

INTERMEDIAL PERFORMANCE AESTHETICS IN PATRÍCIA FAGUNDES' *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

ESTÉTICA DE ENCENAÇÃO INTERMIDIÁTICA EM *SONHO DE UMA NOITE DE VERÃO*, DE PATRÍCIA FAGUNDES

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ABSTRACT

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594-1595), Shakespeare introduces elements borrowed from court masques, mainly music and dance. After a brief exploration of critical arguments claiming that Shakespeare's play is the model for musical versions produced during and after the Restoration, this essay investigates the negotiations and shifts of meaning in the homonymous Brazilian adaptation (2006), staged by Cia. Rústica and directed by Patrícia Fagundes. The intermedial processes, articulated in the transposition from page to stage, will be analyzed in the light of contemporary theoretical perspectives.

KEYWORDS

Intermediality, media combination, intermedial references

SHAKESPEARE'S *DREAM*: ADAPTABILITY AND EXEMPLARITY

A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594-1595) is one of Shakespeare's most adapted and performed texts, since the issues addressed in it have not lost their interest and urgency. The popularity, regularity of performance and cultural continuity of the play make it highly representative as regards universality. Mirroring the Socratic dialogue, the play explores the nature of different forms of love relationships – erotic passion, sexual desire, sexual neuroses, “true love”, infatuation, romantic love and the love of the artisans for the theatre – their different degrees of intensity, as well as the difficulty to make clear-cut divisions among them. As we read the text or watch a performance, critical questions tend to multiply: Who can tell why sometimes “true love” turns awry and “false love” becomes true? What is the difference between erotic passion or sexual desire and the feeling which humans call “true love”? How

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do we explain the cruelties that are committed in the name of love as, for example, Oberon's pleasure in taming Titania by sexually humiliating her?

Besides thematic complexities, a plurality of elements is responsible for the universal appeal of Shakespeare's *Dream*, among them the composite structure and multiple diegesis; characters from different histories, geographies, mythology and fiction; mixture of comedy and tragedy; juxtaposition of the grotesque and the sublime; amalgamation of classical, medieval, Romanesque and Renaissance literary traditions; insertion of farcical elements from the *commedia dell'arte*; embedded structures or *mise-en-abymes*; metatheatricality, parody and self-parody; popular culture traditions in early modern England, such as the carnivalized festivals of May Day and Midsummer Eve; and elements of spectacle borrowed from court masques.

According to André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion (2008), media can be malleable or resistant in terms of mediatic-expressive structuration. They are charged with specific communicative energies, technical possibilities, and expressive potentials more or less compatible with certain narrative substrata. The intricate dramatic design and fusion of the hybrid interlocking elements in *Dream* can be pointed out as axiomatic of its "médiagénie"² or adaptability, that is, the play's capacity of regenerating itself in different media.

The convergence of high and low culture in our global, image-saturated, electronic age is responsible for paradigm shifts in Shakespearean performance aesthetics. Contemporary Shakespeare productions tend to follow the model provided by the bard who used to mix and combine multiple genres, popular art forms and media. As Laurie Osborne (2003) has pointed out, each new mode of production depends on a different generic and medial mixture: "The mixed modes of production [...] demonstrate that the multiple media that are beginning to converge in reproductions of Shakespeare relate directly to colliding materials within the plays".³

After a preliminary investigation of media combination in Shakespeare's *Dream* and of similar procedures in some of the play's musical afterlives during the Restoration and after, this essay aims at discussing music and dance in Patrícia Fagundes' homonymous production (2006) in the light of intermedial critical perspectives. Modelled on the methodology of intertextuality, intermediality presupposes the integration of aesthetic concepts from different media into a new context. Irina Rajewsky (2005), concentrating on "concrete medial configurations and their specific intermedial qualities",⁴ has proposed a tripartite division of intermediality from a literary perspective, which includes medial transposition, media combination and intermedial references, phenomena that will be taken into account in the analysis of the Brazilian production. The blurring of media borders, defined by Rajewsky (2010) as a "founding category of intermediality [...] the specific way in which medial differences, borders and crossing of borders come into play",⁵ will also be explored.

² GAUDREULT; MARION. *Transécriture and Narrative Mediatics: The Stakes of Intermediality*, p. 65.

