

MAPPING RESEARCH

A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years

This volume documents the research journey of Mapping: A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years. This multifaceted project took place over five years and involved researchers, artist-practitioners, illustrators, and managers from 22 countries and five different continents. Together they attempt to “map” the aesthetic perception of very young children, zero to six years old. The research for this book started with questions, which have been adapted and refined over the tumultuous years during which the project was implemented. At the heart of the book are the discussions of 24 questions, focusing on four pillars of performing arts: image, movement, word, and sound. The discussions of these questions are not meant to give a definite answer—in that sense they may be considered observations and explorations. However, as the first research volume of a project this size and scope, it is an invaluable source for any researcher and artist that is interested in making art for, and contemplating the value of art for, the early years.

15 €



MAPPING RESEARCH A MAP ON THE AESTHETICS OF PERFORMING ARTS FOR EARLY YEARS

Pendragon

MAPPING RESEARCH

A MAP ON THE AESTHETICS OF PERFORMING ARTS FOR EARLY YEARS

Edited by Manon van de Water



Mapping Research

A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years

All rights reserved.

The texts and illustrations are the property of the individual authors.

© Jackie Eun Ju Chang, Young-Ai Choi, Bruno Frabetti, Roberto Frabetti, Yvette Hardie, Yoona Kang, Katherine Morley, Manon van de Water, Klaas Verplancke

© Katsumi Komagata, Manuel Marsol, Fabian Negrin, Klaas Verplancke

editing

Manon van de Water

graphic design

Francesca Nerattini

cover illustration

Enrico Montalbani

© 2023

publication within the European project

Mapping, A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years

www.mapping-project.eu

supported by

Creative Europe, EU Culture sub-programme

editorial project by

La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi

Teatro per l'infanzia e la gioventù

www.testoniragazzi.it

MAPPING RESEARCH

A MAP ON THE AESTHETICS OF PERFORMING ARTS FOR EARLY YEARS



published by

Edizioni Pendragon

via Borgonuovo 21/a

Bologna - Italy

www.pendragon.it

CONTENTS

- 7 **Approaching Research**
Roberto Frabetti
- 13 **Mystery Box**
Bruno Frabetti
- 17 **The Wonder of Imperfection**
Klaas Verplancke
- 19 **Research and the Researchers**
Manon van de Water
- The Questions**
- 23 **↳ Percipient Beings: What Is It Like to Be a Baby at the Theatre?**
Katherine Morley
- 29 **↳ What Is the Relationship Between Context, Image, and Imagination?**
Manon van de Water
- 32 **↳ How Real Is an Illusion for Early Years' Audiences? Is there any Difference from Reality?**
Yvette Hardie
- 37 **↳ How Are Movements Connected to Emotion?**
Jackie Eun Ju Chang
- 41 **↳ Performance Encounters: How Does the Spectatorial Experience Begin?**
Katherine Morley
- 45 **↳ How Do Very Young Children Make Meaning of Abstract Movement?**
Young-Ai Choi and Yoona Kang
- 49 **↳ Can Clichés Exist in Theatre for Early Years?**
Yvette Hardie
- 53 **↳ How Could We Make Images Speak to Very Young Children During the Pandemic?**
Manon van de Water
- 56 **↳ How Can Early Years' Audiences Perceive Movements Differently in Theatre from Adult Audiences?**
Jackie Eun Ju Chang

61	⌘	Risk, Curiosity, and Care: What Kind of Role Does Expectation Play in Shaping Our Experience at the Theatre? Katherine Morley
65	⌘	Cognition and Emotion: How Does Theatre Mean, or, What Is the Relationship Between Cognition and Emotion in Theatre for Early Years? Manon van de Water
69	⌘	Reverb: What Happens When Sound Becomes a Character? Katherine Morley
73	⌘	When Do We Need Words to Matter? Are Spoken Words Always Necessary in Performance? Yvette Hardie
78	⌘	How Can Movement Deal with an Experience the Early Years Are Unfamiliar with? Yoona Kang
83	⌘	What Could Be the Meaning of Life for Very Young Children and What Roles Do Image and Imagination Play in That? Manon van de Water
86	⌘	What Kind of Theatrical Signifiers are Disallowed in Theatre for Early Years? Yvette Hardie
90	⌘	The Body as an Ear: How Might Spectatorial Engagement Look and Sound? Katherine Morley
95	⌘	How Can Culture Be Transmitted Through Theatre for Early Years? From Abstract to Concrete and Concrete to Abstract Manon van de Water
99	⌘	How Does Movement Relate to the Human Condition of the Early Years? Yoona Kang
103	⌘	Listening: Why Is Relative Silence so Significant? Katherine Morley
109	⌘	Does Spoken Text Ever Need to Be Translated for an Early Years' Performance? Yvette Hardie
114	⌘	How and Why Does the Meaning and Significance of a Performance Shift when Viewed on a Screen? Or, Why Do We Need Live Theatre? Manon van de Water
117	⌘	Hearing, Feeling, Saying: How Does Experiencing Live Speech Affect Listening and Language Use? How Does the Quality of Sound Color Meaning? Yvette Hardie
121	⌘	How Does Stillness Speak to the Early Years? Yoona Kang
127		The Map in All the Mapping Languages
143		Mapping Project

Approaching Research

I have always been fascinated by the word “Research,” even though I’d rather separate the first syllable from the rest.

Re-search. Search again and again.

Do not stop, do not feel satisfied, keep searching and re-searching.

There are so many things we do not know, and we should feed our ignorance with curiosity.

I started to work with very young children - from 0 to 3 years of age - back in 1986. With the older ones I started ten years before. So, I have been in and out of “Elsewhere” - the place children and young people inhabit - for 47 years now.

My purple backpack is full of images, words, things that happened, encounters, and discoveries.

How many children have I had the privilege and the luck to meet?

With how many of them have I walked streets I thought could not exist?

So, so many.

And how much do I know about the way they think and feel?

So, so little.

I am no expert, no psychologist, no pedagogue.

But this is not the reason why I do not grasp the complexity of kids.

The reason is that they live in Elsewhere.

So, if you want to meet them, you need to re-search. Search again and again.

Because the doors of Elsewhere open and close in the blink of an eye.

I often wonder why artists who work with kids find no fascination to research childhood.

In grasping its elusiveness.

Maybe many artists believe that re-search work on childhood’s identity and culture should not be part of their professional development, that artists should only measure themselves with “their own” artistic research to develop their own expressiveness, which they feel as unique, therefore precious.

Paradoxically, the European project *Mapping. A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years* has been centered on “Re-searching”, and it actually originated from an episode where someone denied that being in contact with very young children could allow artists to express their own, original aesthetics.

Mapping’s story begins once upon a time...

Helsinborg, Sweden, 17th May 2016, Bibu Festival. Sara Myrberg from Teater

Tre, one of our Small Size project partners (which was still ongoing at the time), called me and asked me to talk about our experience with the youngest audience with artists who had never produced for early years.

We had an interesting debate that led to a crucial question: “why are there only a few theatre artists for new generations who produce for early years?” Which led to a straightforward answer: “Because with little kids you cannot fully show your aesthetics, your artistic research.” The implications of this answer are clear. In a show for teenagers, you can display your drama vision, develop a complex *mise en scene*, and play with multiple languages. On the contrary, with a show for early years, you do not have the same possibilities: you have to simplify dramaturgy and *mise en scene*, adapt to unequipped spaces, and abandon any idea of artistic provocation. How can you show your expressiveness as an artist?

Those words spun round my head for months.

Because I could understand them, but I could not accept them.

Because my re-searching childhood does not allow for a discrimination between the various age groups.

Can we talk about aesthetics when referring to performing arts for early years?

Yes, I actually think we can.

We just need to find the right way to do it, aware that taking unknown routes is part of our being re-searchers.

So that we can find pleasure in wandering.

It is what Lancelot, Gawain, and the other companions who left Camelot to wander did; they went “off the beaten track” to find fragments of reality, because the Grail

- “pure reality” - was inaccessible to them, and therefore to us.

To me, childhood is just as inaccessible, and this is a very good reason to continue to re-search it.

Sometimes, as we wander - and fail -, we find surprises.

While I wandered, I started to walk an intriguing road.

A European project centered on aesthetics in productions for early years.

It was a fascinating road, which ultimately led me to get lost in the “woods of empty words.”

The word “aesthetics” as I intended it back then sounded empty and insignificant, because I conceived it as a discipline that regarded beauty and the arts only in terms of classification and assessment.

If I wanted to prove those who believe that working with children prevents artists from showing their own aesthetics, and therefore from being recognized in the cultural market, wrong, I needed to go beyond the meaning I used to ascribe to the term.

I believe these words stem from prejudices and bias, and that many artists who work with very young children do have their own style and a strong, clear vision of beauty and art.

But prejudice and bias exist, and sometimes they can become our own cage. How could I get out from that cage where aesthetic value is only defined by standards pre-set by the theatre market?

What’s the possible relationship between these standards and re-searching life with kids?

Children vibrate, feel, sigh, yell, run. They perceive the world they are wrapped up in.

Perhaps, the younger they are, the freer they are from the conventions and super-

structures of the cultural market.

I needed and wanted to talk about aesthetics for very young children, but I was unable to fill the word “aesthetics” with meaning.

I could not find the way that could allow me to continue to Wander, as I was losing my way amidst all those empty words.

Then, in the woods of empty words, I found Bruno, and my son showed me the way and led me out of the woods, and most importantly, he made me see there could be a new meaning.

The contemporary meaning of Aesthetics in terms of beauty, differs from the one ascribed to it in the classical world, where the term referred to the sphere of knowledge that involved the use of senses. In fact, the Greek verb from which the contemporary term derives means “to perceive through the senses.” When we make a connection between the word “Aesthetics” and “children,” we might want to re-assess the sense-related experience, because children, especially the youngest ones, are “new subjects of the world.” They are still discovering it, as much as they are discovering themselves.
(Bruno Frabetti)

This definition of Aesthetics was in clear contrast to the contemporary meaning of aesthetics as a discipline that regards beauty and the arts in terms of classification and assessment.

Also, it perfectly suited the special sensitivity of the youngest.

But I did not want it to be a simple statement.

We needed to “search” and analyze the sensory-based relationship between artists and small children during a performing act. We needed to do it as accurately as possible, searching for possible answers and new questions.

This is how Mapping was born. From the desire to find questions that generated other questions.

Over 50 artists from the project partners (theatre, dance, and music artists plus artistic directors) took part in the Research. They were divided into four working groups, each of them supported by an ITYARN researcher (International Theatre for Young Audience Research Network), and facilitated by four artistic directors, Barbara Kölling, Paivi Aura, Uroš Korenčan, and Christian Schröder.

Bruno Frabetti coordinated Mapping’s Research work, which was led by Manon van de Water, in close collaboration with Yvette Hardie, Katherine Morley, and Young-Ai Choi.

This process brought the 24 questions that are at the heart of the Map and that not only inspired the essays published in this book, but also the work of four world-famous illustrators, Katsumi Komagata, Manuel Marsol, Fabian Negrin, and Klaas Verplancke, who created 34 original illustrations collected in “The illustrated Map” exhibition and book.

Mapping has been a “wandering” process, where we tried to highlight our pleasure of always being “in search” of children and their elusiveness, but also of ourselves, and the many “Grails” life can offer us.

I think it is our civil duty to let children know and feel that we will always be lis-

tening to them and their “otherness,” that we will always be interested in them, and that we will never stop observing them to catch new fragments of their emotional and cognitive complexity.

We will always be listening to childhood. This is not just a matter of willingness or availability.

It is a “never-ending” journey, made of questions with uncertain answers.

And questions that generate other questions, like Mapping’s questions.

Listening to childhood means that we need to understand it and feel it.

And I think this need should be based on a method, namely the trial-and-error method.

We need a method to try and grasp a reality, aware that it might just touch it.

A method that allows us to pursue an ever-evolving reality.

And we will not suffer if our certainties fail to keep pace with the evolution of reality.

We will accept their transience, which of course does not mean uselessness.

They will be fleeting certainties, but even for a second they will make us touch reality.

And we will know that even when they were unable to catch what cannot be caught, they felt its deep energy. I think no one with a bit of common sense can say they know what “reality” is.

At the same time, I think that the constant Re-search for reality is a wonderful song sang by reality itself.

We will need to re-search accepting that we will wander and fail, and knowing that biological life evolves by random events (errors, perhaps?) through a process called “trial-and-error,” which is one of the basic methods of scientific research. This meth-

od allows not only for casual errors, but also for errors in the outcome.

Of course, it is not that we find pleasure in making mistakes, but this method clears the field from errors/failure and the presumption of a “truth” we can access the easy way.

“Supreme precision, clarity, and certainty can only be achieved at the expense of uncertainty” (Einstein 35).

For us, who continue to grow with the certainties of Euclidean mathematics, Einstein’s “uncertainty” can be inconceivable.

But in our Research work around childhood we chose uncertainty as our guide.

And we re-searched with no hurry, because while we try to understand and collect knowledge about the children, they are always elsewhere.

When it comes to children, it is always the right time to start moving, without stopping, because there is so much to do: new projects, occasions, visions to be brought to life.

We cannot stop; we owe this to the children, no matter their age.

Children require adults in movement, willing to re-search.

Adults capable of “approaching research” (Ciccardi).

Adults who grow for and with the children. And in doing so, they won’t stop their inner and outer research.

I don’t think there is anything more fatal than stopping at our own knowledge.

My shop looks like many others; but there is something in the back that makes it unique... In the old days, antiquarians possessed precious relics: usually, a fragment of Christ’s cross. I am just like them: I possess a fragment of a cross planted on an extra-terrestrial tomb. It is there, next to the

newspaper clipping where I first read Mort Cinder’s name. (Oesterheld 14)

With these words, antiquarian Ezra Winston introduces Mort Cinder, “the man who could not be killed,” created in 1962 by Héctor Oesterheld, one of the many desaparecidos fallen under the Argentinian fascist regime.

He is born again after his death in absolute terms, living era after era, from Egyptian Pharaohs to the battle of Thermopylae, from Babel to the battlefields of the Great War, to the 1960s.

Like a wandering Ulysses, Mort Cinder travels through time constantly searching for knowledge and freedom of being.

Ulysses, “he who, thanks to his own experience, knows the importance of every moment and event, and faces the unknown with his own forces; he who will learn that he cannot be himself unless he accepts to be misguided, involved, destroyed time and time again, and that he can only win if he accepts these falls and defeats” (Enriquez 131).

With these words, addressed to psychologists, trainers, and educators, Eugene Enriquez evokes the character of Ulysses - for once disregarding his prestige and, perhaps, his final triumph - to encourage them to always search for new connections, threads, patterns.

It is an invitation not to remain prisoners of old ways and habits, of practices never renewed, no longer feeding on curiosity

and visions, that help us connect and interconnect again to be part of something new, poetic, creative.

It is an invitation to accept our own death as part of life itself, but leaving aside any death drive, any attempt to deny the unpredictable richness concealed in every future moment.

An invitation to find an approach to re-search and live every moment of our present, planning fragments of a future we still do not know.

A present and future to live together with children and young people, always at their side along the way. Searching for knowledge and discovery.

Simply, re-searching. Searching, again and again.

Roberto Frabetti
Mapping Project Manager

Works Cited

Ciccardi, Claudia. Conference “EduCare, la cura dell’apprendere.” Parma, 27 January 2023.

Einstein, Albert. *La ricerca esemplare, in Come io vedo il mondo*. Newton, 1988.

Enriquez, E., “Ulisse, Edipo e la Sfinge. Il formatore tra Scilla e Cariddi.” In *Formazione e percezione psicoanalitica*. Edited by Speziale-Bagliacca. Feltrinelli, 1980.

Oesterheld, Héctor German and Albert Breccia. *Mort Cinder*. Imago Libri, 1979.

Mystery Box

Theatre for Early Years is like a box: its sides are opaque; we might hear voices and music from the outside, but we cannot find out what is happening inside until we decide to enter, maybe driven by curiosity.

The box is a physical place where children and grown-ups can experience live theatre together.

Not all grown-ups are brave enough to open the box: parents, pedagogues, educators, and artists often think it's not time yet to go to the theatre, especially if the show is for children from 0 to 6 years old.

This closed box frightens and intrigues at the same time, because it holds the secret of children-spectators. Having been inside it for years, first as a child and then as a grown-up, I can say that surprises never end: every time we - as artists - approach the little ones, *every certainty on how to make a show for early years* becomes blurry.

In this place, it's the grown-ups who have to be up to the task.

A play of heights, a journey to the unknown, enriched every day with traces and curiosity.

This is where *Mapping - A Map on the Aesthetics of Performing Arts for Early Years* is rooted, in the desire to create

a Map made of questions and in-depth studies useful for getting a little bit closer to the world of the little ones.

As in a picture book, images are also important, because sometimes words cannot express the depth of a theoretic reflection which, in any case, stems from artistic research.

If we want to produce for this particular audience, we should not forget our past but continue to explore the present and expect a rewarding future, also made of hard work.

The starting point is the sum of many years of artistic research: it belongs to the past but it needs to be shared before continuing the journey.

After years of fieldwork, we are used to considering children as a competent and brilliant audience, just like the adults who are with them. This is the necessary condition to enter the box as artists, otherwise it is better to change our focus. Only then will we, as artists, be able to change our point of view and think that yes, we are watched by the children, but we could learn to watch them, too.

And we could also learn how to rediscover the meaning of some words.

One of these words is “aesthetic.” In the framework of the project and in connection with the little ones, we returned to its original meaning.

In ancient Greece, where the value system was of course very different, the word referred to the fact that human beings are naturally curious about their origin.

Today, we - artists and researchers - are in the same situation when we face the enigmatic audience of very young children: they are new subjects in the world and are discovering it just like they are discovering their bodies and everything that surrounds them. They haven't established specific classification criteria yet, but they perceive what comes from direct experience, at any level of representation.

This is why we need to open the box as soon as possible.

Following the tracks these young spectators leave in the box, artists come to realize that they are perceiving through their senses.

They are so different from us, but once we were just like them.

It would be nice to be able to ask them what they think, what excites them, or what frequencies they perceive.

But it is not always possible: very young children, as all human beings, can be rather outgoing, but they can also be reserved.

Some of them talk a lot, some do not even speak yet, but if they want to tell you something, they will find a way to let you know: all it takes is being there, with them, inside the box.

Question:

Performance Encounters: How Does the Spectatorial Experience Begin?

It probably starts long before they enter the theatre space, but we cannot be

sure; this is just one possible answer.

One point we need to agree on is that we grown-ups do not take or bring children to the theatre but that they are our travel buddies. They take us to the theatre hall and make it so that every performance is different from any other.

Every day, they inspire new questions that lead to other questions. Of these, Mapping collected 24. We could also have doubts about the meaning of the word “question.”

To explain how we used the word in the course of the project, I will use the words of Katherine Morley, one of the four researchers, who was able to sum up the project's complex structure in only 4 words:

“An invitation to participate”—this is what we mean.

Just like every essay published in this book, Mapping is a suggestion to join us in our journey to the origin of children-spectators. The invitation is open to everyone, not just artists.

We, the project partners, started this journey in January 2019 in Salzburg with the “Image” working group. Some of the questions were born over 4 years ago, and those who were there hold them dear.

Question:

How Real Is an Illusion for Early Years' Audiences? Is there any Difference from Reality?

This is one of the first questions; fascinating and incredibly relevant to the present times.

As artists, it is good to have questions but no certainty about the answers, because questions can generate ideas or possibilities to choose from.

Choosing is the actual act of responsibility

we, as grown-up artists, owe the children: we give them a blank space (but with well-defined profiles) every child-spectator can fill with color, deciding whether or not to color within the lines.

Shows come to life thanks to doubts and experiments, and only a very small part of these is actually put on stage, and it often happens that, in the course of artistic research work, it is easier to find the end rather than the beginning.

But let's go back to the start, as Mapping is a project characterized by many beginnings.

The initial idea for the project was that the 18 partners - divided into 4 groups - would meet on a regular basis in various locations to share ideas and suggestions that, starting from the actual performance on stage, would be useful for the project's Research - the result of three days of fieldwork.

The names of the working groups - Image, Word, Sound, and Movement - did not define the specific characteristics or interest of the participants, but they referred to the four basic elements of Performing Arts.

Over the first year, the four groups met in Salzburg in January, in Limoges in May, in Breda in June, and in Ljubljana in October.

The ideas collected would then be analyzed by four ITYARN researchers (International Theatre for Young Audience Research Network), professors in performing arts for early years at universities around the world, strongly motivated to open and enter the box. We collected so many questions that we could even afford to discard some of them.

Manon van de Water coordinated the

research from the United States, involving Yvette Hardie from South Africa, Katherine Morley from the UK, and Young-Ai Choi from South Korea. Their work allowed the 24 questions to travel to four different parts of the world, before this book was even published.

Each researcher was the main coordinator of one of the working groups, and together, they selected the 24 questions that became the titles of the 24 essays composing the research. Everything was going smoothly, until the end of February 2020.

Then, all of a sudden, everything changed.

We all know why; just search the word “pandemic” on any search engine on the web.

We were not allowed to travel, meet in person, and above all, go to the theatre.

Opening the box was forbidden, until further notice.

However, the project found its way to go on: it stopped for a couple of months, then it was delayed and then it started over again, trying not to lose its meaning, waiting for life to go back to normal.

This historical period has inevitably brought unexpected consequences, many of them negative, but some of them positive for the outcome of the project.

We were allowed more time to work on the first Mapping productions, the only one initially included in the project, and we also found funds to develop a second one.

We developed new digital skills that allowed us to continue with the project online, as well as to create videos that could be watched on screen, lacking presence and closeness.

We were positively impressed, because we thought Theatre for Early Years could not exist outside the box, so we decided

to leave traces of this experience in the questions of the project.

Question:

How and Why Does the Meaning and Significance of a Performance Shift when Viewed on a Screen? Or, Why Do We Need Live Theatre?

So, among the 24 featured in this book, the Map now includes an essay about this aspect.

At the end, you will find blank pages, because the Mapping project is close to an end, but the questions and the invitation to participate are still effective.

And what about the little ones? What have they done during these hard times?

The outlaws, of course.

Have you ever seen a very little one wearing a mask?

That's what they are like: they want you to see that they exist, but they do not want to reveal who they are or which world they come from. They are still free and not yet influenced by the obligations of adult society.

We have continued to think about them, trying to find new ways to be in contact with them and new stories to tell, while we waited for the doors of the Theatre to open again, always aware that, the closer we get to the origin of things, the more obscure becomes the mystery. The case of the little ones is still unsolved, but the box is now open to everyone, again.

Bruno Frabetti

Research Coordinator and Producer of
the Mapping Project

The Wonder of Imperfection

Mapping is a wonderful project that has given me new insights about my abilities and limitations as an illustrator and author. Never before have I deliberately compared the diversity in perception of literature, theatre, film, or music from the point of view of children. And it is no different for adults than it is for children. Children do have one awesome advantage: their untouched talent for wonder. And that wonder is also the common thread in the questions distilled from the various theatre workshops, lectures, and events organized as part of this research. For how else do you describe the consideration that a sound can also become a character? Or that a movement can turn into a musical note?

Between the lines of these questions, you'll read above all the wonderful idea that in a perfect world the senses are interchangeable. That you can see with your ears, caress with your eyes, Interchangeability is a more interesting thought than trying to complete the perception on every sense level. Each form of artistic expression is a different combination of our senses, but never all at once. A cinema 4D experience does

not make me happier, on the contrary. A shaking seat and some drops in my face each time make me more aware of my physical presence in the theatre, instead of my mental and emotional connection with the story.

It sounds like a cliché yet it is a certainty: out of the lack arises the imagination. Every form of creation has its limitations that force us to come up with clever solutions. Visual poetry gives sound and music to printed words, the artist Banksy turns street art into a haunting opinion piece, and a brass band sound becomes a dancing procession thanks to Pina Bausch. It is just these inventions, these unexpected, clever manipulations of our expectations that equal the wonder that overwhelms the viewer, the reader, and the listener.

Mapping helped me to realize that I will never be able to create a direct interaction with an audience. Writing and reading are two creations, or performances, in their own right. On a stage, every note, every pass, every word is sculpted live over and over again. The audience conducts and makes each performance unique. The cre-

ation happens instantaneously. But the book reader does have one unique advantage: they can stop time at any time, or scroll back.

This 4-year project has enriched my insights and taken my imagination a step further. It confirmed my awareness that as an illustrator, I'm also an author, a director, a composer, a dancer, an actor, a

dramatist, and one reader, one listener, one spectator. Every day I am looking for original, inventive, and surprising ways to make an image whisper, sweat, or creep. To be able to listen, to feel, and to smell with your eyes, that is my every day performance.

Klaas Verplancke
Author & Illustrator

Research and the Researchers

How does research start? Why do we try to find things out? What motivates us to look something up—in a book, on google, in a museum, or a theatre?

It all starts with Questions. Asking the “right” question opens up a whole new territory of knowledge, giving rise to more questions that open up more horizons. Questions are worth examining, says Terry Eagleton, because “the nature of a question is important in determining what *might* count as an answer to it” (7, emphasis mine).

Researchers in arts and the humanities generally consider questions more important than answers. Questions illuminate the complexity of human life and lives. Not every question leads to a definitive answer, most answers are depending on context and point of view as well as argumentation. There are age-old questions that have never been answered, except from a theological point of view perhaps, like the meaning of life. There are unanswerable question of moral dilemmas, such as which of your children to offer up if a soldier demands it. And then there are simple questions which require simple answers like “yes you have to wear a coat because it is freezing outside.”

The questions in this volume are important and meaningful. They have been formulated and reformulated over the course of almost three years. They are not meant to give answers but to illuminate what is important in the work that we do, and in the perception and “meaning-making” of our target young audience. If an answer may be read in the essays, they may also solicit different answers and ideas. The essays are meant to inspire the reader and stimulate artists. They may be soothing and confirming, or they may stir up controversy.

But ultimately what we hope is that these questions will lead to dialogue and conversation, both verbally and artistically through the use of Image, Word, Movement, and Sound.

The Mapping project was divided in these four focus points and each point had an IT-YARN (International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network, ityarn.org) researcher assigned. Each of the focus points also had four different theatres attached, who each made one or two performances around their focus point. Together, the researchers formulated questions, and each of the researchers, then, had six questions

to consider and write an essay about. Below is a short introduction of each of the researchers.

Movement

Young-Ai Choi, Professor Emerita at Korea National University of the Arts and a founding board member of ITYARN, was the researcher for the movement group. She decided to divide the movement questions up between two additional colleagues: **Dr. Yoona Kang** a Lecturer at the School of Drama of the Korea National University of the Arts, whose research focuses are Theatre for Youth, Study of the Performance of Korean Childhood, and Practice-Based Research, and **Jackie Eun Ju Chang** a researcher in Global Creative Industry Research & Evaluation Center in Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, who has served as director of Neuroscience & Art Center in Good Culture Hospital of Eunsung Medical Foundation in Busan, Korea.

Sound

Dr. Katherine Morley is an Associate Researcher at the University of Manchester and researcher in residence at the egg, Theatre Royal Bath. Her recent focus on relative stillness and spectatorship in TEY received a President's Doctoral award and was funded by AHRC. Katherine works internationally as a creative consultant and has recently joined the board of ITYARN.

Word

Yvette Hardie is a theatre director, producer, educator and advocate, focusing on theatre for young audiences. She is national director of ASSITEJ South Africa, and serves

as Chairperson of STAND (Sustaining Theatre and Dance) Foundation. She is Honorary President of ASSITEJ international.

Image

Manon van de Water is the Vilas-Phipps Distinguished Achievement Professor Emerita at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a co-founder and past chair of ITYARN, and a current board member.

These four researchers come from different cultural backgrounds, professional trainings and experiences, and research perspectives. The chapters/questions in this volume can be read in any order, based on the personal interest of the reader. Some chapters will refer to other chapters, where concepts or ideas are elaborated upon. Some chapters by different researchers will talk to each other or discuss a similar idea from different angles. Together they offer in their essays a mosaic, a map, of how we may approach the aesthetic experiences of very young children.

This map is a start. May the work continue.

Manon van de Water

Editor

Coordinator of Mapping Researchers

Professor Emerita at the

University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA)

Works Cited

Eagleton, Terry. *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

The Questions

Katsumi Komagata, Manuel Marsol, Fabian Negrin, Klaas Verplancke, created 34 original illustrations, freely inspired by the 24 questions arising from the research of the European project Mapping for the book and the exhibition "The Illustrated Map."

Each illustrator chose which questions to be inspired by, with no requirements to constrain them.

To illustrate how Research also influenced this process, we are pleased to include some of these beautiful illustrations in the book.



*Percipient Beings:
What Is It Like to Be a Baby at the Theatre?*

Klaas Verplancke

Percipient Beings: What Is It Like to Be a Baby at the Theatre?

Katherine Morley

Infants are, by nature, percipient beings, both receptive and perceptive. To consider what or how an infant perceives during performance is tricky, not least because infancy is a time of rapid developmental change. But that's also partly what makes this question so interesting, because developmental capability has a bearing on the detail of subjective response and in turn, an influence on the experience of the audience as a whole. The term "percipient" was coined by artist and academic Misha Myers and adopted by scholar Josephine Machon as a descriptor for her elegant analysis of Immersive Performances. Machon suggests spectators may be hyper-aware of their experience but unaware of the illusion, and draws our attention to the importance of touch as an anchor to that experience. She elaborates the term percipient through WildWorks founder, Bill Mitchell's description, where to be percipient in performance events is to be "drawn between the safety of their companions and the lure of a novel encounter with fellow spectators or performers" (In Machon 73). I would like to bring this idea into productive relationship with the work of Child Development scholars Alison Gopnik, Andrew Meltzoff, and Patricia Kuhl who propose that infants are "torn between the safety of a grown-up embrace and the irresistible drive to ex-

plore" (Gopnik et al. 86). In articulating the sensorial experiences of adults in the immersive realm, Machon also inadvertently describes infants as percipient beings.

Recently, as part of a wider piece of research, I was able to examine the details of ocular, aural, and haptic development in children. I have chosen to share some of that work here because it serves the broader Mapping aim to create a stronger picture of the child's system of senses in relation to their experience at the theatre. In nuanced ways, the theories shared here help explain how our experiences are normatively absorbed and interpreted, but also, maybe, what brings us pleasure. Engaging with an essay like this is perhaps not dissimilar to the ways in which infants deal with stimuli, filtering from the "polyphony of information" found at the theatre (De Marinis 107). It also feels appropriate to share this gathering of scholarship, because it echoes the research workshops that were part of the Mapping sub-group meetings, where a focus was given to discussing the technicalities, acquisition, aesthetic, and behaviors of language, locomotion, image, and sound.

While children develop at their own pace and according to their environment, common developmental landmarks help influence perception. One of the things I was most curious to understand was the distinction between the ability to focus on one performer or the action of performance as a whole. Here are some of the details that helped, thinking first about vision. From twelve-weeks old, infants may begin to define their own visual relationship with a performance since they are able to anticipate movement, as opposed to merely fol-

low a moving object. This suggests they are choosing where to look (Eliot 211). Binocular vision occurs at around fourteen weeks, enabling depth perception and therefore a stronger sense of how to recognize objects at a distance and track them as they move. Although it is not necessary to examine the visual cortex in detail here, my interest in the “how” and “where” of looking, and ocular influence on attention, is informed by knowing that the work of the developing visual cortex is separated into two streams. The where: processing the visual space, an object’s speed, direction of motion, and location; and the what: processing objects, color, shape, and fine detail. “[At birth] far more synapses involved in *motion processing* have formed than those involved in *form perception*” (Eliot 205, emphasis added). This dual track may help to pique an infant’s interest when performers pause or cease moving.

From around three months old, infants can see several feet in front of them but exact scholarly definition is scarce because of the complexity in how the eye develops. Relevant here is that the muscles of the eye develop in tandem with cognition. As Gibson suggests, “We must perceive in order to move but we must move in order to perceive” (*Ecological* 223). Put another way, infants with normative vision “have the level of visual functioning that is required for the things that infants need to do” (Hainline 9). We only see as far as we need to at that particular developmental stage, for instance, if I cannot move across the room on my own, I do not need to be able to perceive what is on the other side of the room. If I cannot see an object on the other side of the room, I have less interest in travelling there.

By six months old, “all primary visual abilities will have emerged, such as depth perception, color vision, fine acuity, and well controlled eye movements ... And by one year they will be almost fully tuned” (Eliot 198). With improved vision comes improved hand-eye coordination, meaning tactile interaction such as reaching and grabbing become a stronger part of perception. Once crawling, infants are also able to recognize faces and objects from across a room, and therefore, with greater awareness of surroundings comes the sense of “object permanence,” the understanding that objects or people continue to exist when they cannot be seen. Associated with games like peek-a-boo, object permanence can evoke humor, suspense, or distress and is a good example of the role of vision in social and emotional communication, when joint attention on an object or activity becomes more knowingly intersubjective.

Face-to-face, playful, reciprocal, responsive communication where “two individuals are linked in direct psychological connection with one another” (Rochat and Passos-Ferreira 173) is known as “primary intersubjectivity” and emerges around seven weeks old. There is a mutual focus on one another and a sudden lack of reciprocity can provoke anxiety (Baldwin and Kosie 1). “Secondary intersubjectivity” emerges around nine months old and is the communicative act of jointly attending to an object or event, and can be initiated by parent or child. We see “two individuals connecting psychologically with respect to some external thing, event, idea or emotion” following another’s gaze and pointing to external objects or events (2). Seating 0-18 months old infant spectators directly

in front of their parent-carers rather than side by side, maintains close dyadic proximity (and the opportunity for touch) and also tends to decrease instances of parental gesticulation, offering the infant greater independence in where to look and how to connect to the performance. As a seating arrangement or a starting place for more locomotive productions, it also helps to reveal instances of joint attention when infants turn to triangulate a particular moment with the parent, non-verbally asking “Did you see that, Mum?”

Before secondary intersubjectivity emerges, it is less likely for infants to sit facing away from their carer, being both physically impractical and less conducive to natural interplay. By seating infants directly in front of parents, those below nine months old (and under the threshold of secondary intersubjectivity) are more able to engage in moments of primary intersubjectivity with performers - as long as proximity to the performance area and locomotive speed allow performers to be perceived. Here the parental practice of care shifts to facilitate the infant’s connection with other adults. This may be the developmental point at which infants are less likely to receive the performance but instead, become more able to stretch towards the action.

Natural growth in childhood provides the gradual maturation of the apparatus we use to perceive, which in turn improves cognition - the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. “Where vision emerges late and matures quickly, hearing begins early but matures gradually” (Eliot 228). The per-

ception of sound is broadly measured by wavelength frequency, and decibel intensity with infants less able than adults to hear quieter sounds and those with lower pitches (Keenan and Evans 143). “The sounds to which infants are most sensitive (i.e. can hear best) are those which come within the typical frequency range of the human voice” (Aslin et al. 147), so the use of *motherese* or infant direct speech (IDS) is used almost universally across cultures to address infants (though rarely in the theatre). The larger “contours” of IDS arouse high attention and may help block out background noise (Fernald 35-64), while the repetitive and lulling qualities of infant directed *singing* foster more moderate interest, but can facilitate longer bouts of engagement (Nakata and Trehub). This is fascinating within the broader consideration of how young children can attend for so long at the theatre. In daily life, IDS helps to block out background noise and create piques of attention, whereas hearing in the theatre often begins, I would propose, with silence, much as the visual horizons begin with darkness (see the chapter on Relative Silence).

