

PHILOSOPHY AND THEATRE IN THE CENTURY OF ENLIGHTENMENT: Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau

PhD. Luciano da Silva Façanha (Corresponding author)

Teacher at the Department of Philosophy and the Graduate Program in Culture and Society (PGCult),
Federal University of Maranhão,
São Luís, Maranhão, Brazil.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1178-4018>
E-mail: luciano.facanha@ufma.br

PhD. Zilmara de Jesus Viana de Carvalho

Teacher at the Department of Philosophy and the Graduate Program in Culture and Society (PGCult),
Federal University of Maranhão,
São Luís, Maranhão, Brazil.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1991-0250>
E-mail: zilmara.jvc@ufma.br

PhD. Maria Olilia Serra

Teacher at the Department of Philosophy and the Professional Master's Program in Philosophy,
Federal University of Maranhão,
São Luís, Maranhão, Brazil.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6160-9328>
E-mail: mo.serra@ufma.br

PhD. Helderston Mariani Pires

Teacher at the Law Course at Faculdade Armando Alvares Penteado (FAAP),
São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9598-8888>
E-mail: heldermariani@terra.com.br

Msc. Márcio Junior Montelo Tavares

Graduate Program in Culture and Society (PGCult), Federal University of Maranhão, São Luís,
Maranhão, Brazil.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5748-9474>
E-mail: marcio.tavares@ufma.br

Msc. Priscila de Oliveira Silva

PhD student in philosophy at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro – Rio de Janeiro.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9043-5523>

E-mail: silva.priscilaoliveira@gmail.com

Msc. Franciscleyton dos Santos da Silva

PhD student in Educational Sciences at the University of Minho/Portugal.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0764-9799>

E-mail: cleyton_vocare@hotmail.com

Msc. Leonardo Silva Sousa

Teacher of Philosophy at the Federal Institute of Maranhão Campus São Raimundo das Mangabeiras

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9959-4595>

E-mail: leonardo.sousa@ifma.edu.br

Elainy Priscila Gonçalves Reis

Master's student in Culture and Society, Graduate Program in Culture and Society (PGCULT), Federal University of Maranhão, São Luís, Maranhão, Brazil.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2179-9654>

E-mail: elainy.pgreis@gmail.com

Nildo Francisco da Silva

Master's student in Culture and Society, Graduate Program in Culture and Society (PGCULT), Federal University of Maranhão, São Luís, Maranhão, Brazil.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2086-6680>

E-mail: numenic@hotmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze the different conceptions of theater for the philosophers of the Enlightenment. The bibliographic research developed its methodology based on fundamentally theoretical analysis, interdisciplinary critical-reflexive approach and hermeneutic interpretation of the works on the theater of Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau. The theatrical performance has always been a continual concern during all the history of humanity, because it performs an art where people have certain stories that arouse many feelings and insights to the spectators. It highlights the fact that the theatrical performance has special importance for philosophical reflection, especially in the characteristic illustration of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. In this context, several thinkers participated intensely of the political reality of this time, using the theatrical practice on several occasions, both for the contribution to the intellectual framework and to portray the daily life of the rising class, namely the bourgeoisie. Among these thinkers, this paper will highlight the Voltaire conceptions of representation of the aristocratic theater, establishing it as a powerful means of education; Diderot about the genesis of the drama, where art had the function of refining and instructing individuals, representing the aspirations of the bourgeoisie. Since the conception of Jean-Jacques Rousseau about the theater, unlike the two mentioned thinkers, says

the educational role of the theater is illusory, as the theatrical representation only reflects the passions of their audience. Thus, it is emphasized that the Genevan thinker followed a contrary understanding to the thinkers of the period. The conclusion is obtained from the observation of how the theater is historically developed, especially the rout raised among the Enlightenment over this expression of art, noting that the thinkers, Diderot and Voltaire considered that theatrical shows are important to develop the awareness of the population, when they assume a pedagogical character, while, that Jean-Jacques Rousseau observes that theatrical representation is only a way of offering entertainment and that it is the classical model of French theatre was disseminated in small towns, as in the case of Geneva, could cause in men, the taste for luxury, the superfluous and the unnecessary.

