The Impact of Virtual Reality on the Future of English Theatre: A Speculative Analysis

تأثير الواقع الافتراضي على مستقبل المسرح الإنجليزي: تحليل استشرافي

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Abstract:

This study considers the future of English Theatre when it is dominated by new virtual reality (VR) media tools, and how performance modes, narrative strategies and audience engagements become infiltrated with un-bodied digital technologies. Informed deeply by the field of performance theory, postmodernism and digital media research, the scope of this article takes into consideration how VR is rewriting a continuum of presence in theatre space across levels ranging from physical to individual body condition within an embodied environment. In addition, it outlines the changes in recent years and offers a brief overview of theatrical practice from its Renaissance beginnings: taking English theatre itself as an interesting case model for hybrid production, it shows how this modernist symbolic commodity has come into being at present and describes the various mediums used within its production procedure. The author also discusses the cautions and questions raised by digital technology as it enters real human quest for meaning in the machine; that is to say, questions such as personal or collective authenticity, convenience and scientific or not thinking patterns. In considering the future of stage electronic literature, it is stated that by incorporation with technician innovation and positive humanism English theatre could become an interactive art form; it should be a constantly interactive medium of communication basically accessible to all types of people. Therefore, VR is not to replace live theater, but more its extension--opening the creative and social possibilities even for ethical investigation in this digital age.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, English Theatre, Performance Theory, Digital Media, Postmodernism.

الملخّص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة التأثير التحويلي لتقنية الواقع الافتراضي (VR) على مستقبل المسرح الإنجليزي، من خلال تحليل الكيفية التي تعيد بها التقنيات الرقمية الغامرة تشكيل الأداء والسرد وتجربة الجمهور. وانطلاقًا من نظريات الأداء، وما بعد

الحداثة، والإعلام الرقمي، تبحث الدراسة في كيفية إعادة الواقع الافتراضي صياغة المفاهيم التقليدية للحضور الجسدي، والتجسيد، والفضاء المسرحي. كما تتبّع التطور التاريخي للمسرح الإنجليزي منذ الابتكارات الميكانيكية في عصر النهضة وحتى التجارب الرقمية المعاصرة، مبرزةً دور الواقع الافتراضي كوسيط هجين يدمج بين الفضاءين المادي والافتراضي. وتتناول الورقة أيضًا الأبعاد الأخلاقية والجمالية مثل الأصالة، وإمكانية الوصول، والحفاظ على الإبداع الإنساني ضمن بيئات الأداء المؤتمتة تكنولوجيًا. ومن خلال هذا التحليل الاستشرافي، تؤكد الدراسة أنّ مستقبل المسرح الإنجليزي يكمن في قدرته على دمج التقدم التكنولوجي بالقيم الإنسانية، ليغدو فنًّا تفاعليًا، تشاركيًا، ومتاحًا عالميًا. ويُقدَّم الواقع الافتراضي هنا ليس بوصفه بديلًا عن المسرح الحي، بل باعتباره امتدادًا له، يوسّع آفاقه الإبداعية والاجتماعية والأخلاقية في العصر الرقمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الواقع الافتراضي، المسرح الإنجليزي، نظرية الأداء، الوسائط الرقمية، ما بعد الحداثة.

1. Introduction:

Role of technology; the various kinds of theatre Technology has changed not only probabilities, prosceni-ums, and styles, but also The Theatre. This has changed the way that people buy, and look at, art. In English we will be considering the potential dramatic applications of VR, and it might make us ask ourselves to think more deeply about spatiality, narrative structure, actor versus audience. As it migrates yet closer to the digital, scholars and practitioners are also starting to ask what such experiential technologies might do 'to the way theatre looks' (Causey, 2016).

The history of the English stage is shorthand for technological and economic change in Britain, from Renaissance 'mechanical arts' to postmodern hypermedia. VR borrows from this mode, taking it one step further: immersive storytelling, a state in which both creators and audiences find themselves floating within stories rather than consuming them. This transformation challenges the conventional binaries of the real world and cyberspace, giving rise to a new hybrid performance through the blending of bodily materiality and virtual performativity (Giannachi, 2004).

