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FROM THE ARCHIVES



GUEST EDITOR

José Pedro Sousa

THEATRE CENSORSHIP AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

TEATRO EXPERIMENTAL DE CASCAIS
DURING THE PORTUGUESE
DICTATORSHIP

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Theatre censorship in Portugal dates back to the sixteenth century and the second Expurgatory Index, the *Rol dos livros defesos nestes reinos e senhorios de Portugal* (*List of the prohibited books in these kingdoms and seigniory of Portugal*) published in Lisbon by Joannes Blavio de Colónia in 1561).

The Index ensured that texts were censored; excerpts from plays were cut; or their publication, reading, or circulation was simply prohibited. The professionalisation of the theatre would bring with it new ways of limiting freedoms, not only in the more restricted scope of the dramatic texts but, now, of the performances themselves, with licences being required from the civil and religious courts and, later, the Inquisition. In the eighteenth century, with the Marquis of Pombal's reforms after the Great Earthquake of 1755, these three censorship bodies were centralised in a single institution, the Real Mesa Censória (Royal Censorship Office). It was followed by the Comissão de Censura Dramática (Dramatic Censorship Commission) in the nineteenth century and, in the twentieth, the regime's censorship body had three different names. It was created, in 1933, as the Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional

(National Propaganda Secretariat); in 1945, it became the Secretaria do Nacional de Informação (National Information Secretariat) (SNI) and, in 1968, it was renamed the Secretaria de Estado da Informação e Turismo (State Secretariat for Information and Tourism).

The research presented here will focus on the final incarnation of this body and, particularly, its relationship with a theatre company, Teatro Experimental de Cascais (Cascais Experimental Theatre) (TEC), during the period in which its activity coincided with Estado Novo censorship. Our aim is to explore twentieth-century Portuguese theatre censorship archives and bring together various types of dispersed information so as to better understand Portuguese Censorship workings and legacy.

The fact that there is no documentation regarding the censorship process for some of the productions presented by TEC during this period means they have been excluded from this study. Therefore, productions as famous as Lorca's *A Casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*) (1966) or *Sotoba Komachi*¹ by Yukio Mishima (1971) will not be covered here. As will be seen, documents belonging to the same institution, the SNI, can be found both in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Torre do Tombo National Archive) (ANTT) and in the archives of the Museu Nacional do Teatro e da Dança (National Museum of Theatre and Dance) (MNTD). At the same time, we seek to cross-reference this information with the documentation deposited in the TEC Archive, the Espaço Memória (Memory Space), whose collection has been subject to cataloguing carried out over the last decade. Besides this type of archive, the possibility of reconstructing the history of these early years of TEC's activity from the company's founders allows for a dialogue between different types of sources and processes of preservation of theatre history in times of censorship.

1. The title refers to the name of the character.

Teatro Experimental de Cascais was founded at a time when 'a new impulse for the theatrical modernisation of the country encouraged experimental projects that assumed the concept — of experimentation, studio, or modernity — in their very designation' (Serôdio 2005: 44). The foundations had been laid in the 1940s with the creation of Teatro Estúdio do Salitre. This was followed, in the 1950s, by the Teatro Experimental do Porto (TEP); and, in the 1960s, the Teatro Estúdio de Lisboa and the Teatro Moderno de Lisboa would reinforce this movement of renewal.

For practical reasons, the premiere of the first TEC production, *Esopaida ou Vida de Esopo* by António José da Silva (nicknamed *O Judeu* — The Jew), on 13 November 1965, can be seen as the beginning of the company's history. Before the premiere of this play, however, there was a period of rehearsals, and before the rehearsals, there were people who decided to get together to stage a performance. These people were Carlos Avilez and João Vasco.

Carlos Avilez's directing career began when he was told by the foremost Portuguese actress and businesswoman of the time, Amélia Rey Colaço (co-director, with her husband, Robles Monteiro, of Companhia Rey Colaço-Robles Monteiro, based at the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II) that he should abandon his acting career and move into directing. Subsequently, Carlos Avilez wrote and directed *Triângulo Equilátero* (*Equilateral Triangle*) (1956, Lisbon) and *Se amanhã fosse hoje* (*If tomorrow was today*) (1958, Lisbon). He went on, in 1963, to stage a sixteenth-century classic, *Castro*, by António Ferreira, at the Sociedade Guilherme Cossul

in Lisbon. It was a controversial production, bringing the first Portuguese tragedy right up to date. The production's success lay in its minimalist, modern setting of *Castro*, both in terms of Francisco Relógio's set and the costumes, which were t-shirts and jeans. The cast was also a sign of modernity, composed almost exclusively of young performers. Avilez's irreverence stirred the Portuguese cultural milieu. Far from gathering consensus, due to an innovative, disruptive, and sharp artistic language, Avilez soon gained the epithet of Portuguese Theatre's *enfant terrible*. In this regard, Júlio Conrado has argued in retrospect that Carlos Avilez 'is, without a doubt, one of those responsible for the evolution of avant-garde theatre in Portugal' (2002: 39).

While Avilez was gaining experience and reputation, accumulating directorial successes, the young actor, João Vasco was taking his first steps on the Lisbon stage. He was the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's first theatre scholar (in 1964), having graduated from the General Theatre Course at the National Conservatory (1960–64). In the last year of the course, he was invited by Amélia Rey Colaço to join the Companhia Rey Colaço-Robles Monteiro. However, after finishing his training, João Vasco declined the invitation, with a view to creating a new artistic project, as he explained in a 1965 interview to *Jornal da Costa do Sol*: 'After finishing the Conservatory [...] I ruled out any possibility of joining another professional company. Any young actor would be seduced by this kind of project; not only because of the enthusiasm and expectations that the company has been causing, but also because of the work plan that Carlos Avilez intends to carry out' (*Jornal da Costa do Sol* 1965a: n.p.). Today, the actor recalls the company's beginnings: 'It all started not in Cascais, but in Lisbon; in the mythical little room called Sociedade Guilherme Cossul, nicknamed over the years the "Conservatório da Esperança" (Conservatory of Hope), as it was in that area of Lisbon [next to Rua da Esperança, which translates literally as 'Hope Street']' (interview by José Pedro Sousa, 16 November 2020).

Alongside the enthusiasm aroused by participating in the creation of a theatre company, there was clearly a close relationship between this performer's desire and the 'work plan' — to use his words — of he who would become the director and co-founder of this collective. Carlos Avilez talked about this plan and the 'programmatic objectives' presiding over the foundation of TEC, in an interview published in *Jornal da Costa do Sol* on 11 September 1965. A main 'objective' was to have

a theatre of our time and although fundamentally concerned with creating a Portuguese company with productions of universal interest, but for a Portuguese audience [...] only by working continuously can we accomplish as much as we set out to do [...] A short theatre course for all those who want to join us [...] We will hold weekly conferences in Portuguese or in a foreign language, colloquia on TEC performances [...] set up a theatre library and discotheque; holding exhibitions of painting and sculpture.

(*Jornal da Costa do Sol* 1965b: n.p.)

From the very start, the place chosen for this experimental company raised a question: why Cascais? It is important to remember that mid-1960s Cascais — despite being a renowned summer resort frequented by a certain national and international elite — was still in a peripheral area, a considerable distance from the Portuguese capital. As Júlio Conrado recalls, 'in Cascais, there was no cultural life like the one we have today' (2002: 19). It is therefore interesting to note that, during TEC's early years, press publicity for its productions included, besides the usual information (dates, venue, times, cast list, etc.), the timetables of trains running between Cascais and Lisbon, clearly aiming to encourage the Lisbon theatre-goers to attend the company's productions.

Twentieth-Century Censorship Archives

During the period in which TEC's activity coexisted with the regime of the dictatorship, between 1965 and 1974, the company premiered a total of thirty-seven productions. However, in the ANTT, and specifically in the SNI collection, of the twenty-one cases on plays premiered by TEC, only eighteen contain documentation relating to the company's productions. This group is complemented by five others that make up the documentary archive of the MNTD, totalling a set of twenty-six cases, most of them incomplete, referring to TEC performances.

