

Audience Viewing Pleasure and Theatre on Digital Media Site

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Abstract - *The merging of theatre and digital media allows viewers to engage in new forms of viewing pleasures and communication. The research will be important in determining if theatre as an art form can survive in the age of modern communication technology. Theatre is one of the earliest art forms, having not only endured but also incorporated and adjusted to technological developments. This research looks into whether new media platforms can enhance theatre by enhancing the viewer's interest in the live performance and allowing for real-time involvement. This paper investigates young people's theatre viewing pleasures via new digital media sites. The study employs chi-square analysis to assess young perceptions of theatre viewing on digital media platforms. The study investigates several view points on how integrating new media and theatre might strengthen theatre as an art form. The research will aid in the discovery of new digital media presentation and advancement opportunities for theatre. The research will be useful in understanding how new digital media might enhance theatre viewing pleasure.*

Keywords - Theatre, New Digital Media, Viewing Pleasure, Technological Development, Live Performance

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INTRODUCTION

The study looks at the modern concept of convergence culture and how it applies to 21st-century theatre productions aimed at young audiences. The merging of theatre and digital media allows viewers to engage in new forms of viewing pleasure and participation. The study also looks at how viewers move between live and technology environments in their daily lives, claiming that this movement creates a new set of aesthetic possibilities for theatres that are filled with concepts about convergence with online media.

Theatre is a relic of a bygone era of creativity. The representation-based creative economy, in which theatre thrived, has given place to a replication-based economy, in which theatre is severely disadvantaged. Theatre cannot legitimately be regarded a creative enterprise in the same way that film can with its one-to-many industrial distribution and worldwide reach due to its high expenses and difficulty in achieving economies of scale, as well as a one-to-few distribution model that is firmly non-industrial. Digital Theatre can be defined as demonstrating synthesis of coexistence of "live" performers and co-present audience with digital media in a manner which contains spoken words or narrative elements and limited interactivity/participation, thus retaining at least limited distinctions of performer/audience (or

message sender and receiver) roles. Digital Theatre utilizes both the strengths of human connection found between "live" performers and their co-present audience, and the flexibility and global reach of digitally processed data. It remains my hope that criteria or limiting parameters are flexible and permeable enough to allow for a wide range of theatrical activities while refining the scope of events to those which most resemble the hybrid form of "live" and mediated theatre, a subset of digital performance.

Theatre is one of the oldest art forms, & it has not only survived every technological change but in fact adopted and adapted along the way, for example incorporating electric light and amplified music. Theatre has always been a hybrid form. This study attempts to find whether theatre can be enriched by new media platforms with the viewer's interest in the live event and real-time interaction.

Interactive media are giving birth to new art forms, and the practice and history of theatre has agreed to contribute to these new forms. The primary focus of this paper is the role of new media in theatre--"theatre" here referring to the old-fashioned, non-participatory performance genre in which a group of live performers gathers before a group of live spectators to enact scripted play. Incorporating new media into theatre opens dynamic new possibilities for theatre artists, but

more deeply that it compels us to reexamine some of our most basic assumptions about the nature of theatre viewing experience.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The goal of this literature study is to look into how modern technology can be integrated into the conventional art form of theatre. Researchers should think about how new media might be combined with theatre to provide a more engaging viewing pleasure. There is ample amount of studies conducted in the west on the watching habits of various generations and how the introduction of online streaming services or Subscription-Based Video on Demand (SVOD) services i.e. the likes of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar, Hulu, etc., have influenced the entertainment industry. **Burroughs B. (2018)** discussed the impact of emerging streaming services on the existing entertainment industry by researching on the factors like Netflix as quality streams and Cord-Cutters & Cord-Nevers.

Wayne M. (2017) concluded in his research that "New media forms do not replace the old ones" based on how SVOD services like Amazon and Netflix were branded traditional media forms. As per an article released by **Business Insider (2015)**, the period 2013-14 saw tremendous growth in SVOD services. One of the major contributors to this growth is Netflix. While Netflix started its business as a DVD rental service it slowly changed its model to online streaming and later on started producing in-house media content to provide Netflix Originals to its user. This grew popular amongst the teenagers and they saw Netflix as a better option instead of traditional television series. Binge-watching, as the new term goes, has become increasingly famous within the **Gen Y and Gen Z. Matrix S. (2014)** in her research paper has termed this as the Netflix effect.

