

## Virtual theater: Theory and practice<sup>i</sup>

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### The Theater Konferenz<sup>1</sup>

Let us take as a starting point one of the most innovative modalities of contemporary theater, the *Theater Konferenz*, which spread throughout Germany from the 2011 play *Konferenz für ein paar*, by Hans-Jürgen Frein, and soon gained followers and fans all over Europe<sup>2</sup>. Assuming that 90% of those who had been watching his plays were actors, stage directors or artists from other areas, Frein began to present performances consisting primarily of conferences or lectures in which he sat before a microphone and simply enunciated the theoretical principles that ruled his creation, considering useless to put it into play since it could be perfectly imagined by the audience.

The *Theater Konferenz* soon unfolded in the *Metakonferenz*, a hybrid genre created by the same Hans-Jürgen Frein in July 2012 at a colloquium of the German Philology Society held in the Elmau Castle, in Bavaria. At a round table devoted to the 'importance of the textual philology in the publishing of dramatic texts,' Frein surprised everyone by presenting a talk titled *Philology of Decomposition*, which began as a typical academic text but gradually became unstable and gave way to a series of hesitations, interferences, digressions — culminating in a powerful and astonishing performance, where Frein floundered on the table, with convulsive, cramped gestures and guttural sounds that climaxed with one of the participants collapsing and the works being suspended for fifty minutes.

The reaction of the academic community was shy, limited to a brief repudiation

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Instrucciones para suicidas amadores*, by Javier Zambrano, *Concerto n. 4*, by Giorgio Bassari, and *Je m'en vais*, by Claude Renard.

note to the 'spectacularization of scientific debate,' published in the *Journal of the German Philology Society* the following month, but some journalists present at the colloquium undertook to spread that unsettling experience to a wider audience. Although the critical prestige of Frein's work has only increased since then, the invitations for him to take part in seminars and conferences began to thin out, which did not prevent the artist to surprise again the academic world in 2014, with the *Heidegedicht* intervention, in which, after nine months of intense preparation, fifteen teenagers sat amid the audience of a symposium on 'The ontological dimension in Heidegger's work,' held at the Universität Marburg, and challenged the speakers with baffling questions and remarks.

As Frein himself says in one of his hybrid texts (*Seriel*, read by a female model at the Berlin subway in May 2015), 'it is about fertilizing the academic space with dramatic instances and, in parallel or simultaneously revitalizing the dramatic space with academic noises, by establishing and introducing new modalities of experience in unsuspected places.' The *Metakonferenz* became one of the most open genres of contemporary European theater, and the process of disruption and destabilization provoked by the precursory works of Frein transformed the hitherto dull German academia in a source of ebullience and adventure that has been attracting dozens of young creators.

### **Theory and practice of virtual theater**

— This is not theater! – the indignant voice of the purists rises from the audience almost automatically and, as usual, the purists have strong arguments to support their views: 'The big difference between theater and literature is that there is no "cerebral", "solipsistic" theater, i.e. the encounter with the other is necessary' (cf. Dubatti, 2012, p. 20). The *modus operandi* of this kind of reasoning is familiar and predictable: a restrained, tightly defined concept of a multifaceted phenomenon is established (because 'at least insofar as we are reasonable, we adopt the simplest conceptual scheme into which the disordered fragments of raw experience can be fitted and arranged' (Quine, *apud* Dubatti, 2012, p. 12)), and everything that escapes this 'conceptual scheme' is considered unworthy of receiving the official seal of approval – is not theater, or even more radically, 'does not exist'. From this perspective, a work like *Stifters Dinge*, by Heiner Goebbels, performed in 2015 at the

ii International Theater Exhibition in São Paulo cannot be considered theater, since there are no artists present on stage during the eighty minutes of this 'play without actors [...] performance without performers' (cf. Stifters Dinge, 2015). In a similar fashion, the long hours of rehearsal that precede a presentation, the countless discussions that shape the creative process of hundreds of theater companies are despised because they do not fit the 'concept': a 'rehearsal without spectators: the "observer" is not constituted, it is not theater. [...] the work of an actor who rehearses alone: it is not theater' (Dubatti, 2012, 27).

