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PHOTOGRAPHY IN SHAKESPEARE AND PERFORMANCE:
A PICTORIAL STUDY OF CACÁ ROSSET'S *A COMÉDIA DOS ERROS*

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To my parents, Renato and Malé,
thank you for teaching me how to live,
and to my husband-to-be, Sami,
for his love and support for keeping
me on this trail until the end.
Love you all.

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were part of this process of creation and imagination. Thank you all for the encouragement and trust in me.

God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

PHOTOGRAPHY IN SHAKESPEARE AND PERFORMANCE: A PICTORIAL
STUDY OF CACÁ ROSSET'S *A COMÉDIA DOS ERROS*

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
2010

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Since its advent, photography has been used as a process of registry of images, either

for souvenirs or as a physical proof that something existed in the past. The use of

photographs as historical documents serves several areas, for the static and immutable

physical characteristics of photos allow the images to be used as sources for analysis and

study. It is in this context that photographs of a production of *A Comédia dos Erros*

allow a detailed study of their contents and possible meanings. It is through the

photographs of a scene that the analyst is able to detect particularities of a moment of

the performance that no longer exists and, this way, reconstruct its moment within the

spectacle. With the help of iconographic indications allied with the playtext, it is

possible to obtain further details of a scene, even identifying the exact moment of the

performance the image refers to. Considering that every photograph is a trace from the past, it is the viewer's role to read and understand the photographic image based on his or her socio-cultural background which will enable the reconstruction of meanings for the implicit fragments within the image.

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RESUMO

FOTOGRAFIA EM SHAKESPEARE E PERFORMANCE: UM ESTUDO
IMAGÉTICO DE *A COMÉDIA DOS ERROS* DE CACÁ ROSSET

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Desde seu advento, fotografias têm sido usadas como veículo de registro de imagens, sejam elas para recordação ou como prova física de que algo existiu no passado. O uso de fotografias como documento histórico se estende por diversas áreas devido a suas características físicas estáticas e imutáveis que permitem que imagens sejam utilizadas como fontes de análise e estudo. É neste contexto que fotografias de uma montagem de *A Comédia dos Erros* permitem um estudo detalhado de seus conteúdos e possíveis significados. É através da fotografia de uma cena que o analista consegue detectar

particularidades de um momento da performance que já não mais existe e assim reconstruir seu momento dentro do espetáculo. Com a ajuda de indicações iconográficas aliadas ao texto dramático é possível obter mais detalhes de uma cena, até mesmo identificar o exato momento da performance a qual a imagem se refere. Considerando que toda fotografia é um resíduo do passado, cabe ao interprete ler e compreender a imagem fotográfica baseado em sua bagagem sócio-cultural que possibilitará a construção de significados dos fragmentos implícitos na imagem.

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Chapter I

The Reconstruction of *A Comédia dos Erros* **Through Image Analysis**

The present work proposes an analysis of the photographic archives of the performance *A Comédia dos Erros*, staged by the Brazilian theatre company Teatro do Ornitorrinco, in 1994, in order to verify whether photographs of scenes can "speak" for the text and how a static image, through the analysis of elements such as people, objects, sets, and costumes pictured, can help the viewer understand what the scene conveys. Considering the fact that the performance is no longer being staged, the information conveyed through the image records can help impart meaning to the photographed scene in the absence of the playtext. Thus, the photographic registry of the aforementioned performance has elements that enable the reconstruction of a scene, and such elements enable reading, interpreting, and understanding scenes within the performance.

During a performance, costumes, scenography, and body language are used to construct meaning onto the playtext. However, when the performance is distant from the present, photographic records allow the analysis and contextualization of the scene in the spectacle. Photographs, as fragments of something that was real in the past, can help the viewer infer meaning based on the context in which the pictures were inserted and the moment in which they were shot. The environment in which a photograph was produced is also important and should be taken into consideration. All the elements framed in a photograph belong to a much bigger environment which has to be left out either for lack of space or due to the

choices of the photographer; therefore, what is visible in the photograph is a "frozen moment" in a meaningful context.

For a long time, photographs of performances, in general, have been used mostly as straightforward documentation, to illustrate reviews in newspapers and magazines, and for the audience to remember the spectacle. However, photographic records of drama in performance can be more valuable, because image records can help recreate an event from a past that is no more. Therefore, images can serve as cues to reproduce what was happening at a certain moment in the performance. When access to the staged performance, enacted live, in front of an audience, is no longer possible, other kinds of documentation are needed in order to proceed the analysis. For this reason, photographic images of a performance serve as concrete proofs of the spectacle that took place and that cannot last forever.

The idea that "a photograph is worth a thousand words" is widely known even by those who are not familiar with photographic discourse; however, a single photograph has a multitude of meanings which can emerge according to the observer's experience with the world. In other words, image reading engages a complex process – from the physical action of looking at the photograph to the intellectual process of decoding what the image means to the viewer. Reading photographs is a personal act, and this is inevitable. Although the same image can show the same subject to a vast number of people, interpretation is unique and individual, according to the viewers' distinct upbringing, culture and interests. Martha Langford explains that, when observing a photographic image, "we refill our plates, to supplement the portion we have been given, activating our intuitions, desires, beliefs, experience and training" (3). Since every person is a single individual, for each person a

photograph will tell a distinct story, even when the framed subject is the same. Examining the physical flat surface of an image and interpreting what goes beyond what can be seen engages a series of associations that can affect the way a photograph is looked into. Such associations can be verified when one can compose different stories by looking at a photograph, or when several people make different stories out of the same image.

Steve Reinke, on the other hand, proposes that for telling a story a series of photographs is needed in order to construct a narrative: "Unless an image contains multiple temporal frames (like a long tapestry or scroll, or the frames of a comic book), it cannot tell a story. At most it can illustrate a single incident from a story, or suggest, allegorically, possible stories" (226). Nevertheless, while analysing photography of performances, if the image is contextualized in its corresponding moment in the playtext, I believe it is possible to construct meaning based on what can be seen. However, the difference between a story told in photographs and in performance must be kept in mind. While the performance itself suggests movement and interaction within the elements on stage that construct meaning during the spectacle, photographs of drama in performance present the subject to the viewer as something inert. This means that the photograph *alone* does not speak for itself. To tell a story, the elements in the photograph must be contextualized to be understood as such, even though not all the elements present in a photograph have the same meaning for people from different cultures. Generally speaking, the viewer can identify what is visible in the photo, but what lays beneath and what goes beyond as a message cannot always be identified if the visible elements are not part of the viewer's cultural background.

For performance to be understood as a whole, some cultural background is required

from the audience. Having said that, I support Keir Elam's assumption that in theatre everything that is on stage acquires meanings which are directly attached to the social, moral and ideological values that form the community in which the performers and spectators are inserted (10). Therefore, the performance, as well as its traces such as photographs, carries meanings that "will even vary from spectator to spectator, although always within definite cultural limits" (11). For example, objects used on stage during a performance such as a "sword" or a "chair" can acquire different meanings depending on who uses them and how they are used, just as a "crown" can range its meaning from "royalty" to "usurpation", according to the context in which it is inserted. Everything in the theatrical performance is involved in a denotation (real) and connotation (implicit) relation determined by sets, the actor's body language, movements and speech. However, Elam points out that connotation is not unique, since it depends on the spectator's ability to decode the performance based on "the extra-theatrical and general culture values which certain objects, modes of discourse or forms of behaviour bear" (11-12).

Based on the example given by Elam, I can say that photographs constitute a system of signs. According to S.E. Larsen "'signs' are all types of elements--verbal, nonverbal, natural, artificial, etc.--which carry meaning" (833). This is to say that a sign can be any object which represents another object and "meaning is the representation of an object in or by another object" (836). In this perspective, a sign can communicate ideas and, therefore, produce meaning. Larsen adds that "the sign or the representing object can have any

material manifestation as long as it can fulfill the representational function" (836).[1] Having

the power to communicate ideas, we can say that signs can be denotative or connotative,

and they construct meaning onto what is visible; therefore photographs can be read and

interpreted. What is identified as "real" and visible in an image is denotative, and the

implicit meaning is the connotative aspect of a sign. According to Daniel Chandler,

denotative "tends to be described as the definitional, 'literal', 'obvious' or 'commonsense'

meaning of a sign", while connotation is "used to refer to the socio-cultural and 'personal'

associations (ideological, emotional, etc) of the sign" (2). However, the connotative aspects

of an image vary from person to person, according to factors such as socio-cultural

background, class, age, sex, and gender, enabling different interpretations for the same

visual information.

Having the power to communicate ideas, photographs can also be misleading if the

elements present in them cannot be "read" correctly. Just as *A Comédia dos Erros* is about

unfortunate happenings involving two pairs of twins due to their inability to recognize one

another, a photograph also can be misinterpreted and, consequently, lead to misinformation

if the visual elements cannot be "read" by the viewer. In the case of photographs of

performances, the playtext is one element which allows the viewer a glimpse of what was

the "truth" on stage, for the meaning of the photographic image is attached both to the

playtext and to what was enacted on stage at a certain moment of the performance.

In Graham Clarke's view, it is possible to read a photographic image in the same way as

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[1] I would like to clarify that I am aware about the long-standing theoretical debate about the "sign" in
    semiotics and semiology, via Ferdinand Saussure, Charles S. Peirce, and of course Roland Barthes.
    However, I have opted to draw on Larsen's, more recent and straightforward definition.

a written text, since the image has its own "grammar and syntax" (1). Still, such reading can be problematic due to the complex process of constructing meaning, because "the image contains a 'photographic message' as part of a 'practice of signification' which reflects the codes, values, and beliefs of a culture as a whole" (4). Neutral readings are impossible, taking the cultural aspects in consideration, because, as mentioned previously, if the viewer reads the image according to his socio-cultural background, several different interpretations will come up for the same photographic image. Reading a photograph is a complex process that unravels the same way as reading a text. In a sense, if the observer cannot recognize the structure which is presented, much of its meaning, if not all of it, will be lost or misunderstood.

William Crawford states that photographic syntax exists just as syntax does in linguistics. In order to make concepts turn into statements it is necessary to follow a set of rules of structure so that meaning can be conveyed and decoded. Crawford believes that the language of photography does not come from the creativity of the photographer only, but also "from the chemical, optical, and mechanical relationships that make photography possible" (6). This means that the photographer is not limited by his artistic ability but by what technology allows him to produce. Crawford defines photographic syntax as "whatever combination of technical elements is in use. The combination determines how well the technology can see and thus sets the limits on what photographers can communicate through their work" (7). In other words, syntax here has to do with the technological apparatus available for the photographer to produce an image. In addition, there are other elements of photographic syntax that encompass the gear, the choice of lens,

the printing method, and all of these elements play a "syntactical role to the degree that [they affect] the way the information, the sentiments, the surprises, and the frozen moments found in photographs actually meet the eye" (7). The results of such syntactical process are photographs that can serve as testimony of a "reality" encapsulated in a frame which is available for reading and decoding.

