Theatre. The Anti-Artificial Intelligence

DOI : 10.46522/S.2026.01.32

RETEA Flavius PhD
Faculty of Music and Theatre, West University of Timisoara
retea.flavius@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research has all the components to generate an eclectic concoction between abstract theatre concepts and scientific research, in the quest to decipher a new theatrical vocabulary in the reality of the 21st century and the ever-evolving landscape of art under the shadow of artificial intelligence. Under the umbrella of subjective creativity and mysticism, very little has been done to comprehend the infinite power of theatre under an objective and scientific lens, developing theatrical ideologies mostly based on a trial-based system, exposing both actors and audiences to various restructures of reality and calibrating outlooks based on an interpretative analysis. This approach had been for most of our history the singular option to validate theatrical dogma, with only few theorists at the dawn of the 20th century, correlating new ideas in psychology, neuroscience, medicine and science of perception. Metacognition is a vital process in this system, offering a clinical perspective of both affective and cognitive mechanisms, and conclusively drawing parallels between human consciousness and machine based algorithmic systems.*

.

Key words: *metacognition, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, perception, acting techniques.*

Our purpose as artists in 2026 extends beyond artistic creation to sustained critical inquiry. By bringing abstract theatre concepts into dialogue with concrete scientific research, we seek to develop a new theatrical vocabulary that responds to the realities of the twenty-first century and evolving landscape of art under the shadow of artificial intelligence. Whatever our attitudes towards AI, its growing presence in everyday life also calls for critical reflection on its role in artistic practice.. An emphasis on subjective creativity and mysticism instead of a scientific perspective has limited the scope of such inquiry, leaving its potential insufficiently explored. As a result, theatrical ideologies still widely function primarily through trial-and-error practices, and only a few exceptions —typically classified as *experimental*—incorporate scientific and medical equipment within a quantifiable, data-driven framework, and, hopefully a start, theorists at the dawn of the twentieth century, correlated new ideas in psychology, neuroscience, medicine and science of perception. (Sofia, 2014). Theatre has always been an amazing playground in the study of the human brain, as it creates unique circumstances of cognitive function, offering new opportunities for scientists and artists alike. This approach of truly understanding human cognition must become a wider adopted practice if theatre stands any chance of surviving against the limitless potential of algorithmic artificial intelligence generated artistic consumables. Only by truly engaging with what it means to be human and the inner workings of cognitive systems, we can equip ourselves with the tools required for an artist of the XXI century. Sergei Eisenstein reduces my entire thesis on the importance of

meta-cognition and meta-reality in the language of theatre convention to its quintessence: "experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated" (Eisenstein 2021, 78).

Theatre is at the crossroads. Yet there is no reason to despair, since this condition may be understood as part of its very ontology: a state not determined by spatial or temporal coordinates, but one that has generated various definitions, some of which will be discussed here. Theatre is and always will be an exercise in making choices, complex, nuanced, complicated choices, a perpetually growing Yggdrasil, branching endlessly into new possibilities, generating a continual expansion of alternate realities, rebirthing century old texts with new meanings, while simultaneously reiterating the irrefutable nature of human beings, unaltered by the proliferation of technological endeavors. The manifestations of our desires and needs might have changed, but their root essence can be traced down the ancestral tree, to discover that Sarah Kane and Sophocles might have had substantial communalities regardless of the enormous gap in time, space and culture. The dramatic story is at its core, a sequence of choices made by a protagonist within a system of conventions, as is life.

Theatre is about life and the makings of being human, a fact that has been undisputed since the first story ever told. For the first time in history this is about to change within the main fabric of reality, in the literal sense. Technology has reached a point where consciousness, cognition, creativity, life and individuality have changed or will change with the inevitable rise of artificial intelligence beyond the capacity to maintain our old ways to define art. Theatre is at the crossroads, different ones this time around, and we must consciously determine where we stand, but first we must understand this new archetype of intelligence and consider that the spectrum of beings branded as sentient can exponentially multiply. In a hyper-technologized and digitalized society, theatre can be one of the last bastions of genuine human footprint, as its very existence is strongly connected to a particularly anthropic feature. It is my belief that understanding theatre and its inner mechanism through the perspective of science has been unduly delayed.

