

Neoliberalism and Global Theatre: Performance Permutation, edited by Lara D. Nielsen and Patricia Ybarra

Camila González Ortiz | Goldsmiths, University of London

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The definition of Neoliberalism and its multiples effects, within the private and public sphere, has been widely explored by contemporary theatre, Live Art, fine arts and other interdisciplinary artistic platforms. From official institutions such as the Tate Modern or the National Theatre in London to smaller scale projects produced in fringe circuits, Neoliberalism, as a theme, has been interpreted as a concept with the dramatic potential to be crystalized in a work of art. Moreover, in the last 15 years, there has been substantial rise in the number of anthologies with a selection of plays, art installation or films, which have served as artistic interpretations of what Neoliberalism means or does.

The book *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres: Performance Permutations* is different. Editors Lara D. Nielsen and Patricia Ybarra, Assistant Professor in Theatre and Dance (Macalester College, USA) and Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies (Brown University, USA) respectively, gathered a series of essays that examine how Neoliberalism intervenes, helps, and blocks the processes of production of cultural capital. In Nielsen's words, "This volume does not intend to summarize theatre and performance studies' interpretations of neoliberalism, let alone predict their mutations. The essays here select specific genealogies of thinking and capital that are useful for theorizing the autonomy of cultural production in theatre and performance, which negotiate the dogmatism of neoliberal formations". (2)

The volume is divided in four chapters. The first one is entitled “Institutional Strategies” and examines different cases where cultural institutions (Museums, Universities and Theaters) negotiate with tools such as marketing, branding, membership and other Neoliberal strategies to engage a global audience. The essay “Nintendo Museum: Intercultural Pedagogy, Neoliberal citizenship and a theatre without actors” by Margaret Werry analyzes the case of the Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in New Zealand and how this institution embraced modes of bicultural management in partnership with the Maori community. Werry argues that although the bicultural management is a step forward in New Zealand's cultural and political development, the museum with the laudable excuse of promoting values like cultural identity and global integration between nationalities and ethnic groups ended up presenting a new format of commoditized cultural citizenship, where cultural identity is neutralized as an objective public good.

The second section, “Modes of Transmission”, deals with examples where Neoliberalism is the object of critique while at the same time its structure and qualities are strategies for the works' funding, exhibition and promotion. The essay “Fighting for a Future in the Free World” by Patricia Ybarra examines the process of production of the play 'La casa Rosa' developed and performed by the Tetlanohcan-based group Soame Citlalime (Nahuatl translation: Precious Women of the Stars). This project was funded primarily by remittance money raised by the company members' relatives currently living and working in the USA. Moreover, the connections and networks that Soame Citlame has developed with cultural institutions based in the USA, some of them elite educational centres, reflect the company's efforts to raise awareness on the political, cultural and economic effects that Neoliberalism, and specifically the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), has on the town of Tetlanohcan. Therefore, Soame Citlame moves away from a victimized posture (quite common in artistic projects for social change) by using production and promotion strategies provided by Neoliberal structures.

Margaret M. Olsen's 'The Gift of the New Orleans Second Line', which belongs to the third section called “Formal Economies”, takes the case of the Second Line Parades in New Orleans and positions them as concrete examples of cultural and political participation, encouraging the neighbors to be active citizens. Every year and since they started, the Second Line Parades have been organized and completely funded by the New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs (SA&P); organizations that were born to provide social and economic support to African American citizens. As the title of this section suggests, the SA&P constitutes an alternative economic system to individualistic Neoliberal economies that place private wealth and accumulation as higher values. Instead, the Second Line Parades are site-specific performances that celebrate a different value system based on welfare assistance, communal wealth and the right of each community to take and intervene their public urban space.

The fourth and last section of the book, “Sites of Articulation”, explores specific theatre and dance projects and the complex relationships they have built with the urban spaces where these pieces are taking place. Jon D. Rossini's “Teatro Vision and The Limits of Chicano Politics in Neoliberal Space” analyses the creative process of the play “La Víctima” by Chicano company

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Teatro Visión. Rossini highlights specific changes made by Teatro Visión to “La Víctima”’s original text and production. The new version evidences a shift of methodologies from a Brechtian approach (where actors, plot and audience are always framed and alienated within a historic perspective) towards a methodology where the actors' engagement to the play's text and themes was achieved by studying specific Chicanos' personal experiences. Rossini also examines the contradiction between the representation of a play where the main themes deal with social change for immigrants, and the fact that the theatre where the show is presented, the Mexican Heritage Plaza, embraces neoliberal modes of cultural management.

Neoliberalism and Global Theatre: Performance Permutations invites the reader to think about Neoliberalism not only as an economic system, but also as a complex structure that carries specific modes of performances, which hegemony affects the ways art is produced, consumed, promoted and managed.

Camila González Ortiz (Santiago de Chile, 1983) obtained her Bachelor’s degree from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and her Master of Arts in Performance Making from Goldsmiths, University of London. As a Director, she is interested in the relationship between theatre, performance, politics, and humour – themes that she explores as well on site-specific and audio-based performances during real train journeys in UK. Her work has been exhibited at the Festival Internacional de Teatro Santiago a Mil, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Santiago, Chile and the Greenwich+Docklands International Festival. She currently resides in London working with her company of experimental theatre *11:18*, funded by the England Art Council and the SPILL Festival of Performance 2012.