³ OSBORNE. *Mixing Media and Animating Shakespeare Tales*, p. 151.

⁴ RAJEWSKY. *Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality*, p. 51.

⁵ RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 52-53.

Shakespeare's *Dream* consolidated its success with the insertion of songs and dance, such as "You spotted snakes",⁶ the fairies' song to ward off harm from the sleeping Titania; "Ousel cock",⁷ a popular ballad that Bottom sings to himself to keep his spirits up after having been metamorphosed into an ass; and Titania's roundel or round dance with the fairies,⁸ a popular and egalitarian practice.⁹ Later on, however, as gendered hierarchy is restored, a courtly couple dance¹⁰ takes place, which far from celebrating cosmic order, shows Oberon's triumph over Titania.¹¹ And there is the Bergomask¹² with which the mechanicals end their play, a popular dance in imitation of the movements of the peasants of Bergamo in Italy. This dance, especially when performed by Kempe, whose fame as a dancer equaled his popularity as an actor, would have been a crowd-pleaser, rather than a demonstration of the mechanicals' ineptitude.¹³ The incorporation of popular music and dance within early modern plays proved to be so effective in London, in the early modern period, that the King's Men included a curtained music room in the balcony above the stage of the Globe theatre.¹⁴

In the section "Lyricism, Music and Dance", which integrates the introductory notes to the Arden edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Harold Brooks places the play between spectacle and dramatic representation, when he claims that song and dance are not merely optional extras, but essential elements that go hand-in-hand with the lyricism of Shakespeare's rhythms and cadences: "When the spoken verse is so various in its forms, and so often lyrical in tone, the distance from dialogue to song is not great. And the songs and dances are no less an integral part of the drama than the set speeches".¹⁵ However, he believes that rather than advancing the plot, song and dance routines generally have a ritual function within the play.

According to Julie Sanders (2007), Shakespeare's *Dream* "encourages and lays the foundations of a rich and diverse afterlife in terms of borrowings and appropriations, be it in the form of painting, musical, dance interpretation, or film".¹⁶ Like Brooks, she believes that musical insertions in the bard's plays are "not just present for the purposes of dramatic punctuation or emotional underscoring",¹⁷ but are integrated in his dramatic project. No wonder, then, that the impulse to adapt the *Dream* to musical form has remained strong since the late 17th and 18th centuries' vogue, when devices borrowed from masques and entertainments of the early Stuart courts constituted formative elements.

The Restoration theatre, mainly the productions by William Davenant, Thomas Killigrew and Nahum Tate, adapted Shakespeare's playtexts to suit the new political and cultural tastes of the age. They added songs not included in the bard's texts, producing stage adaptations that were

⁶ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.2.9-23.

⁷ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.1.120-128.

⁸ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.2.1.

⁹ LINDLEY. *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 183-185.

¹⁰ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 4.1.84-85.

¹¹ LINDLEY. *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 132.

¹² SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.347-348.

¹³ LINDLEY. *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 133.

¹⁴ SMITH quoted in HANSEN. *Shakespeare and Popular Music*, p. 17.

¹⁵ BROOKS. Introduction: Lyricism, Music and Dance, p. cxxii.

¹⁶ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 123.

¹⁷ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 29.

[...] regularly supplemented not only with new dialogue, scenes and characters, but also with new opportunities for musical performance, in the form of both song and dance. [...] These musical additions were themselves frequently recycled in a Restoration and later eighteenth-century theatre context; David Garrick, for example, was much influenced by Davenant's adaptations and alterations to *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when creating his own influential performance scripts.¹⁸

Sanders (2007) continues reporting that “the musicological as well as the interpolational aspects of the operatic and semi-operatic versions of Shakespeare that were undertaken during the Restoration and after”,¹⁹ such as *The Fairy Queen* (1692) by Henry Purcell, and *The Fairies* (1755) by David Garrick, which combined “spoken drama, spectacle, dance, and music in a kind of total theatre that is readily recognizable in modern opera”,²⁰ were the direct result of the prohibition of theatre events during the Civil War and Interregnum periods, when drama continued to be performed illicitly at taverns and other venues in the form of drolls, short hybridized and cannibalized versions of a number of Shakespeare's plays. This provides ironic evidence that a space of repression can also be “a space of liberation, a site of free play and experimentation, and opera was a key to that process”.²¹

