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For a feminist gender horizon in productions and studies on men and masculinities in the performing arts

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Taking as a starting point the construction of the conceptual framework of gender produced by the Brazilian authors Benedito Medrado and Jorge Lyra, the present article brings as a central focus the discussion on the creation of strategies, principles and methodological horizons for the insertion of masculinities in the scene. Developing the issue of the need for a welcoming of masculinities in the scenic activity beyond a simple opportune thematic interest for the construction of performances and plays, the authors propose the creation of clues/principles that can be developed so that masculinities enter the scene under a perspective of political and careful awareness of gender issues that goes beyond a dichotomous and binary model of power relations, resulting from a universalizing stereotyping of being a man and being a woman. The authors also include in their observation the creation of an expanded artistic territory where the work does not close in on itself and includes artistic proposals linked to intersectional factors (such as race, class, age, sexuality and coloniality) that constitute the relations of gender consider the vast and complex production of multiple masculinity models.

Keywords: Theatre; Performance; Masculinities; Methodology; Intersectional.

Introduction

In a still recent process, studies on men and masculinities that once only orbited the realm of social, anthropological and philosophical studies, critical feminist reflection and gender studies are now manifested, in the middle of the 21st century, on the radar of theatre and theatre arts research. Given its incredible timeliness and the emergence of a new field of research devoted to studies on masculinities, theatre and performance, the following questions should be raised: Can the Performing Arts collaborate with gender studies and the process of deconstruction of hegemonic masculinities? Would it not be necessary for some principles or methodological horizons to be invented/thought to deal with the great challenge of producing a critical discourse on masculinities in the realm of scene and performance? Would it not be fitting to distrust or question the notion that depending on the stage context presented, a performance or theatrical play runs the serious risk of protecting the privileges of the hegemonic identities that are being put into question? In other words, does art not protect the privileges of hegemonic masculinities, when, for example, a straight-cis-white man uses artistic space to exercise gender disobediences, but little of his artistic discourse is actually present or resonates in your everyday social, material and affective reality?

In an attempt to incite a debate on these issues rather than formulating a definitive answer, our paper aims to contribute to studies and research on masculinities in the Performing Arts, presenting a conceptual framework of gender produced by the authors Benedito Medrado and Jorge Lyra – originally created for studies on masculinities in the field of health, sexuality and reproduction – which will be resized in our proposal for the context of the production of masculinities in artistic territories, from a horizon that

dialogues with feminist productions and a Latin American point of view produced by these two Brazilian authors. For this purpose, the sequence in which we address the subject will be divided into three moments: 1. Presentation of the conceptual proposal of Medrado and Lyra. 2. Formulation of the clues brought from the ideas exposed in the previous topic to think of principles that can propose a methodological horizon in the artistic creation of masculinities on stage. In the creation of shows and performances this horizon may include the vast and complex production of multiple models of masculinities. 3. Brief case study based on the artistic example of the Brazilian theatre and dance group Dzi Croquettes[1] which produced artistic performances marked by gender ambiguity in the 1970s, during the military dictatorship in Brazil.

The conceptual framework proposed by Medrado and Lyra

Medrado and Lyra[2] organise this framework into four axes: 1) the sex/gender system; 2) the relational dimension; 3) power markings; and 4) the rupture in the translation of the binary model of gender into the spheres of politics, institutions and social organisations. According to the authors, the first feminist essays on gender, e.g. Gayle Rubin's reflections on the 'sex/gender system', originally published in 1975 in her article *'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex'*, contribute to an important and preliminary critical exercise for studies on masculinities, which consists of reaffirming the need to denaturalise the prescriptions and sociocultural practices attributed to (and incorporated and naturalised by) men and women, considered markings of the male and female models. They are actions, practices, symbols, norms and social values that societies develop

from a local cultural context of anatomical and physiological sexual difference and that support the political organisation of how men and women can exist and relate in society. In this sense, the concept of 'gender' as an analytical category is also useful to understand the establishment of social inequalities operating in genders. However, the authors understand that such inequalities are not justified by a model of opposition or search for similarity between the two sexes, but are defined by the complex diversity produced in gender relations. Thus, they propose as a second axis of their conceptual framework the 'relational dimension of power', suggested as an alternative to think of the power structures organised by genres in a context that goes beyond the dichotomous model consisting of the limiting notion of domination and subalternity resulting from the culpability of men and victimization of women.