Infants’ “nervous systems process auditory information at least twice as slowly as adults” (Eliot 247) and the ability to distinguish particular sounds against background noise only begins to occur from around two years old. Theatre audiences of 0-18 months old therefore may well benefit from being in an environment where they do not have to sift through background noise “to pick up important auditory cues” (Eliot 247) as with the outside world. This is something the Mapping Sound group companies have explored and celebrated in diverse ways. The per-

formance environment may well offer infants a valuable public social context to connect and respond through audition. It may even facilitate the precocious sense of prolonged attention frequently seen at TEY performances knowing too that “[I]n general, reductions in infant body movement are correlated with heart rate deceleration and other measures of infant attention” (Richards and Casey 45-53). In response to what we hear, our spectatorial movements help measure affect.

As curiosity inspires infants’ locomotion, the space between the dyad widens, lessening somatic reliance on the parent-carer and influencing their modes of attention, moment by moment shifting between a parent-carer who is spectating and a spectator who is parenting-caring. The practice of care will regulate this aspect of spectatorship, based on the infant-parent dyad’s shared perception of risk and curiosity (see chapter on Role of Expectation). Perhaps the most well-known theory concerning infant attention is “Lantern Consciousness” (Gopnik 125-132). While most adults have the capability to focus, or “Spotlight” their attention, the infant’s natural mode of attendance ensures that any stimuli an infant can perceive is available as a source of exploration and learning. This accounts for how often young children may flit between stimuli. In domestic settings attention is reported to last for up to three minutes per year of age, but post-show parent-carer testimonials consistently report that participation in performance far exceeds normative expectations, suggesting the conditions of the theatre are ideal for infants to connect their own subjective sense of pleasure. What spectators perceive of the balance of novelty and familiarity then registers on a spectrum of physical and vocal

activity. To be percipient in performance events is to be; “more alert, looking for clues... Their senses are heightened. They are more aware of each other and become a temporary community experiencing something new together” (Bill Mitchell qtd. in Machon 73).

This broad network of scholarship has been brought together to help illuminate what it is like to be a baby *at the theatre*, where the infant’s broad and diffuse “lantern consciousness” frequently gives way to prolonged (and precocious) displays of close attention, suggesting that the theatre provides an environment in which infants can thrive. Here, to cite Machon again, “[e]mbodied space breaks down barriers between the perceived contradictions of the internal/external binary to establish a continuum of *felt* and *thought* experience” (144). To consider the relationship between sensing, perceiving and feeling from an infant’s perspective furthers our understanding of audiences in all sectors, where for every spectator, our “equipment for feeling is anatomically the same as the equipment for doing” (Gibson, *Senses* 99).

Works Cited

- Aslin, Richard N., Peter W. Juszyk, and David B. Pisoni. “Speech and Auditory Processing during Infancy: Constraints on and Precursors to Language.” In W. Damon, Editor. *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 2. Cognition, Perception, and Language*. John Wiley & Sons, 1998, pp. 147–198.
- Baldwin, Dare and Jessica Kosie. *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Edited by Hilary Callan. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.
- De Marinis, Marco. Dramaturgy of the Spectator. *TDR: The Drama Review*. 161 Vol. 31, No. 2, 1987, pp. 100-114.

Eliot, Lise. *What’s Going on in There? How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life*. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999.

Fernald, Anne. “Hearing, Seeing and Understanding.” *Blackwell Handbook of Infant Development*. Edited by Gavin Bremner and Alan Fogel. Blackwell, 2001, pp. 35-64.

Gibson, James J. *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*. George Allen and Unwin, 1968.

---. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979.

Gopnik, Alison. *The Philosophical Baby*. The Bodley Head, 2009.

Gopnik, Alison., Andrew Meltzoff, and Patricia Kuhl. *How Babies Think. The Science of Childhood*. Phoenix, 2004.

Hainline, Louise. “The Development of Basic Visual Abilities.” In Alan Slater, Editor. *Perceptual Development: Visual, Auditory and Speech*

Perception in Infancy. Psychology Press, 1998, pp. 1-50.

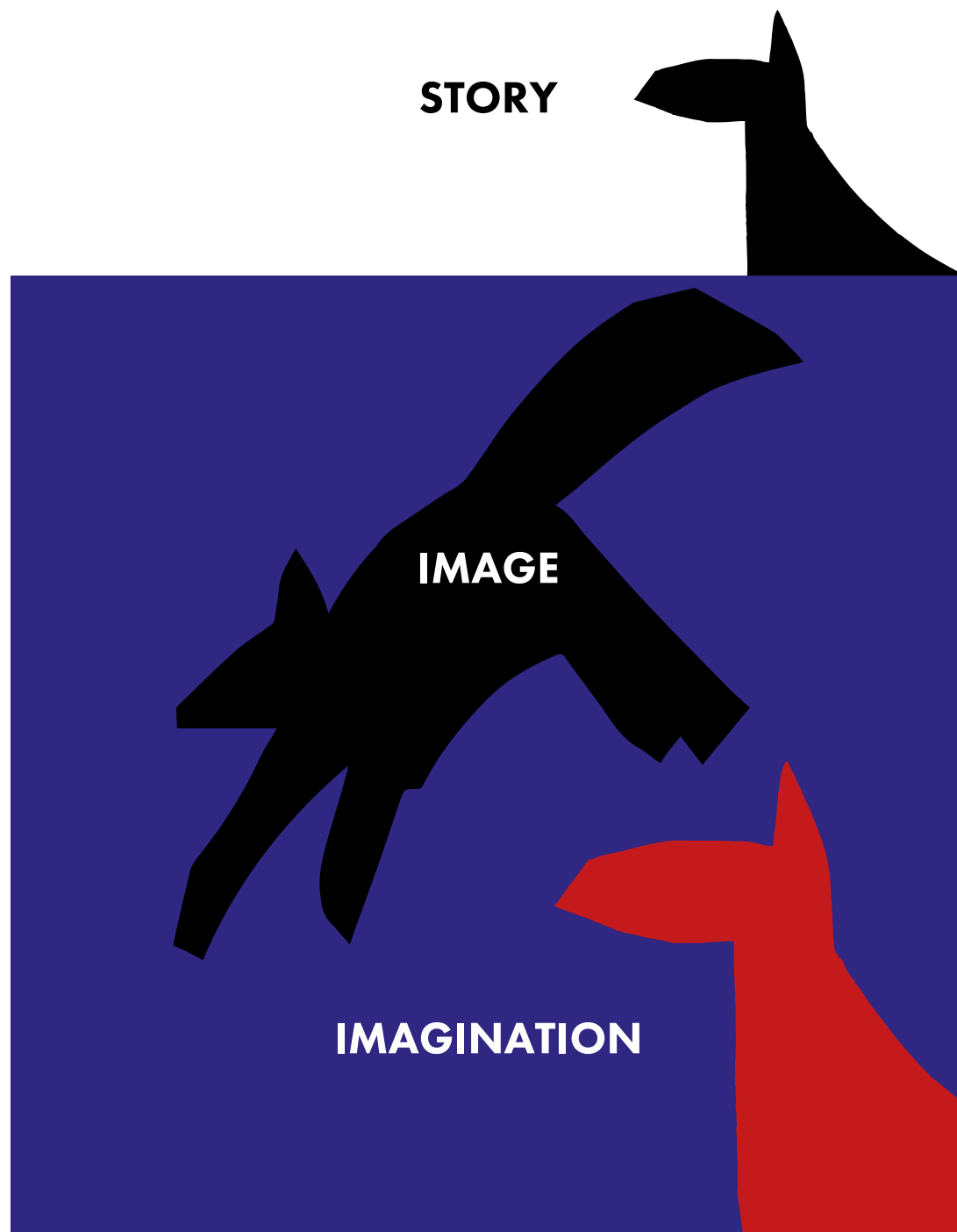
Keenan, Thomas and Subhadra Evans. *An Introduction to Child Development*. Sage, 2009.

Machon, Josephine. *Immersive Theatres*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Nakata, Takayuki and Sandra E. Trehub, 2004. “Infants’ Responsiveness to Maternal Speech and Singing.” *Infant Behavior and Development*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2004, pp. 455-464.

Richards, John E. and Betty Jo Casey. “Heart Rate Variability during Attention Phases in Young Infants.” *Psychophysiology*, vol. 28, 1991, pp. 43–53.

Rochat, Philippe and Cláudia Passos-Ferreira. “Three Levels of Intersubjectivity in Early Development.” In *Enacting Intersubjectivity: Paving the Way for a Dialogue Between Cognitive Sciences*. Edited by Antonella Carassa, Francesca Morganti, and Giuseppe Riva. Lugano University Press, 2009, 173-190.



What Is the Relationship Between Context, Image, and Imagination?

Katsumi Komagata

What Is the Relationship Between Context, Image, and Imagination?

Manon van de Water

Much of perception theory—no less semiotics—depends on the audience's previous knowledge and experiences. What you perceive relies on individual background, how you perceive relies on your ability to consciously or unconsciously decode the theatrical signs. Meaning in all performances are part of the mutual interaction of the performance text (what we see on stage), the conditions of performance (under which the performance is conceived), and the conditions of perception (the audience) (Knowles 19).

Taking *Peskovnik (Sandpit)* by the Ljubljana Puppet Theater as an example I'd like to explore how this pertains to a young audience of four to six years old—and how important it is for an adult researcher to see this performance—as all live theatre—with the intended audience of young children present.

The theatrical signifier in *Sandpit*, as the title indicates, is sand. In a striking opening image, the dark stage gets illuminated by a single light beam, revealing a thin stream of sand coming from the ceiling. The four actors walk partly in unison, partly by themselves, forming different groups from one end of the stage to the other, seeking

contact, trying different configurations. As they move on, they each grab a box with sand and fill the stage with piles of sand, while the stream from above forms a pile in the middle. From there the actors explore the sand, they feel it, move it, smell it, blow it, make different patterns in it. More is brought in until the entire stage is filled. The actors play with the sand, with each other, with a bucket of sand that comes from the ceiling; they explore one kernel of sand then explore a pile; they destroy the patterns they made, form new ones and end up making a sophisticated mandala, a geometric pattern that represents the cosmos, metaphysically or symbolically. Then they destroy the mandala again, and move on to explore another geometric pattern, bring in boxes and build what looks like a village, which then is destroyed by a stone or ball hanging from the ceiling that the actors swing around looking where it ends up. Again, there is a rebuilt and a start-over: water is brought in, which creates the opportunity to clump the sand, and so, finally, they are able to build together a sandcastle in the middle, low enough so the ball cannot hurt it.

As all performances in the Mapping project this production was made under the conditions of the pandemic. This is a context that heavily affected the first perception of the performance, the way the images were interpreted and the way it stimulated the imagination. The production was created upon the initial pre-pandemic exploration in spring 2019, and the keywords for building the production were selected then, among them time, touch, traces, sand, play, physical transformation, desert, solitude, zen, sea, wind, fluidity. The idea was the creation of everything; a

world that emerges from nothing, of forming relationship, of something coming from above.

But after this first pre-pandemic exploration, the production was put together during the pandemic. It was clear that a live audience was not a reality and yet the Mapping project needed to go on. And thus, aside from the theatre company itself, the first audience were adults, the Image Group, and the production was shared by video. The video, in turn, was enhanced by video techniques that, for example, made it possible to film from above and show the mandala in its full glory; and also zoom in on intricate detailed sand patterns. While this was an opportunity, the medium of video as opposed to live theatre had its disadvantages. The relationship between the actors could not be conveyed properly, the subtle changes in lighting did not come through, and it was hard to convey the playfulness. This first production shared on video by the image group, then, seemed to me, as the researcher, slow, dark, and somewhat creepy. In the context of when the video of the production was discussed in April 2021 by the Image Group in the middle of the pandemic it became a metaphor of doom. The conditions of production, the performance text on video, and the conditions of perception (each of us in our own space watching a computer screen) highly influenced our perception. The question in all of our minds was “how would this be perceived by the intended audience of 4-6 years old?” And there was no one who could answer that.

Then, we fast forward to March 2022. The pandemic was still there but our closeted world was slowly opening up. In Bo-

logna at the Visioni Festival, one of the first live theatre for young audiences’ festivals in Europe after the lock-down, *Sandpit* was the evening performance of the first day. A live performance for families with children age four to six.

As the first production of the image group that the group could see live, the difference between video and live theatre was immediate and striking, and surprised even myself as a quite seasoned theatre researcher. How could I have been so wrong in my first impression. The performance was not dark but lively, playful, evocative, imaginative, and instead of doom it inspired resilience, and creation. Through its images it sparked imagination. Without words, the actors explore and play with the sand, the action is at the same time predictable and unpredictable which is part of the joy for the audience, younger as well as older. The actors build, tear down, and build again. The music, light, and movement make this production highly evocative. The context—sand—forms images which in turn spark the imagination. In an adult perception, of course there was still the metaphor of the pandemic, augmented by the recent war between Russia and Ukraine. But the fact that it was live in presence of a child audience made it possible to sense the way a *child* could perceive this production, which was impossible to conceive on video. And the children in the audience looked on in wonder and excitement.

The next morning at 10:30 am *Sandpit* played for a preschool audience of 3-4 years old. How would they perceive this quite dense production? What was their context?

These children still perceived this production under pandemic circumstances.

They could not just enter the theatre but first needed a temperature check. All adults around them were masked. This had already been the case for most of their lives. But how important was this? Would these circumstances play a role in their aesthetic perception at all during the production?

Here context comes into play. Because while the pandemic weighed heavily on the adults’ mind, the young child perceives through their senses. For them the context is sand and water, tactile entities they know and with which they play, pandemic or not. These children are open to the possibilities of sand; to see, hear, and imagine what sand can do to you and what you can do with sand. They are ready to be surprised, to appreciate the unexpected, and they perceive the production using all their senses: the sand smells, the sand sounds, the sand feels, with sand you can create. You can bring things into the sand and you can take it away. You can rub, stamp, spread, form sand.

For this audience, sand is their context. The image is sand, and the images that can be created with sand. The image leads the audience, gently led by the actors, to act upon their imaginations. The possibilities seem endless. Abstract-concrete-and abstract again.

It is difficult to predict what effect this production had on its young audience. Perhaps it is just the joy of exploration with sand. Perhaps it is something more. Of building, of using the context of sand to build one image and imagine another. How will they use their individual imagination to create different structure, or figures, something abstract, something concrete, something geometric, linear, round. Would, as Affect Theory would have it (see the chapter on Cognition and Emotion), this production linger on, until at one point there is another connection? Would the emotion of sand coming from the ceiling translate in a cognitive behavior or realization down their lives?

These possibilities and potentials are, I think, at the heart of why we make and watch and analyze performances for the very young. And to keep in mind *their* contexts that lead via the images presented to the use of their own imaginations.

Works Cited

Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge, 2004.



How Real Is an Illusion for Early Years' Audiences? Is there any Difference from Reality?

Yvette Hardie

All theatre is an illusion, as Plato famously decried. There is the material reality that is created from the many items in a theatrical toolbox – the actors' bodies and voices, the costumes, props, stage or performance space, set, puppets, masks, lighting, music, and sound – and these need to be experienced in the same space and time as the audience.

But these elements are used to create something more than the individual sum of their parts – this illusion is the perception and articulation by the artist of the reality they encounter, and it provides intuitions and perspectives with which each audience member needs to wrestle. The illusion may evoke a mood, ask a challenging question or create a story or poetic encounter of some kind – and these things play out in the body-mind of each audience member. In essence, the piece of theatre is a uniquely personal experience for every audience member, although there may be shared attributes that can be agreed on when discussing the piece afterwards.

A theatre performance played to no-one is not theatre, unless the artists themselves

are the audience for whom the performance is intended. Unlike other art forms, like a piece of music, film, or visual artwork that can exist in some concrete form whether or not the audience is engaging with the artists at the point of creation, theatre needs the active participation of the audience in the here and now, by definition.

Theatre requires, as Matthew Reason puts it, the audience “to actively and imaginatively work to complete the evoked illusion of the stage” (11). This “work” requires active observation, recognition, processing, interpretation, and imagination from the audience.

Perhaps a way of looking at illusion and reality in theatre is to think of them as being inextricably linked, feeding into each other in a continuing loop. There is a physical reality which is being evoked or reflected on through the creation of an illusion using physical tools, which in turn gives rise to a real physical, intellectual, and emotional response in the audience, felt in the body-mind of the observer through what we know as kinaesthetic empathy, which in turn becomes the memory of an experience, where certain elements may be retained consciously and others may be discarded, submerged, or reconfigured over time.

An interesting aspect of much theatre is the relative transparency of this illusion, when compared to other forms, such as film. The concrete reality cannot be easily denied; rather there is an opportunity to see double – to see the actual reality that is creating the illusion and the illusion that is being created – simultaneously.

A question for early years audiences would be whether or not they in fact do experience this dual vision. Are they only interested in the concrete reality they see in front of them? (When some children first encounter theatre, there may be an evident fascination for the source of the light or an interest in what is behind the side curtains, as much as for what is being presented as “the performance”.) Or, are they highly suggestible and carried away entirely by their imaginations? (This view is one that many parents and educators have held, and it is sometimes used to describe the so-called dangers of theatre for young minds; that young children can't tell the difference between reality and illusion, so therefore we need to be extremely careful in choosing what they are shown.) Or indeed is reality itself so new to the very young child, that it needs no “dressing up” in order to become magical? It is already something that evokes amazement.

Certainly, on this last point, we see many productions for early years that have been created from the point of view that further illusion is unnecessary. Exploring the simple, concrete elements of our world (water, sand, stone, for example), we evoke a sense of wonderment in children. This approach invites the audience to see these elements in a more focused way than is possible in life, and invites curiosity and a desire for further investigation. Many of these works are built around the recognition that the child is a natural scientist or explorer of their environment, who needs and wants to investigate the way the world is constructed in order to find a path through and into life. Children's wonder challenges adults' complacency.

In these performances, usually the actors do not present as characters, but as accessible and somewhat simplified versions of themselves. There may be little in the way of storyline, but rather the artists and audience track through a series of shared experiences or experiments with the materials. These productions encourage multisensory perceptions of reality, using theatrical languages to enhance each moment of discovery. Essentially, they do not attempt to create artificial illusions to replace the wonder of the actual, the everyday. Reality is not being denied, but rather celebrated.

In Ion Creanga's *CUTInE*, the performance begins with several large boxes on stage. The first action of the piece is that two of these boxes move around one another, as if by magic. However, after some play between the boxes, the mystery is resolved when each box opens to reveal the human being within. The mechanics of the illusion are made clear. The spontaneous playfulness of the two actors with one another takes over from the wonder of the illusion to hold the audience in thrall. At another point a box appears to float in mid-air, until it is revealed that the actor is holding it up with her upper body. This tendency to present a seemingly inexplicable illusion and then to reveal its workings is seen in many performances for early years.

The term “willing suspension of disbelief” on the other hand has been used since the 19th century to describe what the audience needs to do in order to engage with the theatrical (or fictional) act; it invites the audience to step into the imaginary world created by the artists and to disregard any inconvenient indicators of “reality” while doing so. In essence, it is an invitation to

the audience to become complicit in making the fiction happen. However, it is an inadequate term in that it doesn't fully embrace the paradox of seeing the reality and investing in the illusion, simultaneously.

Part of the pleasure of watching theatre is precisely this gap between the reality and the illusion. The gap is the trigger for the imagination and the space for transformation. Seeing how something is being created, while simultaneously experiencing the effects of the creative process on the imagination, allows for a sense of ownership of the material by each audience member that is quite unique.

When we experience theatre, our responses play out in our body-mind through what is known as kinesthetic empathy. While the responses may not be as powerful as they might be in life if the experience were "real" and happening to us directly, they are nevertheless experienced fully, but in a more contained, perhaps safer, way. This process could be seen as if we are "rehearsing" internally for the possibility of action later.

Matthew Reason's research into how children experience theatre, which involved having children draw their responses to what they had seen on stage, spends some time looking at how children view illusion and reality in theatre. Working with children aged 5-10, he was able to show that children are able to perceive both the material reality of the stage performance with all of its elements, while simultaneously perceiving the illusion that the artists want to represent. He demonstrates through the conversations around their drawings, that children in this age-group are capable of the sophisticated double-vision we have

been describing – being aware of both the material reality and the evoked illusion simultaneously.

For example, after watching a physical theatre performance called "Them with Tails" where two men in black clothing created multiple stories about mythical and fantastical characters, using simple props (e.g. tails to indicate the different characters), the vast majority of children drew the evoked experience (143 out of 150) – the illusion, if you like. However, when questioned, they were able to remember and articulate exactly how those moments were created in terms of the material reality, and they demonstrated that they were aware that they were seeing, for example, a basilisk and a man dressed up as a chicken, at the same time.

Whether this holds true for children younger than 5, is difficult to say without detailed research. Cassandra Weddell (in her chapter entitled "The Child Audience" in *Children, Meaning-Making and the Arts*, edited by Susan Wright) identified five types of audiences amongst young children. She named these: the Technicians who were fascinated by the production techniques used (the material reality of the stage); the Narrators who made sense of the performance by talking and commenting; the Mystics who are in awe of everything they see; the Dramatists who spontaneously perform during and after the performance; and the Spectators, who participate more as observers, moving in and out of the performance.

If we accept her framing, then is an illusion more real for the Mystic than for the Technician? Is the Spectator more discerning of the dual perspective and able to move between these?

Perhaps artists need to accept that there will be a range of responses from child audiences, and that all of these ways of being an audience are permissible, and not necessarily better or worse than one another. It may also be possible that each child has several types of audience behaviors available to them, with different productions stimulating one or more of these, depending on the content and form of what is being presented.

In a world where truth has become more heavily contested by conspiracy theorists, and where half-truths and outright lies are presented as self-evident truths, this notion of how to treat illusion and reality in theatre even for the very young is an important political decision. Brecht's approach to theatre which actively sought to remind audiences of the concrete reality of the theatre in order to encourage a more critical response to what they were seeing, is perhaps more relevant than ever.

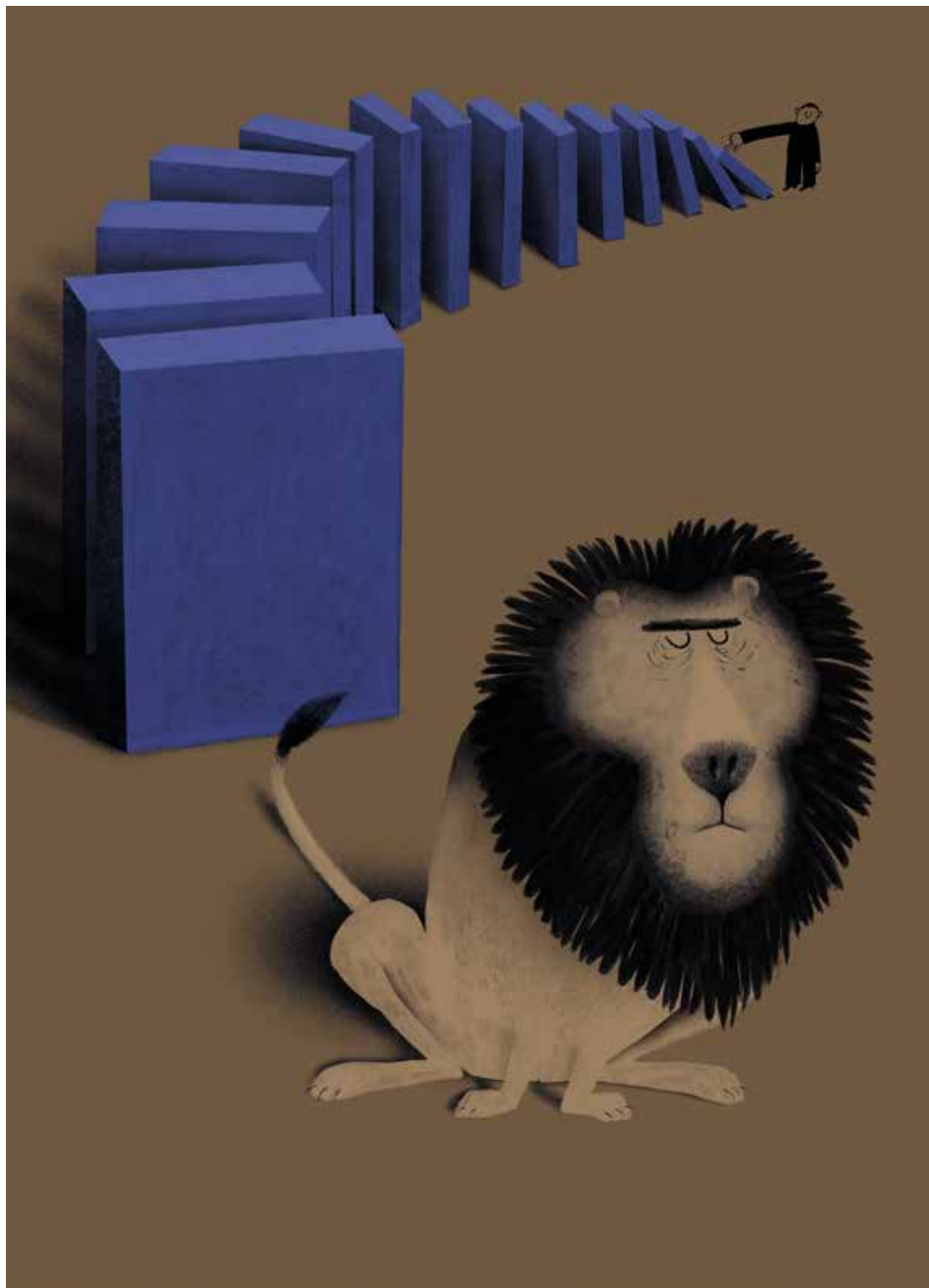
How do we engage young audiences in such a way that they experience the world as something over which they have the power to make a difference? Neither as an inexplicable mystery which cannot be altered, nor as a place stripped of the beauty and richness of what life has to offer.

Perhaps we can take some cues from the way children play naturally. They are able to use any means to transform objects into representations of other objects and then recombine these with other elements to create new storylines and worlds. The focus that is maintained through a game is intense, and the belief in the fiction can seem total. But when the game is over, the supercar reverts to being a cardboard box, the Superman cape to a plastic bag and the child is able to distinguish between the fictional world they have just created and the real world in which they will eat their supper.

Perhaps it is only by working intimately with children as our guides that we will start to know how real is an illusion for early years theatre.

Works Cited

- Reason, Matthew. "Drawing the Theatrical Experience: How Children Watch Theatre." <https://matthewreason.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/drawing-the-theatrical-experience-final-version.pdf>
- Wedell, Cassandra. "The Child Audience." In *Children, Meaning-Making and the Arts*, edited by Susan Wright. Pearson Education, 2003, pp. 135-159.



*How Are Movements
Connected to Emotion?*

Klaas Verplancke

IV.

How Are Movements Connected to Emotion?

Jackie Eun Ju Chang

The origin of a word, sometimes, leads us how we contemplate the word. In a word 'emotion,' 'e' symbols 'out' or 'outside' in Latin and 'motion' is related to something moving. In short, 'e-motion' means that something moving comes out but not something that still resides in. That's why it is 'e-motion' not '*in*-motion,' '*inter*-motion,' '*ob*-motion,' or '*per*-motion.' Feeling is slightly different from emotion in the context of "in or out." We feel *within* ourselves. Nobody can know what *I* am feeling now, at this moment, unless *I* express out it anyway. Because my feeling occurs through the whole body of me, not of others. I can feel me, but not you. That's why *myself* can be differentiated from *yourself* physically.

However, we can know some levels of others' emotion when it is expressed out. Without this ability theatre art cannot exist. Audiences can understand/interpret/notice/be aware of the expressed emotions of actors because they can sense and perceive the changes of physical movement of the actors' body on the stage. This ability to focus on the changes of others' bodies can be observed from the beginning of life. Right after birth, in the delivery room, if the newborn had not been interrupted by bright light during birthing process, the baby can engage their gaze to the father's eyes and mouth when he is watch-

ing his new born child in the tiny bath tub. It happens so easily that the baby grasps their father's shaky point finger, because most fathers start to cry with various sounds. These sounds intrigue eye-searching-movements. Personally, I *feel* so lucky that I could have witnessed these amazing moments for the last 11 years.

This surprising ability of a baby can be observed because human beings are born with FFA: the Fusiform Face Area in the brain (Kanwisher et al.). Very young human beings have tendencies to focus their eyes more easily on anything with the shape of a face. And babies can gaze better on it when moving. With or without emotion does not alter the tendency. In the delivery room babies do not seem to have specific emotions to need to move their eyes but, with that movement, fathers started to cry in deep emotion.

Since 2007, scientists have suggested that human infants have an intense interest in people and their behavior (Hermann et al.). Through this bodily based interest the very young start to learn to attune their feelings to others' expressed feelings, so called emotions. Thus, bodily attuned feelings and physically shared emotions can be the foundation of 'sociality' so that people can communicate each other. With these communicative physical movements we can assume, guess, and imagine other's feelings and emotions:

Human imagination and the ability to communicate through performance are engaged in participatory, communal, bodily based activities which attuned each person to others in the immediate group and to the environment. (Zarrilli et al. 4-5)

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938) had already foreseen the physical factor in emotion and imagination. Rhonda Blair emphasizes that his method of acting is significantly “informed and influenced by late 19th and early 20th century reflexologists (an early version of behaviorists) who studied the links between physical conditioning and bodily response” (Blair 94). It was the time of Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) who is famous for the physical conditional reflex. Imagination and action are precisely what the ‘magic *if*’ is all about. When imagination affects an actor’s physical sensation and perception it is likely that both actors and audience can rely to some degree on neural mechanisms of experience of emotion. We feel when the other feels. And whether we respond *with* the other person or to the other (both are required of actors), both responses depend on imitation which precedes language and prosocial response. “Empathy doesn’t necessarily require conscious awareness because of the way we are biologically built” (Blair 101). Bodily attuned feelings and physically shared emotions are responses of ours *with* or to the others. And imitation precedes attuning and sharing. Imitation is the fundamental simple social movement which can physically be performed on both sides: the imitator and the imitated.

Simple morphological imitation can also expand our cognitive imagination. First of all, mimicking is a very willful action. To mimic you need a very specific strategy: which part exactly you need to emphasize, when you will start, when you need to finish effectively, etc. While we keep mimicking someone or something our conscious imagination naturally starts to connect related situations. We learn how to

understand the world starting by simple mimicking in complex ways. Theoretically and empirically, imitation is not that simple and easy nor cognitively passive or inferior, rather it is very active.

An interesting study was guided by psychologists using Stanislavski’s acting method. Researchers divided actors in two groups and assessed their processing of emotional facial expressions. The “Mimic Method” group was asked to use voluntary active mimicry to respond to the related cast’s emotions. And the “Stanislavski Method” group was asked to infer others’ inner states from reading the emotional context. Then, each group were compared with a control group with no acting experience at all. The result was: the responses of the Mimic group were more accurate, whereas the Stanislavski group was slower (Conson et al.). This slowness might not seem a big deal. But imagine that mother delayed response to infer the meaning and context of her baby’s babbling. Internationally, mothers have tendencies to mimic their babies’ babbling or changes their own normal pronunciation following to the baby’s. That’s how they emotionally communicate. Emotional mimicry fosters affiliation and bonding. The “emotional expertise” cannot be trained with cognitive inferring but with sensation and perception of physical movements; movement of vocal cord, tongue, lips, etc. We can start to communicate with others before language and cognition. This can be why children are better experts of empathy than adults.

Infants develop the ability to mimic adult facial expressions from early to later infancy. As emotional mimicry is developed an infant can discriminate emotions with

“matching behaviors” (Soussignan et al.). Valence-congruent expressions emerge in infancy at the cellular level of movements. Infancy is critical to decode the care-giver’s facial expressions to communicate with them. Emotionally matching behaviors can only be discovered by actions expressed. Socially healthy human beings can share a certain degree of movements matching certain situations and emotions in their culture. Movements are the social signal value of emotions. Facial expressions including physical movements are the emotions of the body (Decety and Sommerville).

To know more in detail, we should look into the cranial nerves which directly connect your brain to different parts of your body. There are 12 pairs of cranial nerves in our body, mainly in face, head and neck area and generally whole trunk over all (see 12 Cranial nerves, <https://www.britannica.com/science/human-nervous-system/Cranial-nerves>).

Let’s imagine we are waiting for someone. Waiting is a very physical emotional behavior that is directly connected to the mechanism of the cranial nerves. At a glance, we can easily see that somebody is waiting for someone. While waiting; eyes get bigger and move fast in various directions to keep finding the right person or the right place for better and wider vision, following neck and spine movements, and sometimes the limbic balance sensation is fully activated because we step on a risky higher fence. All these behaviors are connected to the cranial nerves. First of all, the 11th pair of cranial nerves is used. The 11th pair is associated with the neck muscle and the spine moving. In a Korean proverb there is a desperate expression of waiting

behavior: “waiting for someone until one’s neck is come off.” The 2nd pair is associated with the acceptance of optic data or visual information. The 3rd, 4th, and 6th pair roll and change the direction of the eyes. The 8th pair are the auditory nerves which involve in hearing but they are also the center of balance to keep the body stable even on tilted surfaces. To wait for friends or loved ones we use these cranial nerves sensitively and precisely, even without our willful intention and conscious awareness. That’s why we can easily figure out waiting behaviors.

In addition, we can tell the level of positive or negative emotions by the number of movements of body parts; if they start to drink water often, turn the head, shake legs, or wiggle fingers, these are signs that they are getting negative emotions. Bodily movements are all emotional behaviors. Movements lead emotions and, vice versa, emotions lead movements. If we move our body parts or organs related to certain cranial nerves the neural information goes to the limbic area which also exists in the brain. The limbic area is known as the emotional brain which is connected to the hypothalamus that links the nervous system to the endocrine system via the pituitary gland. The endocrine system controls and coordinates our emotions in association with the nervous system and the immune system and it permits the prime functions of living organisms: growth, development, and reproduction (Rogers 2) It also respond to injury, stress, and mood (Anatomy of the endocrine system). Simply speaking, our emotions are the moving relationship of brain and body. Emotions are not psychological only but very physical.

There are some people who have difficulty in understanding the emotional behaviors of others. In emotional response, often immediate reaction is required. To empathize with others sometimes you need to be capable to notice others' emotion without specific verbal explanations. That's how we have culturally common physical expressions. Neurophysiological movements start from the level of neuron cells that move vocal cords, muscles, and cellular chemical exchanges, which are correlated with very complex endocrinological hormonal functions, including emotion. Emotion is not the cause of movements but the process itself of very specific neural movements. As our range of movements are various so are our emotions.

Works Cited

Anatomy of the endocrine system: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/anatomy-of-the-endocrine-system>

Blair, Rhonda. "Cognitive Neuroscience and Acting: Imagination, Conceptual Blending, and Empathy" *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2009, pp. 92–103.

Conson, Massimiliano, Marta Ponari, Eva Monteforte, Giusy Ricciato, Marco Sarà, Dario Grossi,

and Luigo Trojano. "Explicit Recognition of Emotional Facial Expressions Is Shaped by Expertise: Evidence from Professional Actors" *Frontiers in Psychology* 4.382, 2013, pp. 1-8.

Decety, Jean and Jessica A. Sommerville. "Shared Representations between Self and Other: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience View" *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 7, no. 12, 2003, pp. 527–33.

Hermann, Esther, Joseph Call, María Victoria Hernández-Lloreda, Brian Hare, and Michael Tomasello. "Humans Have Evolved Specialized Skills of Social Cognition: The Cultural Intelligence Hypothesis" *Science* 317. 5843, 2007, pp. 1360-1366.

Kanwisher, Nancy, Josh McDermott, and Marvin M. Chun. "The Fusiform Face Area: A Module in Human Extrastriate Cortex Specialized for Face Perception" *The Journal of Neuroscience: The Official Journal of the Society for Neuroscience*, vol. 17, no. 11, 1999, pp. 4302-4311.

Rogers, Kara, ed. *The Endocrine System*. Rosen Publishing Group, 2011.

