# "MORE LIKE A POEM THAN A PLAY": TOWARDS A DRAMATURGY OF PERFORMING ARTS FOR EARLY YEARS

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# "More like a poem than a play": towards a dramaturgy of performing arts for Early Years

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# Abstract

This thesis aims to further our understanding of the emergent phenomenon of Theatre for Early Years (TEY) in Scotland. It interrogates a series of artistic practices – traditional, postdramatic, participatory – with the aim of proposing a possible dramaturgy of arts for the very young.

Practice typically precedes theory in new fields of performance. TEY currently lacks a coherent theoretical framework or dramaturgy, instead drawing on interdisciplinary strands of psychology, pedagogy and existing dramaturgical practices from older forms of theatre for children. This study explores artists' embodied knowledge as a repository of skill, while also recognising external factors that impact on creative production, from belief systems to training, the search for funding and the struggle for recognition.

Using Grounded Theory as a method to analyse interviews with 26 leading Scottish practitioners, this project undertakes a qualitative investigation of current practice in the devising and production of performing arts for very young audiences. The thesis also considers debates around legitimation and human rights for the very young, as well as cognitive models of infant development from psychology.

The process points towards a Grounded Theory which proposes that Scottish Early Years artists undergo an attitudinal shift towards a belief that children should access high-quality cultural experiences on the same basis as adults. Secondly, it suggests that these artists believe they possess a unique skill-set worthy of recognition. The theory points towards an associated dramaturgy centring on equality, and the generalisability of both is then assessed via an innovatory Practice-as-Research case study converting a TEY production into a digital app.

While the project is geographically limited to Scotland, its findings may have international applicability. This study could contribute to a wider praxis of arts for the very young beyond theatre, giving practitioners across the cultural sphere the opportunity to engage with the proposed dramaturgy.

# Declarations

I, Ben Fletcher-Watson, hereby confirm that I am solely responsible for the production of this submission which consists of:

A thesis of 74,659 words
Appendices and bibliography of 35,582 words

and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date………….……… Signature of candidate…………………………………

I was admitted as a research student in September 2011 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in Drama in June 2012; the higher study for which this is the outcome was carried out at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland between 2011 and 2015.

Date………….……… Signature of candidate…………………………………

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of PhD in Drama in the University of St Andrews and any additional requirements for the regulations of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as approved by the University and that the candidate is qualified to make this submission in application for that degree.

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# Acknowledgements

# "More like a poem than a play": towards a dramaturgy of performing arts for Early Years

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# List of Acronyms

ASSITEJ – Association Internationale du Théâtre pour l'Enfance at la Jeunesse [International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People]

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council

GTM – Grounded Theory Method

PaR – Practice-as-Research

TEY – Theatre for Early Years

TiE – Theatre in Education

TVY – Theatre for the Very Young

TYA – Theatre for Young Audiences

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Theatre for Early Years (TEY), also known as Theatre for the Very Young (TVY) or more colloquially as Baby Theatre, generally refers to theatrical productions designed for children from birth to three-years-old. This covers a wide range of ages and abilities, from newborns through toddlers to preschoolers. In practice, TEY often extends beyond this three-year period, and may include performance experiences for foetuses, such as *Lullaby* (2012), or productions which cover a wider age range but overlap with the under-threes.

**Figure 1: *Oogly Boogly* (2003).**
**Performer Eeva Maria. Image by Benedict Johnson.**



In one of relatively few scholarly works to address TEY directly, Evelyn Goldfinger defines it as "professional theatre led by adults performing for an audience of babies from months old to toddlers approximately one and a half to two years old accompanied by a parent or adult companion. Babies usually sit on their caregiver's lap or in a stroller, and watch a play - usually between 30 to 45 minutes long - designed especially for them" (2011, p.295). This narrow definition, aside from

an unusually restrictive age range, excludes many aspects of the phenomenon which have become common practice, such as performances for newborns, centring on bonding and attachment (Fletcher-Watson *et al.*, 2014), and more participatory productions which invite children to enter the performance area for a time (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b). A more inclusive definition might be: *a professionally-created theatrical experience for an audience of children aged from birth to around three-years-old, accompanied by carers.*

Even this simple description can usefully be elucidated. TEY is almost exclusively produced by *professional* theatre companies and practitioners, due to specific challenges including the lack of available scripts (Fletcher-Watson, 2013c) for amateur or community use, and the perceived complexity of working with such a young audience which seems to require special skills. Despite occasional productions derived from the suggestions of very young children (Ball *et al.*, 2007, p.7), TEY is almost always created by adults. It is interesting to note that it never features professional baby performers[1], although this is technically allowable in the UK under the Children (Performances) Regulations 1968. The theatricality of the *performed experience* in TEY is perhaps one of its most contentious aspects, as Manon van de Water has noted: "It is indeed art for this age group that evokes the most skepticism from artists and audience alike" (2012a, p.128). As with recent developments in contemporary theatre for adults, some Early Years performances can appear more like play therapy or free play sessions than dramatic productions, lacking narrative, text and speech, occasionally without performers and sometimes highly participatory. For example, *Multicoloured Blocks from Space* (2012) places babies and their carers within a pixellated world resembling a 1980s video game. An electronic soundtrack of beeps is the only marker of time. There is no script and no actor as intermediary between the child and various tactile, auditory or visual stimuli. Such productions may seem to hover at the fringes of performance, placing emphasis on the hedonic (meaning pleasure-seeking) rather than the dramatic. The presence of *carers* is universal, due to the understandable ethical impossibility of separating a very young child from all adult caregivers. TEY productions involve at least two spectators observing a single theatrical event; this 'doubling' of the spectator has been called the "Triangular Audience" (Desfosses, 2009, p.103).

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[1] Prior to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1889, it was common for very young children, even babes-in-arms, to appear on stage (Varty, 2005); one of the most well-known professional performing babies was Joseph Grimaldi, who made his stage debut before his second birthday in his father's *Robinson Crusoe* at Old Drury, now the Drury Lane Theatre (Grimaldi, 1838, p.9).

Lastly, TEY can be defined by its purposeful design, with experiences carefully crafted especially for babies and their adult companions; this may mean attending to practical issues such as seating layout and minimising blackouts (see for example Donati, 2009; Fowler, 2009; Novák, 2009; Young & Powers, 2009), employing knowledge from developmental psychology to tailor productions to the capabilities of a tightly-prescribed audience, such as the pre-verbal but mobile stage between 12 and 18 months (see for example Young, 2004; Reginster, 2009; Caird, 2011), or embracing political frameworks inspired by Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989; Fletcher-Watson, 2013b, 2015b). TEY looks, sounds and feels different to traditional theatrical forms for children.

The prodigious physiological and neurological changes of the first three years of a child's life mean that the growth in ability (whether spectatorial, cognitive or social) over this period is far greater than at any other time in childhood or adolescence. As has been noted, "the younger age group [from birth to three] is the least homogenous and subjected to experimentation" (van de Water, 2012a, p.128). TEY today simultaneously caters for an unprecedentedly diverse range of capabilities in its audiences and is limited to isolated pockets of activity dotted around the world. For example, while most towns and cities in the UK will host several Christmas pantomimes, few cities beyond London and Edinburgh possess even a single theatre company specialising in work for Early Years. Similarly, training courses at UK drama schools do not yet tutor students in the skills needed to engage babies and toddlers, despite a long history of training facilitators in Theatre in Education or Drama in Education techniques.

Theatre for Early Years is considered to be a sub-category of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), the term now generally used in place of Children's Theatre. Theatre for Young Audiences as a whole has been described as "the Cinderella sector" (Reekie 2005, p.38; Brown 2012), suggesting perhaps that TEY is the Cinderella of the Cinderella sector, marginalised or ignored even by other artists making work for children, and struggling with profile, legitimacy, institutional support, funding, and so on. However, the phenomenon is coming under increasing scrutiny – as one drama scholar notes, "theatre for the very young is perhaps the fastest growing aspect of TYA in research and practice today" (van de Water, 2012b, p.4) – and it is therefore important to understand its genesis and subsequent development.

It may be useful to provide an example of a TEY production in order to illustrate the definitions given. *White* was created in 2010 by Andy Manley for Catherine Wheels Theatre Company in Musselburgh.[2] It is designed for children aged between two and four and their parents, and plays to audiences of between 40 and 60 spectators at a time. In addition, it has been adapted into an app for the iPad and iPhone, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. *White: The App* was released in 2014.

*White* presents two characters, Cotton (young, idealistic) and Wrinkle (older, authoritative), who live in a completely white world. They care for eggs which drop from the sky, placing them in specially-constructed birdhouses. Their routine is disrupted by the appearance of a red egg, which Wrinkle orders Cotton to place in the bin. That night, Cotton rescues the egg and gives it a home in an unoccupied birdhouse. When they awake, Cotton is shocked to see that colour has begun to infect their surroundings – green handkerchiefs, pink feathers, blue milk. Cotton tries to hide this from Wrinkle, but eventually he confesses, saying "I'm sorry… but… I love… Red." Wrinkle tells him that he secretly loves orange, and blue, and green, and purple. They joyfully explore their new world, and end by going into to the audience to talk to them about all the colours that they can see.

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**Excerpt from *White* script:**

When the audience enters the space, COTTON is seated DSL knitting. He is a young man, dressed all in white, with white shoes, long white socks, woolly white lederhosen over a white shirt, and a white knitted hat with a white pom-pom. He has a pile of tiny knitted hats next to him. The white wool from his knitting is threaded through a hole in the front of a knitting-covered birdhouse. A washing line with three tiny white hats and one large white hat runs from the teepee to one of the poles.

WRINKLE is asleep inside the teepee, with both his legs sticking out. COTTON looks up at the sky occasionally and alters the arrangement of his knitted hats.

The sound of a cuckoo clock comes from the teepee. It is WRINKLE's alarm. COTTON puts his knitting away in the knitting-covered birdhouse. He delightedly picks up the hats and crosses to the teepee.

> **COTTON: (*Brightly*) Morning. Time to wake up.**

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[2] A short trailer showing scenes from the original run of the production can be viewed online at http://vimeo.com/44244442. In addition, Appendix E lists the productions discussed in this thesis, and provides links to online trailers where available.

WRINKLE moves his legs. COTTON takes the knitted hats off the line, clipping the clothes pegs to his lederhosen as he goes. He places them inside the teepee. He takes off the big hat. He bends down and puts the big hat into the teepee.

**COTTON: Wrinkle. Time to wake up.**

He rings the bell. WRINKLE pulls his legs inside the teepee.

*White* contains a brief but clear narrative lasting around 40 minutes, with routines such as cleaning the birdhouses and eating a meal repeated through the play. Compared to adult drama, there is little speech, instead focusing on words and phrases such as "time to wake up" which are familiar to the very young. Visual theatre replaces text as the main performative modality. There is no explicit message (about cleanliness or recycling, for example, despite the presence of a large bin onstage), although adult spectators have identified themes ranging from racism to gay marriage to conception. The creative team deliberately avoided assigning meaning to the characters' actions and setting, instead inviting children to generate their own responses. As Andy Manley told me when I interviewed him in 2012, "it's disingenuous to actually pose a question if you believe you've got an answer to it… there's nothing particularly that I want [children] to get."

**Figure 2: Scene from *White* (2010).**
**Image courtesy of Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, copyright Douglas McBride.**



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## 1.2 Study aims and research questions

TEY emerged in the late 1970s as a response to a perceived lack of theatrical experiences for children younger than five (see section 2.2.2). Over time, the art-form developed and spread internationally as the lower age limit decreased, until today, professional performances are created around the world for audiences ranging from newborn babies to pre-schoolers. However, TEY still struggles with legitimation, both from a lack of attention by theatre scholars and theoreticians, and from resistance within the arts community, although its burgeoning popularity with families, festivals and funders, combined with an increasing focus by numerous governments on the social benefits of Early Years, suggests that it is gaining respectability. Most existing research on children's theatre rests on a long-standing binary of discourse split between education and entertainment, but TEY's radical practices subvert both of these foundations.

This thesis therefore aims to discover and explore current practice within Theatre for Early Years as it is embodied in the development and creation of theatrical performances by professional artists. TEY has progressed organically into myriad practices over three decades, but theory has not yet been interwoven with these practices to create a useful praxis for established and emerging practitioners alike. This study explores embodied knowledge as a repository of skill, while also recognising the external factors that impact on creative production, from belief systems to training, from the search for funding to the struggle for recognition. At the end of this investigation, it is hoped that a robust dramaturgy of TEY will have emerged, rooted both in new data and established commentaries, and of direct use to those working in the field.

These aims have been refined into three main research questions:
1) What defines the phenomenon of contemporary Theatre for Early Years?
2) What are the key practices employed by TEY artists, and what are the challenges which trouble the effective delivery of these practices?
3) What are the dramaturgical implications of these practices and challenges?

These questions provided the basis for a set of themed prompts for use in interviews with TEY artists, which can be found in Appendix A.

It is the goal of the study presented here to identify whether the varied practices of contemporary TEY artists can be analysed and compared to reveal a common core, which may point towards a coherent theory of TEY. Daily practice as embodied knowledge held by expert theatre-makers is investigated, rather than relying on external observation of theatrical events or the gathering of audience or peer responses. The processes of creating work for under-threes can provide an insight into the interactions which drive the phenomenon: between collaborators, between performer and audience, between peers, between venue and visiting company, between parent and child. Such an investigation requires new methods which are appropriate for use with artists whose practices have been honed over time (that is, with experts), in order to move beyond reportage. Therefore a secondary goal is to create a means of combining expert testimony with powerful analytical tools in order to attain ontological validity.

The study is an exploration of current practice among TEY artists working in Scotland, including theatre-makers, composers, designers and producers. This investigation combines the Expert Interview technique with the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) to code and analyse transcripts of interviews with the aim of identifying common linkages. Inductive qualitative methods such as Grounded Theory are especially suitable for analysing new phenomena where theory is lacking (Hobson, 2003), as will be discussed in Chapter 3. The development of the coding scheme highlights two overarching themes within the field: *practice as a response to the unique needs and abilities of the target audience*, and *seeking acceptance as a reputable theatre-maker*. Furthermore, the study explores the progression of personal beliefs as artists move from ignorance of the art-form to a passionate, even political engagement with it as a movement.

An initial review of relevant literature[3] suggested that gaps exist within the study of performance for Early Years, both methodological and thematic. From this review,

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[3] As will be discussed in chapter 3, Grounded Theory Method (GTM) practitioners are divided over the timing of the contextual literature review within a GTM investigation, with some proposing that no literature should be examined prior to data collection in order to prevent potential biases (Glaser, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). However, I began a survey of relevant texts before resolving to employ GTM, meaning that I had to acknowledge these biases within my preparation as 'sensitising topics', which are described in chapter 4.

several constraining factors became apparent which defined the direction of the investigation, while still maintaining the openness demanded by GTM:

1) Studies examining practice in the performing arts, especially as it relates to performance for younger children, tend either to apply new theoretical frameworks to an established field (Young and Powers, 2009; Dunlop *et al.*, 2011), or to employ case studies, sometimes in a self-reflective Performance-as-Research context (Young, 2004; Knight, 2011; Reiniger, 2011). The former tend to interpret practice through non-dramatic lenses rather than examining practice as a discrete skill-set deriving from dramaturgy, training and experience; the latter display a tendency towards anecdotalism, meaning that findings cannot be extrapolated to contribute to a more universal praxis. This study therefore seeks to develop an alternative means of gathering data qualitatively and thus, of generating new theory.

2) Descriptions of TEY practice are available from around the world, generally curated into collections of reflective writing by TYA organisations such as ASSITEJ[4] and Small Size[5] (see for example Schneider, 2009b; Nerattini, 2009b; a; Belloli, 2009; Belloli, Morris and Phinney, 2013). In some cases, articles and texts address the work of a single company or artist, although in the UK, this has been dominated by one of the longest-established TEY companies, Oily Cart[6] (see for example Young, 2004; Francis, 2005; Caird, 2011; Brown, 2012). Scotland has not yet received critical attention in this regard, perhaps because of its small population and the relatively recent emergence of TEY here. One methodological goal of this study is to ensure data capture across an entire community of artists, rather than a small representative sample. For this reason, Scotland makes a suitable choice for sampling – the small population of TEY artists (around thirty individuals

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[4] Association Internationale du Théâtre pour l'Enfance at la Jeunesse [International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People] (http://www.assitej-international.org). Following a formative meeting in London in 1964 and a constitutional conference in Paris in 1965, the first ASSITEJ International Congress was held in Prague in 1966. National centres representing over 90 individual countries, along with four networks and 12 individual members, now make up the organisation (for a full history of ASSITEJ, see Eek, Shaw and Krzys, 2008; 2011; Eek, Kovacs and Krzys, 2014).

[5] Small Size is the European network for the diffusion of performing arts for early childhood (http://www.smallsize.org/).

[6] Oily Cart was founded in London in 1981 by Tim Webb, Claire de Loon and Max Reinhardt. The company tours to schools and theatres, offering productions for the very young and also performances designed for young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties (http://www.oilycart.org.uk).

in total) and the existence of the professional development network Imaginate[7] mean that it is possible to interview every artist currently making work for babies and toddlers to provide a truly holistic portrait of practice in a single nation, but with possible wider applicability. This can usefully be compared to Roger Wooster's examination of Theatre in Education, using Wales as his site for study (2007). Only four companies existed at the time of his investigation, providing a less robust or generalisable outcome.

3) Published reflections on practice evidently tend to privilege established or higher-profile artists over emerging practitioners (Delgado and Heritage, 1996; Oddey, 2005; Duggan and Ukaegbu, 2013). Testimonies may therefore neglect contemporary practice in favour of providing an historical perspective, such as the examination of a company no longer producing new work. This study by contrast seeks to uncover practice as it is employed in the present, meaning that the focus is placed on artists who continue to make work. Additionally, it is important to avoid adhering to hierarchies of longevity, as TEY was first produced in Scotland less than a decade ago – emerging artists may have as much to contribute as those who have worked in the field for years.

The study is therefore limited to the qualitative analysis of contemporary practice by artists currently based in Scotland, at any stage in their careers, with the aim of generating new theory of use to TEY practitioners and others.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, scholarly attention has only recently fallen on theatre for the youngest audiences. The texts referred to above almost exclusively consist of insights by artists, in their own words. These testimonies provide an immensely valuable body of first-hand reporting, but their conclusions remain tentative and anecdotal. The viability of this study centres on the combination of artistic reflection with powerful analytic tools to produce new theory of use to current practitioners.

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[7] Emerging from the Scottish International Children's Festival in 2000, Imaginate is now the national art-form development agency for children and young people's theatre in Scotland. It organises the annual Imaginate Festival of performing arts for children and young people in Edinburgh, and provides professional advocacy, creative development and commissioning, as well as creative learning programmes in schools (http://www.imaginate.org.uk).

## 1.3 Positionality

For a scholar, defining positionality is a recognition of the many possible ways of looking at the world. Positionality precedes even the research question, as John Berger notes: "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak" (1972, p.1). It is therefore arguable that a researcher's epistemology is already biased before embarking on a research project. However, positionality "is not fixed, but relational" (Wolfe, 1996, p.14), meaning that stances change over time depending on context and interpersonal links. At the beginning of my research in 2011, I positioned myself as a scholar, wishing to use artists as sources of information; in 2015, having met many artists and worked with several on workshops and productions, I view myself more as their collaborator. Similarly, my epistemological viewpoint has shifted over time due to exposure to new concepts, theoretical systems, methods, methodologies, practices and processes.

As a researcher, I take a constructivist viewpoint of knowledge, aiming to "enter the phenomenon, gain multiple views of it, and locate it in its web of connections and constraints" (Charmaz, 2006, p.187). Critical and self-reflexive practices such as the positioning statement below and the memos created as part of the Grounded Theory Method (see Chapter 3) influence my interpretive responses, and thus the judgements or meanings that I create from the experiences and interactions during my research; my interviews and use of Grounded Theory also affect my perceptions of artists in a variety of ways, from perceived hierarchies to knowledge of tensions and outside factors which may not (and need not) be expressed in my interactions with them.

The following section aims to delineate the various positions I take in relation to practice, gender, culture and other characteristics which define me as a researcher. The subsequent section then describes my epistemological progression, as I engaged increasingly with the contradictions and gaps within the literature, and lastly presents the central aim of the study, an attempt to define an emergent dramaturgy of theatre for the very young.

### *1.3.1 Positioning statement*

As a practitioner, I am 'out-of-practice' in terms of my artistic work; I have only created two short pieces for very young children in my career, and my training as a

director and dramaturg did not include any exploration of theatre for children. Within my interactions with artists, I therefore recognise their skills and experience as powerful forms of embodied knowledge, assembled from years of practice. Scotland's TEY theatre-makers are not my peers, but holders of a different form of knowledge to me, which sets them apart. Nonetheless, I bring a certain amount of life experience, embodied knowledge and pre-existing opinions to the project, although it should be noted that my age makes me very distant from the needs, thoughts and ideas of young children. In particular, I began this study in 2011 having attended more than 20 productions around the UK, with concomitant value judgements and opinions already present in my mind (see figure 15 in Chapter 3). The phenomenon of TEY was not new to me; unlike many in children's theatre, I believed it was a valid form of theatre from the start. My research imperative presupposed the legitimacy of this controversial art-form, moving beyond a typical researcher's neutrality, and much of my published work has striven to explicate this legitimacy (see for example Fletcher-Watson, 2013a; Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014).

My background in children's theatre, specialising in venue management and fundraising since 2003, also contextualises me as an advocate for the broader field of theatre for young audiences, presenting it as both intrinsically beneficial and socially valuable. I have believed for many years that all children have a right to culture, and that they are capable of appreciating theatre and the arts from birth.

In addition, Theatre for Early Years is a gendered field, with a greater proportion of female artists than male. My gender (and by extension, my role as a father of two young girls) therefore implicitly binds me within a complex and at times contradictory network of gendered constructs: hetero-normativity, feminism, Western liberal parenting, patriarchal hegemony and white male privilege, among others. My critical viewpoint is shaped by these contesting forces, even when challenging them.

Positionality is also affected by my identity as a resident of Scotland, a part of the UK which looks to Europe rather than Westminster for many of its social democratic principles. Another researcher, perhaps based in London rather than Edinburgh, or subscribing to different political beliefs, would cast an alternative critical eye on both the material data and its outcomes. Additionally, the recommendations emerging from the project are likely to become focused to impact upon my home country of Scotland before the rest of the UK, or other countries.

I also recognise my affiliation with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland places me within a specific research tradition, influenced by Practice-as-Research and the use of reflective practice as a methodological tool. This scholarly genealogy places practice, artefacts and praxis alongside text as appropriate academic outcomes, with the implication that a research project such as this one may go beyond writing to produce other modes of inquiry.

Lastly, I recognise that I am situated within a contemporary political discourse centred on equality and human rights, such as Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. My core beliefs, particularly as they relate to children, define my research aims and thus the direction of the project. The next section illustrates how my beliefs and perceptions of my role as a scholar have shifted over time, leading me to seek a means of analysing contemporary practice in order to generate theory about its operations, and ultimately to propose a dramaturgy which describes TEY practice.

### 1.3.2 Towards a dramaturgy of TEY

In November 2007, while running a children's theatre in Newcastle upon Tyne, I watched a performance of *Egg & Spoon* by Theatre Lyngo. It was the first piece of theatre designed for the youngest audiences that I had encountered. Children ranging in age from a few months to three- or four-years-old sat in a circle, deeply engaged by the action unfolding in front of them; I sat cross-legged among them, similarly entranced by the performance, but also captivated by performer Patrick Lynch's skill at negotiating his audience's ever-changing mood.

From that moment, I became fascinated with the expertise of artists who chose to work with such a challenging but rewarding age-group, and in particular, the "know-how" or tacit knowledge embodied within these practitioners (Nelson, 2006, p.113). It was obvious to me that Lynch's knowledge of making theatre for the very young was personal and unique, but further observation in subsequent years suggested that other artists possessed very similar skills gained through their own experience. I thus hypothesised that there might be an innate homogeneity to practice within TEY, perhaps emerging from a trial-and-error process in devising productions rather than from training, and it was this sense of a 'hidden' dramaturgy of TEY that drove my initial explorations in the field. However, it was clear that

uncovering and pooling the embodied knowledge of many artists would be a complex but valuable task:

> Artists have highly specialised knowledge and highly specialised skills, but as a rule these competences remain within the individual artist who possesses them… Research should be committed to making this enormous treasure of implicit knowledge and skills of artists as explicit as possible, bringing it out into the open so that it may be better understood and, hopefully, used by others. (Coessens, Crispin and Douglas, 2009, pp.174–5)

As can be seen from the literature review in Chapter 2, relatively little documentation concerning Early Years arts practice exists; actor training within drama schools has not yet incorporated the specialised skills required for Early Years work into curricula, and practically no scripts have been published (for a rare exception, albeit originally designed for children with multiple learning difficulties, see Brown 2012, pp.57–70).

Perhaps in recognition of this lack of documentation, agencies in Europe such as Small Size have begun to produce collections of artists' anecdotes, perceptions and reflections, as noted earlier. It would be a straightforward task to select examples of good practice from these published accounts by theatre-makers, and amalgamate them into a categorisation framework or protocol that might be of value to practitioners. The prevalence of best practice recommendations and identifications in the literature suggests not only a deep interest among artists in ensuring the optimum audience experience, but also an acknowledgement that process and praxis in this emerging field are as yet ill-defined (Young, 2009). Indeed, recurring themes expressed by Scottish artists in informal conversation were: the desire to share practices, to observe one another's devising and rehearsal processes, and the sharing of anecdotes about failures and successes which helped develop their personal practice.

The suggested practices below are drawn from a mixture of artist testimonies and writings by more peripheral figures such as scholars, theatre critics, psychologists and pedagogues. They highlight the provisional state of good practice within the field. For example, various sources claim that artists should take advice from psychologists and education professionals (Reginster, 2009; Novák, 2009;

Young, 2009; Caird, 2011) and that it is wise to test sections of your performance in nurseries or a venue to see 'what works' and to get actors used to being around babies (Young, 2004; Reginster, 2009; Wartemann, 2009; Fowler, 2009; Young and Powers, 2009; Caird, 2011; Knight, 2011). Advice on beginning a performance ranges from conducting the get-in with children around you when performing in nurseries, to help them acclimatise (Reginster, 2009) to letting them watch the costuming and make-up (Schneider, 2009c), or even meeting parents beforehand to explain practical elements and afterwards to answer questions (Reginster, 2009; Taube, 2009). Some have stated that sets, costumes and props must have tactility and play potential (Young, 2004; Pinkert, 2009; Taube, 2009) while others contradict this, believing that performances need not involve exploratory play sessions (dan Droste, 2009b).

Most importantly, and contradicting the wealth of guidance offered in the literature, many testimonies stress that there are no rules in making theatre for very young children (Reginster, 2009; Taube, 2009; Kornhauser, 2010) and that shutting down possibilities is undesirable. Indeed, it is a simple task to find in each case at least one production that 'breaks' the rule given. For example, *Funkeldunkel Lichtgedicht* (2009) by Theater der Jungen Generation takes place mainly in the dark, explicitly challenging the received wisdom that darkness is too 'spooky' for young children (Brennan, 2007; see also Donati, 2009; Fowler, 2009). Similarly, Unga Klara's *Babydrama* (2006) lasts around 80 minutes, almost three times the 'recommended' limit of around 30 minutes (Frabetti, 2009; Novák, 2009).

