

Contributions of Theater for (Cri)Active Aging

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Summary

Faced with the new paradigm of aging, projects and practices that promote active aging are urgently needed. This article interrelates two major areas of knowledge - Theatre and Active/Creative Ageing. It analyzes them in order to understand the benefits of theatrical practice, especially in aspects associated with health and well-being of the elderly. And aims to share the case study conducted with the Silves Senior Theatre Group in the Algarve, Portugal. The results indicate the contribution of theater in the aging process in seven areas: Participation; Mental Health; Socialization; Cooperation; Personal Involvement and Commitment to Life; Appreciation and Recognition; Overcoming.

Keywords: theater; active aging; arts and health; seniors.

Abstract

The new aging paradigm has urged projects and practices that promote active aging. The present article interrelates two major areas of knowledge - Theatre and Active/Creative Ageing. Through the analyses of both, it sought to understand the benefits of theatrical practice, mainly, in aspects related to the health and well-being of the elderly. It also aims to share the case study carried out with the Senior Theatre Group of Silves, in Algarve, Portugal. The results point to the contributions of the theatre in the aging process across seven scopes: Participation; Mental health; Socialization; Cooperation; Personal Involvement and Commitment to Life; Appreciation and Recognition; Overcoming.

Keywords: theatre; active aging; arts and health; elderly people.

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Introduction

This article is based on the study "Theatre's Contributions to Creative Aging", carried out as part of the dissertation for the Master's degree in Social Gerontology, from the School of Education and Communication and the School of Health of the University of Algarve. The study focused on the relationship between two conceptual strands - theater and active/creative aging. The objectives aimed to understand the benefits of theatre practice in the process of active and creative aging, especially in aspects associated with health, well-being and quality of life. The theoretical approach included concepts related to aging, namely: active aging, successful aging and creative aging. In theater practice we selected: community theater, applied theater and senior theater. We also pointed out the influence of arts in the health field, reflecting on the concept "arts and health", as well as on its purposes. The methodology was based on the qualitative paradigm, choosing the case study as the research strategy. Among other data collection techniques, we used participant observation, semi-retrospective interviews, and focus groups, and later used content analysis. The case study focused on the Silves Senior Theater Group, integrated in the Senior Theater Project, promoted by Silves City Hall. We followed the working process of the senior group over a period of two years, corresponding to the first and second edition of the project.

From the analysis, pondering and confluence of sources, we obtained a sequence of

- (1) Participation - Creative Experience; Re- miniscence.
- (2) Mental Health - Memory Stimulation; Anxiety Reduction; Spontaneity and Self-confidence.
- (3) Socialization - The Importance of Conviviality and Reduction of Isolation.
- (4) Cooperation - Empathy.
- (5) Personal Involvement and Commitment with Life - Meaning and Sentiment.
- (6) Appreciation and Recognition - Personal Appreciation; Recognition and Demystification of the Stigma Associated with Old Age.
- (7) Overcoming - Hope and Future Prospects.

From the concepts of Active Aging and Successful Aging to the notion of Creative Aging

Within aging studies and policy responses to population aging, there are now established theories and concepts, albeit subject to (sometimes subtly) divergent discussions and approaches. The prevalent terms in recent decades are active aging in Europe and successful aging in the United States (Paúl, Ribeiro, & Teixeira, 2012). Both derive from the same scientific root, which is based on the activity perspective (Foster & Walker, 2014), and have been considered in research and policy as alternatives to a weak model of aging (Strawbridge, Wallhagen, & Cohen, 2002).

Active aging is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), as a "process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security, aimed at improving quality of life as people age" (WHO,

2002). Its four key notions are: (1) Autonomy; (2) Independence; (3) Quality of Life; (4) Healthy Life Expectancy. It should be noted that for this organization being "active means participating on an ongoing basis in all aspects of life, whether social, cultural, economic, spiritual, or civic, and not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in work" (*ibid.*). The term successful aging gained popularity through the article *Human aging: Usual and successful* (1987) by John W. Rowe and Robert L. Kahn, where the authors argue that illness and aging are distinct processes. Their main results are found in the publication entitled *Successful aging* (Rowe & Kahn, 1997), which indicates the three main components that represent the model: (1) Low probability of disease and disease-related disability; (2) Maximization of cognitive and physical functions; (3) Active involvement/commitment to life. Another proposal, widely disseminated within the theories of successful aging is Paul B. Baltes & Margret M. Baltes, in *Successful Aging: Perspectives from the Behavioral Sciences* (1990). The duo presents a theory based on the psychological perspective through a prototypical strategy - the "selective optimization with compensation" (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). Constituting a dynamic balance between gains and losses, it involves three processes, generally referred to by the acronym SOC - Selection; Optimization and Compensation.