Keywords: Theatre; Enlightenment; Performance; Drama; Comedy.

1. Introduction

Philosophy and theater are inseparable elements in illustration, since, in the century of lights, theatrical representation is a reference for philosophical reflections and discussions about politics. This reference, however, weakened in contemporaneity to the extent that knowledge became more fragmented and, mainly, with the advent and hegemony of the mass media, which took to themselves the criticism (or not) before exercised by philosophy.

About the discussion between philosophy and theater, in fact, Voltaire (1694-1778) is considered one of the greatest French playwrights of the eighteenth century, because he analyzed the frontiers of classical poetics and theater, characterized by tragedy and comedy of the century that preceded the Philosophy of Lights.

In Diderot (1713-1784), it is perceived that this transcended the traditional conception in which theater was conceived and established the dramatic genre. However, this thinker followed voltarie's same understanding by stating that the theater would free the individual from the shackles of ignorance.

Rousseau (1712-1778) follows the opposite path, that is, it is positioned in the sense of contesting the intention of giving the theater a civilizing mission as did Diderot and Voltaire. This position is evident in the famous Letter a d'Alembert on the spectacles, a text that consumption the rupture of the Genebrino thinker with the other "men of letters" in the period of the illustration.

In the present study, therefore, we approach the reflections of Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau, outstanding thinkers of the eighteenth century, who contributed significantly with the querela that involved the questions about theater and philosophy during the Enlightenment period. The main theoretical positioning refers to the pedagogical character of the representation of the theatrical scene, which Diderot and Voltaire consider that theater is intrinsically related to teaching, while Jean-Jacques Rousseau asserts that theater has the characteristic only of simple entertainment.

2. The theater of the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century is considered as one of the most turbulent periods in human history, because its end culminated in a violent crisis that, in France, led to the complete collapse of the current political and social

system, in addition to establishing a new order in which the bourgeois class appeared as the protagonist. This extraordinary transformation, however, began to be developed at the beginning of the century, when a formidable intellectual and social activity raised the theoretical support that fostered the engine of the French Revolution. Thus, while in philosophy names such as Giambattista Vico in Italy, Alexander Gottfried Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant in Germany, John Locke and David Hume in England, Montesquieu, d'Alembert and Rousseau in France, were in charge of demolishing the last foundations of medieval (and even modern) philosophy, in the literary order classicism was gradually being supplanted by romantic ideals.

It is precisely in the 18th century that french arts, especially theatre and literature (largely engaged), undeniably reflected the ideals and claims that eventually led to the Revolution. In this whirlwind of ideas that was the century of lights, countless discussions and debates were fought by philosophers and literati, each trying to establish their point of view about art, especially about its emergence and role it should play in society.

Masterpieces of geniuses such as Molière, Racine, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, among others, consolidated the diffusion of shows in all social classes. In analyzing the phenomenon, Salinas Fortes (1995, p. 52) writes that:

The passion for theater could be observed on several levels, ranging from the most popular, represented on tablados in fairs and public squares, to the refined pieces of names of great expression, also passing through the shows promoted by the bourgeoisie and represented exclusively in some more affluent houses, especially for their owners and convivas. Indeed, throughout 17th century Europe, plays were a powerful vehicle of communication and influence with the public.

The author adds that the intellectual and cultural atmosphere prevailing mainly in Paris in the first half of the eighteenth century greatly influenced the philosophers of the time. In fact, there were not a few thinkers who went down the path of the theater, whether writing plays, making reviews and reviews about plays and even about the theater itself.

In this context, the great influence that some philosophers exerted on 18th-century Parisian society should be highlighted, especially due to the recognition of names such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau, which were successful both in philosophical circles and in the streets of Paris.

