

Carles BATLLE. Editor-in-Chief

editorial

English translation, Neil CHARLTON

The 4th International Symposium of the journal *Estudis Escènics*, “Interpreting the Present, Imagining the Future. Catalan Dramatic Literature in Times of Crisis, 2008-2021” (held in collaboration with AELC), reflected on the current state of Catalan playwriting. And it did so above all in light of the shock of the crises that have occurred over recent years: the economic crisis of 2008, the Catalan pro-independence “procés” or the health crisis during the pandemic. All of this has undeniably had an impact on creative capacity and theatrical production modes, and also on the ways of revising dramatic heritage or the emergence of new dramaturgical or theatre forms... What has become of the theatrical drive and creative euphoria of the turn of the century? What has become of the institutional initiatives that supported playwrights? What has been the effect on theatre publishing? Have the themes, models, formalisations or writing and staging references been altered?

While inviting you to review all the activities and talks of the symposium, which you will find in detail in our “Report”, I will briefly introduce the articles that make up the dossier.

In the opening lecture, Raül Garrigasait offers a personal look at the period 2008-2021, focusing on the changes for the publishing sector (in fact, for the entire Catalan literary system). With a degree of optimism, Garrigasait reminds us that liberal capitalism is bankrupt and that societies must inevitably change. Meanwhile, Esteve Miralles’ lecture identifies some trends from the period, describing them through a cross-cutting hermeneutic hypothesis: the centrality of a rhetoric of anxiety, counterbalanced by a rhetoric of anxiety and compassion.

From a more *practical* perspective, Jordi Casanovas explains what playwrights have to do to survive. Crises, he points out, are not opportunities: crises are moments of great difficulty, uncertainty and pain. At times like these, we must ensure professionalization; in other words, a profound knowledge of the mechanisms of the industrial, public and private theatre system. What tools do professional playwrights have to make their job viable?

From another perspective, Victoria Szpunberg reflects on some of the dramaturgical trends or resources of our current theatre, and particularly

emphasises the so-called “dramaturgies of the self”. She cites the Italian writer Carlo Emilio Gadda: “...I, me! ... are the dirtiest of all pronouns! The pronouns! They’re the lice of thought. When a thought has lice, it scratches, like everyone who has lice...” Otherwise, what happens to fiction, the game?

Ramon Rosselló also focuses on a technical issue: the work “in process” in contemporary playwriting. In this respect, he analyses the case of the Valencian theatre company Pont Flotant. Without leaving the Autonomous Community of Valencia, Clàudia Serra reviews the listings of the most important theatres, such as the Teatre Rialto, the Teatre Principal de València, the Teatre Talia, the Teatre Arniches in Alicante and the Teatre Principal in Castellón. So the question is: what language criterion do the Valencian institutions apply and what kind of theatrical repertoire has been provided in Valencia over the years?

When talking about language, Helena Buffery is interested in the “linguistic landscapes of contemporary Catalan theatre”. The concept comes from ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics, and refers to the visibility of the various languages that exist together in a territory and the need to map their relationship. Joan Sellent reminds us that, in terms of translation, fidelity and literalness are not the same thing. The author highlights the importance of translating verse drama in verse.

In another area, Adriana Nicolau explores a set of plays written by women and premiered on Catalan stages over the last few years that address maternity as a theme. The corpus presented is symptomatic of the effects that the progressive inclusion of women in creative roles has had on Catalan theatre. She analyses plays by Gemma Brió, Cristina Genebat, Marta Galán, Mercè Sarrias, Marta Aran, Núria Planes Llull and, in particular, Clàudia Cedó.

Carme Tierz focuses on youth groups (“youth theatre”) during the period studied. Most emerging youth companies tend to collectively write their shows instead of staging pre-existing texts. This is a hybrid, multidisciplinary writing, created through research and creation processes.

Finally, there are two articles by creators: Xavier Puchades tells us about his journey as a Valencian playwright from solitary authorship to collective projects; Carme Planells describes a dramaturgical research project carried out in Mallorca based on testimonies; it covers everything from the exclusion of the “reds” at the end of the Spanish Civil War to the stigmatisation of the Mallorcan “Xuetes” (Jews).

Apart from the annual dossier, as always we publish studies focused on very different topics (some of them presented at the annual symposium of the MUTIS festival). These include the dramaturgical practice of contemporary circus in Chile (Víctor Bobadilla), autofiction in Cuban playwriting (Carlos Gámez), the staging of *The Seagull* by Àlex Rigola (Daniel Olivares) and the application of the Método Schinca® to the education of text-based theatre actors (Alícia Rabadán).

Thank you for your interest.

Hopefully the crises that frame this new issue of *Estudis Escènics* will not lead to any new turbulence. Happy reading for the new year!