The reasoning of the authors is not directed towards the search for culprits in simple solutions, which usually translates into universal models. Seeking to escape the binary and polarised logics of gender relations between males and females, the authors propose a Latin American perspective that turns to gender relations through the intersection of other markers, such as race, age, sexuality, coloniality, social and economic status, gender, etc. The relational perspective maintained within the feminist perspective, which has power as the central dimension of analysis, seeks to identify how gender relations are institutionalised and actualised, making it possible to see the '…transformations in the scope of 'gendered' social relationships, i.e. oriented by gender inequalities' (Medrado and Lyra, 2008, p. 820). The relational dimension of the concept of 'gender' allows '… to understand or interpret the social dynamic that hierarchises the relationships between the masculine and the feminine and not only between men and women, but in men and women' (*ibid*).

In the constitution of the third axis, ‘the markings of power’, the authors engage in a dialogue with the productions of Joan Scott[3] and Michel Foucault[4] to present the notion that in addition to being a constitutive element of social relations based on the differences between the sexes, gender is also a primary way of giving meaning to power relations; as Scott says: ‘Gender is the field within which, or through which, power is first articulated’ (Scott, 1995, p. 88 *apud*Medrado and Lyra, 2008, p. 821). Power does not appear in gender relations as a simple and isolated noun. Power is not something that is possessed, but something that is exercised. In the Foucaultian perspective, power is not only inherent in government structures, in the ruling classes, in the imperialist nations or in relations between bosses and employees or between masters and slaves, but in all human relationships, whether institutional, amorous, economic, or verbal, i.e. relationships that are multiple in various situations and contexts, in more or less complex forms.

Medrado and Lyra also highlight two relevant points in the Foucault’s thought. First, the observation that resistance is a constitutive element of a power relation; therefore, where there is power, there is also resistance, escape, reaction and strategy to reverse the established power situation. Second, the differentiation between states of domination and power relations in which the former is understood as ‘the total blocking of a field of power relations making these relations immobile and fixed, dissymmetric, with limited margin of freedom, and preventing any reversibility” (Medrado and Lyra, 2008, p. 822). Concerning domination, the French philosopher uses the term ‘states’, but when he applies his reasoning to power, he purposely uses the term ‘relationships’ to distinguish its potential for mobility.

Therefore, the Brazilian thinkers emphasise that the contributions of

Foucault and Scott are fundamental to the debate on the power relationships that inscribe masculinities and femininities in the Brazilian contemporaneity because masculinity and femininity are ‘metaphors of power and capacity for action that guide values and social practices of men and women’ (*ibid*).

In the fourth axis of their proposal, the authors reaffirm the need for models of masculinity and femininity that break with a binary and fixed translation of men and women at the level of politics, institutions and social organisations, and propose a reading of gender based on its relational dimension. Following the arguments of Joan Scott, Medrado and Lyra agree with what the feminist researcher says about gender not being constructed in a binary way but in a multiplicity of institutions that are not limited to the family or kinship relationships, also encompassing other factors, such as economics and politics.

Clues

Regarding the specificity of a critical discourse on masculinities, what can the performing arts offer for the struggle for democratisation and gender equality? Is it enough that there are now more and more works that explore the subject of masculinities for us to account for a whole complex network of values, powers and inequalities in gender relations? Is it enough that a man, or the subject ‘man’ is wide open in the proscenium and then the whole construction of asymmetric values of male identities are fully clarified? We, the authors, do not believe so. We support the idea that it is essential to first reduce our expectations regarding any artistic production of masculinities that responds to the totality of the issues involved in the social identity of men, just as we do not believe that the approach and artistic production on masculinities can solve the wide and complex web of injustice operating in

gender relations. We embraced with great enthusiasm the growing interest of the artistic community in such issues, and we understand that this is an opportune moment to think about strategies, paths, methodologies and principles for masculinities to populate the scene now, under the political and careful awareness of gender issues that surpasses the dichotomous and binary model of the relations of power as resulting from the universalising and stereotyping of being a man and being a woman

In the previous section we have presented the conceptual framework of gender developed by the authors Benedito Medrado and Jorge Lyra; we believe that building on this framework, we can think of clues that generate principles for the creation of masculinities on the scene. Below is the list and description of these clues/guiding principles:

Recognition of the sex/gender system

Aligning themselves with the feminist thought of Gayle Rubin, Medrado and Lyra emphasise the importance of recognising a sociocultural structure developed through the sex/gender system that generates actions and expressions that, incorporated and naturalised by the dominant discourse, produce markings of restrictive and structuring models of masculinity and femininity in the bodies.

