

From Cinema to Circus Theater: Melodrama in the Works of Gilda De Abreu

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Abstract: This article is dedicated to addressing the dramaturgical production of the artist Gilda de Abreu, which was presented in the circus-theaters of São Paulo, in the second half of the 20th century, highlighting the works “O Ébrio”, from 1946, “Coração Materno”, from 1951. The purpose is to relate these two works that circulated through various media (music, theater, radio soap opera, cinema, circus-theater, romance), highlighting for this analysis cinema, the melodramatic genre in its scenic transpositions.

Keywords: Gilda de Abreu, circus-theater, cinema, melodrama.

Introduction

This article is organized into four parts. In the first part I deal with the works of Gilda de Abreu found in the Miroel Silveira Archive, in São Paulo, and the research that has been carried out on the authors who are part of this archive. In the second part, I deal with the life and work of Gilda de Abreu, and her relationship with the singer and her husband, Vicente Celestino, highlighting the fruitful artistic production that involved them, and also the historical-political-cultural period in which they lived. In the third part, I analyze the works “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”, based on the filmed scripts, pointing out the circularity of these works in the media and their melodramatic characteristics.

While carrying out my doctoral thesis “Urban Saltimbancos: the influence of the circus on the renewal of Brazilian theater in the 80s and 90s”, I was able to see how much the circus-theater influenced contemporary directors and actors in the construction of a new theatrical poetics in shows and in the interpretation of actors. Documents collected in the Multimeios Archive of Centro Cultural São Paulo pointed to a dramaturgy with its own characteristics, produced from melodramatic works, romantic dramas, historical plays, operettas and even tragedies for what is known as circus drama; In circus comedies, references pointed to farces, commedia dell’arte, chanchadas and pantomimes.

Circus theater is a type of circus, whose authorship is given to the clown Benjamim de Oliveira, who in the first decade of 1900 presented romantic dramas and melodramas at the Spinelli circus, Rio de Janeiro, on a stage, in addition to the arena space.

In this type of circus, the circus show is structured in two parts. In the first, the variety numbers are presented, such as acrobatics, trapeze, rope, etc. In the second part, theatrical performances are performed, highlighting pantomimes, farces, comedies and romantic dramas and melodramas.

During my post-doctorate, in 2010, I was able to delve into circus-theater studies at the then Miroel Silveira Archive, at the Library of the School of Communications and Arts of São Paulo (ECA-USP).

At that time, the Miroel Silveira Archive of the ECA/USP Library was made up of 6,137 processes that belonged to the Department of Public Entertainment of the State of São Paulo (DDP-SP) which, after the decree of the 1988 constitution, extinguishing censorship and guaranteeing the freedom of expression, were rescued by Miroel Silveira, who at the time he was teaching at the Department of Performing Arts at the USP School of Communications and Arts (CAC/ECA/USP), and was taken to USP. These processes cover a period that extends from the 1927s to the 1967s. Among these processes, 1,088 plays were requested to be released from censorship by the circus-theaters, to be presented in the aforementioned circuses. Upon discovering the Miroel Silveira Archive, I found it necessary to delve deeper into this abundant material for the intended dramaturgical analysis, resulting in the research *The Transit between the Circus and the Theatre: the construction of the dramaturgy of Brazilian circus-theatre – an analysis of the authors, works and dramatic genres of plays performed in São Paulo, between 1927 and 1967*, present in the Miroel Silveira Archive.

From 2020 onwards I began studying, together with two other researchers, Walter de Sousa Júnior and Cristina Macedo, the production of playwrights who wrote plays for the circus-theater in São Paulo, in the period between 1927 and 1967, whose works were part of Miroel Silveira Archive of the São Paulo School of Communications and Arts, and which are currently under the custody of the São Paulo Public Archive. The plays of 21 authors are archived there, including their own texts, translations, adaptations and arrangements, whose repertoire varies between dramas, melodramas, comedies, farces, revues and others. And among these authors there is the production of the nationally known multi-artist, Gilda de Abreu. Among her works in the

Miroel Silveira Archive are: “Mestiça”, from 1954, whose authorship includes her own name; “Coração Materno”, whose authorship is indicated as Rafael Iorio; and “O Ébrio”, whose authorship is indicated as Vicente Celestino.