Likewise, **Panda S. (2017)**, in her paper talks about the influence of binge watching and subsequent gratifications on the viewing habits of the college students. **Merril K. and Rubenking B.** analyzed the difference between the frequency and the time dedicated by an undergraduate college student for binge watching and their consequential habits because of the same. Kim K. and Shim H. on the other hand, conducted a survey to identify the psychological traits of the viewers and their influence in motivating binge-watching. The major difference between traditional services and SVOD is content delivery. While traditional services are more scheduled i.e. the shows have a fixed timing and they release new episodes every week (in US) and/or every day (in India), SVOD services releases all episodes of a series at once. Thus people can watch them anytime and anywhere as per their convenience. This is one of the major reasons as to why such services are increasing in popularity. People also watch the episodes consecutively. Many

productions have directly incorporated social media. The Toronto Fringe Festival's "Dina:

The **Burlapped Crusader**" (**Taylor, 2012b**) in Canada, for example, saw the audience invited to connect with the performer via text, Tweet, Facebook or Tumblr in order to suggest a good retort for a former boyfriend. The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of "Such Tweet Sorrow" was a Twitter version of **Romeo and Juliet (Richardson, 2011)**, and "Purge" at the Contact Theatre, Manchester, UK, had the performer invite audience members on stage to help him "unfriend" members of his Facebook coterie (**Beggs, 2013**). Productions from cutting edge companies such as the UK's Blast Theory fuse theatre with video games, or movies, or else turn an entire city into a kind of stage in which performers and audience members meet in person or virtually (**Blast Theory, 2013**), while shows from Canadian director Robert Lepage are also known to combine multimedia elements in highly creative ways. His 2008 production of "The Damnation of Faust" at the New York Metropolitan Opera, for example, saw images on the massive screens behind the performers animated by their voices and movements (**Ex Machina, 2013**).

Also, **Jenner M. (2014)** talks about the shift from traditional TV services (TV III) to SVOD services (TV IV) due to change in watching patterns in Germany. Similarly, Mikos L. discusses the various factors which are contributing to wider acceptance of the SVOD services among German audience. Ernst and Young in their research "Digital Opportunity Indian media and entertainment" discussed how videos and music currently represent the highest proportion of consumer preferences within the entertainment category, collectively aggregating over 90%. They forecasted India to become the second-largest video **viewing audience globally by 2020**. According to EY analysis, consumers have shown increased preference towards short-form content; with the average length of video viewed in India being around 20 mins. In addition, 62% of the content consumed on YouTube is short-form content. This trend has led content producers like Eros International, Viacom 18 and Star India to focus on exclusive and snackable content.

After the launch of **Netflix's SVOD service in 2010**, 50 mainstream SVOD services were launched; of which India had, at the time, over five SVOD platforms examples: Eros Now, Hotstar, YuppTV, nexGTV, **Ditto. Steiner E. & Xu K. (2018)** used 'Uses and Gratifications' theory to understand how binge-watching culture is changing ways, the viewers interact with television. Most of the aforementioned studies analyze, how the introduction of online streaming services or SVOD has proved to be a disruptive innovation. Therefore, the focus is more on how services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. have

changed the existing business models in entertainment services.

However, there are certain shortcomings in their work, namely, lack of inferential analysis from primary data collection, SVOD's issues in overwhelming the traditional media and comparative analysis among the several existing 'on-demand digital media' services. This research project intends to include these elements and work on them while considering India as its extent. These factors will provide a thorough observation of the advent of on-demand digital media in India and how it has affected the traditional entertainment services. In the aforementioned studies, while they give an idea of how the entertainment paradigm is changing with respect to the shift towards online streaming platforms, they fail to highlight the effect of the same on the traditional spectrum of the entertainment industry, especially in the Indian context in a direct manner. Therefore, in this study one will see the impact of online streaming services on traditional television in India.

