



For a Performative Theatre in Pirandello: a brief dialogue with Deleuze and the theatre of repetition

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ABSTRACT – For a Performative Theatre in Pirandello: a brief dialogue with Deleuze and the theatre of repetition – This article is the result of practical research in the field of performing arts, with emphasis on processes and artistic achievements in studies focused in Pirandello's scene studies. In search of a theatricality built from the intersection between theatre and performance, the dramaturgy of the Italian author is investigated from its head node: the acknowledgement by the playwright himself of the theatre's unpower of representation. In this article, we organize documents and reflections derived from a year of practical activities around the Italian author's scene and dramaturgy, revisited from a performative theatricality, in light of Deleuze's concept of the theatre of repetition.

Keywords: **Pirandello. Deleuze. Performative Theatre. Repetition Theatre. *Maschere Nude*.**

RÉSUMÉ – Un Théâtre Performatif dans Pirandello: un dialogue court avec Deleuze et le théâtre de la répétition – Cet article est le résultat d'une recherche pratique dans le domaine des arts du spectacle, spécialement, des processus et réalisations artistiques autour de la scène de Pirandello. À la recherche d'une théâtralité construite à partir de l'intersection entre théâtre et performance, on étudie la dramaturgie de l'auteur italien depuis son nœud principal: sa constatation de l'impouvoir de représentation du théâtre. Dans le présent article, nous organisons des documents et des réflexions sur une année de pratiques autour de la scène et de la dramaturgie de Pirandello, revisitées à partir d'une théâtralité performative, à la lumière du concept de Deleuze du théâtre de la répétition.

Mots-clés: **Pirandello. Deleuze. Théâtre Performatif. Théâtre de la Répétition. *Maschere Nude*.**

RESUMO – Para um Teatro Performativo em Pirandello: um breve diálogo com Deleuze e o teatro da repetição – Este artigo é o resultado de pesquisa prática no campo das artes cênicas, com ênfase nos processos e resultados artísticos alcançados nos estudos de cena pirandellianos. Na busca de uma teatralidade construída a partir do cruzamento entre teatro e performance, investiga-se a dramaturgia do autor italiano a partir de seu nó principal: a constatação pelo próprio dramaturgo do *impoder* de representação do teatro. Neste artigo, organizamos documentos e reflexões de um ano de atividades práticas em torno da cena e da dramaturgia do autor italiano, revisitada a partir de uma teatralidade performativa, à luz do conceito deleuziano de teatro da repetição.

Palavras-chave: **Pirandello. Deleuze. Teatro Performativo. Teatro da Repetição. *Maschere Nude*.**

I look only at the movements.
Kierkegaard

Our attempt in this essay is to organize the reflections around the three scene studies performed in the Contemporary Scene's Creation and Investigation Laboratory (LCICC)¹, from the dive into Pirandello's theatre work by the path of performativity, investigating the scene twice: for beyond Pirandello's theatre text and beyond the acting bodies. In the three scene studies analyzed herein², there were evidence of paradoxical tries of approximating to Pirandello's text, structurally dramatic and dialogic, even in a violent gesture of appropriation. Amputating certain textual elements and characters, the aim was, with this gesture of subtraction, to emphasize the unpower of representation of theatrical art, making new fluxes and displacements proliferate with the strategy of escaping to the representative system. It was verified in the three studies, a hypertrophy of interruptions, of deep cuts in its dramaturgy, of centrifugation of elements, creating fissures and spacing from the emphasis in the actors' real bodies. In the purposeful attempt of scrambling between presence and representation, a hybridism was proposed between real and fictional, in the affirmation of impossibility of separation between the real and the fictional, accentuating the instability between these two orders, which enter in collapse:

Then, what is that passes in the moment of displacement, that is, in the exact moment in which the order of perception, which existed until then, is disturbed, but wherein the other order is not yet established: this moment of passage from the order of presence to the order of representation or the other way around? A state of instability appears. It transports the perceiving subject between two orders in an intermediate state. Thus, the perceiving subject is found at the threshold - the threshold which informs and marks the passage of an order to another (Fischer-Lichte, 2013, p. 21).

It was experimented in the scene plan the idea (utopian and so much sought after by Pirandello) of *live characters*, ghosts that exist before the words of the text, before the gestures of the interpreters, before the organized bodies. And, as the philosopher Gilles Deleuze will declare about the theatre of repetition: "[...] a language that speaks before the words, [...] masks before the faces, specters and ghosts before the characters" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 35). Again, before Deleuze, the mage Cotrone from *The Mountain Giants*, of Pirandello

(1936) already asserted that: “Suffice to say that a thing is well alive in us, and it represents by itself, by spontaneous virtue of its own life” (Pirandello, 2013, p. 101). What the mage Cotrone does the entire play is to throw us a challenge, pointing out to a happening, which exceeds the thought itself, which overflows the thought. It is intended as an attempt of thinking the impossible, that is, the Pirandellian character as a *live* power, a ghost waiting for a body *to manifest itself* or *possess* – as the playwright liked to picture. The theatre, therefore, as *terrible power*; a theatre that, undoubtedly, is opposed to the theatre of representation³.