As previously stated, there are cases in which the censors' assessment did not allow the staging of the text or, for some reason, the play was not put on. Nevertheless, there were plays actually performed at TEC, such as Beckett's *Acto sem Palavras* (*Act without Words*), where, at least in the consulted archives (ANTT and MNTD), there is no sign of censorship. This phenomenon can be partly explained by the fact that these documents are still undergoing archival treatment. It also has to do with the history of the SNI archive, which has three distinct provenances, corresponding to three moments of its constitution:

- First, documentation from the Inspeção Geral dos Espectáculos (General Inspectorate of Shows), concerning the censorship of plays and literary/musical compositions (archived in ANTT in 1993);
- Second, documentation from the Direcção Geral da Comunicação Social (Directorate General for the Media) (sent to ANTT in 1998);
- Third, documentation produced by the former Inspeção Geral dos Espectáculos (General Inspectorate of Shows) (1944–68). In this

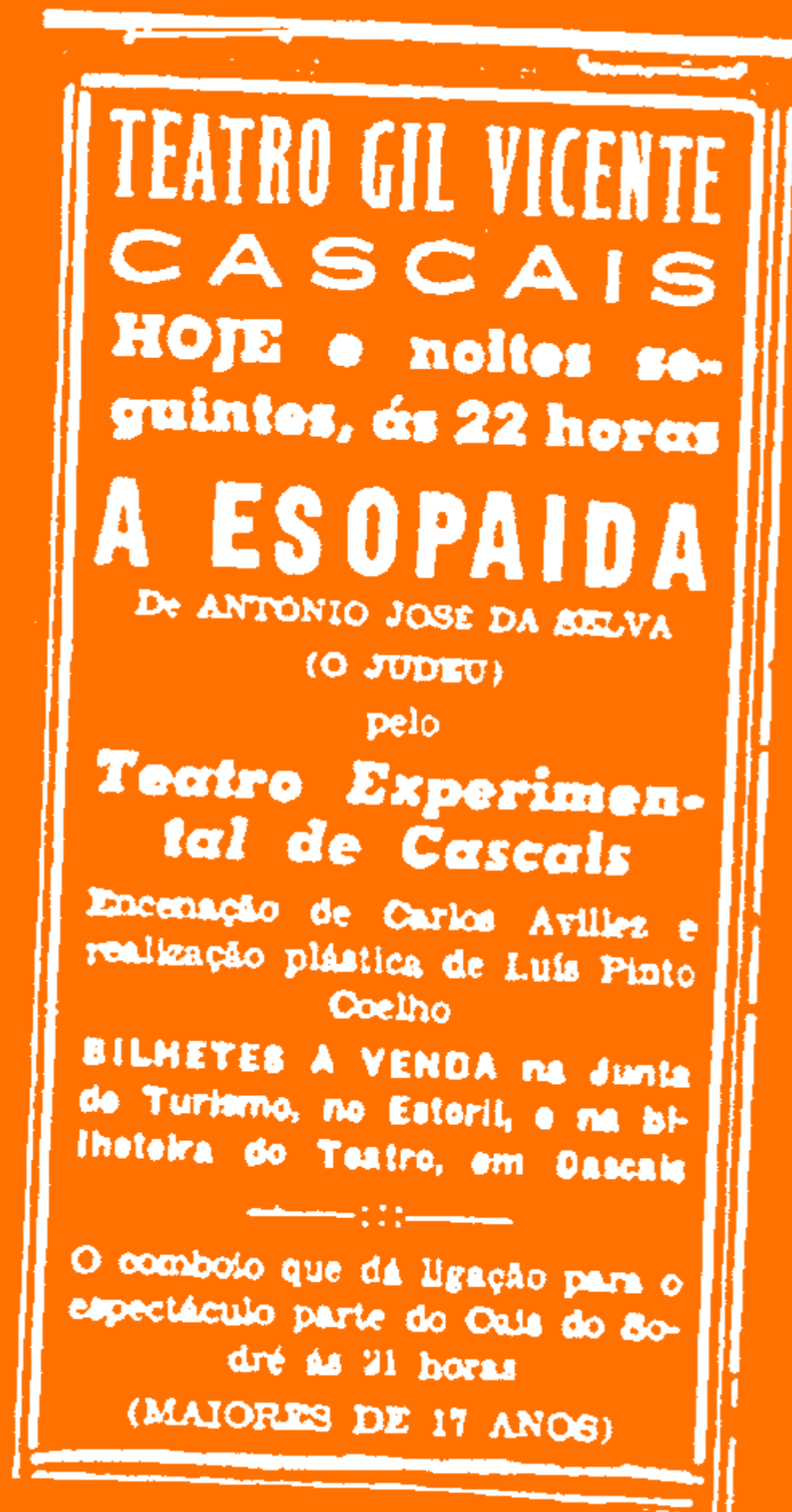


Figure 1 *Diário de Notícias*, 14 November 1965, TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

case, there was the dispersion of the documentary collection (in Belém, in Pendão, and in Palácio Foz), as well as the fact that it was successively

under the custody of the Direcção Geral da Cultura Popular e Espectáculos (General Directorate of Popular Culture and Shows) (1968–75), the Direcção Geral dos Espectáculos (Directorate General for Shows) (1975–80), Direcção Geral de Espectáculos e Direitos de Autor (Directorate General for Shows and Copyright) (1980–90), Direcção Geral dos Espectáculos e das Artes (Directorate General for Shows and Arts) (1992–94), Direcção Geral dos Espectáculos (Directorate General for Shows) (1994–97) and Inspeção Geral das Actividades Culturais (General Inspectorate for Cultural Activities) (1997–).²

Such frequent changes may well have led to the loss of some of the documentation.

Finally, as will be seen, it is also necessary to consider the possibility of deliberate acts of concealment or destruction of documents perpetrated in the revolutionary times around the 25 April 1974.

TEC and the Portuguese Censorship (1965–74)

1. Non-Performed Texts

Of the cases related to TEC productions, six did not make it to the stage: **1)** *A Festa de Anos* (*The Birthday Party*); **2)** *O Encoberto* (*The Overcast*); **3)** *Des journées entières dans les arbres* (*Entire Days in the Trees*); **4)** *Como gargalha a galinha* (*How the chicken laughs*); **5)** *A descida de Orfeu* (*Orpheus Descending*) and **6)** *A Celestina* (*Celestina*).

A Festa de Anos is a translation by Artur Ramos and Jaime S. Sampaio of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* which, according to the licence, was approved for performance, for those over seventeen, on 27 April 1967. As can be seen in a letter from Artur Ramos to the President of the Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos (Commission for the Examination and Classification of Shows), on 15 March 1967, the play 'was intended, in principle, to be performed at the Teatro Experimental de Cascais, at the end of next April'.³ However, the play's premiere in Portugal would only take place 'in December 1967, at Teatro Avenida, in Lisbon, by Companhia Amélia Rey Colaço–Robles Monteiro, directed by Artur Ramos' (Costa 2012: 104). In an interview with the founders of TEC, we realised that it was not censorship that dictated this change (interview by José Pedro Sousa, 7 September 2022). It was a decision by Artur Ramos, possibly related to the bigger audiences the play would attract in the capital.

² This information is available at <https://digitalq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4314203> [accessed 26 July 2022].

³ Lisbon, National Archive Torre do Tombo (hereafter ANTT), collection National Information Secretariat (hereafter SNI), case 8409, reference code PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8409.

Natália Correia's *O Encoberto* was performed at Teatro Maria Matos, directed by Carlos Avilez, but only in 1977.⁴ The SNI file contains only the text of the play, uncut, although the ANTT online catalogue does state that it was 'performed at the Teatro Experimental de Cascais',⁵ which is incorrect according to our research. Although there is no document showing its refusal, Maria João da Rocha Afonso (2009: 48) hypothesises that it was due to the well-known public personality of the author in question — a controversial figure in Portuguese society at that time — and from the nature of the play (which refers to the Portuguese myth of D. Sebastião, a king who would return to Portugal to restore the country's former glory).

Regarding the text by Marguerite Duras, *Des journées entières dans les arbres*, a performance licence granted to the Teatro Experimental de Cascais, dated 24 October 1969 is in the file. The play was classified as being for over seventeens with the indication that 'it can only be performed in the original language'.⁶ The eccentricity of this decision comes from the French original having been submitted for censorship. The document goes on to state that 'if the play is ever intended to be performed in Portuguese, the respective translation must be presented'.⁷

The only play in this group with documentary evidence of its having been rejected is *Como gargalha a galinha*. The author of the first assessment, abstaining from any comment on its literary, dramatic, or moral value, merely mentions, in the section referring to the 'repercussions for the audience', that 'the social and even political intentions expressed

rule out approval of the play. The figure of the Priest, for example, can only be seen in the anti-clerical spirit of the end of the last century [...] I vote for reprobation' (Fig. 2, 3, and 4).⁸

The second assessment, which dwells on the appreciation of the text, is equally against the play being performed (Fig. 5, 6, and 7).