Soussignan, Robert, Nicolas Dollion, Beoist Schaal, Karine Durand, Nadja Reissland, and Jean-Yves Baudouin. "Mimicking Emotions: How 3–12-month-old Infants Use the Facial Expressions and Eyes of a Model" *Cognition and Emotion*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2018, pp. 827–842.

Zarrilli, Phillip B., Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams, and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei. *Theatre Histories* (2nd ed.). Routledge, 2006.



Performance Encounters: How Does the Spectatorial Experience Begin?

Katherine Morley

The relationship between how we *feel* and how we *watch* is central to any performance experience, though not necessarily easy to articulate. Imagine the arrival of our spectators; waking from a nap, asking for a snack, infants entwined with a parent, newly walking toddlers, pre-schoolers asking astute questions and six year olds chatting with friends. Here, too, are curious adults and nervous teachers wondering how their children will respond. The emotional context and material circumstances of a child's visit to the theatre was recently explored by Emma Miles, during which she cites Ric Knowles' assertion that "the performance event begins long before the houselights dim" (23). In questioning how the spectatorial experience begins, in this article I will consider the impact of journeying to the theatre in a way that also helps unpack the boundaries of cognition.

Let's position *journeying* as a continuous encounter with a succession of variables that can influence how we feel: readying to leave home; the weather conditions; the physiological affects of hunger or wakefulness. Times of transition - moving from one activity or location to another - can be notoriously tricky for some children,

so arriving into the theatre isn't always straightforward. Everything encountered appears on a subjective scale of novelty or familiarity and influences how we feel. This is true too for the parent-carer who might be coming to the theatre for the first time, or feel as if they are coming for the first time, since attending as a parent necessarily influences the spectatorial experience. Arriving into the conditions of the auditorium therefore represents a significant moment during this continuation of sensory processing, where the variables, contextualized by each venue's cultural context and the child's own developmental and physical capabilities, converge with the performance conditions. A child's response at the theatre is the site of this personal coalescence.

As adults we can conceptualize that the performance begins at a predetermined time, when the lights "go down," or the performers "enter" but from a child's perspective, let's imagine "spectatorship" steadily comes into focus, to shape perception, while passing through a succession of doors; from home, nursery, bus, venue, cloakroom, and auditorium. From sectoral best practice and tacit knowledge, we understand how all these variables, each with their own impact for each child, can become absorbed by the venue's welcome. The approach to receiving audiences will be nuanced for each venue, space, show, and geographical cultural practice, but some things remain universal: the warmth of welcome, centering the child without excluding the adult, gently imparting information without extinguishing anyone's curiosity. The epitome of artful, twinkling welcomes was that of Valeria Frabetti, whose formidable presence

was a magnet to any child I ever saw in her orbit. I imagine the child thinking...

*We have stepped out of our routine
I am not asked to move quickly
anymore
People here look me in the eye
They suggest what might happen
I can find my own way
I can find my own way of being
I can hear small things
I hold hands, not because I am
scared but because I want to share
this*

In her work in Immersive Theatre settings Josephine Machon illustrates how touch becomes an anchor for “contact, tactility and immediacy” during the spectatorial experience (144). This idea helps to expand the definition of spectatorship in TEY because here too, we see touch is a reliable constant in the experience of young children. Even when adults find themselves immersed or disorientated by novelty, it is they, we first assume, that become an anchor to the child’s experience, although it quickly becomes possible to see how we might argue that it is the child that becomes an anchor to the adult’s experience.

During recent research on synchronous silence, I analyzed some sixty TEY performances to examine the relational responses of infant-parent dyads. At the beginning of the performance, infants (aged between 0-18 months) fell rapidly into positions of close spectatorial attention – limb movements dramatically reduced and vocalizations dropped to low levels. Adults were slower to settle. As with so many Small Size performances for

this age, these responses could be attributed to a combination of the novelty of the surroundings, the presence of performers, and the first perceptible alterations to lighting and sound conditions. Perhaps at the beginning of a performance, relative silence in infants also occurs because other infant spectators have fallen silent - but this idea deserves more space than I can give it here. However, what also became clear was that the common response of relative stillness and silence not only occurred at the beginning of each show but also during pauses between scenes. In the moments nothing of consequence appeared to be happening onstage – during a momentary hiatus or absence of action - pauses invariably created the same kind of close attentional response as occurred at the beginning of a show, where the cause was more easily attributed to the novelty of action.

Pausing encourages infants to look more closely, not look away, and rarely causes vocal or physical responses that suggested a broken connection with the stage. In observing the response of infants, parent-carers also visibly still. Something significant is happening for these infants and it links back to the question this paper is asking. In seeking to more specifically question how the spectatorial journey begins, through close analysis it is possible to suggest that rather than experiencing a void or absence, infants recognize and perhaps even enjoy pauses as moments of presence. As a way of understanding the value of pauses, I would like to position them here as a kind of beginning; or beginning again. It connects back to the developmental fact that the auditory processing speed of an infant is at least twice

as slow as adults (Eliot 247). The relative stillness and silence of a pause can become, I propose, a place to wonder, to question, to digest, or to cogitate.

In renewing their interest in the performance rather than looking away at a time of pause, we could also ask whether infants have learned to anticipate action. It might be that pausing allows a sense of expectation or anticipation appropriate to their particular age and developmental capability. This also brings a new perspective to the beginning-middle-end view of the performance experience and encourages consideration of a journey shaped not by prediction, but by feeling and immediacy.

In Spring 2022 I took a two-year-old to see Theatre Helios’s show *Kreise (Circles)*, at the Brik Mapping festival. It was only the third piece of theatre she’d been able to see due to Covid restrictions - the first was La Baracca’s *Cornici (Frames)*, and the second was Helios’s *Früh Stück*, so this was her starting point for what she understood theatre to be. I want to share here how this very young spectator helped me understand a particular aspect of expectation... *I’d told her the title of today’s piece was Circles, but that I didn’t know anything else about it. We find the stage is “empty,” the flooring is black, and a silver bucket is suspended in the center of the space. A short time after the start of the show, Michael, the sole performer steps towards the edge of the space pulling the bucket out at an angle. He has removed a stopper from it and sand is falling at his feet. The audience is silent, watchful. “Where are the circles?” my companion says, sounding confused ... And then he let go of the bucket, and as it wheeled round the space, from its point of suspen-*

sion, it deposited lines of sand in perfect circles. I think perhaps she didn’t need to speak again because somehow the performance began for her at that moment. When the expectation of seeing circles was met (with a material she recognized from her own everyday play) she began to connect through recognition: to recognize – know again – recall to mind – re-learn.

There’s something significant here about the beginning of a performance marrying with a sense of recognition: that the performance itself has started for the individual when they are ready to look inside or step inside it. Without opportunities to pause, we risk children being unable to assimilate their surroundings to find their own way to become receptive. Adults purchase tickets and make decisions, but as theatre makers we can offer time to assimilate the surroundings so that the invitation to participate (see White) can be accepted by children themselves.

There was something very elegant about the way Teater Tre’s Mapping production *Drömskt (Dreamy)* used a direct, settling technique with their audiences. Gently greeting, helping audiences sit comfortably, two female performers put a clear demarcation around the end of their welcome and the beginning of the show by saying to one another, “So... shall we begin? Yes... let’s begin.” The “experience” of being in the theatre had already very much begun, the audiences (mostly aged 2-4) had travelled through the venue, met the performers, walked into the auditorium, found a space to sit, maybe noticing the scenography or glancing up at the lights. The performer’s suggestion “to begin” was not just an af-

firmation that the conditions were ready, but also about inviting the audience in that little bit closer. So, this is the beginning. It's starting! Did that mean that these spectators watched in a different way, shifting in that moment from every day, domestic observation to viewing through an aesthetic lens? Did they pass from a primary connection with their parent-carers to a primary connection with the performers? This careful punctuation certainly allowed everyone to breath in, though the process of settling had begun as the venue doors opened, and by the venue staff offering the best assurance possible that this was a place where spectators were welcome, safe, and could feel comfortable. Given the ease with which we consistently see children settle to spectatorship, we could argue that it is they that become an anchor to the adult's experience, as they navigate the performance aesthetic together. When practitioners receive children in a way that is allowing, it becomes more possible for the child to lead their adult through the aesthetic experience. We are all, of course, simultaneously journeying and arriving, to-

gether, and alone. As we arrive in the present, we are already journeying towards the future from our current perspective. As my toddler daughter likes to ask in the morning "is it tomorrow, today?" Amidst the continuation of our individual and collective journeying, sensory processing, and meaning-making, it feels good to acknowledge that "We are here."

Works Cited

Eliot, Lise. *What's Going on in There? How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life*. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999.

Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Machon, Josephine *Immersive Theatres*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Miles, Emma. Bus Journeys, Sandwiches and Play: Young Children and the Theatre Event. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2018, pp. 20-39.

White, Gareth. *Audience Participation in the Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

VI. How Do Very Young Children Make Meaning of Abstract Movement?

Young-Ai Choi
and
Yoona Kang

How you react to abstract movement is interesting for me. The dancer makes a movement and a spectator receives it. What happens in the spectator's mind? How does she interpret what she sees? What kind of stories they find out of it? How does it feel inside? I think it's fascinating. Because it's about the imagination and that's where the art is happening.

- Paivi Aura, Director of *Why Mix*

This essay starts with a question raised during the process of creating the Mapping production *Why Mix*, a work of the movement partner group Auraco. The piece is a dance production focusing on abstract movement. The performance does not have a story line nor a narrative. Rather, two performers come together on stage and perform stylized and abstract movement inspired by the shapes of the German art house Bauhaus. One performer's movement is very sharp and the other's is large and soft. The director's aim is "to show how great and diverse their body language can be" and to see how the very young audience interprets their abstract movement (Aura).

Indeed, how does a very young child respond to abstract movement on stage? Auraco's artists' question led us to the topic of this essay, which we cannot explore extensively within the limit of this paper, but about which we hope to start a meaningful discussion. To return to the *Why Mix* case, the child participants (age 4-18) who were invited to watch, selected dance sequences of the production during the play developing process answered the question of "what did you see?" in diverse ways. The company shared their record of audience responses with us:

There were birds and also the sea, maybe the mermaid or fishes in the water.

That was a football game.

It was a robot dancing.

There was a joyful child playing.

The dancer was practicing some very difficult task.

She throws something toward me and then she sends a kiss.

It was a candy rain.

She was going to fall asleep but then she woke up.

She was able to get into the best place ever.

Echo, it was definitely an echo.

The *Why Mix* team, in the first place, was fascinated by how different and unique each child's story was even though it was based on the same abstract movement (Aura). Then what do the interpretations from the child audience tell us about the way a young child responds to an abstract movement? The director says, "What experience do they bring? I think this comes to their experience of life. How long your life has been [...] what kind of experience you have. [...] When you see something,

you relate your body experience to what you see. [...] It is something very essential to human beings" (Aura). Aura thinks that humans tend to understand or interpret movements based on the body experience they had.

Influenced by Aura's ideas, we think that the concept of 'inner mimicry' or 'kinesthetic sympathy' is useful when thinking about children's way of responding to abstract movement. The prominent dance critic John Martin "...used the terms 'inner mimicry' and 'kinesthetic sympathy' to refer to spectators' muscular and emotional responses to watching dancers" (Reynold and Reason, "Introduction" 19). According to him, just by watching a movement performed on stage, a spectator would feel as if they would be experiencing it themselves (Reynold and Reason, "Kinesthesia" 53). And movement and emotions are closely linked because the nerves which sense our movements are connected to the senses where emotions are felt (53). Thus, when the audience experiences a performed movement, they also feel the emotions related to it, which is called inner mimicry (54). John Martin also writes that "sensory experience could have the effect of 'reviving memories of previous experiences over the same neuromuscular paths', and also of 'making movements or preparations for movement'" (qtd. in Hedges).

Based on the above ideas, then, it is very likely that a dancer's abstract movement will make a child spectator experience the movement and also feel the emotions connected to it. As mentioned, if inner mimicry can happen based on former experiences, children might tap into the child's own life experience as they relate to the dancer's

abstract movement. If the movements are felt together with relevant emotions, the children might empathize with the dancers while watching their movement. Or because watching a movement might let the spectator prepare a future movement, the child might use their imagination to attach meaning or relevant emotions to the movement performed.

As the diverse and dynamic audience responses to selected scenes of *Why Mix* illustrate, there is no such thing as a universal experience of the very young. Each child's life is singular. We cannot essentialize a young child's experience and each child will meet their unique emotional history in their own way when watching an abstract movement.

Nevertheless, it would be meaningful to point out a number of characteristics of young children's experience, which are likely to affect their interpretation of abstract movements on stage. First, young children move flexibly and diversely and their movements take all kind of shapes. Peter Slade observed that there are distinct shapes in which children move during their free play (*Introduction* 6). According to him, "Once active personal play has started, we see an interesting number of shapes, drawn, as it were, over the space by the direction the child walks, runs or dances" (*Child Play* 7) [...] "if the person (or persons) involved is allowed enough freedom to create things in their own way" (8). Children start moving in circles when they are babies, circles in diverse sizes and shapes thereafter, and in the spiral in infant school or in the S shape later on (Slade, *Introduction* 6). If children are familiar with moving in such abstract forms in their everyday life

remembering the experience and relevant feelings with their bodies, wouldn't it be easier to invite them to connect to their own movement memory when watching a performer's abstract movement?

Furthermore, we would like to point out that children are masters of "the mental act of imaginative transformation" (Koste 4), which affects their response to abstract movements. According to Koste, in child's play and/or the "mental act of imaginative transformation," — "the blocks, rocks, etc. are imbued -perhaps silently, internally- with character." Children "fancy themselves out of their street corner lot into some more dazzling diamond where mythic pennants are sought" (4). Thus, projecting meanings on abstract shapes, transforming them into meaningful objects in their imagination, is a task children do in their play freely— it is what they are experts about. If so, couldn't abstract movements performed on stage easily become triggers of children's imagination? Of stories, the very young audience creates for themselves?

How do very young children make meaning of abstract movement? Even though we never attempted to find a definite answer to the question, the above reflections led us to a number of interesting insights. Humans relate to movements on stage, based on their bodily experience of movements,

the emotions relevant to them. Thus, to abstract movements as in *Why Mix* the very young will respond based on their movement/life experience and imagination. The spectrum of movements of the very young, however, both physically/literally and also in terms of the ways they transform it via their imagination, is extremely wide and dynamically diverse. Thus, the very young, with their flexibility both in terms of movement and imagination, surely are an interesting audience in front of whom to perform diverse movements such as abstract movements as in the *Why Mix* case and many more.

Works Cited

- Aura, Paivi. Personal interview. 19 May 2014.
- Hedges, Nicholas. "Kinaesthetic Empathy," 18 February, 2010, <https://www.nicholashedges.uk/uncategorized/kinaesthetic-empathy/>
- Koste, Virginia. *Dramatic Play in Childhood*. Heinemann, 1995.
- Reynold, Dee and Mathew Reason. "Introduction." *Kinaesthetic Empathy in Cultural and Creative Practices*. Bristol: Intellect, 2012, pp.17-25.
- . "Kinesthesia, Empathy, and Related Pleasures: An Inquiry into Audience Experiences of Watching Dance" *Dance Research Journal* vol. 42, no. 2, 2010, pp. 49-75.
- Slade, Peter. *An Introduction to Child Drama*. University of London Press, 1958.
- . *Child Play*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1995.



*Can Clichés Exist
in Theatre for Early Years?*

Manuel Marsol

VII.

Can Clichés Exist in Theatre for Early Years?

Yvette Hardie

Two actors greet the audience with smiles and kind, focused attention, acknowledging each person, child or adult, as they enter. They wait for all the children to be settled before looking at one another, breathing in and out together. The lights in the audience dim a little. The actors carefully and deliberately open a box, from which they draw a...

Numerous productions for early years start in this manner. It is a way of establishing contact with the audience, of settling everyone in to the experience, of creating a kind of shared stillness, in which anticipation or curiosity can emerge... Is it a common ritual of sorts or has it become a cliché?

When is something a cliché? When is it fresh and new? Does something have to be entirely innovative to be good?

Early years theatre may carry many repeated tropes – the use of particular colors together (at one time, there seemed to be a fashion for black and white, at another, for primary colors), particular kinds of sounds (tinkly music played on xylophones, for example, or gently cascading rain sticks), particular explorations of simple materials that become a source of wonder – cloth, paper, water, feathers, glowing balls, handheld torches. Sometimes, it could be

argued, that even the atmosphere of sustained wonder or reverence for life that so many pieces for early years evoke, may itself feel like a cliché.

When does the use of these elements, or the manner in which they are used, become clichéd and when is it genuinely engaging and impactful?

And if we are speaking about clichés that occur in TYA, one of the most repeated (and heavily scorned) lines of dialogue must be something along the lines of “Where did he/she/it go?” with the audience expected to roar the answer in response.

Is it possible for a child, who has had so little experience of life, let alone of theatre, to experience something as being a cliché?

This may of course be their very first theatre experience. If clichés are those ideas or expressions that have become overused to the point of losing their original impact or meaning, what is it like to experience something considered clichéd for the first time? Does one not experience the cliché as having its original impact or meaning in that first experience? Does the nature of the artist-audience relationship not refresh the cliché, restoring some if not all of its original impact? “My love is like a red, red rose”, may be one of the original clichés, and yet when the filters of experience are removed, is it not still a powerful image? Clichés become clichés because they are possessed of a certain power at the point of creation, and precisely because they possess this power, they are repeated to become over-used so that society finally judges them as clichés. This doesn’t necessarily diminish or negate the intrinsic power that they have...

And even if the child has witnessed the cliché before, what about the fact that for the child, repetition is a key part of their learning and how they choose to experience life?

One of the most common refrains from young children, parents will tell you, is “Again!” Children need and love repetition. It provides familiarity, comfort and a platform for learning. Singing the same song, having the same story read, repeating a game endlessly; all these repetitions provide endless enjoyment and pleasure. We know that neural pathways require repetition to remain permanent, and so in any learning process, repetition and pattern-making are basic building blocks. Children cycle through observation, imitation, experimentation and then mastery, and these cycles are fed by repetition.

It has also been shown that children learn better when things are repeated precisely. Experiments have indicated that children learn words better when they hear them in the same repeated story, rather than when they hear the same words in different stories (Horst et al. 8) The repetition appears to allow for a deeper understanding of nuance and meaning. By hearing and knowing the story repeatedly, they become masters of the story, and feel empowered by being able to anticipate what is to come. The experience becomes considerably more fun.

This need for repetition seems to diminish with age, since as Judith Wright, literacy specialist with Ontario Early Years Centre in London, Ontario says, “A baby needs a 1000 repetitions to learn a word; by the time he’s a toddler, he might need 50 repetitions; and when he’s in kindergarten, he

may need only a few repetitions to master it because the brain connections have been laid out” (qtd. in Kryczka) The same may be true of all forms of learning – whether of language or the structures of stories or ways of moving and being in the world.

However, repetition in itself does not necessarily indicate a cliché. Rituals are repeated actions imbued with meaning, which carry a wide range of desired outcomes, from the reduction of anxiety to consolation in the face of grief to communal celebration. Something can be repeated and yet remain fresh and compelling, as perhaps our opening scenario is an example. Knowing something deeply and experiencing it again can be highly satisfying. Rituals may use repetition, but the repetition adds to the power of the ritual through an accumulation and deepening of meaning over time. And of course, ritual and theatre are deeply interconnected, in their origins, their forms and their purposes.

The borrowing and recombining of materials from other sources into new and exciting forms is an entirely valid form of theatre practice (Shakespeare was a master of this) and therefore the mining of common materials to rediscover what they have to offer in new works, should be permissible in theatre for early years as much as in any other genre.

TEY theatre-makers speak of the need for creating patterns and then for surprising children; to lead them in a particular direction, and then find shifts that allow for variation, for peaks and troughs within the experience. This can be achieved through the use of a known story, or it can be done through manipulating repetitions in order

to provide spaces for surprise. There needs to be a delicate balance between making and disrupting patterns, that also allows for breathing space at the moment when the patterns shift (Mac Lochlainn).

Games can create useful and flexible structures for children’s theatre, since they follow certain predictable rules (and where even the variations can be somewhat predictable), so that it can be obvious when one is subverting the rules or playing against the expected. Children are also expert at learning games quickly through observation, as well as at creating their own games and inventing the rules for playing. So while the repeated use of games may at times seem clichéd in early years theatre, this may not be the case for the child audience. And of course, play could be argued to be the starting point for all artistic practice...

Indeed, how do we even determine if something *is* a cliché for its intended audience?

Perhaps when as adults we experience moments of what feels like cliché in theatre for early years, it is a by-product of our having seen a large amount of theatre ourselves, and therefore carrying a sense of having seen it all before. Is it useful to apply this lens to the work, or should we in fact be attempting to experience the work through the eyes of the children in the audience, rather than the adults? When watching a performance of theatre for early years, surely the most important people to watch in making a judgement of how powerfully the work is landing, is the intended audience for their response?

Coming from a culture where theatre for early years is the exception rather than the rule, it is interesting when artists with no previous experience of the form, invent the same or similar approaches with which to engage children. Sometimes these are founded on certain common preconceptions about the nature of childhood, which may in themselves be clichéd and could result in less interesting discoveries. But when the quality of the artistic research is such that it engages children with genuine respect and curiosity, when productions are made and developed through at least some engagement and interaction with the audience, even if the end results are potentially viewed as clichéd by the experienced adults, the children are more likely than not to experience them as novel and absorbing.

The attitude of the artist to the work they are presenting may also have an impact. If the cliché is perceived as such by some in the audience, but to the artist it is felt as a new discovery, it may be presented in a way that it manages to escape its status as a cliché. Sometimes not knowing what the clichés are can have this impact. At other times it may be about recognizing that something could be considered clichéd, but finding a way to present it that escapes the definition. The moment finds a new life in the energy and commitment that the artist brings to it.

Of course, an aspect of theatre performance that is specific to the artform is the communal aspect of experiencing it together. This seems to have particular significance when thinking about theatre for early years. When we watch theatre with very young children, there is often a kind of

three-way relationship in operation: the intended audience (the child) – their accompanying adult/s – the artist/s.

This is not generally the case when children come with a school group, but when they attend with their families or caregivers the response of the adult to the work can be deeply significant and can affect the child's experience. If adults are irritated or bored by what they are seeing, because to them it appears clichéd, then this may dilute or disturb the child's engagement with the artwork. Equally, if there is a freshness and excitement for everyone in the audience, the child's engagement may be enhanced. Many artists deliberately work to ensure that a performance has as many appealing qualities for the adults watching it as for the children, or that moments can be read at different levels by different audience members. If there is a genuinely engaged response from adults as well as from children, it creates a more electric connection that can be deeply satisfying to all.

In South Africa, where theatre for young audiences is not always given the respect it deserves, it is not uncommon to see the adults on their phones, while children watch a performance – the palpable lack of interest must surely have an impact ultimately on how the children experience that performance and how they value the

experience? However, this is not necessarily going to result in the child identifying a particular moment as being clichéd...it may simply make them less interested in theatre in a more general way, since they are not seeing it as something to be valued by the adults who are most important to them.

Part of what theatre invites us to do is to look again at something we think we know and in so doing, by giving it our attention in the here and now, we spark a sense of awe, of wonder, of curiosity in the everyday.

Perhaps clichés in early years theatre are created as much by the attitudes we bring to the experience of watching theatre, as they are by the original creators of the piece?

Works Cited

Horst, Jessica S., Kelly L Parsons, and Natasha M. Bryan. "Get the Story Straight: Contextual Repetition Promotes Word Learning from Storybooks." *Front. Psychol.* Vol. 2, no. 17, 2011. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00017

Mac Lochlainn, Marc, Branar Téatar do Pháistí. Notes from Interview, 22 October 2022.

Kryczka, Cathie. "Again, Again! Why Your Kid Wants to Do the Same Activity Over and Over." *Today's Parent*, 2008, 2021. <https://www.todaysparent.com/toddler/kids-repetition>

VIII.

How Could We Make Images Speak to Very Young Children During the Pandemic?

Manon van de Water

The global covid-19 pandemic has affected us all, including our children and youth. While the elderly and other populations were the most physically vulnerable, children experienced prolonged disrupted school attendance, a lack of social interaction with peers, and a life with masks, distance, and isolation. For the very young, 0-6 years old, this became their reality and many, until late 2022, may have not experienced otherwise.

Early 2020, when covid emerged and spread, the Mapping Project had just started. Some meetings had already happened in various places, some groups had met, some not yet, and all the performances were in the conception stage. None of us could envision that two years later we would still be in a pandemic, but meantime the work had not been halted and although traveling was more or less prohibited, we were all working to the extent possible in our own environments.

In Poznan, Poland, Animacji—Animation— theatre worked on the production *Whispers from the Woods*, a puppetry performance for toddlers 2-4 years old and their closest

adults. The director, Alicja Morawska-Rubczak, lived in the woods at that time, which were empty since visiting the woods was prohibited in Poland. Nature, of course, had for many people become the go-to place by lack of any other open indoor leisure activities. But the forbidden access to the woods in Poland at the beginning of the pandemic inspired Morawska-Rubczak to create a performance on how to bring the youngest audience in touch with nature. It also made her and the creative team tackle heads-on the practical obstacles of performing during a pandemic: how to create the conditions necessary during the performance where the art of puppet animation could in safe and sensorily engaging ways take place in the presence of audiences as young as two years old?

Puppet animation relies on imagery. Of course, all puppet performances can be enhanced by words, sounds, and movement, and these elements were amply used in this performance but at the core are the images created by the puppetry and the scenery to convey the story, message, experience, or idea. In this case, it was the experience of presenting the forest in unexpected ways, yet unknown to audiences, encouraging them to individually explore this area of knowledge.

In terms of images the creative team faced choices: abstract or concrete? Anthropomorphized or realistic? In between? Combined?

And the overall question: how do the images speak to its young audience?

What can we assume and what not with this intended age group of 2-4 years old and their parents? What is their context, what do they bring to the production?

As mentioned above previous first-hand knowledge of woods and nature may not be there, but in Poland you can assume the popular illustrated books on nature and the woods by Peter Wohlleben and Simona Kossak may have been read to the children. This led to a choice of an abstract set, the forest as a constantly changing ecosystem, a world of trees that combine into a structure of interconnected vessels, not literally, but suggestively through the use of movement, sounds, lights, and the smell of essential oils. As the audience enters the theatre and meets the environment, the actors set the tone by welcoming them with few but essential words indicating the space as woods—secretive, moving, and talking to each other. For the adults a mysterious forest opens, but for the young audience it is a new world, a world they may have never seen.

This world unfolds in six scenes following the actions of three animal puppets: a woodpecker, a squirrel, and a badger. There is also a nut which stands for the woods as it sprouts and spreads its roots. In contrast to the set, the animals (and the nut) are realistic; visually and in their movements. As recognizable puppets, they are a catalyst to remove the distance between human and nature. Throughout, though, is the theme of the woods and the trees that nourish, form their own families, and feed us. The audience is invited to open their eyes and ears and discover what feeds upon and lives in the roots, the branches, the leaves and the ground of the woods. The idea is not to specifically educate children about the ecosystem, although this is definitely a theme an adult would see, but to present forests in unexpected ways as yet unknown to young audiences and in

this way encouraging them to individually explore this area of knowledge.

In addition to the theme, there was the question of *if* live theatre could be presented during the pandemic and *how* that could happen in a responsible way without compromising the aesthetic experience of the audience? In other words, how, in a production for very young children—were proximity, touch, and interaction had become conventions—can we make images speak over distance, without any physical contact or proximity between audience and performers, and between audience groups and the performers themselves? Are compromises prohibiting? Do they have to be?

Theatre for the very young had created its own conventions over the years. Often productions for the very young take place around the audience or the audience sits in the round or specific places on the set. Audiences are encouraged to sit close, and invited to come into the performance and on the stage, if not during then certainly after the performance concludes. Now, due to pandemic restrictions, the audience had to stay in its own family pod (the adults with masks on), proscenium style so the action could be and stay sufficiently distanced. There was no touching the puppets or exploring the woods afterwards. In addition, the performers had to keep distance from each other. How do the images speak to the audience under these circumstances?

Perhaps because the company had taken all the above in consideration, and both design and mis-en-scene of the production were carefully thought out under pandemic circumstances, this production was quite similar both on video and

live. Not only the performance itself, the placing of the children (proscenium but in family groups) and the distance between children and set and actors was very specific. Watching it on video approached a semblance of what it would be watching it live, without the target audience. Like *Sandpit*, the image group first watched and discussed this performance on video before we saw it live at Visioni in March 2022. A live audience was wonderful, and greatly enhanced the experience but it did not significantly alter the impression we, Image Group, had of the production, other than that it worked. The young audience was captivated and did not seem at all disturbed by the distance. The sounds, rhythm, and unfolding images were clear and precise, and the sense of growth and expanse summed up in the last song seemed to come across. As adult theatre makers, watching the video we missed the sense of contact and proximity—between the actors and between the actors and the audience. How would the company adjust the staging if the pandemic restrictions would not be in place?

But that is not the question. The first question here is how to make images speak to very young children *during* the/a pandemic's restriction. The way Animacji chose

was to take all into account and work from there. To consider all circumstances: theatre, audience, image, the outside world, restrictions, and to create a play that speaks to young children, live not on screen.

The second question, then, would be (as also discussed elsewhere in this volume) if the performance does not significantly alter *formally* on screen from on stage, can a young audience relate to this performance on screen? This is a question, I believe, is lingering until this day and likely beyond. There are many reasons to offer on-screen performances, accessibility and costs are only two of them, but the live, communal, and immediate experience of a performance is impossible to recreate. It is not only the performance that makes for the theatrical experience, it is the *communal* experiencing; the live contact—orally, visually, sensorily—that is vital for theatre. And while we all scrambled during the pandemic to keep some semblance of the work we do with the means we had to do it, two things have become absolutely clear: one, live theatre (if allowed), even when conceived and played under pandemic circumstances, can still have a large impact and reach its target audience; and two, live theatre can never be fully experienced through a screen.



How Can Early Years' Audiences Perceive Movements Differently in Theatre from Adult Audiences?

Jackie Eun Ju Chang

“How can early years audiences perceive movements in theatre?”

The general answer to this question is related to young children's prenatal and perinatal sensations. Let me start with explaining the terminology. In neurology, sensation, perception, and cognition are differentiated: “Sensation is the activation of sensory receptor cells at the level of the stimulus. Perception is the central processing of sensory stimuli into a meaningful pattern. Perception is dependent on sensation, but not all sensations are perceived” (<https://openstax.org/books/anatomy-and-physiology-2e/pages/14-1-sensory-perception>).

We have two different types of sensations: the general and the specific. Touch, pain, temperature, proprioception, and pressure are the general; and vision, smell, hearing and taste are the specific which convey sensory information to the brain through cranial nerves only (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK547656/>). We do not take sensory data only from the

outer world. We also need sensory information from within our bodies to stay alive and healthy. Sensing of “the state of the living body” (Damasio, *Feeling* 22) is “the simultaneous foundation of mind and self.” (Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind* 256). Brainstems collect “body sensation in relation to different areas of the body and different functions (e.g., cardiac functions, respiratory functions, blood pressure regulation)” (Damasio et al. 844). This biological sensitivity is linked to greater sensitivity to negative and positive environmental contexts (Corina U. Greven and Judith R. Homberg, 51-74). Neural pathways of sensory data in the brainstem “provide the neural mechanisms by which attentional, motivational, and cognitive variables filter ascending sensory information” (Alexandra Hoffmann et al., p.e103463).

The very young, especially those under 2 years of age, have very specific *physical memories*¹ that exactly connect to their body feelings (Damasio “Descartes”). This physical feeling from the mother's womb was originated by vibration (babies are in amniotic water), which later will be developed as sensation of sound (physically sound is vibration²), balance, and movement. Feeling cannot be discussed without physical sensation because we only can feel the outer world through our sensory organs: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin. We perceive the outer world by organizing, identifying, and interpreting the feeling related to sensory data which are later to be understood. (Of course, it is not a linear process. I simplified it for an explanation but it is much more complex). Thus, sen-

sation is different from perception; it initiates perception; you can sense if you have sensory organs whether you can perceive things or not. Feelings, for example itching, flushing, pounding, etc. are grounded in sensation and are different from emotion. Feeling is basically connected to the body while emotion sometimes can occur only with thinking, memory, or imagination. Richard Schechner, in *Performance Theory*, differentiated feeling from emotion; the former is authentic while the latter social (Schechner 266). Feeling is generated from your authentic body so that it creates physical individuality. Following this step, we realize that the very young already have their own individualities with their real and actual bodies. Whether they are an embryo (under 8 weeks of pregnancy), a fetus (over 9 weeks of pregnancy), or a baby they have the same and one body. In short, a baby has individualized memories of bodily feelings from gestational development, and all embodied memories are related to movement, balance, and vibration in various levels.

Neurophysiological and neuropsychologically vibration means connected micro movement (Fritsch et al.; Mishra; Abeytunge). To feel vibration, any sort of connected phenomena is necessary. The ear drum can take transmitted electrons in the air.³ It means that micro movement of electrons in the air with vibration is interpreted as sound for a human being (Hermelin). In short, sound is subdivided vibration. So, when we consider the very young's watching behavior of an actor's movement we really need to look into the detailed processes of sensation and perception. Very young babies usually happen

to watch actors' movement not led by the vision but by the vibration/sound. No matter how young they are, healthy babies can sense vibrations from a floor to which they are physically connected by lying, sitting, standing, or even walking or running, at exactly the same level as of adult. Compared to hearing and feeling vibrations, watching takes three more years to be developed at an adult level. Thus, we can say that under 2 years old children are a real audience in theatre, not spectators. They are more auditory than visual. It means that the details we, adult performers, discuss about the watching experience of the under 2 years old are very hard to figure out. But the good news is that we do have clues about the perception of sensation of vibration including sound, balance, and movement (Helwany et al.).

The smallest unit organ that senses vibration, begins to form on the 22nd day after fertilization. At this time, it is not yet a stage that can be called an ear but as it grows, it becomes the organ of Corti, the receptor organ for hearing, that recognizes various sounds and vibrations. At 14-15 weeks of gestation, it functions fully at the same level as that of an adult. In other words, a three-and-a-half months old fetus can distinguish as many vibrations and sounds as an adult does. Imagine the feeling of a 2.5 cm tall baby floating in amniotic water when the mother is walking in a park, turning to friends, humming, talking, or bending to pick up a leaf. The various vibration feelings might be big fun for the baby. The vestibular organ, the apparatus of the inner ear involved in balance, develops from 8 weeks of gestation and is completed to

1 In this case I intentionally used the word 'memories' to emphasize the neural patterns toward environmental sensory data not as a cognitive process but as a process of physical sensation. Our sensation and perception processes are very neural and neurons are the micro physical organs!

2 In very rough explanation, sound wave consists of vibrating electrons.

3 Information transmission or process of electrons in the whole world including our universe are real phenomena, not theoretical only.

adult size at 17 weeks. And the cochlea, the sensory organ of hearing which includes the organ of Corti, distinguishes sounds at the same level as of an adult at 19 weeks. Therefore, a 20-24 weeks old fetus can hear all external sounds around the mother exactly as adults do.

Thus, a baby can already have at least five months of physical memories of vibration, balance, and movement at the time of birth. The baby, using this sensory data alone, comes down to the curvy (NOT straight) birth canal. The baby comes forward and backward curvilinearly, turns the head, shoulders, spine, and pelvis to fit into the mother's physically individual structures. It is why nobody except the baby can predict the exact time of birthing. The baby initiates this very sensitive physical adjusting process with their previous sensory data, yet their eyes are still closed. All mammalian babies also do so and they are very good at it, if, and only if, the process is not disturbed. "Giving birth is a natural physiological communication process between baby or babies and mother" (Odent). Simply speaking, connection is necessary to communicate with the very young. Connected feeling is generated from all kinds of vibrations which create and expand to more detailed emotions and thoughts, since the deeper parts of the brain and the beginning of the spinal cord are connected to the inner ear in the cranial space. Sensory data,⁴ when connected and related together, makes meanings. It is why *data*(plural) is more meaningful than *datum*(singular).