PATRÍCIA FAGUNDES' DREAM (2006): MUSIC AND DANCE IN CABARET ATMOSPHERE

Traditional protocols are subverted in Patrícia Fagundes' 2006 homonymous “tradaptation”²² of Shakespeare's *Dream* for Cia. Rústica, which will be examined mainly in the light of the concept of media combination, defined by Rajewsky (2005) as a subcategory of intermediality:

Intermediality in the more narrow sense of media combination, which includes phenomena such as opera, film, theater, performances, illuminated manuscripts, computer or Sound Art installations, comics, and so on, or, to use another terminology, so-called multimedia, mixed media, and intermedia. The intermedial quality of this category is determined by the medial constellation constituting a given media product, which is to say the result of the very process of combining at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation. These two media or medial forms of articulation are each present in their own materiality and contribute to the constitution and signification of the entire product in their own specific way.²³

By combining and fusing multiple media, such as theatre, dance, choreography and music, in a fresh and new way, the Brazilian director explores the medial conditions of the theatre and “the fundamentally plurimedial structure of this medium”.²⁴ Her multimedia project includes the

¹⁸ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 31.

¹⁹ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 123.

²⁰ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 126.

²¹ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 125-126.

²² The term ‘tradaptation’ (new translation + adaptation) was coined by Michel Garneau (Quebec poet and translator) to express the close relationship between the two practices (BAKER; SALDANHA (Ed.). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, p. 5).

²³ RAJEWSKY. *Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality*, p. 51-52.

²⁴ RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 53.

updating of the setting for contemporary audiences. In a personal pronouncement, she reveals the sources and traditions which prompted her to set Shakespeare's play in a cabaret or nightclub:

We borrowed elements from the 20th century nighttime imaginary, mainly old and new circuses, 1920s and 1930s cabarets, the drunkenness of nightclubs, the ephemeral licentiousness of carnival and the tradition of musical theatre. A kaleidoscope of images and sensations that suggested a contemporary reading of this love comedy mixed with adventure, fantasy and farce.²⁵

The relocating of the action from the 16th century forest of Arden to a 20th century cabaret or nightclub was an inspired choice, because the fragmented and discontinuous structure that governs the alternate narrative plots in Shakespeare's play, interspersed with song and dance, can be compared to a cabaret variety show composed of a series of sketches and routines, punctuated by musical interventions.

In the light of the above remarks, I believe that the cabaret format is an adequate metaphor, condensing the main elements of the Shakespearean universe, since the dark atmosphere of the nightclub in modern times, where licentiousness, the ludic and the oneiric predominate, can be related to the festive seasons in the forest of Arden on Midsummer Eve, mentioned in the title, and May Day, twice referred to in the play.²⁶ While in Shakespeare's theatre, the moonlit nighttime wood was suggested mainly through the bard's language, since the play was presented in daylight in an open-air theatre, in Cia. Rústica's production, the cabaret atmosphere was created by complex lighting techniques and color fades of red, blue and orange.

The Brazilian director makes radical alterations to construct her spectacle: she shortens or does away with some scenes and cuts lines from long speeches, adjustments made to leave more space for musical interpolation and carefully designed choreographed physical action. She creates mood and intensifies emotional response by electing instrumental music, song and dance as central issues of directorial perspective. Instead of introducing Mendelssohn's 19th century incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or assembling musical scores from a variety of pre-existing songs, the soundscape of the production included live music created by a single composer working in close cooperation with the director. The actors, besides impersonating their roles, were also responsible for the execution of all music accompaniment of the production (FIG. 1).²⁷

²⁵ Translations from Portuguese into English (of lyrics interpolated into the performance text and Fagundes' pronouncement revealing the sources for the relocation of the action of the play) are mine: "Bebemos no imaginário noturno do século XX, nos circos antigos e novos, nos *cabarets* da década de 20 e 30, na embriaguez dos *nightclubs*, na liberdade efêmera dos carnavais, nos musicais antigos. Um caleidoscópio de imagens e sensações que propõe uma leitura contemporânea para essa comédia de amor, que também é aventura, fantasia e farsa." This statement related to the conception of the set and the play in general was available at: <<http://www.ciarustica.ato.br/sonho/index.html>> in July, 2007. The Brazilian director developed a cultural project with Cia. Rústica, entitled "Looking for Shakespeare", inspired by ideas discussed in her MA thesis at Middlesex University in London. The first Shakespearean production staged by the company was *Macbeth, Bandit Hero* (2004), followed by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2006) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (2008).