With regard to Tennessee Williams's *A descida de Orfeu*, the nature of the censor's remarks merits the full transcription of his assessment (Fig. 8, 9, and 10):

Since it is a play of great dramatic intensity, set in the south of the United States of America, in which there is a climate of love, passion, hate, revenge, impudence, corruption, racism, fanaticism, religious beliefs and irreverence and its consequent deviations, any deep intervention in the texture of the play would strip it of its critical value and its derogatory and dissecting rhythm, targeting, in time and space, the American society in which it takes place. Thus, we have limited our interventions to suggesting several small cuts or substitutions that are marked with ——— on sheets 5, 24, 25 and 32.

In these terms, with the small changes suggested, and considering the theatre for which it is intended, we approve the play in question for people over 17 years old.⁹

The performance licence was granted on 9 December 1969. However, the play would not be staged by TEC. A special feature of the production was that the cast was to include a major name in Portuguese culture, Amália Rodrigues, which is why the press of the time highlighted the imminent rise to the TEC stage of the *fado* diva. It was Amália's

4. www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/MatrizNet/Objectos/ObjectosConsultar.aspx?IdReg=175864 [accessed 26 July 2022].

5. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 874-A, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/874-A.

6. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8522, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8522.

7. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8522, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8522.

8. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8798 PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8798.

9. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8943, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8943.

-7

INSPECÇÃO DOS ESPECTÁCULOS

Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos

INFORMAÇÃO

Título da peça: *Como Gargalha a Galinha*

Actos: *1* Quadros: _____ N.º de registo: *8798*

Teatro: *Experimental de Lusitania*

Tema: *Comédia*

Valor literário: _____

Valor dramático: _____

Valor moral: _____

-6

Repercussão sobre o público: *Entendo que as intenções sociais e mesmo políticas expressas tenham inconveniente a expressão da peça. A figura de Pódis, por exemplo, só se percebe no espírito anticlerical do fim do século passado... De la pela 10ª página*

Decisão que se propõe: *F. J. de 64*

[Signature]
O Censor

Decisão da Comissão, em sessão de _____ de _____ de 19____

Figures 2-3-4
Como gargalha a galinha, Censorship form.
 National Information Secretariat, General Directorate
 of Entertainment Services, case 8798 - PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8798.
 Courtesy of ANTT.

INSPECÇÃO DOS ESPECTÁCULOS

Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos

INFORMAÇÃO

Título da peça: Como Gargalha a Galinha

Actos: 1 Quadros: Registo n.º: 8498

Teatro: Experimental de Cascais

Tema: Comédia

Ação:

Embora existam no tempo um aspecto... social de... já mudam?

Valor literário:

Então a compreensão de quem o autor tem todo conhecimento dos factos que são em causa em tempos de sua "interior..."

Valor dramático:

Almas de outro mundo! Porque ainda o tempo se arrastava nos últimos dias de quem todo mundo, expresso em alito que há muito já mudam?

Valor moral:

Porque a percepção de fugir do poder de um "terro" espe-

Repercussão sobre o público:

"pessoas" que a tempo também de... há muito superior...? E se a... do propósito de vida..."

Decisão que se propõe:

que a... para os... de... facto... do "mundo" O Censor. Julgo ser de preparar esta peça... de... de... 23-XII-68

Handwritten signature and date: 23-XII-68

Figures 5-6-7 Como gargalha a galinha, Censorship form. National Information Secretariat, General Directorate of Entertainment Services, case 8798 - PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8798. Courtesy of ANTT.

INSPECÇÃO DOS ESPECTÁCULOS

Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos

INFORMAÇÃO

Título da peça: *A Descida de Orfeu*

Actos: 2 Quadros: 8 Registo n.º: 8943

Teatro: *Teatro Experimental de Cascais*

Tema:

Trata-se de uma peça, de grande intensidade dramática, passada no Sul dos Estados Unidos da América do Norte; e na qual se representam, em clima de violência e em linguagem congénica, o amor, a paixão, o ódio, a vingança, o impudor, a corrupção, o racismo, o fanatismo, as crenças religiosas e as irreverências ao consequente desvio. Qualquer interpretação profunda na leitura da peça, terá de ter o seu valor crítico e o seu ritmo apressado e lírico, vindo ao tempo a no objecto, a verdade americana que se recorre a duas acções.

Ademais, limitamos as nossas intervenções, apenas a alguns pequenos pontos em substituição de

-14

que se assimilam a
fls. 5, 24, 25 e 32.

Nestes termos, e com os meus melhores cumprimentos, apresento o presente documento, a qual se destina, a ser apresentado a quem em referência para maiores de 17 anos.

Lisboa: 24.XI.1969.

[Signature]

Valor literário:

Valor dramático:

Valor moral:

SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO
DIRECÇÃO-GERAL DA CULTURA POPULAR E ESPECTÁCULOS
Direcção dos Serviços de Espectáculos

LICENÇA DE REPRESENTAÇÃO

A TEATRO EXPERIMENTAL DE CASCAIS
com sede em CASCAIS

fica autorizada a fazer representar no território português a seguinte peça teatral:

Título: *A DESCIDA DE ORFEU*

Género:

Original: *Tennessee Williams*

Actos: 2 Quadros:

Tradutor: *Edurisa, Filho*

Adaptador:

que foi registada na Direcção dos Serviços de Espectáculos sob o n.º 8943 e classificada pela Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos como

ESPECTÁCULO PARA ADULTOS
(maiores de 17 anos)

Lisboa, 19 de Dezembro de 1969

Pe'l Director dos Serviços de Espectáculos,

[Signature]

-4

Figures 8-9-10
Descida de Orfeu, Censorship form and Performance licence.
National Information Secretariat, General Directorate
of Entertainment Services, case 8943 - PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8943.
Courtesy of ANTT.

inability to reconcile her international career, which had reached great heights in these years, with the TEC rehearsals that led to the project being abandoned.

Finally, the Spanish classic *A Celestina*, by Francisco de Rojas, received a performance licence for TEC on 13 January 1970, being classified for people over seventeen years old. The canonical place of this work in the history of Spanish dramatic literature was a major factor in its approval, as can be read in the features outlined by the censor, who considered it a

masterpiece of Spanish literature, [which] profoundly influenced the entire later picaresque novel – Juan de Encina, Cervantes, D. Francisco Manuel de Melo, Beaumarchais, etc. [...] It is not a frivolous work, rather there is pessimism tinged with irony. It is profound satire on a certain social layer of all times and all peoples, and, hence, there must be tolerance for language and situations. In these terms, I approve the play for people over 17 years old and that it be staged by Teatro Experimental de Cascais.¹⁰

Although the play was unanimously approved, the text would undergo a number of cuts and, in fact, *A Celestina* was not performed by TEC.

¹⁰. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8859, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8859.

2. Non-Performed Texts with No Censorship File

It is also important not to forget those productions that are known to have been banned but for which the respective SNI file has not been found in the archives consulted. This is the case of *O Crime da Aldeia Velha* (*The crime of Aldeia Velha*) by Bernardo Santareno and *A Noite dos Assassinos* (*The Night of the Assassins*) by José Triana.

The abandonment of *O Crime da Aldeia Velha* by Bernardo Santareno was dictated by the type of censorship that escapes the written record. For the cast of this play, Carlos Avilez chose actress Maria Barroso, who, after a break in her career due to interference from the Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (State International and Defense Police) (PIDE) at the end of the 1940s, returned to acting in 1965. The Marcelist Spring¹¹ seemed to facilitate the return to the stage of Mário Soares's wife. However, in 1969, her participation in a play such as Bernardo Santareno's led to Carlos Avilez being summoned to the SNI headquarters. The presence of Maria Barroso was prohibited by the political police, and the disclosure of this 'meeting' was also prohibited, under penalty of TEC losing any funding and a consequent embargo on its activity. In place of this text, TEC would stage Lorca's *Blood Wedding* (*As Bodas de Sangue* in Portuguese).

In 1970, Jorge Listopad was rehearsing *A Noite dos Assassinos* by Cuban playwright José Triana, at TEC. As the director has recalled in a text of his own, this play had the shortest rehearsal period of any performance he's ever staged (only four weeks). The cast included Maria

¹¹. The *Primavera Marcelista* (Marcelist Spring) is a period between 1968, when Marcelo Caetano became the President of Portuguese Counsel after Salazar, and 1970. In this period, there was a sense of liberty, when some expatriates were authorised to come back to Portugal and the regime seemed to ease its censorial and persecutive policies. Two years later, however, it became clear that Marcelo Caetano would not proceed on that path.

do Céu Guerra (Beba), Manuela de Freitas (Cuca), and Sinde Filipe (Lalo). The set was by Fernando Conduto, with the collaboration of José Manuel Nunes.¹² Listopad's testimony about the brief history of this production, which ended up 'dramatically offstage and without an audience', portrays well the pitfalls and disappointments of those who, during the dictatorship, courageously sought to do theatre in Portugal:

The text was sent 48 hours before the premiere, in line with the debatable but sometimes effective strategy of TEC's director, and the Comissão de Censura simply did not authorise it. Too violent, via 68, they said. We protested as best we could. Some dear people (Carmen Dolores) helped us with other non-official contacts. Once again, however, the Commission, re-examining the case thanks to the solidarity of some, banned the text, and this time also the programme. Despite that, they went to see the rehearsal: they definitively banned the production. There were three of them, the inquisitors.