When movements are related to the previous sensory *data* of the early years'

audiences, we can offer some connected feelings to them: vibrations with sound or movements; curvy or swirling actions rather than straight movements; and rich vibrational qualities of sound rather than verbal words or literal meanings of the language. As babies grow "the vestibular, proprioceptive, auditory, and visual senses work in concert. These fancy words are labels for sensory systems in humans that often work behind the scenes, taking in information and shaping the brain's network" ("Better Kid Care"). Let's relate this analogy to the very young audience. They perceive not only visual movements but also the types of vibrations, balance sensation, and sounds through the movements of actors and objects on the stage. They may enjoy three different sensory versions of one song rather than three different songs. Subtle difference of vibrations: music; the amplitude and rhythm of footsteps; coughing; claps; and even a yawning sound can make young babies enjoy. Whatever and however you move, this special audience would catch vibrations in it and use it as neural resource. "Mechanosensory" cells like the organ of Corti can differentiate the intensity, amplitude, vibration, and periods of externally transmitted stimuli in every millisecond. It is no exaggeration to say that the very young, including fetuses of all animals, are waiting for vibrations to enjoy.

In 2017, Dr. Moriah E. Thomason and mathematician Veronika Schöpf imaged the brain of a 9-week-old fetus, which was already very active along with the physical movement following to the sounds and vibrations in diverse ways (Miller 2017). Often, we can observe that babies under 2 years old continuously move their

bodies in various patterns while vibrating their voice cords simultaneously. Different vibrations occur with different emotions, and a change of emotion can create various physical feelings. "Infants are sensitive to cultural differences in emotions at 11 months" (Liu et al. e0257655).

Many aspects of culture are expressed by movements. Babies experience physically expressed culture by the people around them. Theatre can introduce more various cultures by rich vibrations, balances, and movements of emotions and feelings for early years audience. The more vivid and abundant information we have, the better and more we can communicate with others. In the beginning of the communication, perceiving vibration, balance, and movements play critical roles for understanding self and others. For the very young vibration in sound and movement initiate the perception process and it will be expanded and combined to vision later on. Let's remember: without sound the very young usually turn away after very short visual focus no matter what you suggest to them. But with sound, especially with vibration or rhythmical movements, very young ones stay more relaxed and focused. For this real audience moving vibrations are more enjoyable than silent visions. They are experts of perceiving sensory data of sound, balance, vibration, and movement.

Works Cited

- Abeytunge, Sanjeewa, Francesco Gianoli, A.J. Hudspeth, and Andrei S. Kozlov. "Rapid mechanical stimulation of inner-ear hair cells by photonic pressure" *Elife*, vol. 10, 2021, e65930.
- "Better Kid Care" <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/news/2017/spinning>
- Damasio, Antonio R. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. Heinemann, 2000.

---. "Descartes' Error Revisited." *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2001, pp. 192-194.

---. *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain*. Heinemann, 2010.

Damasio, Antonio R., Hanna Damasio, and Daniel Tranel. "Persistence of Feelings and Sentience after Bilateral Damage of the Insula" *Cerebral Cortex*, vol. 23, 2013, pp. 833-846.

Fritsch, Bernd, Ning Pan, and Karen L. Elliott. "Inner Ear Development: Building a Spiral Ganglion and an Organ of Corti out of Unspecified Ectoderm." *Cell and Tissue Research*, vol. 361, no.1, 2015, pp. 7-24.

Greven, Corina U. and Judith R. Homberg "Sensory Processing Sensitivity—For Better or for Worse? Theory, Evidence, and Societal Implications." *The Highly Sensitive Brain*, Bianca P., Ed. Acevedo, Academic Press, 2020, pp. 51-74.

Helwany, Muhammad, Taflina C. Arbor, and Prasanna Tadi. *Embryology, Ear*. StatPearls Publishing, 2022. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK557588/>

Hermelin, Sylvain, Shintaro Takada, Michihisa Yamamoto, Seigo Tarucha, Andreas D. Wieck, Laurent Saminadayar, Christopher Bäuerle, and Tristan Meunier. "Electrons surfing on a sound wave as a platform for quantum optics with flying electrons" *Nature*, vol. 477, 2011, pp. 435-438.

Hoffmann, Alexandra, Robert Marhenke and Pierre Sachse "Sensory processing sensitivity predicts performance in an emotional antisaccade paradigm", *Acta Psychologica*, vol. 222, 2022, e103463.

Liu, Liquan, Mieke du Toit, and Gabrielle Weidemann. "Infants are sensitive to cultural differences in emotions at 11 months" *PLoS one*, vol 16 no. 9, 2021, e0257655.

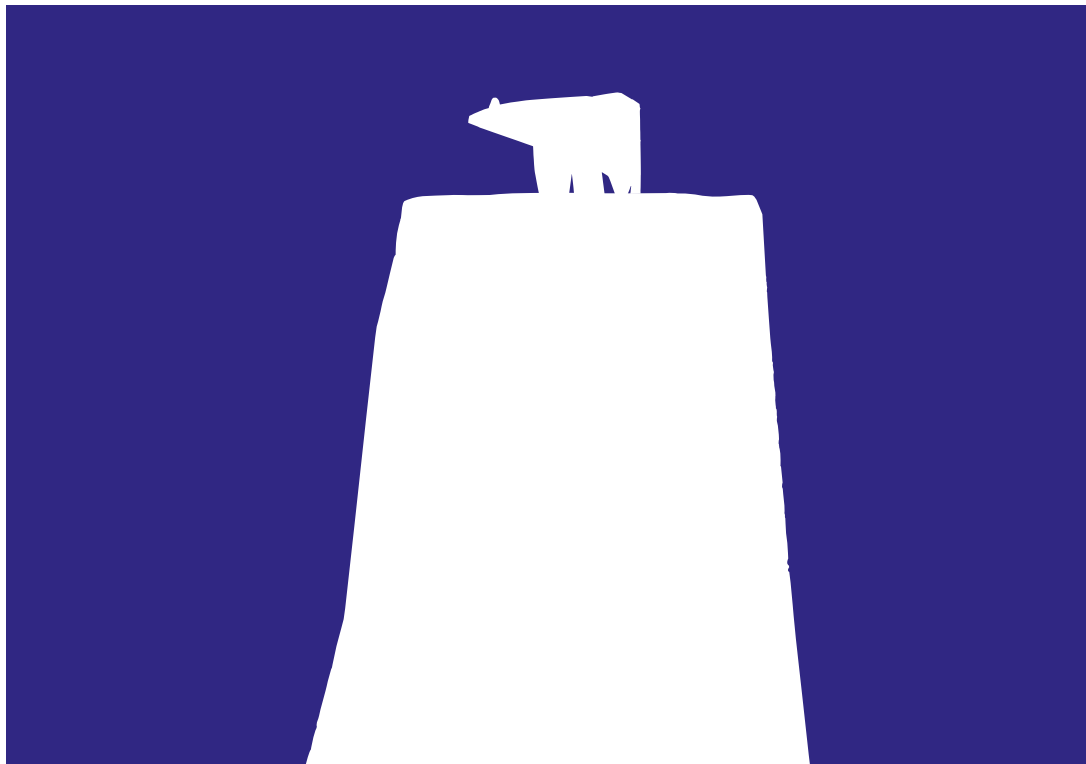
Miller, Greg. "Pioneering study images activity in fetal brains" *Science*, vol. 355, no. 6321, 2017, pp. 117-118.

Mishra, Sabita, T.S. Roy, and Sashi Wadhwa. "Morphological and morphometrical maturation of ventral cochlear nucleus in human foetus." *Journal of Chemical Neuroanatomy*, vol. 93, 2017, pp. 38-47.

Odent, Michel. "Obstetrics." Private Note. 2000.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Theory*. Routledge, 1988.

⁴ 'Sensory data' in this writing means neurophysiological body information.



X.

Risk, Curiosity, and Care: What Kind of Role Does Expectation Play in Shaping Our Experience at the Theatre?

Katherine Morley

When I flick the switch, the light comes on.

If I wake in the night crying, they will come to tuck me back in.

If I let go, teddy falls down.

If I reach up to hold his hand, he will walk with me.

When I throw the ball upstairs, it will bounce back down to me.

Our expectations grow from experience. We accrue them through routine, repetition or surprise. In this way, we develop expectations about the behavior of objects and people, and how our relationship with them makes us feel. This sense of expectation relates to both the physical world and our emotional wellbeing and becomes more nuanced with age. So, to consider expectation is to address how what we learn, gathers in our body.

This developmental continuum of gathering begins from our earliest days helping us understand how to navigate the world. So regardless of our age, the objects, people, or actions we encounter appear somewhere on a spectrum of novelty or famil-

arity according to our expectations. They manifest and are managed depending on whom we're with, what is happening and where we are. When the little mechanical doll in Madam Bach's show *You Are Here* glides across the paper at the front of the stage, carefully following the marks made by Pernille only a few moments before, we look anew at the beauty of this movement and adjust what we thought was possible. Every piece we see rewrites our expectations of what is possible.

If we take the definition of research in spectatorship to mean the analysis of how we watch, what we watch, and who we watch with, it feels logical to suggest that our relationship with expectation sits at the heart of spectatorship. In this way, our youngest audiences have much to tell us because of the way novel encounters shape our feelings, gather in our bodies, and confirm or re-write our expectations, leading to a sense of understanding.

The movements we make in response to situations of novelty or surprise are, I find, endlessly fascinating, especially in the context of early years performance where the embodied movements and vocalizations of the audience are a natural, emotional response to onstage actions and activity. The younger we are, the more likely our expectations will be rooted in comfort and parental proximity, and the feelings that emerge from an aesthetic experience will be a response to a stimulus, rather than an expectation of what might occur at a future point. However, when the spectatorial reactions of infants and young children are repeatedly described as entranced or immersed, and for much longer durations than normatively seen in domestic or social spaces,

CURIOSITY

EXPECT

RISK

CONCERN

*Risk, Curiosity, and Care:
What Kind of Role Does Expectation Play in Shaping
Our Experience at the Theatre?*

Katsumi Komagata

we are prompted to consider whether the environment of performance can, in some small way, foster a sense of expectation in spectators ordinarily too young to predict “what will happen,” or if this fervent attention is a response to the strongly novel stimulus – by which I mean a place, space, object, person, and scenario the spectator has not previously encountered.

Since much work in TEY is attended by intergenerational audiences, even when it is made with a particular age group or developmental stage in mind, an opportunity to reflect on our shifting sense of expectation helps reveal something about the universal appeal of listening to a story, watching movement, or becoming immersed in a piece of art. In his fascinating publication *Diary of a Baby* psychologist Daniel Stern uses his professional experience to speculatively voice the thoughts of infants as they make sensory-led discoveries at different stages of development. In the following paragraph, I adopt that same writing style of imaginative “thick description,” a technique used to describe social action (Geertz 3-30). I am using the paradigm of novelty and familiarity to help contextualize audience expectations and answer why the realm of TEY is so significantly a place of care, curiosity, and risk for the infant, the child, the parent, and the artist.

She waits in the shadows, her eyes shut tight, heart beating loudly in her chest. How long should she wait behind this curtain? She smiles to herself and knows what to say. It's well-rehearsed. Time slows down. Waiting is necessary, it feels familiar and is partly why she keeps doing it. Someone else is waiting not far away. She is listening to their approach. There's a sense of sus-

pense, suspension, hiatus, a gap, even an absence. Knowing and not knowing what will happen. The atmosphere is charged. Intention entwined with expectation. Absence creating presence, sitting hand in hand with expectation.

Whether you imagined a performer preparing or a child playing hide-and-seek, the sense of expectation on both sides of the (mostly metaphorical) curtain is significant: *something* is about to happen. In recognizing that, something is of course already happening. This time of suspense is indicative of the promise and prediction made between performer and spectator. In the moments before a performance begins, it hints at a willingness to step within the theatrical frame, and regardless of style, format or genre, the invitation to participate.

We don't often hide offstage in TEY, the magic of theatre here is made of a different stuff: “Not made of trickery but of complicity” (Bruno Frabetti); “The creations of this special world are not veiled, [but] rather shown” (Taube 122). Despite the ubiquitous popularity of peekaboo, we rarely hide behind curtains at the start of a show. But the feeling of novelty or surprise is a significant feature in how spectators perceive and respond within the theatrical frame at a time when, for infants, expectations and anticipation are founded on physiological comfort and parental proximity.

Drawing on the wealth of tacit knowledge from forty years of TEY sectoral growth, and the sharing and dissemination at nearly two decades of Small Size events, audiences have fantastic opportunities to discover meaningful connections

and deep-rooted pleasure in performance. But, I would propose, this only becomes possible when the personal, mostly unspoken, expectations of infants, children, parents, and performers have been met with respectful *care*, managed in the context of *risk*, and nurtured in the context of *curiosity*. This is just one way of describing the sophisticated dynamic that facilitates theatre, performance and dance at its best in this sector. When care, curiosity, and risk are brought into productive relationship *for and by* every participant - child, parent-carer, and practitioner - it becomes possible to see what theatre is able to do here for infants and what infants are able to do here for theatre.

Infants normatively rest on the reliability of their parent to help them feel comfortable physically and cognitively, without sensory overload or sensory deprivation. In a realm of unfamiliarity like the theatre, the proximity of the parent becomes an anchor: a place from which to watch and explore. Parents may attend seeking artistry, an aesthetic experience, entertainment, education, or escapism – for themselves or their children. Beyond these broad thoughts the expectations of the parent are also likely to be of comfort, safety, and pleasure. The child aged three or four, for example, having developed a stronger sense of narrative and therefore the arc of “what happens,” may well draw on previous shows they've seen or stories they've read to form expectations or imagine what will happen when they enter the environment of the theatre. Perhaps they're thinking more about the installation in the foyer, or how enjoyable the journey to the theatre has been – this too creates a fuller picture of the spectatorial experience. When the close or prolonged

attention of infant-spectators exceeds parental expectation, it often brings parents a sense of pleasure and, as frequently seen, over time, infants respond to that parental sense of ease. Observed in systematic analysis of instances of spectatorial joint-attention, this sequence of perceiving, which I have called “enfolded pleasure” (Morley 140) enables the parent to more strongly become a spectator-who-is-also-parenting, and allows both infant and parent to sit more deeply into a connected, companionable sense of spectatorship.

Just for a moment, we could suggest that the theatre is a place where neither parents nor children are “in the know” because here they encounter a high degree of novelty. It is practitioners that define and host this space. And yet, given this work is intended for them, infants can be acknowledged as both the expert and not the expert here. Given the knowledge and responsibility parents hold alongside their infants the opportunity to engage as a spectator, they too are both experts and not experts. Let's apply the same idea to the artist, since their expertise is neither in being a baby or in parenting (at this moment). It is this equal triangulation that helps expand the traditional definitions of bi-directional stage to auditorium spectatorship, (Bennett) or a “feedback loop” of production and reception (Fischer-Lichte) suggesting instead, TEY is a place of omni-directional action, activity and activation. Here I'm considering the presence of the performer and the perception of the spectators, suggesting that the perception of the performer and the presence of the spectator are equally important “[In TEY] we have to be able to tell and listen at the same time” (Roberto Frabetti). Identifying

a link between presence and perception helps dissolve some of the reductive argument concerning passive versus active engagement, since the *doing* of theatre emerges “through the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators... through their encounter and interaction” (Fischer-Lichte 164). In his consideration of spectatorship, theatre scholar Marco De Marinis argues for “acceptance that theatrical pleasure arises and is maintained in an unbroken dialectic between the frustration and satisfaction of expectations” (112). This is how the balance of care, curiosity, and risk offers opportunities for infants, performers, and parents to gather aesthetic, social, emotional, and inter-subjective pleasure.

In the context of TEY, it is natural to support the idea that “perceiving... is an active undertaking” (Welton 85). Performers will not anticipate spectatorial passivity, knowing instead that the action of infants at the theatre is the result of a response to stimuli, which appear on a subjective scale of relative novelty, familiarity and expectation. These actions might appear delicate or demonstrative but as cognition develops hand in hand with physical and sensory development, the movements of infant spectatorship come from the embodied impulse, choosing themselves to turn or reach towards... gaze or puzzle at... call or cry because... balance or stretch between... sensing, feeling, and having the opportunity to be themselves. We might see infant-led scrutiny, delight, an ovation, a heckle, annoyance at a fellow spectator, cries of delight, the cry of overwhelm, spontaneous applause, a shared look, hand holding, or spontaneous hugging of the performers. It is these responsive movements that hint

at how meaning is being made. As psychologist James J. Gibson suggests, “the equipment for feeling is anatomically the same as the equipment for doing” (99), helping to validate that the movements of the very young, however seemingly slight, are a significant contribution to the shared framework of perception through the senses, and the expectations that we foster in the moment.

Works Cited

- Bennett, Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. Routledge, 1990.
- De Marinis, Marco. “Dramaturgy of the Spectator.” *TDR: The Drama Review* 53 (2): 1987, pp. 100-114.
- Geertz, Clifford. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3–30.
- Gibson, James J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erica. “The Art of Spectatorship.” *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 4(1), 2016, pp. 164-179.
- Frabetti, Roberto. Harmonic Fluxes workshop at Festival di Visioni, Bologna March 2017.
- Frabetti, Bruno. Personal interview 2022.
- Morley, Katherine. “Spectatorship in Theatre for Early Years: Towards a Working Taxonomy of Relative Stillness.” Doctoral Thesis, University of Manchester, 2022.
- Stern, Daniel N. *Diary of a Baby*. Basic Books, 1990.
- Taube, Gerd. First Steps: “Aesthetic Peculiarities of the ‘Theatre for the Youngest.’” *Theatre and Early Years: Stories of Artistic Practices*, ed. F. Nerattini, trans. G. Schroeder. Small Size Papers 2. Edizioni Pendragon. 2009, pp. 113-24.
- Welton, Martin. *Feeling Theatre*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

XI. Cognition and Emotion: How Does Theatre Mean, or, What Is the Relationship Between Cognition and Emotion in Theatre for Early Years?

Manon van de Water

The discussion about this question is in a sense a continuation of the question about the Meaning of Life for very young children, and goes deeper into some aspects of meaning making and how we create meanings. I argue that if meaning making for adult audiences is primarily a cognitive process, augmented by affective responses— for a very young audience meaning making is primarily affective and may or may not develop in a cognitive notion. I also argue for the affective, and what I interpret as the “aesthetic” experiencing of theatre, by a very young spectator. Before going into this deeper, though, I’ll give a brief overview of what has been a seminal theory in meaning and theatre: semiotics.

From the late 1960s-1980s, “meaning” in theatre research was heavily influenced by semiotics, originally a theory of interpreting signs and signifiers that came out

of linguistics that was later enthusiastically applied to theatre in an attempt to analyze how people derived meaning from a performance, or to speak with Ric Knowles, *how* theatre “means” as opposed to *what* theatre means— in other words, to focus on the process rather than the outcome.

In his seminal work, *The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create Meaning on Stage and Screen*, first published in 1987, Martin Esslin, applying semiotics to the theatre, argued that a sign is something which represents something else: the signified. According to Esslin, there are three types of signs: an icon which represents what it signifies by a direct image of that object (like a photograph), an index sign which gains meaning through its continuity to the object it depicts (like pointing at an object), and symbols which have no immediate recognizable organic relationship to their signifieds, but instead rely entirely on convention (like the agreement that the sounds D, O, G together refer to a specific species of animal) (Esslin 43–44). Semiotic analysis of theatre involves breaking down the various icons, index signs, and symbols in a performance text to identify how they produce meaning by indicating various signifieds.

When I started studying theatre at the University of Leiden in 1983, this was exactly what we, students, were asked to do. Each of us was assigned a theatrical “signifier” which, in subsequent performances we had to analyze in order to detect its corresponding “meaning.” The tediousness of this endeavor may be self-explanatory, and as I asked one of my professors once, would I ever be able to simply enjoy a performance as a whole, rather than set of signifiers?

Luckily, for the rest of my career, subsequent scholars, such as Ric Knowles, opened up the semiotic analysis which would lead to “meaning” being derived from a number of other factors, including the materials circumstances under which a performance was generated, i.e. the performance text; the conditions of performance (which, as we all know, differ vastly from day to day and venue to venue, etc.); and, the conditions of perception by the audience, which differ similarly from day to day, venue to venue, and depend on other mitigating circumstances (forced field trip or family outing, sunny or rainy day, etc. etc.). Knowles, then, argues that meaning is a complicated interaction between the conditions of performance, conditions of perception, and the performance text (*Reading 17-22*).

Perhaps inevitably, the “meaning” searched for in these productions, was primarily directed to adults and to a cognitive process, conscious or unconscious, to decode the performance text, even if in a post-modern sense there would not be one “correct” interpretation. As we moved from the word as the primary conveyor of meaning (note that Esslin is talking about drama, that is, written and performed text), towards a notion of a total text where all theatrical signifiers play a role, without necessarily preferring one over another, non-cognitive ways of aesthetically experiencing a performance text became a focus of academic and artistic discourse. Nowhere would this be as pertinent as in theatre for early years, in par-

ticular pre-verbal years, and more recently in theatre for audiences with, to take the UK identification “Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities” (PMLD).¹

Which brings me to Affect theory, a theory of perception that is not based on cognition but the affective response to the performed, including the aesthetic perception, what in lay terms, has also been called the “Aha” moment. Affect theory looks at the audience’s emotional/visceral reaction to theatrical events (Carlson 9–15). In theatre for the very young, affect is privileged over cognitive perception, be it conscious or unconscious. While many theatre for early years performances have a storyline no matter how simple, the main way of impacting an audience is affective: through images, sounds, movements, and words. Though difficult to define, affect theory posits that the impact of art is not based solely on “unearthing meaning” but tries “to theorize the lived/felt experience of cultural events” (Campbell 304). Thus, affect theory is interested in “lived/felt experience” and “embodiment and felt experience” (Mattaini 64).

Theatre scholar Marla Carlson differentiates “affect” from both “emotion” and “feeling,” which is a useful differentiation in thinking about the impact of theatre on a very young audience. Feelings, she argues, are “individual experiences of sensation” and nearly impossible to make the subject of academic scrutiny. This is when a baby starts crying at a performance for reasons seemingly unrelated to the performance.

An emotion is “that which is conceptualized, named, performed, and thus interpreted by others.” Emotion is the categorization and sense-making of feelings. The baby above feels sad, but if she is sad as an emotional state that is a different problem.

Affect, then, is “what circulates between individuals and their environment including but not limited to other individuals.” In this definition, affect happens at an interpersonal and communal level and happens in a context. If the baby would start crying as an affective reaction, then this is based on the interaction between the baby and the performed, and perhaps the behavior of the other babies in the audience. Especially in baby theatre, where the target audience is primarily pre-verbal, observing the audience’s emotional/visceral reaction to theatrical events, is in some ways the only tool the researcher, and the theatre artist has to get a sense of the (aesthetic) impact of the piece, and the way it is perceived by the spectator.

Matthew Reason’s visual based audience research study focuses on children four to seven years old when both drawing and verbal skills are more developed. However, his theories are applicable to a younger audience, especially in the light of affect theory and the notion that the aesthetic experience of children takes place in context right then and there between the spectator and the performed: “with theatre . . . what is important is not just what happens on the stage, but also what happens within the minds, imagination, and memory of the watching audience” (112). While minds, imagination, and memory vary from each child based on developmental stages and other socio-cultural factors, the pow-

er of theatre to create meaningful experiences, affective and cognitive, for all young children is not to be ignored.

There is another thing to keep in mind while assessing the aesthetic impact of theatre for early years on its audiences, and in fact many of the other essays in this volume imply this too. The aesthetic impact of TEY is affective, immediate, and embodied. It is not in the brain, it is in the heart. For very young children the impact is through *how* theatre means, not *what* theatre means. As such, it becomes part of the kinesthetic memory of the very young. At one point, at some time, this may start to develop in a cognitive recognition or association. But for now, we’ll have to meet the very young where they are.

Works Cited

- Campbell, Alyson. “Adapting Musicology’s Use of Affect Theories to Contemporary Theatremaking: Directing Martin Crimp’s Attempts on Her Life.” *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance*, vol. 4, no. 3, Nov. 2011, pp. 303–18. EBSCOhost, doi.org/10.1386/jafp.4.3.303_7.
- Carlson, Marla. *Affect, Animals, and Autists: Feeling around the Edges of the Human in Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2018.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Field of Drama*. Methuen, 1987.
- Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge, 2004.
- Knowles, Ric. *How Theatre Means*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Mattaini, Molly. “Ability-Inclusive Sensory Theatre in the United States.” Diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022.
- Reason, Matthew. *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children’s Experiences of Theatre*. Trentham, 2010.

¹ For more on Sensory Inclusive Theatre see e.g. Molly Mattaini’s Dissertaton “Ability-Inclusive Sensory Theatre in the United States,” University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022. As stated by Mattaini and other scholars-practitioners, I want to reiterate here that while in terms of the theory of perception in this essay there are similarities, TEY should never be equated with theatre targeted to children with PMLD, including autism, which is the focus of Mattaini’s dissertation.



Reverb: What Happens
When Sound Becomes a Character?

Klaas Verplancke

XII.

Reverb: What Happens When Sound Becomes a Character?

Katherine Morley

Reverb, to reverberate, a reverberation: a continuing effect, the prolonging of a sound, an echo of sorts, the repercussions of something. In its oldest usage, reverb was taken to mean to bend back and reflect.

It feels natural to first consider the technicalities of sound, how it travels freely through space, landing in our ears to create meaning or feeling. “Sound is the movement of air molecules, caused by living things in motion” (Fernald 37) and what we hear “propagates affects, generates atmospheres, shapes environments and enacts power” (Gallagher et al. 1246). Sound does not require translation for the listener to feel its effect or form an opinion about its meaning, and at any age, it can make us cry or delight, our hearts beat faster or our palms become clammy. Depending on where sounds are created, they resonate and reverberate differently, even taking on different characteristics for each listener. For sound to ‘become’ a character we are implying that an everyday noise acquires significance beyond its meaning in isolation. In return, sound can move us physiologically and emotionally, and in response to what we hear, the movements of our bodies help measure affect.

The origins of the word character come from the Greek *kharaktēr* meaning “a stamping tool.” The earliest definition changes to become: a “distinctive mark,” evolving into: a “token, feature, or trait” (early 16th century), and finally to: “a description, especially of a person’s distinguishing qualities” (Cresswell). A word’s etymological route re-minds us of its possibilities, its origins, the international influences that have shaped it and how, through re-use in different contexts it has changed over time. Here, it also provides a light-touch analogy for the definition of spectatorship and how our understanding of theatre can shift each time we visit, because the characters or “distinctive marks” we encounter there generate feelings through which we establish meaning, and form memories – particularly as children. In turn, these experiences help define what we understand theatre and human nature to be, and may (or may not) shape our own personal “distinguishing qualities.”

While any question about sound inherently invites us to pay attention to how we listen, I also wish to consider the role of memory. When we recognize familiar surroundings or are able to recall how people, places or sounds make us feel, we are enacting a reverberation of our own. The characteristics of others leave a trace in our bodies – as the adage suggests, “we don’t always remember what people say but rather how they made us feel.” Language acquisition – itself a function of expanding memory – is founded on infants’ intuiting from their carers’ tone of voice, not just the specifics of vocabulary. This is significant for anyone questioning the successes of early years spectatorship, because intuiting meaning from *and* about a novel context is

a natural, everyday process for young children. Infants are expert meaning-makers. The conditions of performance only serve to create an environment in which meaningful connections can be made.

The association between sound, memory, perception and meaning was intricately explored in Theatre Helios' Mapping production *Früh Stück*, within which a story of great tenderness is told. *Früh Stück* is an exploration of everyday musicality, sound and reverberation and provides the space – physically, cognitively, and aurally – to recognize *sounding* as a process of creation that is accessible to all and brilliantly theatrical. Within the layers of sounding that performers Michael, Minju, and their spectators perform together for each other, Minju pauses to share her memory. Her intonation and manner evoke warmth and ease; she speaks with tenderness and care. Her story emerges at a point when spectators have become accustomed to close listening and are clearly finding joy in producing sound and “seeing” sound produced. We are switching between an immersion in acoustic sounds and the amplified reverberations of those sounds made acoustically. Into this collective mirroring and aural mark-making came Minju's story. After a minute or so I catch up with the realization that I don't actually know what she is saying. This was a fantastic moment of experiencing *feeling* through *listening* without understanding precise *meaning* because the story is being told in Korean. And yet, I still felt like a recipient of the care she was evoking through her story. The whole audience was listening closely: their attention hadn't been deterred through any lack of understanding. As Michael said in a post-show discussion, “I wanted the audience

(as non-Koreans) to pay attention to the sounds and tone of the voice rather than the content of the language” (Lurse 2022).

Is this what it is like to listen as an infant, before connections between precise language and understanding become more fully formed? We can infer through their responses how audiences make meaning from the aesthetic offer of each performance, even though, as in the everyday life, they will encounter language they may not fully understand. We cannot know precisely what audiences “take away” but what remains, is how the work, in context, made us feel. Spectatorship is no less an active cognitive undertaking just because those present may not yet be able to articulate the precise characteristics, as Martin Welton articulates, “Silence is not a vacuum of understanding” (95).

An understanding of the infant's everyday experience is enhanced by what developmental psychologist Daniel N. Stern describes as the “felt experience” (8). In his investigation of the manifestations of vitality, he considers movements of the body in relation to time, force, space, and intention. This framing is particularly valuable in helping to interpret the spectator's experiences, building on what Stern describes as the mind's many internal and external events as a subjective experience and a phenomenological reality. Stern describes the gestalt of the infant's felt experience “as it is lived, pre-theoretically and pre-reflectively,” referring to the infant's phenomenological world as “whatever is passing across the ‘mental stage’ right now” (34). In asserting the infant's being and doing in the present tense, Stern relieves any pressure of proving the validity of an experi-

ence without (an infant's) working memory to recall it. Even if spectators cannot speak of it, performance may leave a sounding trace, reverberating in those that gathered as an audience that day.

Central to the listening experience, we might briefly consider the character of silence. With power to provoke visceral responses, moments of silence provide the opportunity to absorb what we have already encountered and, depending on the connections that have been established, think forward to what may follow. Children are capable of reading and responding to silence. To foster expectation about the event in an audience of very young children is a special aspect of spectatorship. The movements that create acoustic sounds onstage often determine our visual focus, but in offering silence – which also implies a relative stillness (something a child may interpret as a pause, a gap, or an interval) it is possible that the ways in which a child is connecting to the performance can be revealed. Silence can be shocking, amusing, or relaxing. What a child chooses to do in response to contextual silence is indicative of certainly their developmental stage, but more so their subjective opinion and emergent sense of self. I return here to the productive notion that the smallest moments of spectatorial action can reveal much about the way in which the performance is being received.

The beauty with which silence was used to portray absence in Mapping production *Cornici* rendered sixty nursery children giddy-to-be-at-the-theatre completely silent at the Brik Festival. Absence fueled the emotional weight of this play: the audience became stilled and peaceful watching two grieving women come to terms with their

loss. Chalk-drawn props were used and erased by both women, creating an even greater sense of impermanence, and these capable young children leaned into the long periods of silence, barely moving at all. Amidst all their vitality, the huge presence of the absent character was matched and enhanced by the presence of this silent, watchful audience. The characteristics of sound are universally subjective and can shift between music, noise, and relative silence according to the listener, regardless of their age or developmental stage. Sound creates a felt sensation.

Songbird by Kolibri Theatre, was created with a playful use of interactive audio technologies. Rather than following a particular narrative, the team experimented with technology-led real-time performer-audience interaction. One particular moment became significant and I recount it briefly here:

Huge, beautiful Rousseau-inspired illustrations surround the little auditorium. It feels like sitting in someone's wild garden. Everyone looks at their ease as the performer, Melinda, sits amongst the audience holding open a small wooden box. She offers it to a girl, around 5 years old, who smiles and visibly breathes in. She pauses. Her eyes turn from Melinda to her Mother and back again. After a few seconds, in silent agreement, (and unrehearsed), the child, her parent and Melinda all gently Meow like a cat. The box snaps shut. They smile at one another, with pleasure or complicity. We smile, too, at this playful act. And then the moment expands... Melinda wordlessly reconnects with the audience and re-opens the box to allow the exact same meow to reverberate from the box, back into the auditorium....

An invitation was accepted. An echo set in motion. Recorded sound became a (temporary) mirror for the child's voice. There was a sense of surprise in hearing the echo of something we assumed was impermanent, not only for the girl and her mother but for all those listening. It became a moment of audible mark-making. It was a passing feature within a show driven by the non-verbal and technological exploration of sound and yet this moment seems significant: the girl uses eye contact to triangulate the moment between parent and performer; her acknowledgement of Melinda's proposal is silent; she demonstrates a leap of faith in why meowing into a box is relevant to this moment; the growth in confidence of the girl after meowing; how she connects to her peers after hearing her voice replayed; and the unrehearsed synchronicity between the girl, her mother and Melinda meowing together. All these moments contribute to how we describe what Matthew Reason articulates as the "doing of the audience" (171).

While the immediate reverberations from this moment manifest as close spectatorial observation or whispered questions, the chance to move is also used. I glance round to see several children lying down in the space. Their eyes are glued to the action, they aren't lost or sunken but appear relaxed and receptive. Melinda is attentive to them, "full body responses are welcome" she tells me afterwards.

In her care, igniting spectatorial curiosity and taking aesthetic risks, every response here is welcome. These are the moments of connection and dialogue this team has sought to create with their audience. The technology of aural reverberation hidden in the box is merely a tool with which to mine the magic - something from which a character emerges to create a distinctive mark. Mark-making and meaning-making are present here side by side. The girl holds her breath and becomes Rousseau's tiger. These are the characteristics of play.

Works Cited

Fernald, Anne. "Hearing, Seeing and Understanding." *Blackwell Handbook of Infant Development*. Edited by Gavin Bremner, Alan Fogel. Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

Gallagher, Michael, Jonathan Prior, Martin Needham, and Rachel Holmes. "Listening Differently: A Pedagogy for Expanded Listening." *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 43, no 6, 2017, pp. 1246-1265.

Lurse, Michael. Transcript of post-show discussion. Hamm, 2022.

Cresswell, Julia. *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (3rd edition). Online version, OUP, 2021.

Stern, Daniel N. *Forms of Vitality. Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy, and Development*. Oxford UP, 2010.

Reason, Matthew. *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children's Experiences of Theatre*. Trentham, 2010.

Welton, Martin. *Feeling Theatre*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

XIII. When Do We Need Words to Matter? Are Spoken Words Always Necessary in Performance?

Yvette Hardie

This is a tantalizing question when considered in relation to theatre for early years. I understand it to be asking whether words are imperative to making meaning for very young audiences. Under what circumstances do we absolutely need words and need those words to be important to our audience?

Many, perhaps most, theatre traditions are highly reliant on words to define, narrate, evoke, create dialogue and thought. The theatre *audience* is there to *hear* the play, to experience the spoken word, to engage with its meaning. South African playwright, Athol Fugard has said: "the written word, and the spoken word, is infinitely more powerful and effective a means of effecting change than any of the forms of violence that are so appallingly alive at this moment..."(qtd. in Sweeney) The power of words is made palpable within the theatrical space. While theatre does not *need* language to be theatre, it can be argued that some of the greatest experiences of how language can impact on us are recorded in the theatre.