THEATRE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ascott writes, optimistically perhaps, of 'a telematic politic, embodying the features of feedback, self-determination, interaction, and collaborative creativity' (Ascott 2002: 342). A drive to connectedness characterizes the work facilitated by another telematic explorer, Johannes Birringer, who writes in neo-liberal terms of an implied grand project to dissolve cultural as much as geographical boundaries. In **2005 Birringer** collaborated with fashion designer Michèle Danjoux on a 'telematic dress' project. Developed at the DAP Lab (Design and Performing Laboratory) in Nottingham (Birringer and Danjoux are the lab's co-directors), the project pursued 'transdisciplinary intersections between fashion and live performance, interactive system architecture, electronic textiles, wearable technologies, choreography and anthropology' (**Birringer and Danjoux 2005: 1**). It featured performance partners in Europe, the

US, Brazil and Japan – dancers who interacted with their costumes, their telematic partners in other locations, and the somatic suggestiveness of their partners' attire. Is it possible to generate another form of telematics – semiotic and affective, yes, but also dramaturgically driven? Live from Paradise, presented by the London-based performance company Station House Opera, promised a move in this direction. The project was first presented in **Amsterdam in 2004**, in a co-production with De Daders, Amsterdam, using three separate locations across the city. It was produced in England the following year, located in an empty, white-walled shop in Birmingham, a disused church in Colchester and warehouse in London. A different audience in each space witnessed live theatrical action under their noses and watched two screens showing

interrelated action at the other sites. The company's website notes the intention 'to create a simultaneous combined performance, telling a story that uses cinematic language to create a fourth imaginary space. The resulting single narrative is like a report transmitted from somewhere metaphysical – live from paradise' (**Station House Opera 2005**).

THEATRE & NEW MEDIA

New-media theatre is an invented space that relies on human invention—a meta-medium in which projection designers work in tandem with directors, actors and other designers to create worthwhile audience experiences. New-media stenographers work with one foot in virtual space and the other in the built environment. Theatre and Media Arts as a course is divided into many areas of specialization such as: Directing, Acting, Stage Management, Theatre Management and Administration, Technical Theatre which is further compartmentalized into Carpentry, Design, Costuming, Make-up, Media Arts, Public Relation and Advertising.

Digital technologies are important in the theatre world because many conceptions of the present-day theatre space have been shaped by these technologies. Since the advent of modernism, theatre practitioners have employed forms of communicative technologies in theatre productions to explore and expand on notions of time, space and spectacle. Scholars argue that the advent of film in the late 1900s and the subsequent incarnations of that technology allow for a "uniquely pliable and poetic [theatre] space" (Dixon, 2007, p. 14–15) that could not exist previously in the fixed perspective of the theatre spectator. Like earlier media technologies, digital technologies influence the non-linear presentation of theatrical materials, the fragmentation of time and space, and invite contemporary spectators to reconsider what live performance means (Auslander, 1999). The use of digital technologies is also gaining prominence in Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) productions. For example, global for-profit edutainment companies such as Nickelodeon re-purpose popular television programs like Dora the Explorer or Blues Clues in live arenas capitalizing on theatrical conventions to expand their popular, global brands into local communities; and professional TYA companies including Melbourne's Arena Theatre Company (Play Dirty, 2002) and the Minneapolis Children's Theatre (Fashion 47, 2007) are producing works that engage audiences in technological experiences, or situate characters in online or digital environments, in an effort to explore themes and issues created by those technologies.

It is true that virtual reality, illusion and the suspension of disbelief are time-honoured tools

of theatre, yet some cyber impresarios would almost have us believe they had invented story-telling itself. Perhaps what is most irksome to theatre practitioners is the lack of acknowledgment or credit: the digital world owes much more to theatre in terms of its language, structure, concepts and content than it wants to admit or perhaps even realises. For example, virtual worlds pioneer Jaron Lanier claims to have coined the term 'virtual reality' despite being aware that Antonin Artaud used the term in the context of theatre in 1938 (Artaud, 1958, p. 49; Davis, 1998, p. 190; Salz, 2004, p. 121). But theatre's contribution is not completely without recognition: Brenda Laurel drew parallels between human-computer interaction and Aristotelean drama (1993); and in his introduction to *The Digital Dialectic: New essays on new media*, Peter Lunenfeld compares digital media and environments to theatre and dance, being evanescent and mercurial: "[w]e accept dance's transience as no small part of its power. We should do the same for digital culture, at least for now" (1999, p. xx). This transience is also noted by Axel Bruns who refers to the palimpsestic quality of blogs, wikis and other online media that are constantly rewritten (2008, p. 104). The unfinished, open and collaborative culture that has emerged in internet environments and the open source software development community shares the collaborative process of theatre making, the immediacy of live performance, and the emphasis on process over end product.