In the theoretical foundation of our research work we consider and de- 3. We have developed the concepts of active aging and successful aging. However, these do not directly point out the relevance that creative and/or artistic activities may have in the lives of the elderly, referring only to the participation and involvement in cultural activities. Therefore, we sought a complementary model of aging that would support our study through the role of arts and creativity in the health and well-being of the senior population, thus arriving at creative aging.

Creativity presents itself as a new paradigm for aging. A paradigm that articulates the potential of older people, rather than their problems (Hanna & Perlstein, 2008). In contemporary society creativity is often associated with the young, as if it were an exclusive characteristic of youth. But the artist and art critic Fayga Ostrower *deconstructed* this idea in her work *Chance and Artistic Creation*:

creativity is an inherent dimension of the human being, the creative ~~part~~ however, will only become known after the person grows, develops, and reaches maturity, that is, only after encounters with life. And it is in this context that sensitivity and creative potential will reveal themselves, for they are directly linked to the paths of life, in which there are no shortcuts or skip steps (Ostrower, 1999).³

The concept of creative aging is supported by pioneering scientific work focusing exclusively on the themes of creativity and aging, such as

³ Ostrower, F. (1999). *Chances and artistic creation* (Santos, 2010).

by Gene Cohen (2000) *The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life*.

One of the pioneers of the concept of creative aging is Susan Perlstein, a researcher in this field for over twenty years, founder of the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) and of Elders Share the Arts, a community-based arts organization that encourages artistic expression and cultivates the role of the elderly as bearers of history and culture, creating new ways of connecting with the community.

In the *Creative Aging Toolkit for Public Libraries* platform, developed by Lifetime Arts, Inc:

The field of creative aging focuses on the beneficial and powerful role of the arts in improving quality of life for older adults and is increasingly recognized as an important contributor to positive aging. Researchers are finding that brain aging is much more plastic than previously believed, and that structured learning - especially through the arts - can improve cognitive functioning and quality of life (Creative Aging Toolkit for Public Libraries, n.d.).

The team collaborating on this innovative "toolkit" adds that creative aging is "a practice that involves older adults (+55) participating in (professionally guided) art programs focused on engagement and social mastery skills" (*ibid*).

Creative aging practice has emerged in three distinct areas: (1) Health and Wellness (includes art therapy through programs tailored to institutionalized seniors and targeting the population with cognitive loss); (2) Community (programs directed at using the arts as a means of cultural or civic development, including programs and opportunities through which seniors can contribute to the life of their communities); (3) Lifelong Learning (community-based learning programs that aim to develop artistic skills through participatory workshops and usually culminate in public sharing).

Understanding the relationship between creativity and aging is of the utmost importance, as it makes it possible to enhance the potential of individuals in their third and fourth years, restoring them the place of lifelong learning, growth, and community participation.

From the premises of Community Theatre and Applied Theatre to the attempt to conceptualize Senior Theatre

In the last few years, theatre practice with the community has been developing locally, nationally and internationally. However, its theoretical and critical reflection still has little expression, especially when we relate theater practice and elderly people, in a community context.

The terminologies of theater, which involves a group of people with something in common, vary according to the time, political, social-cultural and artistic context. And some researchers in this field define the phenomenon in the light of their experience and observation. Therefore, in this study, we were concerned with determining the typologies that, in our opinion, best contextualize the activity in question.

Firstly, we analyzed Community Theatre, because we consider it to be the most used terminology in our country; secondly, Applied Theatre, because it is a term well developed among the international academic community. Both terms are controversial and non consensual, covering diverse practices under different domains (art; politics; education; inclusion or health). Nevertheless, we believe that they share similar genesis and purpose, always aiming at the development of people and the communities they are part of.

Third, we wanted to include Senior Theater, an option that brought us many difficulties from the conceptual point of view, due to the scarcity of theoretical debate about the term. But the question imposed itself - what is senior theater?

