Investigation article

Europe's 21st century performance and its engagement with postmodern culture: difference and event

La *performance* del siglo XXI en Europa y su relación con la cultura posmoderna: acontecimiento y diferencia

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Abstract:
Introduction: This paper, from a poststructuralist approach of event and, besides, of difference (keys transversal to postmodernity and affecting the performative phenomena), intends to set up a theoretical framework out of the "problematic", from the question and the plight, rather than on the basis of the so-called apodictic, out of what is necessarily valid. This model to which we refer, made up of several philosophical concepts from current thought, tries to provide some keys from which to catch the so-called "performance" in the European stage of the 21st century. **Methodology**: An analysis of the performances in their constituent parts is carried out and then the common data are synthesized in order to draw relevant conclusions. **Results and Conclusions:** The philosophical-performative model, compared and analyzed with the performances of representative groups on the European continent, is validated. **Discussion:** While interpreting the results and bringing them into contact with our transdisciplinary theoretical-factual corpus (the fruit of philosophical-dramatic research, of conversations and experiences in the field of dramaturgy and also of the stage), we observe not only that the variables are validated and meet the criteria of performativity, but also that it is not possible to understand this phenomenon apart from its postmodern grassroots.

Keywords: event and performance; difference and performance; post-structuralism and performance; contemporary European dramaturgy; performance; postmodern dramaturgy and scene; contemporary stage writing; theater and postmodernity.

Resumen:

Introducción: Este artículo, desde un concepto posestructuralista de acontecimiento y, además, de diferencia (claves transversales a la posmodernidad y que afectan al fenómeno de la *performance*), pretende crear un marco teórico desde lo "problemático", desde el apuro y la pregunta, en vez de hacerlo desde lo apodíctico, desde lo necesariamente válido. Este modelo a que nos referimos, integrado por varias nociones filosóficas del pensamiento actual, trata de proporcionar algunas claves desde las que atrapar lo performativo en la escena europea del siglo XXI. **Metodología:** Se lleva a cabo un análisis de los trabajos escénicos en sus partes constitutivas y, a continuación, se sintetizan los datos comunes en orden a extraer conclusiones relevantes. **Resultados y Conclusiones:** Esta fase valida el modelo filosófico-performativo, en su comparación y análisis con las performances de algunos de los grupos más representativos del continente europeo. **Discusión**: Al interpretar los resultados y ponerlos en contacto con nuestro cuerpo transdisciplinar teórico-fáctico (fruto de la investigación filosófico-dramática y de conversaciones o experiencias en el ámbito de la dramaturgia y de otros signos de la escena), observamos no solo que las variables son validadas y responden a lo performativo; también, que no es posible entender este fenómeno sino desde sus raíces posmodernas.

Palabras clave: acontecimiento y performance; diferencia y performance; posestructuralismo y performance; dramaturgia europea contemporánea; performance; dramaturgia y escena posmoderna; escrituras escénicas contemporáneas; teatro y posmodernidad.

1. Introduction

The context of this research refers to the process of shift and re-foundation about what theater is, which is attempted to be shown through the analysis of the notion of European performance and its scenic functioning.

From a transdisciplinary analysis, it is not a question here of compiling the literary characteristics about the aforementioned term, performance, and checking to what extent they are found or absent in the "reality", in the pragmatics of the so-called performative. This is not what this paper intends to do. The objective and proposal of this research relates to the possible interfacing between postmodernity and performance, how the roots and precepts (the poetics) of this stage phenomenon are to be understood from the postmodern culture.

The historical element that upholds the whole process of decline in the Western Dramatic Canon, in its connection with the current state of knowledge, is related to the period of epicization that dramaturgy experienced during the first transformative phase in the later part of the nineteenth and the dawn of the twentieth century (Viviescas, 2013). This period came to a climax in a second theatrical reform that would take place from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. The aforementioned process of epicization is intimately intertwined with the emergence of an epic subject or rhapsodic author, who assumed the role of mediator or spokesperson, embodying the author's voice within the narrative (Barbolosi, & Plana 2013). In short, this slow but radical transformation would come to signify the shifting of metaphysical representation into utterance, into a speech act, finding its occurrence within a text endowed with a significant narrative component.

This re-assessment of composition has led to the displacement of certain narratives, previously isolated by the metaphysical approach, towards a center defined by the hybridization of cultural "forms", the fragmentation of the play now thought of in terms of multiplicities, the summoning of montage techniques and the adoption of a choral language crammed with different perspectives. This language to which we refer discloses an event in which assemblages and simultaneities are produced and that have the effect of placing both subjectivities and objects on the margins of the new interests of culture.

Hence, the crisis of Greek and later ontological structures induces discordances and ruptures due to a new vision of life and, consequently, of art, and within an enlightened context, which gives rise to a change in the logic of meaning. As already mentioned, this transformation converts what was previously mere mimesis (the result of Aristotelian apophantics) into discourse, an act of enunciation with claims of reality, of creating reality; it is definitely here where the re-foundation of dramatic art, which was born under a regulation of copying, can be found.

It might be said that the world in which people live unfolds before one's eyes two possible theatrical scenarios to place oneself in, the dramatic and the post-dramatic. The first, the dramatic one, is the same described by Szondi (1987) in his Theory of Modern Drama, which he places at the end of the 19th/early 20th century, giving rise to a crisis of drama (first amendment) and having as consequences the disappearance of the Aristotelian-Hegelian model, the mitigation or suppression of identities and also of mimetic processes, to a certain extent, as an imitation of the world around us (López-Antuñano, 2023; Orosa, & Galarza, en prensa).