However, as De Marinis reminds (2011, p. 98), theater is not made only by producing plays or staging them, but also by watching a performance, studying it or writing about it. Similarly, Matthias Langhoff points out the need of taking into account the 'second apparition' of theater, which results from the 'rumination' of the performance/show by the spectators, 'the theater recollected, filtered and washed in everyday life' (*Apud* Grésillon; Mervant-Roux; Budor, 2010, p. 21). Or, as Mervant-Roux mentions (2006, p. 30), it is important not to dissociate the attendance from the experience, "nor the spectacle from the echoes that will come much after it. In this extended perspective, the spectator [...] is a figure made of memory strata."

From the moment we expand the reach of the term 'theater' beyond its ephemeral, unique, irreproducible realization, we obtain a broader perspective on the contemporary scenic creation. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1994 [1952], p. 72) has already warned us: 'A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.' By broadening the field of theater to before its scenic realization, as project and as creative process, and to after, in the form of the various discursive elements (comments, criticisms, accounts) or iconographic elements (photographs, recordings, remains of sets and costumes) that amplify it, effuse it, disseminate it, spread it, deform it, and transform it we free ourselves from an overly narrow image which is not able to do justice to the multiplicity of experiences of contemporary theater.

If, as pointed out by Bourdieu (1992, p. 241), 'The discourse on the work is not a simple side-effect, designed to encourage its apprehension and appreciation, but a moment which is part of the production of the work, of its meaning and its value,'

the critical texts that analyse the contemporary scenic creation play a role that is more poetic than one commonly imagines. Thus, the *Theater Konferenz* potentiates a feature that we have already noted in relation to the frequent presence of narrative passages in the articles published in Brazilian and foreign scientific journals of performing arts (cf. Catalão, 2014a, p. 5):

...in case the reader has watched the theatrical and performative spectacle in question, the narratives embedded in the critical texts may serve as a counterpoint to his or her experience as a spectator; in other cases, however – perhaps in most of them, especially when referring to a spectacle in a distant country or when it is a performance that will not be repeated – the narratives are virtually the only means of accessing that event.

In order to address this border territory between theater and literature, we formulated the concept of 'virtual theater', which manifests itself in three instances:

1. We will define as 'virtual theater', firstly, texts or other materials that expand the theatrical experience beyond the single, ephemeral event of its scenic realization. In this sense, the term comprises the projects, essays and scenic experiments that occur before the spectacle itself as well as the reviews, analyses, critical texts and recordings, photographs and re-creations that ensue.

2. The concept of 'virtual theater' also refers to the theater as an unrealized potential -- and also in this sense it may relate both to the past and the future. Thus, beside the most known and visible work of George Büchner, Federico García Lorca or Sarah Kane, we can think about how the plays written by these playwrights would be, hadn't they died so early; likewise, we can re-create, from the fragments that have survived to the present day some of the lost plays by Sophocles and Menander; we can also try to reconstruct the Dostoyevsky's play which was later transformed into the novel *The village of Stepanchikovo and its inhabitants* (cf. Simone, 2012, p. 337) or wonder how would have been the drama in five acts that Strindberg (2012 [1888] , p. 221) claimed to have burned and from whose ashes *Miss Julie* was born. On the other hand, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*, by Peter Weiss, is an example of 'virtual theater' within a 'real' play: from hard data, it imagines a spectacle created by Sade in his involuntary commitment in the Charenton asylum.

3. Finally, we can enlarge our imaginative freedom and invent authors and scenic experiments that have never existed, but about which we are free to discuss critically with such pertinence as in relation to concrete works and stage directors. This applies to Hans-Jürgen Frein's work, which never existed materially, but may shed light on important aspects of the debate concerning the contemporary theater.