This dogmatic and anecdotal identification of guidelines lacks rigour: results are contradictory, often within themselves and especially when compared with performance records; many examples could be described as culturally-specific or language-specific and therefore of limited utility; recommendations tend to be over-reliant on the inherent biases of practitioners. In particular, no sense emerges that theory consistently or systematically underpins practice. This renders these results difficult to validate, arguably illegitimate and insubstantial, divorced from observable phenomena – here, the individual practitioner's testimony (as a form of embodied knowledge) is privileged above a wider praxis and cannot be interrogated further. It ignores the fact that knowledge, especially tacit or embodied knowledge, is "interrelational, interwoven in webs of networks" (Kvale, 2007, p.21). If knowledge is preserved and disseminated interpersonally, then perhaps a means can be found to

draw together such disparate observations, ground them in theory and feed them back into current practice (Fletcher-Watson, 2013d).

Using a more rigorous methodological approach to synthesise contributions from multiple practitioners, the National Foundation for Educational Research identified seven common principles relating to quality in work for children and young people, while acknowledging that these principles lack specificity for the youngest audiences (Lord *et al.*, 2012, p.33). These principles are:

1. Striving for excellence
2. Being authentic
3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
4. Ensuring a positive, child-centred experience
5. Actively involving children and young people
6. Providing a sense of personal progression
7. Developing a sense of ownership and belonging (ibid., p.8)

In contrast to the highly specific personal reflections given above, these dicta are ambiguous. They contribute little to practice as it is employed within the rehearsal room.

However, it is possible that between contradictory personal recommendations and vague governing principles lies a more coherent and consistent dramaturgy of theatre for the very young, waiting to be discovered, as I had hypothesised back in 2007 while watching *Egg & Spoon*. Therefore, my methodological choices are intended to allow deeper drilling into the data, to move beyond the useful into the essential, to demystify and to clarify. As arts education researchers Johnny Saldaña and Lin Wright point out, research "has the potential in this field not only to reveal new insights and to improve our practice, but to serve as an agent for advocacy – to show decision makers that drama and theatre for youth 'works'" (1996, p.129). It has been noted that while practical recommendations can be drawn from observation or experience, only a systematic and thorough integration of knowledge can create a theory with real explanatory power (Travers, 2001). In the case of this study, the theory with explanatory power may point towards a dramaturgy of TEY.

### 1.3.3 The researcher as dramaturg

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the father of dramaturgy, states in the Preface to his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* of 1767 that "there are many steps an emergent theatre must climb in order to reach the pinnacle of perfection" (2012, p.3). It is not the role of the researcher to provide a 'how-to' for aspiring performers nor simply to reproduce best practice recommendations such as those above; nor do I mean to place myself as researcher above the artist of the "emergent theatre" for the very young. Instead I propose a relationship of mutuality between artists and the academy, working to uncover and co-create new sites of knowledge.

Dramaturgy literally means "the work / action of a play" or more loosely, the art of structuring a story, from the Greek δραματουργια. Thus *drama-turg*, as "worker", differs from *play-wright*, as "builder." Traditionally, at least in European theatre, primacy lies with the writer as creator of the story; the dramaturg fashions and frames the story to best suit the stage, overseeing dramatic representation and composition. Contemporary commentators have expanded the term to mean "the inner flow of a dynamic system" (Trencsényi and Cochrane, 2014, p.xi), implying diverse processes which can encompass multiple forms. The dramaturg may be a central member of the creative team, or a peripheral figure brought into rehearsals late in the development process, or the role may be shared among several artists, varying according to timescales and available skills. But how does dramaturgy function in settings such as performing arts for Early Years, where language and narrative may not be used, and the creative process relies almost wholly on devising rather than texts?

The dramaturg's role within devised theatre is limited at present, with several authors not mentioning it (Oddey, 1996; Irelan, Fletcher and Dubiner, 2009) or dismissing it as not yet common (Turner and Behrndt, 2008). Even those texts which investigate the linkages between dramaturgy and devised performance restrict their attention to adult theatre-making, while acknowledging that children's theatre may benefit from the scrutiny of dramaturgs (Trencsényi and Cochrane, 2014). It can perhaps be argued that this lack of presence opens the door for researchers to enter the rehearsal room in their stead. The researcher may produce similar theoretical results to the dramaturg – categorisation of composition and form within a genre – from the opposite direction; by analysing past productions and current artistic processes not necessarily linked to any one performance, it may be possible

retrospectively to generate theory about practice, then feed that theory into future praxis.[8]

It may be useful briefly to consider scholarly proposals for dramaturgies of children's theatre. Jonathan Levy has described three historical premises derived from the scripts of Stephanie, Comtesse de Genlis (published as *Théâtre a l'Usage des Jeunes Personnes* in 1780):

> First, that children's plays should be based not on the struggle between good and evil, but rather on the struggle between good and not-yet-good; second… real evil will not be shown and that, when wickedness of any kind is shown, unless it is clearly reformed and repentant by the final curtain, it will be shown to be inept or else so outrageously overwritten as to be unbelievable; and third, that the sensibility that suffuses plays for children should be one of triumphant sweetness and light. (1992, pp.2–3)

Levy also suggests that these early plays replace narrative suspense with predictability and certainty of action. It is pertinent to note that this dramaturgical structure emerges from plays for children to perform in, rather than to watch, hence the emphasis on pedagogic moral lessons. Nonetheless, there are several parallels with the traditional twentieth-century mode of theatre for young people (and indeed popular culture such as Disney films), centred on familiar fairy-tale plots, didacticism, sentimentality and morality.

In contrast, Dragan Klaic proposes an "open dramaturgy" in contemporary children's theatre, drawn from download / mash-up culture and "based on interactivity, debate and the reshaping of traditional and contemporary stories, myths, legends, literary material and personal experiences" (2012, p.76). However, this applies to older children with a sophisticated understanding of narrative, and educated in a range of story forms. Nonetheless, it points towards an audience-focused dramaturgy that responds to ongoing cultural trends. For very young

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[8] This is likely to require a multi-modal approach, perhaps blending qualitative data collection techniques with Practice-as-Research (PaR) or practice-led methods in an effort to encompass a sizeable area of interest. The third chapter explores the Grounded Theory Method as a possible means of resolving this challenge, by placing scholars alongside artists, while Chapter 6 outlines a case study employing PaR as a means of evaluating emergent theoretical concepts.

children, this might be reflected in a play-oriented dramaturgy such as that outlined by Susan Young in her analysis of Oily Cart's *Clouds* (2004, pp.25–6). Young provides a description of key features of TEY practice, distinct from the anecdotal recommendations in the previous section due to her qualitative case study design. These dramaturgical features include: sensory multi-modality, opportunities for improvisation and intimate one-on-one interaction between adults and children, a responsive actor-spectator dynamic which does not overwhelm young children, and support for caregivers to discover their own participatory thresholds.

Additionally, Faith Gabrielle Guss has carried out a dramaturgical analysis of children's private play-drama with the aim of inspiring "innovative and meaningful theatre for children from three to seven" (2012, p.179). She identifies a "non-linear narrative circling" (2012, p.185), forming a "chain of fragments… each one with an internal narrative logic" (2012, p.187), strongly reminiscent of the "dramaturgy of incidents" devised by German TEY practitioner Rike Reiniger (2011). For Reiniger, the achievement of a "non-hierarchical sensuous theatre experience", in which children are privileged alongside their caregivers as "there is no need to decode any meaning" (2011, p.3), defines her process of creating theatre. This move away from meaning towards engagement has been noted by scholars of adult-oriented dramaturgies: "instead of emerging from the decoding of signs, meaning is no longer considered as static or fixed but in terms of how the performance 'moves' the audience" (Radosavljević, 2009, p.49). Reiniger sites her dramaturgy of incidents as postdramatic, meaning "a theatre that feels bound to operate beyond drama" (Lehmann, 2006, p.27). This term is perhaps less troubling in its application by German theatre-makers, for whom it is a more familiar mode, than if a British artist were to claim it for their own. However, in Chapter 2, I will argue for the postdramatic nature of TEY as a whole.

Finally, dramaturg Marianne Van Kerkhoven (2009, p.11) has described the challenge to traditional dramaturgies presented by radical performance settings such as installation models:

> By transgressing the borderlines between visual arts, dance and theatre, installations and performances come into being in which the spectator alternatively is brought into a theatre or a museum context, with an alternation between 'looking at something' and 'walking in something', an alternation between observation and immersion,

between surrendering and attempting to understand. And in this way, the spectator can determine independently his own standpoint.

Those TEY productions which lie farthest from the proscenium arch tradition, such as *Multicoloured Blocks from Space* (2012) and *BabyChill* (2009), could be situated within the alternating dramaturgy posited by Van Kerkhoven, legitimising their more avant-garde aspects.

These works suggest that dramaturgical forms of theatre for the very young may be definable. One of the objectives of this study is to discover whether a multi-modal investigation can ultimately produce a proposal for a dramaturgy of TEY (such as by combining qualitative examination of current practice with a Practice-as-Research validation study), in addition to the existing models from historical textual analysis, case studies, video analysis or reflexive writing.

## 1.4 Overview of study

The body of this thesis provides context to the investigation, demonstrating the development of new theory. Chapters follow a progressive narrowing of focus: Chapter 2 reviews the pertinent literature addressing the topic of performance for the very young, including theatre studies, psychology and child development; Chapter 3 positions the study within a qualitative constructivist research paradigm, namely Grounded Theory, then outlines the study design and methodological choices; Chapter 4 presents the results of the investigation following analysis; Chapter 5 describes the core themes emerging from the results, and then develops a provisional theory about the process of creating TEY, titled the theory of equality and artistic integrity, finishing with the proposal of a tentative dramaturgy of TEY; Chapter 6 then discusses a Practice-as-Research (PaR) study which applies findings to the adaptation of a TEY performance into a digital media format, seeking to assess theoretical transferability across domains, and thus strengthen both theory and dramaturgy; lastly, Chapter 7 evaluates the theory, discusses its limitations and makes recommendations for stakeholders. The figure below summarises the genealogy of theory within this study, from raw data to recommendations based on a grounded theory.

**Figure 3: Genealogy of Theory**
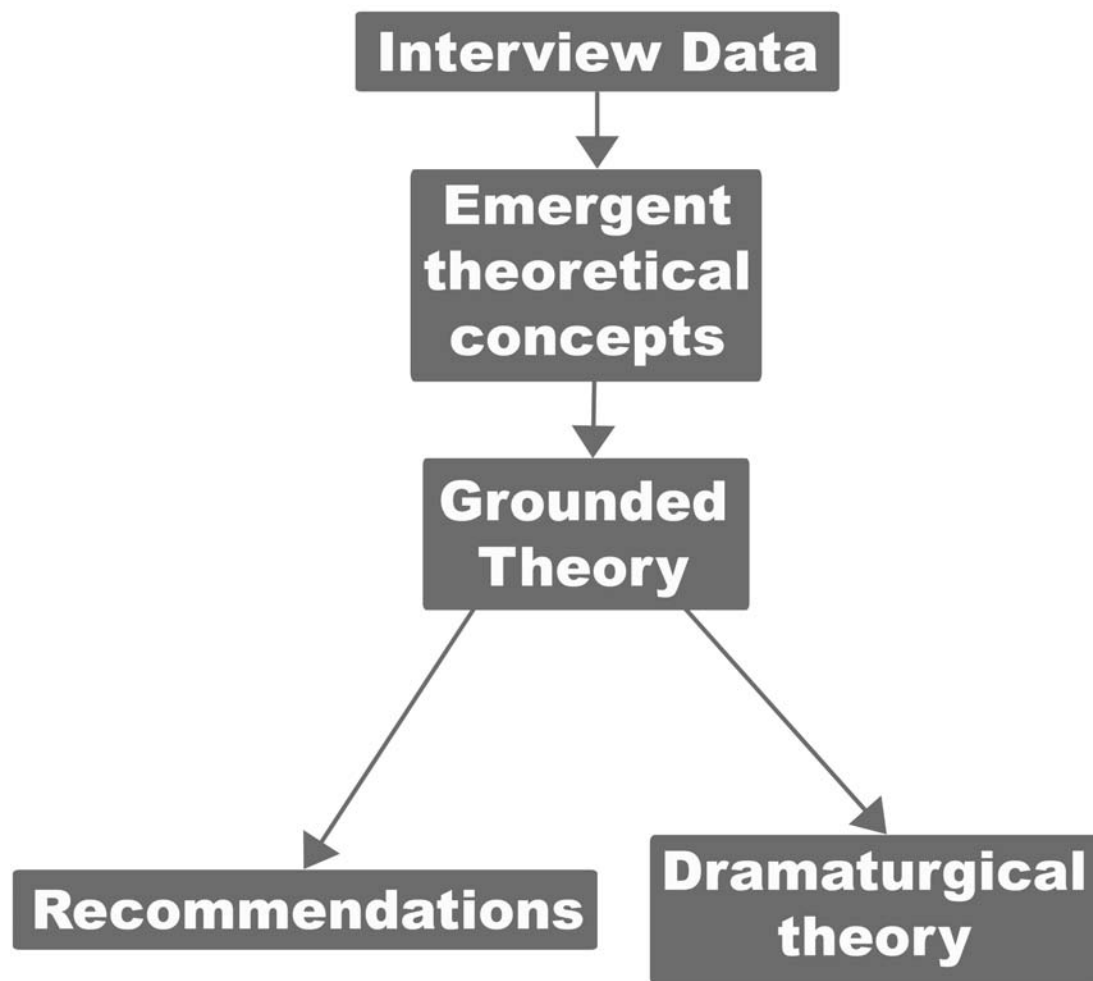


This chapter has provided an introduction to the phenomenon of professional theatre for very young children. It outlines three central research questions, and discusses the aims of the investigation. A rationale for the use of the Grounded Theory Method is provided, highlighting the contribution to knowledge emerging from a qualitative social science methodology. The chapter also explores my positionality as a researcher and introduces the concept of a dramaturgy of TEY.

Chapter 2 examines the scholarly literature from a variety of fields which has informed the development of TEY over three decades, from infant psychology to pedagogical studies. It also draws on recently published artist testimonies from around the world, reflecting on practice and the challenges of TEY. The chapter does not reference the sizeable body of literature relating to Theatre/Drama in Education, focusing instead on texts directly relevant to professional artistic practice. In keeping

with the Grounded Theory Method, new literatures are enfolded into the discussion later in the thesis as the explanatory theory is developed.

Chapter 3 presents the justification for the use of qualitative social science methods, situating the investigation within a constructivist epistemology. The emergence of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) is outlined, demonstrating its suitability as a means of interrogating artistic reflections. The full GTM process across several stages is described – collecting data, comparing and contrasting categories, mapping themes, employing inductive reasoning, achieving theoretical saturation and developing a theory with explanatory power. A new stage is inserted into the GTM, namely, the evaluation of emergent theoretical concepts in a Practice-as-Research study. This exploration provides the background to an examination of the specific methods employed in the study, as well as the ethical implications of the GTM approach.

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings of the study, presenting verbatim testimonies of participants as new data. Specific data-capturing and analytic processes are discussed, along with notable challenges, such as overcoming preconceptions about the field. Following the coding framework of GTM, the data are divided into six codes or labels which describe large sections of the dataset, known as axial codes. In each case, direct quotation from interviewees is used to illustrate emergent theoretical concepts and guarantee authenticity.

Chapter 5 describes the generation of a theory of TEY, emerging from the two central themes which describe the entire phenomenon of TEY in Scotland, known as core categories. It then presents a provisional theory of TEY derived from the GTM process, called the theory of equality and artistic integrity. The development of the theory is explained, and its relevance and theoretical contribution are then considered. The theory of equality and artistic integrity may offer a new framework for examining TEY, as a set of uniquely sensitive practices. The model is designed to provide relevant knowledge to practitioners, drama students and tutors, programmers and audiences. A tentative dramaturgy of equality within TEY, grounded in the data, is then presented and discussed.

Chapter 6 shows how PaR methods are employed to test and evaluate the theory of equality and artistic integrity and its associated dramaturgy, assessing their transferability across domains (in this case, from theatre to digital media).

Documentation from various stages of the project is presented alongside discussion of creative decisions taken during the process of creating a mobile app version of *White*, by Catherine Wheels Theatre Company.

Chapter 7 provides a conclusion to the study. The new theory is evaluated against recommended criteria for credibility, resonance, originality and usefulness. Finally, the study as a whole is examined, its limitations outlined, and suggestions made for further research in the field.

# Chapter 2: Contextual Review of Literature

## 2.1 Summary of chapter

The field of children's theatre has received growing attention from researchers in recent decades, albeit limited by comparison with adult theatre. Manon van de Water likens children's theatre scholarship to feminist, post-colonial and queer studies, siting the child as a marginalised figure lacking cultural capital (2012a). Nonetheless, commentators from a variety of disciplines have begun to scrutinise the practices and praxes of performing arts for young people, including psychologists, educators, historians, political scientists and others. Within children's arts, the most recent and notable development has perhaps been the arrival of productions aimed at the very youngest audiences.

This chapter provides an overview of existing research into the relatively new genre of Theatre for Early Years, meaning theatre for children from birth to around three-years-old. It outlines a genealogy of practice, and presents several discourses which have defined the field of inquiry, from instrumentalism to human rights. In addition, a synthesis of current evidence for the spectatorial capacities of the very young is presented, drawn from developmental psychology. As Evelyn Goldfinger has noted, "it may be time for theatre theory to recognise and study the emergence of theatre for babies – whether theatrical installation or performance – and the accompanying new practices required for its production" (2011, p.298).

## 2.2 The history of Theatre for Early Years

Before outlining the specific history of TEY, it is worth considering Manon van de Water's criticism of the partiality of a historiographic approach to children's theatre: "From Mark Twain in the United States to Alexandra Gozenpud in Soviet Russia, writers have claimed 'firsts', 'most significants,' and 'influentials,' constructing an image of the field that was at the very least incomplete, periodising and situating it in a liminal and limiting frame of what Roger Bedard coined as 'theatre-but-not-theatre'" (2012a, p.9). While the starting point of professionally-produced theatre for babies can be identified, albeit tentatively, it is true that the roots of theatre for children are more difficult to delineate; even the century in which theatre for children first

appeared is contested. A notable lack of data on these ephemeral and previously overlooked performance events aimed at the young, whether in archives or online records, complicates the task further. Perhaps more importantly, the implicit assumptions of such historiographies (especially, but not only, that children constitute a separate, different audience from adults) serve to ghettoise children's theatre as 'other'. There is a danger that, by defining the beginning point and major milestones of TEY, the discourse around it becomes disconnected from its more radical practices and instead wound into the long-running debates within the academy about educational content or theatre literacy. However, it is important also to recognise the usefulness to practitioners and scholars alike of a genealogy of the art-form, centred on practice rather than philosophy.

### 2.2.1 Babies in the audience

As spectators, evidence from the visual arts from around Europe suggests that children and their families had attended morality and Mystery Plays for centuries before. Outside Europe, scholars have argued that storytelling theatre served as "an informal method of socialisation in society" for children of all ages in the pre-colonial period (Udoka, 2012, p.37). Performance explicitly designed to appeal to family audiences emerged during the nineteenth century in the forms of pantomime, circus and music hall, as the perception of children completed its shift from "little adults" to unformed innocents (Hardyment, 2008, p.14). Across Europe, pioneers such as Zachris Topelius created educational texts for performance by and with children throughout the same period, including Fröbel's 'action-songs', *Mutter- und Koseleider* (1906). Babies often attended the Victorian theatre and music hall with older siblings, although performances were not intended for them as an audience. Some playbills from the period suggest that noisy babies were considered a problem by proprietors, as they bear the words "Children under Three Years of Age will NOT be admitted."[9]

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[9] It is interesting to note that by the twentieth century, some theatres (notably within the Women's Theatre movement) were beginning to provide "a well-equipped nursery, with cribs and maid, so that mothers can bring their babies to the matinee and be free to enjoy it" (*Lewiston Daily Sun*, 1902, p.3).

**Figure 4: Playbill from the Royal Strand Theatre, 6ᵗʰ January 1862**
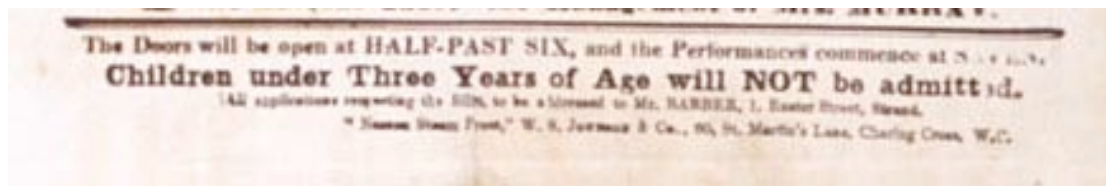


In Britain, Harriet Finlay-Johnson and Henry Caldwell Cook created the earliest forms of theatre aimed directly at children around the time of the First World War (Bolton, 1999), with Winifred Ward following closely in the USA (Ward, 1950). However, these first productions did not accommodate the youngest spectators (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b). It is arguable that attendance by babies and toddlers probably reduced during the twentieth century, due to a combination of disapproval from venues and a dearth of suitable material, although evidence in the form of audience data is extremely limited. The development of "instructive children's theatre" (Reason, 2010, p.3) since the 1920s has been linked by scholars to the growth of middle-class or neo-Victorian attitudes to childhood – children as innocent and in need of moral education. In 1943, Peter Slade's Pear Tree Players became the first professional Theatre in Education (TiE) company (Slade, 1955), performing in schools and youth centres. Until the late 1990s in the UK, it was relatively common for TiE companies to take their work into nurseries as well as schools, but it is debatable how carefully performances were calibrated to suit the capabilities and limitations of children of differing ages within the same educational setting. Today, touring productions of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) are often advertised as suitable 'for families' or 'for all ages', particularly in commercial theatre, with the intention of attracting the widest possible audience; these performances tend not to have been tailored to the needs of the youngest spectators, and arguably are not suitable for them.

## 2.2.2 The emergence of Theatre for Early Years

TEY arguably emerged in 1978 with the work of two London-based companies, Theatre Kit and Oily Cart. Chris Speyer, founder of radical children's theatre company Theatre Kit, describes the epiphany which led to the earliest experiments in TEY:

The move into under fives theatre was prompted by an occasion when we took [Speyer's wife] Katherine [Ukleja]'s niece Annie, then aged three, to see a performance of one of our shows for children. Finding that various aspects of the show frightened Annie, Katherine decided that we should develop a form of theatre tailored to the needs, interests and concentration spans of under fives. (Speyer, 2004)

Theatre Kit produced around five productions for nurseries and preschools, including *Crocodile Pie*, before the company finally folded in 1982, due to loss of direct subsidy, according to company member Mandy Budge (personal interview, Jan 16, 2013). Several key members of Theatre Kit had already left to set up a new children's theatre company named Oily Cart, including Tim Webb, Max Reinhardt [Dave Bennett] and Claire de Loon [Alison Webb]. It is often claimed that the first purpose-designed performance for pre-school children (aged two to five) was Oily Cart's *Exploding Punch & Judy* in 1981 (see for example Brown, 2012, pp.3–4), but this may obscure the achievements of the company's predecessor. Nonetheless, Oily Cart have gone on to produce at least one show a year for under-fives, although it was not until 2002 that they began making work for the youngest audiences (six months to two years), with *Jumpin' Beans*.

In 1987, the first recorded performance for newborns, Joëlle Rouland's *L'oiseau serein* [*The Serene Bird*], was presented in France (Ben Soussan and Mignon, 2008), at the same time as Italy's La Baracca – Testoni Ragazzi began their long career with *Acqua* [*Water*] (Frabetti *et al*., 2000); La Baracca's founders, Roberto and Valeria Frabetti, were invited by staff at a local nido [crèche] to develop a workshop, and later a performance, for their children, aged from 3 months to 5 years (Churchill Dower, 2004, p.9). This project, which became *Acqua* (1987), has a claim to be the first non-English production staged for this age group (specifically, a target age of two to four years). Over the following 25 years, La Baracca has been at the forefront of research and creation of theatre experiences for ever younger audiences in Europe, with at least thirty different plays now produced for the under-fives (Frabetti *et al*., 2000). More than fifteen companies currently produce work for this age group in Italy (see Appendix C).

La Baracca's work is heavily influenced by the child-centred Reggio Emilia approach prevalent in education throughout northern Italy (Frabetti, 2009, p.138),

involving children in creative, self-directed, participatory activities (Edwards, 1993). Perhaps the relative lack of success in importing this particular pedagogic model to Britain, by comparison with other progressive influences such as Waldorf Steiner education (Steiner, 1996) and the Montessori Method (Montessori, 2004), explains the decades-long delay before the genre truly took root in the UK. Oily Cart and La Baracca's pioneering early work catered for verbal, mobile children who could comprehend narratives and participate in song and dance; only Rouland's work explored the practices required for babies and toddlers who had not yet fully developed these skills.

In the UK, at least 200 performing arts experiences (including opera, ballet, contemporary dance, mime, visual art installations and classical concerts) have been created since 1978 for children from birth to three.[10] It should be noted that the frequency of productions sharply increases with age, with around three times as many for two-year-olds as for newborns, and almost five times as many productions for three-year-olds (see figure 5). A similar pattern can be observed across Europe, and to a lesser but increasing extent, the Americas, Australia, Asia and Africa, where a variety of sociocultural factors have influenced the growth of TEY. For example, TEY in the USA is largely divided between large-scale commercial work which tours on a national scale, such as *Dora the Explorer Live* (2013) and *Sesame Street Live* (2011), and regional hubs which have developed in-house programmes of work for the very young, including the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta and the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis. To a lesser extent, a small-scale European-style touring ecology is beginning to emerge, particularly around New York and Chicago, while higher education institutions such as Bowie State University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison have become sites of experimentation in TEY. Nonetheless, as well as home-grown forms, Megan Alrutz has claimed that "many of the new trends shaping the face of TVY in the US come from increased exposure to international performances that philosophically, aesthetically, and literally connect with babies and very young children on their eye level" (2009, p.123).

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[10] The data informing Figures 5 and 6 are drawn from a database collated over the past four years, included as Appendix C. Regular Google searches in a variety of languages (e.g. "theatre for babies" in Spanish as "teatro para bebes"), combined with examination of listings for major international festivals, produced entries for more than 800 separate productions. Performances in languages I do not speak, such as Japanese or South Korean, were more difficult to identify, and where these were present, they mainly emerged from English translations of festival brochures. The data therefore display a bias towards productions featured at festivals where English is the main language, meaning that a geographical analysis would not be appropriate.