Wood (2007)⁴ mentions that Senior Theater is a practice performed by people over the age of 55 and describes it as follows:

the fastest growing sector of recreational and occupational theater in North America and Europe. Like traditional theater, senior theater now includes all types of theater, from amateur and therapeutic groups in nursing homes, day centers, and churches to interdisciplinary companies, community theater, university theater, and fully professional companies.

In turn, Stewart (2004)⁵ suggests the purposes of senior theater in four general objectives: (1) it provides the opportunity for seniors to act; (2) it educates the public about senior issues; (3) it shares the life experience of seniors; (4) creates structure and social support (for seniors). Emphasizing that in each of these four areas there are a variety of opportunities for learning and socialization.

And through the Senior Theatre Resource Center in the U.S., we have accessed some considerations of Bonnie L. Vorenberg, its main promoter, who makes the following characterization:

Most senior theater groups are amateur, although some are professional. As with community theater groups, participants generally live in the area where the theater practice sessions take place. Most programs include 11 to 20 participants, who remain in the group for 1 to 3 years, leaving only because of illness or other commitments (Vorenberg, 2011).

⁴ Woods, A. L. (2007). Eileen Heckert drama for seniors competition. *Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute*, The Ohio State University. Cited in Kole (2009).

⁵ Stewart, D. (2004). What is senior theatre? *The Bulletin of the Senior Theatre League of America*, 2(1),

8-9. Quoted in *ibid.*

Although these brief definitions have been formulated based on the theatrical experience with seniors, from a reality different from ours, it seems to us that they are applicable and adequate to senior theater groups in Portugal. Nevertheless, the need to conceptualize the term remains, as well as the need to record, investigate and disseminate the experiences in the area.

Arts and Health - a multidisciplinary field of action

The sphere of action of arts and health⁶ is multidisciplinary and encompasses all work carried out through the implementation of artistic practices in health and community settings. This field is part of our research because it is usually in the last stage of the life cycle that the human being is most vulnerable, and therefore most susceptible to developing health problems. Moreover, what we seek to understand with seniors who practice theater are aspects that can promote their health and well-being.

Mike White⁷ generically calls these matters arts in community health. He mentions that the pioneering of these practices began in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s, through sporadic pilot projects dedicated to the development of local arts for health promotion and primary care. For this author, the "arts in community health is a distinct area of activity that operates primarily outside of serious health situations and is characterized by the use of participatory arts to promote health" (White, 2009).

Arts Council England, the national agency for the development of the arts in England, in its strategy document *The arts, health and wellbeing* defines "arts and health" as follows:

arts-based activities that aim to improve individual and community health, as well as health care, and that enhance the health care environment through artistic work or performances" (Arts Council England, 2007).

Through this agency we consulted the work of *The National Alliance for Arts, Health & Wellbeing*, created in 2012, with the aim of demonstrating the role that creativity can play in health and well-being. To this end, this organization has developed the *Charter for Arts, Health and Wellbeing*, which sets out important observations about the field:

The arts in the health context utilize diverse and dynamic disciplines. in a variety of health care in community settings for expressive, rehabilitative, educational, and therapeutic purposes. Some in the sense of prevention, some to aid in the recovery process, and some to improve the quality of life of people in long-term or terminal conditions. The creative arts

⁶ There are many terms in the English language to name this field. Some examples: arts for health; arts and health; arts into health; healing arts; arts in health.

⁷ Mike White was a researcher at the Centre for Medical Humanities, Durham University. International recognition of his work has influenced the scientific community in this area.

contribute to making sense of our human condition, open space for the heart and listening to the soul. They encourage active engagement with the world around them, help people in continuous learning and build connections among themselves, thus contributing to their communities (Jackson, 2012).

This approach applies to a variety of artistic practices, takes place in different locations, and can be conducted individually or in groups.

Research Strategy and Process

The research strategy was based on the qualitative methodology, which presupposes a phenomenological model in which reality is rooted in the ~~stijl~~ perceptions; the aim is to understand and find meanings through verbal narratives and observations (Bento, 2012). The method used was the case study, as it is an appropriate methodological approach when we aim at understanding, exploring or describing complex events and contexts, in which several factors are simultaneously involved. In the data collection process, we used several techniques, namely: questionnaire survey; participant observation; direct and indirect observation; *focus* group and semi-directive interview. In data analysis, we adopted content analysis as the main method.