²⁶ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.165-168; 4.1.120-139.

²⁷ Photographic images have been inserted into the text with Patricia Fagundes' permission.



Figure 1 - Actors doubling as musicians, playing live music when not acting

Fagundes' opening scene, like an overture or prologue, frames the action and comments on it, announcing the motif of running risks and inviting the audience to engage in the festive spirit present in Shakespeare's play and maintained in the spectacle. While the spectators take their seats, some actors dance the tango *La Cumparsita*, in pairs, in the dark nightclub ambience, while others play musical instruments in the lateral spaces of the large dance-floor created by eliminating the orchestra pit to approximate stage and audience. A single voice enunciates an interpolated discourse, enriched with lines borrowed from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*²⁸ and *Hamlet*²⁹, while some of the words are reechoed by other voices: "Dark forests. We are such stuff as dreams are made on. Realities that have no concrete existence. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt in our philosophy. To risk in dark forests. To risk. Love affairs and adventures. We create fantasies".³⁰ Then, a Brazilian musical nightclub hit of the 1960s, in *bolero* rhythm, titled "A noite do meu bem" (My darling's night), immortalized by Dolores Duran, is sung in chorus by the actors. The song evokes romantic idealized love and tenderness which, in a sense, reverses the expectations of the audience who are, instead, introduced into an *imbroglio* of mechanical inversion of desire and successive exchange of love partners.³¹

The keyword in the prologue, marked by repetition, is "to risk", since the play is first and foremost about taking risks. The evocation of sites, where dreams are fabricated and illusions engendered, suggests that the play's dark forests are not places figuring on maps, but spaces in the mind. Like Shakespeare, Fagundes underscores the darker aspects in her production to suggest, symbolically and literally, the workings of the unconscious, especially in dreams.

After the scene in which Egeus, Hermia's father, imposes his paternal authority, there follows a duologue by Lysander and Hermia on the impediments of love: age, race and class difference as well as the constraints of patriarchy are mentioned. Helena shows up and confides she would like to be metamorphosed into Hermia, because the latter holds sexual dominance

²⁸ SHAKESPEARE. *The Tempest*, 4.1.156-157.

²⁹ SHAKESPEARE. *Hamlet*, 1.5.165-166.

³⁰ "Florestas escuras. Somos feitos da mesma matéria dos sonhos. Realidades de coisas que não existem. Há mais coisas entre o céu e a terra do que sonha a nossa filosofia. Arriscar em florestas escuras. Arriscar. Amores e aventuras. Fabricamos fantasias" (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 1).

³¹ KOTT. *Titania and the Ass's Head*, p. 176.

over Demetrius. Part of the dialogue that ensues between Hermia and Helena³² is transformed into a musical duet by Fagundes:

Hermia – I frown upon him and he still loves me.
Helena – Oh, that your frown could teach my smile to please him!
Hermia – I curse him, abuse him, yet he speaks of love.
Helena – Oh that my prayers could provoke such fire!
Hermia – The more I hate, the more he pursues me.
Helena – The more I love, the more he says good-bye!
Hermia – His folly is no fault of mine.
Helena – The fault is your beauty, I wish that fault were mine!³³

The transition from speech to song is always marked by change of lighting that evokes the cabaret atmosphere; whenever the characters break into song, lights are dimmed down (FIG. 2).

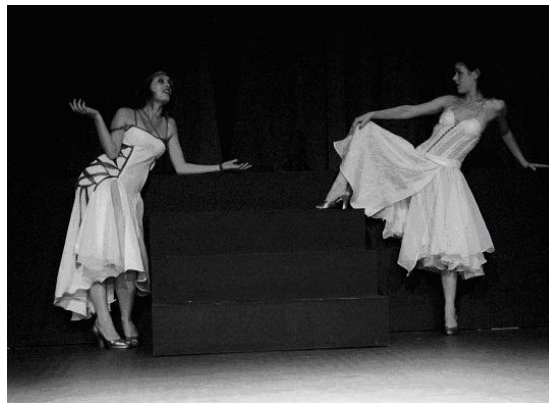


Figure 2 - The heroines' musical duet in cabaret ambience

Shakespearean soliloquies, which are instances of expressive crises, nuclear moments in which a lot of energy locked inside the characters reaches the surface, are recycled into new medial configurations similar to operatic musical arias. Each of the four lovers has a solo aria, in which Shakespeare's words are reconfigured to express his/her emotional state or thought. In this sense, the musical interpolations are entirely diegetic, they not only advance the plot, but also highlight turning-points or announce changes of perspective.

