
The “Process” Category in the Analysis of Current Catalan Dramatic Literature

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Abstract

Given the diversification of the forms of creation in today's theatre — which go beyond solitary individual writing —, this article focuses on the interest in looking at the “process” category with the objective of exploring the characterisation of the most recent playwriting in depth. This exploration first addresses methodological questions with the aim of approaching the different objects and elements that can be considered when analysing the processes. Secondly, based on the data collected from diverse creators, we suggest a delimitation of diverse process models. Finally, the article examines the collective creation process of the Valencia-based company Pont Flotant, one of the most renowned in the 21st century.

Keywords: creation process, Catalan playwriting, current Catalan theatre, collective creation, Pont Flotant

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Introduction

We should first point out that in the study of current Catalan drama it has not been common to include detailed analysis of the creation processes, especially if we think in terms of dramatic literature (or writing).¹ Probably, and we say this without much conviction, because for quite a long time there has been a prevailing process that perhaps made it unnecessary to examine this element. Thus, we took for granted that a playwright, individually and solitarily, wrote a text — García Barrientos (2015) speaks of cabinet playwright —, which was later performed or staged by a company or an institution, under the direction of someone other than the playwright. And it was perhaps published later, simultaneously or after being staged. Perhaps it was published and never reached the stage or was performed but not published.

That said, given the increasing diversity in terms of the processes in recent decades, we could argue that the study of these processes, including the script — both separately or within the stage and/or book sector —, should be included in what should be considered for the characterisation of today’s theatre. However, it is worth pointing out that we lack a well-established methodology in the external analysis of the different processes — self-analysis or the creators’ own account of them would be different. Thus, we should also look at which methodologies (and terminology) would be the most appropriate to correctly study and describe the processes, which — and we are thinking now about living playwrights — would lead us to research techniques that are mainly characteristic of the social sciences, such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews or direct observation.

With the aim of exploring the “process” category, which for us goes beyond a specific writing method, technique or procedure, we can note that we have also experienced our process based on bibliographical reading, theatre publications and, above all, on questionnaires and interviews

1. Nevertheless, among the reviewed bibliography on 21st-century dramatic literature, some pieces of research have indeed paid attention to the specific creation processes or contexts, as we see in Massip (2009) or Riera (2011).

with Valencian playwrights, who I would like to thank for their involvement: Guadalupe Sáez, Xavier Puchades, Begoña Tena, Núria Vizcarro, Juli Disla, Pasqual Alapont, Rodolf Sirera, Pont Flotant and Anna Albaladejo.² For two months, we have compiled and read materials, most of which have not found space in the final draft of this article but which have been quite useful to lay the foundations of this path in search of analysis of the processes, although it is still a path of more questions than answers. Thus, we still wonder whether we can really know the process of each creator or we will inexorably remain in the field of what is inapprehensible, mysterious, as a part of the personal background of the artist. In any case, we can always see this journey as a point of meeting and dialogue between the playwrights and an external observer.

In Search of the Process: The Importance of Paratexts

This approach to the processes also seeks to highlight the interest in the fact that playwrights write and reflect on this concept and on their own processes. In this respect, we should recall how since 2003 the Valencian journal *Acotaciones en la caja negra* (later *Red Escénica*) has had a section in which the creators have spoken about the creative processes. We also consider it relevant that the editorial paratexts (forewords, introductions, notes, epilogues...) or stage paratexts (programmes, dossiers...) explicitly deal with these issues, as it can be a good starting point to gain an insight into them. Probably because, along with what we have mentioned, we agree with Josep Maria Miró (2020: 13) when he says that "I have always found it fascinating and deeply stimulating to see, know or be able to understand the creative mechanisms, procedures and methodology of an artist. I remember that the beloved and late *Papitu*, as we friends of the master called him, Josep Maria Benet i Jornet, despite all his seniority, was interested in the procedures of others and on more than one occasion I had heard him ask: 'Hey, how do you do it? How do you write?'"

As an example of what we are saying about editorial paratexts focusing on the concept of process, we will mention some of them.³ Thus, in the recent release of volume 2 of *Teatre complet* (2020) by Manuel Molins, the section on short plays includes many playwright's notes at the end of each piece with information about some of the processes during which they emerged. Also the volume *Teatre reunit (2007-2017)* by Lluïsa Cunillé, from 2017, contains some paratexts on productions written by more than one playwright which included some of her short pieces, such as *Geografia*, within *Fronteres* (2017: 276), or *Sud* (2016), within *Pares nostres* (2017: 350).⁴ If we look at *Teatre reunit (2004-2020)* by Pau Miró and go to the paratext "fitxa d'estrena"

2. This research process has also been useful to test the design of questionnaires and interviews with the playwrights.

3. We would like to stress that we will offer some examples of recent paratexts related to the concept of creation process. Undoubtedly, it would be possible to undertake an analysis — quite interesting — of these different cases, both individually and with respect to the options of the publishing houses or the collections in which the plays were published.

4. In some cases, these paratexts form part of editorial decisions or by the people in charge of a collection, as we can see in "Textos a part-Teatre reunit", by Arola and the TNC.