Furthermore, there was greater demand for virtual performance space because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which pushed theater makers to experiment with online and extended-reality worlds. So, VR is a sideshow no more, but rather a medium for future theatre that could have legs in terms of access, engagement and artistic playfulness. It is in order to address these that this speculative paper turns its attention to how VR technologies may shape the future development of English theatre, which includes performance aesthetics, audience experience and

cultural production values in the context of a digitized world (See Broadhurst & Machon, 2021).

2. Theoretical Framework:

The methodological framework for this study derives from Performance Theory, Postmodernism and Digital Media Theory to give a theoretical basis in which we can critically re-approach the secoupling of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies within English theatre. These frameworks reveal the ways in which VR remolds performativity, spectatorship and theatricality.

2.1 Performance Theory:

For scholars such as Schechner (2003) and Fischer-Lichte (2008), Performance Theory highlights the dynamism of performance, as a dialogue between performer and space and audience. Schechner's notion of "restored behavior" that actions recur and are transformed in new instances - is a useful way to think about how VR restores traditional theatre within virtual environments. In performances that make use of virtual reality, the experience in which actor and spectator interact with one another is enveloped by digital settings through which their senses are mediated. This influences reciprocal response between presence and suspension of disbelief (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). performance theory as a framework for examining how immersion and participation are reconfigured in virtual theatre spaces.

2.2 Postmodern and Intermedial Perspectives:

A way of reading which could be applied to this production is postmodernist theatre, focusing on hybridity, fragmentation and intertextuality. VR and postmodern aestheticism VR are also obviously aligned with a postmodern aesthetic through the destabilization of real and virtual, participant/audience and actor, fiction/non-fiction. Lehmann's notion of "post dramatic theatre" is especially applicable given that VR performances tend to dispense with linear story-telling and static space in favor of multisensory and participatory functions. Additionally, intermedial theory promotes the fusion of media forms within theatre and therefore may see VR as a continuation of this tradition, broadening the semiotic and sensory palette of the live theatre (Chapple & Kattenbelt, 2006).

2.3 Digital Media and Immersion Theory:

Digital Media Theory explores how technological mediation shapes the production and reception of cultural products. It is Bolter and Grusin's (1999)

concept of "remediation"- the way new media constantly refashions old media that determines VR simulation to reposition theatrical conventions through digitalization. Theory of immersion and presence as it explains what underlies the experience of "being there" in an imaginary world built by VR. In such settings, theatre is functioning as a digital space in which not only are members of the audience engaged as viewers, but also their role as authors of meaning (Ryan, 2001).

3. The Evolution of English Theatre:

English theatre has undergone changes in its history from the primitive forms of local entertainments and pageants to that of occupation by foreign conquerors, and back through numerous experiments influenced by Eastern and Western drama. From the morality plays of the Middle Ages to the digital performances of today, English theatre has both mirrored and affected changes in society and developments in dramatic literature. Understanding changes occurring in live performance provide invaluable context for speculation on the possible effects virtual 3D (or VR) may have upon theatre's future forms and purposes.

3.1 Early and Renaissance Theatre:

English theatre stemming from liturgical and morality plays couched in the medieval era trained its audience toward allegory and religious narrative. A richer, more secular theatre also emerged during the Renaissance, through the works of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. The building of a number of permanent public theatres such as The Globe Theatre in 1599 was an important stage in this process, as it helped cement the professional nature of many players and enhance their status with touring companies. Theatrical performance during this time was a sociable, communal act that took place in the presence of actualized bodies of different spectators (Bevington, 2014).