We herein advise that it is not about thinking of the Pirandellian character as a transcendence, even though Pirandello, in a certain way, had this thought in mind when stating the character as belonging to another nature, even superior. We think of the character as virtuality. And we shall not forget that the author, afterwards, will *elevate* the actor to the *superior plane of art*, placing the actor and character in the plane of immanence⁴: two parts of the same coin (one actual, in the presentified, and the other virtual, becoming). We shall not work herein to scan Pirandello’s theatrical concepts, for the whole discussion about his perception about art may be checked within a broader scope in the book *Luigi Pirandello, um Teatro para Marta Abba* (Ribeiro, 2010). We intend to excavate under the Pirandellian assertion of impossibility of representation of the fertile soil to the experiments in the field of performative theatre. Accordingly, we cannot think of the character as something transcendental, because, if we look for a dialogue with Deleuze, aiming for the understanding of the performative theatre as a theatre of movement, any evocation of transcendence halts the movement itself, for it introduces a previous interpretation to the experiment, rooted in the attempt in the field of representation.

Maschere Nude was how Pirandello named his theatre work, already giving us a clue of what he aimed at: empty masks. It is about a *comedy without actors*. It is not about representing anymore, but putting into motion, acting directly over the spirit. Characters as dynamic virtualities, without mediation, which acted over the body of the interpreter and his spirit, joining it directly to its fantastic nature. The stage as a *magic* place. The action proposed by Cotrone is immediate, “[...] suffice to imagine and immediately

the images gain life!” (Pirandello, 2013, p. 101). Without being a representation of the motion, but the motion itself: “[...] it is about producing, in the work, a motion capable of stirring the spirit out of all representation” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 32). The scene, populated by *live characters*, exceeds the theatre in its dramatic paradigm of representation. Nevertheless, what is this exceeding about? The mage Cotrone (read Pirandello) will not propose a new representation, a new way of acting which substitutes the representation of characters (in view of considering the representation, of an illusion theatre, as something impossible to be engendered). For this purpose, the real evades representation, fixing into a form, since it is the absence of all sense, as it is impossible the obliteration of the phenomenal, daily body of the actor in the construction of the fictional (semiotic) body of the character. What Pirandello-Cotrone does is to propose a scene without mediation, a non-scene, something spontaneous, which is the motion itself. If the images gain life, it is because we are speaking of a theatre of motion, a soul moving theatre, a theatre of affection, a theatre to come, of the future!

The famous scene of the wraiths in the third part of the play *The Mountain Giants* (2013, p. 75-109) confirms the approximation of the Pirandellian thought to Deleuze’s affirmation of the difference, without subordinating it to the identity. The performance of the scene, “[...] without actors”, halts the representation; says Cotrone “The village is as such. Every night it dwells in a state of music and dream. And the dreams, inconspicuous, live outside us, in the same manner by which we make them: they are incoherent” (Pirandello, 2013, p. 96). The wraiths in the Village, witnessed with awe and wonder by the actors, shall not be understood as delirium, fantasy or illusion, but an attempt of, by means of the theatre of wraiths, awakening us to the exterior of the sense usually accepted, subverting the sense of things, challenging the entire representation, forcing our thinking to beyond what it can master. It is acutely noted a Pirandellian will to think the theatre from the unrepresentable. It is for us then, the question: if is not possible to the theatre to represent *live characters* (or even, the real, or the sensible power, pure becoming), but only what is already codified, and because of that fossilized, in what extent, taking Pirandello today, it is possible, through the performative theatrical scene, to drive ourselves away from the

representation, producing motion by means of the repetition? Which devices (of the theatre) to eliminate? Which ones to multiply?

Before we enter into the analysis of scene studies performed in the Laboratory, we believe in the relevance of raising some consideration that may clarify to the reader Pirandello's importance in thinking a performative theatre. It seems fundamental to us to trace some lines over the term performative theatre, not only because it is a recent term to think about the theatre made nowadays, but mainly because it is an operative concept developed by the French-Canadian researcher Josette Féral as a substitute to the post-dramatic theatre concept developed by Hans-Thies Lehmann (2007).