I believe theatre to be the science of metacognition[1], arguably more so than psychology, because it unifies affective and rational processes within an artistic framework. The conditions that emerge on stage during performance are highly complex and multidimensional, subjectively oscillating from actor to actor, contingent on his training, the system he approaches, the context of the performance and dominantly on his cognitive abilities. Theatre is a convention manufactured within the limitation of human cognition, unbounded by the confinement of reality. Likewise, reality is a convention defined by our comprehension of perception and laws of physics, with most of its mystery undisclosed behind the wall of cognizance. "If the doors of perception were cleared, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite" (Blake 1906, 27). The artificial brain does not have these doors, for better or worse, we are not certain - *Is 'God' in the machine?*

[1] Metacognition *is* awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes.

I had always considered the ideas of metacognition and metaconsciousness to be part of an elevated state of human sentience, contained within its own inherent capacity to decode a higher order of reality. The actor must be deeply acquainted with his chemical soul – the brain, to comprehend mechanisms, decode patterns of the conscious and subconscious in order to translate to an audience a concept that cannot possibly be universal. The theatre has a rather skeptical relationship with science, fearful that it might lose a bit of magic if the mystery is unveiled. I am not certain where I stand on regarding the idea of a soul, or how much magic does theatre hold, but to broadcast its ideas and emotion, theatre must abide by the language of human perception. I strongly believe that my purpose as an actor is to understand existence through the lens of consciousness, and the main investigation can be reduced to the most important word in the universe – *why*. Theatrical and acting systems are successful because they align with channels deeply rooted in our psyche and must be understood by the artist on both receiving ends – how do we ignite and how it will be received, otherwise the conclusion is a random accident with no control. In Stanislavski's words: "It is embarrassing and shameful the inability of our psycho-technique. In order to get inside the obscure soul of the role, actors without a system throw themselves in all directions. Their only hope is the accident that may help them find an escape" (Stanislavski 2023, 407). Similar to a conductor playing Bach, the performer must be capable of reading the structure of the work, maintaining tempo, rhythm, and intensity, understanding the complexity of its composition, and clearly communicating interpretative intent to the ensemble, while also imprinting the performance with a distinct personal expression. In music theory this concept is called *audiation*[2], introduced by Edwin Gordon in 1975. It refers to the capacity to internally comprehend music, hearing sounds of music without the actual physical presence. Theatre should analogously have a similar apprehension, a theatrical metacognition, where actors should be able to envision the map of mechanisms required to develop a scene, just by reading the text. In most ways this would be the approach of the mechanical soul (the artificial brain), yet our primary asset is that our soul is chemical, and that is the language of emotions. This can be our ultimate advantage over machines, at least until the simulation of human chemistry transcends the *uncanny valley*[3]. Until recently I had never considered that the meta-brain can also result from the symbiotic relationship between human and machine, but this premise has creeped in our reality subtly and in an unsettlingly organic manner.

Theatre is in essence an algorithm, concerned with the study of human emotion impact, but has never truly committed to this superpower and responsibility. Inevitably creating theatre implies a certain degree of manipulation, often to a significant extent, which in turn reinforces the ethical responsibility inherent to our craft. It is like having *cheat codes* in any interaction you decide to partake in. These mechanisms have been intensely exploited by other actors and creators of alternative realities: the architects that

[2] *Audiation* - the ability to mentally hear, comprehend, and think about music when no actual sound is present, essentially "thinking in music," much like we think in language.

[3] *Uncanny valley* - the negative emotional response people experience when encountering entities that look and act almost, but not perfectly, human.

designed the algorithmic structures of the internet, social media and now are infiltrating the arts, in graphic design, painting, film and music. The most notable current example is the impact of Suno and its AI artists on the music industry, as a country "artist" named Breaking Rust has landed the Number 1 spot on Billboard's Country Digital Song Sales chart and engaged more than 3.5 million streams on Spotify (Mouriquand 2025). The movie industry is slowly setting the stage for the upcoming success of Tilly Norwood, who is projected to become the new viral movie superstar in the very near future (Bradshaw 2025).