In our view, such recognition becomes essential for artists and works that address issues of gender and masculinity. Since the body is the main materiality of the conception of a performance or theatrical spectacle, it is necessary to think that even before any action, gesture or message of poetic resignification, even the body of an actor or an actress on the stage is already in itself a material representative of various cultural meanings. The body should always be considered as political, composed of intensive virtual

parts, i.e. structuring lines/forces from multiple local, historical, social and cultural contexts. A white European man standing in the proscenium represents certain meanings that are perceived differently in terms of culture when a black, Asian or Latino man stands in the same place and performs the same action. The stage work cannot ignore these historical, cultural, social and political crossings, closed in on itself, in its meanings and poetic intentions. The relationships that structure gender through the identification of bodies should be considered in the conception of artistic processes. Even if a work or a collective of artists seeks to dismantle the dominant hegemonic schemes, it should always be remembered that the bodies on the stage come from different locations and social backgrounds.

Gender means power

The Brazilian authors argue that masculinity and femininity are ‘metaphors of power and capacity for action that guide the values and social practices of men and women’ (Medrado and Lyra, 2008, pp. 822). In other words, within the meanings constructed by the norms that describe men and women, and their bodies, values are imbued and operate and hierarchise power relations, producing the arrangements of social inequalities operating in the genders. Medrado and Lyra recognise that in addition to being a constitutive element of social relations based on the differences between the bodies, gender is also a primary way of giving meaning to power relations.

Different bodies start from different places and cultural signifiers, and therefore represent/exercise different values. The genre as the primary form in which, or through which power is articulated, must be taken into consideration when conceiving a performance or theatrical spectacle. It is necessary to think about how power is inherent in the bodies that are on the

stage, what meanings and power relationships are already described in advance, and how the work can develop them to outline its critical, artistic and sensitive intent.

The relational dimension of power

A work or an artistic collective that addresses the issues of masculinities on stage cannot fail to recognise the struggle and the feminist commitment, and the understanding that there are different and unequal values and powers played by men in gender relations with women. The historical construction has given men opportunities and authoritarian power in different cultural contexts, taken by assault as privileges that were not attributed to women. We speak here of oppressions and injustices that are still active and ongoing, such as deaths, intimidation, sexual abuse, inferior terms and conditions of employment, domestic exploitation, to name but a few. Without these harms ever being erased, it is necessary to include in the artistic treatment a detailed assessment of the situations of the genres based on the relational dimension of power where inequalities are not perceived through the narrow notion of domination and subalternity stemming from the dichotomous conception of blaming men and victimising women.

Far from becoming an act of male authentication or victims' appeal, as witnessed in political movements and organisations, such as the 'men's rights movement', we believe that the commitment of masculinities on stage could be intended in the principle of seeking a less artistic expression, universal and uniform, reduced to a binary and polarised logic of male and female gender. To artistically adhere to the issues of masculinities in gender relations, it is necessary to go beyond gender to talk about gender. Intersectional production becomes relevant and fundamental to visualise,

through the stage act, the power of a critical point of view combined with other factors that go beyond gender, but are constituents, i.e. such as the factors of race, class, age, sexuality, coloniality, etc.

Authors such as Raewyn Connell (1995) and Michael Kimmel (1998), as well as the Brazilian researcher Mônica Schpun (2004) and the Brazilian Fernando Botton (2007), recognise the numerous possibilities of living masculinity, leading to the use of the term ‘masculinities’ (in the plural) when referring to gender studies focused on the inherent issues of being human. The awareness of the relational dimension of power, grounded on an intersectional creation of masculinities on the stage, becomes a powerful lead to perform the contingent and contextual critical examination of the constructions of multiple male identities, as well as to work towards the understanding or interpretation of the unfair social dynamics that affect and hierarchise the relationships between the masculine and the feminine, not only between men and women, but also within men and women.

Like gender, power is in everything

In line with the ideas of Foucault, Medrado and Lyra support the idea that power is not something statically inherent only in the structures of governments, nations and imperialist states, but something that it is exercised and is present in all human relationships, whether institutional, amorous, economic, or other. Therefore, art and its human and institutional organisations, such as theatre groups, art and performance collectives, educational centres, e.g. university courses and conservatories, or even the artists themselves as individuals, are not exempt from these power relationships. The same is also true of their works which also present a set of values and poetic relations representative of power. Even when one intends

to go against the tide, their art and artistic works run the serious risk of replicating them. This is a reminder that we can never afford to forget.

