



**LONG-TERM UNDERLYING CONDITIONS OF THEATRE PERFORMANCE AND ITS SYMPTOMATOLOGY DURING THE PANDEMIC: CHRONIC UNTREATED PATHOLOGIES AND TEMPORARY REMEDIES**

*CONDICIONES SUBYACENTES DE LARGO PLAZO Y LA SINTOMATOLOGÍA PANDÉMICA DE LA REPRESENTACIÓN TEATRAL: PATOLOGÍAS CRÓNICAS NO TRATADAS Y REMEDIOS TEMPORALES*

**Eleni Timplalexí**

post doc, lecturing staff member NTLab, Communication & Media Studies Department, NKUA

Guest researcher with Linnaeus University Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies

([elentimple@media.uoa.gr](mailto:elentimple@media.uoa.gr))

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8120-8759>



**DOI: 10.32621/ACOTACIONES.2022.48.08**

**ISSN 2444-3948**

**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic caused alertness to literal and metaphorical pathologies. Attempting an analogy with medical science and drawing upon the notion of pathologia, the pandemic superimposed its own viral layer onto the organism of theatre performance that was already coming to terms with its chronic underlying conditions. The article aims to provide a bigger picture of the pathology/ies of theatre performance (+ studies), to denote the ways in which theatre performance responded to the social prohibitions as well as to underline long-term unresolved inconsistencies and contradictions. It argues that recent remedies may have offered smart ways out of the pandemic but more

subtle and chronic issues, such as lack of complicity/cross-disciplinary terminological consensus between theatre and performance studies, tensions in theatre/performance politics, and political correctness need to be scrutinized once again. It highlights the pandemic problems and solutions, such as online theatre, transformation of theatre communication, normalization of the theatre spectator, theatre making in the open-air and theatre prosumerization and trace their immediate aftermath. The article concludes by also “reading” vulnerabilities of theatre performance as sources of power that could in fact re-inform the societal and political intentions, enhance resistance to “normalcy” and nurture deviations in theatre performance (+studies).

**Key Words:** Performance Studies, Technology and Theatre/Performance, Theatre and Philosophy, Performance Theory, Performance and Social Change

**Resumen:** La pandemia del Covid-19 causó alerta ante patologías literales y metafóricas. Intentando una analogía con la ciencia de la medicina y valiéndose de la noción de patología, la pandemia superpuso su propia capa viral sobre el organismo de la representación teatral que ya estaba asimilando sus condiciones crónicas subyacentes.

El artículo pretende aportar una imagen mayor de la/s patología/s de la representación teatral (+ estudios) y denotar los modos en que la representación teatral respondió a las prohibiciones sociales, así como subrayar inconsistencias y contradicciones irresueltas a largo plazo. Argumenta que los remedios recientes puede que hayan ofrecido vías de salida inteligentes de la pandemia, pero asuntos más sutiles y crónicos, como la falta de complicidad/consenso terminológico interdisciplinar entre los estudios teatrales y performativos, las tensiones en las políticas teatrales/performativas y la corrección política, necesitan ser escrutados una vez más. Resalta los problemas y las soluciones de la pandemia, como el teatro en línea, la transformación de la comunicación teatral, la normalización del espectador teatral, el hacer teatro al aire libre y la «prosumerización» del teatro, y trazar sus repercusiones inmediatas. El artículo concluye asimismo «leyendo» las vulnerabilidades de la representación teatral como fuentes de poder que podrían de hecho re-informar las intenciones societarias y políticas, reforzar la resistencia

a la «normalidad» y promover desviaciones en la representación teatral (+estudios)

**Palabras clave:** Estudios Performativos, Tecnología y Teatro/Representación, Teatro y Filosofía, Teoría de la Representación, Representación y Cambio Social.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 2. Interweaving the pandemic and underlying conditions: research questions and aims. 3. Long-term underlying conditions: chronic untreated pathologies. 4. The pandemic symptomatology of theatre performance and temporary remedies. 5. Discussion. 6. Bibliography. 7. Notes

Copyright: © 2022. Este es un artículo abierto distribuido bajo los términos de una licencia de uso y distribución Creative Commons 4.0 Internacional (CC BY 4.0)

ELENI TIMPLALEXI is a laboratory lecturing staff member based at NTLab, Department of Communication & Media Studies, NKUA. Her research interests focus on the interrelations between performance/theatre/drama and digital media, gaming and storytelling. Awarded with a post doc *I.K.Y.-Siemens Fellowship of Excellence* (2015-17) and with a *Hellenic State Scholarship Foundation (I.K.Y.) PhD scholarship* (2010-14). *Alexander C. Onassis* Scholar (2005-07) in Theatre Practice. Awarded playwright (2008), theatre director, video artist and festival curator. Artistic director of UtopiArt Theatre Company (2002-2008), and co-founder of Magenta artistic collaboration (2011~).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic caused alertness to all different sorts of pathologies, literal and metaphorical, physiological, mental, psychological, social, institutional and cultural. Pathology here is taken to signify the study of suffering, as particular to medical science, which is concerned with the cause, development, structural/functional changes, and natural history associated with diseases. The latter are seen as definable deviations from a normal phenotype, becoming evident via symptoms or signs to the careful observer (Funkhouser, 2018).

Theatre performance is a communicative transaction between actors/performers and audience (Elam, 1980), usually taking place under specific contextual spatiotemporal restrictions, such as in a theatre and scheduled for a couple of hours. It is ideally destined to be viewed by a group of people, the spectators, sorted in smaller groups or couples usually already acquainted, with the intention to stimulate cognition through aesthetically elaborated performative representations, sometimes involving fiction (in dramatic theatre) and with the aim of entertaining/*psychagogein*. As Brecht (1964) put it, theatre is about “making live representations of reported or invented happenings between human beings and doing so with a view to entertainment” (pag. 180).

Attempting a metaphor with medical science and drawing upon the notion of *pathologia*, our *pathos* for our inability to make live theatre “the old way” came as an empathetic response to a metaphorical *pathos*, a suffering of theatre performance in the pandemic. It was as if theatre was a patient lying on a hospital bed, requiring a *logos* that would study and treat its pathos: a collective cognitive faculty that would speculate, look into this condition for the corpus of theatre performance and proffer some remedies for instant relief of the symptoms. And it did. Our “creative” thinking gave rise to the invention of “smart” ways to overcome such calamity, offering a temporary relief.