Jacques Aumont believes that if an image has a meaning, it has to be decoded by the viewer. However, as mentioned previously, considering every person has a distinct socio-cultural background, they will interpret images differently. This is to say that, although all images are visible almost immediately, not everyone can understand them easily, especially if the images were produced in a time and space that are distant from the present (250). The more distant the context of the photograph is from the present, the more interpretation of the elements present in a photograph is needed. I should add that interpretation becomes more complex if the context of the photograph is distant from the reality of the viewer.

Having said that, I support Boris Kossoy's belief that, as well as other information sources, photographs cannot be accepted as a copy of reality because they are full of ambiguities, implicit meanings that need to be interpreted (22). Photographs contain fragments selected from a real moment in the past and, again, the meaning inferred from the image can differ for each viewer according to his socio-cultural background. As a consequence, multiple interpretations are possible because the viewer brings his own mental images, and reacts according to his life experience, socio-cultural situation, ideology, personal concepts and pre-concepts. For this reason, Kossoy believes the contents of the images cause a different impact on each individual, and for this reason it is impossible to

have standard or universal interpretations about what is registered in a photograph. Still according to Kossoy, photographs have been accepted and used by the masses, to whom the photographs' contents are assimilated as an expression of truth. However, Kossoy believes the photograph has its "own reality", which does not always correspond to the reality the subject was involved in when it was registered. What is shown in the photograph is the reality of the document, which he calls a "second reality", a connection between time and space that gives a clue to what happened in the "first reality", which has to be deciphered by the viewer. Kossoy explains that the subject depicted in the image is a new reality which has been idealized and then interpreted by the viewer. The "first reality" would be the situation that has been photographed and, consequently, the photographic image becomes a "second reality" (43). The photograph connects physically to its referent--something that existed previously--without which the photography would not have been possible.

Similarly, Roland Barthes considers photographs as emanations of past reality, which carry both denotative (real) and connotative (implicit) values that must be discussed in the context of their content (16). According to Barthes, in *A Câmara Clara* (*Camera Lucida*), the photographic image is a perfect analogical depiction of a reality, a witness to something that is true in the past, which no longer exists or that cannot be repeated anymore. Barthes notes that photographs seem to carry both denotative and connotative messages, as described previously by Chandler, which enable multiple readings according to their context. Barthes proposes that, in order to add connotative value to a photograph, the photographer may incorporate a series of symbolic objects to the image by means of poses and clothing style, for example. It is crucial to consider Barthes's opinion of an image with

its denotative aspects and what goes beyond what is immediately seen, in order to verify what message can be constructed from the elements present in a photograph. Similarly to Barthes, Susan Sontag believes photographs serve as a witness of something that was true in a past occasion, as a trace of something that existed (5); in addition, Sontag believes a photograph can also be distorted. This distortion comes from the intention of the photographer, who makes choices when taking a photograph, "in deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another" (6), not from the viewers and the way they read and interpret the image.

Another similar view on photography comes from Philippe Dubois, who also claims that the analysis of a photograph should go beyond the "real" aspects of the image because the content of the photographic message is not only "literal" (36). According to Dubois, if a photograph is examined carefully, it will not be flawless in the way it represents the "real world". The image has a physical connection with its subject, but it is not, necessarily, exactly the same as the subject photographed (94). What is seen in the image has disappeared in real life, and what is left is a memory, a register that will substitute the absence (90) of the subject or situation photographed.

Likewise, Dennis Kennedy reasons that "the meaning of photographs ultimately depends upon cultural signification" (20), which implies that, as mentioned previously, the meaning of a photograph varies for people from distinct socio-cultural background. Kennedy also defends that "photos taken from a distance and showing the relationship of actors to the setting are more likely to indicate actual performance conditions than close-ups" (23). I agree that close-ups and cuts cause the elimination of certain elements that will change the

meaning of a scene, but I believe they do not eliminate the dramatic atmosphere proposed by the performance. However, when we take into account the scene as a whole, it is possible to obtain the identification of iconic details that the image contains, which reinforces Keir Elam's belief that all the visible elements on stage acquire meaning. All in all, photographs bear information that can be interpreted, and this is why visual records are extensively used as documentation. Photography of theatre performance, for example, may not provide much information about the way actors actually work on stage, but they are crucial to indicate elements such as set, costumes, scenography, and staging. All such elements in a performance are connected to the place and time of the production, and according to Kennedy, it is the role of the theatre historian to "reimagine the moment of the past performance and to contextualize it with a narrative about its social meaning" (16).

For Marco De Marinis, the performance, which is "ephemeral and non-persistent", leaves behind a series of partial traces such as "the script, the director's notes, photographs, documentation on film or television, descriptions by the members of the audience, reviews and the like" that enable the re-construction of scenes of a theatre production (16). As it is impossible to analyse a theatre production based on memories or the playtext only, other forms of registry must be used in order to enable the reconstruction of the performance and, in this case, photographs can be useful tools.

As mentioned before, most photographs made of theatre performances are not meant to be part of the performance archives but to illustrate reviews in magazines and newspapers, and a great number of them serve as publicity for actors. Back in history, when cameras were not fast enough to freeze the movements on stage, most theatre photographs used to be

close-ups or posed shots, not showing the real interaction between actor and set. Today, even with better equipment, it is still impossible to register a moment in the performance with the same feeling and sensations provoked by the performance when it was staged. However, the limitation of the pictorial source does not prevent the analysis of scenes in an attempt to construct their meaning during the performance.

The fact is that photographs of performances can be considered an important source for analysis when one has not witnessed the staged production. Through photographs it is possible to restore what was happening on stage at specific moments of the performance because, since images are traces that are left behind, they offer significant visual evidence that can be useful for interpretation.

For this reason, the corpora for this study are photographs of six scenes of *A Comédia dos Erros.* The photographs to be analysed belong to the collection housed at Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP). The present study proposes an investigation of the cultural role and function of photographs of performance through the analysis of the photographic archives of *A Comédia dos Erros*, by Teatro do Ornitorrinco, and to verify whether the photograph of a scene can "speak" for the text, and how a static image can help the viewer understand what the scene conveys through the analysis of elements such as people, objects, sets, and costumes depicted in the photograph.

For this investigation I propose three initial research questions:

1- What are the literal (denotative) and implied (connotative) meanings of the objects, costumes, people, and body language within the image?

2- What are the photographs' "*studium*" and "*punctum*", as defined by Barthes? (see

definition in Chapter III).

3- What is the relationship between the actors and sets, and what connection do they have with the respective moment in the playtext, as depicted in the photographs?

In addition to the photographs, the analysis of the performance shall proceed based on the playtext, set design, costumes and language. Furthermore, the performance *A Comédia dos Erros* shall be studied in terms of conception (what has been decided by the director/company), production (staging) and critical reception (the critics' response and reaction to the performance, based on reviews and interviews on publications such as newspapers and magazines), the latter in order to contextualize the performance in its time and space.

It is worth mentioning that a fascinating study on Shakespeare's drama in performance through photographs has been done by Rebecca Flynn, a former Lecturer in Shakespeare Studies in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Education Department, in Stratford-Upon-Avon, who organized a series of commented slides on *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*. Such study consists of a pack of twenty-four slides from various productions of the respective plays, followed by written commentary giving details about selected scenes from each production. However, no similar study has been done on *The Comedy of Errors*, neither on the Brazilian adaptation by Teatro do Ornitorrinco's *A Comédia dos Erros*, be it in Brazil or abroad.

1.1 The Play Under Analysis

The Comedy of Errors, the shortest of William Shakespeare's play, is believed to be one of his earliest, written between 1589 and 1594. The Roman play *Menaechmi*, by Plautus, was the main inspiration for Shakespeare to borrow the mistaken identity premise, which is a central issue in *The Comedy of Errors*, leading to a series of unfortunate accidents throughout the plot. More than a light slapstick comedy, the play brings a series of dramatic/individual issues in its plot such as slavery, honor, jealousy, fidelity in marriage, political authority, debt and payment, and the search for individual identity. Although the drama lived on stage leads to confusion among the characters, this is what guarantees the laughs for the audience, who knows the information about the mistaken identities and all the facts that happen as a consequence of the confusion that is unknown for the characters.

The Comedy of Errors has often been staged since Shakespeare's times, and it is impossible to tell how many times it has been performed worldwide over the years, either by amateur or professional threatre companies. It is believed it was first staged on December 28, 1594, at the Gray's Inn (Brown and Harris, 54). In Brazil, the threatre company Teatro do Ornitorrinco is well known for having staged a successful version of *The Comedy of Errors,* namely *A Comédia dos Erros,* in Brazilian Portuguese. The company's debut was with the production *Ornitorrinco Canta Brecht e Weill*, in 1977. Soon Teatro do Ornitorrinco became popular in Brazil and in Latin America for staging polemical performances in a comical vein. Another successful production by Teatro do Ornitorrinco was *Sonho de Uma Noite de Verão* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), first staged at the Delacorte Theater, in Central Park, New York, in 1991, in Portuguese, adapted, and directed by Cacá Rosset. Praised by the international media as highly expressive, the performance

was successful in communicating visually with the audience even while not speaking the same language. Teatro do Ornitorrinco offered a spectacle showing nude actors in an eroticized production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and brought to stage actors who were also acrobats, jugglers, and fire-eaters, giving the spectacle the playful atmosphere of a circus. Following its tradition in comedies, in 1994, Teatro do Ornitorrinco performed *A Comédia dos Erros*, also directed by Cacá Rosset, staged at the Teatro Faap, in São Paulo, and the show was described as the return of buffoonery, slapstick, and clownish theatre ("Cacá"). Once again, Teatro do Ornitorrinco celebrated the achievement of another successful production, being praised by the media and receiving important prizes in 1994. Besides, under the sponsorship of the New York Shakespeare Festival, Cacá Rosset had directed *The Comedy of Errors*, back in 1992, at the Delacorte Theater, with an American cast before staging the spectacle in Brazil, with a Brazilian cast.

The specific Corpora for this study are six black and white photographs of scenes from *A Comédia dos Erros.* The photographs to be analysed in detail in Chapter III are from the aforementioned collection housed at Centro Cultural São Paulo, and were taken during a performance, by the Brazilian photographer Heloísa Greco Bortz, at Teatro FAAP, in São Paulo, in 1994. The criteria for choosing the photographs are based on my belief that interaction among actors on stage helps to contextualize what is unraveled in a specific scene during the staging. For this reason, the photographs chosen depict two or more actors on stage, and most of the images also depict the part of the setting in which the action takes place. The photographs selected portray the following moments in the play: two photographs from Act I, one from scene 1, depicting Duke Solinus and Egeon in the

beginning of the play, and another from scene 2, after Dromio of Ephesus is beaten by Antipholus of Syracuse; one from Act II, scene 2, in which Antipholus of Syracuse stands between Dromio of Syracuse and Adriana, who is trying to take him home for dinner; one from Act IV, scene 1, when Angelo hands in the gold chain to Antipholus of Syracuse; and finally, two from Act V, one from scene 1, in which the Abbess promotes the meeting between Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus, and another, also from scene 1, depicting the two Dromios and the two Antipholus reunited at end of play.