However, as Duclós (1999) points out, were successful in all the social classes of 18th-century Paris, many of these thinkers, as well as theatologists in general, were not well accepted by the French authorities. Thus, although tolerated (and even admired) by various members of the court, many pieces were attacked by their engaged character and ironic, and often even debauched, way that depicted the French nobility and clergy. Comedians were particularly targeted, underattack from all sides, as Wilhelm (1988, p.145) rightly attest:

French comedians searched for a new location, but parishes rose up against them. The priest of Saint-Eustache prevented them from going to rue des Petits-Champs. 'No matter where they go, it's amazing how the priests scream,' we read in Racine's letter to Boileau. They ended up settling on Rue Mazarine, despite the protests of the terrible priest of Saint-Sulpice. scandalized by seeing a theater so close to his church.

According to Gomes (2005), throughout the 18th century this trend continued to worsen as Louis XV and his successor, Louis XVI, had no taste for representation and the fine arts. For the author, this attitude of the French kings deserved a criticism from Voltaire, who publicly questioned the court for not defending the arts and spectacles of the fury of the clergy (GOMES, 2005, p. 64).

The representation of the theater was made reference in the Enlightenment because the philosopher becomes a dramatic poet, since it aims to represent thought and disseminate it through theatrical representation. Moreover, it is inferred that, during the Enlightenment period, the theater allowed the cultivation of good customs, where the shows had pedagogical utility and through the stagings could transform the social reality.

Taking into account the debate about theater and philosophy in the eighteenth century, we will present the conception of the theater in Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, since these three thinkers were great representatives of the French Enlightenment and contributed fertile with their reflections on the subject.

2.1. Voltaire: the theater as an agent educating man

Voltaire was a thinker who refuted several existing intolerances in his time. According to Brandão (2008), his reformist thinking consists of the conception known as Liberalism, especially in relation to individual rights, such as freedom of thought:

Voltaire wanted to defend freedom at any cost. However, he had to face the question of destiny and divine foreknowledge, which is not just another objection to human freedom, it is the strongest of them. Voltaire confesses his difficulty in dealing with such a problem, but even thinks of removing divine providence to maintain human freedom. The effort to preserve man's freedom in the face of fate should not be unknown to the author, after all this was a common place of the Jesuit theater of the seventeenth century (BRANDÃO, 2008, p. 112).

This freedom concerns, mainly, with regard to thinking, criticizing any kind of intolerance, defending civil liberties, association, religious and expression. Gray (1999) also points out that, despite vehemently criticizing the economic theories of mercantilism, "Voltaire was a liberal in that he accepted as natural the inequalities between men" (GRAY, 1999, p. 47).

Gray (1999) also points out that Voltaire was influenced by several thinkers of liberalism who led him to disapprove the monarchical political institutions and antagonize the absolutist regime. Because of this fact, he observed that the political system in France benefited only the nobility, being unfair to the other citizens, especially the bourgeoisie, which "produced to be exploited by the parasitic class" (GRAY, 1999, p. 48).

With regard to theater, Voltaire valued it as an element of sociability. According to Matos (2009) such appreciation becomes evident when it is observed that most of the writings of this thinker were plays or texts related to the theme. According to the author, it can be noted that Voltaire always sought to stand out as the great name of 18th-century dramaturgy, as Corneille and Racine had previously stood out.

[...] Observing Voltaire's plays and letters it is evident that he was a theater man, perhaps even more so than he was a philosopher. Other thinkers of the period, such as Rousseau and Diderot, also wrote plays. Montesquieu did not write theater,

although his 'Persian Letters' approach him. [...] Voltaire writes his first successful play in 1718, called *Oedipus*, under the direct influence of worldly halls, which also led him to write gallant and satirical poems. In 1717, Voltaire became involved in a great quarrel with the Duke of Sully, who uses his influence to send him into exile. The three-year stay in England is crucial for Voltaire's intellectual growth, which corresponds and relates to the country's greatest scientists and intellectuals at that time (MATOS, 2009, p. 9).