In all these cases, the boundary between reality and fiction (or between criticism and creation) is problematized and thrown into question, making room for a change in our perception about the limits of theatrical experience. It should be noted that the concept of 'virtual theater' does not presuppose the existence of a supplementary 'real theater' in which supposedly a 'pure', direct experience would be possible, without any conceptual or imaginative mediations; on the contrary, it is about unveiling a 'virtuality' present in any theatrical event: one same performative act, for example, is subject to transform itself into distinctive, even conflicting narratives, and all scenic experience moves necessarily towards beyond its concrete realization.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Gedankenexperiment* in Frein and Klein**

– This is not science! – We can hear the indignant voice of the purists rising once again from the back of the conference room – A scientific article should be based on concrete, real facts, and not fictional narratives about playwrights and stage directors who never existed.

However, the proposition of imaginative experiments is no stranger to the scientific tradition. As pointed out by Alexandre Koyré in relation to Physics,

actual experiences are often very difficult to make: they imply no less often a complex and costly apparatus. Furthermore, they comprise necessarily some degree of inaccuracy, and therefore uncertainty. It is impossible, as a matter of fact, to produce a flat surface that is 'truly' flat; or to materialize a spherical surface that 'really' is a spheric one. [...] Between the empirical data and the theoretical object, persists and will always persist a distance that is impossible to transpose (Apud Duyckaerts, 1987, p. 48).

So, at least since Galileo the practice of imaginative experiments (*thought exper-*

<sup>3</sup> We employ, therefore, the term 'virtual theater' in a much broader sense than Gianachi (2004), who limits it to the 'interface between theater, performance and digital arts'.

*iments or Gedankenexperimenten*, as Ernst Mach named them) has been instrumental to the development of modern science. In order to prove that all bodies, regardless of their mass, free fall at the same rate of acceleration, the Italian scientist did not set out to drop objects from a high tower, but simply proposed an imagination exercise in which one should consider two metal balls, one very heavy and the other lightweight, tightly bound to one another. Strictly wondering what would happen if the balls were released at the same time from the top of a tower, Galileo proved that the Aristotelian conception (according to which the heavier object would have to fall faster than the lighter one) entailed an absurd conclusion.<sup>4</sup> Curiously, the author adopted the dramatic form par excellence, the dialogue, to demonstrate his trust in the imaginative experiments:

'Simplicius: How is this? You have not made a hundred tests, no, not even one test? And you so confidently affirm it for true?

Salviatus: I am assured that the effect will ensue as I tell you without [concrete] experiment, for so it is necessary that it should (*Apud* Brown, 2011, p. 2).

Goethe, a playwright who attended the border territory between artistic creation and scientific analysis<sup>5</sup>, offers a similar approach when he comments on the possibility of finding the primal *Urpflanze*, the ancestral archetypal plant that would be the model for all plants -- first a historical ancestor, later an underlying scheme, the 'plantness' of a plant.

The *Urpflanze* is going to be the strangest creature in the world, which Nature herself shall envy me. With this model and the key to it, it will be possible to go on forever inventing plants and know that their existence is logical; that is to say, if they do not actually exist, they could, for they are not the shadow phantoms of vain imagination, but possess an inner necessity and truth. (Goethe, 1969 [1788], p. 258)

One could imagine that such a practice represents an archaic, obsolete version of scientific thought; however, Duyckaerts (1987, p. 47-48) emphasizes the founding role played by the construction of experiments that make use of fiction as an

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed exposition of Galileo's experiment, see Brown, 2011, p. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Besides *Faust* and a wide range of dramatic, lyrical and narrative works, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published important scientific studies on botany and colour theory.

epistemological tool both in the field of Artificial Intelligence (with the 'Chinese Room Thought Experiment' presented by the philosopher John Searle, and the test created by Alan Turing in the paper 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence' (cf. Turing 1981 [1950])) and in the Modern Physics (since the *Gedankenexperimenten* are at the center of controversy between Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein and, as noted by Brown (2011, p. 16), imaginative exercises on allegedly impossible facts like travels at greater speeds than light, played a major role in the genesis of the Theory of Relativity). Einstein's elevator, the Heisenberg microscope, the demon of Maxwell and Schrödinger's cat are fictional creations that, despite its purely mental or 'unreal' character (or more precisely because of it) are pivotal in the development of modern science.