According to Silvia Fernandes: "Féral considers the labeling of Lehmann as excessively generic and ineffective. Thus she prefers the terminology 'performative theatre', defining performance from the concept of performance art" (2010, p. 125). That is, Féral excludes in the performative term Richard Schechner's notion of performance studies, which integrates from rituals to sport events in the scope of performativity. In the case of Féral, the researcher seeks, in performance art, the influences and reflections which incite the most recent experiments of the contemporary theatre. One of the main aspects guiding the studies of performance art is in emphasis given to the present action, to the performing body, rather than representation, which finds its value in the institution of the illusion, that is, in the re-presentation of something that is absent. The performative theatre wishes to produce event, create presence and, with this, distance itself from representation:

[...] if it is evident that the performance redefined the parameters allowing us to think art today, it is equally evident that the practice of performance had a radical incidence over the theatrical practice as a whole. In this manner, it would also need to be highlighted more deeply, this filiation which operates an epistemological rupture of terms and adopt the expression 'performative theatre' (Féral, 2013, p. 200).

The dive into Pirandello's dramaturgy from the performative theatre, mainly from the emptying of the idea of a character in the classical sense, may seem, at first sight, a paradox, since the author is linked to a horizon of dramatic composition in which the character possesses extraordinary strength. And, in the case of Pirandello, the

radical position of repudiation to the theatre and to the art of the actor, which is observed from the fundamental *Illustratori, Attori* and *Traduttori* (1908) – materialized afterwards in the masterpiece *Os Seis Personagens à Procura do Autor* (1921), in which it stages the impossibility of representing the drama of those six despised characters –, points out as the only solution to preserve the life of the dramatic poetry the self-representation of the work, that would be performed not with the bodies of the actors, but with the characters themselves, which, by some *miracle*, would materialize in stage with corporeal presence and voice.

A fantastic solution which ends up challenging the entire Pirandellian theory (although the author is aware of the impossibility of such achievement; hence the drama of the six characters). But it is noteworthy that Pirandello, in his last years, changes considerably of position insofar as the stormy relationship author/character, redeeming the former, giving him an almost magical power, capable of absorbing art's poetry converting it in scenic motion (relocating the actor in the immanent plane to the *superior world of art*). And, more than that, evidencing in the acting art a precious channel for performing construction and experimentation laboratories, especially in his last decade of life, in which he was closer to the scene, helping to establish and direct a theatre company, *Teatro d'Arte*, always together with the actress Marta Abba.

As Claudio Vicentini (1993), a great scholar on his works, will say, Pirandello's idealization of the character made the playwright to think of the interpretation process as a complete and absolute act of possession, granting to the scenic act a magical-ritual character. The book, the dramaturgy, would be some kind of *sacred scripture* for initiates. The actor, *out of himself*, emptied of his personality, would have the power to evoke these *entities*, which belong to another dimension, different from the habitual, made of a superior, ancient, venerable matter. However, the possession of the actor by the character is only possible if the former stops representing, surrendering him to the rite, releasing him from its automations, that is, emptying himself. Without forgetting, however, that, for Pirandello, the actor's assurance was the verb, the written word; a guarantee that would prevent the actor of being dragged by the dilettante and low improvisation.

Such change of perspective of the author in relation to the actor's art and to the character allows us to advance a little further in our readings about the embryonic Pirandellian theatre theory, in direction to a way, at first sight surprising, of the emancipation of the actor and, consequently, the disruption of the character conceived by the naturalist aesthetics. If for Stanislavski the scenic character is born out of the actor's fusion with the character written by an author, resulting in a third amalgamated term, in which the main objective is the actor-character, in the construction of an identity, weaved and engendered by the dialogic/dramatic text, we may say that, in Pirandello, it is not about the fusion or the representation, but the evocation. Presentification (actualization) of a virtual, of this multiplicity that the character is – neither one nor no one, but a hundred thousand – from gestures, sounds, rhythms, played by the actor's body which, transfigured by this virtual power, performs a multiplication of divergent points of view.

The text's function would be, by this hypothesis, a kind of provocation, which allows the actor to actualize diverse points of view. In the game between the actual and the virtual, which, in this case, is about the game between the actor and this virtuality that is the character, there are open spaces, differences rather than approximations. It is not about thinking the relationship actor/character from the myth of transparency, of the spectacular phenomenon, of the representation idealized by the naturalist/illusionist nature, on the contrary, it is about radicalizing even more the place of this *non-relationship* of identification. Declaring the impossibility of the illusionist representation from the inherent instability to the presence: the actor is not in front of the character, but he is and is within this virtuality, indicating thus a co-ownership between the two of them.

Being in the world is the opposite of being in the spectacle. It is to be within of and not in front of [...]. With this expression, Heidegger tries to highlight an in, a 'within', an 'inside', which one does not want to be confused with inclusion – of a 'subject' within a pre-existing 'world' – but to indicate their mutual co-ownership. A co-ownership in the precise mode of what was called to 'be and being launched' – *Geworfensein*, to be understood both as to be and being launched, the projection of a toss or fall which makes the existing to 'be there', as the draft – *Entwurf* – the projection of a gesture, in a possible way of existing. Here, the existence is not anything

different than the unending placing of oneself in the game of his drafts (Nancy, 2010, n.p.).