**Figure 5: Age Suitability of TEY Productions in the UK**



UK Performances for
the Very Young since 1981
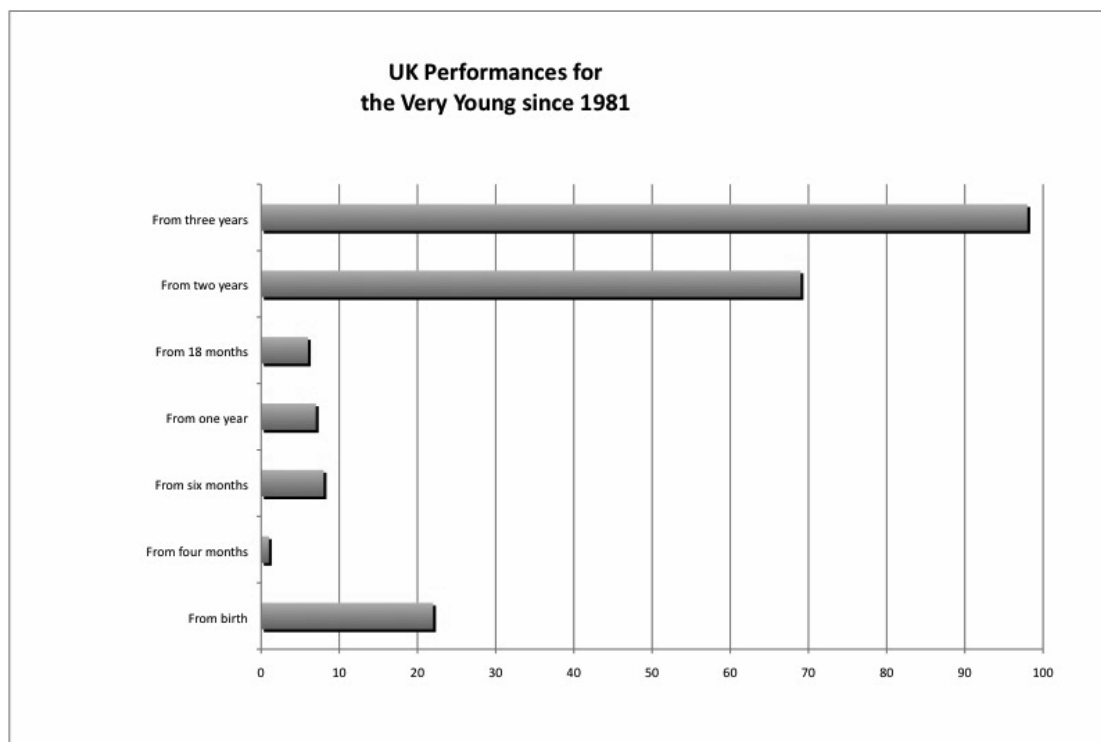
The surprising peak in productions listed as suitable from birth may be due to an assumption, prevalent until recently, of regarding early childhood as "monolithic, erroneously assuming that 'one size fits all'" (Goldberg, 2011, p.274). However, as will be discussed below and in section 4.6.6, many theatre-makers now believe, in keeping with the highly focused study of narrow age-bands within developmental psychology, that age-specificity is a key aspect of the TEY phenomenon.

From a handful in the 1980s, around 80 new TEY productions are now staged every year around the world (see figure 6), with over 800 professional productions to date suitable for children within the birth-to-three bracket (see also Appendix C).

**Figure 6: Frequency of New TEY Productions Worldwide, 1978-2014**
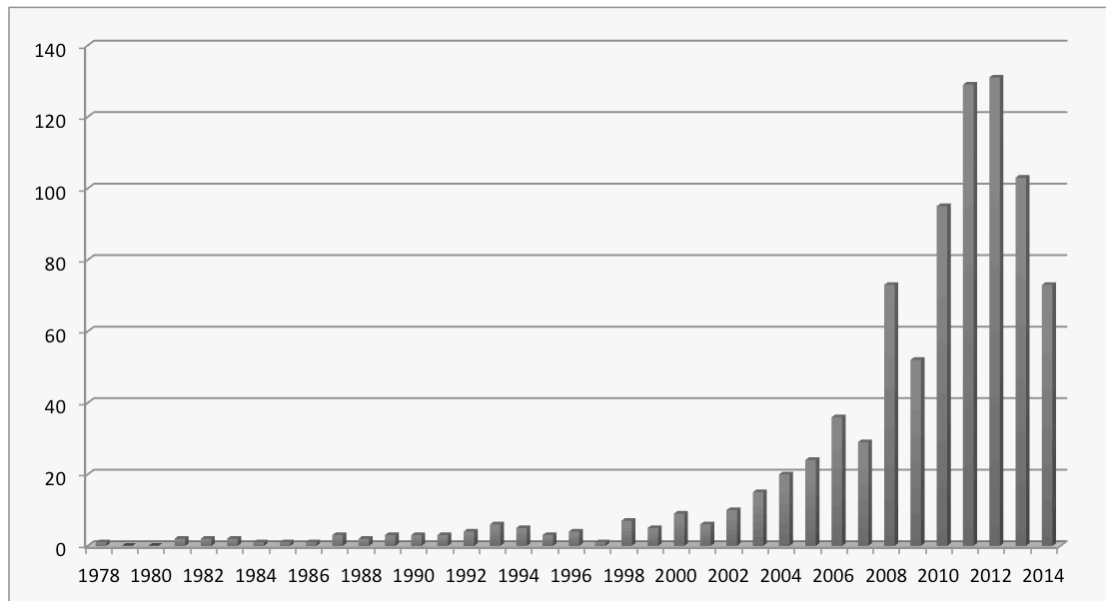


As can be seen in figure 6, there appears to have been a reduction in the number of TEY premieres since 2012. While this may simply represent shortcomings in data collection rather than a true decline in production, there could be an alternative explanation, namely that a 'tipping point' has been reached whereby the scale of the body of work available permits companies to stage revivals of earlier successful work rather than creating new pieces. Long-running productions such as *White*, with more than 1,000 performances by 2016, are perhaps indicative of this shift.

The growth in Early Years arts of all kinds, from theatre to dance, from opera to visual art, is bound up in a complex web of local, regional, national and supra-national processes, including radical art practices from adult theatre (see section 2.4), Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (see section 2.5), the increase in childcare and women in work, the rise of the middle class (Schonmann, 2006), educational developments such as pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1973), increased understanding of neural development in infancy, programmes designed to combat child poverty and the shedding of old orthodoxies about 'premature exposure' to art. However, there are also several organisations and campaigning groups whose influence has been key to the burgeoning legitimation of TEY, especially ASSITEJ (van de Water, 2012a), the EU Programme of Culture 2000 Glitterbird Project (Young and Powers, 2009) and the Small Size network (Belloli, 2009).

### 2.2.3 TEY in Scotland

The rise of TEY in Scotland is even more recent than in England, although the number of productions is now considerable. Scotland's first TEY performance for babies from birth to three was *Little Light* in 2007, produced by the fledgling Starcatchers programme and inspired by the Glitterbird Project in Europe (Young and Powers, 2009, p.9). Prior to this, Scottish companies had only produced work for children over three, as part of the country's long (if uneven) tradition of theatre for children. Since 2007, Starcatchers has produced more than 30 pieces of work for the very young ranging from performances to installations to short films. More established companies, such as Scottish Opera, Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, Puppet Lab, Shona Reppe and Fish & Game have begun to make work for ever younger age groups, while alumni of Starcatchers have continued to explore TEY with their own companies, such as Frozen Charlotte and Vanessa Rigg. Around 100 productions suitable for children aged from birth to three have been produced between 2007 and 2015 in Scotland (see Appendix C).

A noteworthy factor in the increase in TEY within Scotland has been the programming of international work at the Imaginate Festival, held each year in Edinburgh. One report into TEY provision noted that productions from Europe and further afield "have provided a wider benchmark, shared points of reference and cohesion" for Scottish practitioners (Young and Powers, 2009, p.9), many of whom continue to cite international work seen at Imaginate as a key inspiration for their practice (see Chapter 4). As Imaginate's director between 1995 and 2015, Tony Reekie, has claimed: "Prior to 1990, with the exception of TAG and occasional work by companies like Communicado, the quality of work in Scotland was poor. The work was cheap, under-produced, under-rehearsed variations on pantomime with enough audience participation to keep the audiences from catching breath to realise what rubbish it all was" (2005, p.38). Scottish children's theatre, focused on entertainment, is sometimes contrasted with the more pedagogic style of Theatre in Education with which England is identified, and it is certainly the case that Scottish commercial theatre for the over-threes, such as the long-running and highly successful *The Singing Kettle* franchise (founded in 1982 by Artie Tresize and Cilla Fisher), does little to dispel this assertion.

However, TEY in Scotland has been influenced by a very different tradition, that of continental European theatre for children (Young and Powers, 2009; Dunlop *et al.*, 2011), where collaboration with psychologists and child development specialists is a common practice. One mode of legitimation of the emerging TEY phenomenon is to recognise the careful tailoring of performances to particular developmental milestones, as will be explored in the next section.

## 2.3 The use of developmental milestones in theory and practice

Typically, artists creating work for children from birth to age three will employ deductive methods, such as collaboration with specialists to exploit their knowledge of child development, or inductive techniques such as inviting test audiences into rehearsals to discover what captivates their audiences. Artists' methods of creating work for Early Years vary depending on the intended audience: for newborns, productions often centre on attachment and bonding; for babies, performances might be interactive, revolving around a shared sensory or kinaesthetic experience; for toddlers, the focus may be participatory, exploring independence and self-identity; for pre-schoolers, productions can be a bridge to more traditional forms of theatre, dance or music.

Both artists and observers adopt the over-arching term 'theatre' to describe these differing forms, although the sheer variety of performance styles seems to complicate its use. TEY experiences are certainly created by theatre-makers, take place in theatre venues and are culturally situated as theatre by critics and commentators. However, some productions lack actors, text, temporality and / or narrative, resembling "a soft play area" (Tomlin, 2015, p.81), art installations or even undirected play rather than accepted theatrical norms. Traditional notions of the site as *theatron* ['seeing place'] and the event as *drama* ['action'] are troubled when a performance consists of unmediated interplay between baby and carer, as in *BabyChill* (2010), or where the audience simply build and destroy structures, as in *Le jardin du possible* (2002). *BabyChill*'s inflatable tent, even when placed in a theatre venue, does not resemble a conventional stage where dramatic action is expected to

take place – instead, the structure cocoons parents and babies inside pastel panels, replacing bare boards with a soft carpet of cushions, and hiding participants from external spectators (see figure 7). *Le jardin du possible*, by contrast, is often presented in studio theatres, with adults ranged around the walls to observe their children playing with large piles of natural materials, such as pebbles, sand and sticks. The action is entirely determined by the child participants, whose free play forms the drama in its entirety (see figure 8).

The lack of conventional theatricality – of actors performing a story in character to a still and silent crowd – may explain critical reluctance to recognise TEY as a dramatic art-form, despite its resemblances to avant-garde work for adults. This struggle with legitimation will be explored more fully in section 2.4.2.

**Figure 7: Setting for *BabyChill* (2010).**
**Image courtesy of Sacha Kyle.**

**Figure 8: Performance of *Le jardin du possible* (2002).**
**Image courtesy of Benôit Sicat.**



The inherent vulnerability of this audience, combined with claims that babies and toddlers lack spectatorial capacities, have further troubled the field. This section therefore seeks to interrogate the praxis by which performance makers tailor their work to the burgeoning developmental capabilities of the very young, both to reflect artists' duty of care to a vulnerable audience and to provide evidence for sophisticated spectatorial ability, framed in response to Evelyn Goldfinger's call at the start of this chapter for theatre studies to engage with TEY.

### 2.3.1 Debates around TEY

Oily Cart's artistic director Tim Webb resolved to begin creating theatre for under-fives in reaction to more conservative practitioners who rejected this "difficult" audience (Brown, 2012). Three decades on, still lacking a coherent dramaturgy justifying TEY, artists perceive a need to legitimise their practice to audiences (Weinert-Kendt, 2010) and even fellow practitioners (Taube, 2009), as well as justifying receipt of public funds (Knight, 2011). It is notable that the most successful mode of legitimation for this controversial art form remains the perceived benefit of arts experiences for future well-being, especially learning and mental health

(Weinert-Kendt, 2010); for example, publicity material for some US companies prominently displays the purported developmental advantage of TEY. It should be noted that several studies have explored the long-term benefits of arts attendance by children (see for example Elsley and McMellon, 2010), although concrete outcomes remain elusive (Klein, 2005).

Nonetheless, despite its educational and social potential, performance to and for the very young has frequently been portrayed as frivolous, risky, meaningless, impossible or potentially damaging to their emerging creative minds. Writing before more recent growth in understanding of the infant brain and the expansion of child-centred education, some children's theatre pioneers decried performance for Early Years (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b); for example, influential puppeteer Sergei Obraztsov claimed that "children's theatre is harmful under the age of six" (Novák, 2009, p.69), and the year after Oily Cart created the UK's first TEY production but before the movement reached the USA, Jed H. Davis and Mary Jane Evans stated that "children younger than four are not yet ready for theatre" (1982, p.59). Some scholars believe that, as children cannot always separate illusion from reality, they therefore cannot suspend disbelief at will, and thus cannot comprehend theatre (Schonmann, 2002; Goldfinger, 2011).

Yet despite considerable critical opposition to performing for babies and toddlers, increasing numbers of artists are seeking to provide experiences for the very young. To counter accusations of frivolity or harm, the use of evidence derived from education and developmental psychology is common (Young and Powers, 2009; Dunlop *et al*., 2011; Knight, 2011). Certain psychologists, such as Colwyn Trevarthen, have developed new models of infant creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and intersubjectivity from birth, or even in the womb (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009). It has been demonstrated, for example, that babies learn the cadences and accent of mothers' speech *in utero*, and that they can recall music played to them before birth (Lecanuet, 1996). Children only a few hours old can imitate facial expressions, while in just a few weeks they begin to hold complex vocal-physical conversations with their primary carers in a performative proto-culture. Far from being helpless and unaware of their own existence, newborns display deliberate intentionality and intersubjectivity, including expressive gestures. At six months, infants enjoy games and take pleasure in their parents' admiration, respond reliably and precisely to new

sound sources and can discriminate different melodies with ease. By nine months, they have fully grasped turn-taking in dialogues and early attempts at words emerge. Imitative role-play, predictive ability and make-believe emerge in the second year, laying the foundations for narrative understanding (see Deliège and Sloboda 1996; Malloch and Trevarthen 2009; Chang and Choi, 2015). Furthermore, skills in metaphoric fluency, imagination and object substitution appear to peak before the age of five, and decline thereafter (Egan and Ling, 2002) – young children are natural prodigies in the domain of imaginative dexterity. From our earliest years, an understanding of performance appears to be ingrained, even instinctual.

### 2.3.2 Audience profiles for children from birth to three

This section seeks to investigate the specific ways in which performance-makers may tailor their work to the developmental capabilities of the very young, expanding on the audience profiles of children from four- to fifteen-years-old created by Davis and Evans (1982). As Jeanne Klein has usefully outlined (2005), several age-related taxonomies were applied to children's theatre in the twentieth century, including Winifred Ward's "imaginative", "heroic" and "romantic" periods, roughly correlating with ages six to nine, nine to 12, and 13 plus (1950). Similarly, Johnny Saldaña's longitudinal study of drama with and theatre for children (1996) covers a period from kindergarten to age 11. Methodological issues such as small sample sizes weaken the reliability of some of these profiles; indeed, Davis and Evans' work has itself been criticised for a reliance on outdated Piagetian models (Klein, 2005), although its division into Cognitive, Spatial, Emotional and Moral / Ethical areas, deriving from developmental psychology, provides a useful model. Each of the taxonomies mentioned above excludes children younger than four, so this section proposes equivalent audience profiles from birth to three-years-old based on more recent studies.

However, the aim is not to provide "artistic formulas for creating meaningful productions" (Klein, 2005, p.53) from a "body of assumptions, mostly research-based" (Davis and Evans, 1982, p.72) for direct application by theatre-makers; this approach has rightly been described as "vulgar-Piagetian theory… [and] narrowly conceived developmentalism" (Walsh, 2002, p.102). Instead, the intention is to explore how empirically derived milestones could inform the development of existing

performances *in practice*, and to open up the creative process for further debate and investigation.

Six age groups were identified for closer study within TEY's frame of birth to three-years-old: birth to three months; three to six months; six months to one year; one year to eighteen months; eighteen months to two years; two to three years. This reflects the prodigious physical and neurological changes which take place throughout early infancy when compared with later childhood and adolescence.

Two ability tests, the Mullen Scales of Early Learning (Mullen, 1995) and the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (Black and Matula, 2000), were then used to form concise summaries of typical cognitive and physical abilities at each stage, roughly corresponding to Davis and Evans' Cognitive and Spatial categories. These tests are extensively validated and used worldwide to assess development. However, social milestones are not included, so a summary of social development for each age was synthesised from recent developmental psychology surveys (Sheridan, Sharma and Cockerill, 2007; Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009; Gross, 2010). This is intended to be broadly comparable to the Emotional and Moral / Ethical categories used by Davis and Evans, but employing contemporary terminology.

The six audience profiles are presented below:

**Table 1: Audience Profiles for Children from Birth to Three (adapted from Fletcher-Watson *et al.*, 2014)**

| Age | Cognitive capabilities | Physical capabilities | Social capabilities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Birth – 3 months** | Grasp reflexes; visual acuity approaches adult threshold; visual fixation and tracking; alert and responsive to sounds; attracted to light sources; vocalisation / cooing. | Head and shoulder control develop; jerky flexion of fingers, arms and legs. | Attachment / attunement to primary caregiver; social smile at six weeks; deliberate eye contact; imitation / responsive vocalisation. |
| **3 – 6 months** | Vision, hearing and breathing refined; start of hand-eye coordination and intentional grasping / manipulation; coordinated phonation; exploratory vocal play, proto-conversations and responses to Motherese. | Good upper body control; supported sitting; rolling over; finger play. | Eager anticipation of predictable / recurrent events; special interest in faces; vocal response to familiar voices / faces; pride and shame emerge. |
| **6 – 12 months** | Visual memory for hidden items; banging and manipulation of multiple objects; understanding of action and inhibitory words ('up' / 'no'); babbling becomes first word; varied vocalisations with two syllables. | Excellent upper body control and then, weight bearing on legs; stands and bounces – may pull to stand; independent sitting; partial pincer grip; crawling. | Beginnings of shared joint attention on people or objects; enjoys repetition, games and turn-taking; separation anxiety; early understanding of objects' permanence and recognition of emotion; sustained attention span of over one minute. |
| **12 – 18 months** | Spatial awareness, visual memory and understanding of object function; emptying / filling; increasing auditory comprehension for commands and object names; combines sounds and gestures. | General limb control and upright mobility become balance; walking; using two hands together; full pincer grip; throwing objects underhand; pointing; left- / right-handedness emerge. | Inquisitiveness develops – less repetition, more detail; learns own name; language acquisition begins with one-word stage; ability to discern wrong notes. |
| **18 months – 2 years** | Perception of forms becomes increasingly refined; responds to verbal requests; emergent grammar and expanding vocabulary (20 words at 18 months, 200 at 21 months) – two word stage. | Running; kicking; climbing; carrying objects. | Enjoys rhymes and songs, and may try to join in; concentration span expands; alternates between independence and clinging; tantrums begin; imitative role play begins. |
| **2 – 3 years** | Able to match objects by shape, size or colour; fine finger dexterity – turning pages, stacking blocks; conceptual ability increases – size, length, colour; use of numbers; explosion in vocabulary of up to ten new words a day; use of full sentences with pronouns and prepositions. | Jumping; using stairs alone; squatting; tiptoeing. | Theory of Mind emerges (understanding of existence of others' minds and points-of-view); empathy, affection, curiosity, jealousy; object substitution (pretending one thing is another); vividly imaginative role play; emergence of narrative in self-expression. |

### 2.3.3 Use of developmental milestones in practice

Critic Mark Fisher has claimed that "the younger the audience gets, the more focused the shows have to be" (2008). Performing arts experiences can thus be explicitly tailored to accommodate the capabilities of the audience, whether the need to bond with primary caregivers in a quiet, soothing environment in the immersive experience for newborns, *BabyChill* (2010), or the newly-found empathetic facility central to the French-Canadian narrative play *Glouglou* (2004). Today's artists collaborate with infant specialists or regularly test performances to construct a nuanced interplay between aesthetics and ability, fitted to their spectators.

To take into account developmental milestones is to celebrate an audience's current capabilities, offer opportunities to explore the now, and reject the future-oriented training in 'theatre literacy' preached for the last century. Traditions and boundaries are either presented for re-negotiation or expelled entirely – as shown in figure 1, the improvised dance-theatre piece *Oogly Boogly* (2003) makes no distinction between stage and auditorium, nor performer and spectator. Similarly, Swedish play *Babydrama* (2006) ameliorates its unusual 80-minute length by permitting loss of focus, allowing each audience member to move away from the action if they become bored or distracted (Höjer, 2009; see Figure 11). Captivation is not necessarily the aim; instead, baby spectators may engage with theatre on their own terms. In the experiential piece *Le jardin du possible* (2002), traditional theatrical hierarchies are reversed as touch and smell take priority over sound and sight (Pinkert, 2009), reflecting new capabilities in fine motor control. Not simply spectators, children are granted the right to give themselves up to their instinctual desire to participate, rejecting the passive and prescriptive (Hendy and Toon, 2001) in favour of independence and interplay in a shared theatrical space.

Such performances highlight another vital developmental process – the path from attachment to self-confident autonomy. Productions such as *BabyChill* and *Bebé Babá* (2001) centre on the presence of the parent, as they are aimed at the youngest babies, while *Oogly Boogly* allows its tightly-prescribed audience of 12- to 18-month-olds to range further in safety, moving away from their caregivers but able to return at any time. By the time a child is old enough to attend *Le jardin du possible* (from 18 months), they no longer suffer from separation anxiety and actively seek

experiences for solo exploration and collaborative peer activity. Vulnerability is thus both respected and confronted, the artist exploiting their knowledge of developmental capabilities simultaneously to keep their audience safe and test their limits.

Furthermore, a distinction can be made between what Carol Lorenz terms a "didactic and moralizing theatre" (2002, p.97) explicitly teaching children, among other things, how to be an audience, and a theatre which takes into account their requirements in order to present novel concepts, assuming them to be a natural audience. For example, a text-based TEY piece such as *Glouglou* may appear traditionally instructive in style, but makes vital concessions to the spectator, presenting a subject matter (the daily life of a baby) whose familiarity is comforting, in order to introduce the novelty of narrative drama. By contrast, the Soviet practice of 'theatre literacy' in Russian children's theatre emphasised knowledge and understanding of theatrical concepts and terminology (van de Water, 2004).

Performances designed for tightly specified age-ranges therefore implicitly reject the twentieth century's didactic approach to TEY. The influence in particular of Lev Vygotsky (1978) on theatre for children has waned: where once there was a belief that theatre should be edifying, spurring on constant advancement in each child, or goal-oriented, tutoring them in the traditions of the stage to create a theatrically-literate spectator (Schonmann, 2002), now the aspiration is often engagement on their own terms: celebrating the present rather than striving towards the future.

Theatre for Early Years employs a multiplicity of forms to engage with its rapidly changing audience, from play environments to performative installations, from improvisatory co-creation to narrative dramas, and Liz Tomlin asserts that "the importance of audience immersion and sensory stimulation beyond the verbal and the visual began to underpin the majority of theatre for the very young in the 2000s" (2015, p.81). As described above, many of TEY's creative forms, and the immersive, sensory or participatory practices associated with them, seem to trouble traditional notions of theatre, leading some scholars to describe the genre as "a more sophisticated kind of game" (Goldfinger, 2011, p.297) rather than a distinctly theatrical field. Yet it can be argued that game and its corollary, play, are in fact

woven into performance for the very young as an explicit performance process of co-action, just as Erika Fischer-Lichte has posited for adult productions:

> Through their physical presence, perception and response, the spectators become co-actors that generate the performance by participating in the 'play'. The rules that govern the performance correspond to the rules of a game, negotiated by all participants... they are followed and broken by all in equal measure. (2008, p.32)

In the next section, I will use the work of Hans-Thies Lehmann and Erika Fischer-Lichte to position TEY as inherently postdramatic, abandoning the tacitly accepted "theatre of dramas" (Lehmann, 2006, p.21) in favour of a decentred, non-hierarchical and explicitly playful theatre, embracing equality of form, equality of presence and equality of action to define an ideal of TEY. These equalities are only achievable if developmental capabilities are taken into account by theatre-makers: a newborn baby's first encounter with performance is more easily mediated by their primary caregiver rather than a stranger, but the artist is needed to create the theatricalised setting and atmosphere to help the parent perform for their child; similarly, in responding to a toddler's natural hedonic desire to participate by carefully rationing agency, the artist demolishes hierarchies of experience or skill – all actions are welcomed as contributions to the drama.

In summary, for some artists, testing a piece with its target audience will suggest 'what works', while for others, collaboration with child development professionals provides a strong theoretical foundation for their artistic practice. Neither inductive nor deductive practices guarantee a well-received production, but respect for the audience's needs reflects the very best practice and also fulfils the artist's duty of care to a vulnerable population. Knowledge of developmental milestones is a powerful tool when creating work for the very young; a readiness to experiment allied with inductive exploration of the latest research and / or the assistance of infant specialists uses these milestones not as prescriptive formulae, but a springboard towards equality.

## 2.4 Other modes of legitimation: *paidia*, postdrama and play

The sensitive use of developmental milestones is an important element in the journey towards legitimation of TEY, but further steps are required, not least the justification of the employment of play as a central concern. A turbulent and anarchic playfulness, termed *paidia* by Roger Caillois (2001), can be said to lie at the heart of theatre for babies and toddlers. Performing arts experiences for the very young often permit spontaneous play as a discrete element of performance. This can be at specific participatory moments or, more commonly, in a post-performance exploratory play session. Some productions are wholly rooted in spontaneous play, whether solo, in collaboration with other children, or playing with adults as 'co-actors' (Fletcher-Watson, 2015b). Here, infant play interweaves with artistic practice to create unpredictable and unrepeatable hedonic experiences. Often wordless and without explicit narrative, they seem to challenge normative modes of performance for children, but the privileging of *paidia* simultaneously ushers the audience into a postdramatic world and returns theatre to its primæval form, co-created play.

By permitting babies to play freely, theatre-makers help children to construct tiny dramas or micro-narratives (building a tower then knocking it down, or opening a box to release a balloon), which do not need to connect into a coherent whole in order to satisfy their audience, being inherently engaging. Audiences become actors when children join in the play, and by observing others around them, actors become audiences.

### 2.4.1 *Ludus* versus *Paidia*

Playing is key to the entire genre of Theatre for Early Years (TEY). This play is not always *ludus,* defined by Roger Caillois as rule-bound or formalised; rather, it often privileges the inverse impulse, *paidia*: "diversion, turbulence, free improvisation, and carefree gaiety… a kind of uncontrollable fantasy" (2001, p.13). Engagement with theatrical productions may also fulfil many of the criteria synthesised by playworker Bob Hughes, being spontaneous, goalless, freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated, repetitious, neophilic and non-detrimental (2001, p.12). This is the natural hedonic state of being for babies, their 'rehearsal for life', where identities and experiences are continually demolished and rebuilt (English, 2005, p.182). By repeating actions and experimenting with the world around them, children begin to

develop their own understandings of cause-and-effect – they make meaning through play. Just as a baby will physically investigate texture and colour during a meal, by grasping and smearing food, so they test and evaluate social identities via play, by sharing, role-playing, or communicating with looks and gestures.

This section will explore the process that transforms the natural expression of *paidia* into a theatrical event, positing that this may have commonalities with the adult genre of postdramatic theatre. It challenges adult conceptions of children as requiring training as spectators (Schonmann, 2002), unskilled or even unworthy of culture. Positioning TEY within a postdramatic frame, as defined by Hans-Thies Lehmann and others, it argues that the rejection of traditional modes of performance may legitimise infant theatre artistically and developmentally.