Our next nights were sleepless: one morning and on our last legs, symbolically speaking, we screamed. They heard our cry, honour be done to them in this field of little honour: then censorship moved into action, in force, for the second time. They arrived in black cars, ten or more, the titular shadows, filling an entire row of the empty theatre; although some people were hidden, in those poetic boxes of the little Cascais theatre. I too, illegitimate, invisibly watching every gesture they made, those crows: a blow to be received, a blow to be given, in this dialectic of such great uncertainty.

It was my best production, because it was finished and unconsummated. Interrupted work, the ship forbidden to sail, without repair, condemned. I can still see the executioners turning the corner, looking for the uniformed driver.

*

I became definitively Portuguese. The pain naturalised [me].¹³



Figure 11

Rehearsal of *A Noite dos Assassinos*, Sinde Filipe, Maria do Céu Guerra, Manuela de Freitas. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

← 12. See the file on the production in *CETbase-Teatro em Portugal*; <http://www.cetbase.pt/reports/client/Report.htm?ObjType=Espectaculo&ObjId=3288> [accessed on 26 October 2022].

← 13. Cascais, TEC Archive, folder Livro, item 11. The original text has 'naturalised itself'. I have opted for the reading above, since Listopad has just mentioned that this was the day he became Portuguese, i.e., when he was naturalised.

3. Performed Texts

3.1. Missing Files in Preserved Cases

Even before considering the texts performed by the TEC, whose censorship process we had the opportunity to consult, we know of three plays where the case had been preserved without, however, any document relating to the TEC production. These plays are 1) *Esopaida ou a vida de Esopo* (*Esopaida or the Life of Aesop*), 2) *Auto d'el rei Seleuco* (*Play of King Seleuco*), and 3) *Fuenteovejuna* (*Fuenteovejuna*)¹⁴.

The first two are Portuguese theatre classics and relatively innocuous from the point of view of possible offenses to morals and good customs. One would easily imagine, therefore, that these cases would be relatively straightforward, without the need for a major intervention on the part of the censors; possibly even dispensing with the need to attend the full run. In the TEC records regarding *Esopaida*, all we found was a notification warrant stating that ‘the Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos [Commission for the Examination and Classification of Shows] has decided, after attending the full run of the play *Esopaida*, that the phrase “mount of Venus” should be cut’.¹⁵

In the case of Lope de Vega’s text, the issue is more complex. The SNI file contains documentation referring to the Círculo de Iniciação Teatral da Academia de Coimbra (CITAC) production, whose performance was approved for adults in April 1966, despite the censor recognising that ‘It may be feared that the theme of rebellion against the established power has now been intentionally taken up again. However, the power depicted in this classic play is tyrannical and popular revolt is legitimate’.¹⁶ We know that TEC’s production had twelve censors’

rehearsals before being approved for performance, and that this licence would only be granted, at first, for the performance in Barcelona. Only because of the great success obtained abroad and which resonated in Portugal would it be licenced for performance in Cascais.¹⁷ It was impossible to ignore the production’s anti-fascist and revolutionary spirit that was felt, for example, in the refrain chanted in chorus ‘Here the People’s will is only one, Fuenteovejuna, Fuenteovejuna’ (Fig. 12). There was also João Vasco’s construction of the Commander’s character, which vocally mimicked the dictator, Oliveira Salazar, who had died just three years before (Fig. 13), as well as the female nudity displayed in the scene depicting Jacinta’s rape, with Jacinta played by Isabel de Castro (Fig. 14).

The total absence of documentation of the TEC production may not be (only) a consequence of the archivists lapse or negligence, as might seem the case in previous examples. Here, as in other cases, deliberate acts of destruction of more compromising cases must be considered as likely, either by the regime in the broad sense or by an individual.

Following this brief reading of cases in which censorship intervention was barely registered and moving to those in which there is some information regarding particular TEC productions, we will now focus on those productions whose preserved documentation demonstrates, in more detail, both the mechanisms of censorship and the means of resisting them.

¹⁴. The title refers to the name of a city in Spain.

¹⁵. Item in display at the Espaço Memória. Cascais, TEC Archive.

¹⁶. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8121, PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8121.

¹⁷. See, among others, the article ‘A crítica de Barcelona aplaudiu “Fuenteovejuna”’, *Diário de Notícias*, 8-5-1973.

Figure 12

Fuenteovejuna, Alberto Villar, Amélia Varejão, Eugénia Bettencourt, Vladimiro Franklin, Fernando Barreira, Zita Duarte, Filipe La Fera, Isabel de Castro, Lisette Frias. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.



3.2. Dismissive Censorship? From the Stage to the Screen

In relation to 1) *O Mar (The Sea)* by Miguel Torga (premiered on 5 May 1966),¹⁸ 2) *A Maluquinha de Arroios (The Foolish Girl from Arroios)* by André Brun (premiered on 4 November 1966), 3) *Fedra (Phaedra)* by Jean Racine (premiered on 8 September 1967), 4) *O Comissário de Polícia (The Police Commissioner)* by Gervásio Lobato (premiered on 26 February 1968), 5) *Um chapéu de palha de Itália (A Straw Hat from Italy)* by Eugéne Labiche (premiered on 7 May 1970),¹⁹ and 6) *Auto da Índia (India Play)* by Gil Vicente (premiered on 22 August 1972),²⁰ the censorship documentation consulted shows the cases were rapidly resolved, with little censorship, which would even dispense with attending a full run. This was the case with *A Maluquinha de Arroios*: ‘The rehearsal waiver was communicated by telephone’²¹ and *Fedra*: ‘I approve the play for people over 17 years old. I waive the rehearsal’.²²

Some of these cases contain requests from Radiotevisão Portuguesa (RTP), the Portuguese broadcaster about the transmission of TEC productions, namely: *O Mar*, *A Maluquinha de Arroios* and *O Comissário de Polícia*. This transition from theatre to television format required a new licence, which proved to make the censors more attentive to previously unnoticed details. With *O Mar*, permission was granted ‘for RTP, but with cuts marked in red on pages 24 and 29’.²³ The text of the play is not in the file, so we cannot know exactly what was cut. In relation to *O Comissário de Polícia*, there is only one reference to the production:

18. Lisbon, National Museum of Theatre and Dance (hereafter MNTD), case 5167, reference code PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/5617.

19. Lisbon, ANTT, case 3919, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/3919.

20. Lisbon, MNTD, case 5209, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/5209.

21. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 3796, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/3796.

22. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8512, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8512.

23. Lisbon, MNTD, case 5167, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/5617.

Figure 13

Fuenteovejuna, Filipe la Feria, Eugénia Bettencourt, João Vasco. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.





Figure 14

Fuenteovejuna, Isabel de Castro, António Marques, João Vasco.
Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

‘At the beginning of the fourth act, the four couples that appear in the background must not exaggerate their amorous behaviour’. When it came to licencing its RTP transmission, there is an addition to the previously issued observation that ‘attention’ should be paid ‘to Julia’s costume in the 3rd Act’.²⁴

3.3. 1968 ‘O Tempo e a Ira’ (Look Back in Anger) and ‘As Bodas de Sangue’ (Blood Weeding): Erasing the Memory of the (Spanish Civil) War

The case concerning John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger*, translated as *O Tempo e a Ira*²⁵ contains only the printed work, in a translation by José Palla and Carmo (Minotauro, n.d.) and the performance licence granted to the Círculo de Cultura Teatral, in Porto, on 22 August 1966. The premiere of this production, directed by Fernando Gusmão for the Teatro Experimental do Porto, would only take place on 28 February 1967. It was this text, greatly mutilated by the censors, which would also be used in the TEC production. The cuts focus on references to the Church, the institution of marriage, and non-normative social behaviour. There was also the moral censorship that removed any sexual references; the question of the characters’ virginity is, in some cases, eliminated and, in others, ‘softened’ through euphemisms (for example, ‘sex life’ is replaced by ‘love life’, on p. 158). Finally, the suppression of the allusion to the Spanish Civil War in Osborne’s text is significant, revealing the intention to obliterate that moment in the history of Portugal’s neighbour. This was at the time when reaction to the colonial war was already being felt in Portuguese society, increasing discontent and opposition to the regime.