## 2. INTERWEAVING THE PANDEMIC AND UNDERLYING CONDITIONS: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS

What for science becomes a topic of concern, the deviation from “normalcy”, in art attracts the focus of attention as pioneering and radical, so as to even be praised and become a cultural paradigm. It would be naive to assert that the pandemic impacted on a previously perfectly “healthy” theatre performance organism, since this would signify pre-pandemic theatre was probably boring and unimportant.

It is evident, however, that the pandemic superimposed its own viral layer onto the organism of theatre performance that was already coming to terms with its chronic underlying conditions, creating a unique and challenging landscape, calling for suitable remedies to treat the parodic symptomatology. How have old unresolved issues become interwoven with the new problems, triggered by quarantine and its aftermath? What are the specific characteristics of this synchronous landscape? How has theatre performance responded to the pandemic challenge? If the already underlying conditions are re-visited, with the experience of the pandemic problematic, does our understanding of those acquire a new shape?

The article aims to provide a bigger picture of the pathology/ies of theatre performance, underlining long-term unresolved inconsistencies and contradictions on the corpus of theatre performance (+ studies), reading them mostly as long neglected vulnerabilities, as well as highlighting the pandemic problems and solutions responding to the social prohibitions. It argues that recent remedies may have offered smart ways out of the pandemic, but the more subtle and chronic issues need to be taken care of urgently. It concludes by “reading” those vulnerabilities as sources of power that could re-inform the societal and political intentions of theatre performance and enhance resistance to normalcy and the eradication of deviations in theatre performance (+studies).

### 3. LONG-TERM UNDERLYING CONDITIONS: CHRONIC UNTREATED PATHOLOGIES

Theatre performance was pre-pandemically in a process of evolving into new schemata, most of them interactive, participatory, promenade, multimodal, immersive or pervasive. It was a living organism, the pathologies of which have been discussed as vulnerabilities, inconsistencies and contradictions to be philosophically treated (Carroll & Banes, 2001), but also as sources of power (Madison & Hamera, 2005)<sup>1</sup> that give birth to new forms of creation and expression. Key unresolved issues include the schism between theatre and performance studies, in which the major catalyst has been the role of the text, leading to the lack of a cross-disciplinary terminological consensus (Matthews, 1910; Spingarn, 1911 [1931])<sup>2</sup>; the tension between theatre and the digital (Phelan, 1993; Auslander, 1999)<sup>3</sup> theatre/performance politics (Case & Reinelt, 1991), more synchronically manifesting as ethics of self-sacrifice (Kershaw, 2007), political correctness (Reinelt, 2011) and performance studies' imperialistic tendency (McKenzie, 2006; Arora, 2021); the augmenting democratization (Czyżewski & Woroniecka, 2018) and theatre ludification (Raessens, 2006), as opposed to the erudite/avant-garde tradition supported by academia, critics and some culture professionals. This set of pathologies, manifested as chronic inconsistencies and contradictions in performance and theatre studies, that betray severe underlying conditions, attract, in the first place, the focus of attention.

#### 3.1. The lack of terminological consensus in/between theatre and performance studies

This is still a pending project. Beyond individual scholarly voices opposing it, this is about the schism that has occurred between dramatic theatre and performance, mutually carried out by theatre and performance studies, in which the major catalyst has been the role of the text. Even when there is disagreement, a common ground could have been reached before the advent of the “live theatre” crisis. Key terms such as “drama”, “theatre”, “performance”, and “theatre performance” could by now have constituted common ground upon which further dialogue between the two disciplines could have emerged. This lack of

terminological consensus reveals a deeper conceptual problematic and a reluctance that urgently requires theoretical and practical scrutiny. For example, performance studies seem to hold firmly that performance is feasible *outside* the frame of theatre performance. The main difference between theatre and performance is said to be the absence of role and plot, of a linear, fully constructed narrative and the removal of the distance between the “real” and the metaphorical (Goldberg, 2001). Theatre studies’ compromise to revisit the meaning of the term “dramatic text” as the “textual material that is composed for the theatre” (Elam, 1980) was not met by a reciprocal gesture from performance studies, which could have also shown a willingness to revise the certainty that any “even slightly heightened, twice-behaved behavior and publicly exhibited” (Schechner, 2002) is not generated by, just as equally, an “even slight” role-playing instance. On the other hand, theatre studies was late to start exploring less established forms of knowledge such as embodiment, gesture and improvisation and reconsider the hierarchy of knowledges based on texts (Reinelt, 2017).

### 3.2. Performance studies’ disciplinary colonialism

Performance studies have been discussed as “imperialist” (Mc Kenzie, 2006; Arora, 2021). By proceeding to a distinction between drama as codes and material devolving from “doing” as performance, performance studies emphasized the spectacular rather than the whole, comprising the physical and the cognitive. It adhered to a rephrasing of the Cartesian mind/body split in theatre/performance context, while retaining the “intelligent brain” position for the western or central European experts, journalists and scholars, the role of an intermediary who coolly observes bodies-objects performing ambiguously, elusively, the role of the translator of “highbrow art” (Elleström, 2020) for the masses. The sacrifice of drama in the name of postdramatic theatre is the ultimate weapon for the dominant cultural hegemony to render performance erudite, a spectacle to be comprehended and translated by them for others, rather than a dramatic expression for all to intuitively empathize with. The longing for de-dramatization of performance in, for example, post-dramatic theatre, is a manifestation of such an imperialistic tendency, with its elitist Regietheater trend (Carlson, 2015).

The ways performance studies have been conceptually imperialist towards theatre studies as well as the implications of such a disciplinary colonization<sup>4</sup> require further contemplation. Key notions such as “drama”, conceptually allocated primarily within the field of interest of theatre studies, may serve as an example to showcase this imperialism. In fact, performance studies have not only assimilated this notion from theatre studies but negotiated it as theirs, in order to forge synergies with other disciplines. Indicatively, let us remind the reader of the performance studies-anthropology liaison, structured on a rather “selective” reading of Turner’s social drama (Schechner, 1976), needing a re-evaluation. Turner clearly talked about “drama”, describing it as distinct phases in the process of a community embodied and participatory plot structure. A plot the pattern of which is deeply linear, with small freedoms developed around the social drama phases (Turner, 1979) - but with those phases not being so far away from Aristotelian terms in *Περὶ Ποιητικῆς* (δέσεις, περιπέτεια, λύσις, κάθαρσις)<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.3. Performance studies’ urge to emancipate from theatre studies

