

## **Dorottya Mátravölgyi**

Eötvös Loránd University

### **Stages of Participation in Contemporary Theatre**

Thanks to the technological developments of our age, contemporary media environment produces more forms of narrativity than the descriptive and analytical methodologies could keep up with. However, it is not the speed of the emergence of new genres that make the theoretical progress difficult but their interdisciplinary nature, which mediality usually cannot be described as bipolar – as for example the presence is more layered than the opposite of “live” and “medial”. The aim of my research is to analyse performances with the help of texts outside the theatrical discourse, which performances question the presence that usually presumed as essential in theatre, which override the traditional, *Guckkastenbühne*-framed spectator position and expect activity from participants.

Erika Fischer-Lichte gives a broad definition of performance: “the joint physical presence of a player and a spectator”, i.e. “the performance is created jointly between players and spectators”<sup>1</sup> which interpersonality becomes the specificity of the theatre medium. Although Fischer-Lichte gives a definition that is not so strict in relation to bodily presence which says: “In theatricality we mean the special and purposeful staging of the body in different media so that others can perceive it”<sup>2</sup>, still does not accept virtual presence.

In the case of game studies, the discipline was trying to define itself ontologically, demarcating their territory from other academic areas like literary theory and narratology.<sup>3</sup> However, the games themselves, as the technological capabilities extended, were starting to evolve a bit further from these endeavours: the video games reached beyond the border of their own isolated forms and started to interact with other art forms and genres.

The derailment of a spectator position based primarily on the voyeur situation may conflict with the assumptions of game studies at the point that it moves the viewer more to the player's position, which is similar to that of video game players.

In my research I will examine mediatized presence and activity expected of viewers during a performance on a paradigm that does not focus exclusively on theatrical theories but interacts with the relevant media and communication theory and game studies. The focus of the research is given by contemporary European performances that expect activity from the viewer's position and are framed by modern technology. The research attempts to propose an experimental methodology and analysis based on theatre and game theory and

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<sup>1</sup> Erika FISCHER-LICHTE, *A performativitás esztétikája*, Budapest, Balassi Kiadó, 2009. 40. (Translated by me)

<sup>2</sup> Erika FISCHER-LICHTE, *Ästhetische Erfahrung. Das Semiotische und das Performative*. Tübingen, Basel, Francke, 2001. 312. (Translated by me)

<sup>3</sup> Cp.: the relevant works from Gonzalo Frasca, Espen Aarseth etc

seeks the intersection of the existing concepts with the involvement of other transmedial perspectives.

An important element of the analysis is also the examination of the process of cultural history, as a result of which – compared to Germany or even Poland – we can hardly find such performances that fit into this paradigm in Hungarian theatre, while in Europe for decades, the theatrical and media science research focused on the aesthetics of applying media to the stage.