As we noted elsewhere (Catalão, 2014b, p. 150), the invention of imaginary playwrights and stage directors finds another striking parallel in the activity of researchers/artists/philosophers Louis Bec and Vilem Flusser, who created a 'fabulatory epistemology' (cf. Felinto, 2014: 12) which develops, through computer simulations based on data from evolutionary biology a series of potential beings (or 'zoomorphic types') that do not actually exist but that could come into being. As in the case with *Vampyrotheuthis infernalis* or *Malaskunodousse*, it is not about describing beings already cataloged by science, but proposing unprecedented virtualities -- some of them possible to be materialized at some future time, others openly unrealistic but whose proposition may shed some light on important aspects of the contemporary scenic creation.

Let us consider the following narrative of the staging of Yves Klein's *Theater of the Void*:

Klein printed a faux newspaper titled *Dimanche*,<sup>6</sup> imitating a Sunday section of the Parisian daily *France Soir*, and featuring on its cover the famous photograph of the artist Harry Shunk leaping into flight from a ledge, and soaring over towards the pavement in a quiet, empty Paris street, under the title *Un Homme Dans l'Espace (Man in Space)* and subtitled *Le Peintre de l'Espace se Jette Dans le Vide! (The Painter of Space Launches Himself Into the Void!)*. The four-page broadsheet was published on Sunday, 27 November 1960 and sold on newsstands and distributed throughout Paris for one day only; the piece had several texts that configured the staging and informed about Klein's view of theatricality. [...] In the main

<sup>6</sup> *Dimanche* (Sunday), also known as *Dimanche - Le Journal d'un Seul Jour (Sunday - The Newspaper for Only One Day)*.

text, *The Theater of the Void*, besides proclaiming that on that day, 'from midnight to midnight', he would thus present 'a full day of festival, a true spectacle of the Void' and wish that on this day 'joy and wonder will reign,' and that everyone, 'conscious as well as unconscious actors-spectators of this gigantesque presentation, should have a good day', Klein mentions several theatrical artists of the first half of the 20th century, and cites a 1954 manifesto in which he establishes the terms of a kind of **private theater** to be effectively frequented by subscription: 'Each members is to receive, in exchange for their subscription, a seat in their name in the empty auditorium of the theater where a continual performance without actors, spectators, etc. is given. This constant non-representation, in this auditorium, which no one enters after the initial installation must have moments more intense than others, communicated, at the beginning, to subscribers by a program that they receive by mail or... otherwise! [...] The theater will be closed; no one can be able to go inside, only the ticket office at the entrance will be open, so that late arrivals will be able to, at the last moment, subscribe before each performance [...] The new actors [...] will have nothing to do but to know that they are actors and to stop by to cash their vouchers after each performance, or *at the moment of hyperintensity* indicated in the subscriber's program' (Ramos, 2014, p. 40).

To what extent the artistic experiment conducted by Klein on November 27, 1960 in Paris is 'more real' than any imagined work of Hans-Jürgen Frein? Is not the blurring between concrete realization and imaginary projection what makes the *The Theater of the Void* particularly exciting? In Klein, as well as in Frein, the fundamental artistic event does not take place in the theater building or any other external location, but in the imagination of the reader, who must mentally recreate 'the empty auditorium of the theater where a continual performance without actors, spectators, etc. is given.' The 'non-representation' prescind from all the elements traditionally associated with the scenic representation (synthesized in an 'etc.' where almost everything imaginable fits in: scenery, costumes, lighting) – but does not prescind from other elements (the photography, the apocryphal journalistic text, the manifesto, the narrative) that provide the score for the reader's interpretation. Beyond its characterization as 'immaterial work' (a classification proposed by the artist himself and ratified by Riout (2010) and McEvilley, 2005, p 65), Klein's experimentation is a dislocation exercise – from the 'actors, spectators, etc.' to the newspaper, the photography, the manifesto – from the traditional theater to the virtual theater.