According to Jan Kott (1994),³⁴ in Helena's initial monologue, for example, the metaphors of love, eroticism and sex, which are quite conventional at the beginning of her discourse, undergo important changes during her reflection on the nature of love:

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,

³² SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.194-200.

³³ "Hérnia – Eu faço cara feia e ele ainda me ama./Helena – Ah se meu sorriso tivesse essa chama!/Hérnia – Eu xingo, eu escorraço e ele fala de amor./Helena – Ai se minhas preces provocassem esse ardor!/Hérnia – Quanto mais eu odeio mais ele me persegue./Helena – Quanto mais eu amo, mais ele se despede!/Hérnia – Sua loucura não é culpa minha./Helena – É da tua beleza, ai se fosse minha!" (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 4).

³⁴ KOTT. *Titania and the Ass's Head*, p. 179.

And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind;
 Nor has Love's mind of any judgement taste:
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste.
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
 As waggish boys, in game, themselves foreswear,
 So the boy Love is perjured everywhere [...].³⁵

This soliloquy, Kott argues, can be considered the author's monologue, a kind of Brechtian song in which Shakespeare states the philosophical theme of his *Dream*. The Polish critic claims that the bard's imagery "shows a striking similarity to the formulas of the Florentine neo-platonists, particularly Marsilio Ficino and Pico de la Mirandola"³⁶ who, based on the Orphic doctrine, argued that love is a force above the intellect:

Particularly famous was a paradox of Mirandola's, contained in his *Opera*: "Ideo amor ab Orpheo sine oculis dicitur, quia est supra intellectum." Love is blind, because it is above the intellect. The blindness gives fulfilment and ecstasy. Plato's *Feast*, understood either mystically, or concretely, was also among the favourite books of the Elizabethan neo-platonists. But, following the Florentine example, neo-platonism as practiced in Southampton's circle has a distinct epicurean flavour.³⁷

Although the connotation of love as a "blind driving force, a Nike of instinct"³⁸ is diluted in Fagundes' adaptation, the radical departure from the Petrarchan idealization of love remains unchallenged. The transmutation of Helena's soliloquy into a musical aria does not lose its functionality, because the dramatic and thematic potential of music, explored at this key moment, raises important issues that recur in the development of the action:

Oh, love
 That can lend beauty and dignity
 To things that have no quality
 Love does not see with eyes, but with the mind
 Therefore is Cupid winged, so potent and blind.
 Love displays neither fine taste nor reason
 It is a mad thing called passion
 They say that love is like a child
 That has no choice but join the dance, the dance
 As lies to wanton boys are we to
 Love that fools us for its sport.³⁹

Like Shakespeare's soliloquies, which were delivered from the edge of the apron stage to guarantee close intimacy among players and audience, Helena also shares this privilege when rendering her musical solo, because of the removal of the orchestra pit for this specific production.

³⁵ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.231-241. (My emphasis).

³⁶ KOTT. *Titania and the Ass's Head*, p. 179.

³⁷ KOTT. *Titania and the Ass's Head*, p. 180.

³⁸ KOTT. *Titania and the Ass's Head*, p. 180.

³⁹ "Ah o amor/Dá beleza e dignidade/As coisas sem nenhuma qualidade/O amor não vê com os olhos, mas com a mente/Por isso cupido é alado, cego e tão potente./O amor não tem bom gosto nem razão/ Essa coisa louca que se chama paixão/Dizem que o amor é uma criança/Não sabe escolher mas cai na dança, cai na dança/Como um menino mente/Às vezes o amor engana a gente" (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 5).

The actress explores the cabaret atmosphere, flirting with some spectators while she sings about the irrationality of love in the rhythm of blues (FIG. 3).