THEATRE & AUDIENCE VIEWING EXPERIENCE

The audience drives every aspect of developing a theatrical performance. Initially, the audience serves the role of driving the content of the play or performance itself. The audience serves the role of driving other decisions as well. For example, producers will consider their audience during casting. The audience is one of the two essential features of a live theatrical performance, along with the performer. The performing arts exist in a finite space and time; this means that a performance, which is the work of art in theatre, has a finite existence in time. It begins, and it is over. Another, similar work of art may be created the next night, but the different audience and differences in the performers themselves will make the next evening's performance a different work of art. Compare this aspect of the performing arts to painting; different audiences may flock to the Louvre to see the Mona Lisa from year to year, or century to century, but the artwork remains constant in time and is unaffected by the presence of a different audience. Philosophers may argue the aesthetic paradox of whether or not a work of art can exist if no one sees it when they are talking about a painting, but in theatre, if the live presence of the audience is missing, the art form does not exist.

The purpose of most performance art documentation is to make the artist's work available to a larger audience, not to capture the performance as an "interactional accomplishment" to which a specific audience and a specific set of performers coming together in specific circumstances make equally significant contributions. (Auslander, 2006, p. 6) The goal of the research is to see if the audience theatre viewing pleasure on new digital media differs from the viewing experience in the auditorium.

IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The research will be important in determining if theatre as an art form can survive in the age of modern communication technology. Using new media as a platform for creative expression, the project will aid in the exploration of new media's ability to reach a diverse cross-cultural audience. The research will aid in the discovery of new media presentation and promotion opportunities for theatre. The research will be useful in understanding how new media might enhance theatre viewing experiences.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. This paper investigates young people's theatre viewing pleasure via new digital media platforms. The following are the study's main questions:
2. Do viewers prefer new media for theatre presentation and promotion?
3. Does theatre on new media develop a connection between artist and audience and expand the prospect of attracting new theatre audiences?
4. Does the viewer's decision be influenced by time flexibility and theatre viewing pleasure in a technology space?
5. Will diverse cross-cultural theatrical viewing via new media, as well as its participatory aspect, strengthen theatre as an art form?

MEASUREMENT

Nine measures were used in this research to examine the opinion of kids on their theatre viewing experience on new media and to answer the research question:

1. Theatre on online media & visual appeal,
2. Theatre on new media & audience participation,
3. Theatre on online media & presentation,
4. Theatre on new media & artist-audience connection,
5. Theatre on live space & technical area,
6. Theatre on new media & value of time,
7. Theatre on new media & feedback,

8. Theatre on online media & cross-cultural viewing, and
9. Theatre on new media & viewing pleasure

These metrics will help determine how young people feel about seeing theatre on new media platforms. The chi square test was used to determine the validity of these metrics.

POPULATION SAMPLING

The goal of the study was to look into how young people felt about seeing theatre on new media. The social and multidisciplinary nature of new media is one of the reasons for focusing on young people from many fields. Students from SunRise University , Alwar (Raj.) campus made up our sampling frame. A total of 100 students from four departments participated in the study: Journalism and Mass Communication, Sociology , Pharmacy, and Management.

METHODS

Given the paucity of study on the viewing pleasure of theatre on new media, we employed quantitative methodologies to investigate the research questions that assess students' attitudes regarding the use of new digital media for academic learning. All respondents were questioned about their perceptions and assessments of the usage of new media for theatre viewing .

Analyze the data

The results of the Likert Scale are presented in frequency table 1, which shows the replies to the 9 questions. Descriptive statistics were used to assess data at the ordinal level (Mean, Standard Deviation & Mode). Each of these indicators was subjected to a Chi-square analysis to see if there was a significant association between them and youth opinion.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the ratings on statements on theatre and new media by respondents (n=100)

S.No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	When theatre (which is live in nature) is broadcast on new media, its appearance changes.	6	8	17	41	28
2	The use of new media expands the number of people who can see theatre (otherwise, who never go to watch theatre).	2	7	13	35	43
3	Are you a fan of using new media to present and promote theatre?	9	13	18	27	33
4	As with live theatre, new digital media theatre develops a connection between artist and audience.	7	18	11	31	33
5	It is not the same to watch a play in a live environment (auditorium) as it is in a technological one (new media).	4	5	16	27	48
6	The ability to adjust one's schedule (in new media) is a critical factor affect the decision of the spectator (to try the theatre on digital new media).	8	6	10	26	50
7	The interactive element of theatre on new media gives audiences a platform to express their thoughts and provide comments.	12	9	13	36	30
8	Theatre as an art will be enriched by a diverse cross-cultural viewing of theatre through new media.	8	11	18	34	29
9	The use of new media in the theatre enhances the viewing pleasure.	2	7	12	35	44

MEASURE

1. Theatre on new media & appearance

"When theatre (which is live in nature) is played on new media, the appearance of theatre (which is live in nature) changes." This measure's responses have a mean of 3.7 (SD = 1.12). This statement is in the fourth mode. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P

value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =42.7, Df=4, P value=0.0).