Although Pirandello's creative process, of scene construction, was still very imprisoned to the creation of text (lacking attention to the new discoveries on the importance of the actor's body in the scenic process), on the other hand, it is impossible not to note that, when writing for the actress, the playwright immersed in a *Abba-Character* contamination process, progressive, radical, grafting to the text Marta's own physicality: gestures, rhythms, motions, sonorities, her expressive score; and, insofar, seeing in the actress the powers of the virtual (of the non-actualized character). Which suggests a dissolution, rather an overflowing of the character and the actor in the classical sense of the terms for the idea of performer, albeit Pirandello never had mention such term.

The virtual does not oppose to the real, but only to the actual. The virtual has full reality while virtual. [...] the virtual should be truly defined as a strict part of the real object – as if the object had one of its parts in the virtual and then dives as an objective dimension (Deleuze, 1998, p. 199).

What we extract from Pirandello's embryonic thinking, especially in its more recent aims over the actor's art, revealer of its relevance to the study of a performative theatre, is the clear conception of the actor's work while an actualizer of these virtual powers, this productive of disagreement plurality, restoring the non-similarity: the actor, when placing himself into action, updates something which is not yet in action. But, as the philosopher observes, the actual always diverges from the virtual, and alerts:

In all this, the only danger is to confuse the virtual with the possible. As a matter of fact, the possible is opposed to the real; the process of the possible is, therefore, a 'performance'. The virtual, on the other hand, is not opposed to the real; it has full reality in itself. Its process is the actualization [...]. Secondly, the possible and the virtual are also distinguished because one refers to the form of identity in the concept, whereupon the other designates a pure multiplicity in the Idea, which radically excludes the identical as previous condition (Deleuze, 1998, p. 201-202).

Trying to comprehend the Pirandellian thought in relation to the theatre and to the actor beyond a simple eccentricity, we are capable of approximating it to that of Deleuze and the theatre of repetition, evoking the following affirmation: "[the repetition] is

not under the masks, but forms from one mask to another, [...] the masks cover nothing, except for other masks” (1998, p. 45-46). If there is nothing to cover, if all masks are *maschere nude*, “[...] nothing can be isolated from the repetition in which it forms and in which, however, it also hides” (1998, p. 45-46). The theatre of repetition never repeats the same, for the act of repetition itself, of placing into action, according to the thoughts of Deleuze, already introduces the difference. This difference is not about a specific difference in relation to another character or to an actor or to a concept (because we would again institute the same, the model), it is a free difference, which does not entail and does not suppose an identity, since, on the contrary, this difference would still be a form. The difference is not to be found in a form (a coded character), it is the movement of repetition itself. The performer’s work is to establish the theatre of repetition, “[...] inscribing Dionysius’ omnipresence” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 34).

Well, is not Pirandello himself declaring that the character, for being a live power, cannot be represented by an actor? Since the character, as life, is not actuated in a single form? Well, every form in itself is an arbitrary reduction of the difference, because it deems existent a model to be represented. And every model corresponds to a thought about the motion. Decanted in a more or less coherent form, the infinite motion of the repetition is frozen by a mediation, which imposes the representation instead of the repetition. The non-relationship between character and actor in Pirandello, mating with the Deleuzian thought of theatre of repetition, points out to us a way for the scene in the multiplication of overlapping masks, variations, instituting a real movement, one that denies representation. The theatre of the representation is about the re-presentation of a concept, for example, the character; the theatre of repetition proposes ideas to be performed. We shall investigate, therefore, a scene that proposes the non-sense from the movement, the act, the action, the infinite repetition which introduces the difference: “[...] the actor plays a role which plays other roles” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 35). This is the real motion, instituting a theatre of repetition, which opposes the theatre of representation.

Maschere nude, i.e. the Pirandellian characters⁵, were understood in Scene Studies performed in the Laboratory not as characters in the

classical sense of the term: a concept to be played, with features more or less similar to the human physiognomy, with a certain function, with a conflict to be solved. Nevertheless, with ideas, multiplicities, something from the wild, anarchical nature of the motion. We invested in the Pirandellian scene a series of amputations to the original text, replacing the conflict's representation that, as Deleuze will say, are normalized and, because of that, are "products", perfect for the representation scene (2010, p. 57) by gestural, rhythmic, and sound variations. The *nude masks* compound a universe constituted by pre-individual singularities: "Deleuze opposes to an extensive universe, constituted by things and representations, by identities and differences referred to an identity, an intensive universe, constituted by pre-individual singularities" (Magalhães, 2001, p. 3).