The works of the circus theater present in the Miroel Silveira archive

When we enter into the studies of circus-theater works, we come across the circularity and hybridity of these works, understanding circularity from the studies of Bakhtin, reviewed by Ginzburg (1987), in which there is between the culture of the dominant classes and that of the subordinate classes, a circular relationship made up of reciprocal influences, “which moves from bottom to top as well as from top to bottom”. Just as cultural hybridity occurs between cultures that are in essence of a differentiated matrix, which are materialized through a long process of cultural circularity.

Another aspect that emerges in these works is the appropriation of their authorship. It is common to find a certain text, with the name of another author, who did not actually write it.

Certain work. There are several explanations for this phenomenon, but we can see that in the works of the Miroel Silveira Archive, clown comedies were generally named after different clowns, who used a certain sketch known to everyone. There was only a change in the clown's name, for example, “The Wedding of Arrelia, The Wedding of Piolin, etc. The work was registered in the clown's name. Another aspect was the urgency of circus owners to work on a certain piece that was successful. There is also the case of adaptations of works and films, which were authored by the adapter. Currently, we use the concept of cultural appropriation to designate this phenomenon that is so present in the dramaturgy of circus-theater, but for the *modus operandi* of this art, this was part of the daily lives of these artists and their circus companies.

There was also a need to pass these works through censorship, for later release, which further forced circus performers to speed up the copy or version of a given work, whether the original or an adaptation. To release censorship, there was still no need for authorization from SBAT (Brazilian Society of Theatrical Authors), which was only regulated in Law 9,610, in 1998. There is considerable controversy regarding the authorship of these works that are part of the “Trunk of circus-theater pieces.” Many of these pieces were written after listening to theatricalized music, as is the case of “Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”, as well as films watched, or novels read, by different authors.

Researcher Walter Souza Júnior (2009) briefly outlines the production of circus-theater texts present in the Miroel Silveira archive:

“A quick glance revealed that there were plays produced by the Trianon Theater generation (1916-1921), which borrowed texts from what circus performers called “high comedy”. These differed from the “ring comedies”, an extended version of the so-called “entrances” of clowns, which incorporated elements appropriated from European dramaturgy, which came with the troupes to the country in the form of pantomimes.

The prolonged success of Teatro de Revista, with its periodic undulations, also echoed in circuses, to the point that their interaction generated a subgenre, the circus revue. Due to the theatrical and revue tradition with a regional-country theme, there is also a circus show made from the adaptation of heroic sagas sung in guitar styles for the stages and arenas.

On the drama side, melodrama ended up setting the tone for the productions, largely due to the influence of radio soap operas, which became ingrained in popular taste and left the listener ready to consume the genre in its staged version. Tragic dramas, always with a religious theme, perhaps influenced by popular stagings of sacred dramas during Holy Week, ended up exporting the final apotheosis for melodrama.

The circus comedies also did not go unaffected by radio humor. Various humorous types on the radio gained body and soul under the canvas, in a game of references in which the viewer, able to identify them easily, was entertained without the original source of the humor being compromised. Furthermore, it became common for radio artists to perform at the arena, especially those from the caipira music cast and after the advent of television.” (SOUSA JÚNIOR, 2009, p.12)

Based on my interest in studying these authors who currently have their texts archived in the São Paulo Public Archive, I then began researching Gilda de Abreu in dissertations and theses, historical documents from CEDOC-FUNARTE, audiovisual material, magazines, interviews, websites from the internet and other documents. But to deal with Gilda de Abreu, it was also necessary to know the work of Vicente Celestino, her husband and nationally known singer who had a vast career, and who produced and participated in the films scripted by his wife, Gilda de Abreu. The two works “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno” are the result of music created by Vicente Celestino. This intricacy of life and profession alone that involved them would make for another study, and perhaps a new melodrama. In this article I will try to guide myself through the life and work of Gilda de Abreu, and Vicente Celestino will be in a supporting role.