## 2.4.2 Theatre or 'non-theatre'?

As described earlier, more than 800 productions have now been created around the world for children under three, including operas, ballets, installations, comedy and Shakespeare. However, prevalence cannot be equated to legitimation; critics and theorists remain divided on two key issues: at what age a child possesses the capacity to enjoy theatre, and whether those performance experiences deriving from play and/or lacking key elements of the dramatic paradigm (such as actors, text and narrative) can be considered theatrical.

In 1950, American children's theatre pioneer Winifred Ward stated, "a series [of productions] for tiny children is unnecessary, for they do not need a theatre" (1950, p.120), while UK counterpart Peter Slade commanded, "never put on a show for an audience at this age [5 to 7 years]" (1955, p.139). It has been claimed that "back in 1989 theatre for this age [meaning babies] in the UK would have been unthinkable" (Ball *et al*., 2007, p.4), while some scholars have described performance as potentially disturbing to natural development (Papoušek, 1996, p.108). The proposed age threshold has lowered over time, but the implication that children lack spectatorial capacities remains: "we can assume that the earliest age children are able to enjoy theatre would be three years old" (Schonmann, 2006, p.23).

Statements such as these make four specific assumptions drawn from adult conceptions of childhood, rather than a child-centred basis (Lorenz, 2002, p.107): firstly, that theatre for babies is unnecessary compared with theatre for older children

or adults; secondly, that babies have an 'innocence' that can be 'tainted' by exposure to professional performance; thirdly, that babies lack skill in meaning-making and comprehension of illusion; fourthly, that these three deficiencies render performance to babies valueless. As can be seen in Table 1 above, some critical assumptions are contradicted by current studies. However, the first objection to TEY – that very young children do not need access to culture – cannot be answered via developmental psychology.

As Evelyn Goldfinger points out, "this argument echoes the same thinking or prejudice that many people have regarding theatre for children in general" (2011, p.295). The perceived need for theatre for children older than four has been articulated by theatre-makers such as playwright David Wood, who states that "quality theatre for children is valuable in that it opens the door for children to a new world of excitement and imagination" (Wood and Grant, 1997, p.5), while also discussing "the problem of babies and toddlers spoiling things for their older brothers and sisters" (ibid., p.206). As with Ward, Slade and other twentieth-century children's theatre figures, TYA is presented as intrinsically beneficial and necessary for older children, but not for their younger counterparts.

Emphasising children's needs, or lack of them, has been described as infantilising (Bell, 2011), relying as it does on a view of the child as incomplete or undeveloped, rather than autonomous. Instead, it may be possible to reframe the issue as a right to access culture, regardless of age, which grants choice and agency to the very young – this will be discussed further in section 2.5. The need for theatre and the concept of a right to culture are distinct, and should not be conflated, but there is nonetheless a associative relationship between the two: "while both offer analyses of deficits that impact on human life, needs are a simple articulation of that deficit… while rights provide a tool for action" (Robins, 2013, p.33). As a "tool for action", Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms the right "to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts" from birth (United Nations, 1989), which informs the foundation of much contemporary practice (Schneider, 2009b; Nerattini, 2009b).

Within a discourse of rights, the adult no longer enjoys automatic hierarchical privilege when the child becomes the focus of theatre-as-art – although it must be recognised that adults are the consumer of theatre-as-business, being purchaser of

tickets and chaperone (van de Water, 2012a). As already noted in Table 1, data from developmental psychology provide strong evidence for rich aesthetic, communicative and imaginative abilities from birth. Indeed, some scholars argue that babies and toddlers are more skilled than adults in domains such as imaginative dexterity, improvisation and creative inter-play (Egan and Ling, 2002; Corsaro, 2003; Hendy and Toon, 2001). If young children possess both a right to participate in the arts, and capacities for engaging with performance which may in some instances outstrip those of adults, then TEY's inherent legitimacy can be posited. Yet critics still ask: is it theatre, or just play?

Performances such as *Multicoloured Blocks from Space* (2012) and *BabyChill* (2010) situate their audiences as the only participants within the theatrical space, removing professional performers entirely. This lack of professional presence troubles traditional understandings of theatre, since many definitions of drama require an event to be observed. This challenge to tradition is also reflected in some critics' call for theatre literacy, the process of training children to comprehend dramatic tropes, to be situated as the key purpose of theatre for children (Bolton, 1992; Schonmann, 2002). It is claimed that "viewing a play is different from the act of playing" (Schonmann, 2002, p.144) and therefore children must be made to control themselves, to sit quietly, to learn to 'read' the symbols and signs of theatre.

**Figure 9: Scene from *Multicoloured Blocks from Space* (2012).**
**Image courtesy of Starcatchers.**
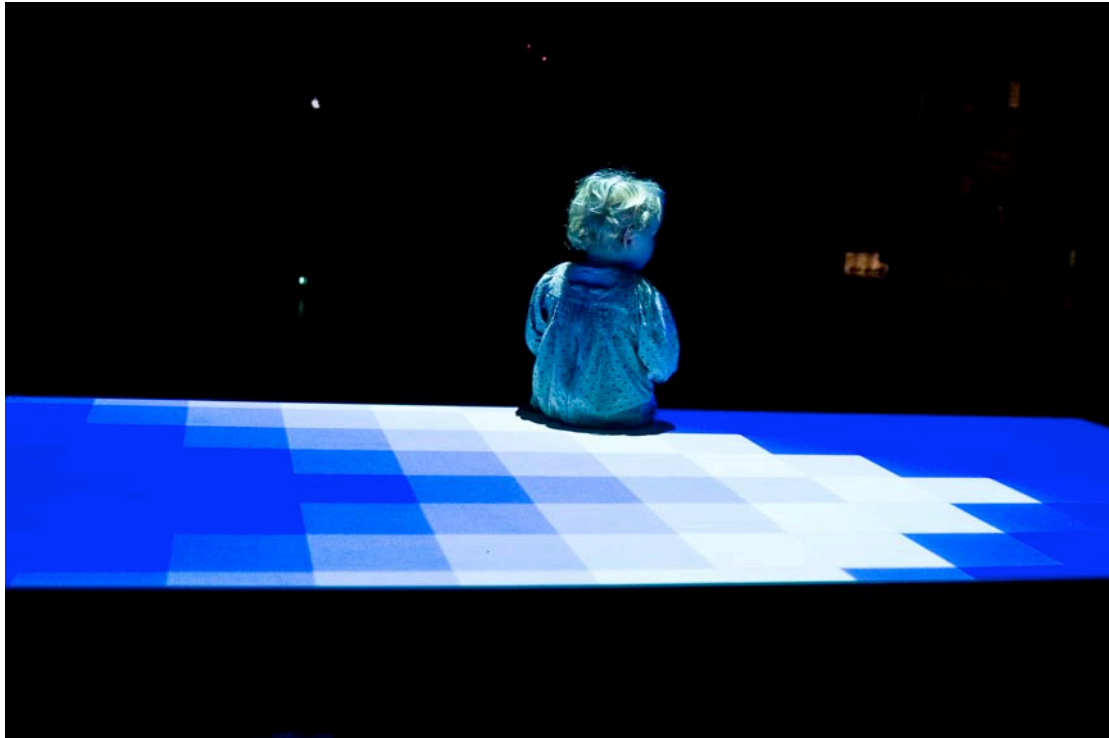


This goal appears to justify the argument that very young children should not visit the theatre, as their innate tendencies towards hedonism (in the form of active participation) and its converse, fear, as well as a lack of behavioural control, preclude them from separating "viewing and doing" (Schonmann, 2002, p.144). The elimination of many traditional dramatic elements, such as narrative, illusion and even applause, seems for some critics to render TEY a form of playful 'non-theatre' which happens to take place in a theatre space.

Only by separating TEY from these assumptions can its more radical practices be truly understood. In fact, its differing forms – variously rejecting temporality, narrative, illusion or even presence – resemble nothing so much as postdramatic theatre. As Hans-Thies Lehmann has noted, "theatre is tacitly thought of as the *theatre of dramas*" (2006, p.21, original emphasis), just as TEY is assumed to be a theatre of dramas for babies and toddlers – and thus productions that reject or subvert drama are deemed 'untheatrical'. However, if TEY is positioned within a postdramatic framework, in terms of intent and form, it can be argued that hedonic play-as-practice is further legitimised. The next three sections develop this argument further, reflecting on Lehmann's work as a route to define TEY as postdramatic, then identifying key practices which fulfil this description, and closing with a direct

comparison of a TEY production with a postdramatic performance for adults, in order to highlight commonalities.

## 2.4.3 TEY as postdrama

Like performance art before it, TEY's radical practices can seem distant from conventional theatre. Some of Lehmann's claims can perhaps be applied to modern forms of performance for the very young – for Lehmann, performance art and postdrama are both characterised by:

> a loss of meaning of the text and its literary coherence. Both work on the physical, affective and spatial relationship between actors and spectators and explore possibilities of participation and interaction, both highlight presence (the doing in the real) as opposed to re-presentation (the mimesis of the fictive), the act as opposed to the outcome. Thus theatre is defined as a process and not as a finished result, as the activity of production and action instead of as a product. (Lehmann, 2006, p.104)

This is also true of much of TEY. Caillois' *paidia* can similarly be classified as process, not product, since the end result is not pre-determined, and may not even be physically created, as when a baby plays with bubbles or water. This paradigmatic cleaving from the dramatic event as the root of performance may explain scholarly difficulties with TEY. Like the early critics of experimental director Robert Wilson's work described by Lehmann, they perhaps feel "like a stranger attending the enigmatic cultic actions of a people unknown to them" (ibid., p.70). Babies, lacking experience and thus preconceptions of performances involving play, could be considered to resemble the adults who "are often more at home with this kind of [postdramatic] theatre than theatregoers who subscribe to literary narrative" (ibid., p.31). TEY privileges the newcomer.

Indeed, some scholars propose that the introduction of *paidia* into performance transforms TEY into "a more sophisticated kind of game" (Goldfinger, 2011, p.297), rendering it other than theatre. Richard Schechner conversely claims that "play [by adults] is what organises performance, makes it comprehensible" (1988, p.98). These opposing viewpoints nonetheless reflect a hegemonic hierarchy within art-

making: adults playing in rehearsal are creating drama; children playing in a theatre, even as part of a performance, are not.

In contrast, Max Herrmann states that audiences co-create theatre in an act of "social play – played by all for all" (quoted in Fischer-Lichte 2008, p.32) and Erika Fischer-Lichte places performance alongside game in a process of co-action, rather than one turning into the other. In both, rules are made up, adhered to and rejected as necessary – no single spectator or performer fully controls the outcome. Eventually, "everyone experiences themselves as involved and responsible for a situation nobody singlehandedly created" (ibid., p.165). Indeed, Matthew Reason has asserted that "every child must feel – both during and after the show – that: 'if I hadn't been there, the show would have been different'" (2010, p.41).

TYA theatre-makers encourage babies to participate on the same terms as adults, emancipating them as spectators composing their own meanings from aesthetic objects, as Jacques Rancière has described for adults: "being at once a performer deploying her skills and a spectator observing what these skills might produce in a new context among other spectators… spectators who play the role of active interpreters, who develop their own translation in order to appropriate the 'story' and make it their own story" (2009, p.22). Additionally, TEY artists frequently extend the role of the child spectator beyond active interpretation to participation in the action, validating the presence of a child at play, where play represents an appropriation, an act of transformation from objects to stories: "[Rancière] makes it easier to recognise the value of being a spectator without changing the theatre into something else, like ritual, process-drama, or playing" (Elnan, 2012, p.174). Placing a child next to an object with which they can play may serve to elevate the child's status and simultaneously lower the performer's status to meet at the point of co-creation. Without children, the stage is simply an assemblage of static objects, stuff in a room; without observers (such as parents, who may also be participants), the experience lacks aesthetic meaning. Babies are equally necessary, and equally legitimate in their presence compared to adults. They are discrete beings rather than dependent becomings: "in a theatre, in front of a performance… there are only ever individuals plotting their own paths in the forest of things, acts and signs that confront or surround them" (Rancière, 2009, p.16).

With this recognition of the roles that very young children can play in a theatre, participation may become not an interruption of the theatrical moment but vital to its success. In consequence, the participative act itself takes priority over any putative outcome: process, not product. In *Le jardin du possible*, toddlers roam among spot-lit piles of leaves, stones, sand and sticks, creating and destroying shapes in a complex web of cooperation (Pinkert, 2009). *Oogly Boogly* permits (for TEY) an unusual degree of agency to its 12-month-old participants, with professional performers instructed simply to copy every movement and vocalisation – the newly mobile toddlers seize the opportunity gleefully (Dartnell, 2009). The Australian production *How High The Sky* (2012) features a striking sequence where all adults withdraw to observe from a distance, leaving the stage solely to babies.

Lehmann describes one aspect of postdrama as "the execution of acts that are real in the here and now and find their fulfilment in the very moment they happen, without necessarily leaving any traces of meaning or a cultural monument" (2006, p.104). Text, narrative and even memory itself – another flaw in TEY, according to some critics, being a baby's inability to remember the experience – can thus be ranked below action. As has been noted in Oily Cart's work for young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, "the focus is on being in the moment, within a temporal framework in which the [autistic] individual foregrounds the present experience and relates to the immediacy of the encounters within the environment s/he inhabits" (Shaughnessy, 2012, p.242).

Thus, as Rike Reininger notes in positioning her practice as postdrama: "adults are not more capable of understanding the performance than small children. There is no need to decode any meaning. There is just the non-hierarchical sensuous theatre experience" (2011, p.3), or as Lehmann posits, "the aesthetic object hardly has any substance any more but instead functions as a trigger, catalyst and frame for a process on the part of the viewer" (2006, p.106). Felt experience is intended to supersede any objective meaning.

**Figure 10: Scene from *BabyO* (2010).**
**Image courtesy of Scottish Opera.**



In performances for the very young, spectators are usually placed close to the playing area: *BabyO* (2010) creates a ring of babies around a floorcloth to allow them unfettered access to the opera singers who perform the work, while 'baby

Shakespeare' play *In A Pickle* (2012) exploits both traverse and promenade layouts to ensure visibility. Lehmann proposes that in adult theatre such proximity, or even physical contact, "quietly radicalises the *responsibility* of the spectators for the theatrical process, which they can co-create but also disturb or even destroy through their behaviour" (2006, p.123, original emphasis). A young child's inability to adhere to normative modes of adult behaviour is another objection to their presence in the theatre, from artists (see for example Wood and Grant, 1997) to theatre architects – both the Egg in Bath and the Children's Theatre in Minneapolis contain soundproofed booths where children causing 'disturbances' (as defined by adults) can be taken to continue watching away from their peers (Fletcher-Watson, 2012). It is apparent that responsibility – either to keep quiet or to participate when required – becomes challenging when working with those who lack inhibition.

However, again this presumes that the performer is superior to the spectator, which is by no means generally accepted within TEY. If the child is treated as equal to an adult, then their interjections into the action are not provocative, as Lehmann claims (2006, p.104), but intrinsic and vital. Theatre-makers routinely display works-in-progress to audiences of babies, in an effort to tailor productions to their developmental needs and abilities (Schneider 2009; Nerattini 2009; van de Water 2012); reaction of even the most extreme kind is explicitly sought. Where agency is granted to children, recognising the validity of any and all responses, it could perhaps be claimed that an 'equality of action' emerges. It should nonetheless be noted that the agency granted to test audiences within rehearsals differs from that bestowed upon spectators of the finished product: while intense reactions such as crying or even leaving the space can be useful for theatre-makers during development, to recalibrate elements of a production, similar reactions are to be avoided in performance. Arguably, artists who choose to celebrate children's agency, such as in *Oogly Boogly*, are implicitly pursuing a specific mode of participation that could be described as positive, contributory and engaged. Thus agency is still judged according to adult definitions of suitability.

Nevertheless, to deny a child the opportunity to react to performance, requiring them to follow adult codes of behaviour, is to favour *ludus* over *paidia*, as it expects them to adhere to rules which they may well not understand or even perceive. By privileging free improvisation and welcoming participation, contemporary TEY practitioners have gone some way towards inverting this hierarchy, helping the genre evolve into new, postdramatic forms.

### 2.4.4 Postdramatic practices in TEY

Tim Webb of Oily Cart describes an epiphany when creating their first work for very young children, *Jumpin' Beans* (2002): "it was startlingly apparent that the babies and toddlers themselves were our primary audience - they had been gripped by this non-verbal, non-linear, and multi-sensory piece, in their own right" (Bennett *et al*. 2005, p.204; see also Brown 2012, p.9). Intending to create a theatricalised play session, he found that play ran alongside theatre, despite lacking many traditional dramatic tropes.

One important omission in TEY, compared with traditional theatre for children, is text. Children's Theatre and Theatre in Education frequently centre on versions of well-known fairy tales (Harman, 2009, p.4) and commercial theatre for children is often derived from media properties such as *Peppa Pig* or *The Snowman*, whereas TEY tends to be original and non-verbal, or highly restricted in vocabulary. It rejects dramatic formulae, recognising that its audience does not require or benefit from narrative scaffolding in the form of text. Instead, multi-sensory stimuli are used to engender engagement. This could be described as 'equality of form', where textual hegemony is overturned. For example, *ETS-BEEST* (2007) melds dance, visual art, sonic improvisation and tactile mark-making. The stage is a huge piece of white paper, on which a dancer writhes and twists, drawing around her body with charcoal and encouraging spectators, aged from two-years-old, to join her. The multiplicity of performative modes is inherently postdramatic: "words themselves […] become just another element in a theatrical mode that militates against hierarchies in performance" (Barnett, 2008, p.16), placed equally or replaced with music, movement and visuals. Indeed, TEY could not be postdramatic without the decoupling of text from drama, as "the step to postdramatic theatre is taken only when the theatrical means beyond language are positioned equally alongside the text and are systematically thinkable without it" (Lehmann 2006, p.55).

The second omission, narrative/plot, is connected to this decoupling – although narrative can be delivered without text, the messages conveyed are perhaps diminished in importance when text loses primacy. *Frau Sonne und Herr Mond machen Wetter [Mrs Sun and Mr Moon Make Weather]* (2010) has "a dramaturgic structure that was not telling a story […] instead the dramaturgy was composed of a series of short actions or happenings" (Reiniger 2011, p.2). These

actions lack the linearity common in TYA, cleaving more closely to "a theatre of states and of scenically dynamic formations" (Lehmann 2006, p.68) that discards narrative in favour of movements, para-ritual and events lacking connection to one another. Thus, "character and plot, the mainstays of dramatic theatre, are no longer categories that need enter the stage in an age in which the act of representation has become increasingly untenable" (Barnett, 2008, p.23). For example, *Lullaby* (2013) appears more like a series of non-verbal, non-linear rituals as the solo performer passes a glowing sphere around the audience, casts shadow-shapes against the walls or places a veil over each baby. *Droomtijd* [*Daydream*] (2011) places its audience on a bed suspended from the ceiling of a shipping container, with the only action springing from highly abstracted sounds (mixing piano chords with thundering hooves, screams and grunts) and pulsing lights. Meaning becomes untethered from action, leaving each spectator to make their own 'translation' of the event.

The third omission, albeit rare, may seem to push TEY beyond even the bounds of postdramatic theatre: the removal of the actor, either at key points or throughout. Productions such as *Multicoloured Blocks from Space* and *BabyChill* frame the baby-carer dyad as joint spect-actors, entirely lacking a performer's input. The carer takes on a role instead (Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014): while the children can be said to 'be themselves' when playing, the behaviour of the parents/carers is "twice-behaved" (Schechner, 1993, p.1), both observed and observing. They perform the role of parents to their own children, flamboyantly displaying their attentiveness in order to delight and entertain (and perhaps because of the presence of other parents who they may not know).

Some TEY practitioners refer to the Triangular Audience, meaning the unusual relationship that exists between actor, baby and chaperone, each looking to the other for reassurance and engagement (Desfosses, 2009) – this can perhaps be thought of as a reformulation of Fischer-Lichte's autopoietic feedback loop (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p.39), expanding from a basic performer-spectator relationship to include pairs of spectators. In productions that lack actors, the feedback loop between baby and carer is further heightened, progressing beyond the typical (domestic) level of action-response, which can be interrupted by a telephone call or visitor. When the distractions of home are removed, each reaction intensifies to form a rich proto-drama. Parents are freed to enjoy an accentuated *paidia* beyond the norm by virtue of their presence within a theatrical space: the lack of defined structure frees them to play publicly, meaningfully and demonstratively.

The Portuguese production *BebéBabá* (2001) develops this meaningful *paidia* into a carnivalesque spectacle, inviting adult audiences to watch a part-ritualised, part-improvised music-theatre piece where babies play onstage with parents. Overseen by professional musicians, but performed by children from birth to two-years-old and their parents, *BebéBabá* creates a "chain of shows", expanding the spectatorial dyad beyond the Triangular Audience to include a fourth, separate, non-performing audience of adults (Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia, 2009, p.586). As in a carnival, hierarchies are reversed – some performers are babies, and the audience are adults.

*This (Baby) Life* (2011) similarly enjoins the very young to participate with adults, in this case, professional dancers. Inspired by *Oogly Boogly*, it interweaves ludic choreographed sequences with moments of free improvisation and imitation. Here, the unpredictable paidic interjections of babies within choreographed action (they are permitted onstage, if not actively welcomed, during the dance sequences) creates a thrilling atmosphere which challenges notions of normative audience behaviour, moving towards a postdramatic "experience of presence and ideally the equal co-presence of actors and spectators" (Lehmann 2006, p.123), which could be termed 'equality of presence'.

Three equalities have thus been posited: equality of form (rejecting hegemonies of text or meaning-making), equality of presence (placing children alongside actors as co-participants) and equality of action (granting agency to render all responses valid). This may define one ideal of TEY, and arguably affirms its postdramatic nature.

### 2.4.5 Paidic and postdramatic dramaturgies

The postdramatic character of TEY may extend beyond productions derived wholly from improvised play, encompassing many additional performances that seem to retain the forms of traditional theatre; instead, their dramaturgies are postdramatic, akin in some way to the unstable structures evident in the works of Heiner Müller, Samuel Beckett or Sarah Kane.

A key postdramatic writer (Lehmann 2006; Müller-Schöll 2004), Sarah Kane crafted plays that may seem the antithesis of TEY in terms of content –suicide,

cannibalism, incest – but in their dramaturgy and diverse stagings, these pieces bear close similarities to many contemporary productions for the very young. Kane's dramaturgies have been described as "open-ended", treating "structure and content as dynamic and continually to be kept in process, rather than as elements to be fixed and resolved" (Turner and Behrndt, 2008, p.30). These could perhaps also be described as *paidic* dramaturgies, deconstructing and reconstructing drama in turbulent, at times anarchic ways, as process rather than product.

Suzanne Osten's *Babydrama* (2006), a seminal TEY production, retains text, narrative flow and performers, but employs a powerfully open-ended aesthetic, which positions the piece both as *paidia* and postdrama. Wanda Golonka's production of Kane's *4:48 Psychosis* (2002) constructs a similar merging of forms, "an integral space of playing and watching" (Müller-Schöll, 2004, p.46). By comparing these performances, it is possible to draw attention to their dramaturgies and expressions of postdrama in practice.

**Figure 11: [L] Scene from *Babydrama* (2006); [R] Image from *4:48 Psychosis* (2002). Images courtesy of Stina Wikström and Yvonne Kranz.**



These productions share a distinct resemblance, like mirror images. Both place spectators inside the performance, erasing stage/auditorium distinctions. Both

resemble "a circus or a playground" (ibid., p.46-7). Both subvert the text with masks, movement, dance and, most notably, kinaesthetic disruptions which alter the audience's relationship to the space and each other - Osten encourages her audience, aged between six and twelve months, to sit in baby bouncers suspended from the ceiling, while Golonka places her audience on swings hanging from a rig. Both employ considerable amounts of text, derived at least in part from psychotherapeutic practices (Höjer, 2009; Müller-Schöll, 2004). Both explore being, non-being and the journey in-between, *Babydrama* examining conception and birth, *4:48 Psychosis* confronting death.

There are obvious dissimilarities, aside from the target audience: Osten uses multiple actors, while Golonka stages Kane's text as a monologue; Osten's use of music is calming where Golonka's is discordant; babies have agency to come and go as they please throughout *Babydrama*, which is not permitted in *4:48 Psychosis*. However, both productions reject the traditional theatre of dramas to revel in the possibilities offered by playful postdramatic practices.

This section began with the assumption that *paidia* is the natural state of being for babies, so productions that grant agency to the very young open up their carefully-crafted aesthetic to risk, volatility and potential destruction. However, they also recognise a child's right to push beyond adult limitations:

> adults can preserve stale and artistically alien conventions… [Better, perhaps] would be an audience in which adults were prepared to let the children – within civilised limits – enjoy their spontaneous interplay with what is going on before them, unchivvied, unprompted and uncensored. (England, 1990, p.227)

This may mean no text, no plot, no characters, no beginning, nor end. Here, children are writing their own theatrical texts with their bodies and actions, reflecting lived experience of perhaps only a few months through the language of play. Practice in TEY has evolved over three decades into what I suggest are markedly postdramatic forms, aesthetically and dramaturgically. It is to be hoped that by positioning TEY explicitly as postdramatic, the theoretical and critical segregation between theatre for children and theatre for adults may begin to be questioned.

However, one further form of separation (or 'othering') remains, problematising the legitimation of TEY: the notion of power relations determining access to culture. The next section explores the role played by human rights in scholarly discourse addressing theatre for the very young.

## 2.5 Human rights perspectives in TEY

It can be argued that no single document has had a greater impact on the development of this new genre of performance than the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Article 31, which addresses children's rights to art, leisure and culture (United Nations, 1989). Artists and producers cite the Convention as a foundation to their practice (see for example Schneider, 2009), with 'free' and 'full' participation often emerging as key aims for new work. This has led to the creation of performances which lack scripts, narratives and even actors, privileging free agency over traditional notions of drama (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b), and perhaps laying a path towards postdrama. A spectrum of TEY performance thus becomes apparent, moving from play-centred environments to productions which ration agency or guide their participants' actions through interactivity, and extending further to more conventional modes of theatrical presentation, where some participatory exploration of the set may occur after a performance. In all cases, participation serves several purposes: aiding children's comprehension of perceived action (by combining active physical or kinaesthetic discovery with more typical, passive forms of visual, verbal and aural presentation); empowering young spectators (by allowing them to take a degree of control over the performance or space); responding to children's natural urge to join in with play scenarios (Fletcher-Watson, 2015b).

However, it must also be recognised that access to participation is determined not by children, but by adults. Parents or caregivers select performances, purchase tickets, transport children to the theatre, select seats and chaperone participants throughout the experience (van de Water, 2012a). Jonathan Levy has noted provocatively that "children in the theatre are a captive audience… they do not choose to come. They are brought" (1990, 10–11), while Matthew Reason calls them "a benevolently coerced audience... taken to the theatre perhaps in the same way that children are sent to school or taken to the dentist - because it is good for them" (2010, 17). Jeanne Klein goes further, claiming that audiences visiting from school or nursery have been "kidnapped" (2005, 44). This is comprehensible as an inevitable

effect of babies' lack of communication skills – a newborn cannot select a production from a brochure, for example. Nonetheless, a fundamental imbalance in power relations is inherent within the theatrical event before the child enters the venue.