[premiere details], we find that this kind of information concerns texts such as *Bales i ombres*: "A commission by the Teatre Lliure within the text-based playwriting project carried out thanks to the award for staging projects by the Institut del Teatre of the Diputació de Barcelona" (2021: 50). In the cases of *Singapur*, *Búfals* and *Lleons* we see: "A text written within the T6 Project of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya" (2021: 114, 158 and 190). As for *Victòria*, we see: "A commission by the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya" (2021: 332).⁵ However, it includes another paratext, an appendix with texts from the dossier that the journal *Pausa* devoted to Miró in 2013. These texts include his interview with Marc Artigau – an epitext that has become a peritext – where we find some questions that lead to a more detailed discussion about issues related to the processes (Pau Miró, 2021: 506-507):

M. A. [...]. Sometimes you have explained that when you begin [a play] you don't know where it will take you... For instance, you had many versions of *Els jugadors* before starting rehearsals...

P. M. First of all, you build a universe, some rules of the game; once you have founded it, you begin playing, you begin listening to what the characters want rather than what the playwright wants to say. You must find the spirit of each character, "the idiolect", as Xavier Albertí says. This allows you to avoid commonplaces. If I know where I want to end up, I'll reach a commonplace, that's why it is not worth writing. I like discovering while I write [...].

M. A. Do you work on the script through the actor? At the start of rehearsals for *Els jugadors* you came with the entire piece written but based on the actors' spirit you wrote the robbery scene two or three times...

P. M. I write at home, and never thorough improvisations with the actors. After, yes, I am open to all that the acting work provides. When you work on a scene with the actors you see three times clearer than when you are alone in front of the computer screen. The actors, however, don't contribute to the plot. It is different to write knowing who you are writing for; it's a possibility that I like more and more. To some extent, you create a made-to-measure suit for them [...].

Another interesting paratext is the one that complements the published script of *La travessia*, by Josep M. Miró (2016), a text by the playwright written in the guise of an afterword. In this text, "Vint anys, de Tuzla a Idomeñi", Miró (2016: 181-184) provides information about the origins of the play, linking it to his life, and the relation of this piece with a later piece:

There are plays that, consciously or unconsciously, you realise you have been writing for years.

In 1996, when I was about to finish the first year at the faculty of journalism, I called my parents from a phone box: "This summer I'm going to Bosnia with an NGO" [...]. That summer I went to Tuzla and I repeated the experience at the same time the following year.

5. We note how the three examples mentioned about Pau Miró's plays focus on the idea of plays that emerged in an institutional context, as commissions or part of specific projects. In the next section we will speak about this factor as one of the elements of study of the processes, based on the label "engine" or "trigger".

Lots of things have happened in these twenty years [...].

This very afternoon, before beginning to write these lines, I had a coffee with the theatre director Xicu Masó. The Teatre Lliure in Barcelona opens its 2016-17 season with *De Damasc a Idomeni*, a socially-spirited show whose box office takings will be entirely allocated to the refugees, with the participation of many theatre people. Around twenty playwrights have written five-minute monologues [...]. Xicu will direct the monologue I have written and called *Rai*, where I have borrowed the character of the photographer that opens and closes *La travessia*.

In *Ombres de memòria*, by Toni Cabré, a play published in 2021, we also find an “afterword by the playwright” providing biographical information and details about the writing process, while expanding the note that accompanies the initial stage directions: “This is a fictional play but it has been written based on real accounts and events” (Cabré, 2021: 6). In the afterword (2021: 76-78) he writes:

[...] based on the original memories of the Ebre front and the rearguard, I have created some characters and have arranged the script so that the play speaks about what interests me [...]. That’s why I apologise to the owners of the memories I have used, beginning with my father, Carles Cabré Junqueras, and my uncle Paquito, Francesc Riera Ambrós. They died years ago and told me about many of the experiences that I have included in *Ombres de memòria*. I have also used documents and references I’ve found in books, booklets and works on that period and of course comments by many other people who I thank for their sincerity.

A final example would be the volume *Teatre trans i altres textos no normatius*, by Marc Rosich, which, along with a foreword and an epilogue, features diverse playwright’s notes. The piece *De tritons i sirenes* includes one in which we are told that the text “was a commission by the Cia. Roberto G. Alonso so that it formed part of the dance-theatre show *La fragilitat dels verbs transitius*, premiered in July 2016 [...]. In the piece, there were excerpts from *De tritons i sirenes* along with other texts written by Carlos Be and Helena Tornero [...]. The script published in this volume includes all the materials that I passed on to the company, of which only a small percentage finally formed part of the definitive show [...]” (Rosich, 2020: 113).

In this respect, the editorial paratexts – since we are mainly speaking of dramatic literature – can introduce us as readers to the process category, a process focused on questions strictly related to writing or that can also be linked to the staging. As we have seen in one of the examples mentioned, these processes have usually formed part of the interviews with the playwrights rather than studies on drama. Thus, we could say that, along with the final outcome or published product, here and there we can find, depending on the cases, remains of the process behind the plays or, at least, as usually happens, the dates when a piece was written and where.

Towards a Delimitation of the Elements Involved in the Process

To begin, we can say that "process" places us in front of another word: outcome or final point, point of arrival. In this respect, we could say that we have usually studied the product of a process, which, if we speak in terms of dramatic literature, has the shape of a text-book — or only of an unpublished text which can "have formed part" (or not) of a theatre production. With the aim of exploring this category, we will overlook for now the reception processes to focus only on those of creation-transmission.

Among the bibliography consulted, Sainza Fraga (2013: 16) pointed out the following about the label "process". "For years this word has wandered a little like a sleepwalker in our discourses so that, when naming it, it seems that we all know why we do so and to what we are referring, and yet, when trying to analyse, argue and contextualise it, an always empty and somewhat silent space emerges, because apparently it is not an excessively problematic word, but a gentle word that is useful for almost everything."