As a result, the vast majority of respondents believe that the presentation of theatre on new media differs from that of live theatre. Over 69 percent of people agreed on this one (those who preferred agree or strongly agree).

2. Theatre on new media and audience participation

"New media expands the prospect of involving new spectators for theatre (who would otherwise never go to see theatre)."

This measure's responses had a mean of 4.1 (SD = 1.01). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =64.8, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that new media allows viewers to watch theatre that they would not have seen otherwise (agree or strongly agree).

3. New media theatre and presentation

"I prefer presentation and promotion of theatre on new media?" is the most common response. This measure's responses have a mean of 3.6 (SD = 1.3). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =19.6, Df=4, P value=0.0006). As a result, respondents are in favour of using new media to showcase and promote theatre. The use of modern media for theatrical purposes was praised by more than 60% of participants (agree & strongly agree).

4. New media theatre and the artist-audience connection

"Theatre on new media develops a connection between artist and audience in the same way that live theatre does." This measure's responses had a mean of 3.65 (SD = 1.29). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =27.2, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that new media can generate a connection between artist and audience in the same way as live theatre can. The agreement rate for this research question was over 64%, indicating that the connection between artists and audiences of new media theatre is similar to that of live theatre.

5. Theatre in a live and technology environment

"Theatre viewing in a live environment (auditorium) and technological space (new media) are two separate things." This measure's responses have a

mean of 4.1 (SD = 1.09). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =66.5, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that the viewing experience of theatre in a live environment vs modern media is distinct. Because the majority of respondents (more than 75 percent) agreed with this statement, it suggests that theatre viewing in the real world (disciplined, seated arrangement, dark room, concentration, etc.) and technical space (new media-home space, doing other activities, etc.) are not the same.

6. New media theatre and the time factor

Frequency of Response -"In new media, time flexibility is a major factor that can influence the viewer's decision (to try the theatre on new media)." This measure's responses had a mean of 4.04 (SD = 1.25). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =68.8, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, viewers' decisions to see theatre on new media are influenced by the time element. Almost the same number of people agreed with the assertion (either agree or strongly agree, roughly 76 percent).

7. Theatre for new media and audience input

"The participatory nature of theatre on new media provides a forum for viewers to voice their opinion and comments," says Frequency of Response. This measure's responses had a mean of 3.6 (SD = 1.32). This statement is in the fourth mode. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =29.5, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that new media provides them with a forum to voice their feedback and opinions on various areas of theatre. This measure obtained a 66 percent agreement rate (those who preferred agree or strongly agree).

8. New media theatre and cross-cultural viewing

"Diversified cross-cultural viewing of theatre on new media will strengthen theatre as an art," says the frequency of response. This measure's responses have a mean of 3.6 (SD = 1.23). This statement is in the fourth mode. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) =25.3, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that theatre on new media will result in a more diverse cross-cultural viewing experience, enriching theatre as an art form. This measure

obtained a 63 percent agreement rate (those who preferred agree or strongly agree).

9. New media theatre and the watching experience

"New media enriches the theatre viewing experience," says a majority of respondents. This measure's responses had a mean of 4.12 (SD = 1.0). This statement has a mode of 5. This difference is regarded extremely statistically significant because the P value is less than 0.0001 (Chi square(X^2) = 67.9, Df=4, P value=0.0). As a result, the majority of respondents believe that new media enhances the theatre viewing experience. This measure obtained a 79 percent agreement rating (those who preferred agree or strongly agree).

CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the impact of theatre on youth's new media viewing experiences. Some of the qualities that distinguish the theatre viewing pleasure from other creative forms include live(li)ness, resourcefulness, attitude, the dispersal of performers, and its location in cyberspace. Such art is made up of more than just form and technology; it also includes attitude, content, and a new audience dynamic. The study suggests that modern media expands the opportunities for theatre to reach new audiences.

The majority of respondents were in favour of using new media to showcase and promote theatre. The same connection between artist and audience exists while watching theatre via new media as it does when seeing live theatre.

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