At the end of the twentieth century, critics tended to claim that the central purpose of theatre for younger children was theatre literacy – the practice of training audiences to comprehend theatrical tropes (see for example Bolton, 1999). As noted above, some have stated that "viewing a play is different from the act of playing" (Schonmann, 2002, p.144), and therefore children are to be instructed in modes of behaviour such as sitting still and quietly in order to decipher the semiotics of theatre (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b). Once within the theatre, the child is expected to adhere to normative adult conduct, rather than being accommodated on equal terms. Adult fears about children's disruptive or even destructive capacity fulfil clichés of the Dionysian, dangerous, uncontrollable, tasteless, selfish child in need of education and correction: "the child is Dionysian in as much as it loves pleasure, it celebrates self-gratification, and it is wholly demanding in relation to any object, or indeed subject, that prevents its satiation" (Jenks, 1996, p.182).

Thus the baby spectator has been further disempowered, this time by cultural gatekeepers. It should be noted that the last decade has seen new acknowledgment of the needs of previously overlooked audiences, including babies. The movement towards inclusive access, combined with more nuanced artistic practices, has led to the creation of what might be termed *non-judgmental performances*, such as 'relaxed' performances, mother-and-baby matinees for adult theatre (such as Soho Theatre's *Soho Screamers* season in 2013-14), and an increase in TEY productions around the world (Fletcher-Watson, 2015a). Scholars no longer focus on theatre literacy to the same extent – indeed, by repositioning theatre literacy as "art form knowledge", some commentators have designated it essential for "the empowerment of young audiences" (Reason, 2010, p.172) – yet culturally this adult-derived restraint remains potent. For example, parents and teachers alike often perceive that their children are expected to be still and silent, and enforce 'appropriate' behaviour rigorously, even when boisterous interaction is welcomed.

Stephen Kline has explored these power relations in theatre for young audiences, noting that "children's culture has always been primarily a matter of culture produced for and urged upon children" (1993, p.44). In TEY as in theatre for older children, "powerlessness is manifested in the preposition *for*. For children, but

by the adult author, artist, director, actor" (Reason, 2010, p.169). The child becomes what Jacqueline Rose has called "an outsider to its own process" (1993, p.2), denied the possibility of creative autonomy. Indeed, where art represents an adult's re-construction of infancy, rather than allowing a child to represent a construction of their own ongoing reality, it cannot be considered an equal encounter. As Manfred Pfister vigorously argues, "this can never, even potentially, become a symmetrical two-way exchange with reversible sender-receiver relationships, such as in ideal cases of *face-to-face communication* [original italics]; because here, an institutionalised asymmetry is present" (quoted and translated in Wartemann 2009, p.50).

The issue of human rights for children is still contentious – it is worth noting, for example, that the USA is not a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Governments apply human rights legislation in wildly differing ways, just as individual parents perceive their children through different cultural prisms which may bestow or deny specific rights. However, consensus appears to have been reached within the field of TEY that babies and toddlers possess a right to freely participate in art from birth (see for example Schneider, 2009). In mainland Europe, in Scotland, and to an extent in the rest of the UK, Article 31 is seen as a foundational document, and practice is adapting to recognise this.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to provide an overview of the literature and debates central to TEY's development over the past three decades. These debates – over legitimation, form, power relations and infant capability – remain in flux, with TEY artists still often challenged by commentators and peers. Modes of performance are criticised as untheatrical; very young children's culture is seen as non-essential; children themselves are believed to be in need of education, or incapable of aesthetic sensitivity; artists are accused of endangering their audiences. However, some societies, including Scotland, have developed powerful ontological arguments which define the development of TEY within those cultures.

The literature which directly addresses TEY tends towards anecdotalism, providing reflections on individual practice but lacking wider theoretical analysis. Critical attention is burgeoning, but often fails to describe the phenomenon in broad

or robust terms, preferring instead to focus on case studies or poorly supported critiques. Where scholars have developed analytic tools to examine the efficacy of performances for babies, such as video micro-analysis of engagement (Dunlop *et al.*, 2011), theory is imposed from domains outside theatre, such as psychology.

This lack of a strong or coherent theoretical basis for TEY provides space for me to attempt to determine, albeit only within Scotland, the current theory emerging from practice. Within TEY, practice has developed in many directions over 30 years, but its dramaturgy remains undefined. The next chapter describes the epistemological and methodological choices which guide this study as it seeks to generate valid, robust and verifiable theory about the genre, and therefore, to begin to propose a tentative dramaturgy of TEY.

# Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Paradigm

## 3.1 Summary of chapter

The previous chapters have outlined the short history of theatre for the very young, noting in particular the paucity of both research and reflective commentary on practice within the field. The body of research that exists is polarised, either delving deeply into the minutiae of an assumed but unproven dramaturgical praxis, or providing anecdotal, nebulous, often contradictory statements of limited use to current or emerging artists. It could be argued that no coherent dramaturgy has yet been revealed in a genre only three decades old; as David Pears has noted, "practice nearly always comes first, and it is only later that people theorise about practice" (1971, p.29). This raises the question: can a theory of TEY be formulated from current practice? And if so, can an Early Years dramaturgy (meaning a contextual exploration of composition, whether artistic, technical or theoretical) subsequently be proposed?

This chapter introduces a methodology selected in order to pursue that question, and charts the progress of my research towards a nuanced constructivist epistemology. It explores the emergence of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM), demonstrating its suitability as a tool to interrogate practitioner discourse and generate robust theory, in keeping with Robin Nelson's statement: "New knowledge may be produced about the disciplines of the performing arts… in terms of better understanding of their processes and products" (2006, p.111). In particular, I outline recent developments in the GTM as it has transitioned from use within health and social science to a focused deployment within arts research. The study design is detailed with examples drawn from the process, and the ethical issues around interviewing experts are discussed. Finally, I discuss methods for evaluating the power of the theories derived from the Grounded Theory approach.

## 3.2 Choices and models

By what means beyond the anecdotalism identified in the previous chapter can practice be turned into theory, or the tacit be made explicit? Helen Nicholson

describes knowledge within drama, especially embodied knowledge locked within the practitioner, as "culturally located and socially distributed" (2005, p.39). This suggests that focusing on a particular culture or social situation (such as Scotland) may provide much-needed coherence, as opposed to gathering data from a wider international cohort of artists (as in Schneider, 2009b). This may of course mean that any new theory derived from an individual cultural body will not be universal, but will hopefully retain usefulness and wider applicability as it feeds into praxis.

Embodied knowledge, having been either learned formally or gained from experience, will differ from artist to artist, and may be contradictory; it is also worth noting that, although I may share some basic artistic training with an individual artist (having trained as a director and dramaturg, as discussed in Chapter 1), we will differ in acquired skill. However, "practitioner expertise [is an area]… with which Performance Studies writers tend nonetheless to be familiar - as expert spectator - in practice" (Melrose, 2005). Therefore, it is possible to approach the unlocking of practitioner knowledge armed with several keys – dramaturgical sensitivity from my previous career in children's theatre, familiarity with the work as a spectator, understanding (to some extent) of the creative devising process as a trained theatre-maker myself, knowledge of the field and its roots as a researcher, passion for the topic as a parent. These varied means of understanding may allow me to overcome the central challenge when investigating embodied knowledge – its tacit, internalised nature.

### 3.2.1 Methodological choices

It is now considered possible to examine theatre experiences through the prism of qualitative research (Carroll, 1996). A variety of methods are marshalled by scholars to construct and disseminate knowledge from everyday experience, including ethnomethodology, conversation / discourse analysis, phenomenology and Grounded Theory. Each has advantages and disadvantages affecting the methodological decisions made within this study. Ethnographic techniques allow researchers to gather data from numerous informants, although it has been noted that indifference or even outright opposition can lead to sporadic data collection (Bryman, 2001) and may restrict an holistic view of the subject (Silverman, 2009). In addition, ethnography relies on observation of everyday events, meaning that to investigate practice, it would be necessary to gain access to multiple rehearsal

rooms, even assuming that suitable productions were being developed during the period of study. Phenomenology would also seem to be an appropriate epistemological choice for a study focusing on defined members of a community sharing specific characteristics (here, artists creating work for very young children), as it favours empathy on a personal level (Conklin, 2007, p.276); however, embedding oneself within that community to 'see through their eyes' requires the researcher to convincingly embody a role, in this case, that of an artist with special skills in theatre for very young children. I do not have expertise as a TEY theatre-maker, so it would be ethically complex for me to pass myself off as a member of that community. This study seeks to investigate the developed practice embodied by experts (see section 3.5.2), so it is vital to identify a method which allows me to investigate their assertions without posing as a peer.

It is therefore necessary to consider alternatives to observation, the foremost of which is the semi-structured interview. In this method, a sample of participants is selected by representative or snowball sampling[11], interviewed using a prepared set of questions, and the data analysed. This method has several benefits over observational techniques: firstly, it permits tightly focused questioning, relating in all cases to practice, rather than waiting for practice to be embodied; secondly, data can be collected far more quickly, although analysis will be similarly lengthy in both methods; thirdly, it is more likely that key participants would be willing to participate in a one-hour interview than that they would grant access to their rehearsal and performance spaces, again assuming they are creating a production during the specified timeframe. The new knowledge produced by artists (knowingly or unknowingly) is made explicit via the documentation process of verbatim transcription, and can then be interrogated. Without documentation, this knowledge remains locked up in tacit practices (described by Nelson as "a matter of doing" (2013, p.9)), unavailable for analysis.

Having identified a suitable method for gathering data, the next decision relates to the specific analysis technique to be employed. The three main choices are conversation / discourse analysis, analytic induction or Grounded Theory. Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1994) provide an excellent example of the use of discourse analysis in the interpretation of multiple sources, including video recording,

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[11] Representative sampling invites individuals from a wider field of participants to act as representatives of the whole, whereas snowball sampling asks each interviewee to suggest the next, avoiding the risk of selection bias on the part of the investigator.

interviews, scripts, background recordings and other data, to analyse a media production (in this case, the documentary *Cancer: Your Money or Your Life* from 1988). This model could be of use in recreating the creative process for Early Years artists, but it is not easily generalisable beyond an individual case study. Discourse analysis seems to privilege the event or individual over the genre or group.

Similarly, analytic induction is used to break down and explain a phenomenon, but relies on exclusion of outliers or "deviant cases", rather than attempting to enfold them within a comprehensive theory (Bryman, 2001, p.389). In a study focused on an interconnected group such as artists, who often collaborate and attend training together, the emphasis must be on finding an holistic analysis method which produces valid, useful and robust theory. Grounded Theory, an increasingly popular choice and the basis of this study, was then the preferred option. A full justification and explanation is outlined in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

### 3.2.2 Methodological models

Having settled on an appropriate methodological approach, it is important to consider the model which provides a framework for the study. Ontologically, the normative hierarchy of value which privileges text over practice has been reversed as scrutiny increasingly falls on performance practice (George, 1996). For example, models from Practice-as-Research (PaR), practice-based research and practice-led research are steadily gaining approval within the academy. While accepting that "the embodied knowledge of the practice is both prior to, and distinct from, the written (symbolic) account after the event" (Nelson, 2006, p.107), it is nonetheless possible to generate new theory which can be of practical value to artists, critics, funding bodies and scholars in the future. For as Nelson further observes, "one way in which creative practice becomes innovative is by being informed by theoretical perspectives, either new in themselves, or perhaps newly explored in a given medium" (2006, p.114).

Numerous collections of artistic reflections have been published in recent years, often in the form of first-person interview transcripts (Delgado and Heritage, 1996; Oddey, 2005), including several collections focused on specific nations, such as Wales (Wooster, 2007) and the wider UK (Giannachi and Luckhurst, 1999; Duggan and Ukaegbu, 2013). As noted in the previous chapter, several anthologies of reflections on TEY practice by European artists have been produced (Schneider,

2009b; Nerattini, 2009a; b; Belloli, 2009; Belloli, Morris and Phinney, 2013), often via the Small Size artists' network. These collections are valuable as records of various forms of knowledge (tacit, implicit, practical, theoretical, psychological, educational), but they are generally presented simply as raw data, with no deeper investigation carried out. This investigation aims to analyse, question and interrogate similar data drawn from Scottish respondents to move towards a more explicit and cohesive record of practice, and thus produce generalisable theory.

From the data contained within the European TEY volumes, two approaches to performance-making emerge as standard practice, as noted in section 2.3.1: *deductive*, meaning the overt incorporation of developmental milestones within creative praxis; and *inductive*, meaning the sharing of work-in-progress at specific points with the target audience, possibly without reference to experts (Knight, 2011; Dartnell, 2009). Many artists combine the two approaches to varying degrees, employing advice from psychologists as well as repeated testing in rehearsal settings (Churchill Dower, 2004).

Deductive artists tend to collaborate with child development specialists, combining their own practice with the researchers' knowledge of infant developmental milestones. The assistance of a psychologist or educator can reduce rehearsal time by providing 'shortcuts to knowledge'. Although they may be valuable for other purposes, these schema and milestones lack intrinsic aesthetic value – indeed, a production derived wholly from rigid rules without artistic vision may fail to engage its audience.

By contrast, inductive artists often rely instead on personal research and lengthy periods of testing or piloting with child audiences; for example, *Oogly Boogly* (2003) restricts its audience to babies between 12 and 18 months and their parents, due to the developmental milestones associated with that age: commonly mobile, but pre-linguistic (Bruce, 2006). The production's creators explicitly avoided working with educators once these basic milestones had been identified, favouring direct observation of test audiences; however, in an email to me on April 13, 2012, creator Guy Dartnell noted that this led to a nine-month rehearsal process.

Both deductive and inductive approaches produce new knowledge, in the form of validated hypotheses, field-tested practices, phenomenological experience and embodied expertise. However, these differing forms of knowledge are tacit, not explicit. As noted above, even when documented in the form of written records, they can fail to generate generalisable theory of use to others.

One reason for turning "tacit understandings, inferred practices and theoretical assumptions" into explicit knowledge, as Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson have noted (2011, p.2), is to provide an opportunity to question and challenge long-held beliefs which have become part of an artist's practice over time, and thus to innovate. Nelson's tripartite Dynamic Model (2006) explores this interplay between practitioner knowledge, critical reflection (which could be described as the inductive method) and conceptual framework (or the deductive method) as it outlines the Practice-as-Research (PaR) system:

**Figure 12: Robin Nelson's Dynamic Model for Mixed-Mode Research**
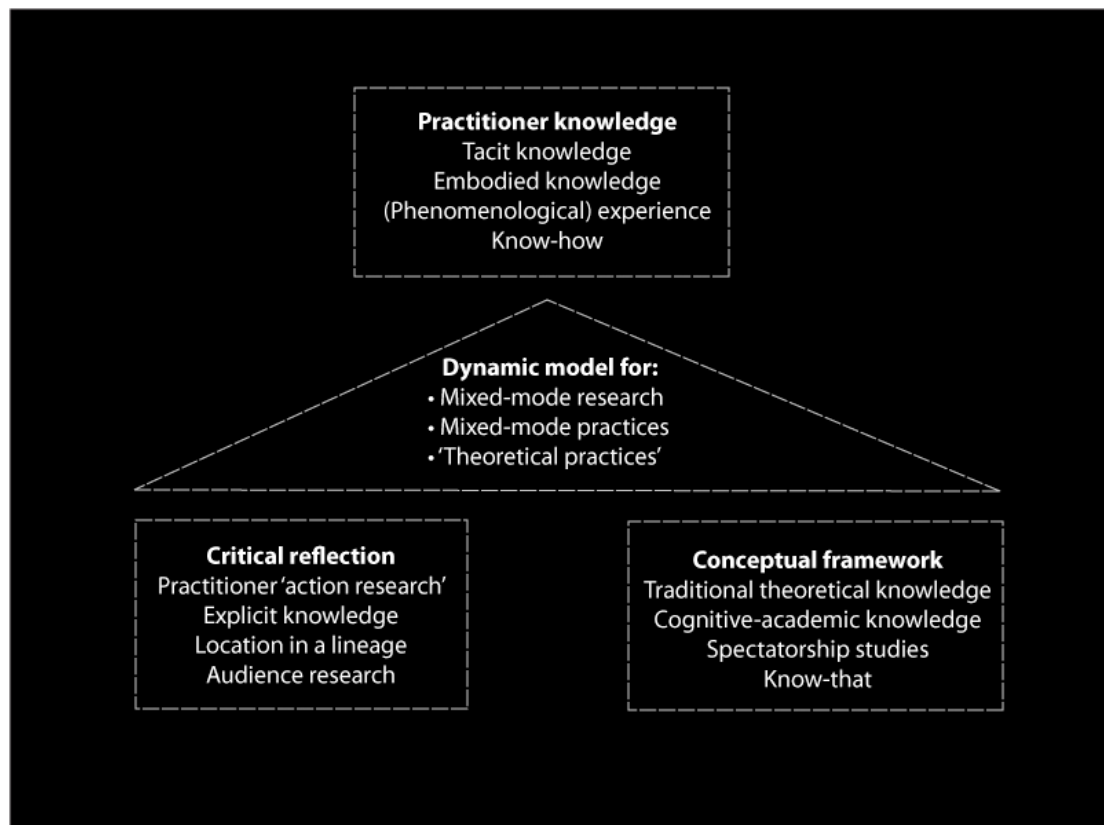


However, the PaR model is designed for the artist-researcher, rather than the scholar or the practitioner. It is predicated on the artist-researcher's ability both to reflect meaningfully on their practice and to interpolate academic theory into their

work. Artists may be able to engage with this dynamic process to a considerable degree, but it is debatable how fully their experiential knowledge can be integrated with action research or a theoretical or documentable praxis. In particular, the linkage between practitioner knowledge and conceptual framework can be tenuous, as the specific skills required to combine the two areas may not be part of artist training. Nelson has furthermore suggested that a record of praxis "always inevitably (re)constructs the practice such that the thing itself remains elusive" (2013, p.5), implying that even first-hand testimonies may fail to capture accurately the nuances of individual practice, let alone wider praxes. Indeed, as Susan Melrose (2005) has noted, expert arts practitioners may "theorise in modes and registers of complex practice which operate wholly or in significant part outside of writing", but their theorising may be internalised as embodied skill, not to be shared more widely with others.

A further step can therefore be taken beyond the documentation of tacit knowledge, in order to develop a more widely applicable framework. As will be detailed in section 3.5.5, the direct application of findings in a practical setting can assist with this assessment of generalisability. Weak concepts which may have little impact can be rejected, while stronger themes will gain in resonance if they can be seen to contribute within a practical process of creative development. This may occur by situating the researcher in a rehearsal context, allowing them to observe practice in order to produce new transmittable knowledge, or it may occur on a more *ad hoc* basis, as in this study, with artist and researcher engaging in a mixture of informal discussion, sharing of practice via workshops or training events, formal interviews and even collaborative devising of new work (see Chapter 6 for a case study which aims to apply theoretical concepts in practice).

The original deductive mode of practice, where an artist tests their own performative hypotheses in rehearsal to produce new (but tacit) artistic knowledge, remains in place. Each agent serves to 'fill in the gaps' for the other – the artist demonstrates their practice and reflects critically upon it in interviews, while the scholar provides theoretical insights as an outcome of research and influences the development of future practice through documentation (Duggan and Ukaegbu, 2013).

It can also be argued that this formalised application of findings is comparable to the practice of dramaturgy, or at least one of the modes in which dramaturgy operates today. Just as a dramaturg assists the artistic process by "eradicating

boundaries between critical thinking and creativity…uniting dramaturgs with all theatre artists inside the common bond of process" (Thomson, 2003, p.117), so the scholar works alongside artists to bring together theory and expertise for the intended benefit of practitioners. Participant and researcher act as co-creators synthesising new knowledge, one providing data, the other providing analysis. The model provides a strong foundation for a methodology in which neither claims primacy (that is, a constructivist methodology); hegemonies of reputation or long experience are overturned in favour of a web of action and interaction, (re)linking existing practice to theoretical advancement to reflexive praxis. The model, unlike Nelson's original PaR version, can also accommodate many artists and many scholars collaborating over time, as the steps within it constitute processes, rather than personal attributes. Agents within a constructivist system, whether artists or researchers, thus "create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning on their realities and acting within them" (Charmaz, 2000, p.521). The means of exploration of these realities and created worlds is the focus of the following section.

## 3.3 Why Grounded Theory?

The critical appraisal of the literature in previous chapters suggested a lack of aesthetic, dramaturgical or theoretical foundations for Early Years performing arts; in their place, the field draws on frameworks from theatre for older children, education, psychology and social science. While useful for the insight these models can offer into an undoubtedly unusual audience, the link to performance and the performative act is often missing. For example, many artists cite schemas (Bruce, 2011) as a key structure underlying their work for babies and toddlers; a schema can be defined as "a pattern or repeatable behaviour into which experiences are assimilated and that are gradually coordinated" (Athey, 1990, p.37). While a fruitful model relating to action as it is lived, it is unlikely to be aesthetically interesting simply to enact or coordinate a schema on stage. Instead, the artist must layer knowledge of schemas into their existing practice, changing the repeated behaviour (jumping, enveloping, crossing boundaries) into a performative act for it to have emotional power.

New theory generation with explanatory power is the hallmark of Grounded Theory, which has been defined within a theatrical context as "a qualitative inductive analysis that studies the drama under investigation as an autonomous research unit with its own structures, boundaries and history" (Carroll, 1996, p.78). Developed initially for use in health and the social sciences, the Grounded Theory Method has

come to prominence in fields as diverse as dance, management and manufacturing, as will be discussed in the next section. The primary aim of a Grounded Theory is to shed light on an unexplored social process or phenomenon, thus influencing practice in the future (Birks and Mills, 2011). It is a fluid and highly flexible method, which produces high-quality theoretical results when applied rigorously (Charmaz, 2006).

The appeal of Grounded Theory for this study lies in its compatibility with my research aims, both methodologically and substantively. It is a means of interrogating lived experience and embodied knowledge, taking human interaction as its source material (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Coleman and O'Connor, 2008); the aim is not to provide an exact replica of a participant's experience (Charmaz, 2006) but to interpret and "render" it into fruitful theory of wide applicability (Charmaz, 1995, p.55). Its modern form is especially valuable as a method which recognises the "inseparability of the knower and the known" (Kincheloe, 2008, p.227); as already stated, the constructivist epistemology developed in the works of Kathy Charmaz "assumes that people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning on their realities and acting within them" (2000, p.521), in place of presuming a positivist external reality. The split within Grounded Theory between positivism and constructivism will be explored in section 3.4.1.

In practical terms, the ability to use multiple sources as part of a dataset (including texts, live or recorded performances, theatre criticism and practitioner interviews) is a key strength of the method – hence the well-known maxim "all is data" (Glaser, 2001, p.145). Grounded Theory positively encourages the use of a wide range of sources of differing media (Birks and Mills, 2011). Thus it is possible simultaneously to analyse contemporary practice, historical reportage, images and reflexive commentary on an equal footing, not privileging one above another.

In addition, GTM focuses on processes rather than incidents, moving beyond anecdotalism to a detailed picture of multi-layered interpersonal activity:

> …bringing process into the analysis is essential. Process can be the organizing thread or central category of a theory, or it can take a less prominent role. Regardless of the role it plays, process can be thought of as the difference between a snapshot and a moving picture... Theory without process is missing a vital part of its story –

how the action / interaction evolves. (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.179)

This emphasis on process, or action, is exemplified by the use of gerunds instead of nouns or verbs (e.g. "performing" rather than "performs" or "performance") in the coding and analysis stages to reinforce the dynamism inherent in lived experience, favouring process over unit (De Búrca and McLoughlin, 1996), as will be discussed in the next section. This also preserves the link to practice as an ongoing and evolving form of knowledge, as opposed to a historical study.

Lastly, the Grounded Theory Method is innately flexible, addressing research questions which simply demarcate the limits of the phenomenon under investigation (Backman and Kyngäs, 1999) in place of a pre-determined series of assumptions. Indeed, researchers can in some cases begin the process without knowledge of the core issues, allowing research questions, if necessary, to change as the study develops (Glaser, 1978). The practical implications of these aspects for this study are manifold:

1. Grounded Theory permits the entry of various source materials to the dataset, rather than relying on a single frame of reference. This means that interview transcripts can be supplemented by my own observations on performances, video recordings of productions, images of performance and theatre criticism, among others;

2. A constructivist outlook overcomes one flaw inherent in the study of any emergent field, namely implicit hierarchies of experience and reputation – within the nascent genre of theatre for the very young, no single practitioner or practice is honoured over the rest, as data are aggregated and analysed anonymously. It is possible later to reassign names to individual excerpts for the purposes of documentation, but the GTM allows users to focus on overarching themes rather than individual statements;

3. An emphasis on process reflects the focus of this study on practice as it is carried out day-to-day. Without this examination of process, individual practices could be seen as time-limited, bound up in a specific socio-cultural context, rather than being generalisable;

4. The GTM's inherent flexibility combats the researcher's natural tendencies towards pre-determinism. The key issues or challenges which affect every participant are allowed to emerge from the data, instead of searching for predetermined patterns or proving hypotheses. Thus any resulting theory should apply to the entire sample, and hopefully more widely across the field.

The next section will lay out the background to Grounded Theory in more detail.


## 3.4 The Grounded Theory Method in principle and in practice

Grounded Theory has its beginnings in the work of health researchers Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, in particular the foundational texts *Awareness of Dying* (1968) and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). Glaser and Strauss developed a new methodology for their research into death and the social relations between the dying and their relatives and caregivers, focusing on the creation of theory from data. They hoped to challenge the primacy of quantitative research in health settings, proving that qualitative methods could produce substantive, robust, relevant and high-quality theory with potential real-world impact (Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Glaser, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Dey, 2007).

Opposing the tradition that theory could only be constructed through deductive reasoning, Glaser and Strauss proposed an inductive method of data collection and analysis which was self-reflexive and responsive to emergent detail. Their tenet of 'constant comparison' allowed a researcher simultaneously to gather data, analyse, reflect both on analysis and, crucially, the process of data collection, gather further data, and continue to analyse until theoretical saturation was reached, where new data simply reinforced the theory, no longer adding anything (Birks and Mills, 2011). Alongside and within this process, the diligent writing of memos, or short thematic paragraphs linked to coding, sensitised the researcher to evolving theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Thus the researcher "does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.23).

Glaser and Strauss later diverged in their development and application of the new methodology, eventually forming distinct, somewhat antagonistic camps, now labelled Glaserian (overtly objectivist) and Straussian (empiricist). As use of their

methods has spread from health to arenas such as social justice and business, Kathy Charmaz has emerged as founder of a third, anti-positivist strand, often referred to as Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 1995, 2000, 2006; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Charmaz' approach is employed in this study, for reasons outlined below.

### 3.4.1 Comparison of the three main forms of Grounded Theory

It is at this point pertinent to compare the three strands of Grounded Theory, noting with Bryant and Charmaz that it can be described as a **"family of methods claiming the GTM mantle… [with] family resemblances"** (2007, p.11), but where individual methods differ widely. The Glaserian GTM focuses on the construction of theories which fit the data, work to explain its context, are relevant both to the field of study and future practice, and are modifiable in light of new evidence; in particular, Glaser suggests that the researcher should provide recommendations to practitioners as an outcome of study (Glaser, 1978). His objectivist stance could be seen to limit the integrity of theories produced using his method, as it does not allow for the layering of interpretative viewpoints, from participant to interviewer to analyst, instead seeking a contextual truth about a given subject (Glaser, 1992). For example, Glaser does not recommend embarking on a literature survey in advance of data collection.