Performance studies’ urge to emancipate from theatre studies and its subsequent quest for the development of connections with other disciplines, such as the visual arts, is not based necessarily on solid ground. The usual strategy coming under this category is the rephrasing of performance as performance art, a media product contextually and operationally connected to the visual arts. Goldberg (2001) denotes the literality of performance (art) as a factor increasing the distance between performance and theatre, as it is said to lack drama, roles and plot. As Marina Abramović puts it, “performance is just the opposite of theatre, the knife is real, the blood is real, and the emotions are real”, and a performance artist has to hate theatre because it is fake (Hickling, 2013). Attributing the property of “fakeness” to theatre signifies an acknowledgment of its symbolic dimension and its distance from war, sacrifice, self-injury and the arena, cultivated for long through storytelling and community bonding. Agon in theatre is symbolic, not literal, but this is not an insult; at least it should not be. It is a preference. Theatricality partly coincides with spectacularity as it traditionally shares the same sensorial path (vision) to reach the perceiver, but it is not exhausted in/

by it. It also contains a second-order vision, as the verb *θεωρεῖν* denotes (Πούχγερ, 2010), a simultaneous dual process, both sensorial and cognitive, leading to the formation of analogies. It is an inherent characteristic of the gaze, responded to primarily by theatre. In fact, performance art takes distance exactly from the attribution of a symbolic dimension to physically occurring events or representations/simulations of them while at the same time exploiting the conceptual schema belonging to the actor/performer-audience communicative transaction that theatre is. Hence, it exploits the notion of theatricality (Carlson, 2002), while at the same time consenting for its processes and outcomes to be pervasively effective for performers, and possibly, the audience. In this light, performance art may be seen as an aesthetically interesting media product, drawing upon the arena while capitalizing upon theatricality. Besides, the correlation between theatre and visual arts (Dragoş, 2020) is traced long before the advent of aesthetically organized performance art, as in ancient Greek vase painting, *camera obscura*, even more subtle nuances of theatricality addressed by *Las Meninas* or the play with theatricality with “ready mades”. What is a portrait if not the virtuality of an imaginary monologue? Have not the visual arts developed the problematic on perspective also because of set designing for the stage? Perhaps performance art developed liaisons with the visual arts precisely because Dadaists (Kristiansen, 1968) made a statement about theatricality of the visual arts (Forsyth & Losche, 1991).

### 3.4. Performance studies’ refusal to recognize politics as a broader notion than radical politics

It is almost impossible to separate performance studies from politics. An evident attachment to labor, left, socialist, communist or anarchic ideologies in the negotiation of political power, identity and social change, especially after WWII, may be diagnosed (Kirby, 1975). It is understandable, since performance studies accepts alternate forms of knowledge to one based on texts, like embodiment, gesture and improvisation, subverting the “elitist” hierarchy, often identified with a “conservative”, “dead white men” tradition. However, performance could also acknowledge its “darker” political moments, such as futurist performance, or any form of propaganda art, as it could be bound to non-radical ideologies.

Performance studies also need to accommodate the distinction between political radicality and artistic innovation – unfortunately, the latter could be theoretically attached to unfamiliar ideologies. Performance studies could reconsider their hegemony in the discussion of theatre politics, allowing also the paradigm of dramatic theatre to contain a political dimension, based on the virtuality of drama as bearing a dynamic for political transformation. Dramatic possible worlds may trigger political alertness and revolution due to intradiegetic functional elements such as crisis and catharsis. Camus’s plays are perfect examples illustrating how dramatic theatre may cause revolt against social injustices (Timplalexi, 2021).

### 3.5. Political correctness

Online culture exported the problematic of political correctness to hybrid or analogue media products, such as visual art, performance and theatre. The notion of political correctness has pervaded the interpretation, creation, expression and reception of theatre and performance. As if there were no other ways to do injustice in art but by the use of language and representational constellations that give some amount of offense or insult, exclusion and harm to people, artists, and spectators take new forms. The concept of political correctness has frozen in time and has become a checklist for key diachronic issues such as race, ethnic background and gender, while neglecting a synchronous dimension that would also accommodate in real time respect and care for the protection of emerging differentialities.

A distinction may be made between intradiegetic and extradiegetic political incorrectness. Intradiegetic political incorrectness is about the lack of political correctness within the representational world of the media product. For example, Aristophanes’s comedy is, in terms of content, rather politically incorrect. A normalization of that content to suit the commands of political correctness could lead to significant alterations, as it may contain parody, offensive “nude”, violent elements and insults. Or a play may include politically incorrect characters or words as an element of plot structure. The villains, or even the protagonists of drama, can be politically incorrect, sexist or racist, while used in the “agon” process, the conflict of the drama.

Is then a revision of dramatic poetics taking into account political correctness needed? How may we watch Agamemnon again, remaining indifferent to the stereotypical heteronormality it reproduces or Othello, “the Moor”, neglecting the *Black Lives Matter* movement? Extradiegetic political correctness may refer to the ethical and aesthetic choices of an artist that may of course pervade the diegetic frame, but belong to their biography rather than their oeuvre. Such an extradiegetic politically incorrect example could be Pablo Picasso’s attitude and behavior towards some women that have stereotypically classified him as a “misogynist” but whose art is not considered overall politically incorrect; or Paul Gauguin’s appreciation, despite the possibility of three child brides’ abuses (Blakemore, 2017).

### **3.6. The infatuation of the academy, critics, curators and artists with politically incorrect media products and/or artists, while also acknowledging it/they is/are politically incorrect**

A typical example is art and artists of the Dada and Surrealism movements. Until when may we admire Man Ray’s *Le Violon d’Ingres* or Marcel Duchamp’s *Étant Donnés* as astonishing art without succumbing to the priority of reading intradiegetic gender-biased connotations, causing even more concern than in Homer, as these are artworks synchronous to the feminist battles of the times? Until when may we forget to add to the “main list” Hannah Höch, acknowledged as talented in providing coffee and sandwiches to the white male supremacy dada and surrealist clubs, Sophie Taeuber-Arp or Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (Mendelsohn, 2017)? By underlining that those media products and artists were rather politically incorrect, we do not really contribute to the deconstructing of their admiration. We earn our living by preaching the avant-garde as high art. We create a complex situation where freedom of expression leading to “political incorrectness” in times past may be worshiped and constitute a resource for money and prestige-making nowadays, but we simultaneously propose that the creation of such art or the adoption of such attitudes is not tolerated any longer. Instead of literally contributing to the highlighting of such gender-biased connotations, by firstly deconstructing our own admiration for them and secondly revising our curricula and concepts, we collectively partake in the incrimination of

freedom of expression, rendering it a forbidden fruit, an unattainable object of desire, constructing a nostalgia for injustices and inequalities it once, and probably still is, attached to. By doing this, we further elevate our role as agents between the masses and art (Edmondson, 2007)<sup>6</sup>, we aesthetically and historically accredit political incorrectness while creating a parasitic key position that promotes elitism while arguing that we really promote democratization. This is deeply inconsistent and pathological.