Algorithmic theatre has already been implemented for more than a decade by the American theatre director Annie Dorset and has been experimented on inside the Art Hub Copenhagen's Testing Ground Research Residency under the guidance of visual artist Kristian Byskov alongside dramatist and director Kristian Husted. Algorithmic Theatre refers to a performance created by computational code, computers dictating the flow of the narrative and responding in real time to the audience. The phenomenon has roots in the concepts of AI, singularity, machine learning and data science. Multiple award winning Broadway director and graduate of Yale School of Drama, Annie Dorset has experimented on the fringes of art, science and human cognizance crafting theatre performances using a rudimentary software program called *natural language processing* and the principles developed by Alain Turing. The principle of algorithmic processing he had established that any computation can be resolved by a machine within a rule-based procedure and the idea of an universal machine that can learn and perform any function, laid the basic groundwork for modern computers and artificial intelligence. During and after The Second World War, Turing's had moved his scientific focus from establishing the mathematical limits of computation to theorizing whether machines could, in principle, replicate human cognition. At the core of his theories *Turing Test* challenges both ends of the spectrum – can a machine mimic human behavior close enough for it to pass as another human being within the frameworks of a conversation? I believe that this comparison offers a deeper understanding about human perception and its limitations rather than a machine's actual capacity for consciousness. From both a spiritual and biological programing aspect, we are not completely certain to the extent of our conscious free will with regards to deterministic or pre-programmed influences on behavior, similarly to a machine's through rule-based processes. This common ground is the fertile soil in which IT companies developed the allorhythmia-based products[4] that made the virtual dimension so indispensable. If a machine can make an individual believe it is also a person, using behavioral algorithms and taking advantage of the limits of human perception, then does it really have to be actual conciseness to impact this exchange further? Unfortunately, our society devel-

[4] Technology companies have developed products that integrate with, influence, and potentially synchronize with human behavioral rhythms like for example: In social media, notifications, feeds, and recommendation algorithms that influence when and how frequently people engage with digital content; streaming platforms auto play and personalized recommendations that shape viewing habits and extend periods of engagement.

oped multiple accounts of extreme relationships between man and artificial intelligence, condition designated by scientists as "chatbot psychosis", where a person is convinced that the AI model is an actual sentient being, capable of friendship, ethics and feelings.

In her 2011 performance *Hi Hello There,* Annie Dorset assembled an enormous database composed of works of Shakespeare, the *Bible* and YouTube chat box comments of the Chomsky–Foucault debate[5], that was fed in multiple computers to devise a dramatic text that would have a different outcome with each performance.

> They start with the same sentence: «The pursuit of this discussion I fear will inevitably lead to the question of meaning». Then they make patterns and connections. Each input gets an output and an output becomes the new input. They are continually responding to each other. [...] Every night the conversation will be radically different. There isn't a narrative. There's a dramaturgy. It's theatre. It's a live event. The laptops are performing live and spontaneously. The show allows one to question what is liveness, what is live performance.
>
> Piepenburg 2011

This concept unpacks a tremendous battlefield of debate regarding the very nature of consciousness, creative awareness and insurmountable philosophical themes, and I cannot disregard the obviously intentionally ironic situation of computers discussing the question of meaning and human nature. If there ever was a paradoxical example of meta-reality, I must admit that this represents the most egregious example. Is it really theatre or just a fancy trick? I would argue that theatre is a fancy trick and at the same time I personally would not define this event as theatre. I do not have an unequivocal case for my statement, it is more a matter of personal feeling, considering that philosophers, physicists, neuroscientists still do not share a universal opinion on the nature of consciousness and human essence. Similarly, drama critics dispute the true definition of theatre and I do not have the authority to settle this debate, yet for many there are strong certainties with regards to what qualifies as an artistic product. Arts have always used tools, yet the modern dynamics between man and instruments now blur the old definitions and perspective towards an artistic endeavored. "I was actually turned down by the NEA for a grant because it has no actors. I thought that's a strange definition of theatre. No one knows how to define theatre. To decide that it's only theatre if there are actors on stage" (Piepenburg 2011).