3.2 The Restoration and Eighteenth Century:

After the Puritan ban on public stage representations, the Restoration/18th century began with a re-opening of the theatres in 1660 and continued to push dramatic expression to new limits, with actors playing characters written closer to their true natures rather than as mouthpieces for rhetoric, greasepaint and revealing costumes replacing masks, dynastic and political plays giving way to bureaucracies, and special effects stimulating rain machines or parrots hooked into pulley systems. Moveable scenery, artificial lighting, and female performances all meant technological and also cultural modernity. Theatre in the eighteenth century

had expanded into commercial ventures that more resembled for-profit professional theatres with both local and foreign audiences. This was also the forceful start of theater as an institution that would pave the way for modern playhouse and actor-manager system (Hume 2005).

3.3 The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries:

During the Victorian era, theatre became more and more commercialized industrialization was changing how people lived and worked. Drama escalated followed by realism and then naturalism representing social angst, and class conflict. The new playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde took theatre to the level of social comment and intellectual discourse. Technological developments such as lighting allowed for increasing realism on stage and attempted to place scenic improvements the closest men had ever come to a picturesque naturalism. Not until the beginning of the twentieth century did this hero of modernist experimentation and avant-garde movements such as Fauvism or Futurism arrive to give traditional representation a run for its money and thereby clear space centuries later for Drastic innovations in dramatics were brought forth by Harley Granville-Barker, T.S. Eliot, later and even still later Samuel Beckett (Booth, 1991).

3.4 Postwar to Contemporary Theatre:

The art world, post-World War II and was the beginning of a more diverse style and international reach. The Theater of the Absurd, political theater and feminist drama preserved English drama within a new thematic and stylistic mold. Theatre in the late 20th was increasingly intermedial, as film, projection and more recently digital media were employed within live performance. But then came companies such as Blast Theory who demonstrated how a form of interactive/site Specific performance could start to erode the line between physical and digital space. It's a trajectory which rather naturally results in the maximal utilization of Virtual Reality through accelerating, extending, and converging earlier experiments to produce a new portmanteau form completely immersive experiences that collapse the distinction between theatre and virtuality (Dixon 2007).

3.5 Towards the Digital and Virtual Future:

English play is in a state of continual change during the 21st century as we witness globalization and new technologies. Digital dramaturgy and livestreams, on the other hand, are harbingers of a different kind of staged event, in which

many ways to watch and share stories come together. VR is the latest iteration of this cycle not just how performances can be created and viewed, but also what 'presence' and 'liveness' mean in a theatrical experience. As English theatre returns to constructs of VR it is reanimated in relation to its colonial history as a medium that serves progress, community and the re-imagining of human experience through new mediations (Broadhurst & Machon 2021).

4. Understanding Virtual Reality in Performance:

Virtual Reality (VR) is an unruly medium in today's performances, turning traditional concepts of space, being there and audience presence on their head. As a product of immersive digital technology, VR enables users to perceive and interact with three-dimensional environments by stimulating their senses. To those in theatre, it is both technological progress and creative methodology; play on the edges of reality/virtuality, real/simulated. Therefore, VR in performance, if it is to be known at all, needs to be considered for its technological development and its aesthetic proposition and asked what kind of a new theatre art form this project into/status could this allocate to the idea of the performing arts.

4.1 Defining Virtual Reality:

Virtual Reality is defined as a form of computer-generated simulation where one or more users become fully immersed in a digitally created space, using head-mounted displays usually with position tracking and auditory cues (Milgram & Kishino, 1994). Whereas traditional media fosters observational distance, VR positions individuals inside the experience, enabling real-time interaction and spatial navigation." (Murray 1997, p171) "In VR the user creates a procedural narrative in which each enactment allows another context to emerge. In the theater, this interaction makes the viewer an active participant in the creation of performance experience.