This dramatic theater is the basis of a so-called transition that starts to take place at the beginning of the millennium through a synthetic, antimimetic, decidedly artistic vision of theater as an independent art. Such a situation leads through acceleration and, in the 21st century, synesthesia (sensations that affect human senses) to a new dramatic theater (López-Antuñano, 2023). It is apparent, and it is pointed out in case it was not clear enough, that to this process of updating the dramatic theater are added factors coming from the new logics of meaning (the simulacrum [Deleuze, 1990]) and from the processes of deconstruction or, consequently, of intervention (Derrida, 1997).

The second landscape among those mentioned is the post-dramatic one (Lehmann, 2006). This post-dramatic theater differs from naturalistic (which seeks empathy) and epic theater (which gives rise to a critical positioning) in which the former (post-dramatic) is based on "reality" (creates reality), not on fiction (representation of reality), and on various planes of immanence (perspectives) (Deleuze, 1990), so it does not draw absolute conclusions (it is not a model, but a simulacrum, event). Moreover, its organizations do not seek an aesthetic form (Lehmann, 2006), but new logics of meaning based on post-structuralist approaches, in the heterogeneous series.

Post-drama and performance are two concepts that are closely related. The first is embedded in a theatrical context, that of the performing arts, and the second, performance, refers to installations as well as resistance to meaning (to metaphysical meaning), but the underlying philosophy would be shared by both types of expressions.

According to Pavis (2003), it would not be possible nowadays to disentangle the notions of mise en scène and performance, both concepts would be mutually polluted in such a way that reflection on one of them would refer to the other. The same author also speaks of postmodern performance in terms of otherness, of cultural hybridizations and heterogeneous elements, of

a shift from authority to alterity. In this regard, he mentions some basic notions to experiment in performance: topologies (referring to the study of reasoning on a molecular level, disregarding the metaphysical meaning, the metatext), atopias (of impossible taxonomy) and embodiment (experiences placed in the "body" that suffers contradictions and possesses one or other kind of densities, that is to say, greater or lesser presence depending on the moment).

In Fischer-Lichte's book on the aesthetics of performance (2008, pp. 75-76), this author, in a quote from Bormann/Brandstetter (1999, pp. 46-50), emphasizes how the discourse of performance functions as a sign of absence, of the outside, of difference; in other words, that object to which we could refer only from its disappearance. These two authors cited by Fischer-Lichte (2008) state that performance would not be interested in pre-structures or in the purposes/intent of the artwork and the artist prior to the experience, but rather in the manner in which the body endures that presentation, in the memories of the spectators, in the different perspectives and multiplicities that are articulated in the observers.

This absence to which reference is made would be explained by the forwarding of the text towards the outside, outwards, into that difference, those alterities that keep the text in a perpetual flux that leads back to those other absences brought about by metaphysics and that now become part of the center. This ceaseless flux that we have just evoked is elicited or induced in the time aion, which is the mode in which the motion of the event is expressed. It is precisely in this spirit that the disappearance would be made explicit. By mentioning difference as a concept, we allude to another way of thinking distinct from unity and identity; difference would be the opposite to the structure of metaphysics (Deleuze, 1990; Derrida, 1997; Soberano, 2007).

As far as the objective of this research is concerned, it has to do with the formulation and subsequent verification of a theoretical/pragmatic model that would encompass a few of the most important notions of contemporary philosophy (not to emphasize its essences, but to illustrate its functioning). The drawing up of the theoretical model comes from various sources: theatrical experiences, the exchange of information and impressions with professionals in this field, the reading of some books/papers on performance and contemporary philosophy, just to cite some examples.

The validation of this theoretical/pragmatic model is grounded on the analysis and following synthesis of those multiplicities in the field of event/aion time (simultaneity, event motion) co-occurring in the facts of performance nowadays.

Certainly, in the extant relevant literature, such as Pavis (2003), to cite just a few prominent names, Fischer-Lichte (2008), Cornago (1988), Richard Schechner (2002) or the author of the "art form" J. Féral (2017), can be found very prominent contributions in this field of contemporary performances. However, it is not so straightforward to find, to be allowed to say, transcendent research that is tied with the role of performance and its practice, in other words, to its pragmatics, and that wish to pay a certain amount of attention, at the same time, to the mindset and philosophy of the time that inspires contemporary artworks. With all due consideration, it is believed that this could be a major deficiency in some of the field investigations that are currently underway.

This is one of the potential shortcomings, if a critical review were to be made, to the scientific literature of our days related to the area under study: the oblivion or relative absence of connection (and the excessive abstract reasoning outside facticity) between theoretical-philosophical studies and the performative pragmatics, which would be something left to the artists and their imagination. Of course, and as we have already mentioned before, this

hierarchical strategy (the important factor would be theory, and then, the factuality) does not match the culture of our time, and even less so the relative indifference towards the so-called transdisciplinarity, which is another of the important contributions of postmodern culture to current research and education.

For this reason, precisely, we are going to approach this research from this double theoretical and pragmatic perspective, on the one hand, and a transdisciplinary strategy, on the other. In the latter sense, we mean to say that we are going to address this paper from a somewhat postmodern viewpoint (in its cultural sense), which is where we will find many of the internal reasons, that is to say, the whys and wherefores, for the prescriptive descriptions (and its regulations or standards) that *poetics* of all times tend to make. How often it is forgotten that the theatrical performances relate to a way of seeing the world, of conceiving life and existence.