There is something in not having the human component that collapses the idea of theatre for me. Computers can model very well, especially in the past few years ridiculous amounts of money and resources have been invested in the further expansion of AI

[5] The *Chomsky–Foucault debate* was about human nature, between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault at the Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands, on 22 October 1971 at 7:30 p.m. The debate was broadcast on 28th of November 1971 at 9:30 p.m. Chomsky and Foucault were invited by the Dutch philosopher Fons Elders to discuss an age-old question: "is there such a thing as 'innate' human nature independent of our experiences and external influences?"

technology. AI is becoming an extension of our body with the advent of *augmented reality,* evolving our anatomy and sensory tools to the stage of meta-human. Yet all of this is an addition to the ungraspable biological entity that is the consciousness, and although it has monumental power of computation and speed, the machine is momentarily a compilation of materials, chips and computer parts. Humans might not be that precise, but their interaction relies according to science between seventy to ninety-three percent on nonverbal communication (Mehrabian & Ferris 1967), including behavioral inaccuracies and inconsistencies: *kinesics* surveys the channels between human transmitters and receptors, including *proxemics*, *haptics* and *paralanguage*. If computers want to speak human, they must learn a great number of languages and use them simultaneously in order to actually communicate. And they certainly will at one-point, virtual reality, robotics, facial recognition technology, all strive to mimic anthropomorphic architecture for reasons I cannot say I completely understand.

My main issues in regarding this computational performance as theatre are primarily the lack of the main ingredients of human correspondence: live consciousness and kinesics elements and secondly, the absence of a metacognitive process on the part of the transmitter, as mainly the computers produce coded based mimesis.

> In fact, the further I have gotten in trying to 'teach' a computer how to make theatre, the more I realize that I don't know what theatre is. The singularity of the event makes possible the paradox that is central to theatre: that it is always both real and not real, it takes place here and now, but relies for its power upon its association to somewhere and sometime else. The performers stand in front of you, in a strange sort of presence – regardless of performance technique, even the most quotidian style of performance brings the performer into heightened otherness –, the time of the events onstage laid over the real time of the performance, the space of the stage always available to evocations of other spaces. So, if the theatre is a kind of machine that relies in its very essence on metaphor, on this-is-that (while paradoxically always also remaining merely this), then algorithmic theatre combines two incompatible modes of meaning-making by putting into play a «real-time, sequential» process that continually activates the underlying and fixed metaphors of our cognition.
>
> Dorset 2017

As previously stated, metaphors are the keystone mechanism to stimulate the cognitive framework, brain development, language learning and advanced communication. Even though computers can learn through association and can make new connections, their output is limited to the type of script that has been implemented, whereas human imagination has really no limitation and is unpredictable.

Unfortunately, human superiority has actual relevance in a *theatrical controlled environment* and, as in the example regarding Alain Turing's test, all it takes is to trick the audience into believing the legitimacy of apprehension.

The important takeaway from the algorithmic theatre concept is the ethical framework it generates, once the ability to predict and influence human behavior is used especially

towards an audience that might be unaware of the curation of experiences by a code. Conventional theatre draws an allegorical contract between the artists and audience, a clear agreement that their emotions and thoughts will be maneuvered through narrative, music, and atmosphere in a complete awareness of the process. The algorithm relies on something more clinical and sinister, implemented by data driven strategies with the sole purpose of manipulating. The inversion of roles transmitter to receiver does not occur between a machine and a human, the machine might alter the script according to the audience reaction, but will intrinsically remain the same, feeding continuous information in a mono directional manner. The data collected by machines is not always explicitly provided by the audience, as many consumers do not entirely comprehend the amount of data they provide to the gadgets they always carry. Of course, most applications provide some sort of disclosure and terms of use, but how many people realize the extent of information exchange. The machine can translate certain behavioral patterns by browsing history, routes and places visited supplied by google maps, shopping lists, articles red, friends, all can be used within the algorithm to create perfectly personalized artistic experience. As algorithmic systems become more sophisticated, the risk of psychological coercion, emotional predictability, and the homogenization of audience feedback increases. What is most troubling is that these systems are already embedded in everyday life, yet their long-term neurological and psychological effects remain insufficiently understood. The obstacle is not solely in understanding how algorithms can improve artistic experiences but also in making sure that this power is applied with transparency, consent, and an in-depth awareness of the complexity of the human brain.

Experiment – a conversation with AI regarding the future of theatre:

The following dialogue is a series of generated answers by Open AI's ChatGPT with regards to questions involving the future of performative arts.