About Gilda de Abreu

Gilda de Abreu was born in France, on September 23, 1904, and came to live in Brazil when she was around ten years old. Her mother, Nícia Silva, was an opera singer, and also a singing teacher. Her influence was great on the career of Gilda de Abreu, who studied at the National Institute of Music in Rio de Janeiro, where her mother taught, and in 1927 she graduated in operatic singing. Oscar Dalva (1927), from Revista Fon Fon comments:

Opereta the Brazilian Song

Documentation and Research Center – CEDOC – FUNARTE – OFFICIAL – 1933



https://atom.funarte.gov.br/uploads/r/centro-de-documentacao-e-informacao-cedoc-da-funarte/3/9/c/39c7513821a51dcd6249506e136b699dca37bca41d90206c09d5eb691d0dfbaa/wp_esp_ep_fot_1930_02_02_01.jpg, accessed on November 9, 2023

The small hall of the National Institute of Music witnessed an artistic baptism last month: she made her debut as a singer, Ms. Gilda Abreu. Daughter and disciple of Mrs. Nícia Silva, it was expected, would reveal the knowledge and vocational skills that so highly recommend her mother. And so it was. Lyric-light soprano or light soprano evolving into lyrical soprano, Ms. Gilda Abreu is one of the most pleasant for its tuning and sweetness. (DALVA, 1927)

Gilda then began her career as an opera singer, during this period, and in 1933 debuted the first operetta starring her, “A Canção Brasileira”, for this same operetta she wrote an act “The Princess Esfarrapada ou The Princess Maltrapilha” added on the 25th of April 1933. After “The Brazilian Song”, that same year he starred in “Maria” by Viriato Corrêa, “A Casa Branca” by Freire Júnior, “A Cantora do Radio” and “Jurity” also by Viriato Corrêa. These authors were part of the Trianon Theater.

I would like to highlight that the Operetta style had been known to the Rio public since 1908, from the work *Viúva Alegre*, Franz Lehár. The operetta genre was born with *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), by Offenbach, in Paris. Years later, the musical format was supplanted in Austria, in 1871, by Strauss. Finally, the Hungarian Franz Lehár innovated by synthesizing Offenbach's cancan and Strauss's waltz in the same show. With this, he conceived one of the most popular European musical shows of that century: *The Merry Widow*. In Brazil, this operetta was staged by several operetta companies, and was even staged by the famous clown Benjamin de Oliveira, together with Spinelli, in his circus, in the arena, with a cast of Brazilian artists.

“A Canção Brasileira” is an operetta with a libretto by Luis Iglesias and Miguel Santos and a score by Henrique Vogeler, whose premiere took place on March 31, 1933. The cast includes, among others, Gilda de Abreu and Vicente Celestino. The operetta has dialogues whose plot revolves around characters who represent genres of popular music widespread at the time – lundu, modinha, waltz, fado, samba, song, charleston, coco, tango – and musical instruments – guitar, flute, cavaquinho, cuíca, tambourine, bass drum.

This short story, created in the early 1930s, initially narrates Lundu's wedding and Modinha, duly represented characters, whose union generates the birth of Brazilian Song. The success of this operetta was so great that during the period of its performances, Gilda de Abreu and Vicente Celestino, who acted opposite each other, actually got married, on September 25, 1933.

It is important to highlight that the 1930s in Brazil were marked by the government of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1937), in which there was a great expansion of industrialization. Thus, entertainment-oriented entrepreneurs, inspired by the North American production model, tried to build studios, hire technical personnel and import foreign machinery. Brazilian cinema was boosted by the introduction of sound film and the improvement of technical conditions. The first film studios then appeared in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, such as Épica Film, by César Melani and Cléo de Verberena, and Cinédia, by Adhemar Gonzaga. and also Brasil Vox Films, in 1935, by Humberto Mauro and Carmen Santos.

With this new scenario, in 1936, Gilda de Abreu debuted in cinema, as an actress, in the film “Bonequinha de Seda”, directed by Oduvaldo Vianna. As I said previously, Oduvaldo Viana comes from Geração Trianon, producing light comedies, and is already well recognized in the theater world.

The plot deals with the arrival of Marilda (Gilda de Abreu), which is a big event in a village: everyone wants to find out who this French girl is, who attended the big schools in Paris and parades with great elegance through the Brazilian streets. Men fight to go out with her, women dream of copying her, of having the same dresses and the same European education. But soon the farce comes to light: Marilda is Brazilian like everyone else, and she has never set foot in Europe.

“Bonequinha de Seda” was a success, earned more than 700 million and was seen by more than 200 thousand people. The actress, who also wrote the film’s theme song and directed the musical scene in which she sings an aria from the opera “Lucia de Lammermoor”, was establishing herself as an artist. The film had a great impact on the actress’s life, due to the fact that it was inspired and designed for Gilda to play, there are even almost biographical scenes from her life in the film. Silk Doll was exhibited in Brazil and in some other countries such as Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay.