To comprehend Pirandello from contemporary theatrical experiences, already going beyond the high modernism ideas, linked to a radical anti-theatricalism, of attack to the usage of live actors, "[...] like a significant material on the mimetic project disposal" – as brilliantly analyzed by Martin Puchner in *Pânico de Palco* (2013, p. 18) and without, however, leaving aside the importance of representation (or of theatre) suspicion in the constitution of what was called modern, all the practical research in Pirandello, carried out in the Laboratory, approximates its research by the performing theatre via. Deconstructing or disarticulating this opposite pair, actor/character, we searched for a new configuration that exceeds its own terms, presenting us with something new, not determined, different from both, built not only by the fusion or opposition of terms, but by the difference: the performer, no longer wanting to set up in the scene ideas like pure presence, grafts in his performance the theatre also, but not any theatre, and rather the repetition theatre, a theatre made by nude masks in perpetual transformation.

As Grotowski would say in *The Performer* (1988), the performer is a man of action. Which means that the performer is a man of the motion, of the impulse. On the other hand, the representation man belongs to another order, everything in him responds to something before the action, since this man that re-presents is a man who is fractured between reason and emotion, everything he does is already a copy, is mismatch, thereby trying to imitate, searching to create a fictional life, seeking the best gesture, trying to make it right,

filling the voids with pre-established codes, already catalogued, this representation man loses himself to imitate an artifice, a hollow cover, without life, exterior to him. The theatre of the motion, of Deleuzian repetition, walks against this dual laceration, its objective is not to represent anything, it is about an awareness of the revolutionary power of theatre: “[...] even though it has nothing to do with a psychoanalytical consciousness, nor with a Marxist or Brechtian political consciousness. [...] it is when the consciousness abandons the solutions and interpretations that it conquers its light, its gestures, and its sounds, its decisive transformation” (Deleuze, 2010, p. 64).

In the year of 2013, three Scene Studies were accomplished based on Pirandellian thinking and drama, from aesthetical choices related to what is named, considering Féral’s studies, performing theatre: crossing of languages and means of expression, emphasis in the present action, implosion of dialogical fable, disarticulation of the classical notion of character⁶. The texts choice sought for certain particularities of the author’s thinking about the theatre. They are texts that are so illuminated by the unequivocal trace of Pirandello that they indeed overshadow themselves. In the first Scene Study, we sought in the incomplete drama structure of the six characters, these abandoned characters, the problem of the incest representation. In Pirandello, the impossibility to perform the drama of these six characters finds itself in the disbelief of the completion power of the drama itself – that, as Szondi (2001) is going to say, has a dialectic origin, being the dialog the drama uphold – as in the certainty of the theatrical scene incapacity, circumscribed by fictional codes and by the actors’ real bodies, from updating the experience of the incestuous desire; or of any other wild desire related to thinking. The solution found was to work *A Cena da Enteada*⁷ repeatedly, with different performers, generating a hypertrophy, a come and go, from the instant that precisely impedes the drama to become complete: the encounter of the Stepdaughter with the Father in Madame Pace’s house, a kind of brothel for girls and older men.



Image 1 – Amanda Calabria and Jefferson Santos in *Os Seis*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.



Image 2 – Ursula Bahiense, Augusto Fontes, and Alex Kossak in *Os Seis*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

In the constitution of the theatrical performing experience *Os Seis*, we have worked in a way to destabilize the dichotomies between the terms theatricality and performativity. Instead of searching for precarious solutions in the troubled actor/character relationship, of exacerbation between the parts, of marginalization or valuing of one

of the terms in detriment of another, our intention in the laboratory trainings and in the new text constitution was to intensify the fluid nature between performance and theatre. Symbolic structures specific to the theatre and energetic flow of the acting people, such as voice, gestures, movements, and sexuality cross each other in an action where the expressive score of the performer and of the fictional codes doubly mix and contaminate themselves. Shuffling actor and character (nude masks) to the point where one cannot identify when one ends and the other begins, exceeding the representation and the real of the present bodies, we seek to establish the difference, the incorporeal of this relationship. In the making of *Os Seis*, we did not work on the whole text; we proceeded by amputation of whole parts and of characters, selecting some elements considered essential to the author's idealized structure, as the six unfinished characters and the incest narrative, endorsed in the impossibility of its factual representation. Our gesture was to amplify the taboo investigation in the search for other sexualities from the gestures and self-representation of the actors⁸.

We tried, in the subtraction of certain elements and certain characters (the Director was dissolved in the scenic construction, his absence lead to an intensification of the Pirandellian game with the audience, since his place was occupied by the spectators who experienced unveiling proposals of the incestuous action) or the multiplication of others (the six characters unfold themselves among the performers scores, who take the place of the theatrical company originally proposed by the author), to create a visual and sound space that not only would unbalance the dialogical structure of the original text, as to emphasize the Pirandellian thinking radiance by the performativity via. The actors were stimulated to create new taboo confrontations from their own psychophysical experiences. The break on the text by the repetition of *A Cena da Enteadada* by different performers (the obscure and veiled brothel scene, in which the Father and the Stepdaughter meet each other face to face) and by different languages (videos were created for the *A Cena da Enteadada* that alternated with the live actions) made possible a kind of vertigo, complicating the trauma not revealed by Pirandello.