These remarks help alert us to the fact of dealing with an excessively broad or diffuse category and therefore we will attempt to define it by establishing a series of elements that we relate to it, which will enable us to characterise it. The process, as we understand it, leaving aside the empirical reception, has or may have direct connections, depending on the type of process, with other aspects or agents of the cultural ecosystem: the production mechanisms or systems, public and private cultural management (what is produced, the formats, approaches and processes used...), the work conditions, the literary and publishing sector, the equality policies (how the components of the process can affect the product) or education. As we approach it, we see the benefit of interrelating issues of an artistic nature with elements that link us to production and cultural management.

Thus, and as a direct outcome of our research, we propose linking the process to six elements, which can be the focus in order to reach a detailed analysis:

- a) The engine or trigger of the process. It can be strictly linked to a writer's motivation (the pleasure of writing or need to do so) or a commission, a process of one's own production, a call, a laboratory or workshop, and so on, which places us in a given framework of action. The processes can thus start from an individual or personal initiative, but can also be unleashed by an external engine, at the initiative of the public or private sector. In a playwright's note in *Plagi* (2019), Rodolf Sirera referred to this element with these words: "Sometimes, plays emerge out of the blue. They are not always the result of inspiration. Or of the need to write. Or to tell stories. In fact, many of the plays I have written during my already long career as a playwright have been the result of commissions" (Sirera, 2019: 105). And he went on to explain the long process that gave way to the definitive play, premiered in 2018, based on two different triggers (2019: 105-106):

Four or five years ago I was invited to participate in one of those, now very popular, playwriting tournaments. I really didn't want to participate, but as always happens to me, I said yes [...]. It was a relatively short play, because these were the rules of the game [...]. Some years later, a group of serious people and fine professionals asked me to revive the play, to work on it again. And, when I started, I realised that that material which, in its time, I found it so hard to invent, was not much easier to enrich, to improve its structure and develop in more depth the conflict and characters. Thus, that *Plagi* of five years ago became a new *Plagi*.

In these cases, it is interesting to consider the playwright's “position” with respect to the creation/production process such as own company or commission for a company or institution, the types and lines of production — public/private, commercial/alternative —, the formats — big, medium-sized, small —, and the circuit or audience at which it is aimed.... This leads us to think of the role of the companies and the institutions in the development of Catalan and Valencian dramatic literature, with programmes of subsidies for playwriting, laboratories, workshops, residencies, awards, publishing (institutional or private), and so on. In the end, to think about cultural policies and actions derived from them.

- b) The temporality or length. Temporality entails a starting point, related to the previous element, and an end point, which can result in different objects: a script, a book, a show. And it also entails a more or less long length. This temporality can be notably extended, for instance, with scripts that contain different versions, more or less distanced in time, even in relatively different contexts. Thus, in some cases, we witness a “macroprocess” which gives way to different versions/editions of the same play-fiction, which has enabled a series of comparative studies. In the Catalan case, we have notable examples such as those of Oliver, Espriu and Villalonga. A recent example of versions related to the staging processes can be found in *Still life (Monroe-Lamarr)*, by Carles Batlle, a play published separately in 2018 and also in the volume *Teatre reunit (1995-2019)*. In the second case, we read: “The text of this play has been published during the rehearsal period at the TNC. Thus, it has been possible to include modifications that are not in the version of the independent volume of the play” (Batlle, 2020b: 422). In this element, it is important to look at the time given to the different phases of the process, which can be closely linked to an appropriate or precarious funding of the projects or to schedules imposed by the triggers.
- c) The phases. We see processes that give way to delimiting different phases, which can have a lineal or chronological development or, rather, in parallel or overlapped phases. The lineal development is linked to what Melendres (2000: 46-47) argues about the position — in his case focused on the direction — of the playwright, director, actor and

audience throughout the process and to one of the ways of seeing its development, that of the so-called "lineal theatre", according to a time order of intervention of each of these elements or functions. In their turn, the phases in parallel would respond to the idea of *plateau* writing (Batlle, 2020a: 158) or collective creation. We could speak, in a simplified way, of writing, stage production/creation and publications,⁶ in which the order of the phases or the number of phases in which this "play" appears is relevant.⁷ The same writing process can be devised with different phases: here the methodologies, the procedures and techniques as well as the diverse re-writings of a script would be involved. These different phases can respond to open processes or processes with an established methodology, within a personal process or with external conditions linked to the commissions or the teams. The phases can even be determined by issues related to promotional actions, such as the publication linked to the presentation of a play, with, for instance, reading clubs. These phases can mean that the script that reaches us can be seen as a "score", capable of becoming a show, but also as a "document" or "record" (with stage directions that illustrate the show made) or as "texts-material" (Batlle, 2020a: 158) that formed part (totally or partially) of a production.

- d) The people/professions/teams, institutions and venues involved. In this case we can look at all the people/professions involved in a process, taking into account the artistic and production team and the relation between the people and the different tasks that each of them carried out. One of the outstanding aspects, which is linked to the previous elements, is to see whether they are individual processes or collective processes, called after the name of a more or less stable group, or by a teamwork planned for a specific project. In the first place, we can see the number of writers/creators involved; in other words, if we are dealing with an individual writing, a writing with two or more authors with a unique "fiction-story", or a multiple authorship with a dramaturgy formed by short pieces or materials by different playwrights. In these models of multiple authorship (or a collective piece) we find proposals that involve, on the one hand, a polyphony and, on the other, a hierarchy of voices, based on the dramaturgy and direction work. In such cases we can see the participation of different people based on labels such as idea, concept, creation, script or scripts, and dramaturgy.