Another very important aspect to be raised at this point is that gender inequalities also have a direct impact on the distribution of values, opportunities and recognitions of and in the work of stage artist as was the case in the cultural formation and still is in the organisation of numerous societies. We speak here of the silencing/erasing of works and trajectories of female artists who did not have their research and productions disseminated proportionately to the works of their male peers just because they were women. This is a subject that deserves much attention, but in this article we will not be able to elaborate on it in an in-depth manner and with the respect that is due to it. However, a quick recall of a recent example is enough to demonstrate how power relations and gender inequalities are implicit in art. It is enough that we try to remember the names of the 'great masters', the 'Alchemists of the Stage' (Schino, 2012) attributed as responsible for introducing radical changes and being representative of the Theatrical Art and Actor Art of the 19th and 20th centuries; they are Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski, Meierhold, Decroux, and Barba … But what about women? Where would the stage directors, directors, thinkers, actresses and their revolutionary conceptions of theatre be? There is a gender imbalance in the arts that affects the entire way in which artistic construction has been treated and taught; in universities, the methodologies that validate theatrical performance are still those of European white men, and although there are already university centres in Brazil and Latin America that have sought to present other methodologies, the labour market still has much of a patriarchal heritage that provides gender injustices. Although there are a greater number of women active on stage, men still continue to emerge recognised for their work more frequently and receive better remuneration

or important positions.

A work, a collective or an artist concerned with engaging with masculinities in artistic territories can never fail to recognise these issues. The entry of a critical reflection of masculinities on stage cannot become an isolated act of an expression or thematic interest; it is necessary that artistic processes assume the need to ensure changes; concrete actions that can change the way artistic activity and its internal values have been organised and produced. The act of collective responsibility by the contingent of male workers/artists is necessary to build policies of alliances with women and the feminist struggle, working on the equalisation of values and distribution of jobs in the functional staff of art and artistic education professionals, as well as in the dissemination/acceptance of other methodologies and historical reinterpretation of the 'traditional' artistic thoughts and deeds.

Where there is power there is also escape

Agreeing with Foucault, Medrado and Lyra remind us that where there is power, there is also resistance, fight, reaction and strategy to reverse the established power situation. Based on this notion, we found another important lead in the insertion of masculinities on stage which consists of seeking to escape the pre-established hegemonic models of masculinities. Artistically speaking, how can we produce these escapes or 'breaths'? This is a question that most likely can only be answered through the trial-and-error approach that practical experience reserves.

However, we propose here to develop another point that deserves our immediate attention; we must be careful not to fall into the illusion that artistic breaths aspiring to a deconstruction of the dominant models of masculinity are in fact giving an account of all the issues involving genders

and the multiple ways of being a man. The power relations that involve genres are very complex structures which can hardly receive a significant and restructuring critical impact if, firstly, there is no creation of different points of view and approaches. Secondly, is the artistic endeavour only limited to the thematisation of masculinities in shows and performances? If we do not want our works to become bubbles, restricted to the ephemerality of the stage act, we must be concerned with producing artistic actions that narrow the gap between art and life. It is necessary to pierce or prolong the bubble of a scenic expression to go directly to the political and material spheres of life.

Escapes from male models cannot be simply treated and/or invented through gender disobediences protected by cis-normative privileges of the stage game. Escapes and gender disobediences must be in life. The masculinities need to be redefined through actions and an expanded awareness of art that is not restricted to the conjuncture and creation of symbols and messages produced during the stage act. In other words, it becomes a powerful track to think of the creation of works that do not close in on themselves, whose action is not restricted to a presentation or season, but in the promotion of actions of continuous re-existence and resignification. Here in Brazil, we can indicate an example that partially explains what we are trying to propose. The teacher and performer Nina Caetano[5] has sought to employ in her works the construction of 'po-ethics of re-existence' that would not be limited to the creation of shows and that would denote a thought about art whose meaning of existence would be implicated in the construction of the self in an interrelated space between art and life:

> … I think of the poetics of (re) existence because it is also something that implies the poetics of existence based on Foucault.

> It strongly implies life; it implies other layers beyond the scene, but these layers are involved as layers of formation, such as collision, grouping and associations, as creation of spaces of affection and welcoming, as networks of conversation. Many things are not exactly the scene and are part of what I understand to be po-ethic of (re) existence because they require thinking of existence as a layer of self-construction and as a space directly interrelated with what we could understand as a scene (Péclat and Caetano, unpublished).

The Brazilian artist also raises very important points about artistic creation that, from an early age, proposes to be constructed through an affective logic of composition which would perform in the stage and political act of a performance working with the consciousness of the other layers of art communication that would go beyond discourse.