By contrast, Straussian methods emphasise the quality of empirical data captured, leading to high-quality theory generation. The social context is key, and thus a wider range of potential data sources are permitted (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Strauss claims that a theory grounded in data is "likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" (1998, p.12). Specific coding tools, including axial coding and conditional matrices, reinforce the social influence upon the phenomenon; this has been criticised for weakening resultant theory by 'forcing' the data (Glaser, 1992; Charmaz, 2000), although it can also be said to strengthen theory by reflecting the interactive nature of human experience.

The constructivist model rejects the founders' positivism in favour of a mission to "find what research participants define as real and where their definitions of reality take them" (Charmaz, 2000, p.523). It seeks to generate theory which is credible, original, resonant and useful (Charmaz, 2006; Birks and Mills, 2011), which fulfils many of the aims of this study in particular. Glaser claims (2001, p.33) that constructivism's focus on the individual's perceptual response to a phenomenon risks

"descriptive capture": employing description rather than theorising. It is arguable that this is as true of Constructivist Grounded Theory as the other strands, springing more from a researcher's familiarity or expertise with the method than a fatal flaw within constructivist epistemology. Charmaz' rejection of seeming objectivity has particular application for a study such as this, centred on embodied knowledge, as it embraces the multiplicity of explicit, implicit, tacit, unconscious and witnessed forms of knowing. She states:

> To the best of their ability, constructivists enter the phenomenon, gain multiple views of it, and locate it in its web of connections and constraints. Constructivists acknowledge that their interpretation of the studied phenomenon is itself a construction. (2006, p.187)

In the past fifteen years, Grounded Theory methods have been applied more widely than before, expanding into arts and humanities research as a valuable tool. Techniques drawn from GTM can now be found in diverse studies of fields within the arts such as drama therapy (Widdows, 1996), Drama in Education (Zannetou-Papacosta, 1997), visual art (Mace and Ward, 2002), music therapy (Edwards and Kennelly, 2004), participatory performance practices (Hohl, 2009), dance pedagogy (Wilson, 2009) and film (Jones and Alony, 2011). This investigation marks the first occasion on which the GTM has been used to examine theatre for children.

## 3.4.2 Methods within Grounded Theory

The methods used remain relatively consistent across all strands of GTM. Having outlined the broad phenomenon, the researcher embarks upon initial sampling, identifying participants with intimate knowledge of the given experience (Morse, 2007, p.231). Data collection commences, alongside a parallel process of analysis – thus emerging themes can be fed into the ongoing interview process (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.9). Statements – from interview transcripts, texts, or other sources – are coded and sub-coded to categorise this rich data and begin to bring it under control. These codes can employ a variety of registers to attempt to capture the nuances within excerpts: clichés can be used to emphasise widely accepted statements which recur in several transcripts, almost like homilies (e.g. "putting yourself in a child's shoes"); 'in-vivo' codes use the participant's own words to create an umbrella term which appositely defines a specific process, thought or concept (e.g. "there are no shortcuts"); bold and creative language can help to crystallise or draw out certain

themes, rather than relying on more pedestrian terminology (e.g. "the Damascene Moment"). This could be described as a performative mode of thinking, making my interpretations visible and available to be challenged.

Throughout the process, as can be seen in the diagram below, the researcher also writes reflexive memos – brief explorations of ideas linked to specific codes – to interrogate both the text and their own preconceptions (Charmaz, 2006). Lora B. Lempert describes this process as "the dynamic, intellectually energising process that captures ideas in synergistic engagement with one another and, through naming, explicating and synthesising them, ultimately renders them accessible to wider audiences" (2007, p.246). The memos themselves become part of the analysed data, feeding into coding in a system of constant comparison, the researcher exhaustively checking and re-checking each code in turn (Dey, 2007; Birks and Mills, 2011).

Once the first stage of data collection is complete, some interviewers choose to revisit certain participants in a process known as 'member checking' (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.27), where themes and codes can be discussed in light of previous conversations, the transcripts of these sessions then forming a second dataset to be subsumed into the first. Over time, it is hoped that a 'core category' will emerge, encompassing every code and defining the direction of the study. As Glaser notes, a core category "has grab; it is often a high impact dependent variable of great importance; it is hard to resist; it happens automatically with ease. Researchers tend to see their core category everywhere" (2007, p.107). Usually, an investigation results in a single core category which works to explain the phenomenon as a whole; however, some studies, including this one, may result in two distinct core categories, where a secondary factor emerges which can neither be subsumed into the main core category nor rejected as unimportant.

Finally a key stage is reached, that of theoretical saturation, when there are no new codes emerging, and all comments have been incorporated into a web of categories. This is the point when the final stages of theory generation and the making of practical recommendations, as noted earlier, can begin (Glaser, 1978). The process is outlined in this diagram outlining the specific GTM model employed for this study:

**Figure 13: The Grounded Theory Method as Employed in this Study**



The Grounded Theory Method
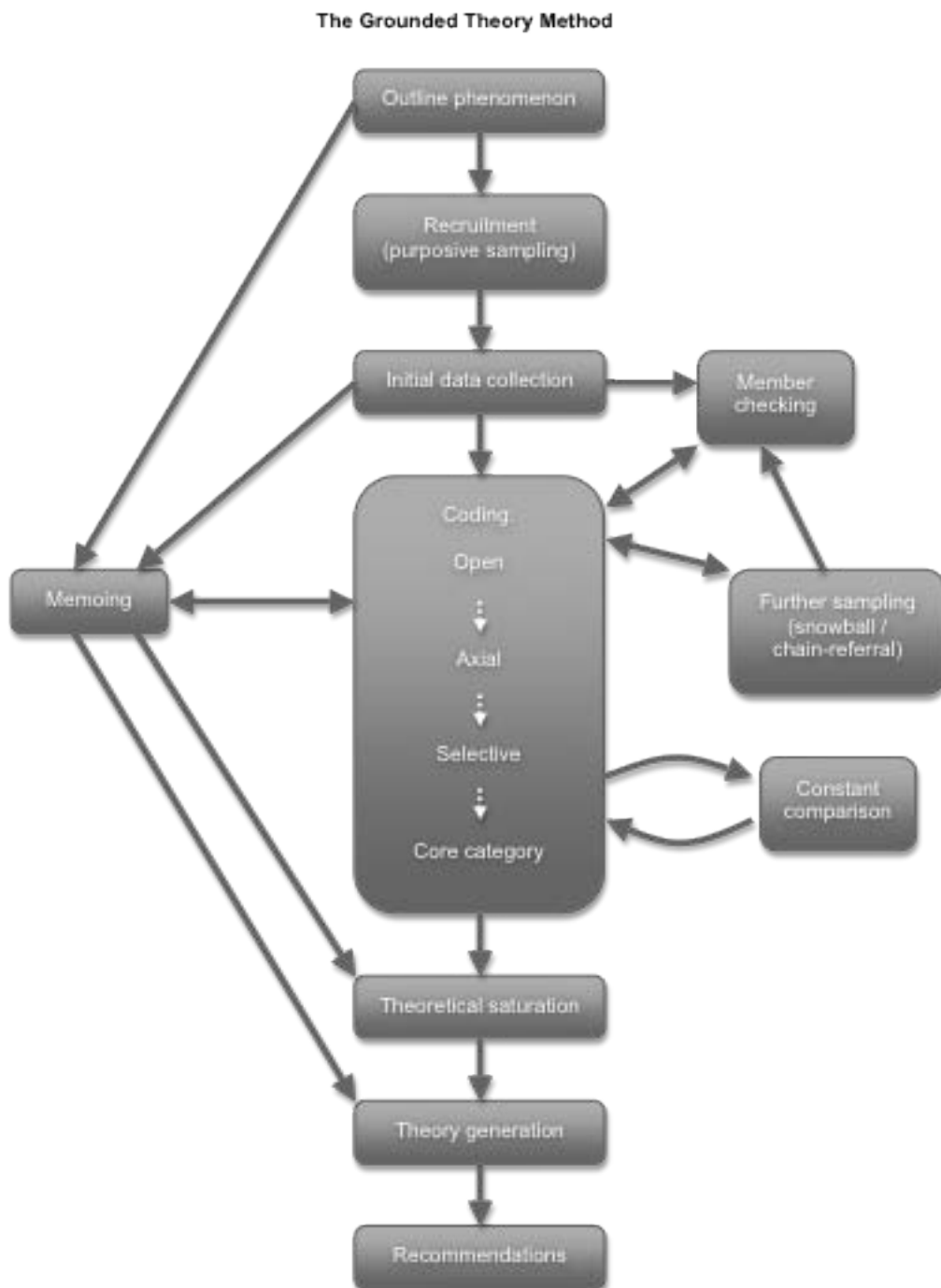
Thus within this investigation, the phenomenon is outlined broadly as *performing arts experiences in Scotland for children under three and their caregivers*. Recruitment (see section 3.5.3) centres on professional arts practitioners based in

Scotland and producing work for Early Years. Data collection, memoing and coding / analysis (see 3.5.4) follow the format outlined above, being concurrent. Theoretical saturation (and thus the end of data collection) will be reached when no new data emerge from interview analysis, with theory generation following thereafter. Finally, this study aims to provide recommendations of use to practitioners and the wider community, including researchers, families and funders.

## 3.5 Study Design

The design of this study is informed by two traditions, as will be discussed further: Grounded Theory, specifically in its constructivist form, and the Expert Interview. Interviewing artists and peripheral figures associated with the field of Early Years arts, such as producers, commissioners and programmers, forms the bulk of the investigation, partnered with a literature survey and a range of secondary sources, including observations and recordings of performances, critical responses and reflective writings. Other Grounded Theory studies in drama have relied on pre-existing materials such as video recordings (Zannetou-Papacosta, 1997), but the opportunity to gather data by interviewing leading contemporary sources is clearly of importance in this case.

The interview can be defined as a "construction site for knowledge" (Kvale, 2007, p.7); the interaction of interviewer and interviewee permits not only the examination of their lived experience but also penetration into its meaning for them. If the participant is able to reflect critically on their experience and articulate their responses lucidly, the data will be all the richer (Morse, 2007).

The interview process is based on Steinar Kvale's seven stages of an interview investigation, which mesh neatly with the structure provided by the GTM: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting (1996, p.88). Within the topic of performing arts for the very young, there are overlapping and competing arenas to negotiate: location (global, European, UK, Scottish); experience (emerging artists versus long-established companies); art-form (theatre, dance, music, etc.). Identification of potential participants must therefore narrow the field to a manageable but productive population.

### 3.5.1 Sampling

This study employs a mixture of purposive and chain-referral (also known as snowball) sampling (Tansey, 2007), leading to a focus on Scottish artists, meaning professional practitioners currently working in Scotland (rather than born there). Having identified around 100 productions within Scotland suitable for children from birth to three-years-old in the past decade (as laid out in Chapter 2; the full database is available in Appendix C), it is clear that there is a thriving cohort of theatre-makers and other practitioners bound in a complex arts ecology, despite a relatively small population. This cohort numbers around 30 artists. Expanding the dataset to include artists from the other nations of the UK, from Europe, or from the rest of the world, would result in an overly large number of potential interviewees, as well as throwing up issues around translation and access.

In addition, concentrating on practice within a single country sidesteps 'cultural confusion', where working practices from one culture contradict those from another – for example, the distinction between child-health-based philosophies in Belgium (Reginster, 2009) and pedagogical structures in Spain (Tiana Ferrer, 2009) – and produces a study where practically all subjects of interest are consulted, rather than restricting the dataset to subjects sampled at random and interviewed with a common interview template (Berry, 2002).

The distinction between emerging and established artists is considered to be of lesser importance as a positional criterion, and the non-hierarchical privileging of testimonies from both sides can be seen as a strength of the study (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009): practice springs from experience, but that experience need not be theatrical in origin – artists may have come to the genre from backgrounds in adult theatre, education, Theatre in Education, visual art or music, and may be at varying stages in their careers. Similarly, the investigation does not discriminate between the performing arts (although it recognises that the bulk of performance for Early Years has been theatrical in nature). The skills, knowledge and creativity required to make work for the very young exist across the varied art-forms comprising Scottish TEY, from theatre to dance, opera and installations.

It could perhaps be argued that the sample should expand to include artists from England, Wales and Northern Ireland, producing a theory of broad applicability, but this ignores a key factor – the number of TEY practitioners in these other

countries is highly variable (Wales currently has only one TEY specialist; Northern Ireland has two; England has more than 40), which could lead to culturally-specific factors, such as arts funding priorities or links with educational systems, skewing the resulting theory. The developers of the GTM make a distinction between substantive theory and formal theory, where the former is defined by a limited sample and thus produces a theory of limited scope, while the latter encompasses a much wider population and therefore has applicability across several substantive areas (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). By choosing to focus on Scotland, with its unique arts funding body, specific theatrical history, separate education system and devolved political structure, the resulting theory may be substantive rather than formal, but it possesses relevance to the population from whom it is derived, granting it practical value. In addition, it retains internal validity, avoiding the common pitfall of seeking to enfold too diverse a sample. Similarly, it might be possible to expand the sample within Scotland to include practitioners from non-performative Early Years arts, such as digital arts for the very young, baby yoga, toddler music classes or writers of children's books in Scots and Gaelic; it is to be hoped that the outcomes from this study may be of interest or even relevance to those groups, but live performance remains my area of interest and expertise.

### 3.5.2 Interviewing experts

The defining characteristic of an artist interview is the ability of participants to reflect intelligently on their own and others' practices from within the sphere of artistic production. It may be possible to interview parents, or even children, about their responses to elements of theatrical presentation, but the results of such a study would not have the power or validity of a study questioning the creative professional themselves:

> [Researchers] seek the optimal, rather than the average, experience. By using the worst - or the best - cases, the characteristics of the phenomenon or experience we are studying become most obvious, clear and emerge more quickly and cleanly, than by using cases in which the concepts and experiences are weak or obscured with other noise in the data. (Morse, 2007, p.234)

Accordingly, each participant can be designated an 'insider', an expert in the field. Interviewing experts, while not without its challenges, is a valuable method of accessing practical knowledge:

> The use of expert interviews is an appropriate qualitative method for the reconstruction of complex experiences and is used when the research interest has a focus on… experiential knowledge. (Meuser and Nagel, 1997, p.488)

Beate Littig provides a useful differentiation between four levels of expertise: specialised lay people possessing "specialist knowledge, but not related to their work or occupation," such as hobbyists (2009, p.107); specialists, or "individuals with occupational expertise" (ibid., p.107); experts, meaning those having "specific interpretative knowledge…and procedural knowledge" (ibid., p.108); and elite possessors of "formative power" (ibid., p.108). The artists in this study can be defined as experts, having highly specialised knowledge gained from study and practice, although some figures may cross over into the "elite", having greater power in terms of attracting funding or commissioning new work.

Experts can be "seen as 'crystallisation points' for practical insider knowledge" (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009, p.2), being generally both highly trained and able to reflect on the complexities of their lived experience (Abels and Behrens, 2009). However, interviews with experts should not be seen as simplistic 'data-mining exercises' (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009) but as opportunities to interact and co-generate ideas with willing, articulate possessors of tacit and embodied forms of knowledge (Morse 2007), such as theatre-makers. As Nelson has noted, "practitioners have 'embodied within them', enculturated by their training and experience, the 'know-how' to make work" (2006, p.113). For this study, it is important to be able to challenge that "know-how" and explore its foundations, rather than assuming it to be representative or indeed exemplary – embodied knowledge can have the same flaws as academic-theoretical knowledge.

Furthermore, it must always be remembered that, unlike lay observers of a phenomenon, members of an elite "will tend to have a secure status, where it may be feasible to challenge their statements, with the provocations possibly leading to new insights" (Kvale, 2007, p.70). By challenging their assumptions about their own embodied practices, new (explicit) knowledge may be uncovered.

### 3.5.3 Interview design

The next stage of research design was to formulate a series of questions within a semi-structured, autobiographical format; this allows the interviewer to be inquisitive, even confrontational if necessary, while placing all remarks in an holistic context. These questions would be likely to change during the lengthy interview phase, in keeping with the concurrent analysis, but the initial set is reproduced in Appendix A. The questions would be tested in a pilot interview, and amended in light of the data generated.

The first stage of interviews (June 2012 to February 2013) was designed to be limited to fifteen participants, identified with purposive sampling as described above, before the scope of the study was widened to include ancillary figures such as administrators and producers. Indeed, Strauss and Corbin have recommended "microscopic coding" of a small number of initial interviews to "provide the skeleton of a theoretical structure" (1998, p.281). Recruitment was expected to be straightforward, due to the inherent interconnectedness of the field (Obelenè, 2009) – in a small community such as the Scottish arts scene, 'everyone knows everyone'. In an effort to avoid reinforcing my own preconceptions, I chose to employ snowball sampling, asking each interviewee to recommend the next participant (Tansey, 2007); this would also have the effect of enfolding artists into the study whom I might otherwise not have selected, but whose participation may have been of interest.

Each interview would last between 40 and 70 minutes. Notes were taken during the interview, in case of mechanical failure of the recording equipment and to provide an aide-memoire for non-verbal cues which might otherwise have been missed. Immediately following the interview, a brief memo was drafted to capture first impressions or thoughts emerging from the process. Transcription of the audio file was then completed, and the text sent back to the participant with an invitation to amend, delete or add information as they see fit. I aimed to transcribe every interview myself, rather than employing an outside transcriber, in order to maintain consistency across all transcripts.

## 3.5.4 Analysis

Analysis and coding has been discussed in section 3.4, and the table below (extracted from the completed analysis in the next chapter) provides illustrative examples of the three stages of coding: Level I / Open; Level II / Axial; Level III / Core (note that this is merely an excerpt – a full diagram of all 181 codes is included in Appendix A.5). This outlines the development of initial codes and categories, intermediate codes and finally core categories, leading to theoretical saturation (Birks and Mills, 2011):

**Table 2: Example Codes Extending to Core Categories**

| Open code | Axial code | Core category |
|---|---|---|
| *Personalising the experience* | Sharing experiences | Treating children as equals |
| *Connecting* | | |
| *Building up a mythology* | | |
| *Putting yourself in a child's shoes* | Proving 'what works' with testing | |
| *Learning from mistakes* | | |
| *Collaborating* | | |
| *Surprising the audience* | Gift giving | |
| *Inspiring a questioning of the world* | | |
| *Making everyone feel comfortable* | | |

Dedoose analysis software[12] was used to code and sub-code all texts, create memos and store data securely. Data collection thus progressed from sampling to recruitment to analysis as the Grounded Theory Method was applied, eventually revealing the core category (or in this case, categories) from within the data. The timeline below outlines the specific processes employed in this study, from an application for ethical approval to the end of data collection:

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[12] Dedoose was designed as a low-cost alternative to qualitative data analysis software programs such as NVivo and ATLAS. In common with those programs, it allows large files (text, audio, video or image) to be broken down into small excerpts or clips. Users can then assign codes to one or more excerpts, as well as writing memos. Unlike NVivo, Dedoose is a web application where all data are saved within a secure remote server.

**Figure 14: Timeline of Data Collection and Analysis**
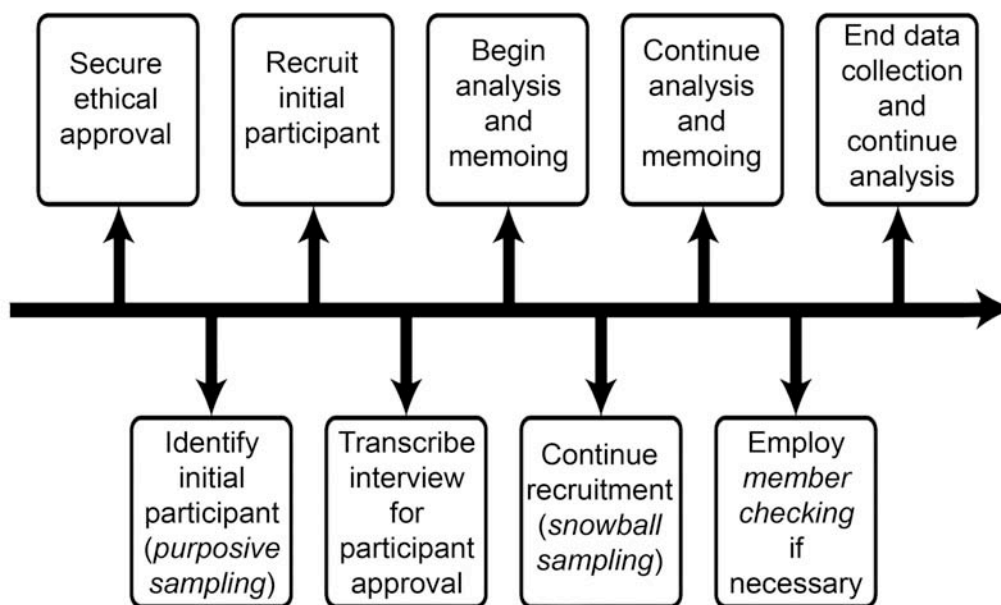


### 3.5.5 Evaluating a Grounded Theory

Traditionally, the GTM concludes with theoretical saturation and theory generation, but some researchers choose to add an additional step, testing emergent theoretical concepts during analysis, or surveying new participants via quantitative methods after a grounded theory has been generated. It should be noted that the literature does not require that GTM findings should be applied in this way, but for a project which aims to influence practice, it may be valuable to assess the usefulness of concepts proposed by a final theory. This is distinct from member checking, as it seeks to extend a proposed model into new areas, rather than confirming reliability. Within management studies, grounded theories have been tested using quantitative methods such as questionnaires (Gioia and Thomas, 1996), working towards generalisability. Quantitative testing does not seem appropriate in this case, not least because the aim of the study is to sample data from a sizeable majority of Scottish theatre-makers working in TEY, meaning that a survey after data collection would produce the same results as member checking, having surveyed the same

population – there is unlikely to be a large number of artists with appropriate knowledge of TEY who would not have already participated. However, direct application in a practical setting may provide evidence as to the accuracy and generalisability of the theory (Weick, 1979).

One possibility would be to survey theatre-makers during the rehearsal phase for a new TEY production. This throws up two separate but equally important issues: firstly, it would be necessary to gain access to rehearsals within a specific timeframe – namely, the period between the majority of data collection and theoretical saturation. Identifying this period in advance may not be possible, as it can be extremely difficult to predict when saturation will be achieved. Secondly, while additional data may be captured by observing rehearsal practices, there would be no way to assess the *transferability* of the concepts generated by the GTM process – as with a quantitative survey, the responses gathered would simply reflect the existing dataset, coming from the same participants. It would therefore become necessary to identify an associated but distinct domain of arts for the very young, to explore whether new theory could be generalised sufficiently to offer new perspectives beyond TEY.

It has been a key part of my planned development to test the theory, and a highly appropriate opportunity presented itself early in the investigation: with two small children as well as a partner who studies children's digital technology, tablet computers such as the iPad have played a major part in my family's leisure time for some years. I have observed that digital arts for children, such as e-books and literacy / numeracy games, seem to share interesting commonalities with TEY, including a need for age suitability, safe environments and wider benefits such as educational attainment (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a). Early in my research, I was offered the opportunity[13] to work on a Creative Scotland-supported project to trial the adaptation of a TEY production into an app (short for 'application') for the iPad[14]. This industry placement fulfils many of the requirements for qualitative validation: the app has close links to TEY, being inspired by a recent Scottish production for children aged 2 to 4, but practice is rooted in a different art-form, digital arts, meaning that any theory which fits both areas is likely to be widely transferable; app development is a

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[13] The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) provided a grant for a six-month industry placement in 2013 as part of my doctoral research.
[14] The app, entitled *White: The App*, can be downloaded from the iTunes Store: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/white-app-by-catherine-wheels/id831470213

lengthy process (around 15 months), allowing me to test concepts as they emerge, rather than forcing the analysis to fit a specified timeframe; the developer is based in Scotland, retaining the culturally-specific context which defines the data collection; digital arts are even more novel than TEY, with few substantive theoretical principles which might contradict or confuse my conceptual proposals. Thus I am able to propose a framework for the app deriving from a grounded theory, test its usefulness in a real-world scenario, assess the success of the product, and allow these findings to feed into final evaluation of the investigation. Chapter 6 will outline this project in detail as a Practice-as-Research case study.

However, before the GTM process could begin, it was vital to consider the ethical implications of the investigation's design and methods, as will be discussed in the next section.

## 3.6 Ethics

Given that this study involved the participation of human subjects, it benefitted from a rigorous ethical approval process. There is relatively little evidence on potential risks or harm to participants within Grounded Theory studies, or indeed within qualitative research more generally (Potrata, 2010), and therefore a strict standard of informed consent should be applied.

Two areas of particular concern were the need to retain flexibility throughout the interview stage, meaning that interviewees could not necessarily be identified in advance, and the risk of reputational harm to artists if their comments were seen to be detrimental to professional relationships. These will be explored in detail below.

The basic principles of informed consent, dignity of research subjects, voluntary participation and protection from harm are at the centre of ethical considerations; however, several factors in the research design had an impact on the approval process.

Firstly, the decision to employ the Expert Interview method meant that, due to the small sample population, there was the potential to identify individuals by name within the results, rather than observing the standard emphasis on anonymity. This would both ensure validity as recognised by peers within the performing arts community, and grant each artist 'ownership' of the story of their practice (Grinyer,

2002). Also, given the relatively small and highly inter-connected group of artists making work for Early Years in Scotland, anonymising contributions would not have been feasible, as the transcripts would have lose too much detail in the quest to remove autobiographical identifiers.

Secondly, Grounded Theory methods call for the legitimate use of all data within analysis, including fieldnotes, memos and follow-up interviews – "all is data" (Glaser, 2001, p.145) – and a flexible approach to sampling. Purposive sampling usually provides the framework of the dataset, but snowball sampling as part of interviews identifies influential subjects who otherwise may not be selected or deemed irrelevant (Farquharson, 2005). The ethical implications of these factors led to the inclusion of certain additional safeguards within the research design: for example, participants were informed of general discussion topics before the interview, to provide an opportunity for reflection and to alleviate any concerns about content, and were asked to review the transcript in full before analysis began.

Reputational harm is always a concern in Expert Interview studies, especially where participants can be identified by name within the results (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Interviewees may make comments to the researcher which could be detrimental to professional or personal relationships, and the onus falls upon the researcher to ensure this does not happen. In this study, participants were therefore informed at several stages, from first contact to final approval of transcripts, that their names could be published in connection to specific comments as well as their data as a whole, and therefore any amendments deemed necessary could be made. It may be the case that attribution would be of use to some artists professionally, recording their thoughts in an openly accessible text. In addition, efforts were made to avoid personally or emotionally sensitive subject matter, questions remaining strictly factual or relating to their own perceptions of their practice.

## 3.7 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge certain limitations regarding the research design outlined above, in terms of participation and methodological challenges. Any study examining artistic practice will centre on the perceptions, opinions and responses of artists themselves, but they are not the only population concerned with the success or failure of an art work, and more widely, a genre. Audiences, funding bodies, critics and academics all have their own input to make into performative practice.