Moreover, we can consider functions that accompany the writing, such as supervision, coordination, mentorship or advisory tasks. In

6. The first phase of the process, in keeping with a perspective broader than text-based theatre, can be linked to Fàbregas' concept of "prior intention" (1973: 16), understood as "the form achieved by the prior intention as a phase before the planning of the production itself." Within this prior intention, the text would be "one of the forms in which we can discover the prior intention, although it is not the only one" (Fàbregas, 1973: 15).

7. In some cases, it could be considered as yet another phase of the dramatised reading. Thus, for instance, this reading is included as a part of the process of the Laboratori Ínsula Dramatària Josep Lluís Sirera, as we will see in section 4.3.

this respect, in the aforementioned interview with Pau Miró, he noted that "in my development as a playwright I was lucky to meet Lluïsa Cunillé. Along with her endless talent, she is very generous. When I had a minimally acceptable version of a script, I handed it over to Lluïsa (I know I'm not the only one). I kept her comments in mind. In *Plou a Barcelona*, she gave me a piece of advice that notably improved the play" (P. Miró, 2021: 505). We can also assess the impact or the intervention of artistic directors or public and private theatres that manage playwriting projects, commissions, residency programmes, and so on, who can establish criteria, premises, conditions, etc., or when the production/programme of a public theatre focuses on a topic. In terms of publishing, we would have the editors or the directors of collections. The people or institutions that we often find in the acknowledgement sections of a programme or book can be relevant and can refer to professionals of the sector or non-professionals related to the creator's private sphere. In this respect, it is important to look at the relations established between the different parties, relations that can respond to hierarchies or power relations (how are decisions made? who decides the team?...) and that make us think in terms such as verticality or horizontality.

- e) The professions of the playwright/creator in the process. Here it is interesting to see the confluence (or not) of professions in a single person within a specific process, which can have an artistic nature (writing, directing, performance...) or not (production, management...). With respect to these situations, the Sirera brothers, when speaking of their processes, mentioned an "unrestrained tendency to the one-man band that exists in our theatre with that proliferation of actors/directors/playwrights bound to dialogue with themselves" (Sirera, 2003: 165).⁸ In this case, we can see whether the confluence takes place out of a personal decision or rather a situation of necessity-precariousness, linked to production contexts.⁹ We can also consider in this element the possibility of self-publishing.
- f) Finally, we can take into account the professional and personal background. From the point of view of the professional side, we can look at issues such as the different jobs (or not) that creators usually have,¹⁰ and whether during the process of a creation they do other jobs in parallel (of the same or different type). From the personal point of view,

8. We can take into account, as Melendres (2000: 45) reminds us, that the confluences, particularly that of writing and direction, have existed since the origins of theatre. It would be later, "throughout the 19th century, mainly with the naturalist movement," when the figure of the director developed and separated.

9. To cite some examples — concerning the playwrights we have interviewed — of this confluence, we can note that Núria Vizcarro and Juli Disla are both writers and performers of their own pieces, as is common in productions of the so-called playwright companies, to which we will refer in section 4.4.

10. We can think of the writing of other genres or for the audiovisual world and other projects in the field of creation. This circumstance exists in some of the playwrights interviewed, such as Rodolf Sirera, Juli Disla, Xavier Puchades and Guadalupe Sáez, who have experience as scriptwriters, or Pasqual Alapont, who has an important career in the writing of other literary genres.

the family history can be quite interesting because of its potential impact on the process, such as, for instance, periods of maternity/paternity or illness. This aspect becomes even more relevant if the plays are directly related to the “reality” of the artist (autofiction, autobiography, documentary...). Neither can we forget the network of contacts or relations with the theatre and publishing sector, the previous career and the recognitions achieved thus far, elements that can affect those aforementioned, such as the engine or the work teams.

To end, we would see how all these elements interrelate and how — as if they were the pieces of a jigsaw — they fit together. We can look at the placing (or the relation) of the different pieces, which in each case can be different, or the hierarchy — the pieces can be big or small, or some of them even could disappear — in the shaping or prevalence of some elements over others, in keeping with the particular characteristics of each process.

An Approach to the Panorama of Processes

With the aim of starting a classification of the complex and diverse procedural panorama, in this section we will introduce a series of different processes based on two elements: the number of playwrights involved in the creative team and the engine (or framework) of the processes, which we will exemplify with specific cases of Valencian playwrights consulted. However, we should be aware that in some of the processes mentioned we will find different elements combined. We will leave creative creation for a later section, which we will approach through the work of the company Pont Flotant.

“Co-Writing”

The processes of “co-writing”, with a single fiction-story, have a long tradition, with examples such as that of Josep Lluís and Rodolf Sirera since the 1970s and until the death of Josep Lluís in 2015, who wrote thirteen plays, from *Homenatge a Florentí Montfort* (1971) to *París, anys 60* (2015). In this case, we have some texts that the playwrights themselves wrote about their joint writing career. In 2003, a text, of shared authorship, was published in which the Sirera brothers explained what they called “collaborative writing”, while describing how their writing processes had evolved over time, from what they called an “assembly exercise” (2003: 157) to the early plays, until the “joint writing sessions” (2003: 160) which led them to mixing up their writings, by which there was no longer a possible answer to questions such as: who wrote this scene or who does this sentence belong to? (2003: 163).