In 1963, Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* (translated as *As Bodas de Sangue*) was submitted for censorship by the Companhia de Espectáculos Vasco Morgado. This was a translation by Cecília Meireles, published in Rio de Janeiro, in 1960. The text had no cuts, and the production was classified for adults (over seventeen years old). Concerning the TEC production, there is, first of all, a letter from António Marques, an actor in the company, requesting the presence of the censorship officials at the rehearsal taking place on the night of 8 September 1968, with the premiere being scheduled for the 10 September. Secondly, there is the report on the censors’ rehearsal, dated 10 September 1968, with a single observation concerning the ‘introductory soundtrack to the performance of the play’. It states that ‘given the fact that it refers to an experience of war, in this case the Spanish Civil War, it will be the object of deliberation by the Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos’.²⁶ On 11 September 1968, the Chief Inspector sent a letter to the Delegate for the Inspeção dos Espectáculos asking him to inform ‘the Company of the Teatro Experimental de Cascais that, after the full run of the play, “BODAS DE SANGUE”, the Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos has decided not to authorize the introductory soundtrack (musical exercise) for the performance of the aforementioned play’.²⁷ As in the previous play, *O Tempo e a Ira*, the censor imposed the cutting of the Spanish Civil War reference, expressing, once again, the repudiation of the evocation of a civil war that could remind the spectator of the war that was then unfolding in the so-called ‘overseas provinces’.

²⁴. Lisbon, MNTD, case 962, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/962.

²⁵. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8217, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8217.

²⁶. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 7071, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/7071.

²⁷. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 7071, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/7071.

3.4. Hide and Seek with Censorship: 'D. Quixote' (D. Quixote), 'Maria Stuart' (Mary Stuart), and 'Breve Sumário da História de Deus' (A Brief Summary of the History of God)

In the following three cases there were clearly some changes between the prior censorship, concerning only the dramatic text, and the censors' rehearsal that examined the performance. At the same time, the *modus vivendi* between the censorship body and TEC portrayed in these productions show its ambivalence, a blend of concessions and 'negotiations', as well as the two entities' inevitable confrontations.

In the *D. Quixote* case, Yves Jamiaque's play was initially classified for people over twelve years old. After the censors had attended the dress rehearsal, however, it was classified as a production for adults (over seventeen years old).²⁸ According to the report by Manuel Miranda, the company's secretary at the time, which Maria João da Rocha Afonso transcribes, there was a curious episode at the censors' rehearsal that highlighted the ruses of the actors and directors to circumvent possible censorship, as well as unexpected acquiescence from the censor:

At the end of the play, Sancho Panza expresses his frustration and despair at the death of his master. Having entrusted their dreams to him, the poor and oppressed find themselves deprived of the chance of redemption that he had represented. The actor was directed to address the audience, including them as Don Quixote's orphans. For the censors' rehearsal, the actor was told to deliver it as if he were reading it, with as little expression as possible. In the end, one of the censors approached the group stating that he understood the ruse, but was willing to let it go because of the great quality of the play. He added that, if he heard there was to be another visit by a colleague, he would notify the company so that they would be forewarned. (Afonso 2009: 47)

²⁸. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8329, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8329.

Yves Jamiaque's play, translated by Mário Delgado and directed by Carlos Avilez, was premiered on 18 May 1967 at Teatro Gil Vicente, in Cascais. Despite having been conditioned for performances 'in the Portuguese territory',²⁹ *D. Quixote* would tour in Spain with great success. The granting of permission, of which no documentary record has been found so far, seems to have been part of the regime's strategy of 'exporting' an image of openness and freedom experienced in the country (contrary to the idea of national atavism that the continuation of the colonial war, among other factors, spread internationally).

D. Quixote was one of TEC's most awarded productions, highlighting Santos Manuel's performance, which won the Prémio de Interpretação at the Ciclo de Teatro Latino held in Barcelona (Fig. 15). At the same event, the painter João Vieira was acclaimed best set designer for *D. Quixote* (Fig. 16). After the success in Spain, the production was presented at Teatro Villaret and later at Teatro Tivoli, in Lisbon. Urbano Tavares Rodrigues would write, regarding the 'very sad beginning of the season [of 1968–69]' that 'only one production, and that was a replacement, illustrated that basic precept of the author-director relationship. I am referring to the passage of Jamiaque's *D. Quixote* through [...] the "Villaret"' (Rodrigues 1968: n.p.).

TEC's production of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* was based on the Brazilian edition translated by Manuel Bandeira (Editora Civilização Brasileira S/A, 1955). It had been previously examined for the licencing of the Cacilda Becker theatre company's performance (Tivoli, 1959) and therefore TEC was exempted from the reading examination. There was, however, a request on behalf of TEC, written on 26 February 1969, that examiners attend the full run. In this same application, the decision of the censors, Pedroso de Almeida and Gerales Cardoso, was

²⁹. See the performance licence. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8329, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8329.

to approve the play ‘for 12 year olds’, but with some technical cuts.³⁰ On the back of this document, under the heading ‘Removed’, is listed a series of page numbers where cuts were made, with the play having been extensively ‘mutilated’. Since there is no mention of cuts in the prior censorship report on the Brazilian company’s production, there is the possibility that these cuts were only made for the TEC production.

In the typed report after attendance at the dress rehearsal, the following note from the censors reads:

Theatre companies continue to require full runs, without the plays being properly prepared for this purpose. This leads not only to various difficulties with regard to the members of the C.E.C.E. [Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos / Committee for the Examination and Classification of Performances], due to their timetable, so different from that of theatre artists.

It is suggested, therefore, that, as full runs are required, the requesting companies’ attention be expressly drawn — in writing — to the need for the rehearsal to coincide in absolute terms with the following premiere performance.

It may thus be possible to avoid *a priori* that theatrical companies will require the full runs — as has already happened — significantly delaying the preparation of the respective plays and with the clear intention of ‘dispatching’ — pardon the expression — the work of the C.E.C.E.³¹

The premature presentation of the performance to the censors, still in the rehearsal phase, would make it possible to ‘soften’ potentially dangerous dramaturgical guidelines, which would only be introduced

³⁰. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 5900, PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/5900.

³¹. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 5900, PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/5900.

a posteriori into the performance. It was, therefore, another strategy to evade censorship that, as can be seen in this quotation and, as seen in the case of *D. Quixote*, was already an established practice.

The following year saw TEC’s twenty-second and twenty-third productions premiered at Teatro Gil Vicente, in Cascais: *Sotoba Komachi* by Yukio Mishima and *Breve Sumário da História de Deus (A Brief Summary of the History of God)* by Gil Vicente. This was after the company’s return from Expo Osaka 1970,³² in Japan, on 1 December 1970 and the programme clearly showed the influence of traditional Japanese theatre, recognisable not only in the choice of Mishima’s text but also in the staging of the Gil Vicente:

There is a spirit of renewal at TEC, inspired by a fresh breeze filled with oriental mystery. It is not by chance that the inaugural performance includes Yukio Mishima’s *Sotoba Komachi*, a Noh play performed entirely by men. The manner in which the actors who perform Gil Vicente’s *Breve Sumário da História de Deus* appear on stage is similarly no accident. Appearing from the boxes, gliding by the colonnades, sliding over the friezes, winding along the walkway that, at the moment, divides the Teatro Gil Vicente audience in two, the actors ‘Remind us of the movements of gigantic silkworms’ as Carlos Avilez says, ‘in the fine manner of what happens in the Kabuki theatre’. (Soeiro 1970: 63.)

One feature seems to have stood out in this TEC production: the sound design. In the second production by TEC based on this text, in 1994,

³². Carlos Avilez was invited to organise the Portuguese participation in Expo Osaka. Considering the grand opening performance for Portugal Day and the equally impressive performances of sixteenth-century texts by Gil Vicente, *Auto da Índia (The Indian Play)* and *Auto da Barca do Inferno (The Ship of Hell Play)*, this was a pivotal moment for both the director and the company itself.

Figure 15

D. Quixote, Ruy de Matos and Santos Manuel.

Photography by Leonel Lourenço – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.



Figure 16

D. Quixote, António Marques, ?, João Vasco, Mário Pereira, Nicolau Paiágua, António Évora, Santos Manuel, Ruy de Matos, Luís Lima Barreto, Lia Gama, Zita Duarte, Laura Soveral. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.