No wonder that Pirandello does not reveal the incest in the construction of his narrative, it only implies it. By representation, the

incest can only be seized as something obscure, as a negative element that should be suppressed by the moral. We can only perform what we realize, what is possible to conceptualize and decant in a way, a unique way. Therefore, the incest performing can only be done by the denial of will, which by its own nature is multiple, as Nietzsche would say. If the will, if the wanting is multiple and does not constitute a unit, the representation theatre is useless to the thinking, only a repetition theatre can establish a plurality of acting forces. When understood this way, we comprehend that the incest in the work *Os Seis Personagens à Procura do Autor* is virtual, incorporeal, which does not mean to say that it is inexistent, on the contrary, it insists in asserting itself, yet not being a body, since in Pirandello the incest is only and object of the Pirandellian thinking, that goes beyond reason. If we understand that the Pirandellian character cannot be domesticated in a dramatic concept or way, and much less have its nature represented, i.e. updated in the matter, how to address the scene? That is, how to establish a repetition theatre that does not fit to the inherent aspects of the representation, that are the identity, the similarity, the analogy and the opposition?

In this synthetic evidence of the research project that is still in progress, we would like to observe that the performing text of *Os Seis* was built by the emphasis on the plural physical actions undertaken by the actors and not in their value of representation in relation to the text. Every dialogue was cut, scrambled in its original order, in a way to deconstruct the dialogical and narrative material conceived by the author. From this spinning, we tried to extract and excavate, in the Pirandellian text, the force game that inhabits the sexuality of the contemporary man, with their sexual impulses and will.

The second Study, *Improviso*, is freely inspired in the play *Essa Noite se Representa de Improviso* and points out even more the materiality of the bodies in space. This play, together with *Os Seis Personagens à Procura do Autor*, compounds what Pirandello called *Teatro dentro do Teatro*. Apart from the first one, we notice a more jocose, ironic tone from the author directed to the theatre environment, especially to the actor, who acquires, in the 1930s, a position of *demiurge* in the scene. The structure is a little similar to the first one: actors who improvise in front of spectators a scene extracted from a Pirandello novel. In addition, of course the playwright will

mock this feat – the abandonment of an author –, creating the chaos in scene and the revolt of the actors against the director. Nevertheless, perhaps the most important in this play is the freedom that Pirandello in fact offers to the actors. There is no indication of nature and composition to the characters, only to the histrionic figure of the Director, who, in this Study case, was suppressed. We attached to the act a voice-over informing both the performer and the spectator what would be presented/performed that night. The main element of the play finds itself much more in the idea of experimenting a live creation, with all the hazards and unforeseen inherent to the performing act than properly by a simple meta-theatrical game. We sought, then, the intense embodiment of performers, with a bigger exposure of their bodies in space, strengthening the idea that the performer, with his voice, gestures, movement, rhythm, possesses an inexhaustible power of presence institution. Our conclusion is unequivocal: Pirandello, before any discussion about presence, had already instituted the actor as a poet in the scene.



Image 3 – Amanda Calabria in *Improviso*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.



Image 4 – Ursula Bahiense and Gabriel Henriques in *Improviso*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

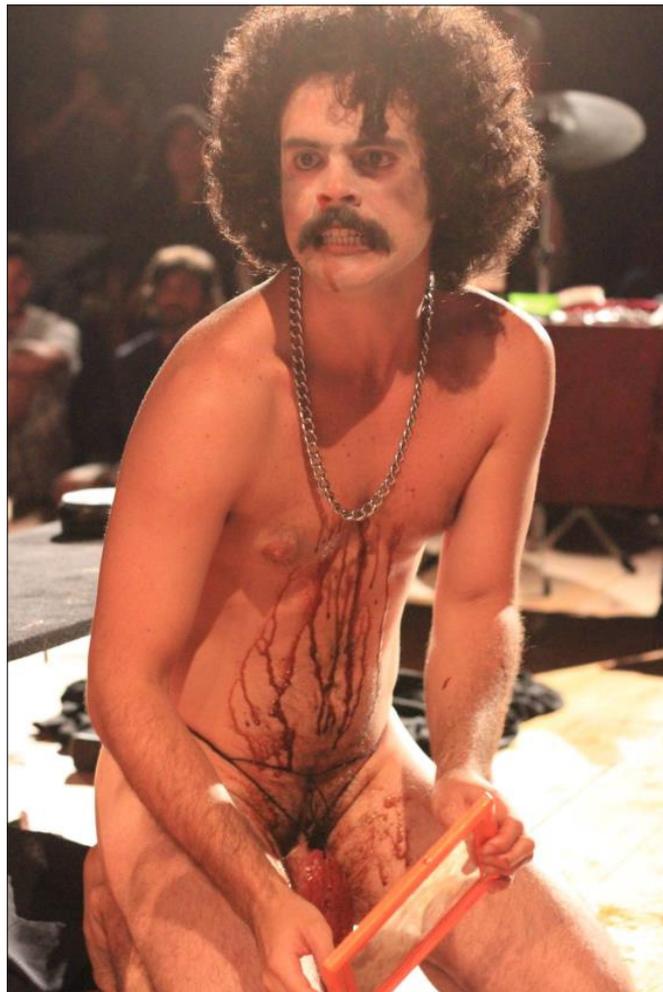


Image 5 – Alex Kossak in *Improviso*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