Discourse, for example, was political theatre until the 1960s, but I do not know if discourse solves today, and I travel a lot through what Lehmann says and the idea of performativity. I do not think a discourse solves it, because everyone has information, people know it is ugly and they do it, they say what they want, they talk about everything. Not that they do not know things, it does not affect them, and I think the question that art has to ask is: how to affect the other? How can I transform my political question into a power of affectation, how can I cross the body of the other with my question? It is not discourse, I think it involves the power of affect, the body power, the relational power ... I believe more in this than in the discourse, more in the power of affectation. I have believed a lot in the conversation in another way; lately I have been looking for strategies to provoke conversations, not this discourse alone. This has been my most recent research, thinking about

spaces for conversation (Péclat and Caetano, unpublished).

We remember here the question elucidated earlier at the beginning of this article: Does art not protect the privileges of hegemonic masculinities, when, for example, a straight- cis-white man uses artistic space to exercise gender disobediences, but little of his is artistic discourse actually present or resonate in its everyday social, material and affective reality? Performing gender disobediences and reinventions of masculinities in the context of an expanded stage is not easy; this is a challenge that should be answered with practical experience. However, its theoretical understanding is necessary and justified as a valid objective for thinking about principles, strategies and methodological horizons so that the treatment of issues of masculinities and their deconstruction are attentive to the risk of producing a stage discourse isolated in itself that hardly affects the materiality of the bodies involved and still protects the values and privileges of the dominant male identities. By proposing the awareness and creation of an expanded stage action based on the construction of ‘po-ethics of re-existence’ situated in the affectation of bodies, we are not saying that the issues involving gender and masculinities in artistic territories are resolved, but we understand the importance of providing actions that make the relation between art and life closer because power and gender relations are present in everything, inhabiting the internal and external values of art. As already declared by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, the questions about sexual inequalities and the power relations produced in the genders address a subject in which ‘the personal is political’, and so it is with the treatment of masculinities on stage which can never incur the misunderstanding and ingenuity of being developed as an isolated subject or topic.

Disruption of binary translation and/or compulsory heterosexuality scheme

In the final axis of the conceptual framework presented, Medrado and Lyra return to the feminist thought of Joan Scott to reaffirm the need to create models of masculinity and femininity that break with the binary and fixed understanding of man and woman at the level of politics, institutions and social organisations. The kinship relationships that ended up producing political and economic organisations in numerous social contexts based on the compulsory heterosexual-cis scheme being crossed, as did the idea of Foucault's power, all human institutions, so that the idea of Western theatre developed in Europe and propagated in all colonies and territories occupied in the colonization periods also had its structure of functioning and attribution of values guided by this same guideline. One indication that is potent for masculinities and for a whole network of artists concerned with gender issues is to reassess the founding normative hetero-cis structure, reviewing its implicit and *modus operandi* values, which would denote the creation of new technical operations and concepts for the performance of artistic activity.

Dzi-família Croquette

In this last part of the article we are going to use a historical example of the Brazilian theatre to hold a dialogue with some of the clues mentioned previously. In this brief case study we are going to observe some important aspects of the creation and the history of the group Dzi-Croquettes, especially the episode that recounts the construction of the show 'Dzi-família Croquette' (Dzi-Family Croquette), the artistic creation that we will use as the starting point for the analysis of the way those artists organised

themselves in order to cause tensions, and to reinforce or reframe the heterosexual-centralised model with their practices.

The show being considered was created in 1972, the same year that marked the beginning of the group's activities. It was a theatre play performed at 'Cabaret Casa Nova'[6] at Lapa (a neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro). This artwork consisted of cabaret language and a witty and joyful theatricality that relied on the humour and musical language, added to the Carioca Carnival practices, like men dressed as women, in addition to some features of Brazilian vaudeville theatre, like reflective political and social satires and sketches, filled with sensual performances. On 13 March 1975, the journalist Zózimo Barroso wrote an article in Jornal do Brasil[7] mentioning the compliments that the French Magazine L'Officiel had paid to the group due to their performance in Paris that year; he also quoted a phrase used by the artists in one of their performances, i.e. 'We don't have a determined sex, not even a destiny. We are a magical family.' Such a statement shows clearly the dramatic organisation of the show and therefore their own existential reality. The fact is that the show was structured on the creation of a family whose characters were not merely restricted to the ephemeral scenes they took to the stages, but that was truly the reality lived by the members of the group.