I. *What is the future of theatre in regard to the advancement of AI? Will it ultimately become obsolete***?**

Theatre will not disappear, but it will become niche, smaller, and culturally marginal. It will not be fully "obsolete," but it will lose any illusion of central relevance.

1. AI will outperform theatre at scale, speed, and spectacle AI-generated film, interactive media, and personalized story engines will deliver: Better visuals than stagecraft, infinitely tailored narratives, zero logistical limits, lower cost after infrastructure.

Compared to that, theatre looks slow, limited, fragile, and expensive. Most people choose convenience over "authenticity."

2. Theatre's core advantage is NOT storytelling — it's presence. Live theatre only has one real strength. AI cannot fully replace: Physical co-presence of real bodies in real time. But that's not scalable, and capitalism doesn't reward what doesn't scale.

3. It won't die — it'll become a luxury or subculture.

Likely futures: Theatre becomes like vinyl records or analog photography: fetishized for its 'realness', high-end immersive experiences for rich urban elites. Academic and preservation circuits will prop it up like a museum tradition. It will ultimately become fringe, experimental, political performance in underground spaces. Mass culture will mostly abandon it.

4. AI will infiltrate theatre instead of replacing it.

Most theatre will become hybrid: AI-written scripts, AI-generated lighting and sound design, synthetic performers (holograms, projections, robotic bodies), predictive audience-response adaptations in real time. Meaning: the "human purity" of theatre will die long before theatre itself does.

5. The honest end-state.

Theatre becomes: Not obsolete — but irrelevant to most people. It survives the way ritual survives: not because it's efficient, but because a small group still wants the feeling of something real happening in front of them.

Final cynical truth: Theatre won't vanish because of artistic resilience. It'll survive because some humans psychologically need *physical witnesses* to feel real. That's not nobility. That's pathology — and it's strong enough to keep theatre alive.

II. *Did you take into consideration the eventual development of humanoid artificial beings? Will actual people be able to make the difference between actors simulating emotions on stage and robots performing on stage? And further will the machines be actually more proficient in transmitting and manipulating a message to an audience?*

1. Humanoid artificial beings are not a side-note — they change the game completely. Once humanoid robots reach: natural facial micro-expressions, fluid body kinetics, real-time emotional simulation, audience-adaptive performance, they will be functionally indistinguishable from trained human actors at the perceptual level. Not philosophically. Not spiritually. Perceptually. That's what matters. Most humans do not detect 'souls'. They detect timing, voice modulation, eye focus, coherence of movement, emotional mirroring. Those are technical. Machines will master them.

2. Will audiences know the difference? Blunt answer: eventually, no — not reliably. Early phase: People will spot the "uncanny" tells. Later phase: Only experts using instruments will know. Final phase: No meaningful difference at all unless disclosed. The "but I feel the difference" argument will be psychological bias, not evidence. Humans are terrible at detecting real vs fake when the fake crosses a certain quality threshold. This has already been proven with deepfakes, synthetic voices virtual influencers Theatre is not immune to this. It's easier than film.

3. Will machines be *more* proficient performers? Yes. Unequivocally. Machines will outperform humans at: control, perfect timing, perfect recall, infinite rehearsal without fatigue. Audience manipulation: Real-time biometric monitoring (heart rate, pupil dilation, micro-movements), algorithmic pacing adjustments, precision-built emotional arcs. Humans act. Machines optimize. That distinction is lethal.

4. What happens to “authenticity”? It becomes marketing, not reality. You’ll see labels like: “100% Human Performers” or “No Synthetic Emotional Engineering”, like “organic” food. A luxury affectation, not the default.

5. The real endpoint, theatre splits:

Branch A — Algorithmic Theatre: Performed by humanoid machines, written and optimized by AI and tuned to maximize psychological impact. Will dominate the mainstream cultural space.

Branch B — Human Theatre: Smaller, more fragile, more visibly imperfect, marketed as “raw,” ‘dangerous,’ ‘real’, not because it’s superior — but because it’s different.