4.2 The Convergence of Theatre and Technology:

Theatre and technology are no strangers to one another – they have influenced each other back since the mechanical stage effects of the Renaissance through to digital projections in postmodern performance. VR inherits this lineage, with a simultaneous extension and disruption of the conventions of theatre (Causey, 2016). It is the continuation of theatre's centuries-long pursuit of a sensual foundation, with all thoughts and forms about theatre then becoming transformed -that again challenges this stage's fixed physicality. Such perspectives as Dixon's (2007) consider VR performance to blur the distinction

between live and mediated presence, into hybrid forms of embodiment where performer gestures or audience movements are in the world we share, while simultaneously transported elsewhere. This synthesis takes shape with respect to intermedial theatre, turning the stage into a digitally enhanced immersive space for storytelling.

4.3 Presence, Embodiment, and Immersion:

One of the measures of VR experience quality is presence; this refers to the 'psychological' perception of oneself in a virtual world (Lombard and Ditton, 1997). Connectedness in traditional theatre is simply being present together in the live presence of actors and audience. But in VR, presence is a technical matter, based on multisensory input from the headset and motion tracking as well as from a reactive environment. This disrupts traditional conceptions of embodiment, where users inhabit digital avatars or virtual bodies (Biocca 1997). VR is the main platform for generating experiential intimacy that crosses these forms through for example site specific immersive theatre, where audience presence and actions determine narrative end. So, immersion replaces a passive witnesser of action with an agent, and in doing so exposes drama to possibilities.

4.4 The Virtual Stage and Spatial Transformation:

The concept of a stage is entirely reimagined in the world of VR performance. Free from the constraints of architecture, VR stages are sculpted in their infinite plasticity to a point where they can articulate all possible worlds beyond those even imaginable in physical theatre. By contrast, in chat-based environments where people are free to navigate through virtual space and communicate with each other as text agents (Giannachi 2004), virtually no personal investment is shown. These are places that it is feasible to give a performance that changes from realist to abstract, in which all and everything turns into both then but also flattened differences in between time-states, geography and materiality. What this reveals, then, is the degree in which VR itself has defined the space of the theatrical as that which is no longer bound and static, but interactive and dynamic a network of sensory and narrative potentialities.

4.5 Ethical and Aesthetic Considerations:

Virtual reality represents new moral and aesthetic challenges about, oh, I don't know, what we mean by authenticity or access or the minimum requirement we can expect from a human performer at all as technology itself invents vast new creative possibilities. Someone like Packer and Jordan (2001) are afraid that

virtual performance may bleed the life of live theater away, replacing real human reactions with computer simulations. Still others, however, see VR as a platform for an even more radical form of embodiment: the ability to try new selves and new perspectives. For the rest of us, though, the question remains: how do you bring together techno-spectacle and emotional load packaging, or what has allowed theatre to survive as a human medium.

5. Potential Impacts of VR on English Theatre:

Virtual Reality poses new moral and aesthetic questions about, among other things, authenticity or access or the presence of a live human performer even as it opens up vast new territories of creative possibility. Packer and Jordan (2001) the concept of computer-generated actors, considering it repulsive; they have great fears that attempting to virtualize performance will steal theatre's soul, leaving behind only grotesque parodies. But there are others who view VR as an opportunity to take the concept of embodiment a step further, adopting new characters and perspectives.

5.1 Transformation of Performance and Acting:

The fact that the actor's engagement is radically transformed in this new form of VR-laden performance. Conventional theatre performance as a physical act of presence, voice projection and interaction with other performers and audience. In virtual reality, however, performers come together in a more human way. Body capture and their virtual avatars create embodiment experiences for VR. Performers need to also learn how to act not just be authentically on play but also pass legitimately through the digital interfaces, merging theatrical performance with animation art and game design (Causey, 2016).

In addition, VR can be used to act upon virtual stages which are not physically located in the actors' vicinity allowing collaboration over a distance. This malleability of form has potential, making new art forms possible and questioning conventional definitions of "liveness". What we have here is a performance of mediating the physical and digital, where presence is re-constituted through an immersive mediation (Auslander 2008).