What has been said up to this point, therefore, would justify the need and relevance of this research, which will be developed further on below.

What this research intends to show is the relatedness and correlation of the conceptual model (which we will find in the theoretical framework) with the pragmatics of performance; the validation, therefore, of this model through some relevant European performances of the 21st century. And we have already remarked that from a rhizomatic way of thinking this theoretical-pragmatic strategy, added to a transdisciplinary methodology, are the best remedies to carry out an investigation of performance from a post-modern point of view.

2. Objectives

The objective of the present analysis revolves, in the first place, around the establishment of a scientific model that gathers and encompasses some significant concepts pertaining to the culture of postmodernity viewed from the standpoint of post-structuralism (notably Deleuze [1990] and Derrida [1997]), this being the main objective of the endeavors contained in the present research with regard to contemporary European performance.

The setting up of a theoretical model related to performance in our days is by no means so simple if we include and consider the facticity of stage work in Europe. They do exist, of course, theoretical papers on such issues, as mentioned above, but, and here is the crux of the matter, to witness a performative "presentation" (not a representation) and to be able to carry out a pragmatic analysis without knowing/understanding the culture and thought of postmodernity, it must be understood, is simply impossible.

The conceptual framework and scientific model that has been developed comes from various sources: theatrical experiences, exchange of information and impressions with experts/directors, different essays on contemporary performance, the in-depth study of the most renowned philosophical authors in the post-structuralism arena, to cite just a few examples.

The validation of this theoretical model, the second and most significant objective of this research, is based on the analysis and subsequent synthesis of those elements that are involved in the facticity of the European performance. This work has not been carried out from the causal logical reasoning proper to abstract metaphysics but from the dynamic ontology inherent to postmodern society. Such notions would stem from post-structuralism and from the pragmatic analysis of performance: the aim is to verify that performative artworks prove, or not, the fact that their roots and cultural sources are found in such a theoretical model.

At no time is it a question here of approaching the concepts as if they were essences (what a performance is, what an event is, etc.), but rather of seeing how they work, how they function, in the spectrum of European performance.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Performance background

The contemporary stage tendencies, performance or the post-drama of our days (for both share the same kind of philosophy in different contexts), have absolutely nothing to do with the theatre in ancient Greece. We could rather say that these contemporary expressions are a refusal, they rise as an opposition, as a revolutionary act (assemblage) to overthrow the scenic and, moreover, the philosophy and culture that underlies and highlights Greek tragedy and its re-presentation (that is closely related to the Aristotelian apophantic structure: a copy of reality, art imitates nature).

On the contrary, these current expressions to which we have been pointing out would rather be linked to the forms of theatricality in the Middle Ages, whether religious or profane.

3.1.1. Popular religious Background

The Auto of the three Magi, from the 12th century, contains 147 verses that allow us to travel to the very origin of Spanish theater, its dawn. That the theater as it was conceived in Greece and Rome was not present in the Middle Ages is a fact commonly accepted by all scholars. But what can we learn from this text? (Pérez, 2004)

As is well known, some are the techniques of a dramatic nature (which are used to position the actors on stage and "represent" or "present" something that had happened or is taking place right now) and other different ones are the so-called narrative techniques (suitable to narrate or make someone believe written events in a paper intended to be read); let's state it this way: to show and to tell, terms commonly used by different literary critics. Therefore, it is estimated that the theater in the Spanish language, as evidenced by the office of Epiphany, is more influenced by techniques, arrangements and styles where the narrative component is more powerful than in the tragedy of Greek origin, the latter to give a significant and emblematic example of what are the dramatic arts techniques (Orosa et al., 2019).

This narrative trend that influences and meddles into the dramatic field is not simply a matter on styles related to the stage. Any artistic proposal, and particularly the dramatic-scenic one, has a connection with an underlying culture and philosophy. Denying mimesis, which is the highest expression of re-presentation (rooted in that intimate correlation —of copying— between the world and text), to be allowed to emphasize this again, betting on diegesis and discourse entails, first of all, a refusal to the original nature of art (which is born as a copy, as imitation, mimetic illusion). On the other hand, it does not signify a presumed shift in attitude or technique, it goes much further, it designates a rejection, a complete denial of such a type of Greek metaphysical logic on which Western world was built, and a turning to utterance. This turn may be due either to a desire to search for some sort of verity (for coming to the persuasion that the surrounding world, the city and politics, will not provide it), or to a want of resting on this speech act as a referee and a guide through and around the postmodern city (the post-truth stage).

Other impressions that come to mind from reading the lyrics of The Auto of the three Magi have to do with the absence of an apparent linearity, at least a strong one. There is a certain precious-decorative reenactment in the scene that inspires fruition and enjoyment of the narratives (somehow this would be evocative of the performance installations?). The make-up of the "characters" seems to be somewhat in the author's hands (puppets) and this may well serve purposes other than those for which the concept of identity could be claimed.

The "conversations" (which seem rather narcissistic, self-contemplative and self-referential, internal monologues or, somehow, flows of consciousness that are in line with the montage techniques) do not follow a logical-causative course, besides there is a certain ritual-liturgical gaze in the scene. These are the notes that leap to our eyes in this bird's-eye view of the scene that comes from the religious popularity of the Middle Ages.

The question that seems to be pertinent appears to be the following: don't these medieval traits have a certain nexus with performative theater? It is feasible that they do. The ritual and popular character of these medieval verses somehow brings to mind the performance of our days although the philosophy that enlightens it is different from the one behind the current event. (Orosa et al., 2019)

3.1.2. Popular and secular background of performance in Ecuador's indigenism

In the profane sphere, the festivities of San Pedro in Peguche and Mama Negra (= black mamma) in Latacunga or Chimborazo are a good example of how popular profane celebrations give rise to some of the basic concepts of indigenous performance in Ecuador.