Branch C - Theatre becomes a mixed reality artform. Humans + AI co-create with projection performers, virtual and holographic bodies and algorithm-assisted writing and direction

6. Humans won’t “lose” to robots because robots are evil. Humans will lose because: Machines will be calmer, more precise, never tired, never forgetful, and optimized directly against human nervous systems. A trained actor expresses emotion. A machine will calculate the exact shape of emotion required to control a room. In performance, that’s a higher tier of power. The future stage is not about presence. It’s about control of perception. And machines are built for that.

End of experiment.

These answers might appear dystopian and a bit alarmist and most importantly purely speculative, but each of them is grounded on patterns of human behavior and our responses to analogous technological transitions throughout history. From my personal experience, many people involved in the theatrical landscape minimize the potential influence A.I. will have on our craft. The answers given by Chat GPT are founded by the machine’s capacity to understand the human brain and apply the algorithmic based system to the theatrical environment. The A.I. system also understands that in many of cases, arts and entertainment are used as a form of escapism and might make it feel better to consume by an audience as it might track the reactions and needs in real time. What this conversation describes can be seen in the world of graphic design that has been violently impacted by generative A.I. rendered creations, from television ads, to academic promotional materials, to fast food banners, people now are acquitted and use visual resources created with this template. After a mild reluctance, convenience from both economic and time standpoints has convinced users to use this technology. As a result, according to a study made by the not-for-profit organization World Economic Forum, graphic design jobs will be one of the fastest declining roles by 2030 due to the rise in AI (WEF, 2025). I consider this parallel particularly relevant with our own theatrical space, as both disciplines are grounded to the unique element of human creativity and craftmanship, yet in the case of graphic design it is feels increasingly irrelevant to the general consumption and use of materials, becoming widely adopted.

As our society increasingly prioritizes efficiency, across labor, financial and time management, it is reasonable to understand why AI predicts similar outcomes in the artistic milieu. The underlying models generating such outputs fed our current tendencies in consuming arts and entertainment. People need shorter and more shorter, immediate doses of content and are becoming uncapable of handling complex messages within a prolonged time frame. As the machines make the uncanny valley narrower and more narrower, human evaluative capacity in relation to Turing-like distinctions becomes progressively less reliable. Machines can mime behaviorally an informal human interaction in a chat context almost flawlessly. When viewed in the context of exponential technological development, AI understands precedents in history, moments when people chose technology over the human element, with the essential difference that the speed of this development is unprecedented. Our society simply does not have enough time to adapt and assimilate all these changes without casualties.

Since the making of this interview, the discussion regarding robotic humanoid performances became a reality. For example, the Humanoid robot Sophia has made her debut as a lead singer in Hong Kong on May 29th, 2026, performing alongside the Hong Kong Baptist University Symphony Orchestra in an AI-themed concert. Sophia was equipped with a software specifically developed for learning instead of just feeding her the exact information, in this case, the songs and method of performance. To be completely honest, I believe the concerns raised are not merely speculative but reflect plausible trajectories of current technological and cultural evolution, especially if we are capable of toning down our romantic ideals of artistic expression.

Conclusion

AI undoubtedly is and will be a part of our day-to-day life and although this has only been an exercise mainly build on suppositions and theories, I believe it is a valuable one, as it also informs us on how to equip ourselves, in order to remain relevant in this dimension. The machine is not bound by physical limitations, it does not adhere to time nor space and can synchronously analyze Shakespeare, Beckett, Simon Stephens and all the other writers ever to consider creating a dramatic text. It does not make mistakes, it is never wrong, it can read and understand emotions better than humans.

Fortunately, there is one great infallible asset on our side, art is born from the chemical soul – whether some define that to be an actual soul or feelings love, pleasure, passion, hatred, it is that innate human capacity. Although machines can replicate, it lacks the capacity to evaluate a transactional value for their exchange, while theatre is ultimately generated by human interaction and this exchange. Theatre is the "anti–artificial intelligence" because to its core, it functions against pragmatic ideas of efficiency, wheatear labor, financial or temporal. Its existence is not easily framed within a purely instrumental or rational framework, yet it remains central to life, so much of who we are revolves around our hunger for art. It might be because before receiving this definition, music, painting, dancing, even theatre was a form of communication between humans.