On the play *Oedipus* (1718) Voltaire goes back to the myth of *Oedipus*, not including novelties, in which he aims to recover the Greek daily life. According to Matos (2009), the play converges especially on *Filoctetes*' love for *Jocasta*. This show was accepted triumphantly, from it, Voltaire begins the success of his career on stage.

Voltaire considered that the tragedy would be a reproduction of exalted conducts, performed with decency and honor, in isometric stanzas, in order to awaken suffering and compassion. He refused the domestic and bourgeois aspect that emerges in society.

Unlike Diderot or Rousseau, who presage the trend of romanticism, Voltaire argued that French classical poetics and theater welcome the severity of genre theory, where each person fills a particular location.

Voltaire asserts that theater is a form of cultural expression capable of bringing the nation together and developing people's mentality in order to crystallize good customs in society. According to Matos (2009, p. 11) "it is there that foreigners will learn our language, that no bad maxim is tolerated and no priceless feeling is recited without being applauded". In this context, theater would be a permanent school of poetry and virtue from Voltaire's perspective.

As his pieces were represented, Voltaire became famous and raised several followers. They not only applauded his pieces, but also read his books and sought to approach his restless spirit. According to Wilhelm (1988), Rousseau and Diderot, at the beginning of their careers, were part of Voltaire's group of admirers, so much so that Rousseau, before becoming renowned as a philosopher, considered following a career as a playwright, while Diderot thought about being an actor.

Duclós (1999) corroborates Voltaire's success, noting that to the extent that his plays were represented he attracted more and more admirers in almost all the seasons of the Old Regime, with the exception of the clergy, whose largest portion accused him of obscenities and blasphemy in his writings.

The break with Rousseau, according to Matos (2009), occurred on the occasion of the publication of the *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* by the Genevaphilosopher in 1750, because Voltaire did not agree with Rousseau's attack on civilization. Moreover, for Voltaire, to state that wildlife, being closer to nature, was better than living in civilization, as Rousseau had done, was absurd.

As Duclós (1999) rightly states, Voltaire was a staunch supporter of illustration and letters that marked the 18th century. In this context, theater would have the fundamental role of instructing, educating and civilizing man.

Thus, it can be seen that Voltaire's goal is to make the theater a spectacle similar to what occurred in Ancient Greece, bringing together thousands of people. In this way, the theater would be an instrument capable of facing the absolutist regime and serving as a powerful means of education and socialization.

The irreverence and acidity of his writings earned Voltaire powerful enemies, so much so that he came to

know the Bastille prisons and various exiles, culminating in his banishment from Paris by Louis XV. According to Duclós (1999), only at the age of 84 did he return to Paris, being welcomed by one of the largest crowds in the history of France.

2.2. Diderot: verisidiness as a genre of theatrical representation

Diderot pointed out that the theater should stage the domestic life of the bourgeoisie, which mediated the characteristics of classic tragedy and comedy, displaying to observers a multitude of real feelings that he would know in the future, both in "serious comedy" and in "domestic tragedy".

In addition, he analyzed the peculiarities of actions related to theatrical language, both of actors and playwrights, presenting a style that was intermediary to the Greek genres, that is, the serious genre, elaborated by serious comedy and family tragedy.

On serious genre, Freitas (2011, p. 07) states that:

This intermediate genre proposed by Diderot is starring characters of less elevated condition than the tragic characters, but it is not comedy, and does not arouse pity or terror, as should occur in a tragedy. The tone of this genre is serious: it seeks to thrill the public while leading them to reflect on the problems of the family, first, and, subsidiarily, of society, having the role of moralizing. The man represented is virtuous, of high character, as in the ancient tragedy, but in the particular context, as it was proper to comedy. In this genre, called by Diderot of serious genre, comedy loses its role of provoking light and spontaneous laughter to assume a moralizing role, teaching men their virtues, instead of the display of their vices, becoming the serious comedy, in which the outcome of the plot was given by the triumph of virtue; and the tragedy is shown with the intention of causing complacency by exposing the tragedies that occurred in families, abandoning public scourges, in the domestic tragedy, in which the denouement revealed the punishment of virtue.