In *Improviso*, the performers were led to question the frontiers between the humane and the inhumane, the real and the fictional, investigating the limits of its physical materiality, experiencing and inducing pain, the disturbance, as a constitutive agent of the performing act. By all means, by its carnality as presence. From an important element in the Pirandello drama, the torture by jealousy – which, in the case of experimentation, starts to be physical –, we searched in the contradiction, in the paradox, in the deformation, in the eschatological, in the terror and decadence of bodies the sources to inspire the creation, the physical and gestural score of the performers. Refusing the appearance logic, the investigation comes through the dissection of bodies and intends to make it seen that not all appearance is banal. This issue of the being and the appearance, the irreconcilable fission, is in the roots of the Pirandellian dramaturgy. What was conducted in this study seems to reveal the power and the possibilities of the grotesque in *Essa Noite se Representa de Improviso*, diving deep in the idea of chaos and disorientation in which we are submitted. The new script created fragmented the Pirandellian text even more, eliminating each and every narrative targeting that invests in the reflection, at last allowing the birth of a world truly grotesque, supported in the presence excess, the excess of the real.



Image 6 – Nathalia Frazão in *Improviso*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.



Image 7 – Nathalia Frazão and Amanda Calabria in *Improviso*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

In the third Study, *Fantasma*⁹, we investigate one of the problems that followed Pirandello in all his theoretical reflection about the theatre, reflected in his drama composition: the impossibility of mimesis, or, to use an up-to-date expression, the irrepresentable. In the case of the Italian author, he is going to say that the irrepresentable finds itself in the impossibility of the actor to perform another being. Such event, the representation of characters by a living actor, would entail a kind of a self-cancellation from both poles, draining the real experience of art. Not even the power of the written, invented word could argue like the actors' bodies would clog, making it impossible the real experience of its presence. Thus, the presence of real actors performing a role would already be treason to the poetry's singularity, which does not serve to a univocal presentation. Moreover, the blinding concretude of these bodies in scene makes it impossible that the character, which would be the performed thing, has his weight of reality. On the other hand, these bodies addressed to the spectator, subjected to all kind of affection, gain certain irreality in this game of presence and absence of representation. This impossibility, pointed by Pirandello, highlights impotence, or *unpower*, of the theatre when performing living beings.

With these issues, the investigation pointed to the short texts *Sonho (mas talvez não)*, *O Homem da Flor na Boca* and *A Saída* (never performed in Brazil). These last two texts are still being investigated,

this year, in the Contemporary Pirandellian project. The similarity between these three texts, besides the discussion on death, is in its poetic, lyric rather than in its dramatic configuration, despite the three being structured in dialogues (that seems more like soliloquies). Their characters do not talk with each other, they are witnesses of something that happened, i.e. they narrate, in a monological way, a lived experience, that is not about information, a fact, a simple narrative, but of something that happened to them, that they witnessed. And as Rancière attests, if the *happened* is characterized the exceeding of the thinking, it is necessary an art that witnesses the unthinkable, what our thinking cannot dominate (2012, p. 121). Therefore, if in Pirandello we are in front of a way of thinking the theatre that revokes the representation from within, pointing it as impossible the very fact of the actor performing a role, we tried, in the Study three, to investigate a scene that, when thinking this internal impossibility of representation, would be capable of subscribing this non-representable.



Image 8 – David Kondylopoulos in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Luiza Nasciutti.

In the creation of *Fantasma*, we made the scene a common space between the performers and the visitors. There were not expected as spectators, passive voyeurs, but acting visitors, that, from a dilemma, the torture of unchosen performers and their scene expulsion, i.e. their niche displacement, experienced ethical aspects related to our daily life. In relation to the use of space, what we call niches, the scene was sectioned in rectangles and squares marked by a dividing

line, where each performer built his individual space, his installation, from suggested daily life objects. The motion of each performer was extremely reduced due to the spatial demarcation; it did not reach 1.5 square meters for each one. We told them to investigate a concrete object, of daily use, to develop their action, their gestures in a material, concrete, millimetric way in order to create in each niche a daily life place, intimate, like a bathroom, a room, a closet. From these choices, the performers developed their scores, seeking, in the Pirandellian texts, associations with their interior landscape, their memories, their intimate life ritualizing, therefore, the daily life scene. We believe that the sacred can be found in the everyday gestures, like serving a cup of tea, shaving or listening to vinyl records. To notice this scene dimension is to assign to each gesture a temporal spacing that makes it sacred. The use of time as a subject of the scene can redimension our world, giving it the taste of something wonderful.