Can the project, the description, or the commentary of a work have the same artistic status as a concrete, real, authentic work? More important than answering that

question is to inquire ourselves into its validity. In what extent should the dichotomies real/virtual, legitimate/false, presence/absence be applied to contemporary art? In the play *Manifesto vs. Manifesto*, Susana Torres Molina inserts the following narrative anecdote:

A Chilean artist presented his last work and invited a group of friends, sat them at the table and served them some meatballs cooked with fat from his own body. '*Ladies and gentleman, bon appetit and may God bless,*' he said to his dining companions while serving them. '*The question of whether or not to eat human flesh is more important than the result. You are not a cannibal if you eat art,*' he added (Torres Molina, 2010, p. 362).

Maybe some spectators or readers may identify the Chilean artist in question; others perhaps wonder if he is a character as fanciful as Hans-Jürgen Frein. Starting from the assumption that the narrated event did actually happen, we may wonder if the implications would be the same if the fat used in the preparation of the meatballs did not belong to the artist, or if instead of using only fat he had cut other part of his own body (his ear, for example, or a finger). To a large extent, however, these questions (as well as the question stated by the author herself: 'to eat or not to eat human flesh is more important than the result?') have some degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the facts. It is not about to dismiss as irrelevant the performative act narrated, but recognizing the narrative (or, in other cases, the critical commentary) as another performative act, with its own vicissitudes and implications.

Another example regarding a Yves Klein work can clarify this statement:

*Yves peintures* is an artists' book of colourful reproductions embellished with a foreword, in line with the well established model for the exhibition catalog in a posh commercial art gallery (colour plates, bulky heavy-weight paper, a foreword: everything connotes luxury). The first element of surprise is in the 'preface': between its generic title ('Preface') and the name of the 'author' (Claude Pascal, a poet and childhood friend of Klein's who agreed to lend his name to this symbolic deletion ritual), the 'text' consists only of unbroken horizontal lines imitating the typographical layout of an essay (printed lines, paragraphs), very similar to the *Poème optique* published by Man Ray in 1924, which emulates in Morse code the configuration of a sonnet. The second surprising element (important at the time) is that the colour 'reproductions' are, of course, monochromatic rectangles (the fact that these colourful pieces of paper are hand-glued into the white pages was not necessarily an extravagance or oddity; on

the contrary, the imitation of Skira's practice, then considered the highest standard in art book publishing, accentuated the connotation of high-end luxury). The third unusual feature concerns the 'captions' placed beneath the paper cutouts (with this last term I am deliberately referring to Matisse, who must have been on Klein's radar). These captions are all of the same mould: to the left, the name Yves; to the right, the name of a place followed by a date and the dimension of the 'work' in parentheses. For example, 'Yves /in London, 1950 (195 x 97)' or 'Yves /in Tokyo, 1953 (11 x 65)' (Bois, 2010).

By presenting a catalog as an artistic work<sup>7</sup>, Klein breaks down the dichotomy between criticism and creation, or between description and materialization of the work. Especially if we take into account the fact pointed out by Bois (*Ibidem*) that 'the "works" supposedly reproduced in *Yves peintures* did not yet exist, and would in fact never come into being,' it becomes clear in this case (as in Chilean artist cited by Torres Molina or in Hans-Jürgen Frein's case) that the mere enunciation of the work (more than just its conceiving, as argues Bois) is already the realization of an object with its own artistic potentialities (whether we call it 'work' or not).

### **Every dichotomy engenders a hierarchy**

As pointed out by Hofstadter (1981, p 77-78), the expansion of an initial concept is a recurring procedure in science: in this manner Mathematics extended the number system from positive numbers to include the negative ones, and then the rational, real, complex numbers and so forth. The artists' shift of interest from the ephemeral event of spectacular realization to the creation process, conceived not as a preparation to an ultimate 'finished' goal, but as a worthwhile experience in itself<sup>8</sup> has opened up a new field in contemporary theatrical research, namely the genetic criticism, which seeks to investigate the various strata prior to the scenic realization.