This thesis is divided in four chapters, structured from the broader to the more specific subject. The present chapter, Chapter I, which is also the introduction, contextualizes the research and offers insights on the main authors that will be invoked throughout the work. Chapter II develops the discussion on photography and image reading, using the authors cited as theoretical parameters to enhance the understanding of the visual aspects of drama and performance photographs. Chapter III analyses the specific set of photographs in Teatro do Ornitorrinco's *A Comédia dos Erros*. Chapter IV is reserved for my conclusions, and the presentation of the results of the photographic analysis of *A Comédia dos Erros*, as well as my final remarks on image reading and performance photographs.

The development of present work is driven by my interest both in the fields of drama in performance and photography. My interest is to show how photographs can serve as an instrument that enables the reconstruction of a scene when a performance is no longer being staged. This work is also meaningful because a close study of the aforementioned performance *A Comédia dos Erros,* by Teatro do Ornitorrinco, has never been conducted. I feel particularly motivated to study photographs of performance due to my interest in

photographic registry and how such registry serves as historical documentation for performance analysis in the temporary absence of the playtext. After initial research, I have realized that the literature concerning the reading of photographs of theatre performance is scarce. As a researcher, I feel the need to contribute with the increase of literature in this field, providing resources for interpreting photography of performance. For UFSC-PGI, I believe this research will be significant because, as I have already mentioned, no study concerning photography analysis of *A Comédia dos Erros* has been carried out in this program yet. For this reason, I believe this analysis may contribute to future research in the area.

Chapter II

Meaning Through Photographs

Photography can be briefly defined as the process of registering the light provided by solid objects by means of mechanical/chemical/electronic devices. Beyond the technical process of registering light, photography is the process of recording images of something that was real in the past and that cannot be repeated in the present, enabling the preservation of memory, documentation, and historical reconstitution. Martha Langford defines photography "as the translation of external visual reality into material form through mechanism and chemistry, digital technology, or some combination thereof" (3). When, through the eyes of a photographer, a subject is captured in the form of a photographic registry, what happens is the materialization of the visual perception into a framed subject. From the time of its invention, in the nineteenth century, photography has been regarded as a faithful depiction of reality. However, other aspects should be taken in consideration when one observes what lies beyond what is immediately seen in a photographic image.

The act of looking at a photograph enables a series of exchanges between the image and the viewer because, as Langford explains, "we visit the photographic expression of a photographer's memory, thereby plucking something from another person's storehouse of memories and adding it to our own" (6). In this process, photographic traces are exported to

the viewer's imagination and, as a consequence, imagination leads to interpretation, and such interpretation is the result of a multitude of different readings of the same image. According to Langford, such operation in the viewer's imagination happens because when viewing a photographic image "we refill our plates, to supplement the portion we have been given, activating our intuitions, desires, beliefs, experience, and training" (3). This means that much of the reading of a photograph depends on the cultural background and experience the viewer has of the world, hence the different interpretations that can be obtained from the same photographic image. In other words, what can be seen in the image may have a meaning for one person and mean nothing for another whose cultural background precludes the decoding of the messages implicit within the image.

Petra Halkes points out that "the photographer's intent, whether to record reality straightforwardly or to alter reality through unusual camera settings or manipulation of the negative in the darkroom, does not change the sense of indexical truth that clings to any photograph" (*Image* 233). Thus, again, what is visible in the photograph is the same for everyone, but the implicit aspects of the image can render several readings and, therefore, different interpretations. When looking at a photograph one can imagine a story behind it, just as several different stories may come up when people look at the same image.

As pointed out in Chapter I, Steve Reinke, on the other hand, believes that a series of photographs is needed in order to construct a narrative and tell a story. According to Reinke, to build up a story/narrative multiple temporal frames are needed, since a single photograph can only illustrate an incident from a story. In fact, when a photograph lacks information such as names and dates, it is difficult to impart meaning to it, since the image

without contextualization is just an image detached from a story. However, I believe that even an isolated photograph can convey meaning to the viewer, since it triggers the viewer's imagination, who then builds a personal story for the image.

Ian Walker observes that when looking at an image "cognition and imagination elide" (17). In fact, by observing a photograph we interpret the visible objects contained within the image and this leads to the act of imagining what is beyond what can be seen. For example, if we take a photograph of a chair, some people will just describe it as an object to sit on, or as a decorative piece of furniture. Others, provided with more design knowledge, will be able to identify the style of the chair and even by whom and when it was designed. The interpretation-reading of the same photograph, in this case, largely accounts for the viewer's cultural background in a way that the more the viewer knows of the world, the more he will make of the photograph that is being observed.

2.1 Reading Images

Why do we read images? According to Martine Joly, the analysis of images can fulfill different functions that go further than the pleasure for the eye. The analysis enables the increase of understanding of the visual messages, improving the sense of observation which increases the pleasure of appreciation and knowledge that enables gathering more information in the reception of a work of art (47). Joly adds that by the analysis we can demonstrate that the image is a language and that it distinguishes itself from the real world by its particular signs (48), according to the definition of sign by Larsen provided in

Chapter I. According to this definition, a sign can be any object which represents another object that carries meaning to the viewer. Hence, when observing the photographic signs enclosed in a photograph, the viewer engages in a process of decoding what can be seen, which consequently leads to interpretation. And although every photograph contains a series of visual elements that produce meaning, we must always consider that the signs present in a photograph can be read or not, depending on the viewer's cultural background, enabling either a successful reading or misinterpretation.

Joly states that we begin to learn to read images at the same time we learn to speak (43). In the course of our lives images come to us often in the form of illustrations or photographs, in books, comic strips, daily newspapers, magazines, and advertisements. We are surrounded by photographic images wherever we go, and they take on important roles in our lives, from serving as a tool in the learning processes, to entertainment and informative purposes. When the access to the written word is limited, either due to illiteracy or lack of understanding/knowledge of a certain language, photographs can serve as a tool to decipher a series of messages. Considering that the access to images is almost immediate, photographs can sometimes substitute verbal or written language.

According to Graham Clarke, as introduced in Chapter I, as in Linguistics, images have their own "grammar and syntax" (1) and , for this reason, *reading an image* can be problematic, since the procedure of constructing meaning, which depends on "the codes, values, and beliefs of a culture as a whole" (4), is part of a complex process. Taking these factors into consideration, we can say that neutral or universal readings of an image are not possible, since every single viewer has a different cultural background which will influence

the reading of the image. In addition, some codes present in a photographic image might be understood by some people, but not by other individuals who cannot "read" certain aspects present in the photograph. In a sense, if the codes are misread, the viewer will misinterpret or misunderstand what is depicted in the photograph.

William Crawford adds that conveying meaning to a photographic image depends on following a set of rules of structure, just like it does in Linguistics, as observed by Clarke. For an image to be understood, it is necessary for the viewer to perceive that a photograph is not only the result of the photographer's creativity, but also the combination of elements that make the production of a photograph possible. For Crawford, we recall, syntax has also to do with the technological apparatus available in order to produce the photographic image; the choice of the gear, the choice of lens, and the printing method, might affect the way information is conveyed through a photograph (6-7).

2.2 Reality Conveyed Though Photographs

In the mid-1820s, the advent of photography, by the French Nicéphore Niepce, enabled the possibility of reproducing something "real" with fidelity (Gervereau 157),   and it was the French artist and chemist Louis Daguerre who was responsible for the invention of the daguerreotype process of photography that went through several developments in the following years, eventually making photography what it is known to us today, popular and accessible, using either analogical (film) or digital processing. Differently from a painting, in which the artist takes the liberty to interfere and alter the image according to his desire, photographs are regarded as a proof of something that was true in the past, depicting

voluntary or involuntary iconic elements registered with or without the photographer's intention. The iconic elements--objects, clothing, and scenery, for example--present in every photograph can give historical, cultural, and geographical clues which are important as an iconographic document for the reconstitution of a past memory.

However, as mentioned previously, the construction of the photographic image goes beyond the technical process. Photography can be considered the result of a process of creation engaged by the photographer, who produces the image from his cultural, ideological, and particular point of view. The intention of recording an image depends on its purpose, such as, documentation, preservation of memory, publicity, or artistic manifestation. According to Boris Kossoy, taking a photo involves a series of decisions, especially by the photographer, who is motivated by a series of purposes, either personal or professional, who elaborates and constructs the image through complex cultural, aesthetic and technical processes (*Realidades* 26). For this reason, Kossoy argues that the photographic image carries an epistemological complexity (*Tempos* 32). In other words, photographs are taken in a specific and precise moment in the past and, therefore, belong to a historical context in which the image can be inserted, which, in turn, allows photographs to serve as a tool for analysis.

The advent of the photographic process has enabled the decrease of physical and cultural distance between people. By observing the images present in a photograph, the world becomes more familiar and closer to the observer. Still according to Kossoy, after the advent of photography, other realities became familiar to people who, up to that moment, only acquired knowledge by verbal, written, and pictorial tradition (*Fotografia* 26). This is to

say that a remote place in our planet, or an exotic tribe in Africa, for example, may elicit levels of understanding if observed in a photographic image, since the observer does not depend on his imagination only when the subject is described written or verbally. By looking at a photographic image, the observer identifies what is already part of his cultural repertoire and tries to interpret what is still unknown to him.

I believe photographic images enable the filling of a gap between presence and absence in a way that what has been photographed becomes real and close to the viewer in pictorial form. The photographic subject in the print form becomes the subject, as if the photographic image could substitute the "real thing" by analogy. As defined by Jacques Aumont, analogy is the similarity between image and reality, given the observer's point of view and how this observer perceives the image (198). Unconsciously the viewer relates the image as the perfect reproduction of reality, between the model and its image. The feeling of reality and closeness is what enables the use of photographic images as family souvenirs, a document for preservation of a historical moment, and as artistic manifestation. Due to its "portrayal of reality", the photographic image has been considered a faithful proof of reality given its technical characteristics. The popular maxim "a photograph does not lie" survived until the techniques of manipulation were put into practice. Kossoy believes that photographs offer possibilities of investigation and discoveries, but the research and analysis of their contents should be carefully planned, and adequate methodologies should be applied in order to decipher the reality the image comes from (*Fotografia* 32). In other words, photographs should not be treated just as mere illustrations for a text. Photographs belong to a much bigger realm and, as a document, they should be explored adequately.