The very fact that these dance-theater processes are born in the heat of the joys and sorrows that spring from the people, of their patriotic or local celebrations, without prior planning of the actions to follow, is a fact that comes to be shared by the indigenous cultures. When speaking of "narration of an action" to be celebrated within the indigenous culture this refers to the existence of a previous narrative, an already existing motif (not an action or dramatization typical of Greek theater), a story in the heat of which the people freely and spontaneously carry out a scenic presentation. That previous motive can be the adoration of the Magi, the homage to certain saints or, why not, a tribute in memory of the Virgin of La Merced for her protection against the eruption of the volcano. Then all the people freely join this event, without a previously planned action, without a program or a script, to celebrate with their songs, dances and demonstrations this giving of gratitude.

Now it will be clearer why the text of a stage performance is not autarchic, why its existence is shared with other scenic signs; moreover, why these diverse stage languages do not have to match or be consistent with each other. It also explains the fragmentation of its discourses or the disdain towards the notion of representation, in short, it also accounts for the diversity of elements in its scenes and the juxtaposition of ideas or the self-referentiality of its displays. The same could be said about the lack of logic or hierarchy in its discourses, the sensory communication of its routine micro-stories, the absence of a direct relationship between text and scene, the illogical conversations or the emotional brainstorming with the perspectives of all participants in the event (Orosa et al., 2020).

3.1.3. Background on installations

The installations refer to an art that has been imbricated, indissolubly intertwined with performance art over the years. It offers peerless chances to investigate the engagement between art form and the viewers. When it comes to this art known as installation, there is a multiplicity of interactions that can take place between the objects and the audience. In the process of encountering different and multiple perspectives, absent narratives are revealed and now move to the center: their seams are unraveled and sewn back together again in the reconstruction of performance, giving rise to a new work inspired by the so-called difference.

Nic Sandiland, the renowned artist who works with installations and performances, remarks on the first mentioned art that those imply a four-dimensional aesthetic form; and adds that an installation would be to sculpture what sculpture is to painting. The spectator would no longer be a mere observer but rather another perspective, someone who participates in a creative process that rejects representation and the split between audience and stage. Such a space would have no limits, it would have no beginning and no end, not only from an artistic point of view but also in terms of schedules (Newe, 1996).

The performance art genres include body art, the *Fluxus* movement or the happening, among others. In any case, it seems that any approach to performance starts from the visual arts and from a conceptual renewal that breaks with the metaphysical notions of the already more than two-thousand-year-old *re-presentative* tradition.

3.2. Functioning of the notions in Table 2.

Hereafter, we will make reference to some of the most relevant performative concepts of contemporary stage and, in accordance with the transdisciplinary process, we will do it, not from the theatrical or literary theory, but from the French post-structuralist philosophy (Deleuze, 1990; Derrida, 1997; Foucault, 2005), which is a very fresh approach to understand several of the most relevant notions of current performance.

The event is displayed as a monism, that is to say, it is one, it is a "unity", but this unity is not expressed in identity, in purposiveness (teleology), in a certain order or in privileges (hierarchies). This latter metaphysical understanding would refer to the unity or composition (of each of its parts) in order to pursue one effect, just one: from the superior and the inferior, the most important or the unimportant, that is to say, from the dualities of Greek ontology, which distribute hierarchies, organization, imitation of reality, in short, of a universal order, as Plato or Aristotle understood the world and life. But there is no end-oriented ordering in the *event*. The unity of the event would manifest itself in motion, and that dynamism would be the *aion*, the simultaneity (and therefore, the absence of hierarchy), that is, an anonymous (no privileges) "being", where everything happens at the same time. As for the ontology of the event, this has its expression or its unfolding in difference, which is an appeal to think not from metaphysical unity but from multiplicity, and, therefore, this kind of reasoning would be introduced from heterogeneity (not from the homogeneous or the identical), what in Bergson we would call intensities (Deleuze, 1990; Soberano, 2007).

Events are made neither in the image of a model, nor as representative copies or resemblances of a more definitive or transcendental reality, but are totally immanent, original and creative productions. Besides, there is no such thing as that getting to break a state that lingers. Rather, it would be the inverse, the state to which we refer would be configured by a series of events that would mark the change of that state, as a dynamic of mutation; the becoming passes through the event, and the latter only signifies a heterogeneous intensity, unique and instantaneous.

To give an example of what we have been saying, according to Cliff Stagoll's commentary in *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Parr, 2010), the following text is reproduced below:

> Take as an example a tree's changing colour in the spring. On Deleuze's account, the event isnot what evidently occurs (the tree becomes green) because this is merely a passing surface effect or expression of an event's actualisation, and thus of a particular confluence of bodies and other events (such as weather patterns, soil conditions, pigmentation effects and the circumstances of the original planting). Therefore, we ought not to say 'the tree became green' or 'the tree is now green' (both of which imply a change in the tree's essence), but rather 'the tree greens'. By using the infinitive form 'to green', we make a dynamic attribution of the predicate, an incorporeality distinct from both "the tree" and "green-ness" which captures nonetheless the dynamism of the event's actualisation". (p. 90)

The notion of difference contends with the hierarchies or privileges assigned to being and with the thought of mimesis, these latter in line with metaphysics and the Aristotelian apophantic structure. As already mentioned above, it implies a path of thinking multiplicities, which for Deleuze are forces (of heterogeneity, heterogeneous series). The event does not carry out a taxonomy of the multiplicities, of the multiples, since the latter would happen without taking hierarchies into account.