Figure 17

Breve sumário da história de Deus, ? and José Mário Branco.
Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

Fernando Midões would recall precisely the ‘impressive and significant presence of the ballad singers (Pedro Barroso, José Jorge Letria, and António Macedo)’, and the ‘boldness of the ballad singers cursed by the censors [that] gave the production a very strong revolutionary charge’ (Midões 1994: n.p.) (Fig. 17). This provocative tone was not mentioned by the press in 1970. However, the quality of the play’s sound design did not go unnoticed by one of the biggest Portuguese record labels of the time, Edições Zip-Zip, which released an album with the songs from the play. As soon as this recording was played by the radio stations, it was immediately banned by the censors. An Edições Zip-Zip employee,



Figure 18

Breve sumário da história de Deus, Fernanda Lapa, Maria Albergaria, Josias Gil, Augusto de Figueiredo, Maria José, Carlota Calazans, João Vasco, Águeda Sena, José Jorge Letria (at the back), Lídia Rita, Luís Lupi, António Marques, Mário Viegas, Fernanda Alves, António Macedo, Paulo Saraiva, Zita Duarte. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

Célia de Sousa, a young actress trained at the National Theatre Conservatory, travelled to Cascais to deliver the box containing the records to be sold to the public during the play’s run. When she arrived at Teatro Gil Vicente, two PIDE agents confiscated the box with the records, taking it to the PIDE headquarters in Rua António Maria Cardoso.

On the back wall of the Teatro Gil Vicente stage, railings were put up to simulate a prison, in a set designed by José Rodrigues (Fig. 18).

A walkway was built over the audience that allowed the performers to approach the spectators and their actions were almost acrobatic. On the stage itself, there was only a piano, a toilet, and strategically hanging angel wings. The actors wore modern day suits.

During the play's run in Cascais, members of the Comissão de Censura frequently travelled to the theatre to 'analyse' such a public phenomenon. They had, after all, approved that apparently harmless text without any cuts and with 'great appreciation', in which Gil Vicente brings the main biblical figures of the Old and New Testaments to the stage alongside allegorical figures, in what could well be considered a staging of world history.³³ The censors' great concern and questions were about the productions' set and sound design. Why that 'idea' of prison bars? Why the emphasis given to the song *Hino dos Incarcerados* (*The Hymn of the Incarcerated*), with music and interpretation by José Jorge Letria in the character of Jesus Christ? The Comissão de Censura aimed to stop the production. However, banning an iconic text by the 'father' of Portuguese theatre, Gil Vicente, could make the regime look ridiculous. Even so, in the procedural documentation relating to TEC's production of *Breve Sumário*, a performance licence, granted on 30 November 1970, classifies the play as being 'for over 17 years old', with the already usual addendum 'only for the Teatro Experimental de Cascais'.³⁴ Also in this case, the form commenting on the censors' rehearsal was only partially filled out, identifying only the start and end date of the rehearsal, the title of the play, author and place of performance. However, on a 'Service Sheet', dated 6 December 1970, a series of notes are recorded that seem to correspond to observations collected previously (after, we can infer, a first censors' rehearsal):

We watched the aforementioned production and were able to verify the following:

- 1) the figure of Christ was performed with dignity, his garments not having been removed;
- 2) the prophets maintained the necessary composure;
- 3) in the collective history scene, it did not appear that any pair made up of men or women exaggerated their behaviour in a criticisable way. Also, the figure of the 'old woman', although harassed by the other characters, was not touched by them in a way that required any change. Therefore, the recommendations made to the theatre management were complied with.

The case also contains a note from the Prior of Cascais saying that he went to see the performance 'accompanied by three ladies' and found 'nothing worthy of notice'. From the pulpit, the priest recommended attending *Breve Sumário*, thus increasing the size and regularity of audiences. Among his listeners were the servants of César Moreira Baptista who, influenced by the homily, also went to see the play. That's how the Secretário de Estado da Informação e Turismo — the institution that succeeded the Secretariado Nacional de Informação — found out about the TEC production and did everything he could to have it stopped. Moreira Baptista exerted enormous pressure on Joaquim Miguel Serra e Moura to immediately end the play's run. However, the success of the production and the courage of Serra e Moura helped to keep *Breve Sumário* on stage.

³³. See the digital edition of this text on the Teatro de Autores Portugueses do Séc. XVI website. www.cet-e-quinientos.com [28 October 2022].

³⁴. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 5793, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/5793.

3.5. The Repertoire of Censorship:

'Antepassados vendem-se' (Ancestors sell out) (1970)

Antepassados vendem-se by Portuguese playwright Joaquim Paço d'Arcos obtained a performance licence on 13 September 1969, uncut but classified as being 'for adults'.³⁵ The circumstances dictating the introduction of this play in the TEC repertoire, and the audience's response, deserve some attention. As the company established itself in the Portuguese theatre scene, several playwrights showed interest in having their work performed by TEC and *Antepassados vendem-se* was one of the new plays received. Paço d'Arcos had already had his *O Ausente* and *Braço de Justiça* (*The Absent*, *Arm of Justice*) performed at the D. Maria II National Theatre, and enjoyed some celebrity in the cultural milieu of the time, with bestsellers such as the novel *Ana Paula*.

Antepassados vendem-se was not intended to be one of the new Portuguese plays staged by TEC, but various influential groups were covertly pushing for the play by Joaquim Paço d'Arcos to be performed in Cascais. The close ties between the playwright and the highest ranks of the regime would make the staging of his play possible. The President of the Costa do Sol Tourism Board, Joaquim Miguel Serra e Moura, who held a very important position in the political and cultural circles of Cascais, and who had provided TEC with the necessary conditions for the company to establish itself there early on, would be given an ultimatum. In a frank conversation with some members of TEC, Serra e Moura confessed that the pressure he was subject to jeopardised the company's continuity. The solution adopted was to stage Paço d'Arcos's play, in a tacit compromise that allowed TEC to produce a play that, without this precedent, would never have been approved. The premiere took place in January 1970. In the previous week, the founders of TEC had learned that a bad reception was being prepared against the author



Figure 19

Antepassados vendem-se, set design.

Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

of the play. And so at the end of the play, when the author took the stage, Carlos Avilez ordered everyone to leave and he was left alone to receive the various reactions from the audience, ranging from applause to cat calls.

³⁵. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8917 PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8917.

3.6. The Brand New TEC Repertoire in the Final Years of the Regime

With few exceptions, TEC's repertoire between 1969 and 1974 became more contemporary and disruptive. The company focussed more regularly on the introduction of new authors and new ways of doing theatre in the Portuguese theatre system, demonstrating an increasingly provocative attitude towards the regime. The four plays discussed below had their Portuguese premiere at TEC and clearly reflect this new attitude.

Thus, a year after Living Theatre were at the Avignon Festival, their boldly innovative aesthetics having a great impact, TEC brought the most daring and modern performances being done abroad to Portugal. The play's militant language caused enormous cultural upheaval. As João Vasco says, 'performing this play in Cascais, in that distant year of 1969, would be a challenge for the experimental line that we wanted to continue' (interview by José Pedro Sousa, 16 November 2020). *The Apple* by Jack Gelber, translated by Mário Delgado as *A Maçã*, was approved without cuts by the censor, 'despite not being an easy play for most audiences'.³⁶ After the censors' rehearsal, a 'baffling' note appeared: 'We pointed out that during the performance the word *pêga* [tart] was always replaced by *puta* [whore] (on about 5 or 6 occasions). The censors authorized the change'.³⁷ Contrary to what happened in other plays, the censors were now quite permissive, dispensing with any kind of euphemism.

In the same year, two texts by the Spanish author, Fernando Arrabal, judged and condemned by the Franco regime in 1967, took to the stage in Cascais: *A Oração* (*Orison*) and *Os Dois Verdugos* (*The Two Executioners*). Less than a month before the TEC premiere, Arrabal's theatre made

its debut in Portugal, at Casa da Comédia, with the play *Fando e Lis* (*Fando and Lis*), directed by Norberto Barroca.

The text of *A Oração* was sent for preliminary examination on 10 September 1969, but was rejected. The following day, Carlos Avilez wrote to the Director dos Espectáculos (Director of the Entertainment Services), José Maria Alves, requesting 'that Arrabal's play *A Oração* be looked at again, as it is a new translation and the production is intended for a small section of the public and a short series of performances in Cascais'.³⁸ In fact, Avilez's subterfuges seem to have been decisive in getting the play authorised, as can be seen from the censors' report (Fig. 21 and 22):

Despite certain reservations that this play initially raised in me because of its moral and religious implications, I have decided, after attending what was virtually a dress rehearsal, to approve it for people over 17 years old.