Still according to Kossoy, the photographic analysis occurs in two stages: iconographic analysis and iconology. The initial stage, iconographic analysis, concerns the description of the elements within the image, and the following stage, iconology, pertains to interpretation. The iconographic analysis proposes the systematic description of the contents of an image and its elements. The literal and descriptive aspects prevail, the subject is contextualized in time and space and identified correctly. The represented subject in the photograph must be studied in depth and the analysis will be possible if the elements in the photograph are duly understood. As Kossoy points out, solid knowledge of the portrayed subject and a reflection of the visible contents are necessary in order to go beyond what is seen in the photographed surface (*Fotografia* 101). The second stage, iconology, pertains to interpretation, in which the meaning of the contents of the photograph is aimed at. In my opinion, since interpretation is personal, several readings of the same photograph might be possible and acceptable as long as the argumentation supporting the interpretation is solid and coherent.

2.3 Photographs as Testimony of Truth

Given its status of testimony of truth, for the photograph depicts precisely what is in front of the camera, photographs have been regarded as a tool for registering memories and historical facts. As Susan Sontag affirms, "photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about but doubt, seems to be proven when we're shown a photograph of it" (5). Still according to Sontag, "a photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing

happened" (5). In fact, due to a distinctive status of "proof of reality", photographs have been used to eliminate doubts one might have concerning facts and happenings. This might explain the use of photographs taken as a proof for scientific discoveries and in forensic criminal investigations because, as mentioned previously, photographs are considered a trace from the past which is registered through a physical /chemical process that, strictly speaking, cannot be changed and, thus, they are acknowledged as a faithful proof of reality.

However, other factors must be taken into consideration when photographs are elevated to such status. Every image is produced under cultural, aesthetic, and ideological circumstances that operate in the mind of the photographer. According to Kossoy, the subject registered in the photograph is an elaborated product, a recreation of the physical or imaginary world in a process of creation by its author (*Realidades* 43). Thus, a new reality is brought into existence by the photographer. The subject depicted in the image is a new one, a new reality in another time and dimension. The new reality that is represented in the photograph is what Kossoy calls "second reality". It is the reality of the representation itself, something that takes the place of the model or situation photographed in the past. What Kossoy calls "first reality" is, then, the photographed subject itself that is turned into a representation on the photographic surface (film, paper, etc.). The "second reality", which is portrayed in the photograph, is the connection the viewer has with the past. It is the document of something in real life that occurred in the past and will not be repeated any more.

According to Kossoy, the "second reality" conflicts with the past material reality since it is physically out of reach. The "second reality" is the photographic document, and the "first

reality", which is the past fact in real life, can be recalled only by memories and references. If we take a theatrical scene, at the moment it is enacted, live on stage and in front of an audience, we can call it "first reality". It is real action happening at a specific moment in time and space. When such scene is registered in a photograph, it becomes a "second reality". It is a document of a fragment of the past, fixed and immutable, that can render multiple interpretations. Thus, considering that a photograph can be interpreted in different ways, we can say that the photograph of a specific moment of a performance [second reality] is a creative registry of the "first reality" of what happened on stage(*Realidades* 36-38).

2.4 Reading Between the Lines

As stated previously, every photograph is the result of a creative process which has motivated the photographer to register a specific moment for any given purpose. Most photographs taken by amateurs or kept by common people depict occasions spent with family or friends, portraits of ancestors, pets, trips--and such photographs are exhibited as a proof that something was real or happened in the past. All these photographs are stored in order to "keep in touch" with situations that no longer exist, as part of the viewer's affective past and personal history. Likewise, photographs depicting historical facts and scientific discoveries are presented as a faithful reproduction of a fragment from the past and are kept as legal documents and tools for iconographic study and analysis.

Phillip Dubois proposes that one of the roles of photography is to preserve a trace from

the past or to help science in its effort to deliver a better understanding of world reality (30). This is to say that photographs can perpetuate a moment that cannot be repeated, giving the viewer the opportunity to focus on the details of what has been registered. The access to details enables the viewer to use the image for different purposes and the most important purpose would be to preserve memory, to serve as a testimony of something that "has been".

All photographs can be considered a trace of the past, a fragment of a reality registered photographically on a surface. A photograph, however, does not, according to Kossoy, reconstruct the past, but only freezes a fragment of an instant in the life of people, things, nature, urban and rural landscapes (*História* 120). It is a frozen fragment of an emanation from the past that will not happen again exactly the same way as it occurred.

Photographs are documents of iconographic value for they bring a series of visual "clues" which, associated with ideological, historical, and cultural information, help the viewer to identify, recognize, and date the information conveyed by the image. For example, details present in an image can help the viewer to identify the place and the time the photograph was taken and, as a consequence, the historical moment the image belongs to. The photograph of a street with its buildings, people's outfits, means of transportation, for example, is rich in information which can help reconstruct and locate the moment that image belongs to in the past. This reinforces the idea that photographs constitute an important source of documentation and study because they provide the iconographic indications that are necessary for locating the image in time and space. All in all, the viewer not only sees the image itself but also reads a series of messages hidden within the

image.

I agree with Kossoy's point of view that photographic sources provide the opportunity for investigations and discovery, and that it is necessary to systematise the information and establish methodologies for research and analysis, so that the image contents can be deciphered (*História* 32). I should add that every piece of information that can be gleaned from a photographic production can help in the process of reconstructing meaning of an image. This is to say that it would be ideal if we had access to the creative process involved in the production of the image, from the photographer's intention to the final use of the photograph and the viewer's reception. Unfortunately, obtaining such complex information is nearly impossible, since so much information is lost during the production phase. In addition, I believe photographs are not always product of the photographer's intention. We must consider that in many occasions photographs are taken by chance, especially by amateur photographers, not aiming to convey any specific message.

Phillipe Dubois says that a photograph is a testimony that gives proof of the existence of the referent, but it does not mean that the photograph looks exactly like its referent, since the photograph is a trace of the real, not mimesis (the imitative representation of nature and human behavior in art and literature) (35). Briefly, according to Dubois, what happens is a transference of the appearance of the real to the material surface either on film or printed photography. Dubois adds that the photograph, as a trace of something real, carries a similarity to the photographed object, which is the model. The trace of reality connects the image to its referent, giving the idea of a perfect analogy with the photographed subject (26). This is the idea presented by Roland Barthes, in his *Camera Lucida*, where he says

that 'the referent adheres' (16), meaning that, by analogy, the photograph is exactly the same as the photographed subject. Hence, even if the subject changes appearance and becomes old, the referent will remain intact in the photographic image; so the referent will always be connected to its image, for they are the same.

However, when the photographic image is submitted to analysis, the study must go beyond what is immediately seen in order to explore meaning in the image. This process of image analysis is not very different from textual analysis, since the observer needs to "read between" the lines in order to understand further than what is explicit in the photograph. For this further reading, though, the observer uses his socio-cultural background in order to construct meaning. In addition, as already argued, since every person has a different socio-cultural background, multiple readings of the same photographic image will be possible. The iconographic elements in a photograph can be read almost the same way, for the iconographic reading rests on the descriptive level. If other symbols, such as religious or ideological, for example, are present in a photographic image, probably they will only be decoded by the ones to whom they are familiar. To a certain extent they can be identified and understood by a good number of viewers, but they will be readily understood by the ones inserted in the culture in which such symbols belong to.

2.5 The Existence of Something that "has been"

The inseparable relation between the photograph and its subject is a key argument Barthes brought to the pages of *Camara Lucida*, in 1980. In his book, Barthes defends the idea that a photograph freezes a fragment of the past that was unique and ephemeral, and

that a photograph is, thus, a proof of something that "has been" and could not be repeated existentially. I can agree that a photograph is essentially an eternal presence of something that was real in a time and space that cannot be separated from its referent—the photographed subject. As pointed out in Chapter I, when Barthes claims that "the referent adheres" (16), he means that the photograph refers to a real thing that was there at the moment the image was taken and, when the camera shutter closed, is no more. That moment in the past, then, ceases to exist in life and the photographic registry becomes an image of the past.

I agree with Barthes's idea of the photographic image as a testament of a past reality. However, although a photograph offers iconographic evidence of something that was real in the past, I cannot consider the image an irrefutable proof of truth. First of all, we must consider that the photograph depicts a fragment of reality plucked out from a much bigger environment that does not fit completely in the camera viewfinder and, consequently, does not fit the printed photographic frame. Therefore, what is seen in the photograph is primarily a choice made by the photographer and what was left out of the frame will never be known by the viewer. Also, we must understand that the framed subject, either human or inanimate, can be constructed or manipulated according to the photographer's intention. In other words, manipulation, in this case, does not mean only changing the elements that will be photographed but also the photographer's choice when selecting what and how something will be depicted in the photograph. Thus, considering that every photographic image is a result of the photographer's cultural and ideological repertoire, the manipulation can also occur according to the function for which the image is designated. However, even

if manipulation occurs, I agree with Susan Sontag's idea that "the picture may distort, but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture" (5)

2.6 Studium and Punctum

Reading photographs and reconstructing meaning is not an easy task for the viewer, who counts on his upbringing, culture and interest in order to make sense of the fragment of reality that has been frozen by the photographic apparatus. Barthes emphasizes two important elements involved in the act of viewing photographs. One element he named *studium*. For Barthes, *studium* is the order of liking, not loving (47). In other words, the viewer glances through photographs, is interested in them as a whole but is not attracted by any details in particular (45). These are the kind of photographs that do not capture the viewer's attention, because nothing in the image is unusual and nothing triggers any feelings in the viewer. Random photographs printed in daily newspapers can be often a good example of *studium*. The viewer does not stick to the images for a long time when looking at them, and then moves on to the next photo.

The other element is *punctum,* which Barthes defines as something that "pricks and bruises" (46). He defines *punctum* as something that breaks the *studium* and makes photographs exist in the viewer's eyes. *Punctum*, for Barthes, is an unintentional detail that can be anything present in the photograph (body language, physical characteristics, an object, etc) that wounds the viewer; and this particular detail, the *punctum,* breaks the viewer away from the polite interest aroused by the *studium* (46).

According to Barthes, *punctum* operates on two levels. The first one, as described before, is the "accident" in the photo, completely unintended by the photographer or by the photographed subject, that "pricks and bruises". The second kind of *punctum* is that of Time, very common in historical photographs, that evokes our future death. What is seen in the photograph is something that ceased to exist, but has been. It is the proof that something existed and is no longer of form but of intensity.[2]

2.7 Analysing Photography of Performance

Photographs can provide valuable documentation for theatre productions. Differently from video documentation, which is dynamic and able to register a performance from the beginning to the end not allowing time to stick to small details, still photographs capture a moment of the performance that allows time for the viewer to observe and contemplate it attentively.

Photographs, as well as what takes place on stage, is a lifetime opportunity. If what happens on stage does not repeat the same way in every performance, photographs are similar in this aspect, since they register a unique moment that will not be repeated absolutely the same way in the next staging of the same scene. Although the playtext does not change, movements do. But they do not change completely and a photograph can, somehow, serve as a referent for what was being performed at a specific time on stage. Much of the work of the photographer of performance should be in accordance with the

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[2]   Further notions on Studium and Punctum shall be added in Chapter III, along with the analysis of

director's decisions, who chooses the specific moments he wants to be registered. However, it is the photographer's personal choice the angle and the composition of the images to be recorded, always bearing in mind that any interference such as the use of flash, for example, can disturb either the rehearsals or the actual performance in front of an audience. In addition, the photographer must avoid taking photographs that might alter the meaning of scenes because, if the photographs are going to serve as documentation, the images must be as faithful as possible to what is performed on stage, for they convey meaning to the viewer.