The work began with a meeting that included my introduction to the group and vice-versa and, obviously, aimed at framing the research we intended to carry out. From this meeting resulted a plan of sessions for monitoring and supporting the theatrical practice, duly articulated between the person responsible for the research and the coordination team of the Senior Theater Project. In the first phase, we monitored the group's rehearsals regularly (once a week) during the months of May and June 2014, resulting in a total of 10 sessions lasting approximately 2h30m. The sessions took place in the multipurpose room of the Silves Municipal Library and on the stage of the Teatro Mascarenhas Gregório. The follow-up included support for the theatrical practice, participation in the creative process, in the dress rehearsal, as well as in the two performances of the first show, in the last days of June 2014. In the second phase, we followed the result of the work of the senior group, in the dress rehearsal and in the public presentation of the second theatrical creation, in July 2015.

Senior Theater Project - brief context

The Senior Theatre Project took place in the municipality of Silves, in the Algarve. The initiative, conceived and implemented by technicians from the social action and cultural sectors of the Municipality of Silves, aimed to be a complement to the program developed to promote active aging, which mainly included physical activities. The idea of promoting the theatrical activity was suggested by elements of the senior groups, who were already participating in other initiatives of the Lifelong Learning Centers of the Municipality of Silves. The manifest interest of seniors in theater led the social action sector, in conjunction with the culture sector, to launch the workshop "From Word to Stage" in January 2014. This workshop was the motto for the development of the

This project took place in four parishes of the municipality: Armação de Pêra; São Bartolomeu de Messines; Silves and Tunes. This subsequently gave rise to the creation of four senior theater groups, corresponding to each of these parishes. From our data analysis, we identified four areas that the Senior Theater Project wanted to foster: (1) Active Aging; (2) Valuing Immaterial Cultural Heritage; (3) Cultural Access and Participation; (4) Community Involvement.

Of the four groups formed, we selected only one group - the Silves Senior Theatre Group - in order to understand the theatrical experience of each of the participants in more detail.

Participants

In the first phase of the study (Senior Theatre Project, 2014), the Silves Senior Theatre Group (GTSS) consisted of 16 (sixteen) members, of whom 15 (fifteen) collaborated continuously and effectively in the research work. Of this group, 13 (thirteen) were people over 55 (fifty-five) years old and 2 (two) were technicians from the Municipality of Silves: 1 (one) from the social action sector, as a community intervention technician; and 1 (one) from the culture sector, as a cultural manager. Occasionally, we also had the participation of 1 (one) municipal councillor.

The group included 13 (thirteen) elderly people, 11 (eleven) females and 2 (two) males. The age of the participants, at the time of the study, was between 60 (sixty) and 80 (eighty) years old.

For all the elderly in the Silves Senior Theatre Group, it was the first time they had experienced and/or had the opportunity to participate in a theater group. This is especially significant if one thinks that the theatrical experience implies an individual and collective challenge that requires the development of aspects strictly linked to the capacity for adaptation, transformation and exposure. All considered their participation in the GTSS as important. Moreover, we found that all participants valued the experience, pointing one or another reason that justified the importance ~~and~~ to it, such as: socializing; sharing; or issues related to mental activity.

In the second phase of the study (Senior Theatre Project, 2015), the group was composed of 14 (fourteen) people, of which 12 (twelve) were over sixty years old and 2 (two) are technicians from the municipality of Silves. All the elements participated in the previous edition, with the exception of 1 (one) element. Therefore, we consider that the group of participants described above has been maintained.

Contributions of Theatre for Cri(Active) Aging

The process of examination and analysis became demanding because of the volume and diversity of information, and because we brought together aspects mentioned in the literature review, while adding theoretical and empirical knowledge from other scientific works. However, through weighing and confluence

In order to provide information, we have designed a range of contributions organized into 7 (seven) categories and their respective subcategories:

- (1) Participation - Creative Experience; Reminiscence.
- (2) Mental Health - Memory Stimulation; Anxiety Decrease; Spontaneity and Self-confidence.
- (3) Socialization - The Importance of Conviviality and Decreasing Isolation.
- (4) Cooperation - Empathy.
- (5) Personal Involvement and Commitment to Life - Meaning and Sense.
- (6) Appreciation and Recognition - Personal Appreciation; Recognition and Demystification of the Stigma Associated with Old Age.
- (7) Overcoming - Hope and Prospects for the Future.