Lisbon, 7th October 69

Monteiro Fernandes

In the formation of this assessment, in addition to the sober staging, the fact that the play was explicitly intended for the restricted auditorium of Teatro Experimental de Cascais had a decisive influence.

Monteiro Fernandes

I fully agree with the above assessment, all the more so as I personally accompanied my distinguished colleague on the occasion of the aforementioned rehearsal.

Lisbon 7th X 1969

[Signature illegible]³⁹

³⁶. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8860, PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8860.

³⁷. Censorship report. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8860, PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8860.

³⁸. Letter from Carlos Avilez to José Maria Alves. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8926, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8926.

³⁹. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8926, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8926.

Figure 20

A Maçã, Vasconcelos Viana, Vítor Ribeiro, João Vasco, António Marques, Santos Manuel, Zita Duarte.
Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.



Once the licence to perform the two plays was issued, with the spatial restriction described above, the company requested the presence of the Comissão de Censura at the dress rehearsal, days before the production's premiere (Fig. 23).

After watching 'a sort of dress rehearsal' of *Os Dois Verdugos*, the censors decided, on 11 February 1969, 'to approve for adults, without interventions, its performance there [in Cascais]'.⁴⁰ That decision was underlined in the assessment issued two days later on 13 February.

After meeting Grotowski in Poland, where Carlos Avilez took part in a course that had a significant effect on his way of staging and directing, TEC started a cycle of plays by Witold Gombrowicz. Directed by Carlos Avilez, in close collaboration with Águeda Sena, responsible for movement, and set design by Espiga Pinto, *Ivone, Princesa de Borgonha* (*Ivona, Princess of Burgundia*), premiered at Teatro Gil Vicente in Cascais on 19 June 1971. *Ivona* was considered both at the time and in retrospect 'one of TEC's highest moments, with a production that was perfectly in line with Witold Gombrowicz's beautiful text' (Conrado 2002: 31). It is also important to highlight the pioneering spirit of this production, as it not only introduced Gombrowicz to Portugal, but also set the country at the forefront of disseminating his work, west of the Iron Curtain. This was underlined by an article published in *A Capital* on 7 April 1971, in which Artur Maciel suggests that 'Portugal will be the second country in Western Europe (the other is East Germany) in which the Polish author rises to the stage' (Maciel 1971: 7).

The censorship case on this production can be found at the MNTD, with the information sheet on it, dated 15 February 1971, reading as follows:

⁴⁰. Lisbon, ANTT, SNI case 8936, PT-TT-SNI/DGE/1/8936.

I think the play, as presented in this version, is acceptable for adults. I say 'in this version' because I have the idea of having read a very similar play some time ago and I would like to see the assessment given then. I have doubts as to whether or not cuts should be introduced in this version. I would withhold the final assessment and decision until after comparison with the assessment previously given. After an exchange of views with colleagues who have read this play, here are the possible cuts or notes:

- p. 7 – last line
- p. 10 – 2nd line
- p. 22 – last line
- p. 23 – 1st line⁴¹

In one of the typewritten copies of the play in the SNI file, a large number of sentences, excerpts, and expressions are underlined in pencil (in what seems to be a first-phase exercise in thinning/censoring the text).⁴² The relatively few and insignificant cuts to the text mentioned above, however, simply remove references to the police or prisons. Nonetheless, the play would be 'approved uncut' in February 1971. On 16 April 1971, after attending some rehearsals, the censors approved the production for adults.

Although the performance licence, issued on 27 April 1971, does not say that *Ivone, Princesa de Borgonha* was authorised only for Cascais, the file contains a letter from TEC, dated 1 April 1972, asking that 'the restriction to present this show only in Cascais'⁴³ be lifted. An interview with the company's founders has made it clear that this diktat in 1970 was a result of the controversial staging of *Breve Sumário da História de Deus* (interview by José Pedro Sousa, 8 September 2022).

⁴¹. Lisbon, MNTD, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/9187.

⁴². Play text submitted to the censorship. Lisbon, MNTD, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/9187.

⁴³. Letter from Carlos Avilez to José Maria Alves, Director of the Entertainment Services. Lisbon, MNTD, PT-MNTD-SNI/DGE/1/9187.

INSPECÇÃO DOS ESPECTÁCULOS

Comissão de Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos

INFORMAÇÃO

Título da peça: A Oração

Actos:

Quadros: 1

N.º de registo: 8926

Teatro:

Teatro Experimental de Cascais

Tema:

Ação:

Após a leitura, realizada, em carta
pela participação do mesmo
em virtude das suas implicações morais
e religiosas, decidiu, após a leitura
Ter ordem a sua execução para ser
aprovada para execução de 17 de

Lisboa - 7 - Outubro - 69

Monteiro Trunç

em tempo: Na forma desta parecer

Valor literário: Tem influência crítica, além
de sobre encenação simplista,

o facto da peça de estar excluída
pelo facto de ser de carácter
Valor dramático: Tem um carácter dramático de
Teatro Experimental de Cascais.

Monteiro Trunç

Valor moral: Concedo inteiramente - com o
- parecer supra, tanto mais
- se acompanhada por
- o meu atestado - para
- os fins do mesmo referido.

Lisboa - 7 - 11-69

-8

SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO
DIRECÇÃO-GERAL DA CULTURA POPULAR E ESPECTÁCULOS

LICENÇA DE REPRESENTAÇÃO

A TEATRO EXPERIMENTAL DE
com sede em CASCAIS

fica autorizada a fazer representar no território português
a seguinte peça teatral:

Título A ORAÇÃO

Género Drama místico

Original ARRABAL

Actos 1

Tradutor António Barahona da Fonseca

Adaptador

que foi registada na Direcção dos Serviços de Espectáculos
sob o n.º 8926 e classificada pela Comissão de
Exame e Classificação dos Espectáculos como

ESPECTÁCULO PARA ADULTOS
(maiores de 17 anos)

para o Teatro Exper. de Cascais
Lisboa, 23 de Outubro de 1969

Pelo Director dos Serviços de Espectáculos,

António Barahona da Fonseca

Figure 21 A Oração, Censorship form.

Figure 22 A Oração, Censors' report.

Figure 23 A Oração, Performance licence.

National Information Secretariat, General Directorate of Entertainment Services, case 8926 - PT/TT/SNI-DGE/1/8926. Courtesy of ANTT.

In fact, besides the success with audiences that extended the play's run, the critics were also quite favourable to this production. The title of Duarte Ivo Cruz's review is: 'A great production'; while Orlando Neves concludes his review as follows 'Ladies and gentlemen, in Cascais there is Theatre, there is Spectacle. It's unforgivable not to see it. It's unforgivable not to turn Avilez's experiment into the first REALLY ALMOST great theatre success of our time; or better yet, the FUTURE. It is unforgivable not to go, not to discuss, not to understand' (Neves 1971: n.p.). Urbano Tavares Rodrigues, despite pointing out some weaknesses, acknowledged that 'Carlos Avilez has given us the best of the bodily expressive productions he has created to date' (Rodrigues 1971: n.p.), highlighting 'Águeda Sena's decisive role in the choreography' (ibid) as a fundamental element in his appreciation of the production. *Ivone, Princesa de Borgonha* was awarded the Prémio da Imprensa de Melhor Espectáculo do Ano (Press Award for Best Show of the Year) and Carlos Avilez received the Prémio Nacional de Encenação and the Prémio da Imprensa (National Direction Award and the Press Award) in the same category. In Portugal, the play would only be performed in Cascais. However, it was taken to Paris (where the production was highly recommended by the French press, which included a review of Colette Godard in *Le Monde*) and Barcelona, as well as Luanda and Mozambique on TEC's tour of Africa between 1973 and 1974.