On the aforementioned relation between processes and the drafting of paratexts, we can now recall the last premiered and published play (2019) by the Sirera brothers, *Dinamarca*, whose foreword brings us closer to the writing process of the piece that closes the trilogy “Europa en guerra”: “When the autumn of 2015 arrived, we had began thinking about a new idea: Denmark, a country that was occupied by the Germans at the start of the war

[...]” (Sirera, 2019: 10). Then the historical documentation and the subsequent phases are mentioned: “Once this first phase was completed, the following step would have been to arrange all this historical material and use it, like in the other plays of the trilogy, as a support for some characters and a story that we had to invent next. And then, of course, to start writing the text” (2019: 11).

A Valencian playwright who has quite often worked with another playwright has been Carles Alberola, both with Pasqual Alapont, in different moments of his career, and with Roberto García, with shows for his company Albena Teatre. More recently, in Valencia we have witnessed co-writing processes with three and four playwrights involved, promoted from the public sector. Thus, in 2017, *TIC-TAC* was premiered, a musical theatre production by the Institut Valencià de Cultura (IVC) and the Diputació de València, with Alberola, Alapont and Rodolf Sirera as authors of the script, whose process they explain in the published play (Alberola et al., 2018). A second example would be *Els nostres* (2018), by Juli Disla, Patrícia Pardo, Xavier Puchades and Begoña Tena, a piece written based on the issue of migration.

Multiple Writing or Authorship

Another of the processes is what we would call multiple writing or authorship, in this case with diverse texts (or materials) within a show, each of them written by a different playwright.¹¹ As an emblematic example of recent Valencian theatre, we would like to highlight *Zero responsables*, a play premiered in 2010 and published in 2017 by Artezblai, which dealt with the accident in the Valencia underground in 2006. From the point of view of the script, it is an example of multiple writing (also direction), made up of ten short pieces, with the participation of thirteen playwrights (P. Pardo, P. Montalbán Kroebel, J. Gomar, X. Puchades, A. Sánchez Velasco, J. L. Sirera, R. Sirera, G. Ochoa, J. Disla, J. Cornelles, J. Picó, P. Zarzoso and B. Tena), in which four of the pieces were also co-written. The publication includes a paratext in the form of a foreword, by Xavier Puchades (2017), one of the promoters of this play and coordinator of the dramaturgy, who details the process: creation of an initial teamwork, sending of invitations to the playwrights, preparation of a dossier on the accident so that they all shared the same documentary base, and preparation of a list of people involved in the issue, who were chosen by the playwrights. These also received some guidelines: to avoid long monologues, a length under twelve minutes, with the possibility of dividing the piece into two or three parts, and to tend to an empty space with very few objects if necessary.

It also explains how within the process some of the scripts were shared with the remaining playwrights and were re-written based on the opinions received or the tweaks that Puchades suggested in his role as coordinator, particularly to avoid redundancies and establish possible links, more or less subtle, between the pieces. The scripts as a whole had a final dramaturgical design, a final script structured in two parts: a first with seven scenes and a

11. On this type of process — which already has a long tradition — we can recall, for example, several productions by the Catalan company T de Teatre since *Homes!*, a show premiered in 1994 and published by Edicions 62 in 1996.

second with ten, in which some of the pieces are segmented into parts, such as that of Patrícia Pardo, which has three scenes, including the one that opened and closed the play.¹²

Laboratories, Calls, Residencies...

For some time the scripts — their structure, staging and publication — have formed part of processes linked to residencies, laboratories, workshops or, even, tournaments. All these initiatives, many of which have emerged within public institutions or initiatives, involve approaches with particular characteristics and conditions, both in terms of writing (contacts between a group of playwrights, mentorship by senior playwrights...) and their dissemination based on the staging (or dramatised reading) and publication. In this case, we find the initiative of the Laboratori Ínsula Dramatària Josep Lluís Sirena, promoted by the IVC during the 2017-18 season, which in its first year — and as a proof of support for female playwrights — only hosted projects by women.¹³ This laboratory, coordinated by Paco Zarzoso, has an external advisor and ends with a season of dramatised readings and the publication of the resulting texts. In the third call the advisor was Josep M. Miró, who wrote a foreword with a great deal of information about the process, through which, once again, the paratexts become an outstanding source for discovering them (J. M. Miró, 2020: 10-14):

A call was opened in which candidates had to submit their writing projects and had a single premise: the starting point had to be a classical material [...]. Paco [Zarzoso] has met them many times. He has seen and supported the growth of their literary creations [...]. I was given the role of the uncle who lives away, who comes from time to time, is surprised by the changes because he has not seen the day-to-day and provides a different gaze, of the one who lives on the margins of this everyday life. At the equator of the project, there was a fascinating proposal, that of spending a few days in the monastery of Sant Esperit in Gilet, half an hour from Valencia [...]. Here another interesting element was added, the playwright Javier Sahuquillo (Valencia, 1982) as rapporteur of the process [...]. A few weeks ago I received an email with the four plays in the revised and definitive pieces of this year's call, although in theatre you can't speak of definitive versions until these scripts have been tested in the rehearsal process and on stage, which is where writing is definitively concluded.