5.2 Redefining Stage Design and Spatial Aesthetics:

VR 'Stage design' ~ Theatres beyond spatial constraints in the world of VR, stage design of the theatre expands limitlessly and becomes an infinite creative space that is not bound by physical architecture. Designers may build entirely

immersive worlds that change in reaction not only to the progression of a story, but also audience responses. As notes, such "virtual scenography" allows performances to break out of realism and open up to hybrid spaces where imagination meets simulation. It could also carry real potential in terms of its application to English theatre imagines how this kind of capability would transform the work of scenographers and directors, with productions forming an entirely integrated whole, lighting, sound and movement all operating within digital landscapes. Thus, VR stage becomes not only aesthetic but participatory, interjecting the definition of theatre space as a bounded proscenium to an open, interactive world (Giannachi, 2004).

5.3 Reimagining Audience Experience:

But the most revolutionary impact VR could have on theatre is how it changes what experience means for audiences. With traditional theatre, it's something you sit down and watch with VR, the audience gets to act in it. For immersion can transform spectators into "interactors" who influence the outcomes of stories with their choices and movement. In the world of British theatre this shift from active to passive consumption comes at a time when more interactive and site-specific theatre, embodied in companies like Punch-drunk and Dream think speak, is becoming so popular. Using VR, we could put the spectator right inside a world of a play and let her or him interact with characters as well as observe from multiple narrative perspectives simultaneously. This rearrangement of limits is not only directly related to the blurring between who does and does not produce/perform for whom but may have as extreme a consequence dramaturgy that up to be co-author by storytelling in situ (Murray 1997).

5.4 Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Global Collaboration:

VR could change all that, opening up English theatre to a more accessible and diverse audience. Physical productions can be experienced by remote audiences who may not, for reasons geographical, financial, physical and others wish to attend performances in person. With this access, we contribute to a more general cultural project of theatre as a shared and enlightening "public" experience. It also allows artists, designers and performers to create new cultural expressions locally or globally between continents with stronger intercultural exchange and hybrid creative works. But 17 But the potential rebalancing of political, social and cultural interaction is dampened by digital inequality and the cost of VR technology -could give rise to new hierarchies of access in cultural production (Broadhurst & Machon, 2021).

6. Challenges and Ethical Consideration:

The Theatre works Virtual Reality (VR) will radically reshape English theatre, by re-orienting its art form through immersive, interactive and playful acts—but not before it is met with dilemmas and challenges too! These relate to authenticity of performance, access and equality, technological dependency, data and privacy and the preservation of human creativity. In challenging these, it is in This chapter that we seek to explore what happens when VR enters into theatre practice and culture.

6.1 Authenticity and the Loss of "Liveness":

Another one of the buzzwords circulating in VR theatre is a battle over authenticity (or loses of 'liveness' if you prefer). For traditional dramas, there is not only a live audience but also performers and audiences are at the same time and in the same places physically. For Outlander (2008), life is not simply presence but co-consciousness and co-presence. For VR, this live engagement is technologically mediated, but experience can still be cast as a "live" performance if it takes place in a digital version of being there. Causey (2016) contends that VR constitutes a "technological liveness," one that reconfigures the present through computational interactivity. But opting for such a response also risks draining the emotional and collective life out of theatre, making an embodied form instead of something mediated by technology. The ethical and aesthetic problem of striking a balance between cinematic modernity and hermeneutic authenticity remains unsolved.

6.2 Accessibility and the Digital Divide:

But while VR can democratize theatre, and make it accessible to anyone anywhere, it also raises questions around digital inequality. Opportunities for the widespread use of VR technology are, however, still limited to a segment of society further contributing effectively to the reification of cultural stratification. Since, in the theatre English evidence a part of a culture where inclusivity and access to the public have been valued, plus the added expensiveness from VR production as well as tooling it could mean that large parts of those audiences are more marginalized towards smaller theatrical companies will find themselves being priced out of medium. VR theater does not strive to divide among the masses and support itself; it risks becoming a tool of technological privilege, and its boast of being available for anyone anywhere unmet. Indeed, ethical practice

is prescriptive to maintain the social inclusivity and economic viability of VR theatre (Broadhurst and Machon, 2021).