On the subject of theater, between Diderot and Voltaire there were several convergences and also divergences. In this context, if he agrees with Voltaire on the content, Diderot disagrees with that one as to the form. That is, for both the theater has the potential to free the man by instructing him. However, Diderot disagrees that the plays based between the tragedies and the classic comedies staged in France of the seven hundred there was a void, a gap that should be filled by a new mode of theater, as will be seen later in this article. It is important, for now, to verify how Diderot establishes his theory about the role of the play as a transforming agent of man.

According to Freitas (2006), Diderot had as its starting point the idea that the comedy of customs was essential for the formation of the citizen. In this sense, the theater would play a pedagogical role, educating man and improving his taste and customs. "There was in him a belief that the theater should portray the customs to educate them. Hence the importance of the serious and honest tone that should guide the character of the dramatic poet to paint with vigour the virtue and duties of man" (FREITAS, 2006, p 65).

The theater, therefore, when staging everyday and other fictitious facts, would inculcate in men a certain critical sense, since each spectator would become a critic not only of the play, but also of the actors'

performance. To these, moreover, Carbonelli (2009) states that Diderot devotes special attention, especially since they are the ones who will convey the author's message and leave open the space for discussion.

On the importance of theater as a means of "clarifying" the public from Diderot's perspective, Matos (2001, p. 12) states that:

Like Voltaire, Diderot intends to put the theater at the service of illustration. Just as philosophy exorcizes superstition and prejudice, so too should theater enlighten men, teaching them to love virtue and hate addiction. If you want to do it, however, the scene needs to transform the viewer's sensitivity and, to do so, it has to provoke a lasting illusion about it. Diderot disputes that contemporary French theatre, dominated by classic tragedy and comedy, is capable of one thing and another [...].

Diderot thus proposes an intermediate genre between comedy and tragedy, which would thrill the public while leading him to reflect on the problems of contemporary society. The proposal to redefine genres implies, therefore, an inversion of the moralizing process of classical comedy, that is, it is about building by the example of virtue and not only through the denunciation of ridicule and vice.

As the first critic of classical French theater, Diderot uses the general rule of classical poetics: *verisimilitudo*. On this, Matos (1986, p. 13-14) explains to us that:

[...] in his first critique of modern theatre, Diderot begins by invoking the fundamental general rule of Classical French poetics: *verisimilitudo*. In his eyes, *verisimilitudo* will never be an arbitrary rule, illegitimate generalization of empirical observations, but a fundamental principle of dramatic art and, as such, there is no reason to challenge it. As will be seen below, what matters to Diderot are the consequences that he can collect, especially in the plane of genre theory, this invocation of *verisimilitudo* against classical French theater.

Diderot thus proposes a more "serious" genre, which would fill the void between tragedy and comedy. That is, it is not only a juxtaposition of opposite genres, but presenting to the viewer a whole range of true emotions in which he identifies himself, whether through a "serious comedy" or a "domestic tragedy". Thus, therefore, modern man is represented through prose in place of the verse, a change that would give a more "realistic" air to the staging. That is, a more bereaved aspect to the play.

Still on the same question, Matos (1986, p. 17) states that:

On the dramatic poet: true and lying, the poet will be *bearesimil* and, at the same time, wonderful, if he resorts to the 'small circumstances', 'simple', 'natural' and apparently unimaginable. The *verisimilitudo*, the illusion, results, therefore, from a subtle game of trade-offs between the common and the unusual, 'the truth of nature' concealing from the spectator or the reader the prodigy of art.

