



## Recasting transnationalism through performance: theatre festivals in Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Brazil

Luis R. Mitras

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O'Toole et al. go some way towards answering questions such as these in Chapter 3, as does Prentki in Chapter 2.

In the light of the debates, the often unresolved tensions, the ever shifting terrain and the overwhelming might of the capitalist machine, what role, if any, can theatre for development play in the transformation of our world? Prentki's response is conditional. Theatre for/as development, he argues, must take the lead in the re-interpretation of 'development' that is people-centred. Raised consciousness is insufficient. Echoing Freire's original definition of praxis as reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (1970), TfD projects must also be instigators of social action. Prentki also proposes incorporating a playfulness into the process and product. Drawing from the examples, they must be adaptive, creative and responsive. This can be achieved through the art of the facilitator, who embraces the 'fool', 'dodging the traps of certainty and ideology, refusing to do other people's thinking for them' (p. 251).

This approach, Prentki believes, will undoubtedly expose the contradictions of our time as theatre for development 'as an art form dedicated to exposing and playing with contradiction is ideally suited to juggling with these concepts in order to produce the socio-political changes necessary for our survival' (p. 254). Let's hope so.

Miranda Young-Jahangeer

*University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban*

*Youngml@ukzn.ac.za*

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Christina S. McMahon has written a fascinating study of theatre festivals in the cities of Mindelo (Cape Verde), Maputo (Mozambique) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). To better explain these festivals, the book also considers some of the most emblematic and interesting plays performed at these festivals and, in that sense, the book is also an in-depth study of these particular theatrical performances.

McMahon's central idea is that theatrical performances at festivals in these three countries end up by creating a type of 'transnation'. A transnation is a kind of supra-nation that exists at the level of the idea of some sort of shared kinship. What unites the members of this particular 'transnation' is the legacy of Portuguese colonialism shared by these countries, as well as a common language, which also happens to be one of the legacies of that same colonialism. She writes: 'By performing at festivals in Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Brazil, Lusophone theatre artists may constitute the ideology of *lusofonia*, the notion of a transnational "family" of Portuguese-speaking people united by a common language and by cultural coherences' (p. 6). Paradoxically, in creating this transnation – this abstract international communion of nations – performances at these festivals can also end up by recreating a vision of the performers' own nation. As such, these performances can also function as nation-building

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