The decision not to consult with parents and children who observed performances is important. Several studies relating to TYA have employed interviews with children and other information-gathering techniques with notable skill (Grady, 1999; Schonmann, 2002; Reason, 2004, 2008, 2010; Knight, 2011). In the main, these investigations focus on primary-school pupils' responses to performance, and while the models (ranging from short focus groups to pictorial representation of memories) are of interest, they are not applicable to audiences whose language skills and comprehension are not sufficiently developed. Observational models for recording responses in-the-moment have been created, mainly adapted from micro-analysis research in psychology (Young, 2009), and leading to the specific study of engagement signals as a marker of interest (see for example Dunlop *et al*. 2011). However, these studies produce data on reactions to individual moments within performance rather than providing an holistic overview.

Alternatively, audience feedback is a traditional tool within the evaluatory systems used by theatre companies and enforced by funding bodies. Parents are often asked to provide short comments on their own and their children's responses to performances. It would be possible to include these, where available, within the dataset for analysis, but such comments lack wider applicability, being restricted to an single performance of a single production. In addition, few parents are able to visit the theatre regularly and thus develop a keener sense of comparison between art-forms or company styles. Dramaturgy is perhaps more generally felt than considered.

Two further complications with the Expert Interview method are also worthy of exploration. Firstly, it is vital always to retain an awareness of the multiplicity of possible viewpoints within a constructivist epistemology, rather than falling back on a "naïve belief in the totality of expert knowledge" (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009, p.2). I aimed not to privilege the testimony of any single artist over the others, and consequently did not seek to legitimise the "social hierarchies" of emerging artists versus established practitioners (ibid., p.3); this was aided by the inclusion of a wide variety of sources to inform the dataset, from theatre reviews in print media to assessments of projects by academics and education professionals. Similarly, seeking to overcome possible differences in quality of data from participants (Gläser and Laudel, 2009), I was able to employ deliberate member checking in cases where the original transcript seemed 'thin'.

Alternative interview techniques have been considered. Other methods, such as questionnaires or focus grouping using the Delphi system or Cooke elicitation, would also tap into the experts' practical knowledge, but are more methodologically complex and technologically demanding (Aichholzer, 2009): for example, there is a risk that in seeking consensus on an issue, emerging artists may defer to more established figures, rather than defending their own practice; also, the need to gather numerous contributors together in real-time, whether in person or online, may militate against a comprehensive picture, relying instead on those experts who have time available. In addition, the Delphi Method suffers from poor response rates in the final stages, a "tendency towards conformity instead of genuine consensus", and "expert biases" (ibid., p.253). Questionnaires, while quick and often effective, require prior knowledge of shared practice in the field – currently an impossibility, as there is no identifiable common praxis, as noted earlier.

Methodologically, the most complex challenge is the negotiation of my own prejudices and preconceptions about the field. These pre-existing ideas can negatively affect all areas of a study, from participant sampling to analysis, and passion for a subject should not be permitted to turn into promotion:

> [Q]ualitative data are often used without rigorous analysis: participants' statements can be uncritically taken to correspond to reality, and reach often blurs the boundary between research and advocacy. (Hughes, Kidd and McNamara, 2011, p.192)

As has been noted, many Grounded Theory practitioners combat this by delaying their literature review until after analysis has been completed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Stern, 1980; Strauss and Corbin, 1998); however, I carried out a considerable survey into performing arts for the very young before deciding to employ the GTM as my research methodology. Therefore, I decided to use the literature as part of my pilot dataset (Cutcliffe, 2000) to provide initial codes and sensitising concepts (see section 4.5). However, I chose not to re-read these texts during analysis to avoid influencing emergent interpretations (Stern, 1980; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) – thus I became sensitised to concepts, but not wedded to ideas or preconceptions. I also followed advice from Kathy Charmaz: "You should explicate and, not least among your tasks, examine your own preconceptions about [your topic]" (2006, p.100) – this memo is reproduced below.

**Figure 15: Memo Dated 19.1.2012**

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**8 Minute Memo: Preconceptions and Bias**

In an attempt to explore and identify my own biases as a researcher before I embark on the process of interviewing and data analysis, I'm going to use a method suggested by Kathy Charmaz (p.88) and do an '8-minute memo' on the topic. This will allow me to codify my preconceptions and hopefully learn to deflect them as much as possible in future.

Preconceptions about theatre for the under-3s
When describing my research topic to friends and fellow arts professionals, I often fall back on a few recurring themes, sometimes self-deprecating, sometimes self-aggrandizing:

**It's important**. This defined my research proposal from the start, and I've been seeking forms of legitimation for the genre since I began at RCS. Will a list of these legitimating ideas convince anyone else?

**It's avant-garde, and has replaced TiE as the fashionable *genre du jour***. I have no evidence for this, other than the increasing unfashionability of TiE.

**It's middle-class**. The audiences I have observed have tended towards the ABC1s, but then that's the core audience for theatre, so it's unsurprising. Susan Young and Stephanie Knight both make the point that the genre has a long way to go before it can claim to have engaged fully with all socio-economic groups, so there may be some validity to this claim.

**It's popular, but not populist**. Again anecdotal, but most shows I've seen have been sold out, or I haven't even been able to get tickets. The subject matter (often due to Tony Reekie's curating of Imaginate, reflecting his tastes and beliefs) can be considerably more challenging than one might expect - death, birth, fear, pathos - and there are baby operas, baby ballets and baby classical concerts. Is this diversity linked to middle-class parents' cultural awareness and openness? The number of new companies popping up adds weight to this idea too.

**It's lucrative**. This is linked to its popularity in my mind, and when I ran the Round in Newcastle, we always made money on shows for the under-5s, but equally, small audience sizes and a perception of elitism or incomprehension might mean it's less lucrative in rural or remote venues. It's certainly not seen as commercially successful in the USA.

**It's under-appreciated in the UK**. My very first blog post talked (a bit self-pityingly) about the lack of respect for the artform, even among intelligent artists and theatre-goers. This comes out again and again in the literature, and seems to be as true of India as Inverness.

**It's under-theorised**. Many artists seem to rely, pretty much solely, on Colwyn Trevarthen's work, perhaps unaware that it's pretty contentious in the psychology community; this is also utterly understandable, given how seductive his ideas are, and how closely they cleave to modern, liberal, Western, white, middle-class perceptions about parenting and babies! I was a convert when I heard him lecture in October, until I spoke to other developmental psychologists.

**It's intrinsically superior to television for babies**, or apps, or non-performative arts experiences like Monkey Music, Dance 'n' Play, etc. I haven't done the reading on these areas yet, but I acknowledge a snobbery in me, as in many people in the arts.

**Scotland is better at making theatre for the very young than England**, and as good as the best European nations. This is almost certainly to do with my current location, and the fact I've seen more work from Scotland than England.

**It deserves public subsidy**. The numerous positive effects of early intervention seem to be obvious, but I need to take care in my discussion of these. I'm writing a thesis, not a manifesto.

While acknowledging these limitations and challenges, it is nonetheless important to note that the quest for rigour lies at the core of any methodological approach: "Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility" (Morse *et al*., 2008, p.14). However, methodological rigour – as distinct from intellectual rigour – should not be allowed to "get in the way of relevance" (Mintzberg, 2004, p.399). The human must always be reflected in the data, in keeping with the constructivist origins of the method employed.

Drawn from nursing practices, the same tradition from which Grounded Theory emerged, Sally Thorne provides four principles for the evaluation of qualitative research (1997, pp.120–1):

- Epistemological integrity, defined as "the connections between the nature of the research, overall strategy, research questions, design and methods" (King and Horrocks, 2010, p.8). The congruence between the aims of the project (uncovering tacit, experiential processes) and the methodological approach taken (designed to explore "what is actually happening in practical life" (McCallin, 2003, p.203)) grants this research a coherence which may make the results more relevant than those of a multiple case study design, or mere reportage.

- Representative credibility, meaning "the theoretical claims [researchers] purport to make are consistent with the manner in which the phenomenon under study was sampled" (Thorne, 1997, p.120). Hour-long interviews are unlikely to produce a comprehensive proposal for a dramaturgy of TEY, although they may provide a wide-ranging description of the phenomenon – claims produced by GTM tend to be tentative and provisional. However, the determination to include all practitioners within a given geographical area (in this case, Scotland) should make any recommendations resonant and hopefully plausible within that specific national context.

- Analytic logic, or overt and defensible reasoning "from the inevitable forestructure through to the interpretations and knowledge claims made" (ibid., p.121). It is valuable to consider here the emphasis placed on inductive reasoning in Grounded Theory, as opposed to deductive reasoning. Induction has been described as an approach whose results are "the inventions of particular brains" (Mintzberg, 2004, p.400); by contrast, deduction is post-hoc,

confirmatory, narrowing. The patterns which come forward out of the data would certainly be ordered in different ways by a different researcher, as is appropriate within a constructivist epistemology, but if efforts are made to clarify the choices made at each stage, a Grounded Theory project maintains an explicit logic.

▪ Interpretive authority, with the implication that interpretations of data are both reliable and fair, moving beyond researcher bias to a wider ontological validity. The GTM's greatest strength is that it allows foci to come out of the data, instead of the researcher imposing them, or being attracted by empiricist cherry-picking.

As has been explored above, the well-trodden path laid out by the constructivist Grounded Theory method, allied to the Expert Interview method and applied with care, should give the results of this study integrity, credibility, logic and authority. A rigorous approach to data collection, analysis, theory generation and verification can generate a dramaturgy of use to practitioners and of value to researchers.

## 3.8 Conclusion

Performing arts for very young children is a genre still taking its baby steps, an "emergent theatre" in Lessing's phrase. Practice is diverse, both internationally and foundationally, drawing inspiration from pedagogy, psychology, paediatrics, philosophy and older theatrical art forms. This study seeks to generate new theory with explanatory power, rather than empiricist categorisation, and by employing well-tested methods, aims to produce a robust, verifiable and useful dramaturgy, grounded in the data.

Practice, the daily exploitation of knowledge embedded within the individual, is decoded using methods designed specifically to capture social processes and the reflections of experts; rich data is produced in profusion, and rigorously analysed in an effort to create a substantial and credible theory of direct relevance to those in the field, whether observers or makers.

This study did not seek simply to record current theatre-making practice for Early Years in Scotland, but to critique and delve into it, and by aggregating forms of tacit knowledge, make them accessible for debate, discussion and ultimately, the

development of a new praxis. Each artist already knows what they themselves do; this study aimed to turn embodied know-how into explicit knowledge.

# Chapter 4: Findings

## 4.1 Summary of chapter

This study aims to interrogate and describe the phenomenon of theatre for babies and toddlers in order to generate robust and substantive theory decoding the experiences of contemporary Scottish artists who make work for the very young. As discussed in the previous chapter, Grounded Theory may be used to distil complex and varied data into theory of practical value to researchers, practitioners and the public. The Grounded Theory Method was therefore adopted with the intention of addressing:

1)      The essential phenomenon of contemporary TEY in Scotland;

2)      The key practices employed by TEY artists;

3)      The challenges which trouble the effective delivery of these practices;

4)      The implications for praxis of these challenges.

Data were collected from April 2012 to February 2014 at sites across Scotland. 26 interviews were recorded and transcribed, producing over 190,000 words of raw primary source material for analysis. Each transcript was approved by the interviewee to fulfil ethical requirements, then uploaded into Dedoose analysis software. The analysis was carried out alongside ongoing data collection, producing emerging themes which were fed back into the interview process. Throughout this period, I wrote memos, or short reflections, to record impressions of interviews, explore codes and expand categories. Memoing formed a vital part of the GTM process, as the memos then fed back into analysis, being examined and coded in their turn, leading in some cases to memos about memos. From around 180 initial open codes, six common categories were derived (also known as axial codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) or higher order labels) with two intertwined core categories finally emerging: *treating children as equals*, and *retaining artistic integrity*. For example, the open codes *personalising the experience* and *connecting* were combined into the axial code *sharing experiences*, which was itself combined with four other axial codes to create the core category *treating children as equals*. A table is provided at the end of this chapter.

## 4.2 Participants and sample demographics

The data collected were sizeable: a group of participants (n=26) encompassing almost all artists currently making Theatre for Early Years in Scotland; a wide range of creative roles, including performers, directors, producers, designers and composers; a diverse set of artistic practices, including music, visual art, devised theatre, puppetry, screenwriting and community / youth work; 400 pages of transcribed interviews, consisting of almost 200,000 words in total.

The sample represented an average cross-section of the arts community, with an even split between emerging and established artists, and a range of primary roles with an emphasis on theatre-makers. As noted earlier, Scottishness was defined as being resident in Scotland at the time of making work, not connected to birth, schooling or training.

**Gender**: 18 women, 8 men

The gender split was roughly 2:1 female to male (18 women, 8 men), a reversal of the typical 2:1 male to female ratio observed in European theatre (Van Langendonck *et al.*, 2014; Sedghi, 2012). It is also higher than the 5:4 female to male ratio across the Scottish theatre sector (Granger, 2012, p.8). This may indicate that TEY is an overtly gendered field, possibly due to historical assumptions about child-rearing, or may be due to an increase in female employment in the arts. However, the gender of artists was not raised as an issue by any interviewee (although see 4.6.3 for a discussion of gender roles in childhood), nor does an interest in TEY seem to correlate with parenthood – while several participants became parents in the three years since this study began, fewer than one third of the sample had children. This is a complex issue, beyond the immediate scope of this study, but worthy of further research.

**Status**: 14 emerging artists, 12 established or mid-career artists

Funders and support organisations use a variety of terms to describe the various stages of artistic careers, including 'emerging', 'early career', 'mid-career' and 'established'. The distinctions between these stages are rarely clearly defined, and several interviewees expressed uncertainty about their exact status: "I feel half-stuck in my chrysalis, emerging for a long time", for example. Current status was inferred from various forms of statement within interviews, including the number of projects artists had worked on, and the sources of funding discussed. The definitions

assigned are therefore tentative. Nonetheless, the even split between emerging and established artists suggests that, as an art form, TEY has become relatively well-established in Scotland. It is not solely the preserve of emerging artists, nor has it fallen out of favour or become a dwindling genre, as may be the case with Theatre in Education (TiE), for example. Distinctions between emerging and established artists appear not to be a defining characteristic of TEY. There is, for example, little sense of 'earning your stripes' before being commissioned to create new work for the very young – indeed, some artists expressed surprise at the warm welcome they had received when making their first pieces, suggesting that traditional UK theatre forms may have more defined hierarchies which must be adhered to, rather than the looser, more egalitarian structures within Scottish TEY.

**Primary role**: 16 theatre-makers, 4 musicians, 6 others (performer / director / designer / producer, etc.)

While many interviewees possessed the wide-ranging skills typical of freelance artists – performing as well as directing, or designing as well as producing – the majority defined themselves as "makers", meaning they focused their artistic practice on the production of new artworks. A minority trained as musicians and composers, and began to make theatre pieces in response to the strongly musical content of much TEY work. Almost all participants held higher education qualifications relevant to their practice, and all had also worked in theatre genres other than TEY. Their routes to discovering work for the very young varied widely, from years of community work with participants of all ages, to being commissioned to work on a specific production which, unbeknownst to them, happened to be for babies. As discussed in 4.6.1, each interviewee described an experience which could be described as a conversion, or 'Damascene moment', when they suddenly perceived that TEY could be a powerful and fulfilling event simultaneously for a young child and an adult artist.

**Geographical location**: Edinburgh and surrounding area (13); Glasgow and surrounding area (11); Fife (1); Inverness (1).

It is important to note that almost all artists were freelancers or ran their own companies, meaning that they moved freely about Scotland and internationally in order to make work. Only three participants were employed full-time by venues (one in Edinburgh, one in Glasgow and one in Inverness) and thus geographically tied.

**Figure 16: Geographical Location of Participants**



The overwhelming placement of TEY artists in the Central Belt is perhaps unsurprising, as this is where both the majority of Scotland's population resides, and where most arts venues are located (Granger, 2012), meaning that the national professional arts ecology is rooted in the Edinburgh-Glasgow corridor. Almost all artists underscored their international touring credentials, and that they also regularly toured Scotland with their work. This emphasis on the reach of TEY can be read in two ways: firstly, artists seeking to stress the broad appeal of Early Years work; secondly, an industry-wide acknowledgement of the current hegemonic status of

Scotland's Central Belt in terms of arts provision. As a participant from Inverness stated, "Basically, we create something inside this studio, the audience sees it and then that's it. Nobody else knows about it, because that's what happens when you live this far up north."

## 4.3 Issues encountered

As is to be expected during the data collection phase of any study, certain challenges were encountered. The study design was made to be flexible, but several areas were of particular interest. In terms of sampling, there was an initial aim to limit participation to artists who had created at least two performing arts experiences for the very young, but in practice this proved to be overly prescriptive; several interviewees had only created a single piece, but had advised or assisted on several others, and the level of their expertise could not be measured by such a simplistic yardstick.

In addition, the fact that I was already known to some interviewees meant that they assumed I had a thorough knowledge of all key members of the TEY community, and would therefore only suggest new participants from outside this group. In many cases, those suggested did not work in or make theatre of any kind. Sampling therefore became a mixture of purposive and snowball methods, rather than purely employing snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is generally used as a means of gathering new knowledge by consciously seeking out participants likely to be rich data sources (Roberts, 1997; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Indeed, my own intuitions about which artists were likely to produce rich data proved to be correct, as these were the artists most commonly suggested by their peers throughout the process of data collection. Snowball sampling nonetheless also proved effective, occasionally producing suggestions for further interviewees who would not otherwise have been approached to participate.

However, it became apparent, despite my attempts to address this during my methodological preparations, that I was unconsciously adhering to perceived hierarchies within the TEY community, particularly in relation to the two major TEY hubs in Scotland, Imaginate and Starcatchers.[15] The directors of these organisations,

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[15] It should be explicitly noted that Imaginate and Starcatchers were the industry sponsors for my PhD research.

Tony Reekie and Rhona Matheson respectively, had been included on the list of potential interviewees from the outset, but I delayed interviewing them until the end of the process, possibly because I perceived them as validators of any emerging theories rather than sources of knowledge (neither Reekie nor Matheson currently make work). Yet this seemed to privilege them above artists, potentially reducing the focus on practice. Once this had occurred to me, I immediately contacted them to request interviews, to attempt to place them within the chronology of data collection rather than at the end. Due to existing commitments, it was not possible to speak with them until December 2013, but I reframed the questionnaire in both cases to reflect their non-artist status, and placed an emphasis on challenging their "secure status" with the aim that "the provocations possibly [lead] to new insights" (Kvale, 2007, p.70).

Within the group of artists and associated figures invited to participate, a notable limitation was one participant's request to respond to a written questionnaire rather than take part in an interview in person. Fewer excerpts were generated in this case.

Transcription proved to be another challenge. Early in the transcription stage, an unexpected issue arose concerning the choice between verbatim oral style and formal written style. The pilot interview had been transcribed verbatim, and approved as such by the participant without amendment; this style was then used for the first three participants in the subsequent interview stage. However, each of them then made lengthy changes to the text when approval was sought, removing repetitions and hesitations, and in some cases, altering their phrases entirely. This was both time-consuming for the participants and ethically complex for me, as they often asked me to ensure that the final text 'reflected' my memory of our conversation, despite being told to amend as they saw fit. They seemed to view the interviewer as superior, an editor who would clean up and approve their 'messy' thoughts, rather than a co-creator.

As Steinar Kvale notes (2007, p.93), *"traduire traittori* - translators are traitors"*: by transcribing, the researcher transforms the interview. It became evident that formal written style was more appropriate, given that the analysis was to be semantic rather than linguistic (ibid., p.95). This also produced texts in a similar format to pre-existing comparators from other countries (such as Wooster, 2007; Belloli, 2009; Nerattini, 2009a; Nerattini, 2009b; Schneider, 2009b), as well as

shortening the member-checking process (Kvale, 2007). Therefore formal written style was adopted for the remaining interviews. The decision to switch from verbatim oral transcription to formal written style also proved helpful regarding the need to avoid reputational harm, as it removed ambiguities within speech, such as hesitations or self-corrections, which could have been viewed negatively. As an example, a sentence transcribed verbatim as "But then, then the kids get the chance to… come up and explore, it's then it becomes their archaeological site, and this from a year maybe" would be adapted into formal written style as "But then the kids get the chance to come up and explore. It then becomes their archaeological site, and this is from a year old, maybe." The simplification of small ambiguities, such as the repetition of "then" in this example, is important – it must be ascertained whether there is a pause for thought between the two words, or whether the speaker is repeating it for emphasis, as in "But then – *then* – the kids…" – but I was usually able to refer to the original recording in order to resolve such issues. The move to formal written style seemed to overcome the problems encountered in the first three interviews, as subsequent interviewees made fewer alterations, and returned the approved transcripts more quickly.

The issue of accurate data capture had additional impacts on analysis. GTM practitioners remain in disagreement regarding the benefits of audio recording interviews (see Schreiber, 2001; Stern and Covan, 2001). I recorded the pilot interview while also attempting to take copious notes in an effort to see which method suited my purposes. I found when transcribing that there were considerable omissions in my handwritten notes, and these omitted sections later proved to have contained key information. To a lesser extent, my contemporaneous notes contained some useful data concerning mood and tone which the recording did not seem to capture as accurately. Therefore, I adopted elements of both methods of data capture: memoing immediately after each session allowed me to gather my thoughts, reflect on what appeared to be the key themes from more informal note-taking (rather like Glaser's no-recording method) and note any non-verbal communications, sensations or interactions. Accurate transcribing then allowed me to compare what had seemed most apparent and what emerged from closer coding. It should be noted that audio recording interviews can also prevent researchers "forcing" the data to fit pre-existing concepts or biases (Charmaz, 2006). As an example of the benefit of this mixed approach to data capture, themes of self-justification did not emerge from my recollections of content or tone, but did emerge powerfully as retrospective insight from the specific words used, as in the statement "There's an uncoolness, I think, to it

– which I only realised when all the [Royal] Conservatoire students came to a Patter [Scottish network of Early Years artists] meeting and told me [laughs]." In the recording, and in my memory of this moment, the participant sounded relaxed, almost jokey. The laugh at the end of the sentence did not seem forced or particularly self-deprecating. The word "uncoolness" would obviously stand out as important to any analyst, but the tone appears almost offhand or frivolous. Yet on reading the words alone, subtleties emerge: the artist hedges their initial statement, as if they don't wish to brand TEY as uncool, or as if the admission might be shameful. They state that "all" the students told them it was uncool, suggesting they were overwhelmed by this surprising opinion. The artist deliberately situates the discussion at a Patter meeting, perhaps trying to undercut the potency of their admission by highlighting the genre's professionalism, embedded within peer networks. Many similar examples emerged through analysis and constant comparison, leading eventually to a separate axial code, *emphasising the struggle*. This will be discussed in 4.6.1.

## 4.4 Coding

The first stage of analysis, Level I coding or open coding, involved breaking down the transcripts into manageable excerpts, ranging from a single word to several sentences. Each excerpt was then examined in the light of five key questions: "What is this data a study of?", "What category does this incident indicate?", "What is actually happening in the data?", "What is the main concern being faced by the participants?", and "What accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?" (Glaser, 1998, p.140). As Judith Holton has stated, Glaser's five questions "sustain the researcher's theoretical sensitivity, transcend descriptive details, and encourage a focus on patterns among incidents that yield codes" (Holton, 2010). Accordingly, the pilot transcript was analysed word by word (sometimes called microscopic coding), with each possible interpretation being assigned its own code using the gerundive format to imply action (Strauss and Corbin, 1998): *being political*, *being a pioneer*, *needing space*, and so on. As expected, a series of repeated concepts quickly emerged, and a wide range of codes (often repetitive or contradictory, as is typical of initial attempts at coding (Holton, 2010)) were applied. The early transcripts were analysed line-by-line in this way as soon as they had been approved by the participants, applying, creating and re-labelling codes where appropriate. Most codes were generated from my reflections on the excerpts, as opposed to pure description, although some 'in-vivo' codes also emerged, directly quoting participants, such as

*"There are no shortcuts"* (see 3.4.2 for a discussion of coding methods). With the creation of each new open code, the system of constant comparison was refreshed, meaning that all previous transcripts were re-examined to see whether the new code could also be applied there.

As may be expected from such a sizeable sample, the practices and concepts discussed varied widely, but nonetheless a noticeable commonality of response emerged. This consistency across interviews may be due to the tightly interwoven nature of Scottish TEY, where 'everyone knows everyone' and cultural backgrounds are similar – for example, the same productions, companies, festivals and scholarly works were regularly cited. Imaginate and Starcatchers, as Scottish linchpins of the genre, have perhaps to an extent fostered this consistency, although it should be remembered that many participants trained and made work elsewhere or in other art-forms before coming to Scotland. It is also possible that other factors are responsible for this uniformity, including leading questions within a flawed questionnaire design, or falling into the trap of "descriptive capture" (Glaser, 2001, p.33), described in section 3.4.1. However, it is equally possible that commonality within the sample suggests a strong foundation of shared practice and engagement with dominant discourses. In particular, the impact on artists of links with ASSITEJ and Small Size should not be discounted.

Open coding produced a complex web of categories, resulting in a final set of 181 discrete codes (described in full in Appendix A.4 with accompanying details of frequency). The most prevalent codes were applied to more than 120 excerpts each, demonstrating a high degree of commonality.[16] One complete analysis is presented as Appendix A.2; this interview, with artist Hazel Darwin-Edwards, contains 332 excerpts, along with four linked memos.

The second stage of analysis is intended to create umbrella codes which describe large thematic areas of the data. This is known as Level II or axial coding (Birks and Mills, 2011), and provides an intermediate stage where open codes can be compared, renamed, nested, re-arranged and occasionally rejected as analysis continues. At this point, memoing became more important to capture my reflections on the process of coding – it was essential to preserve my ideas as they occurred, while not becoming overly focused on any one interpretation. Throughout this stage I

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[16] The three highest frequency codes were *struggling towards success* (145 excerpts), *peer critique* (124) and *emphasising experience / skills* (119).

continued to collect data from new participants, so the emerging axial codes also provided fresh questions for these interviews. In one example, issues around approbation seemed to be emerging strongly, so I added a question about applause and the need for pleasurable feedback.

Axial coding eventually produced six major themes into which all open codes could be subsumed:

- *Emphasising the struggle*
- *Sharing experiences*
- *Proving 'what works' with testing*
- *Gift giving*
- *Treating children as we treat adults*
- *Abandoning tradition*

Each axial code is described in turn in sections 4.6.1 to 4.6.6, with illustrative quotations.

The final stage of Grounded Theory coding is the discovery of one or more core categories which encompass the whole dataset and define the project's direction. As noted in Chapter 3, this category typically appears "automatically" and is "hard to resist" (Glaser, 2007, p.107). In this case, two intertwined concerns seemed to be affecting all participants; these became twin core categories, problematising one another in a complex cycle of tensions: *treating children as equals*, and *retaining artistic integrity*. These are discussed in detail in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

The entire process from open coding to axial coding to core categories is shown in example excerpts over the next three sections, and a diagram showing all 181 final codes, their descriptive axial codes and the final core categories is included in Appendix A.5.