These multiplicities, when they refer to subjectivity, are called folds. Subjectivities are pure/raw potency (force in the sense of heterogeneity, heterogeneous as opposed to homogeneous series). It is a matter of letting go of the modeling process; subjectivities are neither determinations nor models, nor are they codifications. It is about doing away with causal logic and betting on difference, getting rid of identity, replacing "I am" by "becoming-me", the process of constructing and constant change. Subjectivity would be expressed as unique instants of difference to which force leads.

The folds, which oppose identity, cannot be determined, they lack any determination; they have the function of thinking the multiplicity of subjectivity in each event. Subjectivity or subjectivities are exogenous and endogenous forces that do not relate to their outside in a causal time. There is no subject in Deleuze, this would be a residual or vestigial notion coming from metaphysics; there would only be a notion of subjectivity, linked to the fold, to the multiplicity of subjectivity. Moreover, in Foucault, yet another perspective, this subjectivity would be a mere historical concept, nothing more and, of course, the subject would be definitively dead.

Everything that is now being discussed therefore affects, consequently, all the elements and concepts of performance and, in particular, the notions of "character", "actor", and so on.

The idea of difference in Deleuze's thought would not refer to such a concept in its comparison with sameness, that would be heading for a metaphysical conception of difference. Difference in Deleuze is a difference-in-itself. This French philosopher understands that the world, reality, clearly exhibits the difference and that there is no reason to think, from his perspective, that there could be something hidden behind difference, such as, for example, that alleged unity of which metaphysics speaks.

Deleuze thinks of individuality, the singularity of each instant, of each thing, of each situation or event, and considers that difference is internal. Even in the case that such individualities might share similarities with respect to certain attributes, he seeks to privilege the individual differences that might occur among such particularities (this would not fail to be, in the framework of this analysis, an incoherence or contradiction in this specific philosophy since such a privilege would create a hierarchy that would benefit difference over unity).

Individualities in Deleuze account for the primal or primordial fact in the sphere of philosophy and he thinks that the genealogy of an individual rests, not in the platitudes he shares with other individuals, but in the processes of singularization that are manifested in difference.

The French philosopher addresses the meaning of difference in an experiential, empirical way, not in an abstract sense; and this in order to trigger a break with the traditional Western culture, which for him carries connotations or causes effects (although this last expression is not quite in line with Deleuzian thought), shall we say, undesirable (Parr, 2010; Deleuze, 1990; Soberano, 2007; Foucault, 2005).

The concepts of rhizome and body without organs, like all Deleuze's notions, are closely connected to that of difference. The rhizomatic operates through interrelated powers and strengths that are able to shape themselves by means of dissimilar methods and frameworks of knowledge; it is an outward-looking system of reflection. Rhizomatic alignments can be used to surmount binary structures or systems of analysis and judgement. Any part within a rhizome may be connected to another one by creating an out-of-center medium, with no distinguishable end or entry spot. Deleuze, & Guattari (1977) explain that the body without organs is a flux that comprises a permanent becoming, nevertheless it cannot completely fracture with the system it wishes to exit. This concept of *BwO* not only implies a deterritorialization (of a concept, notion, etc.), but also a suppression of hierarchy (Deleuze, 1990; Deleuze, & Guattari, 1977, 1987; Message, 2010).

As far as molar and molecular are concerned, it is understood that at the molecular level there is no possibility of a system; on the other hand, at the molar plane, yes, there is a system. One could not determine the molecular with the molar because all the chaotic forces of the molecular would be passed through a single filter, which is the systematization of the molar. This is absolutely out of the question (Soberano, 2007).

It should be said that, as far as the simulacrum is concerned, it lies outside the discourse of identity, it would be precisely the difference. The simulacrum would be a pseudo according to the Platonic categories of truth. It is not a bad or false copy of something, this would seem to be a medieval reading of Platonic thought but would rather be related to "something that is not completely", it has more to do with heterogeneity than with truth or identity (Soberano, 2007).

The heterogeneous, the heterogeneity, does not turn out to be a critique of truth, but the introduction of a new logic that would have to do with the non-linear, the non-causal, a new event of heterogeneous character.

The fragmentation of discourses *(the micro-discourse)* has to do with specific practices, they do not seek or consider that truth exists; on the contrary, they oppose meta-narratives, which are the source of cohesion of all discourses, metaphysics (Soberano, 2007; Deleuze, & Guattari, 1977, 1987; Deleuze, 1994; Artaud, 1986; Nietzsche, 2005; Foucault, 2005).

As for the concept of experimentation, it is related to that of assemblage, it is a singularity. The assemblages are specific, singular acts, a force, a revolution: "it happens and it is given", but it does not depend on the "subject". It is a multiplicity, there are multiple voices that say or utter the assemblage. On the contrary, only one and unique voice is for the being, the becoming itself, which would be the event. The assemblages are specific acts, ruled by singularities, by multiplicities, by encounters, novelties, in short, by difference (Soberano, 2007).

Deconstructing, deconstruction, is a "rewriting" through the effective choice of a deconstructive strategy. It is a displacement (arche-writing) from presence, from what is present in a sign, in the text itself, to its absence, to that which is absent on the outside, in the margin, and from there through difference.

