

### **THE PAULISTA SCENE: A STUDY OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN SÃO PAULO FROM THE CENSORING PROCESSES OF ARQUIVO MIROEL SILVEIRA, 1930 TO 1970**

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*The processes were originally filed in book format, which may cause damage to the conservation of the material*

From 1929 to 1988, the State of São Paulo, Brazil established offices to censor cultural activities. Among other tasks, these offices were in charge of controlling theater production, including the script and the presentation of the play itself. The censorship office could change a play completely or partially or even prohibit its exhibition. The project “The Paulista Scene: A Study of Cultural Production in São Paulo from the Censoring Processes of Arquivo Miroel Silveira, from 1930 to 1970” addresses 6,204 censoring processes of the Arquivo Miroel Silveira (Miroel Silveira Archive).

From the 1930s to 1970, copies of plays to be performed were sent to the censoring office. Until 1947, this office was in the Press and Publicity department, and it was subsequently moved to the Public Security department. All documents, including requests and reports of inspection, were carefully filed.

When the censorship officially ended in 1988, Professor Miroel Silveira from ECA/USP asked the authorities for these documents, which were transferred to his office at the University. After his death in the same year, these documents were taken to the library, which has since managed their conservation and protection.

In 2002, Professor Maria Cristina Castilho Costa, PhD began to work with this material in conjunction with the ECA Library Commission. This was the beginning of the thematic project “Miroel Silveira Archive: Censorship in Scene”, with financial assistance from FAPESP that made it possible to preserve this material and to establish a database with basic information for all of the material.

The thematic project The Paulista Scene, also with FAPESP aid, began in 2005. It aims to study the relationship between censorship and cultural production in São Paulo. From an interdisciplinary base, this project integrates communication studies, history, sociology, philosophy, language sciences and dramatic arts. It is divided into three main axes: 1) the role of censorship in the formation of Paulista culture and its dramaturgy; 2) forbidden words; and 3) non-professional theater.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS TO DATE AND PERSPECTIVES

This project developed an interdisciplinary process to elucidate aspects of the history of the theater in São Paulo, the dissemination and popularization of the mass media, the sociological aspects of the cultural field and the organization of the official control of symbolic production, especially as demonstrated through censorship. The main results are listed below.

1) In relation to the history of theater, the project demonstrates the organization of groups and artists that were previously only weakly included in the dominant historiography, such as the amateur circuit, the theater at the circus, labor classes' and immigrants' productions, and the revue theater.

2) In relation to general history, this project identifies elective affinities between Brazil and Portugal related to the control of symbolic production and to the censoring of mass media and entertainment.

3) In relation to communication studies, this project demonstrates the impact of the cultural industry in symbolic production as well as the influence of the theater on mass media, especially radio, cinema and television.

4) In relation to language sciences, this project identifies the main areas of discourse control and the linguistic mechanisms of censorship.

These findings have resulted in six books and many scientific articles published in Brazil and abroad and presented at national and international congresses and other scientific meetings. Some of these results are available at the web site [www.eca.usp.br/ams](http://www.eca.usp.br/ams).

The research on similarities between Brazil and Portugal resulted in a specific database of Portuguese playwrights that had some influence on São Paulo theater. Furthermore, three scientific meetings were promoted, two in Brazil and the third in Portugal.

During these years, researchers at different academic levels have contributed to new discoveries, from undergraduate students to post-doctoral students. Furthermore, four professors of ECA/USP have been involved in different axes of the project.

*Aid from FAPESP made it possible to  
maintain the processes correctly,  
guaranteeing the long life of the documents*



## MAIN PUBLICATIONS

Costa MCC. 2006. Censura em cena. São Paulo: FAPESP: Edusp e Imprensa Oficial.

Costa MCC (org.). 2008. Censura, repressão e resistência no Teatro Brasileiro. São Paulo: FAPESP: Annablume.

Costa MCC. 2006 (org.). Comunicação e censura – o circo-teatro na produção cultural paulista de 1930 a 1970. São Paulo: Terceira Margem.

Fígaro R. (coord.). 2008. Na cena paulista, o teatro amador. Circuito alternativo e popular de cultura (1927-1945). São Paulo: FAPESP: Ícone.

Gomes MR (coord.). 2008. Palavras proibidas – pressupostos e subtendidos da censura teatral. São Paulo: FAPESP: Bluecom.

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