An exchange beyond words, a true piece of evidence of our sentience and intersubjective awareness. Although the social of art has arguably changed since the dawn of human civilization, fundamentally it is a form of communication that encapsulates a vast spectrum of information, most of it is innately human. The machine might understand, develop patterns and break human encryption, it does not have a personal use and function for art, therefore the art created within a solely mechanical framework does not have the *seed of intent*. Intelligence goes beyond the capacity to process algorithmically a stream of data that can be interpreted as emotion. Theatre might be an illusion, but the illusion of conciseness cannot substitute the ontological conditions that make such consciousness meaningful in the first place. Consequently, one of main lessons to be learned from AI is ultimately a renewed interrogation of what constitutes the human, and in that respect we must comprehend the elements that devise our humanity.

The global expansion of cognition is yet to be comprehended to the full extent and theatre must work in conjunction with science to develop and sharpen the tools of expression needed to drive this art form to another level and keep up with human evolution. Science was once considered to be witchcraft. Similarly, the magic of theatre must be converted to factual dramatic techniques, without fear of losing any of its value. The salient teachers of theatre have long voiced the importance of the application of cognitive science in theatre, whether Stanislavski and Meyerhold, Strasberg and Meisner, cyclically investigating layers upon layers of cerebral mechanisms.

This article does not aim to be a doomsday prophecy in regard to humanity and art, but rather a call to denude of ourselves as of our egocentric excitement of sole creators in this universe and realize that as unique as we are, humans are not immune to patterns. This sequenced algorithm is how we fundamentally function and the basis of all theatrical methods and schools of thought. With the help of scientific revelation and technology we need to go deeper to understand both our brain and the purpose of theatre. The question is not whether artificial intelligence will produce theatre, it will most certainly do and it will impact the industry massively from many perspectives, especially economic. This is the pattern we already witness in many enterprises. I believe the question is: What makes theatre function now, if somewhere in the future we will consume and appreciate an artificially made one?

REFERENCES

BLAKE, William, 1906, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Boston: John W. Luce and Company.

BRADSHAW, Peter, 2025. The AI ‘actor’ Tilly Norwood is a symptom of blandified film culture. We need a return to reality. In: The Guardian. [accesat la 23 Oct, 2025]. Disponibil la https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/oct/01/the-ai-actor-tilly-norwood-is-a-symptom-of-blandified-film-culture-we-need-a-return-to-reality.

EISENSTEIN, Sergei M., 1974, Montage of Attractions: For *Enough Stupidity in Every Wiseman*. In: *The Drama Review*, vol. 18, translated into English by Daniel

Gerould, published online by Cambridge University Press 2021, [accesat la 23 Oct 2025]. Disponibil la https://www.cambridge.org,

DORSET, Annie, 2017. Algorithm, Composition and Metaphor. *The Theatre Times*, September 2017, [accesat la 12 iunie 2024]. Disponibil la https://thetheatretimes.com/algorithm-composition-metaphor/

MEHRABIAN, A., & FERRIS, S. R. (1967). Inference of attitudes from nonverbal communication in two channels. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 31*(3), 248–252.

MOURIQUAND, David, 2025. Breaking Rust: AI artist tops US chart for first time as study reveals alarming recognition stats. EuroNews.[accesat la 23 Oct 2025]. Disponibil la https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/11/14/breaking-rust-ai-artist-tops-us-chart-for-first-time-as-study-reveals-alarming-recognition

PIEPENBURG, Erik, 2011. Coil Festival: 5 Questions About 'Hello Hi There'. *The New York Times*. [accesat la 12 Iunie 2024]. Disponibil la https://archive.nytimes.com/artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/10/coil-festival-5-questions-about-hello-hi-there/

SOFIA, Gabriele, 2014. Towards a 20th Century History of Relationship Between Theatre and Neuroscience, *Brazilian Journal of Presence Studies*, ISSN 2237-2660, Disponibil la https://www.scielo.br/j/rbep/a/bmgKG85r3RFmFKtczvp3yDp/?lang=en&format=pdf.

STANISLAVSKI, Konstantin, 2023, *Munca actorului asupra rolului* (*An Actor's Work on a Role*), translated from Russian into Romanian by Raluca Rădulescu, București: Nemira.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, 2025. Future of Job reports. [accesed: 22 Apr 2026]. Disponibil la https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf

© Flavius Retea, 2026. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).