#### 4. THE PANDEMIC SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF THEATRE PERFORMANCE AND TEMPORARY REMEDIES

During the pandemic, and especially during quarantine, we were told it was (and still is) dangerous to follow familiar social practices, such as making live theatre. Social confinement and distancing were among the strategies implemented to hinder the spread of coronavirus, an airborne virus more transmissible in closed spaces. Theatre performance is an ephemeral media product materialized in such spaces, at least in the western post-Renaissance tradition, the interface of which involves air, apart from surfaces, objects, bodies and waves (Elleström, 2010). All of a sudden, air received a bodily existence, as it could be inhabited by the malevolent coronavirus. It became packed, moist and dirty. Light waves could still travel in this air; hence, spectacle could reach our vision, but human-generated audio waves, such as those produced by speech or singing, caused concern. Theatre became dangerous not only to its makers and spectators but also to itself. Until the pandemic, the important thing was to make good, artistically appreciated theatre. With the pandemic emergence, the focus has shifted from an interest in making pioneering, groundbreaking, cutting-edge theatre to making theatre to keeping theatre alive. It was exactly this realization that gave rise to the drive to “support the art workers”, despite the quality of productions. And this is probably the most important symptom of theatre during the pandemic, the shift away from making “art” toward making “media products” (Bruhn & Schirrmacher, 2022)<sup>7</sup>. In the following section, some of the more prominent remedies that theatre performance was willing to undertake during the pandemic, such as online theatre, transformation of theatre communication,

normalization of the theatre spectator, theatre making in the open-air and theatre prosumerization are discussed.

#### 4.1. Online Theatre

The media transformation of theatre “going online” came as a response to social confinement, resolving the long-term tension between theatre and the digital, as manifesting in the theatre “liveness” debate (Timplalexí, 2020)<sup>8</sup>. Terms such as “viral theatre” (Liedke & Pietrzak-Franger, 2021) were established in common vocabulary. Of course, theatre had gone online long before the pandemic but either as “digital theatre” or as a supplementary marketing strategy highlighting the primordially of the live event. Indeed, a “contextual conspiracy” between theatre goers, makers and critics made a vague video token of a live performance ontologically coincide with the live theatre performance it stood for, a major conceptual fallacy capitalizing on our desire for theatre. This live streamed or recorded “video theatre/drama”, signifying any theatre performance, mostly dramatic, displayed as a video on a digital platform in real time or just rendered available on the web on any base, free or on demand, differs from digital theatre in that it does not use digital technology as an element of a theatre performance, as in a projection or a robot; it does not supplement a live event as content for an outreach strategy; neither it involves digital media capitalizing on their properties, such as interactivity, to revise the actor-spectator arrangement, nor dramatizes video conferencing technologies, like i.e. cyformance (Jamieson, 2008; Dixon, 2007). Video theatre/drama differs so much in all its modalities (material, spatiotemporal, sensorial and semiotic) as well as its contextual and operational qualifying aspects (Elleström, 2021) from theatre performance that we can speak about a new and distinct media product, which tends to establish its own aesthetics and poetics, as it imposes an indexical semiotic layer on top of all signs of a theatre performance and deluges flat screens with indexes of ephemeral prototypes.

In much the same manner as a person’s photo may trigger a comparable cognitive load to the one produced when we perceive *the* person, it makes sense to claim that video theatre/drama made us symbolically participate in a live theatre performance, even from a distance. However, apart from remediations of immersive theatre performances that contain

a certain degree of interaction as live theatre performances and managed to rephrase this dynamic within a digital context, video theatre/drama did not revise in particular the established active actor-passive spectator correlation. The reader is here encouraged to contemplate the paradoxical sense of “originality” of video theatre/drama, as opposed to the staging and the “fakeness” of the prototype live theatre performance invaded by cameras recording, echoing the Baudrillardian simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1981). Theatre readjusted its semiotic modality in order to be recognizable as theatre and not “film” on the web. It was normalized, it became less “plethoric”, “hypermediated” or “intimate” as the camera capturing the performance and the projection on a flat computer screen render all stimuli fabricated out of pixels and make them content on the web. In order to effectively record a live theatre performance, a mainstream approach is usually followed. The theatre performance has to be kept under control and scenic action has to be spatially and temporally restricted, the actors’ acting needs readjustment, such as in terms of tone of voice or physicality. More “avant-garde” theatre directing approaches pose problems unless new media products, films, are made out of them. There is also a tendency for “idealization” and disembodiment of the experience of spectating, in that the camera may capture the live performance without an audience or may be set in an ideal position – or even adopt positions uninhabitable, in physical terms, by spectators.

Video theatre/drama, drawing upon the conceptual fallacy of massively mistaking video theatre/drama for theatre, is expected to have considerable byproducts, such as the irreversible mingling of theatre with videos on social platforms, which may cause irreversible morphological, contextual, and operational alterations to theatre as we knew it before the pandemic. For example, how are we expected to abandon for good ever again our cozy sofas, the “on demand” mode we got used to giving in whenever convenient, the flexibility of interrupting a spectating experience any time for any petty reason? Why not also drop a bit the “high art” attitude and have a laugh with the ads or viral videos suggested for our viewing in parallel on video platforms? After all, it is all just a click on the screen.

On the other hand, digital theatre performance, integrating interactive digital technologies in the live action, and cyberperformance, computer-mediated performance, not solely depicted on the computer screen but happening live through it (Jamieson, 2008), such as video conferencing

technologies actualising a theatre performance (Ball III, He, & Tassinari, 2020; Sermon, Dixon, Taylor, Packer & Gill, 2022), reached out to a wider audience either through VR technologies (Reis & Ashmore, 2022) or the general adoption of video conferencing for work during the quarantine. However, since both digital theatre and cyberformance remained mostly indifferent to the video theatre/drama tendency, they silently consented to the use of digital technologies by mainstream theatre performances that wanted to reach their passive spectators and somehow overlapped with it as displayed or broadcasted on social media. Hence, it could be argued that digital theatre and cyberformance partly failed to export their more “avant garde” character that their visionaries in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s had set with “networked”, “telematic performances” and “cyberdramas”. Was this a lost case of popularization of their theories and practices or did their idleness to resist intermingling with the mainstream actually give rise to a whole new understanding of the embeddedness and potential necessity of digital technologies within theatre making, as for example manifesting in “A Manifesto for the Future Stage” (The futureStage Research Group MetaLAB (at) Harvard, 2021), so as to emergent “New Performance Professions” being established? Time will show.