The following is a brief exposition of these categories.

Participation

The participation of the elderly population in social and cultural activities is not only an important factor, but is a must in most theories and practices that develop a positive approach to aging.

From the questions asked about the experience of group participation, two items associated with it emerged: creative experience and reminiscence.

Creative Experience

The experience of collective creation was a process that revealed and put into practice the creative capacity of people. For, by considering and valuing their knowledge, it installed the necessary confidence to share and express their ideas. Despite the participants' difficulty in describing the details of the creative experience, their enjoyment of the activity, their satisfaction, happiness, and contentment were clearly demonstrated. The creative challenge provoked a reaction that facilitated change and problem solving, not only in the context of theatrical practice, but also in daily life, which stimulated the development of the acclaimed pro- tivity, propelling the new actors into action.

Reminiscence

The two plays performed by the Silves Senior Theatre Group emerged from a creative process that drew on their memories, the collection of local traditions and customs, and the history and stories of their community. There was, therefore, a work that resorted to reminiscence, stimulating the participation of all and involving the group in the process of artistic creation. This method aimed to include the universe of people's identities, working on aspects close to them or of their interest, in order to involve the participants from their motivation. The theatrical creation through memories proved to be very important for the GTSS participants, because the

reminiscence is a search for meaning - a search for understanding the past. In essence, a redrawing of our origin-a process of discovering and rediscovering who we are through connections between different aspects of our life, family, and community (Gibson, 2011).

Mental Health

Mental health, as a result of the theatrical practice we followed, is supported by the number of subcategories, significant and clear, that the participants and those responsible for the Senior Theatre Project exposed in this area. Of the several facts pointed out by the group, we selected three: memory stimulation; anxiety reduction; spontaneity and self-confidence.

Memory Stimulation

The benefits associated with memory were one of the aspects most mentioned by the participants in both focus groups. The most frequently mentioned expressions were "it's good for your head" or "Here it's more about memory. It's the little head that has to work harder". Advanced research has also shown specific results of theatrical interventions with the elderly that demonstrate improvement in cognitive health. Examples are the many studies by Helga Noice and Tony Noice (Noice & Noice, 2006, 2013; Noice, Noice, & Graham, 2004; Noice, Noice, Perrig-Chiello, & Perrig, 1999) that verify increased memory and recognition, improved problem-solving skills, psychological well-being, and stimulation of creativity.

Decreased Anxiety

The decrease in anxiety was another factor observed during the theatrical practice of the GTSS. The data reveal, above all, "distraction" from difficult situations or easing of life problems, *stress* relief, feelings of lightness, relaxation and even a decrease in medication. We also infer that participants benefited from moments of relaxation, joy or happiness - factors that promote the reduction of the anxious state, and simultaneously minimize depression, associated with anxiety.

Spontaneity and Self-confidence

In the course of the practice, the group showed more and more spontaneity and self-confidence. As the work progressed, the feelings of fear, fear or incapability diminished, giving way to expressions such as: we are more "at ease", "looser", "confident". The development of the expressive faculties is a process inherent to the dramatic activity, which in turn activates and strengthens the spontaneity in the people who practice it. Self-confidence is a factor that performers acquire through participation in theater (Shaw, 1989).

Socialization

Theater, as an ancestral field of socialization (Bidegain, 2011), is an activity that favors the relationship with the other at a different level, especially due to the implicit need for individual and collective involvement underlying the process. The GTSS participants emphasized the importance of socializing and alluded to the reduction of isolation.

The Importance of Socializing and Reducing Isolation

The conviviality was assumed as one of the strongest and most consensual points of theatrical activity, due to the fact that it minimizes feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially among widows. We found that the socializing space of theater can be distinguished by the quality of conviviality it facilitates - difficult to attribute to other activities, artistic or otherwise, and we believe that this happens essentially because the main vehicle of the scene is the human being who participates, constantly with its individual and collective dimension.

Cooperation

The methodology used resorted to the collaborative process, triggering extensive work in the area of cooperation. We identified this social component through manifestations of companionship, mutual aid and group spirit. We also noticed that through cooperation, the affective relationships and interpersonal bonds established promoted the development of empathy among the participants.

