. Since 2020, the residence became a way of resisting. The internet, which was very attacked during the pandemic, was the only space of connection we had.

Isolated at home, we could connect and break geographical and aesthetic boundaries, thoughts and taboos. Getting Eugenio and Julia in this virtual space for our event was a real necessity for us.

But Eugenio told us: “I don’t know if it’ll work. If I speak online for people it won’t be the same thing as being present.” We replied: “Eugenio, people need to listen to you. They need to know how you are dealing with the pandemic so they can get inspired by