Destinerrancy would be a contradiction between the pursuit of destiny and the uselessness of any other micro-story that departs from that main logic, from the fulfillment of destiny. If at any point in time it were possible to take another direction, it would be useless, because that direction does not lead to destiny. What is useless for destiny (a destiny that is sameness, identity) is what destiny cannot think (errancy, which would be the difference). For the logic of destiny, which is the main logic, what is useless is difference; but from the logic of errancy, the prevalence of difference becomes possible (is intended to say: the prevalence of difference over metaphysical logic would be possible if one places oneself in this secondary logic distinct from fate) (Derrida, 1978, 1997).

3.3. *Panel of European well-known performances of the 21st century*

This research, and consequently Table 1. below, focuses on European performances (not on American ones, to cite an example, and its accompanying montage techniques), which are aimed rather towards the event and the rhythms or poetic sonorities of its elements. It comes to divide, on the one hand, the enunciation, the utterance, the discourse (molar and molecular level), and, on the other hand, the content or the meaning that it might entail. If the text, at some point, were to unfold at the molar layer, the meanings it carries would be dynamic, ever-changing and dependent on the context in which they appear (Féral, 2017).

Table 1.

Relevant performances of the European scenarios in the 21st century

	Authors	Plays
1	Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux	*One Monday Evening on a Revolving stage. Quelque chose!*
2	Blast Theory	*Desert Rain*
3	Bobby Baker (Daily Life Ltd.)	*Drawing on a Mother's Experience. Kitchen Show*
4	Forced Entertainment	*Signal to noise. The coming storm. Out of order.*
5	Franko B	*I Miss You*
6	French & Mottershead	*Grey Granular Fist. Homebody*
7	Haug/Kaegi/Wetzel (Rimini Protokoll)	*100% Sao Paulo*
8	Jerome Bel	*The Pichet Klunchun and myself*
9	Julien Blaine	*Hommage à Sarenco. Chute/Chut!*
10	Los Bárbaros	*Obra imposible*
11	Richard DeDomenici	*In bed with the Rev*
12	Sleepwalk collective	*Swimming Pools. Bautismo*
13	Societat Doctor Alonso	*Retratos o si yo fuera*
14	Stan's Café	*River Tours. All Our Money. Of All The People In All The World*
15	Stéphanie Béghain & Nicolas Fenouillat	9 Lyriques
16	Teatro Sotterraneo	*All my presidents. Leǵionāri*
17	Teatro Xtremo	*Indagación filosófica sobre el origen de nuestras ideas acerca de lo sublime y de lo bello*
18	Yves Klein (1961)	*Personas echándose a volar.* Author of very high prestige, 20th century

Source: Own elaboration (2024) based on the works of Bonillo (2009) and Féral (2017).

4. Materials and methods

4.1. Methodology and justification

The object of analysis of this research, with a qualitative approach, involves the establishment of a model (consisting of philosophical notions coming from post-structuralism) capable of apprehending, firstly, the experience and the phenomena of performance in Europe and, secondly, the translation of this experience (of this abduction, so to speak) into some representative performances that have been selected in Table 1 above.

This is followed, if appropriate, by the analysis and subsequent validation of the theoretical paradigm. Can the philosophical model proposed here be validated by examining the

performances that are the focus of this research? These inquiries smooth the way for an exploration, a subsequent description (gathering of information to demonstrate the relationships between the model and pragmatics and to describe the facticity of the phenomenon as it is), the necessary explanation (with reference to this fresh knowledge and new findings) and the subsequent comprehensive validation (evaluation and assessment of the systematics of this research to determine its quality and validity) around the intricate cultural dynamics underlying the performance of our days mainly in the European context.

In the collection of data and its procedures, not only formal means such as documentation, books, publications and papers have been used, but also informal ones such as conversations with experts, experiences of professionals, the customs and mindset of the post-modern stage, among others. Structured observation is also part of these procedures, following the specific method that arises from each of the patterns of the designed model and its confrontation with the factuality of the selected performances.

The criteria for selection of performances are based on their artistic representativeness with respect to the production of these "outputs" in cultural European spectrum. Employing the analytical-synthetic method, the research meticulously breaks down the texts/scenes that make up the selected performances into their constituent parts. Subsequently, the common elements are synthesized in order to draw relevant conclusions.

This scholarly endeavor seeks to address fundamental research questions. Specifically, it attempts to discern the functioning of performance (but not its essence) through the selection evidenced in Table 1. of the theoretical framework. To this goal, it starts from a conceptual model made up of notions taken from postmodern culture, these expressed in post-structuralist keys.

According to the justification criteria of a research project, this article is socially relevant because it analyzes a field that is determinant for cultural industries. In addition, it has theoretical value, since it works with paradigms from the Social Sciences and fits them into the conception of performance. Finally, it is methodologically useful because it provides a new instrument for data collection, in this case, for the analysis of the performance phenomenon.

The main objective within this methodological context is to make up a panel for the analysis of plays from the point of view of performance. We also make use of a transdisciplinary strategy by introducing concepts coming from postmodern culture and poststructuralist philosophy. The secondary objective is to validate the informal/formal model through the pragmatism/factuality of the selected plays in Table 1 (theoretical framework).

4.2. Content analysis and observation sheet

Table 2.