#### 4.2. Transformation of theatre communication

The exploration of multiplicities of theatre communication has led to various typological experimentations, from the communicative set-up of the Ancient Greek amphitheatre to the more individualized approach of immersive theatre<sup>9</sup>. However, the reduction of the theatre communicative transaction to a one-way paradigm, action on stage being watched by passive spectators, was for long, in some forms of theatre, a matter of etiquette and good manners convention, rather than a necessity for all theatre performance genres, imposed by the necessity of the masked face of the spectator as a measure for the coronavirus spreading prevention. What going to the theatre and watching a production means was totally reconsidered. In winter 2020, when the pandemic begun to strike globally, open-air productions were not generally possible, at least in the northern hemisphere. Strategies such as reducing the allowed number of spectators,

introducing masks and generally following health guidelines were implemented. These strategies were a compromise that impacted and transformed the theatrical communicative transaction between performers-spectators. They injected a novel element of arbitrariness to an established relationship and mediated one aspect of theatre's interface, air, making it "visible" through masks. Of course it was not the first time theatre systematically used masks, but masks have been used as a prop belonging to the spectacular universe of the theatre stage world, not extradiegetically, constantly reminding performers and spectators of the outer layer of "reality" encircling the world of the theatre stage.

The covering of the spectator's respiratory tract instantly implicates, at least partly, social interaction and hinders speech, vocal expressivity, paralinguistic, and exo-linguistic features in sign production, leading to the necessity of revising the mutuality of multimodal theatre communication and of rephrasing it as an one-way communication, rather than a two-way paradigm, a bit like watching a film. This shift is of major importance as theatre is based on real time social interaction between performers, actors and spectators. Also, between all the former and fictional characters embodied by the actors (Teske & Gut, 2021). By hindering two-way communication, social understanding between actors and spectators suffers, and make-believe, immersion into dramatic fiction becomes a matter of suspending disbelief rather than of actively triggering belief (Murray, 2012).

### 4.3. "Normalization" of the spectator

In order to make theatre an enduring element of the cultural industry in the pandemic, covid passes were introduced, which, at least initially, appeared as the longed-for panacea. Theatre makers and spectators were no longer deemed sufficient for the theatre performance event to unfold; they had to have extra credentials, apart from the money to buy a ticket. They had to bear pioneering technologies and own smartphones. The theatre maker and spectator consented to becoming "posthuman" by agreeing to the use of these extensions "in order to". The normalization of the theatre maker and the spectator may have been a socially beneficial strategy, but not necessarily an absolutely ethical one. For example, sensitive personal data became visible through

inaccessibility to theatre, due to the lack of a valid covid pass. Such issues may include biological/psychological states preventing vaccination, ideology, religious beliefs or simply lack of access due to poverty in developing countries. Theatre became a tool for mass political manipulation or marginalization, on the basis of individuals' or even social groups' compliance, another "bonus" option available to some. This overall circumstance imposes a central mainstream logic to a media type favouring deviations and does not particularly favour the political character of theatre performances.

#### **4.4. Theatre in the open air**

This strategy came as a remedy to the danger of closed spaces. When the season changed, the first lockdowns and restrictions of social distancing were left behind and open air spaces became theatre's safehold. Performing in summer festivals, theatre in monuments, open-air theatres, amphitheatres and site-specific solutions came as a response to the danger of the indoors by professional companies that adopted such strategies and adapted their scenic and performative idioms. This solution came as a counter-strategy to help keep the essence of mutual, multimodal theatre communication flowing and returned a sense of thin air to the body of theatre's interface. The open-air strategy acted as a filter preventing the occurrence of theatre performances destined for closed spaces. The use of technology, for example, with sophisticated projections, had to be renegotiated. Acting may have been forced to become more "grotesque", "extrovert" and "physical" in order to appeal from a distance and compete with other extra-diegetic stimuli, such as noise from the city or the sunset at the back, which can scatter the focus of spectators' attention.

#### **4.5. Prosumerization of theatre**

Obviously, with the pandemic, a huge crisis in working in the arts occurred. The crisis also functioned as a red herring, shifting the center of audience attention from what theatre makers do and the qualities of their performances to whether they would be able to carry on doing it at

all. Mainstream, postdramatic, immersive, avant-garde, off-off, fringe, national and cultural institutional stages were all in the same melting pot. It did not matter whether we used to find what those people did banal, boring, or merely “entertaining” as opposed to “artistic”. We became sensitive to their agendas and felt empathy. In doing so, as our social sensitivity overtook the aesthetic one, Societàs Raffaello Sanzio performances and mainstream musicals coexisted on the same ontological plane. Although this may sound alarming to the critics and the academy, when coupled with the remedy of prosumerization, a whole new horizon opened up for the estimation of “less artistic”, amateur forms of expression and the abandonment of the “highbrow art” approach, leading to possible revisions of privileges held by postdramatic erudite theatre/performance makers.

However, not only different media products coexisted on the same plane; artists and workers in the cultural industry also did. The “support the art workers” moto reflects exactly this ontological intermingling. The artist started coinciding with the cultural industry worker, who could have been a technician or just an employee working for a theatre stage. Likewise, the cultural industry worker received an artist status, regardless of the qualities of their practice, so that the vague “creative” category termed “art worker” emerged.

As the artist identified with the cultural industry worker, people not making a living from the arts but deeply involved with them, such as the amateurs or the lovers of theatre were left out from this arrangement. The pandemic breached the ongoing democratization of theatre by underestimating the importance of theatre making compared to that of working for the cultural industry. The amateurs never received answers: why is their highly artistic college production less artistic than the mainstream musical, also to be nurtured and protected? Why may a technician claim artist status because they work for the cultural industry whereas them, devoted but neglected Thespians, failed to gain artist status and attract attention? These amateurs are the theatre prosumers (Toffler, 1980) that have been admired in student theatre groups, taken part in interactive/participatory theatre, attended drama schools, gone to yoga classes or joined voice seminars. They may be familiar with Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski and the avant-garde, the privilege of delving into whom was for ages reserved for a white middle-class western elite. Instead, out in the park with their friends they practiced a bit of

Peter Brook, Grotowski, and *Complicite*. In the parks or suitable urban spaces, they met even professional actors rehearsing. Who was to tell the difference, apart from few culture connoisseurs or their accountants, knowing some earn a living out of theatre while others do not?