And yet, in many equally powerful theatre traditions, words are secondary, even

absent entirely. The great spectacles, the physical theatre traditions, circus theatre, dance theatre—these art forms may be entirely wordless or use very few words. Indeed, much theatre for young audiences is made without a focus on language at all, sometimes for reasons of accessibility across languages or with the hopes of touring the work more widely. The international jury proposing performances for the 20th ASSITEJ World Congress was asked specifically to focus on non-verbal works or works that did not rely on language "too much."

When theatre has no language at all, for children it seems obvious that the characters speak their own language. They are able to project their language onto the interactions of the performers and to imagine what the communication may hold. A wordless performance is not without language, since the moment we try to describe it, we use words to do so.

This fact was beautifully illustrated when watching a Swedish performance called *Halli Hallo* by Teater Tre, a musical dance performance for 2-4 years old, in two different contexts. The play began with children experiencing a short melody played intimately for each audience member on a mini glockenspiel as they entered the space. Later in the performance, the artists would play the melody again by hitting the surface of water with different objects to create the same tune. Children in Cameroon immediately used the word "aqua" in astonishment that water could produce a melody, while children in Sweden responded with "vatten." In both cases, the children recognized the unusual instrument being used and spoke the word aloud

in response, although the performance itself was wordless.

Even much younger children, who may not have the language at their disposal to describe what they are seeing, will still construct meaning from their experience. But not all meaning is conveyed in words. Some meaning is felt rather than understood and some meanings remain teasingly out of reach, inscrutable, whether for adults or children. We can sense profound and poetic truths without being able to articulate them fully. When children used the words for water in the above example, they were not precisely expressing what they were feeling, but were rather using the word as a placeholder for that feeling of delighted discovery.

If artists hope to communicate with their audience, they have to find a shared language, but what that language consists of, is not prescribed.

So, when do we *need* words, and when do we need words to *matter* in TYA? When do actions fully convey what we are trying to say? When is the absence or presence of words the final carrier of meaning? When do we need the precise nature of the word to be fully comprehended, to matter to the hearer? Does it matter whether the words are gibberish or real?

In a series of brief case studies, I want to show how needing words to matter can take many different forms: spanning from the wordless, to nonsense language, to language as signposts, to language for narrative, to language for making meaning of our lives.

Sometimes words can be a kind of musical

backdrop to the action, providing a rhythm and energy to the performance, but not essential to understanding what is unfolding. A crucial part of language development is babbling and children go through a stage of enjoying nonsense language to the extent that genres of nonsense poetry, songs, and storytelling have arisen across multiple cultures. Nonsense language is a crucial tool in language development, used by speech therapists and educators to combat dyslexia, to teach rhyme and for children to become more aware of the intrinsic qualities in sounds, amongst other things. But importantly, there is great pleasure and fun in speaking and hearing nonsense words – they seem to encourage a love of the act of utterance itself. This shared pleasure is fundamental to how much we value a piece of theatre. If a performance gives us pleasure, we are likely to find it more memorable and engaging.

In Artika theatre's *A Wonderful Day*, individual sounds are explored for their emotional nuance and for the images they conjure up, by three performers, who interpret these meanings individually and idiosyncratically. Sounds and words become the material on which the piece is choreographed, but since the play also has a poem at its core, the meanings do not remain merely literal, but play out through a kind of dreamscape. The joy of discovering that sounds can be conveyed by shapes, and that language can be built from these shapes to create meaning, is at the heart of the piece. Words *matter* in so far as they can be built in different ways from sounds in order to express multiple meanings. While there could be seen to be an educational imperative in the work, there is also another layer that is utterly theatrical – the

sensuality and pleasure that language gives the user and listener is very much at the forefront of the experience.

Sometimes words create a series of signposts or discovery moments for children as they move through a performance. In Branar Theatre and NIE's *Grand Soft Day*, the characters discover precious seasonal attributes through a day of changeable weather. These different elements from rain to wind to sun to snow are identified in three languages – English, Irish and Italian – and the repeated alternation of these languages does not seem to alienate the audience, but is entirely appropriate to the spontaneous wonder of the different characters who happen to have different languages at their disposal.

Here the spoken language is not being used to carry the story, but rather to respond to the events with relish and create verbal signposts that elicit moments of camaraderie with the audience. The teasing out of these different experiences is felt more in the songs that are sung throughout the play.

Some argue that the language in theatre for young audiences needs to be kept simple and accessible, since otherwise children will get lost. Yet children exist all the time in a world where they are surrounded by words, some of which they may know and understand and some of which they need to decipher in relation to the context in which they are hearing them. They learn words through immersion in this soup of words and through interaction with others who provide indicators as to what these words might mean.

Theatre makes for a rich space in which

to do this kind of investigation and meaning-making of previously unknown words, since there is a sense of focus in theatre which is absent from life. Things can be distilled, selected for their importance, given time, placed more carefully... Also, because of the other languages of theatre – the various signifiers created visually and aurally, by directors, designers, and actors – words can be underlined or discovered or indeed contrasted with these signifiers, to great effect. In this way, words, their meanings and impacts can be better understood and connected with, than is the case in life more generally. Theatre language allows for greater complexity and layers of meaning to be present.

In Polka Theatre's *Ready, Steady, Go!* The Mother tells The Daughter the story of the cycling race that she embarked on years before. The first third of the play is practically wordless and visually playful, but as the remembered adventure begins, words start to take over the communication of the story. These words are supported through the creation of visual elements by the two characters from whatever materials they have at hand. The clarity of the verbal narrative is enhanced and enriched by the use of the visual images (a rotating bicycle wheel becomes the moon, plastic sheeting with a torch becomes the cyclist's path up the Alps), allowing children to enter the story and follow it, even if they may not understand every word being spoken.

In Madame Bach's *You Are Here*, words drive the spoken poem-story, which is simply told, but full of quiet wonder and a deep sense of relishing each present moment. Central to the piece is the recognition that it can be hard to find your

way through words when you are starting to put letters together, but that words have the capacity to take us on journeys from here to anywhere and back again. The piece keeps opening up where language and our imaginations can take us; the various unusual and surprising methods used to connect words and images, using live music, projections, mobiles and other devices, allows children's imaginations to be constantly stimulated and delighted while making meaning. The play leads seamlessly into giving children space to explore letters, words, and images for themselves as they play with the painted stones, which have formed an intrinsic part of the piece, in an after-show engagement.

One of the outstanding qualities of this production is its sense of slow unfolding. The children are given time to hear the words and to fully engage with each scenario. In one of the opening scenes of the show where a character goes by herself to collect bread for the family, the journey is repeated. The first time, the journey takes place without visual images apart from the movement of the little girl herself (represented by a small battery-operated figurine); however, on the way home, each marker of the journey is represented visually as well, with picture book-like pop up images, further emphasizing and giving life to the words that are being spoken.

In *Scoop – a Kitchen Play for Babies*, directed by Koleka Putuma for Magnet theatre, words are made to matter very much when the actors start to use the names of the audience in an improvised song. It is striking how these very young children's postures change and their faces light up as they register the special attention of having their name sung back to them. By using the names of the audience, the artists create a profound sense of inclusion and affirmation for these babies. While it is difficult to know precisely how babies receive this part of the play, the change in their body language at this point in the production was notable.

Each of these examples indicates a different approach to words and language, and who can say that one is more effective than another?

So, when do we need words to matter? This is a question to be answered by each unique artist in relation to their specific audience. The answer will be different in each case. However, that words *can and do* matter for very young children in theatre cannot be in doubt...

Works Cited

"Athol Fugard on The Power of Words" by Louise Sweeney, for The Christian Science Monitor, Washington. December 7, 1989. <https://www.csmonitor.com/1989/1207/lfuga.html>



When Do We Need Words to Matter?
Are Spoken Words Always Necessary in Performance?

Fabian Negrin

How Can Movement Deal with an Experience the Early Years Are Unfamiliar with?

Yoona Kang

This essay deals with the question of how to deal with an experience the early years are unfamiliar with in TEY. And this question is significant as TEY artists are likely to encounter the question a lot during their practice. TEY is a field, where adult theatre makers create performances for the very young. The two worlds of the artist and the very young encounter in the performance space. While the charm of understanding the perspective of young people is often a major reason why TEY artists are passionate about their profession, their artistic desire matters just as much. And the artists' desire, which leads them throughout their work, originates from their life as humans/adults. Because the age difference between adult artists and the audience is the largest in TEY [compared to other fields in TYA] (Kang 164), it can happen that the content of the work the artists want to present to the very young is either something the audience are unfamiliar with, or something complicated to be shared with them for different reasons.

The above ideas came to my mind while contemplating La Baracca's *Cornici: Ricor-*

di in tre atti (Frames: Memories in Three Acts). *Cornici* deals with the memory about and longing for a beloved but deceased family member. Young children 2-5 years old (the intended audience of the performance) may or may not be familiar with this particular experience and at any rate it is doubtful if particularly the youngest ones will fully understand it. How could a TEY artist perform about the experience of longing for a passed away family member in a way that touches the heart of the very young? Indeed, the task of performing about nostalgia for a deceased family member in front of the very young is challenging. To my surprise, however, the *Cornici* case illustrated that it is a doable one. Furthermore, the way in which the artists of *Cornici* do their job reveals some skills which are interesting for the TEY field in general, which makes the case worth studying. Thus, I will explore how the *Cornici* artists make their sophisticated message accessible for the very young, as a nonverbal production where movement is a major medium of communication.

Cornici consists of three parts. In the first two parts, an old woman and a young woman each perform the trivia of their everyday life at their homes. Each of them happens to find an article of a deceased family member: a hat and a pair of glasses. The sight of the objects overwhelms the women with a nostalgia for the beloved one, which they express through a powerful dance. In the third part, the two performers visit a European style cemetery, where they reminisce the passed-away person communally. A longing for a beloved deceased family member is at the center of the play, and the piece captures the emotion effectively through the per-

formers' restrained but delicate movement and the poetic use of music and objects.

How does movement in *Cornici* deal with the longing for a passed away family member, an experience which the very young may be unfamiliar with and which is difficult to share with them due to the subject's subtlety? Firstly, one characteristic of movement in *Cornici* is that it is life-like and expresses emotions in a similar way as movement would do in real life. Contributing to this notion of "life-like" in relation to movement are:

1. the particularity of the performers' movement which makes the characters three-dimensional like a real mother, aunt, or grandmother;
2. the skillfulness and precision of the performers' movements which represent actions/emotions sharply; and,
3. the performers presence in the here and now of the performance reality while performing their movements.

Indeed, one element which contributes to the verisimilitude of movement in *Cornici* is the exclusive movement signature of each performer. The two performers' particular movements each visualize the unique individuality of the respective character such as her age, tempo, and personality in detail. For example, the young woman's dynamic and busy movements reveal the restlessness of her daily routine while the older woman's peaceful, gentle movements show the calm of her life. The performers' movements make the characters three-dimensional. They make it believable that the characters could be a mother, aunt, or grandmother whose movements the very young may have observed in reality.

Another factor which contributes to the plausibility of movement in *Cornici* is that the characters' movements are technically precise, which makes the representation of their emotion sharp. In the moment where the characters discover articles of the deceased family member, for example, the well-trained performers' meticulous movement of their body and facial muscles plays a decisive role in the graphic visualization of how the sudden yearning captures the protagonists emotionally.

Furthermore, the performers' attitude toward the performance reality strengthens the credibility of their movements. The characters are fully present in the "here and now" of the play as they move, living the performance world. The TEY director Barbara Kölling once said that in TEY, *where* the performers' brain is going to is important because the very young audience will follow the performers' focus (Kölling). Thus, if *Cornici's* performers move in the performance space as if they would be actually living in it, the very young follow the performers' "brain" and regard their movements to be as real as in real life.

Hence, all of the above movement qualities in *Cornici* help the very young experience the characters emotions in a similar way as they would do in real life. Indeed, human's familiarization with different types of movements and relevant emotions is part of the process of growing up as a human, of learning how humans act or feel. "[...]as humans grow, they build a shared repertoire of movements for making shared sense of the world, a shared repertoire shaped by their contexts—including other humans[...]" (Alonso 19).

And “the other humans,” at the beginning of our lives, are often people close to us. Don’t young children learn about emotions by experiencing it through the movement of people nearby, such as a parent or a grandparent, for example? Don’t they make sense of what the person’s bodily or facial expressions tell them about their emotion, while knowing intuitively that something is going on in that person’s mind? If so, by performing movements which are life-like in multiple ways, the *Cornici* performers invite the very young to experience the sense of longing for a deceased family member via those movements, in a similar way they would do in real life. Of course, this does not mean that they fully understand cognitively, but the movements and their emotional impact, keeps the attention of the young audience and, as sentient beings, they may grasp on the emotional meaning of the play.

Second, a major movement quality in *Cornici*, relevant to the topic of how movement deals with an experience unfamiliar to the very young is, that the performers concentrate pointedly on the focus of their movement, whether it is an action or emotion, and show it transparently. At the moment where the two women are overwhelmed by their yearning for the deceased family member, for example, the performers’ movements make it explicit that it is about the sense of longing. Also, they expose the emotion directly rather than in a hidden, nuanced, or complex way. Such sharp focus on the core of the action or emotion and openness of expression makes the content and/or meaning of the character’s performed action more accessible to the young audience. This is a gentle way to communicate with the audience

about an emotion they are unfamiliar with. It makes the emotion clearer and more accessible. And interestingly, such movements do not simplify or flatten the visual outcome of the performance, but make it vivid and minimal in an engaging way.

In the *Cornici* case, a number of movement qualities contribute to the performance of an emotion the very young may be unfamiliar with. First, the way the movements carry emotions resembles real life situations on multiple layers: the characters’ three-dimensionality created by the particularity of movements, the well-trained actors’ skillful and precise movements, the performers’ presence in the “here and now” while moving. All of the above create a visceral experience of the performed emotion. Second, for those audience members who can recognize what the movement is about, the sharp focus on its essence and the honest performance of it, helps convey the nature of it more transparently.

It is interesting to explore if/how any of the characteristics of *Cornici* are meaningful for TEY in general. For example, movement qualities such as particularity, three-dimensionality, technical precision, or presence are valued in diverse types of theatre other than TEY. But are they crucial in TEY and how might they relate to the specificity of the very young? The *Cornici* case study also reveals that the TEY space can be a venue of artistically unique movements, movement with extreme focus or transparency, for example. What other types of movements can be explored in the encounter between the adult artists and the very young audience?

Cornici reveals that movement, being a common language of humans, can be a powerful medium when bridging the gap between the world of the adults and the very young. Via movement, adult TEY artists can make their ideas and emotions accessible to the very young. The *Cornici* case is meaningful because it is an example where TEY adult artists perform an idea they care about, even if it is unfamiliar to the young children and difficult to share with them. It lets us (re)confirm that TEY artists can/should listen to their heartbeat throughout their work and that there are

diverse paths via which we can share that heartbeat with our audience.

Works Cited

- Alonso, Andrés Aparicio. “Still Bodies: A Disability-Informed Approach to Stasis in Theatre.” Diss. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2021.
- Kang, Yoona. “Introducing Overseas Studies about Theatre for the Early Years.” *Theatre Forum*, 2022, pp. 152-170.
- Kölling, Barbara. Personal interview. 10 Feb 2021.



What Could Be the Meaning of Life for Very Young Children and What Roles Do Image and Imagination Play in That?

Manuel Marsol

XV.

What Could Be the Meaning of Life for Very Young Children and What Roles Do Image and Imagination Play in That?

Manon van de Water

I am sitting on my bike in the basement, reading *The Meaning of Life* by Terry Eagleton, just because it is the smallest book around and to read it gives me the feeling that I can be exercising *and* being intellectually engaged at the same time (a justification or validation which is in-and-of-itself an adult notion; which young child would be bothered by that?). Biking away, I drift off from reading about Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida to thinking of our Mapping quest and from there to: what would be the meaning of life for children in the early years? Is this a question they ask themselves? When do they start thinking about this? Do they need language and a sense of grammatical construction, i.e. having the knowledge that “What is the meaning of life?” is a legitimate and grammatically correct question, just as “what is the color of my bed”?

These kinds of questions—“where is the elephant?”, “where is mommy’s mouth?”—are concrete and part of language acqui-

sition of the very young. They are the precursors of the “why” questions of toddlers—Why is the grass green? Why do I have to wear a coat? Why did she do that?—but these “why” questions, too, are demanding concrete answers and if they are not satisfied, they make these answers up themselves. That is the beauty of the very young, that is why we should listen to them. When a child forms an image and subsequently uses their imagination to make sense of something they think like artists, unconsciously doing what we, adult artists, are doing with a purpose. But more about that later.

Why questions are questions of wonder, of curiosity. Although it is not likely a very young child would ask *what* the meaning of life is they may phrase it as a *why*: Why do we live? Why are we alive? Why do we think, feel, move?

Eagleton argues that the question *What* is the meaning of life is only a meaningful question in context—we make life meaningful by talking about it, but the answers are just as varied as the persons who discuss it. Questions are not posed in a vacuum. They come out of a context, and some questions are impossible to ask at certain points in time and others can only be asked because of the times. We could only question if sharing videotaped live performances on zoom and then discussing them was a meaningful artistic experience when the pandemic forced us to look for alternatives to live performances and in-person festivals. This is a meaningful question in our times and also one that solicits many answers depending of the point of view of who is speaking.

Young children, too, are asking questions in specific contexts. Their “meaning of life” has likely much less to do with an awareness that their existence is finite, but rather in a way of finding the “meaning” in their present day-to-day lives. For a child each experience creates a new context, a new way of looking at things and a stimulus to use their imagination. Children’s existence consists of its function within a larger whole. Still mastering language, not entirely able yet to differentiate between concrete and abstract in images and imagination, and just discovering the meaning of abstract symbols, the young child lives in the here and now and their meaning-making is dependent on what contexts, most likely by their family and caregivers, are offered to them.

According to Jean Piaget (1896-1980), young children start being able to think about things symbolically, and develop memory and imagination between the ages of two and seven. But their thinking is still not completely logical and based on intuition. While this is not the place to discuss or make a value statement on Piaget’s theories in all its complexities, his test samples were narrow and did not take into account the various contexts of children’s lived experiences. He also acknowledged that he was unable to determine with certainty the thought process of children and if what they shared reflected what they really believed or what they pretend to believe.

This of course is the point of the Mapping process: what exactly do children experience aesthetically when they go to theatre performances for the very young? What do we know, or rather, what do we observe?

And what does that mean?

The big difference in perception of the experiences of very young children came at the point that we started to think of a young child as a human being, rather than a human becoming. Whether or not a child grasps the meaning of life in terms of their own mortality is less important than what the child experiences in a particular moment in time within the particular context of that moment. This also implies that not every experience needs to be an explicit educational learning experience, but can be one of pleasure or enjoyment and wonder, that is, an aesthetic experience (which, by the way, may also be educative in and of itself).

And this aesthetic experience may very well be the meaning of life for that child at that time.

This why we need theatre for the very young. Because live theatre performances, more than any other artform, offer complex images and stimulate the imagination, through its combined use of sound, words, movement, and representations on stage. No one knows why a young child remarks that she really liked the watermelon in the performance that didn’t feature a watermelon in any way, shape, or form, but it is clear that the performance evoked her imagination and made her *believe* there was a watermelon and because she *liked* it, it was a pleasant image.

Children’s aesthetic experiences are phenomenological moments, taking place there and then, between the image and the spectator.¹

They are embodied, emotional, and affective (see also chapter on Cognition and Emotion). They may or may not linger and turn into cognitive memories. The child audience member in *Sandpit* looking up to the falling sand from the ceiling onto the floor in wonder, may not remember her full engagement in what was happening then and there, but she may at one point get a glimpse of that feeling as she is playing in the sand.

To turn full circle, in theatre for the very young it is exactly the images offered and the imagination it stimulates that may give the “meaning of life” to the young spec-

tator, at that moment in that place. The young child as a human being is just as capable to construct meaning, be it concrete or abstract, a figment of a runaway imagination or a literal interpretation—depending also very much on the kind and style of performance offered—as an adult, whether or not we “get” it. The more varied the performances, the more images created, the more imaginations ensue and the more “meaning” is derived.

Works Cited

Eagleton, Terry. *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2007.

¹ Literally, phenomenology is the study of “phenomena”: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>

What Kind of Theatrical Signifiers are Disallowed in Theatre for Early Years?

Yvette Hardie

This is a curious question, which itself provokes many other questions. Who allows or disallows? In what context? And for what purpose? And what kind of theatre is the result of these decisions being taken?

But hidden at the end of the question is the motivating factor... the early years. It is our concept of childhood itself that propels the question. As adults, with the best of intentions, we feel ourselves torn between our innate desire to protect children (and particularly very young children) in the face of their evident powerlessness, and the necessity to induct them into the world in such a way that they will find agency within it.

Just as a parent may hover over their child, removing obstacles as they take their first steps, so for those making work for children there may be a compulsion to want to create safety nets for the audience. This is driven not just by the necessity to find the best means of communication with the child audience at a particular stage of their being, but often by the assumption (or knowledge) that the adults active in choosing this engagement for children have limits in terms of what they will allow or disallow. And it should be point-

ed out that the artists themselves may be the biggest limiting factor. Fear - of offending, of causing harm, of upsetting the audience - can be a powerful driver of choices made. There is a kind of internal pressure-testing which occurs in the theatre-making process for early years that asks "how far can I go", "what will they permit", "will this still be acceptable if...", and these questions are not just aimed at the child audience.

This questioning is shaped by the cultural context in which the artists are working. Artists working in Iran, where theatre as public display is questionable and where physical contact across genders onstage is prohibited, are asking different questions to those working in Italy, where theatre for early years has a longer trajectory and history of experimentation... However, within every context, there will be common beliefs held about what is unacceptable, inappropriate, or forbidden for exploration with young children. These may be freely and openly articulated, but more often they operate as invisible lines of control that make them more difficult to counter or respond to.

Theatrical signifiers of course will also point towards the content of plays, so a related question may be "what kind of topics are disallowed in TEY?" Some topics are considered taboo for reasons of "appropriateness," capacity to be "understandable," or simply because they are considered too difficult or painful - intellectually or emotionally - for young children to handle. Typically, taboo topics are given the marker "adult" and include such areas as sex, violence, death, politics, religion, gender, economics, and race.

Interestingly, these topics can be explored more easily in some art forms than others

- in parts of the world, children's literature has moved ahead of children's theatre in this respect¹. This may be linked to the fears ingrained in us by children's amazing capacity to learn from and copy what they see², as well as by the pervasive notion in some quarters that children are innocent and pure beings in need of protection from a corrupt and complex world. (Lola Fernandez de Sevilla would counter that "There is a monster living inside every child; we just need to observe for half an hour everything that happens in a schoolyard" (55))

Theatre has often been considered more dangerous than literature because it involves live demonstration or re-enactment, and this carries with it the presumed heightened danger of children mirroring what they see onstage. This attitude is based on the notion of children as empty vessels to be filled with appropriate (or inappropriate) content, or alternatively, as mindless parrots who unthinkingly mimic what they see. The fear may be linked to a lack of respect for the child as a unique, thinking, and feeling human being, with the capacity to process and construct meaning actively for themselves.

The use of the term "theatrical signifiers" relates to the construction of meaning. Signifiers can include any number of visual and aural elements used in a performance, including the space, set, props, costumes, lighting, sound, gestures, movements, words, and music, but these signifiers need to be received and decoded in order for the communication to take place. So, signifiers

may be rejected or "disallowed" either in their own right - the thing itself is unacceptable for some reason - or because of what they are presumed to signify (the implied or constructed meaning).

There are examples of theatrical signifiers, which may be disallowed in theatre for babies, for example, for reasons of the infant's comfort or safety. These may include too bright lights shining on the sensitive heads of babies (Chang and Choi 38), too loud sounds (medical experts will say that babies should not be exposed to sound louder than 60 decibels³), or a space dangerous for children who are beginning to crawl and explore their surroundings. Sometimes complete blackouts are considered problematic, since people perceive children to be afraid of the dark or that darkness is so associated with sleep that it may promote disengagement from the theatre experience.

And yet... within an African context, a play using loud drumming for very young children would be considered perfectly acceptable, and in different parts of the world, productions for early years have started from a place of darkness and added elements of light in innovative and beautiful ways.

Nokto (which means "night" in Esperanto) by Compagnie l'Yonne, works with darkness and gentle light in beautiful and sensory ways to explore an operatic experience for babies, creating a meditative and weightless sense of being, "warranting the greatest possible safety and intimacy." The

1 There is a backlash to this development, in places like the USA where book-banning of literature dealing with LGBTIQ+ topics, race, sexual content, activism and religion has increased exponentially. See the latest report from Pen America here: <https://pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools/>

2 <https://jacobsfoundation.org/why-imitation-in-early-childhood-is-crucial/>
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01399/full>

3 <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/hearing-loss/noise-induced-hearing-loss-in-children>

darkness – like the darkness of the womb – is welcoming and supportive.

Where theatrical signifiers are implying something considered dangerous or inappropriate, they may be questioned or objected to by audience members (usually the adults, rather than the children).

In *Chalk About* by Curious Seed (a much-travelled play for older, i.e. 8+ children), a hand gesture was considered problematic by some adults and yet, it could be argued that the gesture would only be interpreted in this (supposedly offensive) way, by those children who already attached this significance to the gesture. Children who did not have this knowledge would understand the gesture differently. Christine Devaney, Artistic Director of Curious Seed, said about the gesture, in a note written to schools,

It is done as choreography in the context of the work as a whole, and the performers do this choreography with no expression or intention of expressing meaning. What's interesting to me is how we are taught meaning and therefore give meaning to (whether positive, negative, informative or even the mundane) through these physical 'symbols' and that we all recognise them through reading the body. However, many of the same physical symbols in this section have different meanings in different cultures, and the history of how they came to mean different things connects to the exchange and assimilation of different cultures (that the performance is exploring).

Given the fact that every audience member comes with their own particular context,

lived history and identities, and corresponding sets of knowledge, signifiers will not be received in the same way by everyone and it is the act of meaning-making itself which should be encouraged in children.

It is therefore impossible to say what the impact of experiencing a particular theatrical signifier will be on an audience member. Psychologists disagree on what the impact of seeing different kinds of behavior may be on children. In longitudinal studies, the consequences of observing violence repeatedly on film and in video games on young children have provided some proof that frequent exposure leads to harm (Josephson). Leonard Berkowitz, a psychologist who studied human aggression, when talking about the consequences of observing violence, said "There is no one factor at work, but one of the things that happens is that people get ideas as well as inclinations, and if their inhibitions happen to be weak at the time, these ideas or inclinations can be translated into open behavior" (qtd. in Bennetts).

However, the same kinds of studies have not been done in theatre, which is mostly typically experienced once-off. Further, theatre tends to treat violence differently – generally through implication or symbolism - from the graphic manner in which it is treated in these other media.

When Sarah Argent produced *Not Now, Bernard* for the Unicorn theatre, she noted that "some parents who didn't know the book were quite traumatised (by the content), whereas children didn't seem to be, they seemed unperturbed by that." The play tells a story of parental neglect in which a monster in the garden ends up eating a child and replacing him without the awareness of the parents.

In many performances for early years, there is less a sense of wanting to communicate something in particular (a message to be decoded), and more a reaching towards a poetic state of being present in the experience itself, allowing for new ways of thinking and being to emerge.

Lise Hovik speaks of sympoiesis, which refers to the act of collective creation using the interdisciplinarity of theatre. In combining different elements, we make something new with them that is both sensuous and magical.

An example of a work that embodies this approach would be *The Garden of Spirited Minds*, by Dalija Acin-Thelander, who speaks about the "notion of audience's agency in correlation with multi-directional interaction of the senses and sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment." Here, theatrical signifiers are selected not for their implied meaning, but for their capacity to contribute to a shared experience between audience, artists, and their care-givers, and to foster an ever-unfolding curiosity of the senses.

One of the strengths of Theatre for Early Years is the fact that many artists approach their work from a place of not-knowing and artistic research. Through experimentation with test audiences during the process of creation, they learn which theatrical signifiers seem to have an impact and which don't, in their own contexts. They also learn the variety of possible responses to the reception of these elements, and this may help them to select signifiers and shape them in such a way that the work is most effective when brought into contact with the audience.

In this process of deep investigation and play, the theatrical signifiers that are disal-

lowed are only those that hold no interest or engagement for the audience in the way that they are presented. When this is the case, the children for whom the piece is intended become collaborators and dramaturgs to the creative journey. This approach can give them the agency that the world often stubbornly refuses to offer them, and in so doing, theatre provides a vital space for validating the child as a full human being.

Works Cited

- Acin-Thelander, Dalija "Works." <https://www.dalijaacinthelander.com/#/thegarden/>
- Argent, Sarah. Personal Interview. December 6, 2021
- Bennetts, Leslie. "Do the Arts Inspire Violence in Real Life?" *New York Times* April 26, 1981. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/26/movies/do-the-arts-inspire-violence-in-real-life.html>
- Chang, Jackie Eunju and Young Ai Choi. "Perception of the Contemporary Child and Theatre for the Very Young." *Youth and Performance: Perceptions of the Contemporary Child*. Gesche Wartemann, Tülin Sağlam, and Mary MacAvoy, Eds. Georg Olms Verlag, 2015, pp. 31-42.
- Devaney, Christine. Personal Correspondence. Notes written for teachers on the occasion of the performance of *Chalk About* at Baboró Festival, 2022
- Fernández de Sevilla, Lola. "Towards the Unknown and Beyond: Theatre and Childhood as Schools for Resilience." *ASSITEJ Magazine: Towards the Unknown—Confronting the Present.*, 2019, pp. 54-57.
- Hovik, Lise. "Thinking with Theatre: The Sympoiesis of Theatre for Early Years." *ASSITEJ Magazine: Towards the Unknown—Confronting the Present*, 2019, pp. 42-44.
- Josephson WL. *Television Violence: A Review of the Effects on Children of Different Ages*. National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1995.

The Body as an Ear: How Might Spectatorial Engagement Look and Sound?

Katherine Morley

This joyous question encourages an exploration of the many ways connection can occur during performance. While it's logical to first consider the interaction between children and performers, the presence of adult carers is also significant in this multi-generational space and so the "looking" and "sounding" of engagement demands an omni-directional view of the performance space. Opportunities for engagement depend on what we might call the aesthetic offer – the intentions of each production, the cultural context, the spatial proxemics and the way audiences are invited to participate. Equally important is the fundamental way in which a child's developing capabilities – physical, sensory, and cognitive – can influence how they choose to engage (or not engage) with a stimulus (see the chapter about Percipient Beings).

As children become more capable, the everyday proximity between parent and child naturally decreases. This is not to suggest that dyadic intimacy recedes, only that children's own physical choices expand with their sensory maturation. Being able to examine the way spectators move in response to the action of per-

formers (specific focus) or the action of the performance (broad focus), helps to reveal more about the how and the when of connection. Observing these layers of spectatorial movement can also help expose the interplay between subjective and intersubjective modes of spectatorship. Here I am considering that all spectatorial activity should be viewed through the lens of engagement (rather than a binary of engagement or disengagement) so as to more closely examine what engagement can be. Think of the toddler who cries for reassurance but does not want to leave the auditorium.

The terms "proximal" and "distal" are helpful to describe the relative position of the child-spectator in relation to that of their parent or fellow spectator. Proximal describes the position of something situated nearer to the center of the body and distal something further away. Rather than assuming spectators have a static position, used together, these terms help describe the constant flow of corporeal (re)actions and (re)positioning as responses to and within the whole performance environment. Using these terms during close analysis of performances helps examine individuated locomotion and the re-positioning of the child's body in relation to their parent or companions. Establishing a clearer sense of movements towards the performance or moving towards the parent or companion helps uncover ways in which children (consciously or subconsciously) move in response to onstage stimuli, and how adults choose to move within the sphere of their children. In this way conversations can move beyond the binary of watching or doing, activity or passivity, and instead, describe the way in which bod-

ies demonstrate relational responses and affect. Thinking about engagement from this perspective and studying patterns of common response also helps to reveal how spectators can influence one another when infants and children are in situations of novelty, like the theatre.

While I have a deep fascination for, and have researched the patterns of collective silence and stillness frequently visible in infant audiences, it is most unlikely that practitioners aim to create uniform responses. The joy of an engaged audience, even as connections are established and broken as a natural part of viewing, also comes from the nuanced responses; reaching for the hand of a fellow spectator, spontaneous clapping mid-show, asking questions into the collective silence, the unbidden hugging of performers, turning round to share a moment of "did you see that Mum?" It is these spontaneous moments of personal connection that help to illustrate something of the complexity of how audiences engage and can come to influence one another in finding pleasure or making meaning from what they see. These moments emerge, I propose, as a result of each spectator being able to fill in some gaps and engage in a way their capabilities will allow. As choreographer Jonathan Burrows suggests,

The audience wants a job to do: they want to be allowed to fill in some gaps in their understanding of what's happening. Somewhere between underlining everything or being unclear to the point of obscurity, is a level of conversation between you and your audience where both collude to make sense of the per-

formance. It's in this place that the delights of expectation indulged or subverted can raise the roof. (108)

Various theatre scholars have asserted the centrality of the audience to the performance event (Fischer-Lichte, De Marinis, Schechner, Heim etc.)—the proximity of the audience and their willingness to walk (or crawl) away if the work doesn't engage them, makes this centrality self-evident in TEY. At the same time, "[t]he paradox of audiences is that sometimes the most active role is to do nothing physically and yet be central to everything" (Reason et al. 7) and this too is strongly applicable to audiences across the TEY age range, although the idea of "doing nothing physically" here is rather contentious (see chapter on Percipient Beings). In her research around immersive theatres, Josephine Machon describes participant-spectators as being "integral to the experiential heart of the work and central to the form and aesthetic of the event" (72). Similarly, TEY spectators are central to everything – bringing whole body responses to performance but also in rehearsal and development. Audiences in TEY may not come to the theatre with complex expectations but will nevertheless be watching expectantly (see also the chapter on the Role of Expectation).

Rather than questioning what art is doing, I've found it helpful to consider what children and adults are doing when they engage with art. The invitation to participate, as Gareth White examines in his 2013 monograph, can be received in many ways, particularly within TEY where the sector encompasses a variety of sub-genres and whose audience often (re)act and respond from instinct and sensorial af-

fect rather than any known convention or behavioral expectation. Questioning engagement through the relational aspect of spectatorship helps celebrate the ways in which children bring their own capability, opinions and interests to this space. The following ten miniature snapshots aim to illustrate some of the nuanced ways engagement can look and sound:

1) A colleague once told me her little boy became entranced with a theatre's fire extinguisher and found it far more fascinating than the show they were there to see. Three weeks later, the same boy enacted the story of the show in surprising detail, though he'd barely "watched" it at all.

2) I had just seen a piece called *Nido*, (*Nest*) in Bologna a few years ago, when a boy, only a few months old, turned to an unknown fellow spectator (Roberto Frabetti as it happens) and reached for his hand. Wordlessly, he asked Roberto to show him around the space. The child's father watched as the little boy took his first steps looking round the theatre.

3) In the opening moments of *Tiébélé*, performed at the Brik Festival, a bowl of powdered paint is set spinning in front of the audience. The nursery class leans forward en masse. Their vocal commentary builds to a high level while the performer mixes paint with water and begins to daub it on Perspex screens, but the audience's visual attention is rapt. This audience urgently wants to verbalize what they can see and then, each time the per-

former sings, they fall silent, except for a child of around four who sings (to herself) in perfect syncopation with the performer.

4) During *Rothar (Bicycle)* at Polka's Mapping festival, a fine mist of water is liberally sprayed about to evoke a scene at sea. "Was that real?" a little girl asked as the scene ended.

5) At the same festival, soon after the beginning of *Ready, Steady, Go!* a large dust-sheet was removed to reveal a bicycle. With huge delight, a girl of around six said aloud, "Granny, I was right!"