Figure 3 - Helena's soliloquy transmuted into a musical solo

While different dance rhythms, such as the *tango*, *bolero*, *samba*, jazz, blues, *passo doble*, *bossa nova*, among others, composed for the musical arias, duets and choruses, lend special flavor to the production and provide variety of tone and perspective, Fagundes also pays homage to musical theatre by appropriating and refashioning conventions from the Broadway and Hollywood musical tradition which, in turn, has incorporated languages from the opera, operetta, revue and cabaret. Titania's first entrance, descending a flight of stairs, accompanied on both sides by adult male fairies, reminds us of the glamour of the leading lady of a Broadway musical show (FIG. 4). She sings a song created for the production, not derived from Shakespeare's words, which expresses her erotic desires:

I feel hot like a volcano,
In the kingdom of the night
Secrets of land and sea
My touch can bring to light [...].⁴⁰



Figure 4 - Titania's spectacular entrance with her adult male fairies

⁴⁰ "Eu venho quente como um vulcão/A noite sempre está na minha mão/Num simples toque eu posso desvendar/Segredos entre a terra e o mar.." (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 7).

The tradition of casting grown-up male fairies in Titania's train has long been introduced into a number of performances, among them Charles Kean's version (1856), as the stage history of the play attests.⁴¹ This alternative can be justified by Shakespeare's playtext, where the fairies are neither ballet-dancers nor female, since Bottom refers to one of them as "Mounsieur Cobweb", and to another as "Mounsieur Mustardseed".⁴²

Part of the Shakespearean lines which refer to the alterations of the seasons as a result of the discord between Titania and Oberon⁴³ is recast as musical duet in the rhythm of *tango*, which ends in a refrain joined by the voices of the male fairies:

Nights without music
So sad and lonesome
Gardens full of mud
Couples in separate beds
Because of our fault.⁴⁴

The male fairies' lullaby and dance, in the Brazilian adaptation, is a recreation of the roundel and fairy song in Shakespeare's play,⁴⁵ a kind of prayer to protect Titania from all harm during her sleep:

La la la la laaaa
Run away serpents with double tongues
And spiders with hairy paws.
Disappear beetles and disgusting frogs
Let our queen sleep...
We sing this sweet song
La la la la la la laaaaa
Fall asleep Titania, deeply asleep.
Away evil spell
Sleep peacefully
We sing this sweet song while our queen sleeps ...
La la la la la la laaaaa.⁴⁶

When Bottom is transformed into an ass and the actors of his company run away in panic, he sings a Brazilian popular song, titled "O cravo brigou com a rosa" (carnation quarreled with rose), which substitutes "Ousel cock" in Shakespeare's play. This song refers to the love relationship between a male carnation ("o cravo", masculine noun) and a female rose ("a rosa", feminine noun). As a result of their fight and separation, the carnation becomes ill and is visited by the rose who gets sentimental and starts crying – in the end they are reconciled and get married. The song is a variation on gender problems and love misunderstandings that are present in Shakespeare's *Dream* (FIG. 5).

⁴¹ HALIO. *Shakespeare in Performance: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 12.

⁴² SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 4.1.10-17.

⁴³ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.1.88-117.

⁴⁴ "Noites sem música/Tão tristes as noites assim/E agora os jardins cheios de lama/Casais partindo a cama/Por culpa de nós dois" (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 8).

⁴⁵ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.2.9-23.

⁴⁶ "Lá la la la la laaaaa/Corram serpentes de línguas dobradas/Fujam aranhas de patas peludas./Sumam besouros e sapos nojentos/Para que durma nossa rainha.../Cantamos essa doce canção/Lá lá lá lá lá lá láaaaa/Dorme Titânia, sono profundo./Fora feitiço/Dorme em paz/Cantamos essa doce canção/Enquanto dorme nossa rainhaaaaa.../Lá lá lá lá lá lá láaaaa" (FAGUNDES. *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, p. 11).