Keir Elam notes that in dramatic representations "the theatrical sign inevitably acquires second meanings for the audience, relating it to the social, moral and values operative in the community of which performers and spectators are part" (10). Just as in photography, the meaning of certain elements on stage are subjected to the viewer's social background. This is to say that the meaning of the elements on stage, such as costumes, setting, etc, depends ultimately on the viewer's life experience. According to Elam, the performance as a whole "is governed by the denotation-connotation dialect" (11); for example, everything that is visible on stage from the actors' movements to the their speech "determine and are determinated by a constantly shifting network of primary and secondary meanings" (11).

Based on Elam's idea we can say that understanding what is happening on stage and apprehending meaning, as we have seen, depends on the spectator's knowledge of the "extra-theatrical and general cultural values which certain objects, modes of discourses or forms of behaviour bear" (12). In fact, both in photographs and theatre, the presence of certain elements in order to impart meaning does not imply that the viewer will necessarily

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photographs of dramatic performance.

comprehend what they represent. For example, a table or any piece of furniture which is relatively common in Western culture, either in dramatic representation or in a photograph, will not differ much in form or structure known by the viewer, yet the way the object is rendered may suggest different meanings that can be understood or not. The object on stage becomes an element of representation that can convey a series of different meanings. For instance, the lighting used on stage can provide a certain atmosphere that triggers the viewers' feelings and memories of something they have seen or experienced in real life. Also the material the table is made of can define the affluence or the poverty of the owners and, in addition, what is seen on the table can also convey meanings. Having said that, I can assume that the theatrical representation of the table on stage can convey meaning to the audience depending on the context it is inserted. For example, the table can be used as a decorative prop, used for a feast, a meeting, and even in a fight scene and, given the contextualization, the presence of the table is justified and has a meaning to the audience.

If we take gestures as another example, I can say that most of them can be understood because they are contextualized and aimed to express something within the performance, even if no speech is needed during the scene. However, the same gesture in an isolated photograph may be considered difficult to understand if the viewer does not know the context from which the image was originated. To understand that specific frozen moment of the performance registered in a photograph, the viewer might either know the playtext or look at a sequential series of photographs in order to determine the meaning of a gesture. For this reason I believe the knowledge of the playtext is important for proceeding the analysis of photographs of performance.

Dennis Kennedy considers photographs of performance valuable documents since performances are instantaneous and vanish in time and space. However, if the performance itself does not last, photographs of performance do. According to Kennedy, photographs of performance do not "tell us much about the acting" (17), since they do not depict movement and sounds, but they do contain a good amount of information concerning staging, setting and costume. As well as Kossoy, Kennedy believes that photographs can be used as a document when they are executed "carefully and precisely" (20). This means that, if the photographer aims at veracity and does not interfere in the performance in order to obtain the images, the result might be a series of photos of the performance itself without manipulation and, therefore, a documentation that can be useful for analysis.

Theatrical performances are ephemeral. They are enacted live, in front of an audience who provide instant feedback, and they come to an end. Fortunately, in order to keep the proof of the existence of such performances, we can count on photographic records, a static art form and can perpetuate the images seen on stage. The photographs perceived through the photographer's eyes become, then, a document of a performance that will not be repeated in the future with the same details.

Although manipulation is undesired, when registering images of a performance, the photographer functions as a mediator between the subject on stage and the spectator. The final image, that will be observed by the viewer, somehow portrays what the photographer has seen in the course of the performance. If the photographer's intention is to build a collection of photographs depicting the performance faithfully, he has to be careful not to

choose angles that might change the meaning of a particular scene. Similarly, head shots[3] might be appealing to register, but not all of them are useful as an efficient instrument for the analysis of photography of performance, because they do not contextualize the image within the performance. More important than that, the photographs aimed at performance analysis should be carefully selected by the researcher. In other words, if the photograph of a scene is aimed at locating a moment within the performance, the researcher should be able to look at the photograph and identify the corresponding moment in the playtext.

Kennedy claims that photos of performance "need at least as much analysis as other historical documents, for they are just prone to lie, or seem complete when they can only be partial" (24). This, again, reinforces Kossoy's idea that photographs are important tools for reconstructing a historical moment, but that the analysis should be systematic and well planned in order to obtain an accurate reading of the frozen moment depicted in the images.

Kennedy also believes that "the meaning of photographs ultimately depends upon cultural signification" (20) and that we do not always know how to read them, since "the story can be distorted by improperly emphasizing isolated moments that happen to have been recorded" (21). To produce a successful reading of a scene registered photographically we must count on the photographer's intention to have registered the moment accurately. Posed portraits of actors do not give the exact notion of a specific scene within the play, for example. The photograph must contextualize the actor within the performance in order to enable the reading of the image and, therefore, convey meaning. Kennedy notes that the use of extra lighting and the stylization of the photograph makes it difficult to count on it as a

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[3] Head shots: face close-ups.

pictorial evidence of a specific scene of the performance itself.

Photographs of performance can be taken in two different ways, according to the director's intention. Photographic documentation can be taken during the actual performance or during rehearsals, when the photographer has the control of the situation and can ask the actors to freeze during a scene in order to register the image. During the performance, though, the photographer has to count on his luck and try to register the scenes while they are unraveling on stage. Due to the limitations we still have concerning equipment and the use of the light available in theatre, not all the photographs will have high quality. Limited illumination and fast movements makes the image blurred, out of focus, and badly composed; such photographs are to be discarded, not serving the purpose for publicity or analysis.

Photographs of the actors contextualized in the environment of the performance, in relation to the setting and to other actors can enable a successful reading of the image. Kennedy comments that "photos taken from a distance and showing the relationship of actors to the setting are more likely to indicate actual performance conditions than closeups" (23). In fact, due to photography's static characteristic, a closeup of an actor does not suggest much of the performance, and, the addition of extra lighting, poses and props to the photo might convey a message that does not match the actual performance.   For this reason, the photographs chosen for the analysis of photography of performance in Chapter III depict a substantial section of the stage as well as the interaction of two or more actors, for I believe such elements help the contextualization and reconstruction of a scene within a performance.

Chapter III

The Analysis of Photography of Performance

The preceding chapter has dealt with the importance of photographs as a source for study and research, since they reveal the presence of static elements that can be observed attentively, described, and discussed by the viewer. Commonly regarded as a physical trace from the past, a photograph is an imprint of something that was real and is no more. According to Susan Sontag, a photograph is not only "an interpretation of the real, it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask" (154). It is in this sense that photographs can acquire status of documents and, in the case of performance, they are priceless physical evidences that should be stored and preserved for further reference and research. Here it can be said that, since the performance is ephemeral, photographs can be trusted as a physical trace of what once happened on stage and cannot be repeated, for all photographs of performance extract an image from their place in the flow of time and space. Thus, every photograph depicts a single moment of the spectacle that is prone to be identified by the viewer.

However, identifying the exact moment of the performance through a photograph without captions is a task that demands some knowledge of the playtext that has been

staged. On the other hand, detached from any reference, a photograph of a scene becomes a piece of art that can be admired, just as a portrait or a landscape. In my understanding, reading a photograph on an iconographic, descriptive level might be an easy task if compared to reading its meaning, since the literal and visible portion is taken into consideration. Petra Halkes claims that "a picture itself constitutes neither truth or lie. A picture is just a picture, the meaning of which lies only in the viewer's imagination" (238).

Likewise, Patrice Pavis points out that a photograph itself does not say anything, and to convey meaning it is necessary to contextualize it with other elements related to the performance (37). Pavis believes that the study of the photographic documentation of a performance can be done through the identification of everything that was caught by the camera; the details--such as gestures, make-up, and lighting--that are present in the photograph and cannot be perceived by the eye of the audience during the performance (37). Hence, photographs used as documents help the verbal description of the analyst, since the registered images are fixed and immutable. However, the use of photographs of performance as a tool for analysis should follow some criteria, which accounts for adding essential descriptive information to the photograph, highlighting its denotative aspects in order to make it less aesthetic and, thus, reinforcing its value as a document. To put it in another way, it is not the poetical and aesthetic attributes of the image that count, but how a particular moment within the performance can be described literally in order to convey meaning to the viewer who is observing the photograph.

Accordingly, when reading a photograph, the viewer observes the image carefully and critically, constructing meanings that can be either explicit or implicit. On the whole, all

images convey information which should be identified and contextualized in order to make sense and be understood. The first stage of reading a photograph pertains to the denotative level, when the viewer identifies and describes its literal aspect, by identifying and describing all the visible elements within the image. Accurate observation is a basic required skill at this stage because not only the main subject should be identified, but also all the other evident features that appear in relation to the subject. Even elements that appear in the photograph by accident—not planned by the photographer—should be taken in consideration because they also constitute data which allows the viewer to gather information and ideas contained in the image. All the elements that surround the actors on stage, such as setting, costumes, and props, also convey meaning. In some cases, when the information is not explicit, the viewer has to infer meaning by making assumptions based on his or her own life experience, cultural background, and values.

Seen in this light, we can also say that not only the body language depicted in the photograph is important, but all the elements visible in the image can offer clues for a more complete understanding of the staged scene. For example, with previous knowledge of the playtext of *A Comédia dos Erros* and some familiarity with the comic background of Teatro do Ornitorrinco, one can easily identify the photographs to be analysed in this chapter as part of a comical performance. Partly, even if the viewer has no previous knowledge of what the performance is about, I believe the genre can be identified by careful observation of the available photographic documentation. The initial assumption that one might have when observing the selected images is that the performance is a comical one due to the body language and facial expressions depicted in the photographs. One can easily recognize

smiles and clownish expressions as a characteristic of comedy, opposed to the seriousness and grave expressions used for the performance of tragic playtexts. Having said that, I can assume that the literalness of the image reflects the way we understand the codes of comical discourse. In this perspective, my initial assumption is that what is immediately seen can be understood by many viewers and, on the other hand, what lays beyond what is seen in the image cannot be easily identified by the ones who have no knowledge of the playtext which was performed.