6) A sequence of everyday actions creates a journey of sound-play in Teater Tre's *Drömsk (Dreamy)*. Described as a child's dream play, there's a moment of getting ready during which performers Nelly and Anna comb their hair. They cry "Owww" with each tug of the comb and a child of around five giggles in response. She reaches up to hold her own hair, looks at her mother, raises her eyebrows in recognition and returns to watching.

7) A girl aged 13 months is teetering in the hinterland between stage and auditorium. Six performers have frozen and are wordlessly teasing the audience about when their action will resume. Everyone here waits (in their own way) but all are silent. After ten (long) seconds some younger children turn to their parents for reassurance, perhaps perceiving a gap in the proceedings,

but the girl holds eye-contact with a performer and uses sign language to ask for "More." Though her parents are directly behind her, she communicates with the performer, repeating "more, more, more" using her hands.

8) During applause at the end of Artika's *Μια θαυμάσια ημέρα (A Wonderful Day)* two children walk on stage to hug the performers. It is described as an unbidden moment of joy when discussed at a festival several months later. Even from a photograph, it's possible to see the pure pleasure of these children saying "thank you, I liked that, you moved me" in a way they knew how.

9) A classical guitarist plays live as we enter the theatre for *Ton in Ton*, at Teater Tre's Mapping festival. From this first moment none of the thirty spectators feels the need to speak. Sitting together in (relative) silence, a solo dancer manipulates clay, leaving visible traces of her movement throughout the space. In a moment of frenzy, clay and water splash towards us causing a ripple of tiny bodies. They adjust themselves, (as if remembering where they are) and settle again. One child around 18 months old imitates a stretch the dancer is holding, planting her feet, reaching into the space. To borrow from an elegant description of children in a Thai temple, this is not one silence, but "a collection of silences" (Yoxall 216).

10) A small train runs round the perimeter of a four-sided performance space, playfully introducing the notion of how sound "travels". As the train's little arm connects with the many water glasses it passes on its track, our ears and eyes fix on its progress round the space as each glass resonates with a different pitch of 'ting'. Every action in this performance comes to facilitate an exploration of listening and the role of sound-making in participation.

Früh Stück (meaning *Breakfast*, but in German also a word play literally "Early Piece"), is the production that featured in the final snapshot above. Sitting within a classic TEY framework of care, curiosity, and risk, (see chapter on the Role of Expectation) specific to this space, place, and time, we are invited to engage in two simultaneous forms of participation – receiving food and water from within the production itself (delivered by train), and giving our musicality and aural attention to the space (hosted by performers Michael and Minju). Layers of sounding, hearing, listening and theatricality emerge in tandem with the different ways in which spectators are invited to engage. To participate here feels like being at someone's dining table. Through the performance we share pieces of breakfast, becoming increasingly conscious of how the actions of hosting and participation are looping back to us through amplified sound. Philosopher Tim Ingold helps describe how this feels: "it is the very incorporation of vision into the process of auditory perception that transforms passive hearing into active hearing" (277). And indeed, this expe-

rience does become a very physical exploration of listening through a growing awareness of, and confidence in, how our movements are creating layers of sound; finding the musicality in everyday actions; and the choreographed interplay of acoustic and looping amplified sounds of, for example, drinking water... (delivering glasses, the pouring of water, the clinking of glass, the exchange of gratitude, swallowing water, watching others do the same, returning a glass). As Herbert Blau suggests, “How we think of an audience is a function of how we think about ourselves (...) and how, if at all, we may accommodate the urge for collective experience” (28). Here we find ways to partake together. Beyond the physiological nourishment, we are invited to add our sounding, feeling voice to this space and perceive with renewed aural attention - not just in relation to what engagement in the theatre is and can be, but what we are, and can be in the theatre.

Works Cited

Blau, Herbert. *The Audience*. John Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Burrows, Jonathan. *A Choreographer's Handbook*. Routledge, 2010.

De Marinis, Marco. “Dramaturgy of the Spectator.” *TDR: The Drama Review*. 161, vol. 31, no. 2, 1987, pp. 100-114.

Fischer-Lichte, Erica. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London: Routledge, 2008.

Heim, Caroline. *Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge, 2015.

Ingold, Tim. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Machon, Josephine. *Immersive Theatres*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Reason, Matthew., Lynne Conner, Katya Johanson, and Ben Walmsley. *Routledge Companion to Audiences and the Performing Arts*. Routledge, 2022.

Schechner, Richard. *Environmental Theater*. Hawthorn Books, 1973.

Yoxall, Matthew. “‘Leaning in’ to Listen: Comprehending Motivation and Intentions in Burma/Myanmar.” In *Making Theatre, Discerning Silences: Engagements with Social Change in Burma/Myanmar and Thailand*. National University of Singapore, 2016, pp. 187-239

White, Gareth. *Audience Participation in the Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

XVIII.

How Can Culture Be Transmitted Through Theatre for Early Years? From Abstract to Concrete and Concrete to Abstract

Manon van de Water

Au bout de la corde, la tente; au bout de l'homme, la trace
[At the end of the rope, the tent; at the end of man, the trace]

Tuareg proverb

In March 2021, I was traveling in a trailer through the western part of the US. In the midst of the pandemic this was one of the few ways to travel, and the only way to visit remote sites. My first Mapping meeting with the Image Group was on my phone in a parking lot with wifi in Texas when I just left Hueco Tanks State Historical Monument where I camped for a few days. Hueco Tanks had been inhabited for thousands of years, due to the Huecos, or “hollows,” large natural water basins, which, in the middle of the desert, were a convenient spot to rest or settle for nomadic tribes. Throughout the last 10,000 years, Hueco Tanks has provided water, food, and shelter to travelers in the Chihuahuan Desert. These people also left images in the park.

In all, Hueco Tanks contains over 3000 paintings depicting religious masks, caricature faces, complex geometric designs, dancing figures, people with elaborate headdresses, birds, jaguars, deer, and symbols of rain, lightning, and corn. Hidden within shelters, crevices, and caves among the three massive outcrops of boulders found in the park, the art work is rich in symbolism and is a visual testament to the importance of graphic expression for the people who lived and visited the area. The most renowned images are “masks” or face designs. Hueco Tanks has the largest grouping of such masks in North America, with more than 200 identified.

At the Mapping meeting in the parking lot, we introduced each other and each group shared their ideas for the Mapping performance they envisioned or were already working on. Gaëtane Reginster from Théâtre de la Guimbarde talked about *Tiébélé* a production in collaboration with the Wéléna Association in Burkina Faso, and the concept that leaving traces is the first and the last thing humans do. Her production aimed to highlight the relationship between the traces very young children leave in their drawings or paintings and those of the first people.

Having just visited Huecos admiring the ancient pictures on the rocks there, I was immediately drawn to the parallels between the idea of the production and the evocative images, some of which could go as far back as 6000 B.C.E.; and the notions of abstract paintings, concrete images, and geometrical figures. The earliest images, called The Early Archaic Style (6000 B.C.E.– 3000 B.C.E.) consist of curvilinear and rectilinear abstract designs, such as

“comb” designs and parallel wavy lines. It is hard to guess the meanings of these drawings. There are no animal or human depictions in this earlier style. They are abstract: there may have been an intent behind painting them, but what exactly we do not know. It could also be that it was not meant to depict anything in specific but was done purely for the pleasure of it, like the aesthetic pleasure a child derives from their earliest artistic activity by doing it. Likewise, the Middle and Late Archaic Style (3000 B.C.E.-450 C.E.) follow the hunting scenes, which in its geometric depictions are also very reminiscent of the development of the child’s depictions of stick figures and the like.

Tiébélé in a beautiful way captures the traces people leave and the cultural and artistic developments. The production is self-contained in music, song, and images. It follows the threat of the women in the Burkino Faso village of Tiébélé who decorate their houses made of clay. The Kasséna people, in the south of Burkino Fasso, have been decorating the walls of their houses with elaborate painted murals since the 16th century. The painting is done exclusively by the women who pass on the skill to their daughters. The paints are made from locally found minerals: white from chalk, black from basalt, and red from laterite. The minerals are mixed with water and clay to make the paint. Each house is uniquely decorated with a mix of geometrical patterns, illustrative drawings and bas-reliefs, all full of symbolism. Some of the murals tell stories of Kassena folklore and beliefs while others are drawn from everyday life. Common motifs include triangular shreds of pottery, fishing nets, and animals such as sacred crocodiles and

protective snakes. The paintings turn each house into a canvas that tells a story of the life of the Kassena people.

In *Tiébélé* a young woman mixes clay and water, makes patterns on the floor and explores the first traces. She is accompanied by another woman who plays the N’goni, a beautiful string instrument made of wood or calabash with dried animal skin head stretched over it. They play together with the clay and sing together. From the ground they move to five plexiglass panels, brought in the circle one by one, decorating each in a more elaborate way: from scribbles, to stick figures, to geometrical patterns, each more elaborate than the one before, in effect following the development of drawing of young children. The panels are placed upstage, forming a background of different “houses.” The song and music are organically integrated and also seem to get more elaborate. At the end, the actors admire their work. On the backgrounds, more elaborate, projected, geometrical shapes slowly appear. “Make me believe” sings the young woman, as the elaborate projections are gradually washed down by rain, leaving its own traces.

Even without knowing the background, this short, self-contained production, transmits culture and wonder. The young audience is enthralled, there is no moment of wandering away from the images shown on stage. The two women are very different in looks, and it is clear they come from different cultures, yet in this production they come together. This is not an appropriation of culture, but a meeting of cultures on stage, a metaphorical representation of how the first people and young children leave and develop traces. How they move

from abstract to concrete and back to abstract again. The production plays tribute to women and the work of women. The N’goni is rarely played by women, but in this production it is. The songs come from recordings of the Kasséna women, with some added twists. While the “houses,” the plexiglass panels, are made by men, the women decorate them.

The idea of human’s tendency to leave traces, aesthetic traces, whether carved, painted, on rocks or pottery or in weaving—

abstract-concrete-and abstract again— goes across continents and peoples and that makes *Tiébélé*, such an exciting production. A production that shows that theatre for the very young can be a deep aesthetic experience that may give a lasting impression of the roots of humanity. And like adults, standing in awe in front of cave paintings thousands of years old, young children can experience in awe and wonder and excitement what these thousands of years old cultures may mean to them now, in the 21st century.

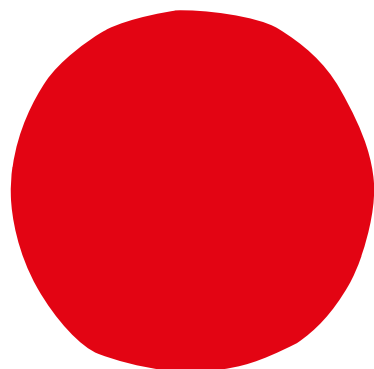


*How Can Culture Be Transmitted Through Theatre for Early Years?
From Abstract to Concrete and Concrete to Abstract*

Fabian Negrin



MOTION



How Does Movement Relate to the Human Condition of the Early Years?

Katsumi Komagata

XIX.

How Does Movement Relate to the Human Condition of the Early Years?

Yoona Kang

How does movement relate to the human condition of the early years? This question is worth asking as it relates to the issue of creating a performance reality which the very young can relate to. A common premise of TEY or the broader field of TYA, is that TEY needs to connect to the life of its target audience. TEY needs to make the very young feel that the play world matters to them. According to Lorenz, “the best of contemporary theatre for the young does reflect the lives, concerns, issues, and feelings of the young with respect for their youth, intelligence, and sensitivity” (Lorenz 108). Thus, TYA/TEY artists make a serious effort to think from the perspective of their target audience when looking at the world. Thus, if we explore the focus of our movement group, how could we use movement in TEY so the performance reality matters from the perspective of the young audience, and how may that relate to their human condition?

To start to explore this question, it is useful to understand how the very young experience movement. Indeed, the very young are familiar with movement as a medium to learn about the world since birth. Movement is a “basic action through which bodies make sense of their world

[...] from their very beginning” (Alonso 19). Sheets-Johnstone writes that “Movement is indeed their [infants’] mother tongue. The world may be unfamiliar, but there is a familiar point of origin, that is, a familiar way by which one goes about making sense of it in the beginning” (223). Also, the very young’s body remembers the information gathered through their movement experience. And as they are beginning their life journey, the information their body collects has just started to accumulate. The very young’s body is a reservoir of the memory of their movement experiences: “[...] thinking in movement is always happening, and the ways of acting it creates are continually sedimented in the body through life” (Alonso 10). As the very young’s life/movement history is shorter compared to that of a person who has lived longer, the amount of information ‘sedimented’ in their body must be less. On the other hand, the very young are experts of the movements relevant to the here and now of their life period, which many older people might have forgotten.

If it is likely that the very young know best about the movement they experience directly and if their bodies remember it, then it is meaningful to explore the aforementioned question on a deeper level: how could we use movement in TEY so the performance reality matters from the perspective of the young audience, and how may that relate to their human condition? To elaborate: if the very young would watch a movement on a TEY stage, for example, wouldn’t they recognize it and/or relate to it better if their body would have already experienced a similar movement and stored information about it? Won’t they know most about movements mirroring actions

and emotions they have been immersed in or care about; movements that are closer to their human condition?

In fact, it was *Wacht's Even*, a piece created by one of Mapping's movement group companies, de Stilte, which inspired me to ask the above question. Movement in this piece, I think, is very likely to resonate with the life experience of the very young and thus it plays a primary role in making the audience care about the play reality. Before explaining why this is so, I will briefly have to introduce the performance:

Wacht's Even, which means "Wait a Minute" in Dutch, is a dance piece which two dancers perform on a white minimal stage in a black box theatre. In the performance, where every scene is expressed solely through dance/movement, the skillfulness of the dancers and the beauty and elegance of the stage/music/costume together catch the eye of the viewers throughout the show. The piece consists of three parts: in each of the first and second section one dancer immerses herself in a playful exploration of the stage and of the symbolic props made out of white panels. Next, the two performers are surprised by the presence of each other but refuse to play in harmony. Instead, the characters insist on maintaining the way in which they have been playing. Their two play-worlds collide and come into serious conflict. Finally, however, the two accept the company of each other and learn to play in peace.

How does movement in *Wacht's Even* relate to the human condition of the early years? First, movement in the piece mirrors an activity which is central and prevalent in their daily life, namely, child's play.

The dancers' movement exploration of the space and props in the first part of the performance, for example, resembles that of a child playing with toys, building blocks or their environment with serious but spontaneous concentration. The dancers are present in the here and now, experiencing every moment with care and surprise just the way the very young do when they are exploring and playing in their environment.

Also, at some moments during the performers' play, their movement mirrors a typical attitude in which the very young interact with their environment; interacting with objects and humans without differentiating. This is well represented in *Wacht's Even* when the first performer moves with each prop playfully in every imaginable way. She almost appears to merge with the objects she explores: as she folds and unfolds the piano or when a plank flutters, for example, her body moves in exactly the same way as the objects. Just as the very young do, the characters relate to the objects on stage and/or make an exchange with them as if the two would be the same species.

Furthermore, movement in *Wacht's Even* captures the way the very young feel and express emotions. In the latter part of the performance, the two dancers get into a bitter conflict, each insisting on building a tower in her own way. Through the desperate movement of their bodies and their facial expressions, they dauntlessly expose how intense and fluctuating their emotions are. And I wonder if such vividness and earnestness are not often thought to be the way in which the very young feel and express their emotions. Indeed, the TEY director Barbara Kölling of *Helios* says,

"These little children are very honest [...] they are experiencing everything with their bodies and also reacting with their bodies... you can always see them."

Thus, movement in *Wacht's Even* echoes actions the very young care about daily as well as play attitudes they are familiar with. Also, movement in the piece reflects the way the very young feel and express their emotions. This makes *Wacht's Even* an example in which movement on a TEY stage mirrors an action or emotion pattern which the very young are likely to have experienced in their reality. It invites the audience to relate to the performance reality. *Wacht's Even* matters to them.

Even though I never had the chance to conduct intensive research on audience response to *Wacht's Even*, I think that facts about the post-drama activity provide meaningful clues about the audience reception of the performance. After the show, the very young were invited to come on stage and play with miniature panels, made after the stage props. Some children imitated the movement of the performers they observed during the show; others played with the props in an original way. But in any case, the nature of the action performed by the dancers during the performance and the action of the children's post-show activity looked extremely similar: both the dancers on stage and the children in the post-performance activity were playing seriously. Both the dancers and the children moved with the props for mere enjoyment and were immersed in their flow spontaneously and profoundly. This is consequential as it suggests that it is likely that the performers have captured the nature of the children's play in their perfor-

mance. They moved in a way the audience could recognize, relate to, and understand thoroughly enough to be able to mimic it in the post-performance activities in a relaxed and playful manner.

Meanwhile, one significant aspect of the movement in *Wacht's Even* is that it not only mirrors the reality of the very young but does so beautifully through elegant stylized dance. As mentioned, it is very likely that the nature of the movements in the show is close to the nature of the movements of the very young in reality. There are myriads of possibilities to choose a form or expression to capture the "nature" of children's action; however, *Wacht's Even* focuses on stylized dance and continues to concentrate on that consistently throughout the show. The marriage between the children's reality and delicate dance produces a type of movement which catches the eye because of its unique beauty. In that way, not only can the very young recognize their reality in the show but also watch how beautifully it is represented. The liveliness and spontaneity with which the very young participate in the post-production activity, therefore, may have been enabled through the inspiration that the aesthetic experience of the skillful and elegant dance offered to the very young.

Wacht's Even reveals meaningful facts relevant to the question of how movement relates to the human condition of the early years in TEY. It is likely that the very young can find a connection to performance movements of which their body has relevant experiences or memories. Also, movements which capture the way the very young feel and/or represent their inner life authentically, can make the very young feel close to the performance reality. And as mentioned, if

the above use of movements helps us stage a performance world which the very young can care about, that is substantial. After all, that is one of the major things we pursue in TYA/TEY. Furthermore, the marriage between the subject matter of the very young's life and diverse movement styles/forms strictly adhering to an aesthetic, can produce uniquely beautiful performances which can inspire the very young. Last, *Wacht's Even* confirms that movement offers a flexible rich language through which we can communicate with the very young in many ways: to feel with them or inspire them through beauty, or both.

Works Cited

- Alonso, Andrés Aparicio. "Still Bodies: A Disability-Informed Approach to Stasis in Theatre." Diss. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. 2021.
- Kölling, Barbara. Personal interview. 10 Feb 2021.
- Lorenz, Carol. "The Rhetoric of Theatre for Young Audiences and Its Construction of the Idea of the Child." *Youth Theatre Journal* vol. 16, 2002 pp. 96-111.
- Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. *The Primacy of Movement*. Expanded Second Edition. John Benjamins Publishing Co, 2011.



Listening: Why Is Relative Silence so Significant?

Katherine Morley

The silence reveals that each person has reserved this time for discovery, rediscovery, and contemplation of that which within his own person would find it difficult or impossible to speak. (Bruce Wilshire 80)

The absence of sound can create tremendous presence in performance. In the English language the common descriptor for silence is that it "falls." We "fall silent" or "silence falls around us" but this feels too passive in the context of TEY where silence is more like an active phenomenon. Having said that, the phrase "to fall in love" is also ubiquitous in English, and perhaps both the phenomenon of silence and the phenomenon of love share a little of how entranced we can become in the face of something inexplicable.

Perhaps one reason why the silences of performance feel so significant, or even theatrical, is the sheer number of contributors that create them. So, specifically, whose lack of sound are we considering when we examine silence: the incidental or performed silences of the stage, the responsive silence of the audience, or the architectural resonance that provides a buffer between the outside world and the place of performance?

In the specific context of TEY, three factors about silence seem particularly significant; first, most theatres can provide a level of silence that is difficult to achieve in daily life; second, the aural cognitive processing speed of an infant is at least twice as slow as that of an adult, so periods of silence may assist in allowing young children to process what it is they are experiencing during performance in a more perceptive way; finally, the ability to listen closely against background noise is a skill that develops gradually through childhood, so silences found at the theatre may help provide an environment where the very young are more able to become receptive and perceptive.

We rarely encounter silence and even in the quietest domestic environment there are few circumstances in which we become conscious of our own aural attention. Just as visual artists Anish Kapoor and Stuart Semple seek the blackest of black ink with which to shift visual perception -creating presence from absence- theatres offer a space to enhance or subvert our experience of listening. Sound, music, speech, or noise imperceptibly or overtly influences perception but when silence is 'held,' the sensations and meanings accrued through listening often continue to resonate in our bodies. Like free-wheeling on a bicycle - the sensation of locomotion continues even when peddling has ceased and the dynamics of 'feeling' change again once the bicycle - or the sound - has stopped. When we notice silence, it becomes possible to develop a greater awareness of how it feels to listen and who is there with us.

If the context for listening comes from silence, this implies silence creates space into which sounds can be made, and from which meaning or feeling can emerge. Alongside our subjective feelings we develop an awareness of the shared moment – and this is eloquently explored by both Martin Welton in his monograph *Feeling Theatre* and within Home-Cook’s “listening to listening” (25). But especially in the context of TEY, a lack of sound feels incredibly active, as though silence itself has become an action. The audience is not so much being silent as ‘doing’ silence, because silence emerges as a corollary of children’s cognitive activity. As philosopher Alva Noë suggests, “Perception is determined by what we are ready to do” (1), adding, “[t]here is no such thing as an ‘inert’ or ‘inactive’ perceiver” (17).

“All sound originates in movement” (Fernald 37), so it follows that silences are often accompanied by stillness. Since the attention of the audience is inherently linked to the intention of the theatre maker, examining the relationship between stillness/movement, silence/sound, onstage/offstage, can help reveal much about the recurrent rhythms of response and connection between individuals, child-parent dyads, performers, and the collective audience. Using silence, pausing or slower pacing as a research method as well as a performance strategy creates space to “read” the responses of all participants - not just those who understand the guidelines for engagement shared during a pre-performance welcome but also those who respond through their senses, instinct, and feeling.

To be clear for those coming to this work from outside the sector, seldom are TEY audiences told to be still or silent, neither are these states a qualification of spectatorship. This is a place where it is widely understood that “[p]erceiving... is an active undertaking” (Welton 85), and that “[v]iewing is also an action” (Rancière 13). Myriad styles of TEY encourage different routes to spectatorial connection, but here I am mining a fascination for what brings children to relative silence and how modes of attention shift when silence falls.

I am using the term *relative* silence because, while hearts beat and breath continues, we cannot achieve absolute silence. Also, through association, it encourages conversation about relative stillness. At moments of silence, young spectators can be seen leaning in to the action of performance, independently holding a relationship with the stage, or comfortably leaning on their adult carers as a joint viewing position. These positions of stillness (seen as features within a continuum of responses) deserve more space for extrapolation than I can give here but Sheets-Johnstone assists saying, “[m]ovement is conceived and enfolded in perception itself ... In the process of picking up information in the world, we of course ‘pick up information’ about our own movement” (235).

What I like very much is the notion that when silence occurs, especially in the context of TEY, the individuals contributing to that silence are independently holding their own relationship with the stage. Silences can be held for a moment, a minute or twenty minutes, during

which they might be contextualized by a dancer’s foot sliding on white flooring, or the zip of a costume being pulled, or by someone’s laughter, or the discomfort of a spectator, or the wail of a siren coming from the street outside. The context for listening comes from silence and is just one way in which energy and ideas are exchanged between the performance participants and the spaces they inhabit.

Here we are paying attention to “what is not said” (Frabetti 140) and considering the actions of “whole body listening” in how we attend. Stillness, as an inseparable partner of silence, is a significant force within a continuum of responses. Psychologist James J. Gibson asserts, “behavior is controlled by perception” (223) and on first reading it is logical to assume that he was suggesting our actions are influenced by what we have perceived – what we call affect. But in the presence and immediacy of children, we should also consider that behavior is controlled by the very act of perceiving. With optimum levels of novelty, familiarity, comfort, and curiosity, positive connections can be made but the fundamental silence brought about by the theatre walls may exponentially help to provide a “clearer” environment in which to participate in the action of perceiving. Silence brought about by the audience magnifies the moments in which meaning can be made. As philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy suggests, “to be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning” (7), a notion which always feels resonant in the context of infants.

To explore the relationship between silence, knowledge production and atten-

tion it is helpful to draw on the theory of “Lantern Consciousness” (Gopnik, *Philosophical* 130). The metaphor most often used regarding attention is the spotlight, which in adults illuminates a point of focus while the surrounding stimulus is largely forgotten. Infants’ attention is much more like a lantern, illuminating a broader array of surroundings at any time. When some people suggest infants are bad at paying attention, “what we really mean is that they’re bad at *not* paying attention” (Gopnik, *Gardener* 192). Infants are driven to learn as much as they can as fast as possible, so paying attention to the widest amount of stimuli benefits this process.

It is also valuable to consider the significance of being surprised, or what developmental psychologists call a “violation of expectancy” (Stahl and Feigenson 1-14). Children naturally develop expectations about objects, actions, and their environment and respond reliably when these expectations are not met. Defying expectations can result in shock or delight especially at a time when attachment is in its infancy and children are establishing the rules of gravity, object permanence, or social conduct. The surprise of something unexpected occurring helps promote learning (see also the chapter on the Role of Expectation).

Bringing these theories of attention together helps illuminate the role silence can play. We understand, through TEY tacit knowledge, that encountering the silence of the theatre creates the kind of surprise that gives way to periods of close attention and deep listening. We see spectators understand how to be in

that silence and investigate it according to the theatre maker's intentions or the cues they take from each other. The unexpectedness of silence in the theatre prompts spectators to reevaluate what they expect by quieting and, as cited at the top of this paper, setting time aside for "discovery, rediscovery, and contemplation" within their own developmentally specific capabilities. The spectator's ever-shifting sense of novelty and surprise gives context to how a sense of curiosity helps facilitate new connections and a renewed understanding of ourselves, others, and the wider world, as Kupperts put it, "me, us and them" (35) or as Mike Pearson articulates "us, them and there" (19). Spectatorship in TEY is a visible, audible, sensate manifestation of connections and disconnections within a continuum of attention. Close analysis of most productions will reveal something of how our appetite for novel sensations and the surprise of silence – as an action or reaction – can create very moving responses. So moving, we cease to move, supporting the possibility of silence.

Infants' supreme ability to attend at the theatre and find moments of relative silence is, I propose, due in part to the effective management of a productive relationship between novelty and expectation. Second, and this is more difficult to state because it requires an articulation of what is *not* present in the theatre space, is the way in which the infant's senses – working with a broad and diffuse lantern consciousness – are helpfully "managed" by the directed environment of the theatre. Curbing the sense-making horizons of the infant, who is used to interpreting from all available stimuli, allows closer

attention to the stimuli that is presented here. Gopnik's theory of lantern consciousness is tested at the very edges of the theatre space. Given the "shoes off" hinterland at the edges of the auditorium, the finality of the theatre walls creates a barrier between the visual and aural realities of the ambient outside world, and the conditions inside which are created from a baseline of silence and darkness. Given this, it is possible to propose that the infant's subconscious or maybe hyper-conscious state of awareness is in some small way enabled to experience a tighter "spotlight of attention" than is possible in daily life (Morley 148). If the context for listening comes from silence, and "silence exists not right here, but just beyond what I can hear" (Smith 9) the conditions of the theatre may define not just the horizons of hearing but also our horizons of attention.

Works Cited

- Fernald, Anne. *Blackwell Handbook of Infant Development*. Edited by Gavin Bremner, Alan Fogel. Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001.
- Frabetti, Roberto. "Does theatre for children exist?" *Theatre for Early Years. Research in Performing Arts for Children from Birth to Three*. Ed. Schneider, Wolfgang. Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 135-145.
- Gibson, James J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979.
- Gopnik, Alison. *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us about Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*. Picador, 2009.
- . *The Gardener and the Carpenter*. Penguin Random House, 2016.
- Home-Cook, George. *Theatre and Aural Attention*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Kupperts, Petra. "Community Arts Practices: Improvising Being Together." In Petra Kupperts

and Gwen Robertson. Eds. *The Community Performance Reader*. Routledge, 2007, pp. 34-47.

Morley, Katherine. "Spectatorship in Theatre for Early Years: Towards a Taxonomy of Relative Stillness." Doctoral Thesis, University of Manchester, 2022.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening*. Fordham, 2007.

Noë, Alva. *Action in Perception*. MIT Press, 2004.

Pearson, Mike. *Site-Specific Performance*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Verso. 2009.

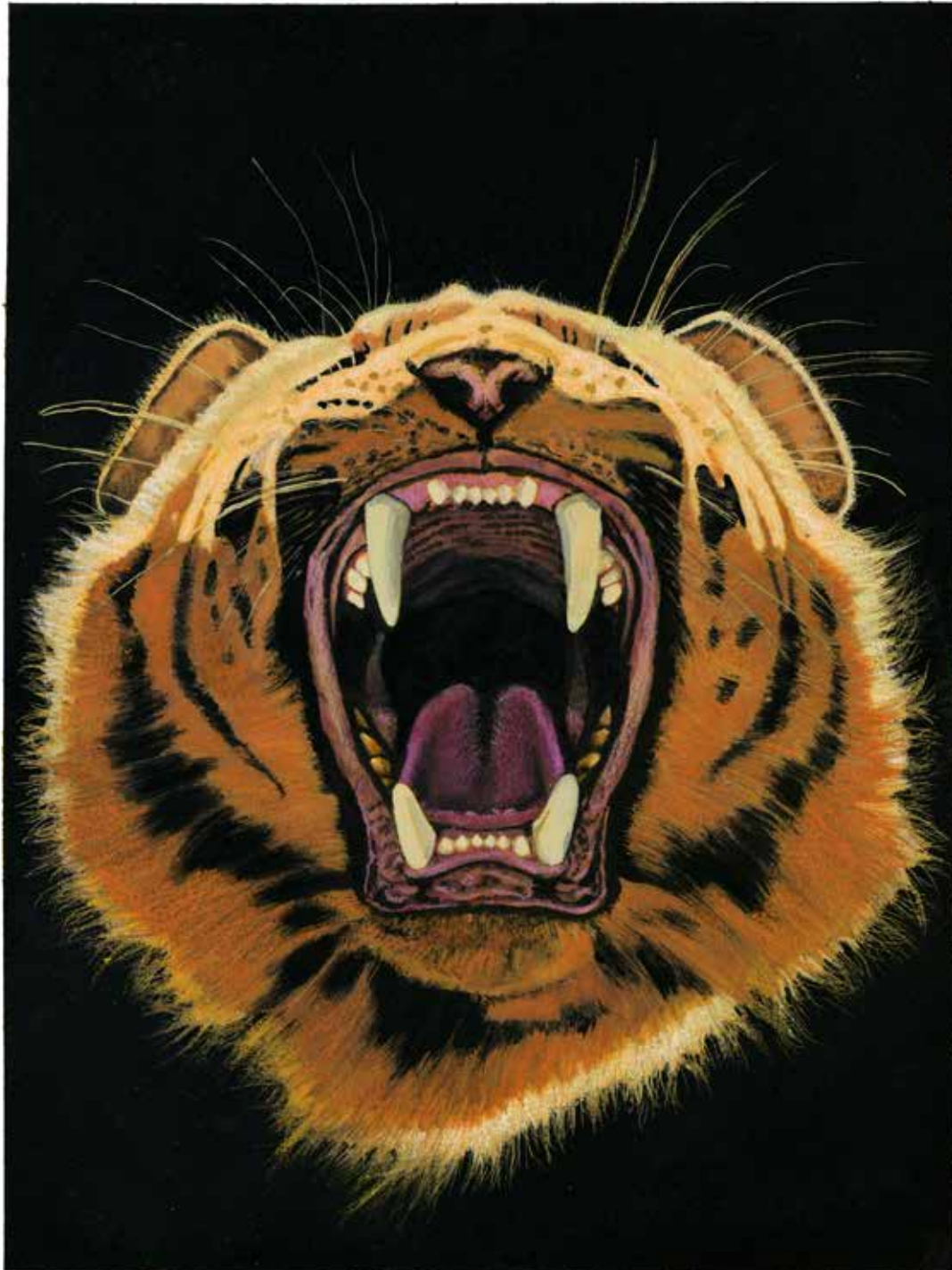
Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. *The Primacy of Movement*. John Benjamins, 1999.

Smith, Bruce. *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Stahl, Aimee and Lisa Feigenson. "Expectancy Violations Promote Learning in Young Children." *Cognition*, vol. 163, 2017, pp. 1–14.

Welton, M. *Feeling Theatre*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2012

Wilshire, Bruce. *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor*. Indiana University Press, 1982.



Does Spoken Text Ever Need to Be Translated for an Early Years' Performance?

Fabian Negrin

XXXI.

Does Spoken Text Ever Need to Be Translated for an Early Years' Performance?

Yvette Hardie

In creating theatre for early years, very often artists are working with a simple, pared down language, which attempts to speak to the heart. Clarity of communication is paramount. This does not mean that the language cannot be metaphorical or nuanced, but rather that the language must find a resonance and connection with its audience.

Artists work hard to find the most effective mode of expression for their ideas, always having to bear in mind that they need to reach not only the children who are their primary audience, but also the adults who are their guides into seeing the work in the first place. This can be a tricky balance to find, but when it is there, the language feels neither trite nor too complex, but 'just right.'

However, in theatre, the language is never communicating alone. Along with the words, we have the presence of the actor, the gestures, and facial expressions that illuminate the text, the authenticity of the speaker who is able to conjure the worlds that exist in their head, the music of their voice be it in speech or song, the rhythms created by the flow of words, the silences that create space for sounds to be more

resonant – and this is before we turn to the other theatrical signifiers which like spotlights, or underscoring, or details of costume or props, can illuminate and support the meaning of what is being said.

For very young children, it is thought that they experience systems of music and language in very similar ways (Drury and Fletcher-Watson 12). This frees the artist from assuming that everything needs to be fully understood in the intellectual sense, and rather confirms that it is not always necessary to translate language, since so much of the theatrical world is assisting to convey the meaning and mood to the audience through other means.

While very young children may not understand precisely the content of the text, they seem to understand and find enjoyment in the narrative if it follows a familiar structure and if it is organized in vocal patterns which the children can recognize. Since understanding language is all about the relationships in which we experience language, in these instances it is especially important for artists to find a way to connect with their audience and to discover moments of shared pleasure, between artists and audience, and audience and audience. These moments of connection serve to build trust for the journey that is being embarked on. They create a special environment where communication beyond words is possible. Importantly the attitude of the speaker to the listener is crucial – there needs to be respect, curiosity and engagement, or "theatre at eye level", as the Danish are fond of saying, if you want to invite an audience member to listen to something they may not understand.

In the now-famous *Babydrama* created by Suzanne Osten and Ann-Sofie Bárány, a fairly sophisticated and lengthy text is used in a piece for babies. Highly inappropriate, some thought at the time. And yet, the pastiche of theatrical approaches within the work, and the playful seriousness with which the audience is approached, gives undeniable access to this infant audience. When there is a direct address by the artists that draws the young listeners into the play, the attitudes of the performers demonstrate palpably the respect in which the audience is being held.

The play was performed in the native Swedish of the infants, with some moments of exception; Chinese is also used briefly and apparently infants reacted to this with surprise (Osten 24). However, when the play toured to the Bitef festival, it was not fully translated, but rather included some elements of English and Serbo-Croatian while retaining songs in Swedish. The actors also learned some contact phrases and words of greeting in the local language. But crucially, what remained consistent was the respectful tone of the play. It was not translated into child-speak with diminutive forms, despite some pressure from the translator (Osten 21). As Ann-Sofie Barany, psychologist and co-writer of *Babydrama* says, if the word “understand” is stretched to mean “experience,” then there are no barriers for infants to experience theatre.