In an article recently published, Silvia Fernandes analyses the various documentation about creative processes produced by IDART (currently Division of Research of the São Paulo Cultural Center), the publications on directors such as Sebastian

<sup>7</sup> There is a digital version of Yves peintures in [http://www.yveskleinarchives.org/works/works22\\_us.html](http://www.yveskleinarchives.org/works/works22_us.html).

<sup>8</sup> This transformation in theatrical conception dates back to the 1960s, as noted by Grésillon; Mervant-Roux; Budor (2010, p. 12): 'To a certain number of artists and groups (such as Grotowski, Barba, the Living Theatre, Open Theatre ...) it is no longer necessarily about "staging" a play in the ordinary meaning of the term.'

Milaré and Antunes Filho, and more recently, the studies written by actors and directors on their own work (among which the researcher highlights Miriam Rinaldi's and Antonio Araújo's texts regarding the Teatro da Vertigem (Vertigo Theatre Company), Leonardo Moreira's, which is referred to the Companhia Hiato (Hiatus Company), and Ivam Cabral's on the group Os Satyros), identifying as the common thread to these works

the privilege of the processes of creation and the development of reflections from the ethnography of rehearsals. From reading those studies, one can verify that the genetic observation of the creation steps by actors, directors and dramaturgists is an effective means of clarifying the contamination among different practices of the creation of the scene (Fernandes, 2014, p. 123).

From the investigation of rehearsal notebooks, recordings of the collective discussions and improvisations, actors' manuscripts, sketches of set designers and lighting designers, emerges a much wider perspective for the theatrical critique, one which demonstrates that the 'final' state of a scenic experience 'is at the same time much more unstable, more surprising and more complex than suggested by previous analysis modes' (cf. Grésillon; Mervant-Roux; Budor, 2010, p. 9).

If, as pointed out by Mervant-Roux (2006, p. 12) the reduction of the theater to the fleeting moment of the performance itself, 'the reduction of that we came to call "spectator" to his extremely volatile, and narrow state of espectador contributed without doubt decisively to the drying of this art,' the reinvention of critique through a new theoretical tool that respects the 'constitutive incompleteness' of the theater (cf. Grésillon Mervant-Roux;. Budor, 2010, p 23) also makes room for new scenic creations. Through Stanislavski 'staging notebooks' we can re-create the different versions and productions of *The Seagull*, be it reconstructing mental or scenically the director's instructions, or be it dramatizing them on stage (for example, when Chekhov proposes a break and Stanislavski writes down in the margins of the text: 'There should be no pause here' (cf. Autant-Mathieu, 2010, p 186.)). Similarly, based on accounts from the time, we can redo and re-create the amazingly performative staging of Calderón de la Barca's *Los tres mayores prodigios* (The Three Greatest Wonders) in 1633, when 'three different scenarios were built on the Retiro lake, one for each act of the play, which was watched by court

spectators sitting in boats' (cf. Arellano, 1995).

On the other hand, for Erika Fischer-Lichte (2013, p. 31) one of the characteristic features of contemporary scenic creation is 'the fading between real and fictitious'. From this perspective, the emphasis on the performative aspect in works such as *Julius Caesar* (Societas Raffaello Sanzio), *The Devil's General* (Frank Castorf), and *Rudi* (Klaus-Michael Grüber) destabilizes the dichotomy between reality and fiction, requiring a different approach from the spectator, who no longer can be regarded as a disinterested observer of an event that occurs 'only on stage' or 'in the external reality,' but rather as a co-creator of a shared experience.

In this new context, the critic's role is lesser just to observe from afar the scenic or spectacular signs, and more to describe and narrate his/her unique experience as a spectator. Thus emerges the figure of the critic-rhapsodist, who dissolving the dichotomy between critical analysis and artistic creation, makes use of literary devices such as suspense, metaphor and confession of subjective emotions and states<sup>9</sup> in order to re-create their involvement with the artistic process in question. From these observations, it is clear that the dissolution of boundaries between science and art, observation and creation, memory and invention, expands the possibilities of both the critique and the theatrical creation, which, once freed from rigid moulds, can reinvent themselves.