In the case of *As Criadas (The Maids)*, the only documents we were able to identify were two typewritten copies of Luisa Neto Jorge's translation, numbered case 9097. The textual cuts, appearing in six passages, seem relatively unimportant. Only the last can be considered more significant, both because of its length and because of its place in the text — at the very end:

Her two maids are alive: they've just risen up, free, from Madam's icy form. All the maids were present at her side — not they themselves,

Figure 24

Ivone, Princesa de Borgonha, Mário Viegas, António Marques and Zita Duarte. Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.



but rather the hellish agony of their names. And all that remains of them to float about Madam's airy corpse is the delicate perfume of the holy maidens that they were in secret.
We are beautiful, joyous, drunk and free!⁴⁴

However, the cut seems innocuous at this point in the play, as Genet's ideas have already been sufficiently presented and discussed throughout the text. It is not this cut that undoes the subversive power of *As Criadas*; at worst, it distorts the poetic tone of the play's conclusion. Along with the text, the staging and costumes were also provocative and disturbing. In terms of set design, the production was characterised by the stripping of the scenic space (by Victor Garcia and Enrique Alarcón). Contrary to the author's indications, which describe a sumptuous environment punctuated by Louis XV furniture, the setting for this production opted for 'a circular, empty stage, framed by gigantic metallic screens that open and serve, like the metallic and inclined floor itself, as unclear mirrors where the images of the characters are reflected' (Porto 1973: n.p.). Centre stage there was a 'round hole under the ramp', in the words of Jorge Silva Melo (in the programme), 'a circular, black pit (the bed), a place for love and death'. (ibid)

This stylised set, contributing to the creation of a solemn atmosphere foregrounding the figures of the actresses, was complemented by the costumes (designed by Victor Garcia) which, in addition to evoking the characters' tragic nature through the use of buskins, also showed the performers' bodies, highlighting their shape.

Victor Garcia's direction was a clear break from the acting style of the time. In the documentary *Conversas com Glicínia (Conversations with Glicínia)*, 2004, directed by Jorge Silva Melo, the actress Glicínia Quartin

recalls the rather brusque manner in which Victor Garcia directed her in this production in order to strip her of some bourgeois mannerisms contrary to the nature (of his staging) of this play: during one rehearsal, Garcia went up to the actress, sitting on a chair with her legs together, and shamelessly spread them.

The question, here too, is: how was it possible to present this production in Portugal? Firstly, the venue restriction may partly explain the censors' relative negligence, as in this case, too, the play was only presented in Cascais. Another factor that may have contributed was the production's direction by Victor García, an internationally renowned personality who, according to the way in which his freedom was or was not restricted, could influence Portugal's image abroad. Finally, the cast itself, with major actresses, extremely well known to the public, Eunice Muñoz, Glicínia Quartin, and Lurdes Norberto, could also have curbed the censors' zeal. The unequivocal support that this production had from members of the intellectual and cultural elite of the time is clearly shown in the programme, which included texts by Ary dos Santos ('Nocturno para Jean Genet'), Bernardo Santareno ('Jean Genet'), Jorge Silva Melo ('As Criadas'), Luís Miguel Cintra ('Victor Garcia'), and Mário Cesariny ('À Franklin Rosemont'). The programme also contains a very brief note by Jean Genet about Garcia's work, which clearly reveals his admiration for the production: 'I wrote some notes on the editing of THE MAIDS as a kind of criticism of Jouvett's production. Now, in view of Victor Garcia's work, I believe that the play can really be done in another way. I consider it to be an admirable version, which rejuvenates my text and even gives it a series of new dimensions. The result seems excellent to me.'⁴⁵

⁴⁴. English translation by Bernard Frechtman, 1957, London: Faber, pp. 42–3.

⁴⁵. Programme of the production *As Criadas*, Cascais, TEC Archive.

Figure 25

As Criadas, Glicinia Quartin, Lourdes Norberto, Eunice Muñoz.
Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.





Figures 26-27
As *Criadas*, Eunice Muñoz.
Photography by J. Marques – TEC Archive. Courtesy of TEC.

Censorship Beyond the Stage

At the time of the premiere of *A Oração* and *Os Dois Verdugos*, TEC received a request from the Comissão Eleitoral de Unidade Democrática (Electoral Commission for Democratic Unity) (CEUD) to hold a session at Teatro Gil Vicente. As João Vasco recalls, ‘we knew many members of this important civic movement and the purpose of the organization. That is why we agreed to hold the session on the night of 22nd October 1969’ (interview by José Pedro Sousa, 16 November 2020). However, the news that the CEUD session would be held quickly reached the Comissão de Exame de Classificação de Espectáculos, which soon found a way to prevent the meeting going ahead on the day announced. Hours before the CEUD meeting started, TEC was informed that the censors’ rehearsal for the production that included the two Arrabal plays would be held that night.

The Teatro Gil Vicente square was packed to watch the session. While waiting for the doors to open, the CECE members, accompanied by their wives, as usually happened, entered the scene to watch the rehearsal of the performance. In front of the crowded square, the surprised censors asked if the premiere was that night. In fact, the SNI directors had purposely not warned the censors in question of what was going to happen and urgently scheduled the censors’ rehearsal for the night when the CEUD session was scheduled. The CEUD meeting would not take place at Teatro Gil Vicente. With a certain nervousness and some restlessness among censors and wives, the rehearsal took place, with the two plays that made up the TEC production being approved without cuts.

On 11 December 1972, a Notification Warrant was issued by the Serviço de Administração da Polícia de Segurança Pública de Lisboa (Lisbon Public Security Police Administration Service), signed by the Infantry Colonel and District Commander of the Polícia de Segurança Pública de Lisboa (Lisbon Public Security Police), Pedro de Barcelos, which reads:

I instruct any police officer who, once this is signed by me and in compliance with a higher order, to notify, in the person of any of its Board members, ‘TEC – TEATRO EXPERIMENTAL DE CASCAIS’, based at Largo Rodrigues Lima, in Cascais, that, as it is illegal, its Amateur Theatre group is not allowed, before or after performances, or simple rehearsals of plays, to hold colloquia, either at the home of the collective or in any other location where performances take place, under penalty of legal proceedings, when disobedience to this order has been verified.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The analysis of the documentation examined here can be useful not only to understand the specific interaction between TEC and the Portuguese censorship but also, on a broader perspective, to ponder the nature of archival research in relation to theatre and censorship in the twentieth century.

Concerning the more immediate layer of analysis, the first years of activity of the Teatro Experimental de Cascais show a complex relation between the company and the censorial institution. It is fact that in twenty-six censorial processes, three were prohibited: *Como gargalha*

⁴⁶. Cascais, TEC Archive, folder TEC Geral I, item 211.

a galinha, *Crime da Aldeia Velha*, and *A Noite dos Assassinos*. If, in the case of the first text, there is a SNI case with documentation clearly stating the prohibition, in the case of the other two, it was only by interviewing the company's founders that we came to know they were forbidden.

Even though it must be taken into account that some processes are (still?) missing, it seems a relatively scarce number of rejections for a period of ten years (1965–74). However, there were more ways of constraining the activity of the company. For instance, the imposition of a play in the repertoire, as it was the case with *Antepassados vendem-se*. Nonetheless, it seems that the most powerful way to censure TEC's productions was the geographical limitation that became constant following the 1969 productions of Fernando Arrabal *A Oração* and *Os Dois Verdugos*. There was, at the same time, a certain concession to TEC productions on behalf of the censors. The case of the censorship rehearsal for *D. Quixote* shows not only that the censor was intelligent enough to understand the attempt to deceive him, but also that he allowed the scene to be directed as was previously intended, and he would even warn the company if other censors were sent to 'spy' on the production. Moreover, the repertoire chosen by the company, even if circumscribed to Cascais, was innovative, subversive, and also revolutionary. Authors such as Genet or Gombrowicz had their premiere in Portugal precisely in Cascais and if the texts could be somehow problematic to the regime, the mise-en-scène itself only contributed to make the production even more disruptive, as it is clear in the set and costume design, and direction for *As Criadas*.

On a broader perspective, this case study has revealed that to fully understand the censorial phenomenon it is not enough to access only the archives of the institutions that were in charge of censorship or other forms of controlling the theatrical system. To begin with, this specific information — the censorial files — can be spread between different

archives, as was the case with the SNI fund, preserved in the National Archive Torre do Tombo and in the archive of the National Museum of Theatre and Dance. Furthermore, this research has also shown that the study of theatre and censorship during the twentieth century must take into account the considerable evidence made available by the technical advances in recording and preserving audio and visual components of the performance. When the reports draw attention not only to the text but also to specifics of the direction or set design etc., it is possible to access in more detail this referent by consulting the iconographic remains or photographic/film records of the production. The abundance of these materials in the twentieth century enables a much more detailed study of theatre censorship. For instance, in the case of *Fuenteovejuna*, the visual record of the production proves the revolutionary nature of the mise-en-scène which poses the question of how it was possible for that play to be performed in Portugal at that time. How effective were, in fact, the censorial mechanisms and how compliant were the theatre companies to the restrictions imposed to them? Finally, one has to bear in mind the existence of unwritten and/or undocumented practices of theatrical censorship, and therefore value the possibility of talking to the people who experienced theatre censorship at the time. More than solely preserving the documentation produced by the censorship and the productions themselves, collecting from theatre agents (actors, directors, set designers, etc.) the memories of these uncharted archives is equally urgent. •

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