In 1939, Gilda de Abreu moved away from the stage and began managing her husband’s career, with the creation of the Companhia Vicente Celestino e Gilda de Abreu. From then on, Gilda dedicated herself to her career as a theater author and wrote in partnership with Luiz Iglesias the comedy “Olhos de Veludo” (1944). With the success of the radio soap operas, Gilda then started writing them. For Rádio Nacional she writes “Mestiça”, “Aleluia”, “A Cigana”, “Pinguinho de gente”, and others, in addition to writing “Alma de clown” for Rádio Tamoio. Gilda also wrote “O Host ou Júpiter e Alemena” (1947), the children’s play “A Bonequinha de Tar” (s/d), the drama “Mestiça” (1944), and the operetta “A Patativa” (1950), in partnership with Ercole Varetto and Vicente Celestino.

There is a circus-theater version of the work “Mestiça”, in the Miroel Silveira Archive, which will not be analyzed here in this study. “A Mestiça” was written at the suggestion of her husband, Vicente Celestino. Gilda adapted it into a play and even wrote a script, but did not have the opportunity to record it. In the 70s, Letita Perroy asked for permission to film it and together they rewrote the script, and the film was released in 1974, with Sônia Braga as the main actress, in the role of “Mestiça”. That same year, Sônia participated in the soap opera “Gabriela, Cravo e Canela”, written by Jorge Amado.

In 1946 Gilda de Abreu premiered the film “O Ébrio”, with her script, and directed by her, which was a success with the public and at the box office. In 1947, together with the production company Cinédia, he began filming his second film “Pinguinho de Gente”, which was not as successful as the film O Ébrio. Her third film was “Coração Materno”, from 1951, an adaptation of a song by Vicente Celestino. This film was also not well received by critics. Gilda then began to dedicate herself to writing, writing poems, radio soap operas and film scripts, such as the script for “Chico Viola Não Morreu”, from 1955, directed by Roman

**_ Films Made:
First Film as Director: “O Ébrio”**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFOO-HFoMSg>, accessed on November 9, 2023

Viñoly Barreto, which deals with the life of singer Francisco Alves. He also published novels previously written for radio, such as "O Ébrio" and "Pinguinho de Gente" and also wrote two books for the children's sector: the novel "As Aventuras de Runt" and the book of stories "Noah's Ark".

With this fruitful production, Gilda de Abreu will establish herself as a filmmaker, screenwriter, novelist, writer of radio soap operas, writer of children's works, writer of operettas and much more.

With the death, in 1968, of Vicente Celestino, her companion in life and profession, Gilda de Abreu still made her last film, a short film to honor him: "Canção de Amor", from 1977. And to honor her mother, Nícia Silva, founded the Nícia Silvia Artistic Cultural Center in 1979. That same year, Gilda de Abreu passed away on July 4, 1979.

Gilda's return to cinema came with the desire to direct a short film. Adhemar de Barros, owner of Cinédia, suggested filming the play "O Ébrio", which pleased both of them, as it was profitable and had popular appeal, in addition to fulfilling Gilda's desire to see her husband Vicente debut on screen.

Based on the song composed and recorded by Vicente Celestino in 1936, "O Ébrio", and transformed into a song successfully staged in the theater in 1942, adapted and directed by Gilda de Abreu; Adhemar de Barros suggested to Gilda that she create the script for the film and direct its filming. In the feature film, Gilda and Vicente acted as co-producers and Cinédia provided the technical resources. The actress was responsible for directing and writing the film, the latter being a challenge for her as she was used to writing theatrical adaptations, radio soap operas and plays. The recordings lasted eight months, starting on August 26, 1945 and ending on March 18, 1946. The main problems were related to recording schedules and the lack of blank film, due to the 1945 world war.

The film's premiere was on August 28, 1946, in Rio de Janeiro, and was a great success, with 530 copies made. The costs were reversed in just two weeks of showing the film. The reviews were highly favorable in the main film magazines of the time, such as Fon Fon and Cineart. According to radio host Wanderley Cunha:

The film's success was so overwhelming that in the first four years of its exhibition, more than four million spectators filled theaters across the country, surpassing the income obtained by many foreign film productions. And to meet demand, around 500 copies were needed. (CUNHA, 2022)

The profit from the film was financially positive for Cinédia, which promised a second film for Gilda, thus starting pre-production on "Pinguinho de Gente".