Playwright/Creator Companies

In other cases, we can say that the origin of the scripts is the dynamic of a company created by the playwrights or of which they form part, something quite common in Valencian theatre. Thus, as we highlighted, the emergence and consolidation of many playwrights is recurrently linked to the creation

12. In terms of publishing, we see how it is possible to release the unabridged script of a production of these characteristics but also a short piece that formed part of it. Thus, for example, Pardo included within *Obra escollida 1996-2017* (2017) the piece *La incomprensió*, which she wrote for the multiple authorship production *València* (2012).

13. We can find more information on the IVC website:

<<https://ivc.gva.es/val/escena-val/projectes-escena/insula-dramataria-escena-val>>.

of their own companies — in some cases we can speak of groups of creators —, with which their scripts have reached the stage and they have often directed and/or performed. In the Valencian context of the 1990s we witness the birth of companies that are still active, such as Albena, with Carles Alberola, or Hongaresa, with Paco Zarzoso, Lluïsa Cunillé and Lola López. Later, we have cases such as Inestable, with Jacobo Pallarés and Maribel Bayona; Patricia Pardo's company; Pérez&Disla, with Juli Disla; Wichita CO, with Víctor Sánchez, or La Teta Calva, with Xavo Giménez and María Cárdenas, among others. In these situations, we often come across scripts intended to be staged by a small number of actors, linked to production structures, such as the case of *Instruccions per a no tenir por si ve la Pastora*, by Núria Vizcarro, a Ravalera Teatre production, a company founded by Vizcarro and the actress Laia Porcar. This piece was premiered in 2018, under the direction of J. M. Albinyana, and performed by Vizcarro and Porcar. A second example of this model of playwright company would be *La família política*, where we find Guadalupe Sáez, with shows such as *Se'ns està quedant cos de postguerra* (2015) and *L'alegria està ací dins* (2017). In any case, we see how the processes within each company have their particular characteristics and how these playwrights, who usually write for their companies, also participate in different processes outside of them.¹⁴

The Collective Creation of Pont Flotant: Stages and Phases

Finally, we would like to focus on the work of Pont Flotant, a company founded in Valencia in 2000, characterised by the collective creation of its members: Àlex Cantó, Jesús Muñoz, Joan Collado and Pau Pons.¹⁵ Their work stands out for a strong relationship between the creation process and the piece that emerges from it, which means, as they explain, that the investigation and stage research process can affect, determine and even shape the final result, thereby emphasising the causality between the procedural development and a given artistic result (Pons, 2018: 7).

We should remember that the company has its own theatre, the Sala Flotant, currently in the Patraix neighbourhood, and which, in terms of temporality, they carry out long processes, which has given way to new shows (at the time of writing this article they were about to premiere the tenth), every two or three years since the first one, in 2002, and also long periods of tours. Moreover, we should take into account that the members of Pont Flotant also work in education and theatre, which also conditions their processes, without forgetting personal and family circumstances, which are also significant. To mention just one example of this relation between the processes and background, only two of its members played in *Jo de major vull ser Fermín*

14. Another model of process that we cannot consider in detail is that of Anna Albaladejo, with her Projecte Obs-cenus, which we could frame within the concept of *escena expandida*. This project, which began in 2018, has given way to two theatre pieces, participatory artistic and performative actions, talks, and audiovisual installations (Albaladejo, 2021).

15. We would like to thank the company for the information provided, particularly Pau Pons' master's degree final project conceived as a self-analysis of the activity of Pont Flotant (Pons, 2018).

Jiménez (2013), given that they decided to allow the other two time to bring up their children. And we should not overlook the importance that personal background has had on the contents of the creation, particularly in what we consider the second stage, which started with *Com a pedres* (2006), followed by *Exercicis d'amor* (2009), *Algunes persones bones* (2011) and *Jo de major vull ser Fermín Jiménez* (2013), which has been called a tetralogy about time (Pons, 2018: 14).

With *Com a pedres*, a key piece in the company's history, Pont Flotant explains that they intervened consciously in the design of the process, as they do not establish a date for the premiere but rather focus on the importance of and the need for stage research. Moreover, the premiere was in the company's theatre, which meant that, for the first time, the work on the space was included and significantly influenced the creation. The processes of Pont Flotant, however, have become more complex, especially since 2015, with *El fill que vull tindre*, a piece premiered in 2016, which began a third period, in which research focuses on the communal based on research laboratories.¹⁶

Apart from the result of their shows, which have had great reception, it is interesting to approach Pont Flotant, as it has produced materials and taught courses on the processes, with a work of systematisation and analysis of their creation methodology, which can be followed in the master's degree final project by Pau Pons from 2018. The development of the process is conceived in four phases, although they are aware that a systematisation in chronological phases is an attempt to structure a process that can be altered by the arbitrariness of the times of creation (Pons, 2018: 30). The first phase is structured around two elements, the first of which is the choice of the theme, which is determined, on the one hand, by the personal involvement and by the fact that it may create a conflict among the members. On the other, the theme must form part of what is shared with the rest of society; in other words, it must be a "universal" theme so that it is capable of raising empathy and identification among the receivers, with the aim of establishing a return path, from the particular to the universal and vice versa. Based on these premises, the themes chosen by the company have been the passage of time, love, commitment, work, education or, for the piece now in phase of creation, death. A second element at present is investigation and theoretical research on the issue based on scientific, philosophical, biological, social and historical foundations.