Selection of post-structuralist concepts of European performance in the 21st century

	Feature/Concept/ Scenic signs	Explanation
1	**Event**	The event performs as an anonymous (does not grant privileges or hierarchies) non-homogeneous unit that is explained through multiplicities (heterogeneous strengths, no closed organism) and aion time (movement and dynamics of the event).
2	**Difference**	Difference is the opposite of unity, of hierarchy, of identity, which would be the structure. It involves a way of thinking multiplicities.
3	**Body without organs**	It supposes thinking of the body as a disorganization. Unformed, unorganized, unstratified, destratified organism or term (Parr, 2010).
4	**Simulacrum**	It has to do with heterogeneity, it works as something that *is* not in a complete manner. Projecting this simulacrum into the future implies a fabulation. Simulacrum is outside the structure of the identity, it would be the difference.
5	**Suppression of meaning. New logics of meaning**	Replacement of metaphysical causal logic by new logics of meaning.
6	**Rhizome (Yuxtaposition)**	Any part within a rhizome may be connected to another part, forming an off-center medium, with no discernible end or entry point (Parr, 2010).
7	**Assemblages**	Highlights singularities in which encounters and novelties take place.
8	**Collective creation. Spectator participation**	The outcome is shaped by subjectivity and there is no single, definitive interpretation.
9	**Actors. Characters. Subjectivities.**	The actor happens, becomes in relation to the event and its elements. The character is not an incarnation, it is an absence, a difference, a fold (that is, a multiplicity of subjectivities).
10	**New ways of conversing. Molar and molecular levels**	Conversations unfold at a molar and molecular level. New logics of meaning. Existence/absence of system.
11	**Conflict**	The ongoing controversy arises from the clash of diverse perspectives, replacing the traditional dramatic conflict. At the center of the knowledge, lies the body on stage, a body that feels nostalgia, feels sickness, feels joy and pain... most of all, pain (Cornago, 1988, p. 254).
12	**Experimentation**	Acts of heterogeneous strengths where a body is involved. It

		works as a creative process, as an assemblage.
13	**Self-referentiality**	It is understood as a return to the elements of the so-called event, which would be the generation of the real.
14	**Heterogeneity**	Heterogeneity has to do with a new way of thinking that refers to multiplicities, with the introduction of a new logic that does not consider the dominance of cause over effect.
15	**Deconstruction**	Textual strategy that implies a displacement of the goal-oriented metaphysical discourse towards difference.
16	**Destinerrancy**	Suppression of the logic of fate in order not to leave out difference.
17	**Folds**	The multiplicity of subjectivity.
18	**Nonsense or sense of the contrary.**	The conventional notion of the "sense of drama" is challenged due to the absence of linear dramatic development. New logics of meaning and denial of the principle of non-contradiction as well.
19	**Body and flesh**	The body would be the physical part and the flesh, the singularity.
20	**Deterritorialization. Rewriting**	It entails a nomadism of thought. In this case we also mention the rewriting process.
21	**Fragmentation. Microdiscourses**	They arise from specific practices, they do not seek any truth. Found in difference, in the margin, they are opposed to meta-narratives.

Source: Own elaboration (2024), based on Soberano (2007); Deleuze (1990); Derrida (1997) and Foucault (2005).

The technique used will be content analysis by applying the model in Table 2. in relation to the model of performances selected in Table 1. Table 2. refers to the philosophical concepts that try to apprehend the functioning of performance; Table 1. refers to certain recognized performances of the 21st century in Europe and Spain (this is the sample under study). The setting up of the panels was done through conversations with peers in the period 2022-24 within the School of Theater of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (among others) and, in addition, through the use made of the appropriate documents, including audiovisuals, mentioned throughout this paper (materials used). This research intends precisely to validate the philosophical theoretical model of Table 2 by analyzing the factuality of the performances included in Table 1. That is to say, the objective is to see how and whether the theoretical model developed to approach performance is confirmed by the analysis and subsequent synthesis of the performative plays so representative, and therefore selected, of this phenomenon.

The theoretical panel of performative analysis captures some variables coming from the philosophical field tied to postmodern culture (it is an open model), namely: self-referentiality, event, micro-discourses (fragmentation) — to the detriment of meta-narratives—, difference, repetition, assemblages, aion time, and others that can be observed above in the respective Table 2.

As for the inclusion criteria, as we have already mentioned, they refer to the canonicity or performative relevance of the plays that have been selected, standards defined not only

through conversations, professional experiences or other informal means, but also through the scientific studies to which we have been referring in this research.

To conclude this section, we have already mentioned that a descriptive data analysis method is used (to know the sample as it is) by dissecting and then synthesizing these data to compare them with the theoretical framework developed in Table 2 and, eventually, determine their validity.

5. Research results

In accordance with that mentioned above in the methodological chapter 4., analyses and comparisons are made among the performances listed in Table 1 in order to observe the existence of features belonging to the theoretical framework (Table 2); that is, the presence of variables of the model (Table 2) is observed in a structured manner within the performances selected as a sample and object of analysis (Table 1).

The performative variables listed in Table 2 are undoubtedly related to the performances selected in Table 1 and this relationship is significantly recurrent: new logics of meaning (rupture of linear times), choices of aion time or simultaneities within the event, constant reference to the "outside" of difference, becoming and heterogeneous series in the space of the body without organs, simulacra, rhizomatic thinking (off-center medium), assemblages (with their singularities, encounters and novelties), multi-perspectivism that becomes evident in the collective creation of performance, subjectivities that affect the actor/"character", deconstruction and destinerrancy, fragmentation of the construction due to micro-discourses, display of subjectivities and their folds, conversations in a new logic of meaning and attending to the molar and molecular level (with the consequent division between discourse and content), displacement of the object/subject and a letting the elements of the event show themselves in their becoming (atmospheres), multiplicities of the event, of assemblages and subjectivities instead of the unity and identity characteristic of metaphysics, daily routines due to singularities and the event, the repetition of difference, absence of meta-narratives. All the elements of the theoretical model are systematically found in the sample selected in Table 1. and which matches with European performances and authors of recognized prestige.