Second Film as Director: "Pinguinho de Gente"



<https://cinema10.com.br/filme/pinguinho-de-gente>, accessed on November 9, 2023

Still in 1946, Gilda de Abreu began communicating with Adhemar Gonzaga about the next film, "Pinguinho de Gente". The pre-production period was turbulent and during production as well, mainly due to financial issues. Filming lasted 9 months, with the premiere in Rio de Janeiro on October 2, 1949 and in São Paulo on April 10, 1950. Critical reception was not good, which was a disappointment, as it was the feature film Cinédia's biggest budget.

Terceiro Filme como Diretora
Third Film as Director: “Coração Materno”



<https://medium.com/cinesuffragette/gilda-de-abreu-e-o-primeiro-grande-sucesso-do-cinema-brasileiro-c2be90229467>, accessed on November 9, 2023

In 1950, Gilda de Abreu was preparing the film adaptation of another song by Vicente Celestino, “Coração Materno”. The director had been responsible for the theatrical adaptation in 1947 and the actors would be the same ones who participated in the show, the only exception being Gilda herself in the main role. With Cinédia not willing to produce it, Affonso Campiglia from FilMOTECA Cultural teamed up with Gilda. The recordings went smoothly, with problems only occurring in locations, such as the Botanical Garden, due to the dependence on natural light.

The film premiered on May 7, 1951 and was not very successful with critics, which left the director disappointed. The public didn't take it well either, as they were already used to the standards of the film producer Vera Cruz and the chanchadas of the film producer Atlântida.

Analysis of the Works: “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”: From Cinema to Circus Theater

When analyzing the works that are deposited in the Miroel Silveira Archive, we can distinguish a priori that its 1088 plays have an average of 50% dramas and 50% comedies, without going into the subgenres classified there based on the descriptions of each work.

According to author Walter Sousa Junior:

The serious genre, which in principle could be called drama, but which in the circus-theatre, especially the one staged on stage, becomes almost exclusively melodrama, whether with epic, religious or family themes – although the latter is always the main raw material of the others –, appears since the beginning of theatrical expression under the canvas. Although triumphant virtue, one of the main characteristics of melodrama, sets the tone for the serious plays staged in the circus, tragedies often emerge, funereal endings, in which the protagonists – ingénue and gallant – perish under evil (the cynic), but always under the banner of romantic love that, in some way, will unite the two hearts, as established in the apotheosis of the classic ...And the sky united two hearts (1938), by Antenor Pimenta.

These dramas and melodramas were narrated in such a way that the plot led to an apotheosis – inherited from religious dramas, especially those that tell the lives of saints – in which the triumph of virtue or the power of love outline the moral message.” (SOUZA JUNIOR, 2009, p.119.)

When we analyze the two works “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”, from the aegis of melodrama and romantic drama, we understand why these works had great repercussions in the circus-theaters that circulated throughout the State of São Paulo, and with a high probability of having circulated throughout Brazil.

I would also like to highlight how these works come from one medium to another:

With the advent of commercial radio, in the 1930s, songs with dramatic lyrics began to serve as raw material for the creation of performances, including the notable ones “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”, by Vicente Celestino, in the “form of true popular operas”. Also the radio, and in particular the radio soap opera, lent new subsidies to the elaboration of the circus theatrical text, with an extra advantage: the mass public was already prepared, through the radio waves, to recognize the melodrama, its characters and plots, and to delight in the adventures and in the end, when virtue always triumphs. (SOUZA, 2009, p. 122)

To delve deeper into the issue of the circulation of these works through different media, we will initially analyze the work “O Ébrio” which was written as a Song, in 1935, by Vicente Celestino. This Song will be adapted for the theater, and directed by Gilda de Abreu, in 1941. In 1946, it will be scripted into a feature film by Gilda de Abreu herself; will also be transformed into a soap opera on TV Tupi between the years from 1965

and 1966, and years later it was transformed into a novel, again by Gilda de Abreu.

Plot:

Gilberto Silva (played by Vicente Celestino) is a rich young medical student from the countryside whose father lost his farm, leaving him destitute. Without support, Gilberto abandoned his studies and went to the big city, where he wandered until he met the kind Father Simão, who opened his doors and helped him look for a job.