According to Natanael Silva (2017), this family arrangement took place at the very beginning, in their first year, when each member adopted the creation of their own character which was almost totally built and sociably noticed as being female. The family distribution was established as follows: Wagner Ribeiro, for being considered the main creator of the Dzi and having written most of the songs and scripts for the show, became recognised as The Mother (Silly Dale). The Italian-American citizen settled in Brazil and

naturalised as Brazilian, Leonardo La Ponzina, known as Lennie Dale, who was a dancer, a singer and a song writer, became The Father. Under his direction, which involved strenuous, eight-hour-long rehearsals on a daily basis, the Dzi could improve and refine their dancing, singing, and performing techniques, being able to enhance their artistic presentations (Silva, 2017). The family also included three sisters-in-law, i.e. 'Tia Bacia Atlântica' (Aunt Bacia Atlântica), performed by Bayard Tonelli, an actor who was also the treasurer of the group; Reginaldo de Poli, the group's administrator, whose character was inspired by the historical figure of the Queen Elisabeth I, became 'A Rainha' (The Queen); Roberto de Rodrigues, whose performances consisted of gestures rather than words, was 'Tia Rose' (Aunt Rose), or Lady Oregon. He was also responsible for creating the sceneries. There were also five daughters, three of which were natural ones, and two had been adopted. The first ones were 'Claudette' aka 'Gayette', performed by Cláudio Gaya, who acted but also wrote the scripts and plots of their plays; and, Ciro Barcellos, who was 17 years old at the time and thus the youngest of the group, became the youngest daughter, 'Syllinha Meleca' aka 'Tonta' (Silly); Rogério de Pole, famous for dancing showing his naked butts in a way that resembled a duck, became 'Pata Dale' (Duck Dale). The other adopted daughters, whom the mother had conceived with a lover, were Paulo Bacellar (Paulete) and Carlinhos Machado (Lotinha). And just to finish, there were also two nieces and a maid. Benedicto Lacerda was Old City London; Cláudio Tovar, an actor and one of the persons in charge of the scenarios was 'Franga Safada' (The Naughty Chick), and we finally have Eloy Simões, an actor who was hired in São Paulo to be Lenny Dale's personal chambermaid, but soon became the whole group's maid. Later on, Simões ended up becoming a Dzi actor, having his own character Eloína, or 'Mágica da Companhia' (The Company's Magician) and making part of the show.

From this point on we can notice some resonances that resonate with what we considered previously. As Natanael Silva (2017) states, with the creation of the show ‘The Dzi-family Croquette’ the group developed a piece of work that finally consisted of two different perceptions of family: one that is staged and taken to theatres, or, might we say, comes from outside (and here we establish a direct relation with the political and public relations considered by Simone de Beauvoir in her work ‘The Second Sex’); and another one, the internal family, from the backstage, the ordinary life, that which comes from the inside (the one that according to the French thinker is configured as the private and personal relations).

It is as if a piece of writing, engendered to be a single theatre play, came alive expanding to daily life, mixing the boundaries of behind the scenes, stage, and daily routine. That said, I can identify that such characters, constituted and instituted on and by the Dzi, were marked by their subjective and creative personal experiences being affected by them and consequently affecting them as well (Silva, 2017).

These internal and external relations, which provide each other with feedback, meet the need of providing artistic creation that it is not restricted to the creation and the ephemeral nature of the scenes, but establishes the settings of an expanded stage where masculinity is not treated as an one-off theme of a play or performance, but it is also an act of recreation of the political self, and at the same time, it is personal. It is also important to highlight how tense the relations between these public and private aspects are, in the examples brought here, causing escapes and new arrangements for the experiences and masculinities, sometimes mediated by the compulsory hegemonic heterosexual-cis scheme from that time and still current today.

Regarding what was previously said about the escapes, we must recall Foucault's ideas (1982) that considered the withstanding act as a creation journey, a change that was not only restricted to denial, but also lined with a participative and active act of redefinition of the pre-stablished power condition. As for Natanael Silva (2017) after Francisco Ortega (2000), in politicising the friendship and the link among them, the Dzi created a new model of existence, from their re-existence movement. Noting that:

'friendship is an alternative to the old and strict ways of institutionalised relations' as the family, the marriage, the work, the unions, the associations, or in other words, spaces defined by a set of rules, and a historical script of the heterosexual centred social actions (Silva, 2017).

As for the examples brought by the Dzi, friendship is taken as an experimental field[8] and political resistance exercise. Or, as it is described by Silva, 'an alternative to the bourgeois institutional sociability by creating other family arrangements from the collective work that was also creative and professional' (2017). Another fascinating fact about this creative and revolutionary act performed by the Dzi and totally worth mentioning is that those actors were not only creating escapes as to break with the gender rules, but they also came up with new ways of fighting the dictatorship existing at the time, a moment that the lefties revolutionary ideals that combated the authoritarian military regime were marked by the militant movements that organised the armed struggled; a context in which most of the activists had to disguise their desires and wishes to institute the fight for the democratic freedom.[9] In order not to romanticise the work group, once this is susceptible to critics and questionings,[10] we are going to express here the option of the group not joining the armed struggle, but instead choosing another way of stablishing the re-existence. Therefore, we can say that the