It is perceived that the *bearesimil* is not an absolute truth, but something that appears to reality and that causes us an illusory sensation, that is, the mystery of the arts. For this, Diderot institutes bourgeois theater as opposed to the classical French standard.

Diderot's intention is also to portray the new audience that appears in this period, "the bourgeoisie", and according to Matos (1986, p. 19): "Diderot will be less daring than Rousseau, but not less clear: his

spectator will be the man of letters, the philosopher, the merchant [...]. This small and snowy group now claims the dignity and sublime of tragedy."

Reflecting on the 18th century French theatre, Diderot notes that it is necessary to re-establish the simplicity of nature, reconstruct the aspect of the theatrical scene, making it accessible to ordinary people. Like his opponents, he elects poetics and classical theater. According to Matos, (2001, p. 173):

Diderot's opponents are therefore the classic French poetics and theater, it is worth saying, Voltaire. Against the old master, Diderot, who prefers the ancients and Shakespeare to Racine, he intends to release the poet from all arbitrary conventions. First of all, it is urgent to rethink the classical theory of genres and invent an intermediate genre. Himself imitating 'the most common actions' of life, where human nature is best expressed.

In view of the explained, it is observed that in Diderot, in addition to the educational function, the theater also assumes the role of contemplation of human nature, so that the human being is reconciled with him, because it is necessary that the poet has freedom over the conventions that harm him in the reflection of daily life.

For Diderot, the purpose of the theatrical show is to give an aura of reality to the presentation. In this sense, the actors' performance should be so perfect and accurate that it would lead the viewer to believe that they are witnessing something real, not a fiction. To achieve this effect, the play's argument should be simple, not overloaded by parallel episodes, as this would defocus the viewer's attention.

2.3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: criticism of science and the arts

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was certainly a great thinker, though, much disputed in his own time. Along the journey he walked was a philosopher little understood and much challenged by his reflections. He was a man of paradoxes.

The aesthetics, the theatrical representation of the century of lights and their effects on society have always instigated thinkers from various areas of human thought. Rousseau has a very clear answer to the theatrical manifestation of his century: the class theatre represented in the century of the French Enlightenment sharpens the taste for luxury and superfluous things. Civilized man seeks happiness and pleasure in art and theater to satisfy his passions, but they do not realize that this happiness and pleasure they seek so much does not appear as a constant form, but only momentary, an ephemeral happiness and pleasure.

In his criticism of Parisian theater, Rousseau wants to show his contemporaries that the show is established with the aim of generating pure distraction, not caring about the critical awakening about the reality of his fellow citizens. Thus, it is perceived that his criticism also suffers the influence of his critical studies on luxury and superfluousness in society, already addressed in the First Discourse.

In 1749, when the competition was proposed by the Academy of Dijon with the following question: "Has the emergence of the sciences and the arts contributed to improving customs?" Rousseau answers this question with another question: is there any relationship between science and virtue? According to A note from Lourival Gomes Machado (1984), by answering this second question negatively, Rousseau caused a furore among the thinkers of the time.

It is precisely in the Discourse on the sciences and the arts (or First speech) that Rousseau will appear in

the scene of the French Enlightenment, responding contrary to the thought that stood out at the time. It is through it that the thinker launches a severe criticism of the society of his time.

Despite his critical positioning and even some pessimism towards the sciences and arts, Rousseau receives the first place award offered by the Academy. In the work the Genevathinker makes it evident that the Enlightenment reason could not answer all the questions – as other contemporary thinkers believed to him – being the only possibility for man to come out of darkness, from ignorance.

In the composition of the First Speech Rousseau in an ironic way he greets with all the pomp the progress of the sciences, of reason; however, such praise will lead to the foundation of his criticism in favor of human morality. What Rousseau shows us is that for man it is much more difficult to turn to himself than to know the universe.