With musical talent, Gilberto composed "Porta Aberta" and signed up for a freshman program at a radio station, thanks to which he gained notoriety and some money to finish his medical course. He met his future wife Marieta, a nurse at the hospital. After some events involving unscrupulous family members and the loss of his wife due to betrayal, he decided to live like a vagabond, drowning himself in drink.

"O Ébrio" is inspired by the 1937 song about the rise and decline of a singer tormented by heartbreak and a victim of alcoholism.

Film researcher Margarida Maria Adamatti (2022), writes about "O Ébrio";

The story of O Ébrio is directly related to the transposition between media in different supports (ADAMATTI, 2018; 2020). In 1935, singer Vicente Celestino presented the song "O Ébrio" on Guanabara radio, which became one of the biggest hits of his career. The story of social decay and alcoholism was adapted to the stage in 1941 in the form of a "theatrical song", which remained on display for almost five months. Six years later, Adhemar Gonzaga invited Gilda de Abreu to debut as a filmmaker, directing her husband, tenor and actor Vicente Celestino. While the play was performed until the mid-1960s, the same story was extended in the form of a soap opera, on TV Paulista (1965-1966), and a novel of the same name, published by Gilda de Abreu. (ADAMATTI, 2022, p.4)

In his film analysis, Adamatti (2022) will address the proximity between the script for cinema and theatrical staging, especially in the productions of scenes that mostly use theatrical techniques of representation in the *mise en scène* of the stage. This format will be predominant in the film, with the use of a camera with a wide view from the proscenium, avoiding editing and scene cutting. The movement of the camera is the gaze of the spectator who watches from the proscenium of the Italian theater the events that unfold as a whole.

The work "Coração Materno"

The work "Coração Materno" is initially a theatricalized song, which will have a theatrical adaptation in 1947, and will have its script for a feature film, in 1951.

Plot:

As a baby, Carlos was abandoned in the church, at the feet of Our Lady, raised by the priest and consecrated to her. As a child, he falls in love with the daughter of the Comendador, the great farmer of the place, who is already betrothed to the son of a ruined count. The young lovers have difficult personalities: Carlos is impulsive and quarrelsome, Violeta is flighty. When things start to go well for the young pair, Carlos falls into a trap and is accused of a murder he didn't commit.

After 15 years of Carlos' imprisonment, the real killer upon dying, a gypsy, reveals to Carlos that he was the killer. Carlos tries to win back Violeta's love, and she discovers that she is going blind. To get away from Carlos, due to his blindness, she asks him to rip out the Saint's heart from the church in which he was raised by the priests. Out of love for Violeta, he fulfills her wish, but on the way to meet her, his heart falls. Carlos is persecuted by the population, but is later forgiven by everyone, and decides to become a priest.

He ends up discovering that Violeta is blind and because she had asked him to rip out the Saint's heart, and forgives her. All these events are told to a journalist who visits him in his castle, years after these events occurred, and which are revealed to him by Carlos. The story ends after the journalist leaves his home, and his death occurs with the arrival in spirit of Violeta, who came to pick him up.

The play is accompanied by several songs sung by Vicente Celestino in the role of Carlos, and at the end the song "Come pick me up and I'm still yours" is sung.

Coração Materno will have a similar structure in the production of film scenes, framing close to the shots of scenes from Ébrio, based on the spatial use of theatrical staging on an Italian stage.

Another aspect studied by researcher Paulo Merísio (2009), in relation to melodrama that fits perfectly into the discussions presented here in relation to the works of Gilda de Abreu, is the aspect of the work's reception:

Critics and historians tend to value theatrical experiences based on literary canons. In this way, they place melodrama at a lower level than the great works of universal dramaturgy. The problem lies in the fact that a theatrical text aims first at the scene and not its reading. There are specific elements of theatrical carpentry

that must be taken into account when analyzing a dramaturgical text. The melodramatic text, for example, contains in its structure a series of indications related to the staging itself, that is, the text is just one of the components of a set of elements, and the analysis of a work only through its printed part is, in the main, minimum, reducing. (MERISIO, p.105)

The author continues his argument citing Thomasseau (2000, p.28), who converges on this view that the text printed in the melodrama is another of the elements that will contribute to theatrical carpentry, drawing attention to two aspects: the potentiality of the rubric as a staging mechanism and the existence of “mise en-scène notebooks”, sold separately, in which the authors describe mechanisms of the staging itself.