Figure 5 - Bottom sings a popular Brazilian song

Enid Welsford argues that Shakespeare's *Dream* is "masque-like"; although it resembles masques in some aspects, the genre has been creatively transformed by the bard. She contends that the rhythmic movement of living bodies is an integral part of the play and that dance is vitally connected with the plot. However, she does not attribute the dance-like quality to songs or dances, but primarily relates it to design, forwarding the argument that the *Dream's* structural movement can be compared to a dance:

The plot is a pattern, a figure, rather than a series of human events occasioned by characters and passion, and this pattern, especially in the moonlight parts of the play, is the pattern of a dance. [...] The appearance and disappearance and reappearance of the various lovers [...] form a kind of figured ballet. The lovers quarrel in a dance pattern: first, there are two men to one woman and the other woman alone, then a brief space of circular movement, each one pursuing and pursued, then a return to the first figure with the position of the woman reversed, then a cross-movement, man quarreling with man and woman with woman, and then, as finale, a general setting to partners, including not only the lovers but fairies and royal personages as well.⁴⁷

According to this perspective, the option chosen by Fagundes to translate the characters' disputes and rivalries into choreographic movements mirrors, in visual terms, the dance pattern described by Welsford. The dance motif is particularly pertinent if related to the successive exchange of love partners: the initial love triangle with which the play opens – Demetrius and Lysander fighting for Hermia's love –, is reversed in the ambience of the night when, due to the effect of the love-juice, both Demetrius and Lysander become infatuated with Helena (FIG. 6).

Dance choreographies and percussion music also mark the entrances of Oberon and Puck who, in the Brazilian production, represent the cabaret's master of ceremonies and assistant. Fagundes revives the 19th century tradition when she casts a woman as Puck: performance history tells us that when Madame Vestris (1840) enacted a female Oberon, a girl played the role of Puck, a tradition that, however, originated much earlier and continued throughout the 19th century.⁴⁸ The female Puck's dance number not only explores the sensuality of the actress, but

⁴⁷ WELSFORD quoted in BARBER. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom*, p. 128-129.

⁴⁸ HALIO. *Shakespeare in Performance: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 25.

also highlights the ritualistic ambience of the forest/cabaret. This gender inversion contributes to a shift of meaning – the homoerotic relationship suggested in a number of productions (quite explicitly in Benjamin Britten’s 1960s opera) –, becomes a heterosexual infatuation between the king of fairies and his female jester. Oberon also accumulates the role of magician/illusionist; whenever he performs tricks with magic potions, he is costumed in an enormous, long cape attached to his arms like wings.



Figure 6 - Choreographic triangular design: Helena, Demetrius and Lysander

Codified choreographic gestures, representing insults, hostilities and blows substitute part of Shakespeare’s dialogues, conveying the dance pattern of “man quarreling with man and woman with woman”,⁴⁹ described by Welsford as a cross-movement which functions as structure, motion and expression (FIG. 7).



Figure 7 - Verbal duel reconfigured into choreographed physical action

Manipulated by Puck’s magic and fooled by his provocations, the exhausted characters move in circles in the misty forest, seeming to drift in slow motion, a reference to cinematic representational practices. Although both cinema and theatre are performance media governed by specific codes and conventions, media borders are frequently crossed to create unusual effects.

⁴⁹ WELSFORD quoted in BARBER. *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom*, p. 128-129.

This aspect of simulating the filming process is described by Rajewsky (2010) as an intermedial phenomenon. She claims that such practices can be denominated intermedial references (*intermediale Bezüge*), for example, references in playtexts or performance scripts to “film qua medium (that is, so called filmic writing)”.⁵⁰ She further clarifies that as far as intermedial references in the theatre are concerned, cinematic devices are not present in a direct manner, but are “employed and fashioned in a way that corresponds to and resembles elements, structures and representational practices”⁵¹ of the cinema. These manipulations of cinematic medial specificities “entail material and operative restrictions that can be played with, but cannot be undermined with the use of the respective media-specific means and instruments”,⁵² that is, theatre cannot become genuinely cinematic. “What can be achieved in this respect is only an illusion, an ‘as if’ of the other medium”.⁵³ In the example here provided, an indirect participation of film devices in the theatre takes place, thus creating the illusion of cinematic qualities (FIG. 8).



Figure 8 - Slow motion: theatricalization of cinematic devices

When the artisans ask the Duke whether he prefers “to see the epilogue” of their interlude or “hear a Bergomask dance”,⁵⁴ the Athenian ruler chooses the Bergomask which, in the Brazilian production, is replaced by a song composed for the spectacle. The lyrics condense and

⁵⁰ RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 55.

⁵¹ RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 57.

⁵² RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 63.