Empathy

Understanding empathy as "a human characteristic or as a native ability to feel and understand the emotional state of other people" (Bodenhorn & Starkey, 2005), we observed that empathic relationships were established in the group through the atmosphere of community and camaraderie triggered by the tea- tro exercise. And that affectivity and familiarity increased the empathic factor.

Personal Involvement and Commitment to Life

There was a high level of personal involvement over the several months that the activity took place, as well as a new commitment to life.

The project coordination highlighted the involvement of the participants, both for the specifics regarding the bond and identification that theater promotes, and for the commitment it establishes. She emphasized the importance of the latter, since it is in the later stages of the life cycle that the absence of commitments often leads to the loss of meaning and/or significance of life.

Meaning and Sense

We realized that the personal involvement of the group was related to the meaning that the theatrical experience produced in the participants, that is, the restitution of a purpose, a meaning, an impulse in life, which in turn was reinforced through commitment. In this way, the commitment and responsibility that the GTSS members took on the challenge of theater allowed them to recover facets of their social functions, renewing part of their role in the community.

Appreciation and Recognition

The personal appreciation, along with the recognition obtained through the public presentation of both shows, was very rewarding for the seniors. These aspects contributed to demystifying the stigma associated with old age.

Personal Appreciation

The testimonies associated with self-worth were, without a doubt, among the most shared by the group. Some participants, full of pride, reported their theatrical experience as a "pleasure", a "value" and even as a "dream". The combination of appreciation and gratitude that the elderly felt led us to appreciate the recognition of the local community.

Recognizing and Reducing the Stigma Associated with Old Age

The recognition came from family, friends, neighbors and other public, which had great repercussion on the actors. The actions and efforts recognized, the pride of others in you, when translated into applause and affectionate expressions, are desirable experiences for their transformative power, particularly in this period of life. Simultaneously, we observed the surprise of the audience in relation to the performance and the capabilities of the seniors, an experience that deconstructs prejudices and diminishes the stigma associated with old age, so present in today's society.

Overcoming

The overcoming process happened gradually, and as the group experienced the games and the theatrical techniques, the initial fear decreased. In this sense, the support of the team that accompanied the group proved to be crucial, but the most important factor to highlight was the mutual support that generated collective courage and hope. The transition implied an active and conscious effort from all the seniors, creating change and giving back to many that disposition that invites to dream.

Hope and Future Prospects

We conclude that participation in new experiences can benefit the development of forward-looking ideas and increase levels of hope for those who benefit from them. The data suggest that the constant challenges of theatrical practice can

promote aspects inherent to a positive motivational state. The motivation and/or the desire to remain in the group confirm the expectation of future and continuity.

Concluding Remarks

From the theoretical basis underlying our study, we highlight, firstly, creative aging, an innovative concept that both facilitates the understanding of creativity and reinforces the importance of artistic activities as a practice that promotes quality of life and well-being in the elderly. Secondly, the concept of senior theater, a designation often used in our country, but which lacks a solid and refined definition, which would be justified both by the use of the term and by the growing number of theatrical activities with seniors. Third and last, we refer to the emerging field of "arts and health" for its multidisciplinary action, through artistic practices in the context of community health, with a view to expressive, rehabilitative, or therapeutic interventions.

In order to understand the benefits of theater in the aging process, we accompanied the Silves Senior Theatre Group in two different periods, with the aim of conducting a comparative analysis between the two experiences of theater creation. In the follow-up sessions we had the opportunity to characterize the participants, integrate the creative process, observe and participate, as well as produce records and collect data. This wealth of information allowed us to analyze the impact of the theatrical activity on the participants, the relationships established, and its effects. Thus, we arrived at the contributions described above, which suggest that theater is an effective activity for achieving well-being and enhancing the quality of life of the elderly. The results also indicate that theatre has the potential to be an important means of social intervention, an innovative vehicle for health promotion, as well as a tool to demystify stereotypes associated with aging.

The major difficulties in pursuing this study were due to the access to information on the topic, i.e. to the literature duly reviewed and documented, either specifically about the question - what are the contributions of theater to active/creative ageing - or even about the areas of intersection that the research involves. However, we believe that this is a promising field, where it is not difficult to find examples and practices, which needs attention from the academic community and, in our opinion, deserves to be registered and studied in the national context, creating scientific bases that provide more evidence.

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