Rhythms are particularly important for very young children who are able, even as infants, to detect the rhythms of their native language from the rhythms of other languages. While babies have been shown to be able to distinguish between two dif-

ferent unknown languages at a very early age (from four days old, in one study), they tend to lose this capacity if they do not hear different languages. Those infants coming from bilingual homes tend to be able to perceive the contrasts between languages for longer, demonstrating that they have a greater sensitivity to a wider variety of sounds. Even just a relatively brief exposure to a different language can sensitize a child to the differences between languages. Linguists studying this phenomenon have come to the conclusion that exposure to multiple languages may ultimately “improve children’s ability to determine who can communicate with whom.” In the more rarefied setting of theatre, there is the possibility for ‘foreign’ sounds to be focused on and given a supportive context for understanding, which may allow them to be less intimidating for the listeners.

This is not to say that translation should never happen. If the artist wants the performance to be one where a particular narrative is experienced and fully comprehended, and the play is heavily reliant on language, it may feel alienating or exclusionary to hear the work only in a language you do not understand, particularly for children whose language capacity is further developed than the 6-12 month old infants who are the intended audience of *Babydrama*.

In South Africa, for example, the majority of work for under 6 years old would fall into one of two categories – storytelling which is language-rich and physical theatre which is movement-rich. Sometimes these genres combine in the performance, which assists the communication to happen, despite the lack of an anchoring language for

the audience member. Sometimes it feels that translation is essential, otherwise the richness and humor of the original is lost.

A complication in the South African context is the fact that this is a multilingual country with eleven official languages and many more actually spoken. Children may hear three or four different languages as a matter of course in the streets or at school, or indeed in their own families. Many people communicate through code-switching between languages, as a result of the wealth of languages available and spoken.

As a result, some artists make multilingual theatre, based on the ways people actually speak, with a flexible mixing between languages. These productions are generally created through workshop and improvisation, and draw on the languages spoken by the actors. Within this context, if productions are to reach a range of audiences, there needs to be flexibility in how these multiple languages are used. Some plays are rehearsed as multilingual experiences, but the artists are able to adjust to the particular audience they are playing for in order to accommodate their needs and increase focus on the most-spoken language(s).

In Magnet Theatre’s *Tree Boom Umthi*, one of their first productions for early years, three languages were used interchangeably in this way. The actors were as a result able to play in crèches in isiXhosa- and Afrikaans-speaking parts of the Cape Flats, while also using enough English to be able to perform in the more mainstream venues, where speakers of English were more likely to be found. They increased their potential audience reach through taking a multilingual approach.

Similarly, Branar theatre and NIE in their *Grand Soft Day*, has English, Irish, and Italian alternate within the performance, each spoken by a different character. It was interesting that the audience watching the play in Galway were particularly aware of the fact that some of the words spoken were Irish. When snow was named using its Gaelic term “sneachta,” a ripple of response was heard through the audience of “Irish, Irish, Irish,” as different children identified the language that they were hearing.

Branar is particularly renowned for their work in rejuvenating the Irish language in theatre for young audiences in Ireland. As Tom Maguire points out this choice “has had implications for the work, which although performed in the Irish tongue, cannot rely on its audiences having even a basic knowledge of the language.” Branar was responsible for an ambitious project in 2020 which tracked the history and origins of Irish through the creation of a site-specific immersive performance which took the audience through a series of rooms in order to experience the richness of the language in different ways. In an article about the piece, the reviewer remarks, “Like all Branar shows, it’s accessible: you don’t need to Irish to understand and enjoy it.” This is because the wealth of devices used would have an impact whether the audience literally understood or not (“Sruth”). The fact that the language may not be understood by its audience has pushed Branar into experimentation with a number of different forms, from puppetry to mask work, to assist in conveying meaning, allowing it to tour more easily as a result. So not translating can sometimes breed innovation.

Back in South Africa, the actors from Jun-
gle theatre are able to move seamlessly
between isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English in
one play, and in recent times have expanded
their language repertoire to include the an-
cient and marginalized KhoiKhoi language
in *Mantis and the Bee*. It is felt that retain-
ing seldom spoken languages in the work is
philosophically important, even if the audi-
ence is not likely to understand the precise
meaning of the words. Like Branar, they use
a highly physical style of playing, using mu-
sic, masks, and, more recently, puppets.

The way that multilingualism is treat-
ed in these plays may result in there being
some direct repetition of words in different
languages. However, often characters sim-
ply speak in their own languages while as-
suming the understanding of the other. This
allows for a monolingual listener to under-
stand half the conversation while being able
to guess the other half through the context
and subtext provided in the response.

Polka Theatre's *Ready, Steady, Go!* de-
picts a mother-daughter relationship
where the mother is Portuguese in an
English environment and there is an easy
mix of languages (Portuguese-English)
within the play. We hear Portuguese both
when she is alone and in moments of in-
timacy between her and her child, as The
Daughter sings to her mother the lullaby
The Mother once sang to her, for example.
Language use is always appropriate to the
characters and the relationship between
them; the fact that one of the languages is
unfamiliar to most of the audience does not
appear to alienate them from the action in
any way.

In instances where language is not likely
to be understood by the audience, it seems

that artists then focus in on the rhythms
and musicality of the text. Sometimes this
musicality can be taken to its logical ex-
tension and be transmuted into song, as
was the case in the Polka example. Just
as adults seem to feel less alienated or ill
at ease when listening to songs in a for-
eign language than to spoken text in the
same language, it may be that children ex-
perience this similarly. The additional ele-
ments of mood, tonality, instrumentation,
and rhythm combine to make the text more
relatable and affecting, and possibly also
understandable to some extent.

So, these examples would seem to point
towards the possibilities for retaining the
original language or at least using a mul-
tilingual approach, rather than *needing*
complete translation.

However, for many artists, the economic
realities of production for this age group
can compete with the aesthetic and ar-
tistic choices. Adults may be less likely to
bring their children to a performance that
is considered "foreign" if they anticipate
that their children will not understand the
language. Festivals may have concerns
about presenting work that seems to ex-
clude the audience through language,
and they are dependent on their audience
numbers for reports to funders. Many ar-
tists working for early years would like to
tour their work to other countries through
networks such as Small Size and ASSITEJ
International or through international fes-
tival circuits – and some need to do this
in order to sustain their practice in their
home countries. Thus, translation may be
demanded by the audience or by the eco-
nomic imperatives of the local and global
theatre systems.

Would *Babydrama* have needed to be
translated into other languages had the pro-
duction toured to other parts of the world?

Perhaps for the adults, is the response
from Suzanne Osten, who explains, "our idea
was that the adults needed linguistic com-
munication the most and in turn they would
generate understanding through their bod-
ies, which the infants would take into consid-
eration in their contemplation of what was
linguistically unfamiliar" (Osten 25).

Since theatre for very young children is
often a three-way communication between
artist, child and caregiver, and the respons-
es of the caregiver may deeply impact on
the experience of the child, perhaps, in
certain cases, text does indeed *need* to be
translated.

Works Cited

- Drury, Rachel and Ben Fletcher-Watson.
"The Infant Audience: The Impact and Im-
plications of Child Development Research
on Performing Arts Practice for the Very
Young." *Journal of Early Childhood Research*,
vol. 15, no. 3, 2017, pp. 292-304. [https://doi.
org/10.1177/1476718X15614041](https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X15614041)
- Maguire, Tom. "Theatre for Young Audi-
ences in Ireland." *The Palgrave Handbook of
Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance*.
Eamonn Jordan, and Eric Weitz, Eds. Palgrave
Macmillan, 2018. Pp. 151-164. [https://doi.
org/10.1057/978-1-137-58588-2_10](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58588-2_10)
- Osten, Suzanne. "Baby Drama: An Artistic
Research Report." The Stockholm School for
Dramatic Arts, 2009. Pdf.
- "Sruth na Teanga." In [https://www.irishtimes.
com/culture/stage/build-it-and-they-will-
come-the-story-of-the-irish-language-in-a-
disused-airport-1.4184561](https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/build-it-and-they-will-come-the-story-of-the-irish-language-in-a-disused-airport-1.4184561)

How and Why Does the Meaning and Significance of a Performance Shift when Viewed on a Screen? Or, Why Do We Need Live Theatre?

Manon van de Water

I already touched upon the difference between a videotaped performance and a live performance, but it is not only a matter of medium, it also is very much a matter of viewing angle, and the agency of the audience member. This became very clear in the videotaped production of *Ventanas* by Teatro Paraiso, and the live production as it was shared in Odder in August 2022.

Ventanas—Windows—is an evocative title for a show. You can look into a window and you can look out of a window. A window can open a whole new world or, when the curtains are closed, it can shut one out. It can give a sense of adventure or security. Each window can hide a different interior and each interior can offer a different view. The window is a mirror, it plays with lights and with color and with images. *Ventanas* plays with the wonderful world of the construction of children's images in their first years of life.

The PDF accompanying the production states that the creators explored new

views of the world, inside and outside the windows, following Magritte's philosophy:

I want to arouse a new life to the way we look at the things around us. But how should we look? Like a child: the first time he/she sees everything as a reality outside himself/herself. I live in the same state of innocence as a child, who thinks he can reach a flying bird with his hand.

The creative team started with recognizable images, which then were put in a novel and poetic context, which in turn sparks the imagination or, as Paraiso names it, "the liberation of thought." The poetic idea is that windows are transparent walls through which children draw the world.

The production features an older and a younger woman—an actress and a dancer. There are no words; sounds, images, and light convey what is, or might be, going on. The older woman finds a window outside and places it in her home. Looking in, we see her do familiar tasks, with familiar objects yet something is slightly off, mostly in a humorous way. Outside, the dancer experiments with abstractions, also through the use of windows and frames. It gets light and dark. There is a snowstorm. The women may or may not connect.

On the video it looks like there are two worlds, the dancer's and the woman's. You can imagine they are looking at each other, and imagine the windows but in the way the camera works the connection is missing. In this performance, with so many windows to look at and through, looking in and looking out, with distorting reflections and evocative lighting, the video directs the gaze and the meaning gets lost.

Laura Mulvey in the 1970s wrote about the way the gaze was directed in films to point out how we were collectively directed to watch movies from a male point of view. Over the decades this concept expanded and created an awareness of how the medium of film can steer the gaze to look at specific actions, zooming in, zooming out, panning left and right or suddenly switching cameras. An audience could be manipulated to see one thing over another. Conceivably, this can also be directed in theatre by manipulating the theatrical signifiers—light, sound, action, word, the whole *mis en scene*—but not to the extent that film can by blocking out any other vantage point. No matter where you are sitting in the movie theatre or in your house watching tv, no matter from what angle you look at the screen, the gaze remains the same.

Not so in live theatre. As an audience member, of any age, you have the agency of looking at what at that moment engages you, and by looking and experiencing that moment aesthetically, you derive meaning out of it, cognitively and/or emotionally. Moreover, the communal experience, seeing a performance with an audience, immediate and live, creates what Victor Turner coined "communitas." In the videotaping of this particular production that uses a variety of windows the camera itself became a window, removing the audience from the production and taking away its agency in experiencing the aesthetic impact of the production.

Ventanas unfolds in six scenes. Central is the snowstorm that looms, takes place, and fades, and the images conjured up by it, connecting the dancer and the actor,

the outside and the inside. It starts with a woman coming up on stage right, finding a window in the snow. She explores it, then takes it home to her house, stage left. We see her house through her window. We hear the announcement on the radio of a snow storm and the warning not to leave her house. On the other side, stage right, a young woman walks through the landscape and finds a table. It starts to snow, the young woman starts to play in the snow. We switch stage left again, the older woman finds a leak and tries to catch the water. She splashes it. Switch stage right: the young woman catches the imaginary water and starts paying with it, it turns into a deep sea of sorts, with schools of fish and under water plants . . . magic unfolds. Stage left, the woman hangs up the bucket, notices something in it, and takes out a small fish tank with a twirling toy fish. Stage right the young woman works with magic, opens the table and introduces transparent cubes that make sounds: cats, children playing. The older woman stage left catches the sounds, wants to play but is stopped by the radio warning her not to go outside. She remains inside and looks out at the wondrous world through her window. The young woman conjures up a world of memories, happy memories of people having fun ... it ends with the sound of a bouncing ping pong ball. Stage left the older woman at her window puffs up her cheeks and spits out a ping pong ball. From here it gets stranger and more magical, until finally the storm is over, the woman leaves her house, and the young and old woman meet, and look together through the window.

My point in this overview is to make clear that the gaze, how you look through

a window and which window to look at, is crucial for aesthetically experiencing this production. While it left many questions after the video viewing, the live experience brought out the magic and the connection between the two women. The stage was indeed divided in two playing field, but, as an audience member, you could take your vantage point, and depending on where you were sitting new images came to live. Sitting house left, you could experience the vantage point of the young woman being observed by the older woman, but sitting house right you looked at the young woman dancer through the longing vantage point of the older woman. Rather than seeing two worlds in isolation the full picture showed how these worlds belonged together.

This is why we need live theatre. Young children who are not exposed to the richness of these images, of different vantage points, of the poetry and the magic they evoke, are deprived of an aesthetic experience that goes so much further than watching a screen.

We should always keep this in mind.

Works Cited

- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen*, vol. 16. No. 3, pp 3-18.
- Teatro Paraiso. "Work Process 'Windows.'" Pdf.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. PAJ Publications, 1982.

XXIII.

Hearing, Feeling, Saying: How Does Experiencing Live Speech Affect Listening and Language Use? How Does the Quality of Sound Color Meaning?

Yvette Hardie

Iconic South African storyteller, Gcina Mhlope's distinctive voice, gravelly and deep, endlessly playful and musical, swooping with delight and plummeting with foreboding, is ingrained in the many thousands of children who have experienced her riveting performances. This is an unforgettable voice – a voice that shapes consciousness and leaves an indelible mark.¹

Another iconic voice for young children in South Africa is that of Sindiwe Magona. While she is known more widely for her written contribution to South African literature, when she takes the opportunity to perform for children, her ebullient, feisty, child-like vocal energy (she is a diminutive now-80 year old) draws children in like a magnet.

Even as adults, we carry with us the voices of those who told us stories when we were children. The power of the live voice, the authentic voice, the free voice that can take us on a journey into our imaginations, that can create worlds with a shift in tone, that speaks to us sincerely and as an equal, is one of the gifts of theatre for early years. It is the intimacy and particularity of the experience that make it so powerful.

Science tells us that newborns recognize their mother's voice from birth and prefer it over other sounds. Studies show that babies who hear their mother's voice may have improved oral feeding skills,² are more easily soothed (Filippa et al.; Williamson and McGrath), feel less pain during medical procedures (Filippa in Davis), and are primed for the task of learning language (Dehaene-Lambertz et al.), amongst other important effects.

Voices are what connect us to one another, and the live voice communicates not just through the airwaves, but also through vibrations which enter and play within our bodies. We feel voices, as well as hear them. Our brains are wired for voices and even the most subtle shifts in tone can give clues that accurately reflect mental or emotional states of being.

Children are typically absorbing their environment on a continuous basis, and their capacity to watch, listen, and interpret what they see, is finely tuned. They are intensely sensitive to tone of voice, and it

¹ To read more about Gcina Mhlope, here are two articles: <https://www.matiemedia.org/the-storyteller-with-multiple-talents/> and <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-11-21-my-fathers-daughter-and-the-woman-his-family-teachings-ultimately-shaped/>

² <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/133/3/462/32356/A-Pacifier-Activated-Music-Player-With-Mother-s?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

has been shown that the voices of parents and care-givers are powerful channels for building and reinforcing children's self-esteem.

Children are also of course engaged in the absorbing task of learning language – usually borne of the frustration of not being able to communicate in other ways and seeing the power of the voice and language in action around them. As they start to babble and make sounds, there is a richness and playfulness to this engagement that suggests not just a desire to communicate, but also a delight in the act of making and hearing sounds. As they become toddlers with a growing vocabulary of words, singing, chanting, rhymes, making sounds, and improvised conversations are a key part of playing alone and with others. It is these natural tendencies of children that can be heightened and intensified in and through the live performance experience.

Studies show that storytelling has greater benefits for comprehension than reading a story aloud, and that eye contact and the direct involvement of the listener in the story allows the experience to seem more personal. The levels of attention given to the story are higher and children are less easily distracted (Isbell et al.).

The performative experience evokes a higher order and quality of listening and attention given to the voice. Theatre can carefully select and arrange the elements of an experience, breaking through the everyday noise and chatter, to provide a more focused listening experience. It has been shown that noise creates increased cognitive load and effort in listening. The-

atre then can provide a free space for the child to truly listen.

Koleka Putuma's *Scoop – Kitchen Play for Carers and Babies*, was the focus of a study on the impact on fathers of viewing a play for babies with their infants (Cowly et al.). While the focus of the study was on how the performance impacted on the capacity of the fathers to bond with their children, there were many references in the findings to the experience of sound.

One father described the following: "... Every time there was a new sound, you could see her focus. It was almost like she tried to hone in on what was happening. It was interesting to me because sometimes you think that your baby, they don't experience all of that stuff, but they actually do."

Another father noted that when the performers used singing and sound effects to engage with the children, this had a significant impact on them. It inspired him to realize that he could use his own voice to have an impact on his child on a deeper level: "I also learnt it's not to make her stop crying, but to communicate and build a friendship."

Since theatre for early years is typically staged in an intimate setting, where the use of an amplified voice is unnecessary, the power of the raw human voice in proximity can be very affecting. Ben Fletcher-Watson speaks about the thrill of very young children experiencing operatic voices that are usually experienced from a distance, up close. He reports the surprise of a composer who said, "one of my expectations was that they wouldn't be able to deal with it being really really loud and very intense,

but actually they can... they can deal with a lot more than I thought they would."

The proximity of the voice and the capacity for the artist to engage directly with the child through eye contact allows for a special connection to build that feels deeply personal and is more memorable.³

In Tiébélé, a production by Gaëtane Reginster for Théâtre de la Guimbarde in collaboration with the Wéléni Association (Burkina Faso), two women create a sonic soundscape through music arranged by Burkina Faso griot and percussionist, Zouratié Koné. The performance allows for a playful connection between the way children use finger and hand painting and the way women create the beautiful murals that Tiébélé in south-west Burkina Faso is known for. Almost the entire piece is sung and it is clear that the voices are the point of connection between the two artists who represent different cultures and between the artists and the audience. The experience of the piece is of entering this culture through the low doorway of the shared songs. Here the experience is less about language (many of the lyrics are in languages that would not necessarily be known to the audience), but rather about opening up cultural connections and a space for exchange.

Where theatre does use language, it often provides opportunities for children to hear words that they don't necessarily hear in everyday conversations – something which is said to be particularly beneficial for children – while simultaneously giving them a context in which to place these new words through the other signifiers that are

communicating with the audience. Children are able to follow those words they know as the touchstones of a performance – jumping from word to word as across the stepping stones of a path – to reach the other side. It is the joy of this endeavor that we need to foster in theatre. The richer, more exciting the language that we use for children, and the richer, more pleasurable the sensuous experience of listening to this language, the more engaged they will be. In this way, they discover the pleasures of language while building their capacity to know and use words for their own purposes.

One of the most famous of South African legends told to children, through storytelling and theatre, is that of Tselane and the giant, where an evil izim or le dimo (a giant with one sweet leg and one sour, whose favorite food is children) pretends to be Tselane's mother, and asks Tselane to open the door to him. It's a story which allows for a vocal tour de force from the performer as the giant tries everything to make his deep and rough voice sound like the sweet tones of the little girl's mother. When this story was discussed on a local radio station, numerous callers phoned in to say that the song that the giant sings is ingrained in their subconscious. There was a deliciously dangerous thrill connected with the experience of hearing this song, and the excitement in the voices of those engaged in this radio conversation demonstrated the power of performance to cross decades and remain embedded in our beings and bodies long after the original experience is over.

³ This effect has been studied in a number of different researches, and the findings seem to confirm that live storytelling has a deeper impact on children's memory and story comprehension. See Gallets.

Works Cited

Cowley, Brenda, Anusha Lachman, Elvin Williams, and Astrid Berg. "I Know That It's Something That's Creating a Bond': Fathers' Experiences of Participating in Baby Theater With Their Infants in South Africa." *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, vol 11, 2020. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.580038>

Davis, Nicola. "Hearing mother's voice can lessen pain in premature babies, study suggests." *The Guardian* August 27, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/27/hearing-mothers-voice-can-lesser-pain-in-premature-babies-study-suggests>

Dehaene-Lambertz, G, A. Montavont, A. Jobert, L. Alliol, J. Dubois, L. Hertz-Pannier, and S. Dehaene. "Language or Music, Mother or Mozart? Structural and Environmental Influences on Infants' Language Networks." *Brain and Language*, vol. 114, no. 2, 2010, pp. 53-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bandl.2009.09.003>

Filippa M, C. Panza, F. Ferrari, R. Frassoldati, P. Kuhn, S. Balduzzi, and R. D'Amico "Systematic Review of Maternal Voice Interventions Demonstrates Increased Stability in Preterm Infants. *Acta Paediatr.* 2017, vol. 106 no.8,

2017, pp.1220-1229. doi: 10.1111/apa.13832. Epub 2017 Apr 19. PMID: 28378337;

Fletcher-Watson, Ben. "More like a poem than a play: Towards a Dramaturgy of Performing Arts for Early Years." Doctoral Thesis, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 2016. <https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/8974>

Gallets, Matthew P. "Storytelling and Story Reading: A Comparison of Effects on Children's Memory and Story Comprehension." Electronic Theses and Dissertations, paper 1023, 2005. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1023>

Isbell, Rebecca, Joseph Sobol, Liane Lindauer, and April Lowrance. "The Effects of Storytelling and Story Reading on the Oral Language Complexity and Story Comprehension of Young Children." *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32, 2004, pp. 157-163. DOI: 10.1023/B:ECEJ.0000048967.94189.a3

Williamson, Selena and Jacqueline M. McGrath. "What Are the Effects of the Maternal Voice on Preterm Infants in the NICU?" *Adv Neonatal Care*, vol. 19, no. 4. 2019, pp. 294-310. doi: 10.1097/ANC.0000000000000578. PMID: 31335378.

XXIV. How Does Stillness Speak to the Early Years?

Yoona Kang

How does stillness speak to the early years? In this article, I reflect on stillness and the very young audience in TEY. I have pondered stillness, humans, and TYA for a long time (for personal reasons, which I will explain below.) And the presence/idea of the very young audience or the endeavor to imagine the perspective of them toward stillness opens up intriguing questions, both from a human and artistic perspective, which is what this essay is about.

I have to confess that I have a serious researcher bias regarding my personal stance toward stillness, which is personal but meaningful for the discussion of the topic of this essay. I am a certified master in Kuksundo, a traditional Korean body mind training and martial art form (Kuksundo Foundation), and have practiced it for more than twenty years now. While I cannot explain the nature of Kuksundo within the realm of this paper, one aspect I have to mention is that the practice let me experience how necessary and valuable stillness is. To simplify, part of my training has been to remain still, regularly, for long periods. And the version of stillness I experienced allowed me to understand how I think, feel, speak, act, move, and how I desire or how I connect to others and society—in other words, how I exist. I have been learning

who I am and what I truly want through Kuksundo and through the type of stillness it trains. Stillness let me learn about myself and the world in a way I would never have experienced otherwise. Thus, stillness, in my case, is an indispensable mode of existing, which is what my researcher bias is about.

In today's world, movement has privilege over stillness in many areas of our life. For example, human communication depends a lot on movement. People express themselves or understand each other through movement. "We expect human bodies to move around and our environment expects them to move around. Our typical social interactions are built on the expectation of a dialog based on the motion of the eyes, the hands, the mouth, the tongue" (Alonso 106). Whereas stillness, too, can perform much about a human condition or emotion, people make more use of movement than of stillness when interacting with each other. In formal school education, too, movement is often more emphasized than stillness. In US public education, for example, where students concentrate much on social interactions, "the consequence is that movement may be much more familiar to students than stillness" (Stapleton and Lynch 285). And such tendency, I think, is not valid only in the U.S., but in most westernized educational systems. The more one has been immersed in westernized education, which happens in most places today, including South Korea, the more a person tends to have been trained in movement rather than in stillness.

Another socio-cultural condition which makes it almost impossible for humans to

remain still today is the dominance of capitalism. According to Bissell and Fuller, “Where post-industrial, neo-liberal capitalism assures pride in the achievement of doing harder, better, stronger, faster, stillness is toxic [...]” (7). We live in a world where people are forced to move rapidly and endlessly merely in order to survive. “In an epoch that privileges the mobilization of mobility, still has been stilled; turned into a stop that is just waiting to go again. Waiting to be re-moved” (3). As such, because being productive means to be moving, stillness is often regarded as a sign of incompetence.

To return to my researcher bias; because of my particular attitude toward stillness, I have been negotiating between my attitude toward stillness and my environment where, as mentioned, movement is omnipresent. When I went to New York to pursue my first graduate degree, for example, a teacher encouraged me with good intention, “You should have some self-confidence.” I was confused because I had rarely been not confident. Gradually, I came to learn that stillness, which for me can mean diverse things such as a performance of existing, of being aware of myself, of being in the middle of reflecting, of being modest, of waiting for or showing respect for others, for example, can signify doing nothing, lacking opinion or agency. I am still trying to secure the amount of stillness in my daily life which I need to exist as my real self, while functioning adequately in reality, which can be difficult.

The biggest challenge while finding a balance between stillness and movement

in my life, however, has not been a social or cultural aspect but my own body. In other words, my orientation toward movement and stillness is deeply inscribed on my body and bolstered by the social structure I am rooted in. Even though I value stillness and have experienced it a bit differently than many others, I, too, am embodying the human cultural heritage of movement-bias as most people who live in the movement centered world. And I am not saying that movement is essentially negative. I mean that just because I appreciate stillness so much, I sometimes like to imagine, “What if I would not have been socialized in the way I prioritize movement over stillness?” But the question is hard to explore, mostly because I cannot rewind my history, or deconstruct my body memory.

My profession in theatre has complicated the situation a little more. Theatre can hardly exist without movement. The stage is mirroring life, which, as mentioned, is full of movement. Also, the “theatron” is a place the audience visits to “see” something dramatic happen on stage. And such an experience, also because of the theatrical conventions which have a history, is difficult to create without movement. To provide an example of our partner group Ion Creanga’s *CUTine*, which deals with a joyful interplay between two play partners, it is mostly movement which drives the protagonists’ play. Stillness appears extremely scarcely and passingly in the show, and only to perform frustration and loneliness of the characters caused by an accidental separation between the two or by a forced discontinuation of their play. Again, I am not saying that there is something nega-

tive about movement in theatre. Rather, I am pointing out that I, for whom stillness has had the same significant weight as movement when feeling emotions or interacting with others, all of which what theatre is about, I have been trying to embrace both stillness and theatre, sometimes trying to make the two meet each other. For example, I have written a TYA play while practicing *Kuksundo*. But staging stillness, or even the metaphor of stillness (as a way to overcome the difficulty of staging the original, stillness itself) is a challenging task.

At the same time, it is because of my personal and artistic history that the idea of the very young and stillness in TEY excites me. As said, my body is filled with adult experience and knowledge about stillness and theatre. The very young, however, are just starting to enter a society and culture formed by adults, just starting to build an attitude toward movement and stillness and even the form of theatre. They do not have a memory of movements/stillness based on which they can interpret stillness performed in everyday life or on stage. Nor do they have an idea or prejudice about the medium of theatre or its conventions. Thus, the presence of the very young encourages me to raise a set of interesting questions, which I think are meaningful for humans in general and for our field of TEY as well:

How do the very young experience stillness, innately and/or socially? What can stillness, which has been shoved to the margin of the adult world, mean for the very young? How does stillness speak to them in theatre? What insight about movement and stillness can the

very young, as our artistic partners, provide to us, adult artists? One significant aspect of many TEY pieces is their post-dramatic or experimental nature (Kang 166). What theatrical experiments regarding stillness would the encounter with the very young enable in the vacuum-like performance space? Are we entitled to guide the very young based on our adult notions of movement, stillness, and theatre? While one of the key concerns and charm for TYA artists/researchers is to understand and experience the perspective of our audience, imagining the position of the very young toward stillness excites me both from a human and artistic perspective.

I think the above ideas and questions are meaningful. In the first place, it is interesting that the topic of stillness and movement leads us to a fundamental reflection on who we are as humans, how we exist, and what kind of culture and civilization we have built. Furthermore, it is notable that the idea about the very young, and the anticipation for the encounter with them in the TEY space encourages us to think about the above issues more thoroughly and profoundly. The very young, as they are just beginning their journey as humans, have the power to make us look back on where we started originally and imagine what we could have been or can be. Thus, the partnership with the very young, invites us as humans and artists to re-think honestly about what (we think) we know about humans, the world, or the arts, and lead us to new experiments both in life and in the performance space.

Works Cited

Alonso, Andrés Aparicio. "Still Bodies: A Disability-Informed Approach to Stasis in Theatre." Diss. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. 2021.

Bissel, David and Gillian Fuller. *Stillness in a Mobile World*. First Edition. London: Routledge, 2010.

Carpenter, Roger and Imran Noorani. Abstract of "Movement Suppression: Brain Mechanisms for Stopping and Stillness." *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B*, 372: 20160542. 20160542, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2016.0542>

Kang, Yoona. "Introducing Overseas Studies about Theatre for the Early Years." *Theatre Forum*, 2022, pp. 152-170.

Kuksundo Foundation, "Origin and History." Kuksundo Foundation, n.d., http://www.ksd21.com/inc/sub_contents.html?SubID=0001000

Stapleton, Sarah Riggs and Kathryn Lynch. "Fostering Relationships, Between Elementary Students and the More than Human World Using Movement and Stillness." *The Journal of Environmental Education*, vol. 52 no. 4, 2021, pp. 272-289.



The Map in All the Mapping Languages

A European project becomes truly European when one is aware that spoken Global English expresses the partners' willingness to share and walk together, but that at the same time it is a source of a thousand and more misunderstandings.

A pathway that lives by making its way through the multiplicity of languages, which are interwoven, symbolising the very rich complexity of that Europe that so many of us dream may increasingly become a political and cultural reality.

In Mapping, 18 partners from 17 different countries participated, and no less than 15 languages were interwoven.

In order to better communicate this linguistic Babel, we thought that, in addition to the English and Italian versions, it would be nice to read the 24 questions of the Mapping Research in the other languages, translated by the partners in this game of dreaming to understand each other.

- I Percipient Beings: What Is It Like to Be a Baby at the Theatre?
- II What Is the Relationship Between Context, Image, and Imagination?
- III How Real Is an Illusion for Early Years' Audiences? Is there any Difference from Reality?
- IV How Are Movements Connected to Emotion?
- V Performance Encounters: How Does the Spectatorial Experience Begin?
- VI How Do Very Young Children Make Meaning of Abstract Movement?
- VII Can Clichés Exist in Theatre for Early Years?
- VIII How Could We Make Images Speak to Very Young Children During the Pandemic?
- IX How Can Early Years' Audiences Perceive Movements Differently in Theatre from Adult Audiences?
- X Risk, Curiosity, and Care: What Kind of Role Does Expectation Play in Shaping Our Experience at the Theatre?
- XI Cognition and Emotion: How Does Theatre Mean, or, What Is the Relationship Between Cognition and Emotion in Theatre for Early Years?
- XII Reverb: What Happens When Sound Becomes a Character?
- XIII When Do We Need Words to Matter? Are Spoken Words Always Necessary in Performance?
- XIV How Can Movement Deal with an Experience the Early Years Are Unfamiliar with?
- XV What Could Be the Meaning of Life for Very Young Children and What Roles Do Image and Imagination Play in That?
- XVI What Kind of Theatrical Signifiers are Disallowed in Theatre for Early Years?
- XVII The Body as an Ear: How Might Spectatorial Engagement Look and Sound?
- XVIII How Can Culture Be Transmitted Through Theatre for Early Years? From Abstract to Concrete and Concrete to Abstract.
- XIX How Does Movement Relate to the Human Condition of the Early Years?
- XX Listening: Why Is Relative Silence so Significant?
- XXI Does Spoken Text Ever Need to Be Translated for an Early Years' Performance?
- XXII How and Why Does the Meaning and Significance of a Performance Shift when Viewed on a Screen? Or, Why Do We Need Live Theatre?
- XXIII Hearing, Feeling, Saying: How Does Experiencing Live Speech Affect Listening and Language Use? How Does the Quality of Sound Color Meaning?
- XXIV How Does Stillness Speak to the Early Years?

- I Esseri umani che percepiscono: cosa significa essere un bambino piccolissimo a teatro?
- II Qual è la relazione tra contesto, immagine e immaginazione?
- III Quanto è reale un'illusione per il pubblico della prima infanzia? C'è qualche differenza con la realtà?
- IV In che modo i movimenti sono connessi alle emozioni?
- V Incontri performativi: come inizia l'esperienza da spettatore?
- VI Come fanno i bambini molto piccoli a dare un significato al movimento astratto?
- VII Possono esistere cliché nel teatro per la prima infanzia?
- VIII Come possiamo far sì che le immagini parlino ai bambini più piccoli nel corso di una pandemia?
- IX Che differenza c'è nel modo in cui un pubblico della prima infanzia percepisce il movimento in teatro rispetto a un pubblico di adulti?
- X Rischio, curiosità e cura: che ruolo giocano le aspettative nel costruire la nostra esperienza a teatro?
- XI Conoscenza ed emozione: che significato ha il teatro o qual è la relazione tra conoscenza ed emozione nel teatro per la prima infanzia?
- XII Il Riverbero: cosa succede quando il suono diventa un personaggio?
- XIII Quando è che servono le parole? La parola detta è sempre necessaria in una performance?
- XIV Come può il movimento raccontare esperienze con cui la prima infanzia non ha familiarità?
- XV Quale può essere il significato della vita per i più piccoli e che ruolo hanno in questo le immagini e l'immaginazione?
- XVI Che tipo di significanti teatrali non sono ammessi nel teatro per la prima infanzia?
- XVII Il corpo come orecchio: come si mostra e risuona il coinvolgimento dello spettatore?
- XVIII Come può la cultura essere trasmessa attraverso il teatro per la prima infanzia? Dall'astratto al concreto e dal concreto all'astratto.
- XIX Come si relaziona il movimento dell'artista alla fase di vita della prima infanzia?
- XX Ascoltarsi l'un l'altro: perché un silenzio significativo è così importante?
- XXI È necessario tradurre il testo negli spettacoli per la prima infanzia?
- XXII Come e perché il senso e il significato di uno spettacolo cambiano quando viene visto su uno schermo? O perché abbiamo bisogno del teatro dal vivo?
- XXIII Udire, sentire, dire: in che modo l'esperienza della parola dal vivo influisce sull'ascolto e sull'uso del linguaggio? In che modo la qualità del suono dà colore al significato?
- XXIV Come viene recepita l'assenza del movimento dalla prima infanzia?

- I Opfattende væsener: hvordan er det at være baby i teatret?
- II Hvad er forholdet mellem kontekst, billede og fantasi?
- III Hvor virkelig er en illusion for det yngste publikum? Er der nogen forskel fra virkeligheden?
- IV Hvordan er bevægelse forbundet med følelser?
- V Mødet med forestillingen: hvordan begynder tilskuerens oplevelse?
- VI Hvordan skaber meget små børn mening af abstrakte bevægelser?
- VII Kan klichéer eksistere i teater for de yngste?
- VIII Hvordan fik vi billeder til at tale til de meget små børn under pandemien?
- IX Hvordan er det yngste publikums opfattelse af bevægelse anderledes fra et voksent publikums?
- X Risiko, nysgerrighed og omsorg: hvilken rolle spiller forventningen i forhold til at forme teateroplevelsen?
- XI Kognition og følelser: hvordan skaber teatret mening, eller hvad er forholdet mellem kognition og følelser i teater for de små?
- XII Rumklang: hvad sker der, når lyd bliver til en karakter?
- XIII Hvornår har vi brug for ord for at betyde noget? Er det talte ord altid nødvendigt i en forestilling?
- XIV Hvordan kan bevægelse formidle en oplevelse, som det yngste publikum ikke er bekendt med?
- XV Hvad mon 'meningen med livet' kunne være for helt små børn – og hvilken rolle spiller billeder og fantasi i det?
- XVI Hvilken slags teaterkoder er ikke tilladt i teater for de yngste?
- XVII Kroppen som øre: hvordan kan publikums engagement se ud og lyde?
- XVIII Hvordan formidles kultur gennem teater for de yngste? Fra det abstrakte til det konkrete og det konkrete til det abstrakte.
- XIX Hvordan forholder bevægelse sig til det yngste publikums liv og virkelighed?
- XX At lytte: hvorfor er stilhed så vigtig?
- XXI Er det nødvendigt at oversætte det talte ord i en forestilling for de yngste?
- XXII Hvordan og hvorfor får en forestilling en anden betydning og mening, når den opleves gennem en skærm? Eller hvorfor har vi brug for levende teater?
- XXIII At høre, føle, tale: hvordan påvirker det levende ord ens sprogbrug og evne til at lytte? Hvordan farver lydets kvalitet udsagnet?
- XXIV Hvordan taler stilhed til det yngste publikum?