The second phase focuses on the creation of and search for materials in different mediums. Thus, based on creative meetings and conversations, the specific lines of research on the theme are being defined. The thematic scope is gradually selected and delimited and the dramaturgical and discursive pillar on which the piece will focus is defined. In the case of *El fill que vull tindre*, in this phase they saw the key importance of the three generations playing together (sons and daughters, parents and grandparents) through actions such as drawing, painting, modelling or bouncing. These actions

16. Previously, the company organised and participated in training courses, which evolved towards courses adapted to the needs of the production they were developing, as already happened with *Jo de major vull ser Fermín Jiménez* (2011), for which they held two workshops led by Juan Domínguez and by Daniel Abreu.

pointed to a specific line of research around the breaking of the social roles established, which would later be explored in depth. In this phase, and since *El fill que vull tindre*, the workshops or research laboratories with people outside the company have become an essential element.

This new approach, which has involved more performers and a larger format of the pieces, has been possible from the production's point of view, as the company explains, through previously agreed economic contributions that have enabled them to have big teams and longer and deeper research periods.¹⁷ The thematic change since *El fill que vull tindre*, ranging from the personal backgrounds of the members of Pont Flotant to their relations with the other, with other ages or, as happens with *Les 7 diferències* (2018), with other cultures, made it necessary for the company to undertake a documentation and research process based on these laboratories. These are conceived with different objectives (Pons, 2018: 31), such as coexisting with the "concept" of the research, enlarging the creative horizons beyond the four members, including other points of view in the discourse, and being a first space of creation, as the primary dramatic actions are gestated and tested there.

For *El fill que vull tindre* an "intergenerational theatre workshop" was held with the participation of ten children aged between 6 and 10 and thirteen adults aged between 45 and 86, with whom they worked on the issue of education through different languages. In this case, the fact that the workshop enabled their participants to form part of the final show was paramount. For *Acampada*, in 2018 Pont Flotant organised the laboratory "Altres InCapacitats" (Other DisAbilities), held at the Real Coliseo Carlos III of El Escorial in the Community of Madrid, with 23 participants. Along with the members of Pont Flotant, they had four contributing artists (the dancer, choreographer and teacher Ana Erdozain, the artist Fermín Jiménez, the musician and actor Pedro Aznar, and the dancer Alba González Herrera), as well as a psychologist, Juan Carlos Morcillo, and an educator, Primitivo Sáez. This workshop was developed in three phases and had two groups of participants aged between 18 and 65: a first group for people with disability and another group of people with previous experience in the performing arts. In the first phase (June and July), there were work sessions of the participants of the functional disability group. In a second phase (September and October) there were joint sessions of the professionals and functional disability groups. In a third phase (October and November) three participants from each group were selected, who, paid, participated in the preparation and exhibition of the laboratory in the framework of the Festival de Otoño de Madrid, in November 2018 at the Sala Verde of Teatros del Canal, within the programming of the works in process. This laboratory helped establish the ethical, aesthetic and discursive foundations of the future show, *Acampada*, premiered in October 2019 at the Teatre El Musical in Valencia.¹⁸

17. Las Naves, the Teatre Escalante, the Festival de Otoño de Madrid or the Teatre El Musical have contributed to the three pieces of this new stage.

18. On processes with workshops, we can note a unique project, *I tornarem a sopar al carrer*, attended by residents in the neighbourhood of El Cabanyal in Valencia, from where fifteen of the eighteen performers in the final piece came. This show, directed by Begoña Tena and Isabel Caballero, was premiered within the programme of the 2017

In a third phase the materials are given a dramatic form through work mechanisms and techniques characteristic of the company. They are mechanisms of organisation such as simultaneity, sequencing, juxtaposition, opposition, coordination, exaggeration, poetization, slowdown, expansion or contradiction. Overall it is essential to find connections between the different parts and the materials linked, so that they provide coherence and thematic cohesion as well as discursive progression (Pons, 2018: 35). During the fourth phase, the sessions were open to contributors or people related to the company with the aim of introducing the audience into the creation. In these sessions the location, role, identification and emotional journey of the audience are assessed, and their presence conditions the piece *in extremis*. For instance, for *Les 7 diferències* there were performances with children and their respective families on the issue of difference, in which they were invited to play along with the performers, to speak other languages, to dress up as other people, to try food from other countries, and so on. And, later, they shared their impressions, opinions and experiences with people from other cultures and origins to discover firsthand their points of view. These performances were held two or three times during the process, based on which and its natural development constant rewritings take place, which can go beyond the day of the premiere (Pons, 2018: 35-37).

We should not forget, and this also becomes interesting, that the company has always been concerned that their processes include the later publication of the pieces, which we could consider another phase of the overall process.¹⁹ On this issue, the company (Rosselló, 2015) conveyed the idea that they find it very strange that someone can show interest in staging one of their pieces with which they have such a close bond that they feel a kind of invasion of their privacy, a strange shame that they do not completely understand, which is paradoxical as they publish the script of the pieces and, in contrast, they still have this feeling. On the publication of their scripts, they comment that it has always been very difficult to publish them because they are very linked to the daily life of their performers and because, moreover, they use different performative languages and codes. This is why they include stage directions that describe the gestural actions, the movements on stage or the videos projected, as well as photos or, even, notes of the creation process, with the idea that providing this information helps complete the meaning of the pieces. In the end, what emerges is the idea of a text-document as a record of what the ephemeral piece was; theatre creation thus becomes a record of a unique experience.

