

Nic Leonhardt

Editorial

Philanthropy and Developing Theatre

When it comes to philanthropy, the field of theatre is not necessarily the first association one has in mind. Yet, especially after the end of the Second World War, philanthropic and NGO initiatives played a prominent role in cultural sponsoring, including the performing arts. Like the Ford Foundation, founded in 1936, or the MacArthur Foundation, founded in 1970, to name but two internationally renowned foundations, the Rockefeller Foundation (established in 1913) is one of the global philanthropic players dedicated to promoting and sponsoring art and cultural institutions in various parts of the world. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Rockefeller Foundation invested not only in medicine, local education and the natural sciences, but also, especially since the 1930s, in the arts, humanities and area studies, first within the USA, but then also in numerous other countries. The Foundation's work in the field of theatre had an inner-American prehistory, in that the development and promotion of community theatre there was actively promoted. The funding strategies explored here in the 1930s and 1940s were geographically extended to non-American countries after World War II, particularly in the so-called developing countries. In the mid-to late sixties of the twentieth century, it significantly reduced its involvement in the performing arts.

The international cultural policy of the time period between 1945 and the 1960s as well as the idea and concept of 'development' have become the subject of critical questioning in historical and political research in recent years. Likewise, the 'in-depth study' of philanthropy, its history and interdependence in cultural-political, ideological and economic discourses, has developed into a field of research in its own right over the past decades. The political scientist Inderjeet Parmar, for example, deconstructs the positive image that philanthropic foundations used to carry with them, with which they adorn themselves. It is hard to believe he argues in his study *Foundations of the American Century. The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (2012), that philanthropy, in the literal sense of the word 'love for humanity,' could also be the opposite. Yet critical studies such as this have revealed that philanthropy can also be a camouflage for highly political agendas.

In theatre studies, questions about philanthropy, NGOs or other funding models in relation to theatre practice and education have hitherto only played a marginal role. We have only begun to research the close-meshed interweaving of aesthetics, ideology and economy in the second half of the twentieth century. Coming to terms with the different facets of philanthropy, the network of culture and politics, of post-war interventions in the theatre world means to embark on new epistemological avenues that are methodologically challenging; in addition, studying the link between philanthropy and development of theatre after the Second World War necessitates an awareness of the densely woven network of intra-European, transatlantic and intra-American relations.

In August 2018, the ERC-funded research project *Developing Theatre* organized an international conference on the topic of "Philanthropy and Theatre Development", financed by both the ERC and the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, Munich. The three papers collected in this GTHJ issue were presented in shorter versions at this conference. With their respective case studies on Africa, Korea, and the Philippines, the contributions gathered here share the focus on the Rockefeller Foundation as a funding institution that invested considerable sums in the promotion of theatre projects, schools and practitioners, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.

Christopher Balme employs the concept of "epistemic communities" as mainly formulated within political and historical studies in his article "Building theatrical epistemic communities in

the Global South: Expert networks, philanthropy and theatre studies in Nigeria 1959-1969". Framed within the bigger picture of international networks and organizations after World War II, the paper focuses on the Rockefeller Foundation's support of playwright Wole Soyinka and the School of Drama in Ibadan, Nigeria, in the 1950s and 1960s. Balme elaborates on how the Rockefeller Foundation invested heavily in educational institutions and infrastructure and, together with US advisors and theatre 'experts' helped to establish and to maintain the School of Drama in Nigeria, which opened in 1962. Balme also illustrates, how and to which extent the foundation, in the role of a 'go-between', granted stipends for individuals in order to foster and expand networks with theatre experts and drama schools outside Africa

Nic Leonhardt's essay, "The Rockefeller Roundabout of Funding. Severino Montano and the Development of Theatre in the Philippines in the 1950s" sheds light on how both individual and institutional funding by the Rockefeller Foundation worked together. Using the example of the Manila-born dramatist, director and theatre pedagogue Severino Montano, who trained in the USA and England, she illustrates the Rockefeller Foundation's impact on Montano's career in the U.S. and abroad. The paper pays particular attention to Montano's initiative and steps to establish the *Arena Theater*, a theatre institution and training institute for theatre professionals and teachers that he established at the Philippine Normal College in Manila in the 1950s. The Foundation supported the *Arena* for over a decade – until it stopped subsidizing it in the early 1960s.

In his essay "Dreaming of a New Theatre in Cold War South Korea", Jan Creutzenberg elaborates on the close relationship between the Korean director and playwright Yu Chi-jin, and Charles Fahs, a representative of the Rockefeller Foundation's Humanities Programme. As in the contributions by Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt, the time period in focus here are the 1950s and 1960. Like Severino Montano, the focus of Leonhardt's paper, Yu-Chi-jin maintained a more than a decade-long relationship with the Rockefeller Foundation and envisioned a new theatre for his motherland, the Seoul Drama Centre, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

We would like to thank the authors for their contributions to this issue and wish our readers a stimulating read.

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