It would not be fair to have undergone a democratization of theatre without loss of privileges for the “artist”, especially as it became feasible for anyone to become one (McLaughlin, 2021). The category of the “art worker” betrays the possibility that someone may be an art maker, and a “talented” one but work outside the cultural industry, often striving to find a longed for position. This remedy responds to the augmenting democratization and ludification of theatre. Theatre prosumers, drama school students, amateurs, even larpers and young artists caused a localization of theatre performance in neighborhoods, a sudden de-institutionalization and popularization of theatre making, inducing further degrees of democratization into theatre practice. This may have had an irreversible impact on theatre’s artistic or professional footprint, but simultaneously increased the fun and participation factor as well as reconnecting theatre performance to play and gaming.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Hopefully, it has become clear that pandemic theatre performance pathologies manifesting in symptoms needing urgent remedies impacted on a living organism. As mentioned earlier, theatre performance was in a process of considerable evolution. Theatre and performance studies were pre-pandemically in fruitful dialogue with various other disciplines, such as intermedial and multimodal studies, screen studies and human computer interaction. There was an extrovert tendency both in terms of practice as well as theory, an expansion of the horizons for the theatre/performance media products and the disciplines looking into them.

The pandemic caused a considerable shift to the contextual and operational qualifying aspects of theatre. All the basics Brecht described as “theatre”, the liveness, presence, happenings, “beings” involved and purpose had to be revised. Liveness was renegotiated as a temporal rather than a spatial notion, reinvented, for example, as in “live streaming”.

Presence was connected to the subjectivity of experiencing a media product, receiving connotations of immersion, by focusing on the spectators' attention, or the actor-spectator complicity. Happenings between human beings retained their symbolic aspect while in literal terms they suffered great readjustments, with a cost in the communicative transaction that theatre is. Also, in terms of purpose, the important thing was to make theatre rather than good theatre.

The urgent remedies theatre performance called forth to relieve its pandemic symptoms have been, more or less, temporarily effective. Some of them may well carry on after the pandemic is over because they offer relief in relation to chronic pathologies. For example, the augmentation of the theatre spectating experience within the metaverse with special equipment for a 360° hermetic spectating experience might win over the effort needed to physically go to the theatre, especially under the pressure of the anti-climate change agenda, promoting the reduction of “unnecessary” transport. Such a strategy pursued temporarily may linger on as the notions of “live” and “social” have been rephrased as “immersive” and “connected” respectively, especially after the pandemic experience. The pandemic has brought a need for introspection. A tendency to perform metaphorical vivisections of the theory and practice of theatre performance was born through the contextual and operational pressures imposed by the pandemic. The theoretical and creative tensions within a media product or very similar media products are just as important as the tensions with other media products. Unresolved inconsistencies and contradictions on the corpus of theatre performance (+ studies) that may have once been deeply functional and fruitful could, as they linger on, prevent a vigorous disposition of theatre and performance studies when seeking synergies with other disciplines. Richard Schechner (2002) has underlined that anything may be read “as” performance, but not all “is” performance (pags. 38-42). In order for both theatre and performance studies to reciprocate the tendency for inter-, cross- and trans-disciplinary discourse, they should not just stand as empty shells waiting to accommodate new ideas; on the contrary, they should reciprocate this appetite by finding a solid base of complicity between them. Indicative topics for investigation could include: starting from re-evaluating the need for the development of a disciplinary synergy and terminological consensus; re-informing perceptions of drama in both disciplines as necessary, even if a re-visit of

Eco's notion of ostension (Guillemette & Cossette, 2006) is required; acknowledging drama as a contextual anchor of "online theatre"; reading "online theatre" as a media transformation into video theatre/drama, the existence of which grants denoted limits between theatre, performance and digital theatre; evaluating the impact of democratization and ludification of the arts onto theatre performance, not only in terms of spectating/participating but also in terms of creating, making it, such as in larps or pervasive gaming; taking into account prosumerism in theatre making; and revising concepts and perceptions in terms of intradiegetic and extradiegetic political correctness, so as to either deconstruct the academic and cultural hegemony and likings for politically incorrect art and/or artists or allow the same freedom of expression and acknowledge political correctness as one of the aesthetic tools of evaluation of media products rather than an ethical tool that has to be embedded in the creation process, hence belonging to the field of poetics. The creation of a nostalgia for politically incorrect artifacts and/or artists, unless synchronic freedom of expression beyond the horizon of political correctness is equally allowed, needs further contemplation. An attempt has been made to demarcate the impact of and response to the superimposed pandemic context onto theatre performance (+studies) chronic underlying conditions, calling for suitable remedies. Its key unresolved issues, inconsistencies and contradictions at work, prior to and during the pandemic have been here discussed as pathological, mostly as vulnerabilities requiring further care. It is time to trace the potential in reading those vulnerabilities as sources of power that could re-inform the societal and political dimensions of theatre performance.

Despite theatre making/going being a rather dangerous practice in its diachronicity, even connected to riots (McEvoy, 2016), for example, the willingness to further commodify theatre by consenting to any theatre making and at any cost brings theatre performance (+studies) face to face with a dead end. It introduces a need for "meta-aesthetics", a flat ontological approach between media products and their cultural values we should be ready to embrace. After all, this flatness is the original child of modernism for history and theory of art. The evaluative approaches to theatre/performance making are over, critique is no longer more important than likes/dislikes and spectators' comments on a video platform. The persistent elitism commands a distinction between cultural production of amateurs and professionals; however, their media

products become available on almost the same basis, or, furthermore, institutional theatrical/performative entertainment simulates the paths of gaming and urban art.