Paulo Merísio (2009, p.109,110) also references the study by Przybos (1987), in which the author lists three dominant cognitive aspects of the scene/audience relationship:

The first refers to moments in which the spectator has superior information, that is, details of the intrigue that are explicit to the public, although unknown to the characters on stage.

The second aspect is exactly the opposite, inferiority in relation to information, moments in which adventures (intrigue or scenic effects) surprise the public; the third is the suspense, effects or striking elements previously announced by posters or the press and eagerly awaited throughout the show (Przybos, 1987: 159).

Large scenic events fall into one of the last two aspects. It is common to go to the theater to confirm the announcement of an incomparable sunset or the announcement in reviews of “a new effect, brilliant costumes and a well-executed ballet”. (Przybos, 1987: 160) (translation Paulo Merísio)

In relation to the works “Coração Materno” and “Ébrio”, the songs already known to the general public, with the narration of events that will occur during the mise-en-scene, attracted even more curiosity and fascination from the public to watch to the show and the film afterwards, and see up close the events narrated in the theatrical songs.

There is another resource used in the structure of melodrama that also occurs in the plays “O Ébrio” and “Coração Materno”, which according to Paulo Merísio (2009, p.112) in his studies on French melodrama, are the narrative moments in which the character clarifies the background of the action. It is common to use a secondary character eager to learn about the developments of the facts, whose function, at that moment, is to serve as an audience for the great clarifying text that can also be configured as a speech directly broadcast to the public.

In “Coração Materno” this resource is used so that Carlos can tell the journalist his story of suffering and pain, and when narrating the facts he also brings the title song “Coração Materno” which summarizes his love story:

Lyrics of the Song “Coração Materno”, By Vicente Celestino

Said a peasant to his beloved
My idolized one, say what you want
For you I will kill, I will steal
Even though you cause me sadness, woman
Prove that I want you
I venerate your eyes, your bearing, your being
But say, your order I wait
For you I don't care about killing or dying
And she said to the peasant, jokingly
If your crazy passion is true
Leave now and pick me up
From your mother, my whole heart
And the peasant ran away
Like lightning on the road disappeared
And your loved one became crazy
Crying on the road he fell

The peasant arrives at the hut
He finds his mother kneeling and praying
The devil rips his chest open
Falling the old lady at the foot of the altar
Take it from your bleeding chest
From the old mother's poor heart
And runs back proclaiming
Victory, victory, you have my passion

But in the middle of the road he fell
And in the fall a leg broke
And from a distance it jumped out of his hand
On earth the poor heart
At that moment a voice echoed
Are you hurt, my poor son?
Come get me, son, here I am
Come get me, I'm still yours

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smnnj63dQMM>, accessed on November 9, 2023

In relation to the film *O Ébrio*, the song “*O Ébrio*” was already well known among the public who already knew it when the film was released. The public was interested in knowing the story now turned into a film, telling the character's facts. The song itself is divided into a previous narration of the character's facts before becoming an alcoholic, and after his misadventure, new facts are revealed in the singing. Narration and singing form a unique block for the public to follow *Ébrio*'s misadventures:

Lyrics to the Song “*O Ébrio*”, By Vicente Celestino:

I was born an artist
I was a singer
When I was still little, they took me to a singing school
My name, little by little, grew, grew
Until you reach the heights of glory
During my artistic career I had several loves.
They all swore eternal love to me
But they ended up running away with others
Leaving me with longing and pain
One night when I was singing *Tosca*
A young woman in the front row threw me a flower
This young woman later became my legitimate wife
One day, when I was singing *The Force of Destiny*
She ran away with someone else, leaving me a letter, and in the letter a goodbye
I couldn't sing anymore

Later, I remembered that she, however,
She had left me a little piece of her: My daughter
A tiny meat doll that I had the duty to educate
I started singing again, but only for the love of my daughter.
I educated her, she became a young, beautiful girl
And one night, when I sang *The Force of Destiny* once again
God took my daughter never to return
From then on I was falling, falling
Moving from high-class theaters to lower-class ones
Until I ended up being booed while singing in the middle of a circus ring.
I was never anything again
Nothing no!
Today, because I drink to forget my misfortune, they call me drunk
Drunken

I became a drunkard, I try to forget
That ungrateful girl I loved and who abandoned me
Stoned through the streets, alive in pain
I have no home and no relatives, everything is over
Only in taverns do I find my shelter
Every colleague in misfortune is a great friend
That although they have, like me, their sufferings
They advise me and ease my torments
I have been happy and received with nobility until

It swam in gold and had a satin alcove
And at every step a great friend who put faith
And in relatives... Yes, I trusted!