Dzi politicised the political context through their art, consequently politicising the experiences and masculinity.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, we seek to contribute to the issues of masculinities and stage by presenting the conceptual framework of gender developed by the authors Benedito Medrado and Jorge Lyra, who structure it in four fundamental axes: 1) the sex/gender system; 2) the relational dimension; 3) power markings; and 4) the rupture in the translation of the binary model of gender into the spheres of politics, institutions and social organisations. Subsequently, we start from the questions presented in the thinking of some Brazilian authors to address specific issues involving stage activity. We developed this discussion from the need to create clues and methodological principles that can link the treatment of masculinities in artistic territories under the understanding of expanded art, attentive to political and careful awareness of gender issues, which is involved in the intersectional perspective addressing masculinities through other important social factors, such as race, class, age, sexuality, and coloniality. In the final part of the article we focus our attention on the historical example of the Brazilian theatre and dance group ‘Dzi Croquettes’ identifying some of the clues brought earlier in a brief case study.

At no time did we bring in our writing the concern with the creation of a method; we speak here of clues precisely because we find the debate on ways to welcome the insertion of masculinities into the stage through points of view and methodological strategies that are open and open; a constant movement of creation. A method such as a closed and unique system does not seem to live up to the need that the complex relations of gender and

power impose on us.

Finally, we would like to clarify that although the idea of a potential for resistance in the context of power in gender relations is not limited to the thinking of Medrado and Lyra, this idea can be discerned and interpreted in the works of some North American authors, such as Judith Butler (1990), Adriene Rich (1984) and Judith/Jack Halberstam (1998). In this article we chose to focus on the thoughts of the Brazilian authors because while we were preparing this writing, we tried to develop an article that would highlight some little-known names in the world and the European sphere, ones that have a rich potential for conceptual thinking on the subject thus fostering the dissemination of the work of writers from the global south who have as much to offer as the names coming from the north. Without discrediting the works and authors cited, we hope that our readers understand that our choice was made as a political movement aligned with the current decolonial agenda, highlighting a perspective conceived by Brazilian Latin American thinkers.

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Footnotes

1. An irreverent group from Rio, aligned with counterculture, collective creation and experiential theater, which makes homosexuality and transvestism a banner for the affirmation of rights. In Paris, Dzi Croquettes are internationally known. In 1973 and 1974, they spent long periods at Le Palace and, among other activities, participated in the film Le Chat et la Souris by Claude Lelouch (1937). Part of the team creates a new show, "Romance", 1976 by Cláudio Tovar and Wagner Mello, which does not reach the same projection as the first show "Dzi-família Croquette", created in 1972. Later, a female cast joins the group . founder, but this alternative does not expand the initial proposals and, soon after, the group disbands. Inspired by the North American group The Coquettes and the gay movement active off Broadway, the team used elements of Brazilian culture such as Carnival to question the context of its reality of sexual repression and censorship suffered during the dictatorship. The group is at the origin of a current that developed some time later, linked to transvestism, mockery, the exploration of the virtuosity of the cast members, caricature, farce and comedy of manners. It influenced the creation of Grupo de Teatro Vivencial in Recife and several gay groups in Bahia in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2009, the documentary Dzi Croquettes was released, directed by Tatiana Issa and Raphael Alvarez (available at < https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/grupo399377/dzi-croquettes >. Accessed on 11.07.2021.
2. Benedito Medrado is a PhD Professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco for graduate and postgraduate courses in Psychology and the coordinator of the Feminist Research Centre on Gender and Masculinities – GEMA/UFPE. Jorge Lyra is the coordinator of the Paternity Project at Instituto PAPAI, a non-governmental organisation which works

based on feminist principles and defends the idea that a fair society is one in which men and women have the same rights (http://www.papai.org.br/antigo/conteudo/view?ID_CONTEUDO=555). The work of the researchers discussed here is the article 'For a feminist gender matrix for studies on men and masculinities,' published in the Feminist Studies Magazine, Florianópolis, 16(3): 424, September-December/2008.