Self-referentiality (which has less to do with the director's private life than with repetitions of the event), the different perspectives of the participants of performance through the generation of *reality*, and the death of traditional conflict (which is replaced by the clash and confrontation of perspectives) are variables that are constantly encountered in the analysis of the plays in Table 1. Reference is made in this case to the performance *One Monday Evening on a revolving Stage*, by Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux, where the meaning of the words is lost because they become a mere enumeration. In this work, self-referentiality clearly points to this division of planes between the discourse (and its molar/molecular level) and, moreover, its content or message.

Furthermore, this same play is related to heterogeneity (which would refer to the rupture of cause-effect logic), to experimentation (i.e., those heterogeneous forces where a body is involved) and to deconstruction, as is implied in this analysis, which points to the absences/differences of discourse through repetition (in this case, of the same words).

We could also include in this same section performances such as *Signal to Noise*, *The coming storm*, *Out of order*, by Forced Entertainment or *Desert Rain*, by Blast Theory, which also make use of the new logics of meaning, deconstruction, assemblage and destinerrancy, among others.

The performance *Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas about the sublime and the beautiful (Indagación filosófica sobre el origen de nuestras ideas sobre lo sublime y lo bello)*, by Teatro Xtremo, offers many of the variables in Table.2, perhaps among them we could highlight the use of micro-discourses, the reference to the margin and nomadic thinking (deterritorialization). In the same way, the play *Hommage à Sarenco. Chute/Chut!*, by Julien Blaine, would be a response to the idea of nomadic thought and micro-discourse.

Swimming Pools and Bautismo, by Sleepwalk collective, encourages the ambiguity of the stage and subjectivities (multiplicities, folds, self-referentiality, molecular level, suppression of meanings, new logics of meaning), even renouncing the nominative value of names (although many other variables are also part of the ensemble that "organizes" the performance).

The ontology of the representation and the canonical dramatic framework that arises from those Greek philosophical roots come to be replaced by other styles of suppression of meaning (new logics) and by repetition and difference, fragmentation, experimentation and rhizome, as we also observe in the performances that make up the sample. *River Tours, All Our Money, Of All The People In All The World* by Stan's Café, *100% Sao Paulo* by Rimini Protokoll, *Grey Granular Fist and Homebody* by French and Mottershead, as well as *In bed with the Rev* by Richard DeDomenici are relevant examples of deterritorialization, thought nomadism and assemblage.

The former characters of incarnation are replaced in all cases by subjectivities and these are displaced to the margins; conversations sometimes take place on a molecular plane open to the real and the creation of reality (this is the case of *Portraits or if I were —Retratos o si yo fuera—* by Societat Doctor Alonso or *9 Lyriques* by Stéphanie Béghain and Nicolas Fenouillat).

The initial premise was verified by employing the model along with its pertinent variables in all the performances of the sample (Table 1). Through this process, the subsequent results and the findings validate the model of performative scenic contemporaneity. They also prove how these performances examined and included in the sample validate and confirm the powerful and central use of event and difference, as a structure of thinking, in the performative realm.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

As for the analysis of the results discussed in the previous section, it can be noted how the variables included in the theoretical model correlate with the factuality of the selected plays.

Indeed, this last finding (i.e., the referred correlation between poststructuralist philosophical theory and the pragmaticity of performances) has to do with the correct formulation of a theoretical model, in other words, a handful of philosophical-cultural keys to understand the reality of what is called performance. Not only researchers in general and scholars, but also professionals in this sector need a model, some networks to help them grasp this reality that is part of their art, of their work; to be able to clearly discern all its cultural and artistic implications.

What is happening with performance, with post-drama, refers to a refoundation of theater, of dramatic art, because art, drama, saw its birth as a copy, as an imitation (according to the structure of Greek ontology in the hands of Plato and Aristotle); that same theater is undergoing a transformation now into a "reality" that would exclude similarity, identity, that is no longer a mimetic illusion. Precisely with the emergence of postmodernity and its characteristic mentality (whose keys are addressed by the philosophy of poststructuralism) not only a new worldview, a philosophy, but also a reformulation of drama, art, politics, ethics, shows us the need and importance of knowing and possessing a theoretical framework such as this that addresses the new dramatic phenomena; and this not only from the literary theory, from the theatrical theory, but from that same mentality and philosophy that are engendering a new world, if we may say, a philosophy and a theory of drama that challenges the entire European tradition, the metaphysical principles that founded it.

It is understood that this is an analysis, perhaps like so many others related to contemporary theater, that works from a transdisciplinary perspective: dramatic theory and philosophy, shall we say, "contemporary", on the one hand, and performative practice, on the other. This approach in which we have been engaged, as it is conceived, undoubtedly opens new doors to more novel, more holistic, more integral approaches, to deeper answers on the subject.

It is considered that the most significant finding deals with the approach to a desired model of theoretical keys that attempts to address the re-foundation of theater. This fact shows a singular advance, the transdisciplinary methodology, which leads the pragmatics and the facticity of theater to where it should be taken, towards a mentality/philosophy that roots all explanations in a deeper and more detailed vision, more cultural than the one existing so far, which was the result only of the theatrical theory. It is precisely this point that shows a hopeful horizon for new research on this subject.

Finally, the utility and usefulness of the tables developed to draw relevant conclusions is validated, although their usage for a complete validation is left open to future researchers.

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