Image 9 – Alex Kossak in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.



Image 10 – Nathalia Frazão and Bruno Bento in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.



Image 11 – Anatólia Pedro in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

Fantasma searches for the dream, the wonderful in every daily gesture. It is another scene that establishes itself, another space, where the visitor is convened to experience the time, perhaps the *immortality* from the objects, the texts fragments, the proposed gesture in each installation by each performer. As the opening text of Study three states: “These ghosts, for some reason, are trapped to these cubicles, [...] where they repeat the memories of some place, of some story. [...] trapped to this ruin of thinking” (Ribeiro, 2014, p. 23). What gives us material concretude is not our mirrors, but the objects that surround us. These are immortal indeed!



Image 12 – Gabriel Henriques in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Martha Ribeiro.

The performers' preparation of this new study sought the conceptual influence of the symbolist theatre, in which the characters do not fight against a destiny because they do not possess an effective action; they wait the passage of time, performing their daily rituals, repeating their daily scores. Symbolizing the anguish in face of the inevitable death, our definitive disappearance, each performer of *Fantasma* invested the scene of this primary tension, with silences, repetitions, echoes, gestural and verbal interruptions. The theme of the symbolist theatre is always the thinking about death, matter made of memory and forgetfulness. Moreover, here the object gains certain concreteness, embodying the time and the life, covering itself with an Aura.

Whether we live in a time of great anxiety, the devaluation of experience, of automatism, in which we are dispossessed of ourselves all the time, in face of this annulment, the theatre that still can convene us, and maybe approach the dream language, is the one that calls to the revaluation of imagination, this revolutionary sister that is constitutive of the man himself. The theatre that convenes not spectators, but visitors to investigate the steps, to excavate the trail of the creative process of images that are offered to them. Not only to see, but to know, which means, at the same time, moving away and recognizing himself in the ambiguities of daily life gestures, in these objects inflamed with desire and shadow.



Image 13 – Nathalia Frazão in *Fantasma*. Direction: Martha Ribeiro. Contemporary Project Pirandello, Niterói, 2013. Photo: Luiza Naisciutti.

Notes

¹ Created in 2010 by the researcher and theatre director Martha Ribeiro, the Contemporary Scene's Creation and Investigation Laboratory (CNPQ/UFF) is developed in the scope of the Post-Graduation Program in Contemporary Art Studies of Universidade Federal Fluminense and has the objective of studying the poetics of the theatrical scene and the technical-poetical foundations of the actor/performer. The LCICC is configured as a practical and theoretical research laboratory space in the formation of the contemporary theatre scene. The main purpose is the critical, aesthetical, and theoretical study of the dramatic in face the post-modern theses, which has as objective the performing arts. For more information, visit: <<https://www.facebook.com/labcriacaocenacontemporanea>>.

² In this article, we analyze the three scene studies performed in 2013 in the Artistic Residency of the LCICC, Solar do Jambeiro, in Niterói. They are: *Os Seis; Improviso, Fantasma*. They were all directed and written by Martha Ribeiro; freely inspired in the plays *Os Seis Personagens à Procura do Autor; Essa Noite se Representa de Improviso*; and the short plays *O Homem da Flor na Boca; A Saída*; and *Sonho (mas talvez não)*. The trilogy, entitled *Toda Noite antes de dormir eu vejo Coisas*, investigates the creation of a hybrid scene language, between theatre and performance, from the psychophysical experience of the actors, with full freedom in the use of the Pirandellian text. For more information, visit: <www.pirandellocontemporaneo.uff.br>.

³ Along the text, the theme of the theatre of repetition in Deleuze will be developed in opposition to the representative theatre.

⁴ The Deleuzian theme of the plane of immanence, which may be examined in his book *What is Philosophy?*, defines a field crossed by becomings, by virtual multiplicities, essential to think of life as diversity of forms, thus standing against the idea of transcendence, that is, the illusion of a higher form of existence. Art, in this expanded Deleuzian field, is no longer subject to a specific rule, representative, which attributes to art a kind of making, a *tekne*.

⁵ We understand here the Pirandellian characters as *maschere nude* to escape to the character classical concept. *Maschere nude* give us the idea of motion corresponding to the theatre of repetition pointed by Deleuze.

⁶ The Contemporary Pirandello research project can be referred in the following address: <www.pirandellocontemporaneo.uff.br>.

⁷ In the theatrical text, Pirandello calls *A Cena da Enteadada* the description of the characters from the encounter of the Father with the Stepdaughter in the house of Madame Pace.

⁸ By a matter of space, the sexuality theme will not be developed in this article.

⁹ The video of the Study can be referred in the following address: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnTyNA1gWs8>>.

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