6.3 Technological Dependence and Artistic Integrity:

The dependence of VR upon software, hardware and digital infrastructure is becoming integrated into theatre practice and could change the balance between artists and technologists in terms of ownership over content. As the notes, working together on a digital performance can also lead to a murky and often-questionable collaboration between engineers and artists that has potential to obfuscate creative authorship and artistic autonomy. This dependence also presents problems of technological obsolesces and such as VR platforms are rapidly evolving, by the time the performances happen, they could be outdated. And when theatre works are dependent on proprietary technology or obsolete platforms, that memory of these pieces is difficult to sustain in the way it would be if preserved through a script or tape. English theatre, therefore, will have to develop new paradigms of digital conservation and artistic authorship in the virtual reality era (Dixon 2007).

6.4 Privacy, Data, and Psychological Impact:

VR is very immersive and interactive, as a result we gather tons of data through this kind of means, and some of such types of data are the biomechanical gaze (or movement), reaction time. This is a big concern when users' data get exposed for commercial or surveillance purposes. Such data are highly sensitive psycho-logically in theatrical contexts where emotional engagement is significant. And finally, immersive settings may cause psychological disorientation or emotional overload (especially in the case of shows on deplorable content). Ethical VR theatre requires informed consent, careful curation of content and secure data policies to guard against harm to participants (Madary & Metzinger, 2016).

6.5 Ethical Representation and Virtual Identity:

VR allows people to inhabit an avatar, or virtual body, making the ethics of representation, self and body vastly more complex. That could be cool in that it might help People understand other people, it might help them want to include other people, see life through another person's eyes. But it could also be a weapon of self-destruction if handled handedly, with issues involving cultural appropriation or what might pass on misrepresentation. For a politically and socially engaged medium with centuries-long lineage in English theatre, VR is an opportunity but also a responsibility, according to Rogers and Dorman. And if

theater is to have a claim on morality, it is just as crucial that we be attentive to the cultural context, and to what conditions prove natural for the digital body. (Murray 2017).

6.6 The Future of Human Creativity:

Thus, the idea of viscerally suspending belief in such a way- largely through VR - causes us to wonder about human creativity in technology-centric performance. And while algorithms and AI are increasingly schooling production design, narrative, audience experience on how it's done, fuck if it wouldn't be depressing to behold technological spectacle trouncing our emotional connection and human storytelling. What future English drama in VR has to do, as set forth by human-centric art (Packer & Jordan, 2001), it makes sure that it is not just an addition or a replacement for the art of the human at its core.

7. The Future of English Theatre in the VR Age:

Theatre In England has always responded to the cultural, technological and philosophical preoccupations of its day. Theatre, from the Elizabethan era up through the digital age, has changed with cultural and technological revolutions but never lost sight of its humanistic foundation to depict, question, and even reshuffle what it means to be human. The English theatre is at a crossroads in the Virtual Reality (VR) era, and it both faces a challenge and has an opportunity to redefine itself as a hybrid form blending liveness with digitized immersion. This chapter seeks to consider how VR will shape and inform the aesthetic, cultural and institutional future of English theater.

7.1 The Hybridization of Theatre and Technology:

Hybrid performance ecologies of physical and virtual realities will arguably characterize the future of English theatre. Digital media are no longer employed as adjuncts to theatre, but as collaborators in the creation of performance spaces. The lines separating stage and screen, actor and avatar, audience and participant will blur even more. Viewers can expect a mix of scripted content that utilizes technology to blend VR storytelling with live elements such as mocap, hologram projection, and immersive scene work. The School of Night is a cross-disciplinary laboratory – in it, classical dramaturgy can meet digital design in English theatre. Playwrights, programmers and visual artists can collaborate. These two "will converge for intimate and personal performances both infinite and in the moment, anchored in live humanity, but amplified by virtual possibility" (Dixon, 2007).