If pathology signifies an imbalance, a distance from normalcy, since when has that really become a bad thing? Pathologies give uniqueness to humans; it could do so with disciplines and media products. If we are reluctant to cure the pathologies in theatre/performance because we need them for a certain biodiversity to emerge and we find it politically incorrect to “correct” them, why not implement the same radical approach towards the pathologies of the pandemic, revising our concept of normalcy in order to include biodiverse attitudes towards safety, psychological issues or even long covid? Resisting homogenization in theatre performance but nodding yes to homogenization in our quotidian lives is so deeply politically incorrect, as it deeply insults differentiality. In a theatre and performance studies context, all the disruptions and declinations from normalcy give birth to new phenomena. What Thespis did may have appeared as wrong, as a pathology, but it gave rise to Ancient Greek Drama. What Artaud did may have appeared aggressive and weird, but led to a theatrical and performative multimodal attack assimilated by VR (Weber, 2009). What Brecht did may have appeared as outside the norm, but Brecht’s alienation effect is the basis of post-modern performance. With pathologies being simultaneously pathogenic but also part of the evolutionary process as adaptative responses to environmental changes, we should realize that when speaking about theatre, “normal” is actually lack of normalcy. It is then time to revise how to meet societal and political pressures attempting to render theatre and performance a tool for normalization and marginalization.

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Αριστοτέλης* (pub. 1991). *Περί Ποιητικής*. Μετάφρασις υπό Σ. Μενάνδρου & Εισαγωγή, κείμενον και ερμηνεία υπό Ι. Συκουτρή, Ακαδημία Αθηνών, Ελληνική Βιβλιοθήκη. Αθήνα: Βιβλιοπωλείο της Εστίας.
- ARORA, S. (2021). A Manifesto to Decentre Theatre and Performance Studies. *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 41, no. 1, 12-20.

- AUSLANDER, P. (1999). *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London: Routledge.
- BALL III, J., R., HE, W. & TASSINARY, L., G. (2020). The zoom function. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 16:(3), 221-225. Retrieved from DOI: [10.1080/14794713.2020.1831290](https://doi.org/10.1080/14794713.2020.1831290)
- BAUDRILLARD, J. (1981). *Simulacres et simulation*. Paris: Galilée.
- BLAKEMORE, E. (2017, February 13). Rare Photographs Could Show Paul Gauguin in Tahiti: The newly discovered photos are from the summer of 1896. *Smithsonian Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/rare-photographs-show-paul-gauguin-in-tahiti-180962112/>
- BRECHT, B. (1964). A Short Organum for the Theatre. In J. Willet (Ed. And trans.), *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (pp.179-205). London: Methuen.
- BRUHN, J. & SCHIRRMACHER, B. (2022). Intermedial Studies. In J. Bruhn & B. Schirmacher (Eds.), *Intermedial Studies: An Introduction to Meaning Across Media (1st ed.)* (pp.3-27). London: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1616190/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- CASE, S.-E. & REINELT, J. (1991). Introduction. In S.-E. Case and J. Reinelt (Eds.), *The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics* (ix-xix). Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- CARLSON, M. (2002). The Resistance to Theatricality. *SubStance* 31, *Special Issue: Theatricality*, no. 2/3, issue 98/99, 238-250. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3685489>
- CARLSON, M. (2015). Postdramatic Theatre and Postdramatic Performance. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença* 5, no. 3 (2015), 577-595. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1590/2237-266053731>
- CARROLL, N. & BANES, S. (2001). Theatre: Philosophy, Theory, and Criticism. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 16, no. 1, 155-166.
- CZYŹEWSKI, M. & WORONIECKA G. WITH DISCUSSANTS (2018). Paradoxes and Traps in the Democratisation of Culture. In M. Czyżewski & G. Woroniecka (Eds.), *Paradoxes and Traps in the Democratisation of Culture. Societas/Communitas* 2-3, no. 26-3, 17-42. Retrieved from [http://societas-communitas.isns.uw.edu.pl/numery/26-3/Societas\\_3\\_18\\_WWW.pdf](http://societas-communitas.isns.uw.edu.pl/numery/26-3/Societas_3_18_WWW.pdf)

- DIXON, S. (2007). *Digital Performance: A History of New media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- DRAGOŞ, R. (2020). Theater, Between Technology and Visual Arts. *Theatrical Colloquia 10*, no.2 (2020): 85-92. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2478/tco-2020-0022>
- EDMONDSON, L. (2007). Of Sugarcoating and Hope. *TDR (1988-)* 51, no. 2, 7–10. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4492756>
- ELAM, K. (1980). *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Routledge.
- ELLESTRÖM, L. (2010). The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations. In L. Elleström (Ed.), *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, (pp.11-48). London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- ELLESTRÖM, L., FUSILLO M. & PETRICOLA, M. (2020). Everything is intermedial. A Conversation with Lars Elleström. *Between10*, no. 20: 27-45. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.13125/2039-6597/4443>
- ELLESTRÖM, L. (2021). The Modalities of Media II: An Expanded Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations. In L. Elleström (Ed.), *Beyond Media Borders, Volume 1* (pp. 3-91). Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49679-1\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49679-1_1)
- FORSYTH, G. & LOSCHE, D. (1991). Introduction. *Theatricality, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art 9*, no. 1, 7-10. Retrieved from [10.1080/03146464.1991.11432910](https://doi.org/10.1080/03146464.1991.11432910).
- FÜHRER, H. & SCHOENE, J. (2022). Media modalities of theatrical space. In J. Bruhn and B. Schirmmacher (Eds.), *Intermedial Studies: An Introduction to Meaning Across Media*, London, UK and New York: Routledge, pp. 255-264.
- FUNKHOUSER, W., K. JR. (2018). Pathology: The Clinical Description of Human Disease. *Molecular Pathology*, 217.
- GOLDBERG, R., L. (2001). *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- GUILLEMETTE, L. & COSSETTE, J. (2006). Mode of Sign Production. In L. Hébert (dir.), Signo [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.signosemio.com/eco/modes-of-sign-production.asp>