<sup>i</sup> [Editor's note - The importance of the author's response to the evaluators for reading comprehension of the text justified its publication as endnote].

I would like to thank the reader for the suggestions made on the text, which led me to re-read it carefully and make some changes in order to make it more consistent. First of all, I would like to point out that the article does not suggest that the methodological discussion of the relationship between narrative and science is "so new"; what arises as new is the transformation of the academic space of conferences and lectures in the actual scenic arena (although, in fact, there are important antecedents of lecture performances) and, above all, the possibility that academic papers be contaminated and fertilized with fictional passages. The fact that "the practice of replacing the presentation of the work by presenting instructions for its creation or other conditions for its existence" is not new can be deduced from the actual reading of the text (which cites an artistic experiment Klein realized in 1960). It is important to note that the purpose of the article is not to discuss what is currently theater or science, but to show that an excessively closed concept of theater and science can inhibit fruitful possibilities for critical and theatrical creation. In this sense, the initial exhibition of the "virtual" work of Fein is, in the first place, an example among others (Klein, Goebbels, genetic criticism) of scenic experiences that are not covered when theater is reduced to the immediate presence or fleeting moment of its submission; secondly, it is also a practical demonstration of the evocative potential of fiction to foster critical debate. Following the evaluator's suggestions, we changed the text to blend in the innovative aspect of Fein's work, without, however, failing to notice its disturbing character.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed exemplification of the expansion of the narrative and fictional aspect in the texts that analyse contemporary scenic creation, see Catalão (2014).

One of the text's objectives is precisely to propose a different way of approaching contemporary art criticism: thus, we do not limit ourselves to methodologically discussing the epistemological role of narratives, but also seek to present a text that incorporates a fictional narrative in its argumentative structure and uses its own narrative artifice, as the inclusion of voices that are raised "in the back of the conference room." Similarly, the lack of a clear link between the subtitle "Every dichotomy engenders a hierarchy" and the text that follows it could be seen as a defect in a conventional academic text; however, here too it serves to destabilize rigid molds by incorporating a proper dash of artistic creation: it appeals to the imaginative capacity of the reader, who must establish their own connections between the subtitle and critical-rhapsodic figure.

Another key point of the article is the fact that it does not suggest the "theater" or "science" as "false enemy" the "theater" or "science", but rather stands in opposition to a certain "purist" conception of theater and science and, I agree, also essentialist) that does not seem to me to be even a little" surpassed ". Remember that the Dubatti article that summarizes the model of theater against which we position ourselves was published in 2012, and I have no news that any attempt to challenge it has been published to date. On the other hand, the idea that scientific practice "must comply with academic norms", please insert "hard data" and thus is not permeable to fictionalization is manifested in the very opinion of the appraiser, which clearly demonstrates the difficulty the evaluator has of dealing with a text in which debate does not take place according to the usual manner.

I leave to the end the most important aspect of reading proposed by the evaluator when he/she states that "it is not clear how the dilution of Cartesian boundaries between art and science can open the door to a `role for the critic [that] will no longer be just to rationally interpret scenic or spectacular signs, but to describe and narrate his unique experience as a spectator `(p.13), since the act of narration is not devoid of rationality and each description or narration is an interpretation." In fact, our goal was not in any way to create a new dichotomy between rationality and narrative, and we appreciate immensely the acuity of observation, which reveals an incorrect formulation that affects our whole argument. What is at issue here (and we sought to reformulate in the resubmitted text), is more than replacing the rational interpretation of the narrative but rather its complementation (it was in this sense that we use the word "only") of logical analysis by narrative. In this sense, this is not to claim an irrational and arbitrary attitude on the part of critics, but to propose new settings for critical space.

Finally, I took a few suggestions about the redesign of the presentation on Klein, leaving aside, however, the inclusion of false bibliographic information. This is an ethically sensitive issue, since our goal is not to mystify readers, but only to destabilize the boundaries between fact and fiction. Anyway, the issue remains open, and I imagine a possible textual scenario text in which one could make it more credible by introducing a critical apocryphal apparatus.

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