3. Scott, Joan W. ***Gênero: uma categoria útil para análise histórica***. Educação & Realidade, v. 20, no. 2, pp. 71-99, 1995

4. Foucault, Michel. *Microfísica do poder*. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1982.

5. Elvina Maria Caetano Pereira (Nina Caetano) holds a PhD in Performing Arts from ECA – School of Communication and Arts of USP (2011) and Associate Professor post at DEART – Department of Performing Arts of UFOP (Federal University of Ouro Preto). At UFOP she also works with the PPGAC- IFAC-Graduate Program in Performing Arts of the Institute of Philosophy, Arts and Culture in the line of research Processes and Poetics of the Contemporary Scenario, in which she develops her teaching project: 'Foreign Bodies, Spaces of Resistance.' Performer and researcher, she investigates preliminary stage modalities and the relationships between performance, gender and feminism. As a playwright, she has worked with several theatre groups in Belo Horizonte, either guiding processes or producing collaborative dramaturgies. As a DJ, she performs a feminist DJ project, focusing on the production of cis women and trans people. She is currently the coordinator of HÍBRIDA – hybrid poetics of the contemporary scene (CNPq), a research group that integrates artists and scholars of the Performing Arts, from UFOP and other universities, as well as from NINFEIAS – Núcleo de INvestigations FEminIstAS with a strong presence in the Ouro Preto's community. In addition, it has been a member, since 2007, of obsCENA, an independent group for scenic research. Nina Caetano has experience in the field of Arts, with emphasis on Contemporary Scene, in which she mainly investigates the following themes: art and contemporaneity, public art, performance and genre, theatre and performativity, and poetics of the contemporary scene. In her academic training, she has a degree in French Language and Literature from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG) (1996), where she also received her master's degree in Linguistic Studies (2000).

6. According to Natanael Silva, Cabaret Casa Nova was founded in 1939, and it was located at 25, Mem de Sá avenue, in the neighbourhood of Lapa, in Rio de Janeiro. The place was considered one of the main places targeting the homosexual public at the time. With their wooden tables and chairs, dimmed reddish lights, Casa Nova, as well as many other houses, had as its main attraction the lip sync performances, most of them performed by cross-dressers. Cabaret Casa Nova was attended by intellectuals, musicians, and artists and it was in this very house that the Dzi started presenting their first shows (Silva, 2017).

7. Jornal do Brasil, Caderno B, RJ, quinta-feira, 13 de março de 1975, p. 3.

8. We chose to use the word 'field' here due to our discernment of the Dzi not only as producing changes in the group relations, but also as affecting a network of people who used to attend their shows and felt inspired by their examples of transgressing the heterosexual-centred gender norms. As a glimpse of what we are saying we can turn to the testimonies of several artists and interviewers in the documentary made by Tatiana Issa and Rafael Alvarez and mentioned in the first lines of this article. In their discourses, the interviewees describe that the magic and amazement produced on the stages by the Dzi made the audience hypnotised by their androgynous bodies, experiment in their own bodies

new forms of expressing and self-producing in their daily lives in a way that, very soon, it was possible to see bodies wearing clothes and paraphernalia of both genders, speaking like a Dzi, and using terms and vocal nuances presented in the shows. However, let us point out here that we should not take this action as a single one, and therefore romanticise the Dzi's actions as beautiful, unique and example of liberating revolutionary act as once said by Natanael Silva in his master's dissertation (2017). At Dzi's time and settings, as far as the authoritarianism was present, there was a whole movement that '… since the end of the 60s along with the changes that marked 1968, in special, in the wake of the 'Tropicalismo' and 'Contra Cultura' movements new ways of seeing the body and the behaviour arose, like the dubious figure of Caetano Veloso, who according to Trevisan, disturbed the military leaderships and the lefties.

9. In his article 'Dzi-Croquettes and the nonsensical masculinities', Natanael Silva (2018) illustrates the case of Herbert Daniel, a militant that belonged to some guerrilla organisations like Polop ('Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária') who had to deny his (homo)sexuality for seven years in order to be accepted by the group.

10. Despite recognising that the construction of this 'family' confronted the limits of the discourses that were popular at that time in defence of the 'traditional Brazilian family' – Once in this context the slogan that prevailed among most of the individuals who considered themselves conservatives, and being so defended the threefold 'Tradition, Family and Society'. The overwhelming majority of the society was guided during the military regime years, by the defence and maintenance of 'the gender order' based on the sexes complementarities as well as the reproductive role, as biological or social, of values considered 'natural', which in turn held up, discursively and politically, face to the new configurations of sexual individuals emerging at the time, like the homosexual guys, as well as the female liberation practices which shocked the 'traditional Brazilian family' (Silva, 2017) – establishing the creation of affection bonds based on the friendship rather than blood and consequently questioning and making even more complex the guidelines assigned as the results of the prevailing concept of family in the 70s. It is fundamental in the considerations emphasised by Natanael Silva that despite the fact that this 'family' was formed by a group of thirteen men, it still based itself on the traditional heterosexual arrangement as it was organised based on the figures of the father and the mother.

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