3.1 The Memory of Dramatic Performances

According to Dennis Kennedy, performance is something instantaneous that leaves traces behind, such as drawings, photographs, and films, for example. Kennedy adds that these are the most immediate and accessible evidence of what has been staged because they contain a series of information that can tell a lot about the performance (16-17). Bearing in mind that a performance does not last forever, the same may happen to costumes, stage settings, props, and scenography. Rather than being kept forever, they might be destroyed due time, or redesigned to be used in other performances. Due to this material recycling process, the memory of theatre in Brazil is not as solid as in some European countries, such as England, for example. In England specialized museums devoted to the memory of theatre, such as The Theatre Museum and The V&A Museum, contribute to the survival and preservation of spectacles by means of keeping what was once used on stage, and that can serve for documentation and future research. Kennedy points out that "set and costume

designs survive in great numbers—there are over 100,000 designs in the theatre collection of the Austrian National Library alone--and photographs of the twentieth-century productions are legion" (17). However, Kennedy mentions that not all those photographs are accessible and most of them constitute portraits of individual performers, which are not suitable for an accurate analysis of the performances, because they lack contextualization.

Indeed, although the number of authentic photographs is vast, not all the images are reliable tools for the analysis of performance. For example, as already pointed out, beautifully produced posed photographs of actors in their costumes can be considered pieces of art and serve as good publicity, yet they are not suitable as an instrument for analysing a scene within the performance because they do not provide much information about the spectacle they come from. In addition, if any intervention by the photographer is verified in the final images, such as the addition of extra lighting, posed shots, or distorted isolated moments registered by the camera, they should be discharged as a tool for analysis, since they constitute the production of artistic images, not documents that offer information about what was staged.

According to Sontag, "photographs are valued because they give information. They tell one what there is; they make an inventory". (22) Based on Sontag's idea, I can say that, due to the straightforward characteristics of the photographs selected for this analysis, they can be considered a faithful depiction of the actual performance, serving as valuable documentation of a past reality that can be described and analysed.

However, according to Graham Clarke, "far from being a 'mirror', the photograph is one of the most complex and most problematic forms of representation" (31) because what can

be seen in the image is part of a much bigger environment, full of implicit meanings that have to be decodified by the viewer. Following this idea, I should reinforce that reading and interpreting a photograph is personal, as mentioned in Chapter II. It means that, since I have not seen *A Comédia dos Erros* when it was staged by Teatro do Ornitorrinco, in 1994, my reading of the photographed scenes shall be based on my cultural background, as well as on my knowledge of the original playtext by Shakespeare.

3.2   On the Corpora and Procedures For Photographic Analysis

This present chapter aims at the analysis of six black and white photographs of scenes from *A Comédia dos Erros*, staged by the Brazilian theatre company Teatro do Ornitorrinco, in 1994. The selected photographs are from the aforementioned collection housed at Centro Cultural São Paulo, and were taken by the Brazilian photographer Heloísa Greco Bortz, at the Teatro FAAP, in São Paulo, in 1994.

According to the documentation provided by the CCSP, Teatro do Ornitorrico staged *A Comédia dos Erros*, translated, adapted, and directed by Cacá Rosset, from 11th of May to 18th of December, 1994, at the Teatro FAAP. It may be worth recalling that back in 1992 Rosset had directed *The Comedy of Errors* at the Delacorte Theater, in New York, with an American cast, under the sponsorship of the New York Shakespeare Festival. As mentioned in the Introduction, both the American and Brazilian stagings of *A Comédia dos Erros,* considered the revival of buffoonery, slapstick, and clownish theatre, were praised by the media and brought important prizes to Teatro do Ornitorrinco, in 1994.

The photographic archives of *A Comédia dos Erros* comprise a series of 232 black and white photographs depicting both individual and interactive performance of the actors on stage. I assume the photographs were produced during the actual performance, because no additional lighting or other intervention by the photographer, such as manipulated placement on stage or posed photographs, can be identified.

The criteria for choosing the photographs were based on my belief that interaction among actors helps to contextualize what happens on stage in a specific scene during the performance. For this reason, the photographs chosen depict two or more actors on stage, and most of the images also show part of the setting in which the action takes place. In addition, the selected photographs show a straightforward and objective approach by the photographer, for they do not constitute abstract images, and depict moments of the performance as they unraveled on stage. In this perspective, I believe the purpose of registering the performance the way it was actually seen by the audience was significant because the images succeed in communicating the essential, which makes the analysis of the scenes feasible. I would like to point out here that during the process of selection of the photographs, I could verify that the whole series of images of *A Comédia dos Erros* offers a consistent pictorial narrative of what happened during the performance; however, due to space restrictions, I have had to limit the number of photographs to compose the corpus for the upcoming analysis.

Bearing this in mind, the photographs selected for the analysis encompass a series of six black and white images, previously listed in Chapter I, and they were chosen carefully to depict, in my opinion, important moments within the performance. The images selected for

the analysis are two photographs from Act I, one from scene 1, which depicts Duke Solinus and Egeon at the moment of the latter's imprisonment in the beginning of the play, and another from scene 2, after Dromio of Ephesus is unfairly beaten by Antipholus of Syracuse; one from Act II, scene 2, in which Antipholus of Syracuse stands between Dromio of Syracuse and Adriana, who grabs him by one arm, trying to take him home for dinner; one from Act IV, scene 1, when Angelo presents the gold chain to Antipholus of Syracuse; and finally, two from Act V, one from scene 1, in which the Abbess is promoting the meeting between Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus, and another, also from scene 1, depicting the two pairs of Dromios and Antipholus reunited at the end of the play.

The analysis shall be primarily carried out based on the denotative and the connotative aspects--literal description of the image followed by the reading based on my personal point of view as an observer and analyst--as well as notions of *studium* and *punctum*, as proposed by Barthes in *Camera Lucida*. In addition, other theoretical parameters cited in Chapter II might be applied and discussed *ad loc*. The order for analysis shall be presented in the order of their occurrence in the performance, as listed in the previous paragraph, and the identification of the scenes, characters, and actors will be done as the analysis proceeds.

3.3 Unpacking the Visual Language of Teatro do Ornitorrinco's *A Comédia dos Erros* Photographs

Let us keep in mind that the photographs to be analysed come in order of appearance in

the performance.[4] In addition to information of the Acts and scenes, the names of the characters shall be provided in Portuguese, with their namesake in English, as they appear in the original playtext by Shakespeare, and the original names shall be used in the descriptions and analysis of the photographs. Also, the names of the performers shall be provided as the photographs are presented.

3.3.1. 1st photograph. Act I, scene 1

Adilson Azevedo, as Duque Solinus (Duke Solinus) and Mário César Camargo, as Egeu

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[4]   A larger version of the photographs is offered in the appendices section in order enable closer observation of the details present in each image.

(Egeon).

The first photograph selected for the analysis is a moment taken from Act I, scene 1, in which the Ephesian Duque Solinus (Duke Solinus), played by Adilson Azevedo, and Egeu (Egeon), a merchant of Syracuse, played by Mário César Camargo, are depicted. In the photograph the two main characters are standing in the middle of the stage, and the silhouettes of two unknown actors bearing quivers behind their backs appear in the foreground. It is not possible to identify them, since they have their backs turned to both the audience and the photographer. Behind the two main characters a cage made of bamboo with its door open can be seen; just a portion of the central stage is framed within the the photograph and, consequently, only part of the scenographic house is visible in the background. This house has a wooden structure and the façade seems to be covered in canvas in which a stylized wooden door, almost cartoonesque, is painted to represent the entrance of a residence. Although the door is painted and cannot be used as a passage by the actors, the viewer can perceive the construction as a house, since right above the door a sign indicating "Home Sweet Home" is partially visible.

The man that appears on the left of the photograph has the facial traits of a nobleman, with longish straight hair, a beard and a moustache. He is dressed in a cloak and a robe, which seem to be expensive due to the material used. The robe has a shiny border in the front and rim, and the long cloak, probably velvet, is bordered with regal fur. He also wears jewellery around his neck, possibly a chain of office or livery collar, common ornaments worn by medieval noblemen to denote status and allegiances. As a contrast, the character on the right looks more rustic, since his worn out clothes are possibly made of cotton. On the

top of his billowy sleeved shirt he wears a a piece of clothing that seems to be made of fishing net, ornamented with sea shells. He also wears a small hat that resembles a helmet and he bears no other ornaments such as jewellery or weapons.

According to the performance credits, the man on the left is the Ephesian Duke, Solinus. In Ephesus he is a man of power, and by looking at the photograph, the viewer might assume that the man plays a character of someone who detains power, due to his garment and the sheathed dagger attached to his belt. In fact, according to Shakespeare's playtext, Solinus is a respected authority in Ephesus, who detains power and has the respect of his people. Even if the viewer has no knowledge of the playtext, he or she would say, by observing the photograph, that the character on the left is a man of power and authority just because of his appearance. Most viewers might identify his outfit as being one of a nobleman and they might also say, judging by the appearances, that the character on the right is a humble man in contrast to the one beside him. Accordingly, in this aspect the viewer is guided by the appearances and by the previous knowledge he or she might have about fairy tales and the way Western monarchs dressed in the past, while the man on the right, who plays Egeon, might be described as someone who has a connection with the sea because of his net costume ornamented with shells. Concerning the original playtext, Egeon is, in fact, a humble merchant who has sailed the world looking for his wife and son--the broken half of his family--separated for twenty-five years in a shipwreck.

Referring to the playtext in order to provide contextualization, in this scene which opens in the city of Ephesus, Solinus is leading a merchant, Egeon, to be arrested, hence the presence of the cage on stage. Egeon tells Solinus that he is a native of Syracuse, and we

learn that the two cities, Ephesus and Syracuse, are commercial rivals and that any Syracusean caught in Ephesus must pay indemnity of a thousand marks or face execution. Based on this information from the playtext, the viewer can understand the body language of the main actors depicted in the photograph, as well as the justified presence of the cage on stage. Solinus, by the blurred movement of his hand depicted in the photograph is probably giving orders to have Egeon arrested, which explains Egeon's expression of surprise and fear. Whether Solinus's hand movement was blunt or slow during the performance, it is not possible to say, but associating the motion of his hand to Egeon's expression we can suppose that he expressed the order to have the merchant arrested.

 What calls my attention to the depicted scene photographed here, and what I would call *punctum*, is Egeon's expression when he hears his sentence in contrast with Solinus's. While Egeon looks both surprised and terrified, Solinus bears a vague expression and empty eyes, as if he is showing no feelings. Egeon's hand covers his own mouth as in attempt to avoid a cry that would show his feelings, and his eyes are open wide in terror while Solinus announces the sentence. The literal meaning of the image would be the man on the left, Solinus, giving an order just by moving his hand and expressing no feelings, while the man on the right, Egeon, is terrified due to something he can see, or foresee, which is the case.

  To conclude this, I would like to stress another point of relevance concerning Egeon's outfit. As mentioned previously, every piece of his costume conveys the idea of a man who spent his life on a boat, hence the presence of the net and the sea shells. Also, the rope across his chest may connote of the use of ropes in boats as well as to represent that he is, in fact, tied to a burden and to his condition as a prisoner in Ephesus. If two elements of

punctum are possible in the same photograph, I would say that, for me, the rope represents another one.