It is a great and beautiful spectacle to see man leave, by his own effort, to say nothing; dispel, through the lights of his reason, the darkness in which nature enveloped him; rise above himself; to launch itself by one's own spirit, to the heavenly regions; walk with giant steps, like the sun, the vast expanse of the universe; and, which is even greater and more difficult, to penetrate into oneanother to study man and to know his nature, his duties and his end (ROUSSEAU, 1978, p. 333-334).

For the thinker, the development of the sciences and the arts is the path that presents itself before men for total loss of their virtue while inserted in the hypothetical natural state, because it is only in nature that truth is manifested.

Following this line of reasoning, it is in nature that man is truly happy, for it comes from everything and protects him against the evils of vanity, arrogance and passions. However, men, as they have the power of knowledge, become presumptuous and arrogant and push the limits of their smallness. The sciences and arts therefore mean the pinnacle of human pride.

In addition to the Discourse on the sciences to the arts, where Rousseau (1978) weaves his critique of artistic productions in general, the Genevan philosopher writes yet another criticism: it is the Letter to D'Alembert, in which he criticizes the French comedy theater as a corrupting agent of The Genevan society. However, its main target is not only the theatrical artistic manifestation, but D'Alembert himself and, mainly, Voltaire, who would be a kind of mentor and guide of D'Alembert.

Indeed, when in 1757 D'Alembert was invited by Diderot to write the geneva for encyclopedia, writing the ebbutt, in addition to talking about the politics, social and geographical life of that city, D'Alembert also makes some considerations about the installation of a comedy theater. It is from this moment that Rousseau begins to weave his criticisms to the proposed installation of a comedy theater in the city of Geneva. The philosopher is against the installation for conjecture that such spectacles would sharpen the taste of the Genevates for luxury and the superfluous, degenerating the habits and customs of that people.

In this context, Façanha (2010, p. 355) presents a very interesting element about rousseaunian criticism of D'Alembert's defense of the comedy theater in Geneva:

[...] Rousseau stands against the idea of a theater as an instrument of moral education, however, the philosopher's position is not in placing this moral playful activity in the category of immoral activity, but rather in that of artificial activity,

and, perhaps, by this factor, could generate immoral effects, depending on what diverged from the natural circumstances of each place.

For this analysis, the problem would not be in the playful character of the theater, since men eventually need some form of distraction. Rousseau's (1978) target is, in fact, the "useless distractions" that French comedy theatre could provide, thus leading to the moral corruption of Genevan society or elsewhere, depending on the configuration of each society.

Thus, in the First Discourse, Rousseau makes references to artistic productions more comprehensively, however, his criticism related to the corrupted emergence of the sciences and the arts as a way of directly censoring the Enlightenment society does not stop there.

Perhaps for this, many commentators see in the Letter to D'Alembert an extension of the First Discourse, but the criticism is directed to a specific artistic institution: the theater.

In the eighteenth century it was believed that theater, through shows and stagings, was able to modify evil customs in virtuous actions to the thought of the general public. However, Rousseau stands against this conception and attributes that the theatrical activity cannot modify people's customs and if there are changes in these habits it will be disastrous with the interference of the shows. About Rousseau's critique of the theater, says Perin (2013, p. 11):

These will exercise a reinforcing character in the ways that men already have and some forms of theatrical manifestation can do just the opposite of what is expected of the theater, so as opposed to making bad habits good, it will make these same bad habits in forms of action much worse than those that already existed. Thus, the direct objective is to show how a critique of a specific way of performing theatrical practices in 18th-century France, in the context of the Letter to D'Alembert, is configured and as the Genevan thinker analyzed at a critical level of the politics of his time. Criticism of this occurs through an artistic pattern.

It seeks to understand in Rousseau the effect of the shows, taking into account the historical and natural peculiarities, always raising the type of audience in which the staging is performed. Thus, it is understood that the Genebrino states that the decline of French theater enabled the genesis of the bourgeois dramatic genre.