⁵³ RAJEWSKY. *Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1. 339.

reconfigure Shakespearean lines extracted from Bottom's soliloquy,⁵⁵ Theseus' speech⁵⁶ and the famous axiom from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* – "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt in our philosophy".⁵⁷ The audience is invited to enter dark forests where the creative imagination dwells, to run risks to make their dreams come true and celebrate the elements of fantasy which are present in all human relationships:

Today I had a most fantastical vision
I had a dream that nobody can explain
Hands cannot hear
Tongue cannot understand
Eye cannot explain
Methought I was
I don't know what I had
There are more things between heaven and earth
Than are dreamt in our philosophy
The madman, the poet and the lover
Are made of imagination
The dream is reborn at every moment
And this is the way our song ends.⁵⁸

This grand finale, first sung as a solo by Bottom, and then by the whole cast, energized the spectacle before the final applause.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Shakespeare established his own precedent when he introduced song and dance in his *Dream*, fostering the creation of musical adaptations during the Restoration and after. Julie Sanders (2007) states that this continuity, in a sense, blurs "the dividing line between the operatic and the theatrical Shakespeare",⁵⁹ foregrounding the two-directional flow between stage adaptations of the play and incarnations in other genres of musical theatre, such as ballet, opera, operetta and cabaret.

The Brazilian director revives the unique atmosphere of the cabaret and its variety shows, which indicates her predilection for exploiting new contexts and her intent to locate Shakespeare in the contemporary scene. The period evoked relates to the vogue of German and French cabarets of the 1920's and 1930's, when audiences sought entertainment, pleasure and good-humored critique in popular establishments that presented sketches in between musical numbers and dance. The cabaret set created the proper condition for establishing a ludic atmosphere and the proximity between stage and audience desired by the director.

⁵⁵ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 4.1.203-212.

⁵⁶ SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.4-8.

⁵⁷ SHAKESPEARE. *Hamlet*, 1.5.156-166.

⁵⁸ The final song does not figure in Fagundes' performance playtext; it is my transcription from the DVD recording of the performance: "Eu hoje tive a mais fantástica visão/Eu tive um sonho que ninguém pode explicar/As mãos não são capazes de escutar/A língua não pode entender/O olho não pode explicar/Parecia que eu era/Já não sei o que eu tinha/Há mais coisas entre o céu e a terra/Do que sonha a nossa filosofia/O louco o poeta e o amante/São feitos de imaginação/E o sonho renasce a cada instante/E assim termina a nossa canção...".

⁵⁹ SANDERS. *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, p. 32.

In this essay, evidence has been provided that, in Fagundes's adaptation, a dialogue is established among Shakespeare's text, subtext, *ur*texts, intertexts (Shakespeare criticism, stage history etc.), the cultural imaginary of the historical moment of its creation, various media in their materiality and intermedial references. Live instrumental music, the spoken word, dance, popular songs, operatic-like solo arias, duets and choruses (inspired in the bard's text), cinematic devices and elements borrowed from different modes of musical theatre are carefully integrated into the performance to satisfy the expectations of contemporary audiences, who appreciate paradigm shifts in Shakespearean performance aesthetics.

Although the Brazilian production displays many elements of dance and/or musical theatre, it cannot be defined by any of these labels, because several media and art forms "contribute to the constitution and signification of the entire performance in their own media-specific way".⁶⁰ Like a great number of contemporary theatrical experiments, it is a hybrid product, in which new meanings are generated through the interplay of different medial codes and conventions which combine and cross boundaries, matching the generic and medial mixture so prominent in Shakespeare's *Dream*.



RESUMO

Em *Sonho de uma noite de verão* (1594-1595), Shakespeare introduz elementos emprestados das mascaradas da corte, principalmente música e dança. Após uma breve exploração de argumentos críticos que apontam a peça de Shakespeare como modelo de versões musicais produzidas durante e depois da Restauração, este ensaio investiga as negociações e mudanças de sentido da adaptação brasileira homônima (2006), montada pela Cia. Rústica, com direção de Patrícia Fagundes. Os processos intermediáticos, articulados na transposição do texto para a cena, serão analisadas à luz de perspectivas teóricas contemporâneas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Intermedialidade, combinação de mídias, referências intermediáticas

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⁶⁰ RAJEWSKY. Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate on Intermediality, p. 57.

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