- HICKLING, L. (2010, October 2). Interview: Marina Abramović. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/oct/03/interview-marina-abramovic-performance-artist>
- JAMIESON, H. V. (2008). Adventures in Cyberformance: Experiments at the interface of theatre and the internet. MA Thesis, Queensland University of Technology. Retrieved from [https://eprints.qut.edu.au/28544/1/Helen\\_Jamieson\\_Thesis.pdf](https://eprints.qut.edu.au/28544/1/Helen_Jamieson_Thesis.pdf)
- KERSHAW, B. (2007). Pathologies of Hope. Interview by Performance Paradigm. *Performance Paradigm* 3. Retrieved from <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/index.php/journal/article/view/37/38>
- KIRBY, M. (1975). On Political Theatre. *The Drama Review* 19, no. 2 - *Political Theatre Issue*, 129-135.
- KRISTIANSEN, D., M. (1968). What Is Dada? *Educational Theatre Journal* 20, no. 3, 457-62. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/3205188>
- LIEDKE, H. & PIETRZAK-FRANGER, M. (2021). Viral Theatre: Preliminary Thoughts on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Online Theatre. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 9, no. 1, 128-144. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1515/jcde-2021-0009>
- MADISON, D. S. & HAMERA, J. (2005). Performance Studies at the Intersections. In D. S. Madison and J. Hamera (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Performance Studies* (xvi-xxv). Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005.
- MATTHEWS, B. (1910). *A Study of the Drama*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- MCÉVOY, S. (2016). *Theatrical Unrest: Ten Riots in the History of the Stage, 1601-2004*. New York: Routledge.
- McKENZIE, J. (2006). Is Performance Studies Imperialist? *TDR* 50, no. 4, 5-8.
- McLAUGHLIN, R. (2021, November 6). 'I went from having to borrow money to making \$4m in a day': how NFTs are shaking up the art world. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/nov/06/how-nfts-non-fungible-tokens-are-shaking-up-the-art-world>

- MENDELSON, M. (2017, August 14). The Women of Dada, from Hannah Höch to Beatrice Wood. *Artsy*. Retrieved from <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-women-dada-hannah-hoch-beatrice-wood>
- MURRAY, J., H. (2012, January 30). Active Creation of Belief. Retrieved from <https://inventingthemedium.com/2012/01/30/active-creation-of-belief/>
- PHELAN, P. (1993). *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge.
- RAESSENS, J. (2006). Playful Identities, or the Ludification of Culture. *Games and Culture 1*, no. 1, 52-57.
- ΠΟΥΧΝΕΡ, Β. (2010). *Θεωρητικά Θεάτρου: Κριτικές Παρατηρήσεις στις Θεωρίες του Θεατρικού Φαινομένου. Η σημειωτική μέθοδος – Η ανθρωπολογική μέθοδος – Η φαινομενολογική μέθοδος*. Αθήνα: Παπαζήσης.
- REINELT, J. (2011). The Performance of Political Correctness. *Theatre Research International 36*, no. 2, 134-47. Retrieved from DOI:[10.1017/S030788311000216](https://doi.org/10.1017/S030788311000216)
- REINELT, J. (2017). Introduction. *Key Words: A Journal of Cultural Materialism 15*, 9-22.
- REIS, A. B. & ASHMORE, M. (2022) From video streaming to virtual reality worlds: an academic, reflective, and creative study on live theatre and performance in the metaverse, *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 18:1, 7-28, DOI: [10.1080/14794713.2021.2024398](https://doi.org/10.1080/14794713.2021.2024398)
- SCHECHNER, R. (1976). Selective Inattention: A Traditional Way of Spectating Now Part of the Avant-Garde. *Performing Arts Journal 1*, 1, 8-19.
- SCHECHNER, R. (2002). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London-New York: Routledge.
- SERMON, P., DIXON, S., TAYLOR, S., P., PACKER, R. & GILL, S. (2022) A Telepresence Stage: or how to create theatre in a pandemic – project report, *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 18:1, 48-68, DOI: [10.1080/14794713.2021.2015562](https://doi.org/10.1080/14794713.2021.2015562)
- SPINGARN, J. E. (1910, March 9). The New Criticism: A Lecture Delivered at Columbia University, March 9, 1910. New York: Columbia University Press 1911 [1931].

- TESKE, J., K. & GUT, A. (2021). Social Understanding in Fictional Contexts and the Question of Error Detection. *Avant*, Vol. XII, no. 1. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.26913/avant.2021.01.03>.
- THE FUTURESTAGE RESEARCH GROUP METALAB (AT) HARVARD (2021). El escenario del futuro: Manifiesto / octubre de 2021. *Acotaciones 2*, 47, 387-401. Retrieved from <https://www.resad.com/Acotaciones.new/index.php/ACT/article/view/597/730>
- TIMPLALEXI, E. (2020). Theatre and Performance Go Massively Online During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications and Side Effects. *Homo Virtualis 3*, no. 2, 43-54. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.12681/homvir.25448>
- TIMPLALEXI, E. (2021). The Political Dimension of Virtuality in Dramatic Theatre: Diachronic and Synchronic Challenges. *Comunicazioni sociali*, no. 3, 415-424.
- TOFFLER, A. (1980). *The Third Wave*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- TURNER, V. (1979). Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology. *The Kenyon Review 1*, no. 3 (Summer, 1979), 80-93.
- WEBER, S. (2009). 11. 'The Virtual Reality of Theater': Antonin Artaud. In *Theatricality as Medium*, 277-294. New York: Fordham University Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823238675-014>

7. NOTAS.

- <sup>1</sup> According to the authors, disagreement over the essence of performance studies gives it the strength to form vigorous multidisciplinary alliances.
- <sup>2</sup> For an introduction to the “archeology” of the relevant problematic, see Matthews, 1910, and Spingarn, 1911 [1931]).
- <sup>3</sup> An emblematic example is the Phelan (1993) vs. Auslander (1999) debate on the notion of “liveness”.
- <sup>4</sup> Schechner (2002) clearly considers the performing arts, including theatre, as “performances”, and performance studies the discipline of their study. Theatre studies, despite comprising also the rather inexhaustible field of the philosophy of theatre, is here probably understood as a “limited-domain discipline” (p. 2) - as opposed to the vigorous and expanding discipline of performance studies.
- <sup>5</sup> Aristotle may belong to the “dead white men” tradition, but was spatiotemporally located considerably closer to the archeology of storytelling and dramatic expression, while also cognitively nurturing one of the biggest imperialists of history, Alexander the Great. The Macedonian Empire comprised various territories, hence, Aristotle’s knowledge of dramatic expression must have been very broad and would have impacted his perception and theory of tragedy. In *Περὶ Ποιητικῆς*, for example, he frames theatre-making within a festival tradition (*Ἀριστοτέλης*, pub. 1991: [1449a - 1456a]); Schechner and Turner would approve.
- <sup>6</sup> Edmondson (2007) here underlines the nuances of scholarly violence.
- <sup>7</sup> For a better understanding of the use of the term “media product”, see Bruhn & Schirmacher, 2022, p. 15-16.
- <sup>8</sup> For a concise description of the term “media product”, which has been already used a few times here, see Bruhn & Schirmacher, 2022, p. 15-16.
- <sup>9</sup> Führer & Schoene (2022) highlight in this chapter the ways in which the material and spatiotemporal modality of the theatre becomes of performative value.