- I Opmerksame wezens: hoe is het om een baby te zijn in het theater?
- II Wat is de relatie tussen context, beeld en verbeelding?
- III Hoe echt is een illusie voor een publiek van jonge kinderen? Verschilt het van de werkelijkheid?
- IV Hoe zijn bewegingen verbonden met emotie?
- V Ontmoeting met de podiumkunsten: Hoe begint de kijkervaring?
- VI Hoe geven jonge kinderen betekenis aan abstracte bewegingen?
- VII Kunnen clichés onderdeel uitmaken van theater voor de allerjongsten?
- VIII Hoe kunnen we beelden laten spreken tot hele jonge kinderen tijdens de pandemie?
- IX Hoe anders kunnen de allerjongsten bewegingen in het theater ervaren ten opzichten van het volwassen publiek?
- X Risico, nieuwsgierigheid en zorg: Wat voor rol spelen verwachtingen in het vormen van onze ervaring in theater?
- XI Cognitie en emotie? Hoe betekent theater? Of wat is de relatie tussen cognitie en emotie in Theater voor het Jonge Kind?
- XII Galm, wat gebeurt er wanneer geluid een personage wordt?
- XIII Wanneer zijn woorden van belang? Is het gesproken woord altijd nodig in voorstellingen?
- XIV Hoe kan beweging omgaan met een ervaring die voor de allerjongsten onbekend is?
- XV Wat kan voor het hele jonge kind de zin van het leven zijn en welke rol spelen beeld en verbeelding daarin?
- XVI Welke duidelijk zichtbare theatrale tekens zijn niet toegestaan in theater voor de allerjongsten?
- XVII Het lichaam als een oor: Hoe zou betrokkenheid van toeschouwers eruit kunnen zien en klinken?
- XVIII Hoe kan cultuur worden doorgegeven via theater voor de allerjongsten? Van abstract naar concreet en van concreet naar abstract.
- XIX Hoe verhoudt beweging zich tot de menselijkheid van de allerjongsten?
- XX Luisteren: Waarom is enige stilte zo belangrijk?
- XXI Is het altijd nodig gesproken tekst te vertalen in een voorstelling voor de allerjongsten?
- XXII Hoe en waarom verschuift de betekenis en het belang van een voorstelling, wanneer je deze bekijkt op een scherm? Of : waarom hebben we live theater nodig?
- XXIII Horen, Voelen, Spreken : hoe beïnvloed het ervaren van gesproken taal het luisteren en het taalgebruik? Hoe kleurt de kwaliteit van geluid betekenis?
- XXIV Hoe ervaren de allerjongsten stilte?

FINNISH

- I Tarkkanäköisiä olentoja: Millaista on olla vauva teatterissa?
- II Mikä on kontekstin, kuvan ja mielikuvituksen välinen suhde?
- III Kuinka todellista illuusio on lapsiyleisölle? Onko todellisuuteen mitään eroa?
- IV Miten liikkeet ovat yhteydessä tunteisiin?
- V Kohtaamisia esityksessä: Miten katsojakokemus alkaa?
- VI Miten pienet lapset löytävät merkityksiä abstraktista liikkeestä?
- VII Voiko lastenteatterissa olla kliseitä?
- VIII Miten saimme kuvat puhumaan pienille lapsille pandemian aikana?
- IX Miten pikkulapset hahmottavat liikkeen teatterissa verrattuna aikuisiin?
- X Riski, uteliaisuus ja hoiva: miten odotukset muokkaavat kokemustamme teatterissa?
- XI Tietoisuus ja tunne – Mikä on tietoisuuden ja tunteen välinen suhde alle 6-vuotiaille suunnatussa lastenteatterissa?
- XII Kaiku: Mitä tapahtuu kun ääni muuttuu hahmoksi?
- XIII Milloin sanat ovat merkityksellisiä? Ovatko puhutut sanat aina tarpeellisia esityksessä?
- XIV Kuinka liike voi kertoa pienelle lapselle jotain, mitä hän ei vielä tiedä?
- XV Mikä voisi olla elämän tarkoitus hyvin pienille lapsille ja mitä osaa kuva ja mielikuvitus esittävät siinä?
- XVI Millaiset teatterilliset aiheet ja keinot ovat kiellettyjä alle 6-vuotiaille suunnatussa teatterissa?
- XVII Keho korvana: Miltä katsojakokemus saattaa näyttää ja kuulostaa?
- XVIII Kuinka kulttuuria voidaan tuoda esiin lastenteatterissa? Abstraktista konkreettiseen ja konkreettisesta abstraktiin.
- XIX Kuinka liike voi auttaa tai edistää pienen lapsen kehitystä?
- XX Miksi koettu hiljaisuus on niin merkittävää?
- XXI Tarvitseeko puhetta koskaan kääntää pienten lasten teatterissa?
- XXII Miten ja miksi esityksen tarkoitus ja merkitys muuttuu, kun sitä katsotaan ruudulta? Tai miksi tarvitsemme elävää teatteria?
- XXIII Kuuleminen, tunteminen, sanominen: Kuinka elävän puheen kokeminen vaikuttaa kuuntelemiseen ja kielenkäyttöön? Kuinka äänenlaatu vaikuttaa puheen merkitykseen?
- XXIV Kuinka hiljaisuus puhuttelee pieniä lapsia?

FRENCH

- I Des êtres perspicaces: qu'est-ce que c'est que d'être un bébé au théâtre?
- II Quelle est la relation entre le contexte, l'image et l'imagination?
- III Dans quelle mesure une illusion est-elle réelle pour un public de jeunes enfants? Y a-t-il une différence avec la réalité?
- IV Comment les mouvements sont-ils liés à l'émotion?
- V Le vécu du spectacle: comment commence l'expérience de spectateur?
- VI Comment les très jeunes enfants donnent-ils un sens à un mouvement abstrait?
- VII Les clichés peuvent-ils exister dans le théâtre pour les tout-petits?
- VIII Comment faire pour que les images parlent aux très jeunes enfants pendant la pandémie?
- IX Comment le public des jeunes enfants peut-il percevoir les mouvements au théâtre différemment du public adulte?
- X Risque, curiosité et attention: quels rôles jouent les attentes dans notre expérience du théâtre?
- XI Connaissance et émotion – Que signifie le théâtre, ou quelle est la relation entre la connaissance et l'émotion dans le théâtre pour la petite enfance?
- XII Réverbération: que se passe-t-il quand le son devient un personnage?
- XIII Quand avons-nous besoin de mots? Les paroles sont-elles toujours nécessaires dans un spectacle?
- XIV Comment une expérience à laquelle les jeunes enfants ne sont pas habitués peut-elle être abordée par le mouvement?
- XV Quel pourrait être le sens de la vie pour de très jeunes enfants et quels rôles y jouent l'image et l'imagination?
- XVI Quels types de signifiants théâtraux sont interdits dans le théâtre pour tout-petits?
- XVII Le corps en tant qu'oreille: à quoi peut ressembler l'adhésion du spectateur d'un point de vue visuel et auditif?
- XVIII Comment transmettre la culture par le biais du théâtre pour la petite enfance? De l'abstrait au concret et du concret à l'abstrait.
- XIX Comment le mouvement se rapporte-t-il à la condition humaine des tout-petits?
- XX L'écoute : pourquoi un silence relatif est-il si important?
- XXI Le texte parlé doit-il jamais être traduit pour un spectacle destiné aux jeunes enfants?
- XXII Comment et pourquoi le sens et la signification d'un spectacle changent-ils lorsqu'il est visionné sur un écran? Ou pourquoi avons-nous besoin du théâtre en direct?
- XXIII Entendre, ressentir, dire: Comment l'expérience de la parole en direct affecte-t-elle l'écoute et l'utilisation de la langue? Comment la qualité du son colore-t-elle la signification?
- XXIV Comment le calme est-il perçu par les tout-petits?

- I Wahrnehmende Wesen: Wie ist es, ein Baby im Theater zu sein?
- II Welches Verhältnis besteht zwischen Kontext, Bild und eigener Interpretation?
- III Wie real ist eine Illusion für kleine Kinder? Gibt es für sie einen Unterschied zur Realität?
- IV Wie sind Bewegungen mit Emotionen verbunden?
- V Begegnungen mit der Aufführung: Wie und wann beginnt die Erfahrung als Zuschauer?
- VI Wie erschließen sehr junge Kinder aus abstrakten Bewegungen eine Bedeutung?
- VII Kann es im Theater für Kinder Klischees geben?
- VIII Wie können wir Bilder während der Pandemie für sehr junge Kinder ansprechend gestalten?
- IX Inwiefern nehmen kleine Kinder Bewegung im Theater anders wahr als Erwachsene?
- X Risiko, Neugier und Vorsicht: Welche Rolle spielt die eigene Erwartung bei den Erfahrungen während eines Theaterbesuches?
- XI Kognition und Emotion - Was bedeutet Theater, oder wie ist die Beziehung zwischen Kognition und Emotion im Theater für kleine Kinder?
- XII Nachhall: Was passiert, wenn Klang zu einem Zeichen wird?
- XIII Wann (ge-)brauchen wir Worte in einer Aufführung? Wann sind gesprochene Worte in einer Aufführung notwendig?
- XIV Wie kann über Bewegung eine Erfahrung vermittelt werden, die kleinen Kindern noch nicht vertraut ist?
- XV Was könnte der Sinn des Lebens für sehr junge Kinder sein und welche Rolle spielen dabei Bilder und eigene Vorstellungskraft?
- XVI Welche Arten von theatralen Zeichen sind im Theater für kleine Kinder nicht „erlaubt“?
- XVII Der Körper als Ohr: Wie könnte ein Engagement des Zuschauers aussehen und klingen?
- XVIII Wie kann Kultur im Theater für kleine Kinder vermittelt werden? Vom Abstrakten zum Konkreten und vom Konkreten zum Abstrakten.
- XIX Auf welche besondere Weise kommuniziert Bewegung als Theatermittel mit kleinen Kindern?
- XX Hören: Warum ist relative Stille so bedeutsam?
- XXI Muss gesprochener Text in einer Theateraufführung für kleine Kinder in deren Muttersprache übersetzt werden?
- XXII Wie und warum verändert sich die Bedeutung und der Sinn einer Aufführung, wenn sie auf einer Leinwand gezeigt wird? Oder warum brauchen wir Live-Theater?
- XXIII Hören, Fühlen, Sprechen: Wie wirkt sich das Erleben von Live-Sprache auf das Hören und den Sprachgebrauch aus? Wie färbt die Qualität des Klangs die Bedeutung?
- XXIV Was erzählt Stille (im Theater) für kleine Kinder?

- I Δεκτικά όντα: πώς είναι να είσαι μωρό στο θέατρο;
- II Ποια είναι η σχέση ανάμεσα στο περιεχόμενο, την εικόνα και τη φαντασία;
- III Πόσο πραγματική είναι μία ψευδαίσθηση για το κοινό των πολύ νεαρών ηλικιών;
- IV Υπάρχει κάποια διαφορά από την πραγματικότητα;
- V Πώς συνδέονται οι κινήσεις με το συναίσθημα;
- VI Θεατρικές συναντήσεις: πώς ξεκινάει η εμπειρία του θεατή;
- VII Πώς νοηματοδοτούν τα πολύ νεαρά παιδιά την αφηρημένη κίνηση;
- VIII Μπορούν να υπάρχουν στερεότυπα στο θέατρο για τις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;
- IX Πώς θα μπορούσαμε να κάνουμε τις εικόνες να μιλήσουν στα πολύ νεαρά παιδιά κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας;
- X Πόσο διαφορετικά από τους ενήλικους μπορούν να αντιληφθούν οι πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες την κίνηση στο θέατρο;
- XI Ρίσκο, περιέργεια και φροντίδα: τί είδους ρόλο παίζει η προσδοκία στη διαμόρφωση της εμπειρίας μας στο θέατρο;
- XII Γνώση και Συναίσθημα — Ποια είναι η σημασία του θεάτρου, ή ποια είναι η σχέση μεταξύ γνώσης και συναίσθηματος στο θέατρο για τις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;
- XIII Reverb: τι συμβαίνει όταν ο ήχος γίνεται χαρακτήρας;
- XIV Πότε χρειάζονται οι λέξεις; Είναι πάντα απαραίτητο να υπάρχει λόγος που ακούγεται σε μία παράσταση;
- XV Πώς μπορούμε να διαχειριστούμε μέσω της κίνησης μια εμπειρία που δεν είναι οικεία στις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;
- XVI Ποιο μπορεί να είναι το νόημα της ζωής για τα πολύ νεαρά παιδιά και τι ρόλο παίζουν η εικόνα και η φαντασία σε αυτό;
- XVII Τι είδους θεατρικά σημαίνοντα δεν επιτρέπονται στο θέατρο για τις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;
- XVIII Το σώμα ως αφτί: πώς μπορεί να φαίνεται και να ακούγεται η συμμετοχή του θεατή; Πώς μπορεί να μεταδοθεί ο πολιτισμός μέσω του θεάτρου για τις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες; Από το Αφηρημένο στο Συγκεκριμένο και από το Συγκεκριμένο στο Αφηρημένο.
- XIX Πώς συνδέεται η κίνηση με την ανθρώπινη κατάσταση στην πολύ νεαρή ηλικία;
- XX Ακούγοντας: γιατί είναι τόσο σημαντική η σχετική σιωπή;
- XXI Χρειάζεται πάντα να μεταφράζεται το κείμενο που ακούγεται σε μια παράσταση για πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;
- XXII Πώς και γιατί μεταβάλλεται το νόημα και η σημασία μιας παράστασης όταν τη βλέπεις στην οθόνη; Ή γιατί χρειαζόμαστε το ζωντανό θέατρο;
- XXIII Ακοή, Συναίσθημα, Λόγος: Πώς επηρεάζει η εμπειρία του ζωντανού λόγου τη χρήση και τον τρόπο που ακούμε τη γλώσσα; Με ποιο τρόπο η ποιότητα του ήχου χρωματίζει το νόημα;
- XXIV Πώς μιλάει η απουσία της κίνησης στις πολύ νεαρές ηλικίες;

- I. Észlelés: milyen csecsemőként látni a színházat?
- II. Milyen kapcsolat van a kontextus, a kép és a képzelet között?
- III. Mennyire valóságos az illúzió a legfiatalabb nézőközönség számára? Különbözik-e egyáltalán a realitástól?
- IV. Hogyan kapcsolódik a mozdulat az érzelmekhez?
- V. Találkozás az előadással: hogyan kezdődik a nézői élmény?
- VI. Hogy értelmezik a kisgyerekek az absztrakt mozdulatot?
- VII. Léteznek-e klisék a csecsemőszínházban?
- VIII. Hogyan tudtuk megszólaltatni a képeket a gyerekek számára a pandémia alatt?
- IX. Miben különbözik a mozdulat érzékelése a legfiatalabb színházlátogatók és a felnőtt nézők esetében?
- X. Kockázat, kíváncsiság, érdeklődés: milyen szerepet tölt be a várakozás a színházi élmény kialakulásában?
- XI. Kognitív és emocionális folyamatok – Hogyan közvetít jelentést a színház; avagy milyen kapcsolat van a kognitív és az emocionális folyamatok között a legkisebbeknek szóló színházi előadásokban?
- XII. Rezonancia: mi történik, amikor a hang karakterré válik?
- XIII. Mikor van jelentősége a szavaknak? Vajon minden esetben szükséges a verbalitás egy előadásban?
- XIV. Hogyan képes a mozdulat a legfiatalabb nézők számára ismeretlen tapasztalatokat megjeleníteni?
- XV. Mit jelenthet az élet értelme egy kisgyerek számára, és milyen szerepet játszik ebben a kép és képzelet?
- XVI. Milyen jellegű színpadi eszközök nem megengedettek a csecsemőszínházban?
- XVII. A test, mint fül: hogyan hangzik és hogyan látszik a nézői bevonódás?
- XVIII. Mi a szerepe a csecsemőszínháznak a kultúra közvetítésében? Az absztrakt megközelítéstől a konkrétig és a konkrétól az absztraktig.
- XIX. Hogyan viszonyul a mozdulat a legfiatalabb nézők specifikus élettapasztalatához?
- XX. Hallgatás: miért lehet jelentőségteljes a relatív csend?
- XXI. Szükséges-e lefordítani a szöveget a legkisebbeknek szóló előadásokban?
- XXII. Hogyan és miért változik egy előadás jelentése és jelentősége, ha képernyőn keresztül nézzük? Miért van szükség az élő színházra?
- XXIII. Hallás, érzés, beszéd: hogyan befolyásolja az élő beszéd az auditív figyelmet és a nyelvhasználatot? Hogyan színezi a hang minősége a jelentést?
- XXIV. Hogyan beszél a csend a legkisebbekhez?

- I. Féachadóirí: Cén chaoi a mothaíonn leanbh ag an amharclann?
- II. Cén ceangal atá idir comhthéacs, íomhá agus samhlaíocht?
- III. Cé chomh fíor a bhíonn seachmall do lucht féachana na luathbhlianta? An bhfuil aon difríocht ann ón saol mar atá?
- IV. Cén bhaint atá ag gluaiseachtaí le mothúcháin?
- V. Ócáidí don Taibhléiriú: cén chaoi a dtosaíonn an taithí a bhíonn ag lucht féachana?
- VI. Cén chaoi a mbaineann páistí an-óga ciall as gluaiseachtaí teibí?
- VII. An féidir go mbíonn clíséanna i gceist le hamharclannaíocht na luathbhlianta?
- VIII. Cén chaoi ar féidir linn íomhána a úsáid chun labhairt le páistí an-óg i rith na paindéime?
- IX. Céard iad na difríochtaí a bhíonn idir an chaoi a dtugann páistí sna luathbhlianta gluaiseachtaí san amharclann faoi deara i gcomparáid le daoine fásta?
- X. Ag dul sa seans, fiosracht agus cúram: Cén cineál róil atá ag gach a mbíonn muid ag súil leis agus ár dtaithí ag an amharclann?
- XI. Braistint agus Mothúcháin: Cén ceangal atá idir braistint agus mothúcháin na hamharclannaíochta do pháistí na luathbhlianta?
- XII. Aisfhuaimniú: Céard a tharlaíonn nuair a bhíonn fuaim ina carachtar?
- XIII. Cén uair a bhíonn tábhacht le focail? An mbíonn gá leis an bhfocal labhartha i léirithe i gcónaí?
- XIV. Cén chaoi ar féidir le gluaiseachtaí déileáil le taithí nach bhfuil cleachtadh ag páistí sna luathbhlianta uirthí?
- XV. Céard a d'fhéadfadh a bheith i gceist le brí na beatha do pháistí an-óga, agus céard iad na róil a bhíonn ag íomhá agus ag samhlaíocht ina leithéid?
- XVI. Cén cineál comharthaíocht amharclannaíochta nach gceadaítear san amharclann do pháistí sna luathbhlianta?
- XVII. An cholainn ina cluas: mar a fhéachann agus a fhuaimníonn rannpháirtíocht an lucht féachana.
- XVIII. Cén chaoi ar féidir le hamharclannaíocht cultúr a chur ar aghaidh do pháistí sna luathbhlianta? Ón rud atá teibí go dtí an rud atá coincréiteach agus ón rud atá coincréiteach go dtí an rud atá teibí.
- XIX. Cén bhaint atá ag gluaiseacht le staid an duine sna luathbhlianta?
- XX. Ag coinneáil orainn: Cén fáth a bhfuil ciúnas iomlán chomh tábhachtach?
- XXI. An gá caint a aistriú ag aon am i léiriú do pháistí sna luathbhlianta?
- XXII. Cén chaoi agus cén fáth a n-athraíonn ciall agus tábhacht an léirithe nuair a fheictear ar scáileán é? Nó cén fáth a dteastaíonn amharclannaíocht bheo uainn?
- XXIII. Ag éisteacht, ag mothú, ag caint: Cén tionchar a bhíonn ag caint ar éisteacht agus ar labhairt na teanga? Cén chaoi a n-athraíonn caighdeán fuaimne an chiall a bhíonn le rud?
- XXIV. Cén chaoi a dtéann ciúnas/suaimhneas i bhfeidhm ar pháistí na luathbhlianta?

- I Istoty postrzegające: jak to jest być niemowlęciem w teatrze?
- II Jaki jest związek pomiędzy kontekstem, obrazem i wyobraźnią?
- III Jak prawdziwie najmłodsze dzieci doświadczają iluzji w teatrze. Czy są w stanie odróżnić ją od rzeczywistości?
- IV Jak ruch łączy się z emocjami?
- V Teatralne spotkania – kiedy rozpoczyna się doświadczenie wydarzenia teatralnego?
- VI W jaki sposób najmłodsze dzieci konceptualizują abstrakcyjne ruchy?
- VII Czy jest miejsce na stereotypy w świecie teatru dla najmłodszych?
- VIII W jaki sposób komunikować się z małymi dziećmi poprzez obraz podczas pandemii?
- IX Czym różni się percepcja ruchu scenicznego u dziecka i u dorosłego?
- X Ryzyko, ciekawość i troska: jakie role pełnią oczekiwania w kształtowaniu doświadczenia teatralnego u dziecka?
- XI Rozumienie i emocje, czyli jakie znaczenia niesie ze sobą teatr i jaka jest relacja pomiędzy rozumieniem a emocjami teatrze dla najmłodszych widzów?
- XII Pogłos: co się dzieje, kiedy dźwięk staje się postacią?
- XIII Kiedy słowo jest niezbędne dla rozumienia? Czy słowo mówione jest zawsze konieczne w spektaklu?
- XIV W jaki sposób ruch może być przewodnikiem po świecie nieodkrytych znaczeń.
- XV Jak dzieci rozumieją istotę życia i jakie role odgrywają w tym obraz i wyobraźnia?
- XVI Jakie rodzaje znaków teatralnych są niedozwolone w teatrze dla najmłodszych?
- XVII Ciało jako ucho: jak wygląda i brzmi zaangażowanie najmłodszych widzów?
- XVIII W jaki sposób wartości kulturowe mogą być przekazywane w teatrze dla najmłodszych widzów? Od abstrakcji do konkretności i na odwrót.
- XIX Jakie znaczenie ma ruch dla istoty bycia małym dzieckiem?
- XX Zanurzyć się i dać się porwać: dlaczego cisza jest tak istotna?
- XXI Czy obcojęzyczne słowa w przedstawieniach dla najmłodszych widzów zawsze wymagają tłumaczenia na język ojczysty?
- XXII W jaki sposób i dlaczego znaczenie i istota spektaklu zmieniają się, gdy spektakl oglądany jest na ekranie. Innymi słowy: dlaczego potrzebny jest teatr na żywo?
- XXIII Słuchanie. Odczuwanie. Mówienie. W jaki sposób ekspozycja na żywą mowę wpływa na zdolności językowe dzieci? W jaki sposób jakość dźwięku ubarwia znaczenie?
- XXIV Jak cisza i bezruch przemawiają do najmłodszych widzów?

- I Ființe perceptivă: cum este să fii bebeluș-spectator la teatru?
- II Care este relația dintre context, imagine și imaginație?
- III Cât de reală este o iluzie pentru publicul foarte tânăr? Există vreo diferență față de realitate?
- IV Cum sunt mișcările conectate la emoție?
- V Prima vizionare a unui spectacol: cum începe experiența ca spectator?
- VI Cum percep copiii foarte mici mișcările abstracte?
- VII Pot exista clișee în teatrul pentru copiii mici?
- VIII Cum am putea face ca imaginile să le vorbească copiilor foarte mici, în timpul pandemiei?
- IX În ce mod publicul tânăr poate percepe mișcările din spectacol diferit față de publicul adult?
- X Risc, curiozitate și grijă: ce rol au așteptările, în modelarea experienței noastre la teatru?
- XI Cunoaștere și emoție – Ce înseamnă teatrul sau care este relația dintre cunoaștere și emoție, în teatrul pentru copiii mici?
- XII Ecou: Ce se întâmplă atunci când sunetul devine personaj?
- XIII Când trebuie să conteze cuvintele? Sunt necesare cuvintele vorbite în spectacol?
- XIV Cum poate mișcarea să facă înțeleasă o experiență cu care copiii mici nu sunt familiari?
- XV Care ar putea fi sensul vieții pentru copiii foarte mici și ce roluri joacă imaginea și imaginația, în acest sens?
- XVI Ce fel de lucruri și semne teatrale nu sunt permise în teatrul pentru copiii mici?
- XVII Corpul ca o ureche: cum ar putea arăta și suna implicarea unui spectator?
- XVIII Cum poate fi transmisă cultura prin teatru, pentru copiii cu vârste mici? De la abstract la concret și de la concret la abstract.
- XIX Cum se leagă mișcarea de condiția umană a copiilor mici?
- XX Ascultarea: de ce tăcerea relativă este atât de semnificativă?
- XXI Este vreodată nevoie ca textul vorbit să fie tradus într-un spectacol pentru copii mici?
- XXII Cum și de ce se schimbă sensul și semnificația unui spectacol atunci când este vizionat pe un ecran? Sau de ce avem nevoie de teatru live?
- XXIII Auz, Simțire, Vorbire: Cum influențează adresarea directă, ascultarea și utilizarea limbajului? Cum dă culoare semnificației, calitatea sunetului?
- XXIV Cum vorbește tăcerea cu copiii mici?

- I. Perceptivna bitja: kako je biti dojenček v gledališču?
- II. Kakšno je razmerje med kontekstom, podobo in domišljijo?
- III. Kako resnična je iluzija za najmlajše? Je kakšna razlika od realnosti?
- IV. Kako so gibi povezani s čustvi?
- V. Uprizoritvena srečanja: kako se začne gledališka izkušnja?
- VI. Kako majhni otroci razumejo abstraktno gibanje?
- VII. Ali lahko v gledališču za najmlajše obstajajo klišeji?
- VIII. Kako bi lahko slike med pandemijo govorile najmlajšim?
- IX. Ali najmlajši dojemajo gib v gledališču drugače?
- X. Tveganje, radovednost in skrb: kakšno vlogo ima pričakovanje pri oblikovanju naše izkušnje v gledališču?
- XI. Spoznava in čustva – Kaj pomeni gledališče oziroma kakšen je odnos med spoznavanjem in čustvi v gledališču za zgodnja leta?
- XII. Odmev: kaj se zgodi, ko zvok postane znak oz. akter?
- XIII. Kdaj potrebujemo besede za ustvarjane pomena? Ali so govorjene besede potrebne za uprizoritev?
- XIV. Kako lahko odrsko gibanje ponazori izkušnjo, ki je nepoznana najmlajšim?
- XV. Kaj bi lahko bil smisel življenja za najmlajše in kakšno vlogo imata pri tem podoba in domišljija?
- XVI. Kakšni gledališki označevalci so prepovedani v gledališču za najmlajše?
- XVII. Telo kot uho: kako bi lahko izgledala in zvenela gledalska angažiranost?
- XVIII. Kako se lahko kultura prenaša skozi gledališče v zgodnjih letih? Od abstraktnega do konkretnega in od konkretnega do abstraktnega.
- XIX. Kako je gibanje povezano z razvojno fazo najmlajših?
- XX. Nagniti se in naslanjati: zakaj je relativna tišina tako pomembna?
- XXI. Ali je potrebno prevajati govorjeno besedilo v predstavah za najmlajše?
- XXII. Kako in zakaj se sporočilo in pomen predstave spremenita, ko jo gledamo na ekranu? Ali zakaj potrebujemo živo gledališče?
- XXIII. Sluh, čutenje, govor: Kako doživljanje živega govora vpliva na poslušanje in uporabo jezika? Kako kakovost zvoka obarva pomen izgovorjenega?
- XXIV. Kako tišina govori najmlajšim?

- I. Seres perceptores: ¿qué significa ser niñas y niños y pequeños en el teatro?
- II. ¿Cuál es la relación entre contexto, imagen e imaginación?
- III. ¿Hasta qué punto es real una ilusión para el público de las niñas y niños más pequeños? ¿Existe alguna diferencia con la realidad?
- IV. ¿Qué relación hay entre el movimiento y la emoción?
- V. En los encuentros escénicos ¿Cómo comienza la experiencia del espectador?
- VI. ¿Cómo interpretan los niños/as muy pequeños/as al movimiento abstracto?
- VII. ¿Pueden existir clichés en el Teatro para la primera infancia?
- VIII. ¿Cómo hacer para que las imágenes hablen al público de los más pequeños durante la pandemia?
- IX. ¿Qué diferencia hay entre el modo en que percibe el movimiento el público de la pequeña infancia y el adulto?
- X. Riesgo, curiosidad y atención ¿qué rol tienen las expectativas en la construcción de nuestra experiencia en el teatro?
- XI. Cognición y emoción: ¿cual es el rol del teatro y qué relación hay entre cognición y emoción en el teatro para la primera infancia?
- XII. Reverberación: ¿qué sucede cuando el sonido se convierte en un personaje?
- XIII. ¿Cuál debe ser la importancia de la palabra? ¿es siempre necesaria en un espectáculo?
- XIV. ¿Cómo puede influir el movimiento en las experiencias desconocidas para los niños/as más pequeños?
- XV. ¿Cuál puede ser el significado de la vida para el público de la primera infancia? ¿Qué papel juegan la imagen y la imaginación?
- XVI. ¿Qué tipo de significantes teatrales están prohibidos en el teatro para la primera infancia?
- XVII. El cuerpo como oído ¿ : que aspecto y qué sonido puede tener la participación del espectador?
- XVIII. ¿Como puede transmitirse la cultura a través del teatro para los niños/as de edades tempranas? De lo abstracto a lo concreto y de lo concreto a lo abstracto?
- XIX. ¿Cómo se relaciona el movimiento con la condición humana de la pequeña infancia?
- XX. Escucharse: ¿por qué el silencio relativo es tan importante?
- XXI. ¿Es necesario traducir el texto en una representación de teatro para la Primera Infancia?
- XXII. ¿Cómo y por qué el sentido y el significado de un espectáculo cambian cuando este se ve en una pantalla? ¿Por qué necesitamos el teatro presencial?
- XXIII. Oír, sentir, decir, sentir, decir: ¿qué influencia tiene la experiencia de la palabra en directo sobre la escucha o el uso del lenguaje? ¿Cómo influye la calidad del sonido en la percepción del significado?
- XXIV. ¿Qué puede transmitir la quietud a la pequeña infancia?

SWEDISH

MAPPING PROJECT

- I Sinnesupplevelsen: hur är det att vara bebis på teater?
- II Vad är förhållandet mellan innehåll, bild och fantasi?
- III Hur verklig är illusionen för den yngsta publiken? Är det någon skillnad mot verkligheten?
- IV Hur är rörelser kopplade till känslor?
- V Föreställningsmöten: hur börjar åskådarupplevelsen?
- VI Hur skapar små barn mening av abstrakt rörelse?
- VII Kan det finnas klichéer i teatern för barn och unga?
- VIII Hur fick vi digital konst att tala till mycket små barn under pandemin?
- IX Hur upplever den yngsta publiken rörelser annorlunda än vuxna?
- X Risk, nyfikenhet och omsorg: vilken roll spelar förväntan för att forma vår upplevelse på teatern?
- XI Kognition och Känsla – Vad betyder teater, eller vad är förhållandet mellan kognition och känsla i teater för en ung publik?
- XII Reverb: vad händer när ljud blir en karaktär?
- XIII Vilken roll spelar orden? Är ord alltid nödvändiga i föreställningen?
- XIV Hur kan rörelse hantera en upplevelse som den yngsta publiken är obekanta med?
- XV Vad kan vara meningen med livet för mycket små barn och vilken roll spelar bild och fantasi i det?
- XVI Vilken typ av konstnärliga koder tillåts inte på teater för den yngsta publiken?
- XVII Kroppen som ett öra: hur kan en aktiv publik se ut och låta?
- XVIII Hur kan kultur förmedlas genom teater för den yngsta publiken? Från abstrakt till konkret och konkret till abstrakt.
- XIX Hur förhåller sig rörelsebaserad konst till det mänskliga tillståndet att vara barn?
- XX Lyssna: Varför har tystnaden en sån stor betydelse?
- XXI Behöver textbaserad teater alltid översättas för den yngsta publiken?
- XXII Hur och varför förändras innebörden och betydelsen av en föreställning när den ses på en skärm? Eller varför behöver vi live teater?
- XXIII Att höra, känna, tala: Hur påverkas lyssnandet och språkutvecklingen av att uppleva tal teater? Vilken betydelse har ljudet för ett färgrikt språk?
- XXIV Hur talar stillheten till den yngsta publiken?

Mapping has been a process made of questions that generate other questions, useful for starting to “map” the aesthetic dimension of young children, trying to detect the signs, the many aesthetic moments that children display during the artistic relationship.

Children live in the peripheries of culture, and the youngest ones even more so, because we know so little about their feelings. And yet, artists who work with children soon realize that they are an extraordinary audience, and that focusing their artistic research work on them is definitely worth the effort. Small children watch and listen to learn, discover the world and perceive its innumerable details. And the many experiences the partners of Mapping have collected during their journey with the little ones are proof of it.

Young children have their own cultural dimension and their own way of perceiving and feeling, as well as their own pace.

They think in a complex way and feel in ways we don't know yet. We might not understand them, but with them we can establish strong sensory-based relationships.

In spite of all the difficulties and even a pandemic, and thanks to the active participation of all the partners and researchers involved, the Mapping project produced the Research on the Map, 29 festivals and 32 new productions for early years, a number of specific studies on Audience Development, Direction, and Dramaturgy for early years, the final exhibition “The Map,” 4 editions of the exhibition “Children-Spectators,” 7 publications on the Research, studies and experiences, including this book.

Mapping has been supported by Creative Europe, the EU programme that, with its Culture sub-programme, next to the Media strand, co-finances performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage, and museums, selecting projects for both children and adults.

The Mapping partnership is formed by theatres, cultural institutions and artists who have established a deep relationship with early years over time, and who are willing to offer their specific know-how in developing this piece of Research.

The partnership is spread across the entire territory of the European Union, **involving 18 partners from 17 European countries.**

La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi (coordinator) and **Bologna Children's Book Fair-BolognaFiere**, Italy / **Artika Theatre Company**, Greece / **Auraco**, Finland / **Baboró International Arts Festival for Children**, Ireland / **HELIOS Theater**, Germany / **Kolibri Színház**, Hungary / **Lutkovno Gledališče Ljubljana**, Slovenia / **Madam Bach**, Denmark / **Polka Theatre**, United Kingdom / **Stichting de Stilte**, Netherlands / **Teater Tre**, Sweden / **Teatr Animacji W Poznaniu**, Poland / **Teatro Paraíso**, Spain / **Teatrul Ion Creangă**, Romania / **Théâtre de la Guimbarde**, Belgium / **Toihaus Theater**, Austria / **Ville de Limoges**, France.