3.3.2. 2nd photograph - Act II, scene 2

Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse) and Augusto Pompeo as Drômio de Éfeso (Dromio of Ephesus)

   The next photograph to be analysed is from Act II, scene 2 and it depicts two actors in the centre of the stage. It is the same setting as shown in the previous photograph, but with the absence of the bamboo cage and, for this reason, the stylized painted door is entirely visible, and a wooden ladder can be seen on the right of the stage. By observing the whole

set of photographs, I could notice that the ladder leads to the top floor of the "house", serving as an access to the residence, since the actors cannot go through the painted door on the ground floor, which is merely a representation of an entrance.

The actor on the right of the photograph is standing and his body leans toward another actor who is on the floor, sitting on his legs, with his head almost in contact with the floor. On the denotative level, the viewer would assume that the one who is standing is accusing the man who is on the floor, just by noticing the movement of his hand and his grave facial expression. The movement of his hand and his expression denote accusation. The expression on his face shows clearly that he is not pleased, for the other man must have done or said something bad or wrong. The man on the floor assumes a passive position, as in a manner to protect himself from the aggression, both verbal and physical.

Based on the playtext by Shakespeare and the performance credits, we learn that the character who is standing is Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), played by Luciano Chirolli, and the actor on the floor is Augusto Pompeo, who plays Drômio de Éfeso (Dromio of Ephesus). The body language of the actors is due to the fact that both characters were engaged in an argument, followed by physical aggression (on the part of the Antipholus). According to Shakespeare's playtext, Dromio is sent by Adriana, Antipholus of Ephesus's wife, to demand his master to come home for dinner. Antipholus of Syracuse, confused by the situation, mistakes this Dromio by his own servant and this leads to an argument, followed by physical aggression.

The depicted scene connotes the idea of authority and superiority of one character over the other. The threatening hand of the actor who is standing is very clear, contrasting with

the passiveness of the actor who is at his feet, almost grabbing his legs, as if asking for mercy and forgiveness. In this context, I would say that the movement of Antipholus's hand constitutes the *punctum* of this photograph. That is the hand that judges, beats, and also embraces the servant. Funnily as it seems, that is the same hand that will cause physical pain to the characters and render laughs from the audience throughout the performance.

In addition, the characters' costumes also convey the idea that one is superior to the other. The actor who plays Antipholus is richly dressed in a velvet blouse with lacy collar underneath a beautifully embroidered long vest, over striped tights. He also bears two leather belts, one to fasten his vest and another from which hangs a small leather pouch. On his head, a felt Elizabethan tall hat adorned with plumes can be seen. Dromio, on the other hand, wears a short striped waistcoat on top of a long-sleeved blouse, trousers, leg warmers, and shoes. Nothing in his outfit seems to be luxurious or expensive and this may reinforce the idea of Dromio being socially inferior to Antipholus.

In the absence of the playtext, this photograph connotes punishment and the power of one character over another, by the physical placement and movement executed by the performers on stage. The reason why Dromio is being punished, though, might not be understood; however, the viewer might guess he is on the ground, begging for forgiveness.

3.3.3. 3rd photograph – Act I scene 2

Eduardo Silva, as Dromio de Siracusa (Dromio of Syracuse), Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), and Christiane Tricerri, as Adriana

The photograph, from Act I, scene 2, depicts three characters on stage. One Dromio on the left, one Antipholus in the middle, and a woman on the right of the photograph. They are standing in front of the scenographic house and the photograph indicates a moment of great

physical movement in the scene. Antipholus of Syracuse, in the middle, is holding hands with the two other characters in the scene. Dromio of Syracuse, played by Eduardo Silva, is holding his right hand while the woman is holding his left. Adriana Tricerri, who plays Adriana, is wearing a long dress, boots and a tall conic hat with a veil attached to it. Due to the body movement, it is not possible to describe further details of her costume. The motion verified in the photograph implies that Adriana is trying to take Antipholus with her, while Dromio is trying to hold Antipholus in place. Antipholus is then divided into staying with his Dromio and going away with the woman, who is turned to her side, walking away from both characters, while holding Antipholus's hand.

The photograph depicts the moment Adriana goes to the street, looking for her husband, Antipholus of Ephesus, in order to take him home for dinner. Due to the identical physical appearance, she takes Antipholus of Syracuse for her husband and demands him to go home with her. Antipholus of Syracuse feels confused, for he does not know Adriana and does not understand what is happening.

The mistaken identity depicted in this scene is a recurrent theme throughout the performance and the confusion happens due to the fact the pairs of Antipholus and Dromios are identical pairs of twins, dressed exactly the same way. Rather than pretending to be other than they are, the twins act as themselves, which makes the mistaken identity the comical feature of the performance, turning the misfortunes and confusions into laughable moments for the audience.

This is the first time Adriana meets the wrong Antipholus before learning the truth about the twins at the end of the performance. The comical representation in this particular scene

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depicted in the photograph is perceived by Dromio's facial expression contrasted with the blurred movement of Antipholus's face and Adriana's assertive body language. Three different feelings are clearly denoted in the photograph. Adriana's body language denotes she is absolutely confident about the decision of taking her husband home, contrasting with Antipholus' confusion about staying or going. As for Dromio, he seems baffled by the situation, which is denoted by his vague expression. I suppose he would assume a neutral position in the scene because he does not seem to retrieve his master back, and he would certainly follow Antipholus if he decided to go away with the unknown woman. Furthermore, Dromio's expression constitutes, in my opinion, the *punctum* in this photograph. His expression is empty, in contrast with the assertiveness imposed by Adriana, and it has a comical "*je ne sais quoi*" that grabs my attention as a viewer.

The choice of the photographer to register the physical activity present in this scene is significant, since the movement depicted in the photograph is of great importance to understand what is unraveling on stage. Within the playtext, the scene depicted in the photograph revolves around the choices that the character in the middle has to face. Rather than being divided into the decisions of going to two distinct places, the body language also reflects the symbolical "division" of the Syracusean Anthipholus into two: himself and the twin brother he is looking for. From my impression as a viewer, the pair of Antipholus is physically split into two. By observing the photograph, the viewer can assume that Adriana is holding the wrong Antipholus, for he offers resistance and does not seem to agree going home with her. Whereas, if he was the right Antipholus, his body language would have been different from what is depicted in the photograph and he would have not offered any

physical resistance in following Adriana.

The viewer with no knowledge of the playtext would describe the photograph by pointing out that one man is "divided" in a dispute between two people who are trying to lead him in opposite directions. In this context, if the photograph is observed as an isolated moment in the performance, the viewer will not be able to guess the contents of the conversation and, for this reason, will not be able to infer meaning from the physical dispute among the characters depicted in the photograph.

3.3.4. 4th photograph – Act III, scene 2

Ricardo Castro, as Angelo – o ourives, (Angelo – the goldsmith) and Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse)

The image, from Act III, scene 2, depicts two male characters standing on stage. The one on the right of the photograph, Antipholus of Syracuse, who has been described previously, is interacting with a man dressed in a knee-length vest which is ornamented by a buckled belt around his waist where pieces of jewellery and little bags for gold are attached to. Just a portion of his hair can be seen underneath the small cap and he wears a longish goatee and an eye-patch on his right eye. In his hands a long chain can be spotted. The man is Angelo, the goldsmith, and he is giving Antipholus of Syracuse a golden chain that the Ephesian Antipholus had ordered, hence the confused expression of the Antipholus he is talking to.[5] Once again, as in the previous photograph, due to the similar appearance to his twin brother, the mistaken identity theme happens once again in the performance causing confusion to the characters involved in the scene.

This particular moment depicted in the photograph is of great importance within the performance because the addition of the chain as a prop in this scene would make the Antipholus we can see slightly different from his Ephesian brother. It means that, every time Antipholus of Syracuse appears on stage he would be wearing the chain, and the spectator and the viewer of the photograph would recognize Antipholus of Syracuse by the presence of the piece of jewellery around his neck. From this moment, the gold chain becomes then a sign to the viewer in a way that it makes the audience confident about the identity of the character every time he appears on stage, which is an advantage over the other characters in the show, who do not know the story about the twins.

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[5] As the Syracusean Antipholus is standing in thought, Angelo comes in and mistaking him for his twin, gives him the gold chain that had been ordered by the Ephesian Antipholus, saying that he would stop by later to collect payment. The Syracusean Antipholus knows nothing about the chain, hence his confused

Detached from any reference from the playtext, the photograph can render several different readings. The viewer might assume that Antipholus is receiving a gift from another man; however, due to his quizzical expression, he does not seem to comprehend the situation. Another reading that can be inferred is that the man is trying to sell the chain he is holding to Antipholus or even showing his treasure off. In any case, Antipholus's face bears a mixture of expectation and suspicion that will not answer the viewer's question if the chain was well received or even accepted.

3.3.5 5th photograph – Act V , scene 1

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expression.

Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), José Rubens Chachá, as Antífolo de Éfeso (Antipholus of Ephesus), and Maria Alice Vergueiro, as Abadessa/ Emilia (Abbess/ Aemilia)

The photograph to be analysed is from Act V, scene 1, and it depicts the two Antipholus on stage with a woman dressed in a religious costume that comprises a dark habit and a white floppy hat. Based on the description of the 4th photograph analysed as a reference, the viewer might recognize the man on the right of the photograph as being Antipholus of Syracuse because of the gold chain he is wearing around his neck; consequently, Antipholus of Ephesus must be the one on the left.

The scene depicted in the photograph, heading to the end of the performance, shows the intervention of the Abbess, Emilia, and that is the moment when she explains what happened in the past and reveals who she is to the other characters in the story, as well to the audience. The expression in the face of the two Antipholus is of surprise and happiness, since the abbess's explanation clears out the problem and solves all the mystery and confusion which has involved all the characters since the beginning of the performance. Although the audience is familiar with the story of the separation through Egeon's words in the beginning of the performance, Aemilia's version is not known until Act V. That is the occasion when she finally answers the audience's question why she spent more than twenty years in Ephesus without revealing herself even to the son who was living in the same city. It is important to emphasize that Aemilia acts as the "Deus Ex Machina"[6] in this final Act, for her intervention solves all the intractable problems the characters have been involved in

throughout the performance. It is Aemilia who stops the execution of Egeon, promotes the meeting and recognition among the pairs of Dromios and Antipholus, giving back their own identities before the other characters who are present on stage and, consequently, leading the story to a happy ending.

In the moment registered in the photograph Antipholus of Ephesus makes a gesture that seems to be of someone in slight pain, which may not be physical, but emotional. His face is contorted in a grave manner and the position of his hands, with the palms turned up and stretched out fingers, suggests the idea of someone asking a question. This is the *punctum* in the photograph, in my opinion as a viewer. Antipholus of Ephesus looks as if he is asking why his mother had hidden everything from him, even living in the same vicinity for years. Antipholus of Syracuse, on the other hand, has his body and arms slightly turned to the opposite side as if he is trying to repel Aemilia's touch. His right arm works as a shield, protecting him from the revelations of Aemilia, who had been a stranger to him until that moment in the performance. The hands of the characters in this scene seem to be of great importance, since Aemilia's hands are behind the two Antipholus bringing them together in a family embrace. The gesture actually brings not only the characters but also the two halves of the family together after the long separation. Although both Antipholus seem to show physical resistance, their facial expressions do not denote repulse or anger.