And today, seeing myself in misery, I see everything then
The false home that I loved and that I left crying
Every relative, every friend, was a thief

They abandoned me and stole what I loved
False friends, I beg you, I beg you to cry
When I die, there will be no inscription on my grave
Let the worms come to finish little by little
This sad drunk, this sad heart
I just want the grave in which I rest
Crazy drunks like me come and deposit
Your secrets in my ultimate shelter
And your tears of pain to your friend's chest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFOO-HFoMSg>, accessed on November 9, 2023

Another aspect addressed in this study carried out by Paulo Merísio (2009), is the relationship between melodrama and cinema, which can be configured as a paradox:

The relationship between melodrama and cinema can also be a paradox. The melodramatic experience triggers elements in the theater that will define the cinematic narrative structure. Diverse and detailed settings (tableaux); plurality of scenes, with some events taking place in time outside the narrative line; flashbacks (in melodrama, in scenes narrated by characters); These are aspects that together seem to anticipate a model that would be absorbed by cinema. The paradox lies in the fact that, no matter how much the scenic machinery develops, there is a limitation that ends in the framing of the stage and that always acts in the field of representation, while the cinematographic camera can capture locations in real environments. Cinema then starts to show what theater tries to reproduce. This knot was untied by stage artists through the rescue of theatricality, that is, the search for what is specific about theater. Theatrical codes begin to occupy the space of proposals for reproducing reality on stage. Now, the appeal to visuality is precisely one of the strengths of melodrama. However, cinematographic resources are able to more effectively carry out this research that guided melodramatic authors, which, in some way, seems to have contributed to the anachronistic tone that this genre seems to have acquired in theater." (MERÍSIO, 2009, p. 114)

In her testimony about the failure of "Coração Materno", Gilda de Abreu comments in an interview given to journalist Wanderley Cunha, in August 1969, a year after the death of Vicente Celestino:

"...then came Maternal Heart. Film set at a time when balloon skirts were prevalent... Vicente and I starred in the film, which had a poetic fantasy plot, but did not have the human theme of *Ebrio*. The financial success also did not compensate for the tremendous sacrifice involved in filming. The direction was mine. And so I ended my cinematographic activities physically ill, mentally ill, morally ill... In short, I was too much of a dreamer to continue a career where you need to have no soul, no heart." (WANDERLEY CUNHA, August 1969 – interview with Gilda de Abreu)

In her speech, Gilda de Abreu analyzes that her proposal to film a work whose plot is "poetic fantasy" was out of context, pointing out that the era was "of balloon skirts", and that it was too dreamy to continue your career where you need to have no soul, no heart. The paradox pointed out by Paulo Merísio in relation to melodrama is evident in the choice of a work that no longer corresponds to the public's taste.

Conclusion

And to conclude this article, I bring as an essential element of this study the potential of Melodrama which, since its emergence in Italy, and having its peak in France, has managed to absorb the various trends of drama, and reach the 21st century with full vitality in the countless forms of shows, whether in cinema, television, theater or circus-theater. And as an example, the two works by Gilda de Abreu, "*O Ébrio*" and "*Coração Materno*", continue to raise in the Brazilian artistic world the possibility of renewing the Brazilian scene, such as "*Vem buscar-me que ainda sou teu*" text by Carlos Alberto Soffredini, and the relevant montages created by Gabriel Villela with the same piece written by Soffredini, based on "*Coração Materno*", as well as the irreverent contribution of Tropicália, by rescuing the song "*Coração Materno*", in some way history of the launch of the tropicalista movement in 1968, voiced by Caetano Veloso, with a script by Rogério Duprat.

And before the curtains close, I would like to clarify that if I arrived at Gilda de Abreu through the circus theater path, the works that are deposited there in the Public Archive of São Paulo point the opposite way, which was from the cinema that Gilda de Abreu's works reached the circus-theater.

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