Cabanyal Íntim, which, because of its location, had a direct link with the theme of the piece. This project combined a workshop led by the directors with scripts jointly written by Begoña Tena and Xavier Puchades.

19. The following pieces by Pont Flotant have been published: *Com a pedres*, by Teatres de la Generalitat Valenciana, in 2008, and self-published *Jo de major vull ser Fermín Jiménez* (2015), *El fill que vull tindre* (2017) and *Exercicis d'amor* (2021).

Final Considerations

Although we could finish by saying that there are as many processes as pieces and playwrights or groups, it seems relevant to assert and systematise the "process" category when analysing the pieces, whether individually or in terms of the career of a playwright, or of a group. Thus, on the one hand, we see how — through a synchronic perspective — we are simultaneously witnessing the creation of texts that we can fit into different process types, which shows us the current diversity and also, if we undertook a quantitative analysis, the prevalence of some processes over others.²⁰ On the other, we see that — through a diachronic perspective — in the career of the playwrights the plays can be the result of a somewhat habitual process or rather of diverse random processes, which have alternated depending on the periods. Thus, we can see whether the characteristics of the processes followed have changed or modified over time, according to different elements, such as the six mentioned. In this respect, we have careers in which the processes can give way to a differentiation of phases, as seen with Pont Flotant or some playwrights, like those interviewed, who have formed part of different groups or companies over their careers (Rosselló, 2018).

In this panorama of processes we see some that are spontaneous or subject to creative chance and also some standardised or systematised which become characteristic ways of work, which can also finally become the object of teaching and follow-up for others. Moreover, Pont Flotant would also be an example with the workshops taught by its members to theatre professionals. Similarly, when we analyse the processes in the career of some playwrights, we see that their writing responds to diverse processes linked to different engines or triggers that account for the craft of playwriting (both a singular and plural craft, and usually shared with other jobs),²¹ as we have seen with the playwrights interviewed, with processes related to their own companies, public and private commissions, the participation in playwriting projects, individual authorship, co-writing or multiple authorship projects. This makes us consider what may be different in the result because of the variations in the process and its elements. Thus, for instance, Francesc Massip commented, on Jordi Casanovas' production, that "it should be stressed that the plays that have grown on stage have a texture very different from those the playwright writes to enter them in contests and obtain funding. In contrast, those that he works on and writes during the rehearsals are perhaps more chaotic in terms of writing but far more forceful as a theatre production" (2009: 354).

We could also consider whether there is a direct relation between those plays that better represent a playwright and the processes from which they have arisen. We can wonder whether there is some type of process that gives way to what would be more genuine or personal, the most representative or, from the critical point of view, the most prized. Moreover, we realise that the

20. On this issue applied to theatre in Spanish, García Barrientos (2015), based on a sample of 66 playwrights, noted that 75% of them had a playwright-director profile in relation to what he calls the cabinet playwright.

21. This plurality can also be related to the different types of writing (original texts, adaptations, versions, dramaturgies or translations), the formats (short and long pieces) or audiences (theatre for adults and family theatre).

way these writing processes have developed in comparison to those related to staging and publishing can explain that a career is more or less long in time, more or less numerous in terms of plays, or more or less concentrated in given moments. If we think of the text as a score, we can even see how the writing and staging process can affect the very status of the text with respect to issues related to fiction/autofiction/autobiography, as happens, for instance, with *La sort*, by Juli Disla, whether the play is performed by the playwright himself and the director-colleague or by the Argentinean company Timbre4.

We can go further, and consider the presence of the processes in the history of dramatic literature or in the history of theatre, giving rise, in keeping with the novelties or the prevailing trends, based on quantitative analyses, to stages or periods, such as the collective creation of independent theatre. If we look at today's theatre, we could consider the impact of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya's T6 Project, with its different stages and conditions throughout a decade. And, given the outcome of this initiative, we could examine the impact of the crises experienced in the procedural panorama and not only in terms of the results but because it was a model of support and promotion of Catalan playwriting. Do we therefore move from a context characterised by a model of processes like those promoted by the institutions, with the T6 and other initiatives, to a model of young companies marked by individual or group creation? Or, more recently, we could consider the stage started in 2017 in Valencia with the IVC writing laboratories. We realise how the study of the processes can also be related to geographical fields, in keeping with the role and activities of public and private theatre, as we find in the Valencian case, a field historically marked by playwright companies and, to a large extent, with playwright-director profiles. This without forgetting that, although for us this was not an element of focus, the process can finally become object of the play, with its thematisation. Undoubtedly, time and research will confirm the meaning of all these processes, new and not so new, in the analysis of 21st century theatre.

As we have had the opportunity to set out in other pieces of research, if we look at today's theatre as a whole, we can state that playwriting is plural and diverse and in constant exploration. These characteristics, despite all the obstacles, reveal its vitality and dynamism, with ideological and formal concerns of a different nature. In this aesthetic and ideological diversity the processes also increasingly deserve to find their own space and recognition; similarly — from management fields — it is necessary to evaluate it in terms of conditions and outcomes. We should prioritise those models that enable the development of creativity and reflection and which, therefore, are sensitive to the people involved. Thus, we can be aware of the benefits and limitations provided by the different process models. And, finally, we leave some questions to continue thinking about, to imagine the future, which, undoubtedly, would result in continuing our research. We know that processes have a shape, but what ideology do they have? Should they be ethical, healthy, take care of the creators, provide the appropriate time and resources, be free? Will investing and innovating in the process bring us "better" results?



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