According to Shakespeare's playtext, the moment depicted in the photograph is crucial, since all the main characters meet on stage for the final revelation, and this very specific moment which portrays the presence of the Abbess and pair of Antipholus is

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6   Latin, literally "god from the machine". A plot device where a problem is solved, usually by another

essential, since it is when the family is reunited and the performance heads to a happy ending. Accounting for the viewer with no knowledge of the playtext, the scene might convey the idea of a woman giving a speech that is probably causing surprise and amusement for the pairs of twins; however, what was being said is impossible to guess just by looking at the characters' expressions.

3.3.6 6th photograph – Act V, scene 1

Eduardo Silva, as Dromio of Siracusa (Dromio of Syracuse), Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), José Rubens Chachá, as Antífolo de ?feso (Antipholus of Ephesus), and Augusto Pompeo , as Dromio of Eféso (Dromio of Ephesus)

The last photograph was chosen because it is a synthesis of the end of Act V, for it

character, promoting conciliation at the end of a play or story.

shows the happiness and the union among the main characters after the mystery of the pair of twins is solved. It depicts the reconciliation. On the left, Dromio and Antipholus of Ephesus and on the right Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse. They are connected to one another by the arms, in a friendly hug that means that they are reunited once again after twenty-five years of separation. The hand movement of Antipholus of Ephesus, tapping Dromio of Ephesus's back, seems to convey the idea of friendship between comrades. No signs of apprehension or discomfort can be detected among the characters portrayed at the final moments of the performance. It can be said that all movements of repulse and violence depicted in the previous photographs are not visible anymore and the comfort and happiness among the characters can be verified by the body contact and smiles that bring the characters together as a family.

Detached from any textual reference, the viewer might guess this photograph portrays the meeting of the pair of twins, who seem to be satisfied and happy in the end, hence their facial expression. The contents of the speech uttered on stage cannot be guessed since no contextualization and extra interaction is offered other than the embrace among the characters. The photograph denotes a happy ending for the two pairs of twins, and I believe this can be guessed both by the viewer who had access to the playtext and by the viewer who just observes the photograph detached from any textual reference. In the final Chapter, I round up my thoughts about the six photographs.

Final Remarks

This dissertation set out to analyse six black and white photographs from *A Comédia dos Erros*, performed by Teatro do Ornitorrinco, in 1994. The research started with the assumption that all photographs have a meaning that can be read and interpreted by the viewer according to his or her cultural background, and that photographs can serve as priceless material for analysing fragments of scenes of a performance that is no longer staged.

In fact, considering that a performance is ephemeral and sometimes cannot be analysed in depth due to its intense stage dynamics, photographs constitute important documents, since they freeze moments of the spectacle. By observing the image of a scene, the viewer can perceive details concerning staging, settings and costumes, for instance, that could not be observed during the performance, for much more attention is often paid to the playtext and the acting. I agree with Bóris Kossoy when he says that the photographic image can and may be used as a historical source; however, the viewer must remember that the registered subject is only a fragment of the past reality and shows only one aspect of it (*Fotografia* - 45). The photograph captures a moment from the "first reality" (ephemeral, volatile,

temporary), and as soon the moment is registered it becomes a document, a "second reality" (permanent, eternal), which preserves the image that was real in a fraction of second captured in the past. Based on Kossoy's idea of "first and second reality" I would say that the performance itself constitutes the "first reality", which is the moment in the past when the action unraveled on stage in front of an audience and is no longer available, and the photograph of a scene is the "second reality", a frozen fragment from the live performance that will last forever. This notion reinforces Kossoy's opinion that the process of interpreting a photographic image depends on a series of references and knowledge the viewer gathers along his or her life and, for this reason, it is impossible to have standard interpretations of what can be seen in an image (*Realidades* 46). In other words, the "second reality" is subjected to different readings and, consequently, different interpretations may arise, since meaning is intimately attached to the viewer's knowledge of the world, his or her cultural background, emotions, thoughts, and imagination.

Moreover, I could observe that the photograph of a scene can render a more precise reading of the enacted playtext if the viewer has previous knowledge of the staging, whereas other readings can be possible when the viewer has no knowledge of it. This hypothesis was confirmed when I started analysing the selected photographs of scenes from *A Comédia dos Erros*. The choice of the photographs was a conscious process in which I selected images of important moments of the performance, based on my previous knowledge of Shakespeare's playtext. I did not want to base my choices on Cacá Rosset's playtext translation and adaptation, since I did not have access to such materials, and also because I assumed the translated text would not interfere in my image reading of a Brazilian montage. In fact, I

believe I was able to make a successful reading of the scenes based on my assumptions.

The first stage of the analysis had to do with identifying the given scene within the performance, indicating the characters, the Act, and scene the image comes from. In this case, since only a fraction of second is depicted in the photograph, there is no rendering of the whole scene, let alone the whole act. For this reason, the analyst has to make use of other tools, such as the playtext in order to locate precisely where the moment depicted in the image belongs to within the performance. Sometimes it is not possible to locate the particular line in the original playtext, but the action is there, imprinted in the photographic image.

The second stage deals with the descriptive level of elements visible in the image. This can be done by almost every single viewer, for the elements correspond to concrete objects that the viewers may have seen sometime in their lives. Even if an object cannot be named, it can be explained by informing its dimensions and characteristics, for example. To put it in another way, the denotative aspects, the literal, and visible features in the image can be easily described by the viewer. Some smaller elements present on stage, like the pile of hay in front of the scenographic house,[7] for instance, may convey the idea that the residents of Ephesus would move around on horseback, even if no horses are depicted in any photographs and, possibly were not used in the performance and are not even cited on the original playtext. In this case, the viewer might infer meaning from the piles of hay based on his or her cultural background. Similarly, it is impossible to infer meaning from the doll

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[7] See appendices 2 and 3.

hanging from the scenographic house structure, depicted in two photographs.[8] Considering

no children take part in the performance, I assume the doll is just part of the stage settings

and its meaning, if it has one, was constructed in the stage setting conception process.

Unfortunately I had no access to any documents concerning the stage props conception, and

I am unable to construct any meaning to such object.

This leads to the next stage of the analysis, that is to identify possible readings, with or

without the aid of the playtext. To do so, the analyst has to put himself or herself in the

position of both the viewer who has a previous knowledge of the playtext as well as the one

who has never had access to it. Still, reading from the point of view of someone who has no

knowledge of the performance can be quite limited because several readings may be

possible and the analyst can offer his or her own.

The most important conclusion I can draw from my analysis is that it is possible to read

the photograph of a scene from a show without the help of the playtext; however, I consider

such readings superficial, relying on the denotative aspects of the image only. It is in this

sense that a great variety of readings can be perfected by different viewers from different

cultural backgrounds, thus, rendering a great number of interpretations for the same

photograph. On the other hand, I consider that a more complete achievement towards

meaning can be reached by the use of the playtext as a reference. The playtext helps to

contextualize certain expressions and movements present in the photograph, even if not all

aspects of the image can be understood completely. For example, some gestures present in

the photographs can be read, although I cannot affirm if what I can see is what it actually

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[8]   See appendices 1 and 3.

means, since a photograph cannot describe a process but only show a small fragment of a scene. As an analyst, I can offer my personal view and my own reading of the images based on my limited cultural background.

By way of conclusion, I can vouchsafe Roland Barthes's idea that it is in its constitutive principle that the photograph is a "message without codes", pure denotation, intimately attached to its referent (analogon). Yet, when the photograph is submitted to a process of reception, the codes of connotation appear, and such [cultural] codes influence the reading of the photograph. In addition, the *punctum* of the image can be perceived differently by the viewers, since what "pricks" me may not cause the same impact in another person, which reinforces the idea that reading and interpreting an image is personal. As regards Barthes's idea, I agree that a photograph is like an empty vessel, and the meaning of its content is inferred by the viewer, as has been argued, based on his or her cultural and social upbringing.

And as regards to the six photographs of Cacá Rosset's A *Comédia dos Erros* analysed in this dissertation, all in all, I can say that all of them can be read differently, either with or without the support of textual reference. Philippe Dubois points out that when a photograph depicts the image of certain character, the viewer can be sure about what is seen in the photograph, and what is seen was real sometime in the flow of time and space. However, Dubois adds that the photograph itself does not say more than what is visible and that we do not know anything else about its meaning. In this sense, Dubois believes that the photograph does not explain, nor does it interpret, and, for this reason, remains enigmatic in its essence (84). Hence, given the openness of several readings for the same photograph, it

is futile to predict if the viewer will grasp the "real" meaning of a frozen image within the performance. Moreover, gestures and facial expressions allow several different readings which, consequently, render a myriad of different interpretations. When associated with the playtext, it is possible to contextualize the image and, this way, proceed the analysis. This is one of the reasons why I decided to limit the analysis to six photographs from the same performance. Even working with a limited number of images and with the help of the playtext, it is a hard task to construct meaning based on the depicted scene, specially when the live performance is no longer available. What the analyst can grasp based on the observation of a photograph from a known playtext is a small portion from a much bigger scenario. Finally, I would say that it is the researcher's and viewer's role to use the playtext as a reference in order to infer deep and more specific meaning from the contents of the image. What is described in the absence of the playtext is an exercise of creativity and imagination that everyone who observes the image is potentially able to do.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

1st photograph. Act I, scene 1

Adilson Azevedo, as Duque Solinus (Duke Solinus) and Mário César Camargo, as Egeu (Egeon).

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

Appendix 2

2nd photograph - Act II, scene 2

Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse) and Augusto Pompeo, as

Drômio de Éfeso (Dromio of Ephesus)

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

Appendix 3

3rd photograph – Act I scene 2

Eduardo Silva, as Dromio de Siracusa (Dromio of Syracuse), Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo

de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), and Christiane Tricerri, as Adriana

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

Appendix 4

4th photograph – Act III, scene 2

Ricardo Castro, as Angelo – o ourives, (Angelo – the goldsmith) and Luciano Chirolli, as

Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse)

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

Appendix 5

5th photograph – Act V , scene 1

Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), José Rubens Chachá, as

Antífolo de Éfeso (Antipholus of Ephesus), and Maria Alice Vergueiro, as Abadessa/ Emilia

(Abbess/ Aemilia)

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

Appendix 6

6th photograph – Act V, scene 1

Eduardo Silva, as Dromio of Siracusa (Dromio of Syracuse), Luciano Chirolli, as Antífolo

de Siracusa (Antipholus of Syracuse), José Rubens Chachá, as Antífolo de Éfeso (Antipholus of Ephesus), and Augusto Pompeo, as Dromio of Eféso (Dromio of Ephesus)

Source: Heloisa Bortz (photographer), CCSP Arquivo Multimeios.

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