And according to Moretto & Barbosa (2006, p. 78):

In fact, times had changed. Rousseau, proclaimed the natural goodness of man, eliminated the idea of the tragic, of evil, whose germ hides in the human essence itself, in its imperfection. Rousseauian optimism contributed on a large scale to the disappearance of the tragedy. Moreover, the nobility lost its hegemony more and more, while the bourgeoisie was born, rich, but whose customs were less refined than those of the court. This bourgeoisie has a more natural, simpler life. The theater, thus, which will now be called drama, puts on the scene no longer a king, more a bourgeois. And of course the subject of the play will be based on domestic problems. This drama that puts on the scene not a hero, but an individual, whose text will be in prose, whose scenario will be realistic and no longer stripped, is no longer a tragedy, his hero is no longer crushed by a force that surpasses him.

The drama puts on stage a fight between more or less equal forces, which gives greater importance to the intrigue, which thus becomes more romanesque. The path is open to romantic drama.

The Genevaphilosopher thus declares that spectacles have the function solely of entertaining and only to the extent that they are necessary. According to Rousseau in *Carta a d'Alembert* (1993, p.346):

In launching a first blow of sight on these institutions, I see at first that a spectacle is a distraction and, if it really needs the man of distractions, you will at least agree that they are allowed to the extent that they are necessary and that any useless distraction constitutes an evil for a being whose life is so short and whose time, so precious. The state of man possesses its pleasures, which derive from its nature and are born from its work, from its relationships and from its needs [...]. It is, however, the discontent with itself, it is the weight of idleness, it is the forgetfulness of the simple and natural tastes that make an exotic distraction so necessary.

Thus, the shows consist of a social option that unites individuals, playing in society the role of establishing coexistence. Thus, the theater will be restricted in its historical conjuncture. Therefore, it will not be the responsibility of the audience to instruct the pieces, but rather the pieces that will be dependent on the acceptance of the public. According to Perin (2013, p. 22):

Rousseau, before making all other arguments has as main focus eliminate the vision of the Enlightenment ideal of belief and hope found in theater and in representations in general. It sprays the perfection attributed to the shows with regard to the changes expected by the public. It leaves no room for any possibility of changing habits and consequently for social change. He adopts the position of breaking with the dictates recommended by the Enlightenment in the spectacles, affirms that the consolidation of habits is the only thing that can be expected of the pieces and therefore each people will be limited only with what he himself has to offer.

Consequently, it is noteworthy that the theater is characterized as a great feast for Rousseau (1993, p. 128):

We already have the pleasures of these public parties; we have them in even greater numbers, and I will be even more delighted. But let's not take these exclusive spectacles that sadly enclose a small number of people in a dark den; that keeps them fearful and immobile in the silence of inaction; that only offer the eyes screens, iron tips, soldiers, distressing images of servitude and inequality.

Thus, it is inferable that it is not possible to analyze the plays in isolation, because their study only occurs through the knowledge of the effects they generate on the audience. At the same time, its modification will not be possible, because the preservation of popular customs must be maintained, since the theater has the function of entertaining and not of educating and modifying the customs of a people that has not yet been corrupted, namely: the Genevan society.

3 Final considerations

From the above, it was found that during the period known as the century of lights, there were not a few thinkers who were embattled by the pathways of the theater, some in the pretense of becoming great masters in the art of the composition of plays, or simply writing criticisms and standing against the general conception that was manifested in that period, namely that the theater had the pedagogical and transforming function of social consciousness.

It was found that the thinkers, Diderot and Voltaire considered that theatrical spectacles are important to develop the awareness of the population, when they assume a pedagogical character, while, that Jean-Jacques Rousseau observes that theatrical representation is only a way of offering entertainment and that if the classical model of French theater were disseminated in small towns, as in the case of Geneva, could cause in men, the taste for luxury, the superfluous and the unnecessary. Criticism that had been worked more comprehensively in his First Speech.

Therefore, it is also asserted, about the theatrical representation, that it is necessary to take into account the human beings themselves, their nature and their customs, because these are numerous and that each society has its own culture.

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