7.2 Audience Agency and Participatory Storytelling:

The VR era represents a fundamental redefinition of what being an audience means. Instead of being mere witnesses, future audiences will be narrative participants – shaping storylines through choice, movement and feeling. The "procedural authorship" of digital narrative, as explained by, enables stories to unfold interactively, inviting (audience) participants into the performance. For English theatre, this could have nonlinear dramaturgies as consequences, where each performance will do differently depending on what the user does. Companies Punch-drunk and Blast Theory have already pioneered forms which merge digital and physical worlds; VR will only enhance this development; interactive theatre will become a mainstream form. This change also democratizes authorship, encouraging spectators to participate as co-authors in the process of meaning-making and foregrounding theatre's communal implications in novel technologically mediated ways (Murray, 1997).

7.3 Expanding Cultural Access and Global Collaboration:

English theatre has never before had such a global platform for cross-cultural exchange and access thanks to the VR nature of networks. Performances in virtual environments can be accessed anywhere in the world regardless of location, language and economic access. Digital theatre creates a "transnational spectatorship" in which artists and audience from different cultures come into contact across common digital spaces. For English theatre, this could translate into a decentralized global stage where no longer are productions confined to the West End or London venues but are also streamed, simulated and co-created around the world. This democratization of access increases both spatial reach but also fosters a dialogue and exchange between cultures throughput broader share and participation, leading to a reaffirmation of an inherently universal aspect of theatre as social and ethical art (Broadhurst & Machon, 2021).

7.4 Preservation, Education, and the Archival Future:

VR technologies also offer the possibility of keeping and teaching theatre. Digitized materials and virtual reality representations of old performances could offer scholars and even audiences, for the first time, a view of classic plays as they looked in their lived moment. Organizations like Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) have already started to employ VR for educational opportunities merging an archive of recorded performance with interactive simulation (RSC, 2022). That way it might be that the VR age is both a creative and a pedagogical renaissance,

an age when English theatre isn't just played but studied and preserved and reimaged in new immersive ways. "It would mark a new way of traditional because holding theatre successor, tradition in novelty" (Murray, 1997).

7.5 Ethical Futures and Human-Centered Creativity:

If a new technological era is announcing the novelty, then English theatre's future can't just be all about blood and money. But virtual reality also poses the danger of psychological and moral damage. Thus, new VR theatre makers are advised to re-populate their priorities with inclusivity-, authenticity- and emotion-driven work. The ideal scenario isn't that there won't be a replacement for human beings in the way of performing technology; it's something like a synergy, or hybrid, between digital systems and human imagination. The theater's future will lie in empathy, embodiment and shared experience elements that will need somehow, some way to be guarded when form of communication changes. The idea we have for English Theatre in the Age of VR is to employ Virtual Reality as a medium, immediate and yet engaging, at the same time preserving its ethical and transformative character (Madary & Metzinger, 2016).

8. Conclusion:

Virtual Reality (VR) is not just another technological medium it has the power to transform aesthetic, spatial and cultural thresholds into English theatre. This self-analysis reveals that VR subverts time and embodiment, all story and audience relations. From a performance theory, postmodern aesthetic and digital media approach, the dissertation inquires as to how VR remediates legacy theatre practices of scenography and dramaturgy vis-vis representation and accessibility. From the early Renaissance to the new-media environment of a twenty-first century technology-literate present, English theatre has embraced technological innovation as a means to explore other ways of thinking, feeling and being. Virtual reality is a compromise on that continuum, an immersive interactive environment that establishes a relationship between performer and audience, reality and its hyperreal simulacrum, here and there. For the future of English Theatre in VR is not VR itself, or its most outrageous dramatic uses (as compelling as these may well be unmatched); it is in a layer above where live and digital meet, around the essence of performing to an audience (all the rest being just more ways for better creative writing). In this symbiotic place, all manner of artists will be alongside, and inter-breed playwrights breed with technologists breed with designers breed with audience to bring forth hybrid new strains, co-created mini performances of the infinite.

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