## *4.4.1 "More like a poem than a play": first example of coding*

This text is taken from the transcript of the first interview of the project (after the pilot interview), with artist Andy Manley on 6th June 2012. It is given here as an example of the coding process from open coding to axial coding to core category. In this excerpt, Manley discusses his perceptions of contemporary theatre for adults in Scotland, contrasting it with TEY.

> **"…a lot of the time I go and see work in Scotland, and I don't think it's bad or anything, I just don't find it particularly engaging or very helpful to the other work that I make. It's almost like a different medium sometimes, because it's so much about words and people being placed onstage, and so much about things being declaimed. And then you make a piece of work for Early Years, which, if it's got language in it, is going to be more like a poem than a play." [6/6/12, Andy Manley, Edinburgh]**

Microscopic coding of the first sentence led to several initial codes: "…a lot of the time I go and see work in Scotland" was first coded as *emphasising experience*. This code later became *emphasising experience / skills*. "I don't think it's bad or anything" was coded as *protecting reputations*, but on further reflection (taking GTM founder Barney Glaser's question "What is the main concern being faced by the participants?" (1998, p.140) into account) this was amended to *bolstering ego*. In time, this code became redundant, as it became clear that the main concern was in fact comparison with other theatre makers, and therefore the code was relabelled *critiquing peers*, as this was how the concern was resolved in this case. "I just don't find it particularly engaging or very helpful to the other work that I make" was coded as *critiquing adult theatre*, which eventually replaced *critiquing peers* as further statements were analysed. This initial code was then applied to the entire first sentence, as it responded to all five of Glaser's questions.

Similarly, "It's almost like a different medium sometimes, because it's so much about words and people being placed onstage, and so much about things being declaimed" was finally coded as both *creating hierarchies* and *critiquing adult theatre*. The third sentence was given four separate codes, reflecting the complexity of the various clauses: *being an artist, not an educator*; *peer critique*; *minimising language*; *emphasising experience / skills*.

Thus *emphasising experience / skills* emerged as a key thread throughout the whole section of text, but from constant comparison with subsequent transcripts, there emerged a deeper sense of craving recognition, which was eventually coded as *being seen to succeed*. The interviewee began by appraising the work of peers ("What is this data a study of?"), suggesting that this was a defence mechanism of sorts ("What category does this incident indicate?"). It became apparent that the real

target was in fact adult theatre in general, rather than specific peers ("What is actually happening in the data?"), perhaps because the artist felt that their own skills were not recognised to the same extent as theatre makers outside children's theatre ("What is the main concern being faced by the participants?"). The process employed to overcome this can be viewed as stressing their aesthetic integrity by emphasising their hard-won knowledge ("What accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?").

The next stage is axial coding, where statements are combined and compared to tease out commonalities and underlying themes. The first attempt at an axial code, *seeking recognition as an artist*, was overly descriptive and failed to capture the nuances of many statements such as this one. Further reflection produced the axial code *emphasising the struggle*. This seemed to unpick both the interviewee's decision to critique their peers' successes and the strong sense of effort in creating TEY, exemplified by the fascinating phrase "more like a poem than a play."

The final stage is to seek out the core category which encompasses this and all other codes. Each excerpt centres on a powerful expression of integrity as an artist – the amount of work observed, the discernment, the exertion, the depth of knowledge, the craving for recognition or kudos. Thus the core category became obvious: *retaining artistic integrity*.

### 4.4.2 "You want to feel safe": second example of coding

This text is taken from the tenth interview, conducted with theatre-maker Katherine Morley on 25th October 2012, and provides another example of the coding process. Here, Morley is discussing parents' need for security when coming into an unfamiliar place, such as a theatre.

**"From an audience point of view, you want to feel safe, and if you're bringing a tiny baby into a space, on a purely practical level you want to know that your baby is safe and looked after." [25/10/12, Katherine Morley, Glasgow]**

Many transcripts feature examples of practitioners *putting themselves in a child's shoes* (which became an 'in-vivo' code) but perhaps surprisingly, fewer

mention viewing theatre experiences through a parent's eyes. This may because an adult perspective is already the default mode for most theatre-makers, and so interviewees expressed this as an assumption. However, this extract demonstrates a practitioner taking particular care to take on the point of view of a parent, in this case, of a very young baby.

*Making everyone feel comfortable* had already emerged as a recurring code, applied to more than 75 excerpts. It seemed to fit well here as an initial code, but I also applied and then discarded *having a duty of care* (as being too prescriptive) and *helping parents* (applicable to other excerpts from this transcript, but not adequately descriptive here, as this sentence focuses on the shared bond between parent and baby).

The axial code *giving and receiving gifts*, later shortened to *gift-giving*, seemed to describe the overriding focus of the speaker (as opposed to the parent's focus, which is safety – it must be remembered that Glaser's question "What is the main concern being faced by the participants?" refers to the interviewee, not the subject of their speech). In this case, the gift of a secure and comfortable space is the artist's solution to the problem of an audience's anxiety. By providing this space, the artist overcomes the problem.

In many cases, the core category *treating children as equals* had already been applied to excerpts tagged with *gift-giving*. This reflected a common theme in interviews of reciprocity, where an artist may share a physical object or simply a glance with a child, and receives a response which can be viewed as a gift in exchange. However, this sentence did not appear to contain resonances of reciprocity, as the relationship discussed is one-sided. Upon further consideration, I realised that the exchange emerges from the solution to the parent's concern – by providing the safe space, the artist allows the parent to relax, and their relaxation means they can begin to become appreciative of the aesthetic efforts of the artist in return. A number of similar excerpts led me to condense the axial code *giving and receiving gifts* into *gift-giving,* which applied more widely. Now it was possible to enfold this sentence, and others like it, into the category *treating children as equals* – here, the parent and child are viewed as equally vulnerable, but also equally capable of aesthetic response. The experience is not solely for the parent, but aimed at both, and so the artist must address the needs of both. By doing so, they demonstrate their commitment to equality.

### 4.4.3 "Seeing things upside down": third example of coding

This text is taken from the twentieth interview, conducted with artist Sacha Kyle on 25th February 2013. At the end of our discussion, prompted by the final question, "Is there anything else about your practice that you'd like me to know?", Kyle produced a passionate defence of failure as a vital part of practice, noting explicitly that children's acceptance of failure was an inspiration to her.

> **"And don't be afraid to fail. It's really important to make mistakes and to try stuff, because that's one thing that I love about children – they'll get up again. They'll try something else. They'll explore something else, and that's the way we should be as artists creating work for this age: we should keep trying. We should keep exploring. We should keep learning and not get set in our ways. We should keep seeing things differently, and keep seeing things upside down." [20/2/13, Sacha Kyle, Glasgow]**

Microscopic coding of the excerpt produced a number of inter-related initial codes centring on developing personal practice, including *learning from mistakes*, *learning from children* and *always learning*. The topic of *taking risks* was also apparent from phrases such as "not get set in our ways" and "try stuff", feeding into a wider discourse about TEY as a place to take risks, unfettered by pre-existing modes of practice.

Further initial codes included *the unusual intersecting with the familiar*, applied here to the phrase "keep seeing things upside down", but more widely referring to a common element of TEY practice (coded initially as *exploiting the familiar*) which sites performances in a realistic and familiar location – garden, bedroom, bathroom, nursery – in order to subvert children's expectations by presenting an extraordinary event taking place within it. This participant's description of the artist's viewpoint as "different" and "upside down" suggests that artists can transgress norms to introduce engaging, amusing and chaotic elements into everyday life.

A recurring theme in many interviews was the ability to recall your own childhood in detail as a guide to appropriate directions for creativity. This became the open code *connecting to your own childhood*. While this participant does not explicitly address their personal memories of being a child, it is clear that they are equating artists with children ("that's the way we should be"). Therefore, the code *connecting to your own childhood* has resonance, and was applied to the central sentence of this excerpt.

Finding an axial code that brought together these themes of learning, risk-taking, subversion, creativity and memory was relatively straightforward. A substantial amount of analysis had been carried out by the time this transcript was examined, with 21 transcripts fully coded. It was becoming clear that few new categories were emerging, suggesting that the study was approaching theoretical saturation. The axial code *proving 'what works' with testing* had powerful implications about exploration, a child-centred approach and thinking differently. Despite the fact that these specific sentences are not exclusively about the role of testing, the transcript as a whole was filled with references to the need to validate artistic practice by trialling new ideas with children. Therefore, *proving 'what works' with testing* was a good fit.

The core category proved even simpler, as this excerpt provided an excellent example of the most prevalent theme across all interviews, *treating children as equals*. For this participant, children are not simply recipients of work or even potential collaborators, but inspirations to all artists seeking to make work for the very young.

## 4.5 Sensitising concepts

Before discussing the final coding structure, it is important to examine the sensitising concepts that were present from the beginning of analysis. A sensitising concept is an idea "identified from the research, popular, or practice literature that, in the researcher's mind, seems salient" (Schreiber, 2001, p.59). While these must not be allowed to 'force' the data, they can be useful in creating the first set of questions for early participants, and in generating initial codes. As discussed in Chapter 1 and the sample memo in Chapter 3, I began the study with four key assumptions which have impacted on the course of its development:
- issues around legitimacy of the genre

- radicalism of practice
- the centrality of developmental milestones in creating praxis
- Scottishness as a key identity for participants

As will be outlined below, the interplay between these concepts and the emergence of entirely unexpected codes from the data resulted in new and surprising conceptual hierarchies.

## 4.5.1 A crisis of legitimation?

Scholars have claimed that children's theatre is "often insufficiently assertive when it comes to the promotion of its own values and societal benefits beyond the entertainment function" (Klaic, 2012, pp.74–5). As noted in Chapter 1, this has led to artists and critics alike referring to children's theatre as "the Cinderella sector" (Reekie, 2005, p.38; Brown, 2012, p.x), and it is arguable that TEY is even more marginalised. As one participant stated:

> "…the danger is that we in the young people's performing arts
> sector get ignored. It's still seen as not as important, not as
> necessary, not needing as much in terms of funding, so the work
> for very young children suffers from that, but even more so."

Theatre for the youngest audiences has struggled with legitimation since the inception of children's theatre as a discrete art form. It has been noted that "despite its educational and social potential, performance to and for the very young has frequently been portrayed as frivolous, risky, meaningless, impossible or potentially damaging to the emerging creative minds of infants and toddlers" (Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014, p.132). When combined with issues such as the struggle for funding and a lack of support from peers, TEY could be said to be wrestling with a crisis of legitimation.

The sensitising concept "lack of legitimacy" has been present in my readings of the literature from the beginning of this project, as I noted in an 8 Minute Memo dated 19th January 2012 (see figure 15 in Chapter 3). I therefore chose to address this explicitly within the questions for the earliest participants, asking variously, "How do you think arts for Early Years is perceived – by other Early Years artists, by artists in other fields, by the public?" The data produced were rich, containing both anecdotes about specific moments of prejudice from peers and wider consideration

of the shifts in perception observed over time. During analysis, codes derived from this concept included *emphasising the struggle*, *overcoming prejudices* and *knowing better than peers*. However, it also became apparent that many responses to different questions which at first appeared to be focused on practice were in fact variations on this theme; thus newer codes emerged to expand this topic, including *craving kudos*, *circling the wagons* and *evangelising*. Gradually, the strategies employed by artists to legitimise their practice (to themselves, to peers, to funders, to audiences) began to appear. For example, numerous participants criticised adult theatre as remote or stale, critiquing its failure to connect with audiences, the common modes of delivery ("things being declaimed") and the "precious" or "guarded" behaviour of its actors. In so doing, they sought to emphasise the innovative practices inherent in TEY, such as the use of test audiences, often reflecting that adult theatre could be improved by adopting Early Years practices. This will be discussed further in section 5.3 relating to the core category *retaining artistic integrity*.

## 4.5.2 The radicalism of TEY?

From my first encounter with TEY in 2007 (see 1.3.2), I perceived performance for the very young as avant-garde and radical by comparison with the more traditional forms of theatre for older children, or even for adults. In many cases, I have argued, "its heterogeneous forms – variously rejecting temporality, narrative, illusion, or even presence – resemble postdramatic theatre" (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b, p.17). However, this remains contentious, with both scholars and practitioners questioning the theatricality of TEY experiences, especially those resembling free play (Goldfinger, 2011). It was likely that asking explicit questions about radical practice would produce affirmative answers which would not challenge my assumptions, as participants sought to emphasise their artistic integrity and skills. Therefore I chose to ask interviewees to compare TEY with other forms in order to explore their perceptions of practice in the genre: "What differences or similarities do you perceive compared with theatre for older children?" As expected, many responses focused on practice, producing initial codes such as *giving and receiving gifts*, *engaging the whole body* or *making the space safe*. In response, the interview questions were revised to include specific queries about these unique stage effects such as creating boundaries between auditorium and acting space, or welcoming audiences via "airlocks" (Brown, 2012). For example, I asked, "How do you handle the ebb and flow of boundaries?" However, broader themes quickly also emerged, as artists

repeatedly chose to reflect on the differences in audience, producing a string of codes concerned with equality, duty of care and the role of parents. Unexpectedly, in response to questions derived from the sensitising concept of "radicalism", almost all interviewees chose to explore their relationship to their audiences. As will be explored in section 5.2, this culminated in the core category *treating children as equals*.

### 4.5.3 Developmental psychology as a foundation?

The literature on TEY, including my own contributions, suggests that artistic practice is rooted in an understanding of developmental milestones, and that collaboration with educational or child development specialists is a common approach (Young and Powers, 2009; Dunlop *et al*., 2011; Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014). This is not to claim that a common *praxis* yet exists, as artists' training, influences and preferences still define their individual practices. Even so, two distinct approaches have been identified within which most artists can be categorised: inductive practice, where close scrutiny of the very young is allied with testing during rehearsal, and deductive practice, where artists work alongside developmental specialists to integrate theatrical moments with age-specific milestones (Dartnell, 2009; Knight, 2011). Rather than asking interviewees to self-categorise, which would produce simplistic results, I elected to ask, "Do you think of young children as having needs or abilities that you accommodate?" The aim was to encourage each participant to reflect on their own knowledge of infant development, whether derived from research or observation.

As expected, many responses focused on practice, with initial codes emerging such as *learning from children* and *making everyone feel comfortable*. In this case, however, unlike the other sensitising concepts, there were relatively few unanticipated codes; instead, a complex interplay between developmental psychology, legitimation and radicalism began to appear. Themes such as *being non-judgmental* emerged with regularity across all three areas, and an underlying tension between artistic integrity and equality became apparent. The hierarchies of open, axial and core codes were constructed slowly over time, but even within individual questions such as the ones above, micro-hierarchies which mirrored the overall structure were present. It is to be hoped that this reflects an inherent robustness within the analysis process.

### 4.5.4 The importance of Scottish identity?

As noted in my positioning statement (section 1.3.1), residency in Scotland has an impact both on my attitudes to performance and the scope of the study. Trish Reid has discussed "what is now generally acknowledged to be a renaissance in Scottish theatre" (2013, p.177) or even a "golden age" (2014, p.ix), leading me to predict a degree of national pride amongst participants. The timing of the Scottish independence referendum in the final months of the project meant that many interviews and informal discussions before or after the recorded conversations contained references to devolution, Scottish identity, Holyrood politics and the future of TEY post-referendum. Furthermore, the majority of participants were educated or trained in Scotland, and thus brought their own cultural perspectives to our discussions, for example contrasting the funding bodies Creative Scotland and Arts Council England.

The question "Do you think it's possible to talk about a Scottish way of making art for Early Years?" featured in the interview protocol from the very beginning of the study (reproduced in Appendix A.1), and produced many lengthy responses. Within these, as well as basic codes such as *peer critique*, several open codes concerning identity became apparent: *promoting Scotland*, *being political*, *struggling for funding* (later abbreviated to *funding*). While not all artists espoused a nationalistic model of Scottish TEY, there was a general agreement that an overtly national 'style' was perhaps materialising, or about to materialise, and that this differed from an English or European style. Artists cited concepts such as "humour", "camp" and live or specially composed music which were not present as often in performances they had seen from England and abroad. Those participants with the greatest political engagement (such as lobbying Holyrood or Creative Scotland) also tended to cite socioeconomic data to support their assertions, such as economic productivity studies which argue for greater investment in Early Years (Heckman and Masterov, 2007). This is in contrast to other artists, who tended to refer to child development studies.

However, unlike the other sensitising concepts discussed above, Scottish identity did not eventually feed into axial coding in any meaningful way. For artists, their national identity was only a small part of their artistic practice, or maybe completely separate. Nonetheless, it is possible that the Grounded Theory resulting from this study was informed to an extent by concepts of nationhood. For example,

the open code *being seen to succeed* suggests an arena within which an artist's skills are critiqued, and this arena is likely to be regionally-defined, rather than international. The resulting axial code *emphasising the struggle* remains culturally-located to an extent, as theatre-makers struggle for Creative Scotland funding, or stress the extra hardships of making work in the Highlands, or compare themselves with more highly regarded peers in Belgium. Finally, the grounded dramaturgy of TEY proposed in section 5.9 is arguably a Scottish dramaturgy, drawn as it has been from Scottish respondents. It is to be hoped that it has a wider applicability, but its culturally-located status cannot be ignored. Section 7.2 discusses this issue further.

The four sensitising concepts inevitably affected each aspect of the study, from protocol design to interview questions and the analysis of responses. I am hopeful that by memoing rigorously throughout to reflect on my preconceptions (Charmaz, 2006), 'forcing' of the data has been avoided. The next section discusses the axial coding process which condensed a large body of codes into a manageable framework.

## 4.6 Discussion of axial codes

The axial coding framework is described below using simple tables to contextualise each axial code. Extensive quotation is then used to disentangle the various themes within each axial code. Participants are not identified individually, although permission was received from each interviewee to assign their name to their statements if appropriate.

As an example of the process, where participants discussed *personalising the experience*, *connecting* and *building up a mythology*, these open codes became subthemes of a major (axial) theme, *sharing experiences*. In turn, this major theme fell under the core category of *treating children as equals*. Thus all open codes can finally be described by a single category. In the tables below, section 4.6.1 demonstrates the development of the axial code *emphasising the struggle*, which leads to the core category *retaining artistic integrity,* while sections 4.6.2 to 4.6.6 culminate in the more prominent core category *treating children as equals*. These tables only show representative open codes, but the full list of 181 open codes is available in Appendices A.4 and A.5, and an abbreviated table showing the open codes and axial codes used in the following sections can be found at the end of this chapter as Table 9.

Not every open code will be discussed in the following six sections. Instead, a selection of more prominent codes (generally, those attached to larger numbers of excerpts) will be used to illustrate and contextualise the six axial codes emerging from the data. The next chapter will then discuss the two core categories, before outlining the process of theoretical saturation, necessary for the final stage of theory generation to begin (Glaser, 1978).

To summarise, it should be reiterated that as analysis progressed, many open codes were subsumed into other codes, moved up or down the code hierarchy to become themes and subthemes, or occasionally removed from the hierarchy entirely if they had negligible impact on the emerging process. In addition, some excerpts were assigned more than one code, as varying interpretations of the data were explored (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). For example, one participant mentioned the oddity of training as a saxophonist only to find herself composing opera; this excerpt was labelled *self deprecation* (emerging from the wry tone adopted) as well as *shifting identity* (deriving from the process she described). Those codes which are included here are therefore representative of a much wider network of interconnected concepts.

## 4.6.1 Emphasising the struggle

This section addresses the axial code *emphasising the struggle*. Four open codes (*being seen to succeed; evangelising; overcoming prejudices; being an artist, not an educator*) are used to illustrate the theme, and the main findings discussed.

One useful feature of Dedoose analysis software is the Packed Code Cloud, a visualisation of data which displays all codes in a single screen, ordered by frequency. The larger the text, the more excerpts have been linked to a given code, providing a simple visual cue as to some important areas for consideration.[17] An example Code Cloud from midway through the analysis is reproduced below:

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[17] Frequency of occurrence does not necessarily correlate with importance, so it can be a mistake to rely too heavily on digital visualisations of data such as the Packed Code Cloud (Becker, 1993). Memoing, constant comparison and member checking are more reliable methods of producing robust theory. In this study, the three most frequently applied codes all fell under the core category *retaining artistic integrity*, but this eventually proved to be less important than the other core category, *treating children as equals*, which encompassed more than four times as many open codes. Thus, had I relied too heavily on data visualisation, the

**Figure 17: Example of a 'Packed Code Cloud' from Dedoose, Dated 13.6.14**
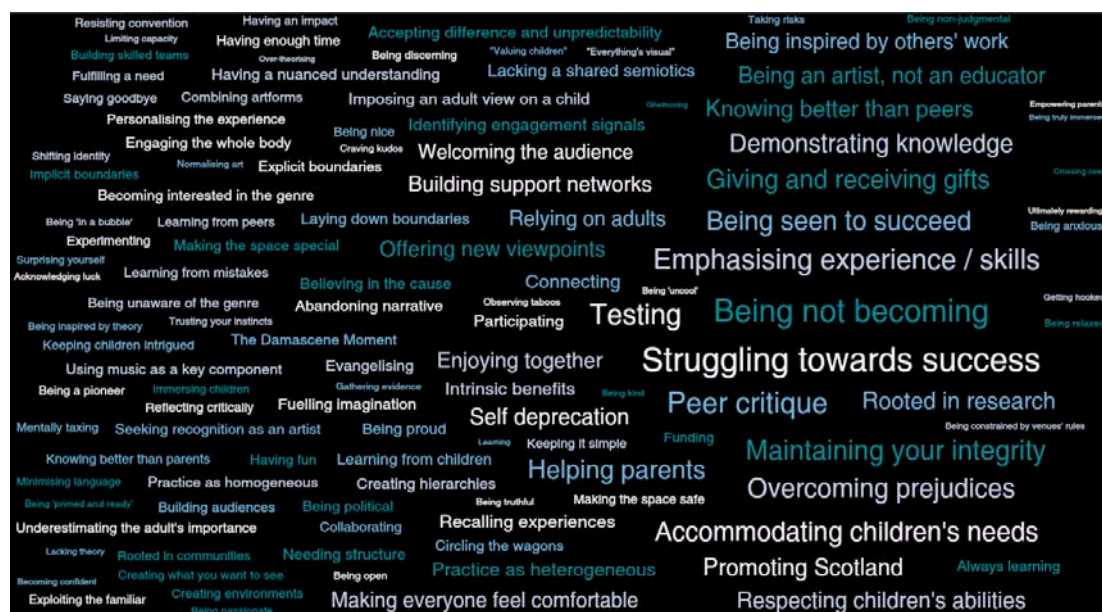


Several common open codes, including *overcoming prejudices*, *being seen to succeed* and *demonstrating knowledge*, appear prominently due to the many excerpts to which they have been applied. As explained in section 4.4.1 (*"More like a poem than a play": first example of coding*) and the discussion of the sensitising concept *a crisis of legitimation* in 4.5.1, these prominent codes and others like them emerged in unexpected profusion from the very beginning of the study. The overarching theme, following a lengthy process of constant comparison and memoing, was finally described with the axial code *emphasising the struggle*.

**Table 3: Axial Code *emphasising the struggle* with Representative Open Codes**

| Axial code – *emphasising the struggle*: "The *Daily Mail* could make some really vivid headlines about 'How ridiculous this theatre is' or 'Money down the toilet'." | |
|---|---|
| **Open code** | **Sample quotation** |
| ***Being seen to succeed*** | "We had masses of press. It's very interesting that you say 'baby' and everyone goes vroooom [towards you]." |
| ***Evangelising*** | "We believe in the value of the arts for children, and give it a credibility so there's an entitlement to experiencing high-quality, innovative, challenging arts at whatever age." |

seeming prominence of codes such as *overcoming prejudices* could have mislead me, perhaps leading to a different theory proposal. The complex relationship between the two core categories will be explored further in Chapter 5.

| *Overcoming prejudices* | "Certainly, if that was your experience and expectation of theatre, when you come to baby theatre, you would probably find it quite shocking. There's more expected of you. You can see everybody." |
| --- | --- |
| *Being an artist, not an educator* | "A beautiful experience shouldn't have to tick off boxes." |

This first axial code describes the myriad strategies employed by artists in conversation with the interviewer to highlight the level of mental and physical effort which constitutes being a TEY practitioner. Some chose to itemise the difficulties they had endured in securing funding for their work, or the lack of visibility of TEY in the media; others stressed the under-appreciation they felt from peers; several described the mental difficulty of subverting their training; some claimed that Early Years work was "more challenging" than any other art form they had worked in.

These complaints could be dismissed as nothing but 'whinging artists' who are never satisfied with their lot, common to any art-form, and I was careful not to allow these sentiments, despite their volume, to colour my initial analysis. However, upon examining other primary source testimonies by contemporary UK theatre artists (Delgado and Heritage, 1996; Oddey, 2005; Wooster, 2007; Duggan and Ukaegbu, 2013), the relative lack of similar self-justifying claims about the difficulty of existing as an artist was notable. This is not simply due to the fact that most published collections of artist interviews focus on successful (and therefore noteworthy) practitioners who are secure in their practice, as many artists in this study have achieved considerable success in other fields prior to or concurrent with their TEY careers. Indeed, some chose to emphasise the need to alternate work for the very young with work for other audiences, using words like "mental", "mad" and "exhausting" (an open code was created to describe this recurring description of being torn between the mental stress of TEY and the desire to keep making TEY pieces, almost like an addiction: *getting hooked*). Nor is the prevalence of statements about the "hard slog" symptomatic of a culture of bragging or whinging – the overwhelming majority of excerpts in this area seemed to be positive at first glance, but on closer inspection revealed themselves to be tussling with issues of legitimacy, sustainability, or perceived prejudice.

It is important to note that this axial code is the only one not to deal explicitly with practice. Instead, it is a central element of the process of attempting to legitimise that practice. Whereas the other codes can be framed tentatively as the beginnings of a dramaturgy of TEY, *emphasising the struggle* to an extent sits outside this taxonomy. Nonetheless, it is an issue of paramount importance to participants, and thus, to the study.

### Being seen to succeed

A crucial initial code, *being seen to succeed*, emerged late in the analysis phase. It replaced a set of disparate codes which were solely descriptive, such as *feeling special* or *showing off*. I had experienced some difficulty in coding small fragments of text such as "when she was in New York" or "I'd worked with them on a few shows", which seemed to be basic and informative, rather than discursive. On further reflection, I realised that I was viewing such excerpts through the eyes of a theatre professional (my previous career) rather than as a researcher. The artists were not swapping stories in gentle one-upmanship or collegiality, but trying to impress an outsider who they felt needed to be convinced of their status.

Once I had had this realisation, a whole array of similar tactics came into view. It was very common, for example, for artists to mention seemingly casually an international festival from which they had just returned, or to repeat praise from parents verbatim: "'That's the first time she's sat through something'" or "'We've tried five times in different things and she's always run out [of the venue] before'." These statements were designed to influence my perception of the interviewee, despite the fact that each participant was told that they were being interviewed as an expert in the field. There was, in every case, a sense that their status required underlining, no matter how they had been approached. It is possible to view this as insecurity on the part of participants, and to question the root of this highly prevalent status-anxiety. The context is important – an interview framed as an expert in discussion with a researcher may have led participants to play up to that image of themselves as knowledgeable, confident and successful; in addition, many of my questions addressed the specifics of their careers, so it would be natural for them to provide me with details of venues, press reviews, international tours and other markers of success. However, the data also showed a complex linkage of other, less overt tactics, coded as *being lucky*, *being proud* or *having an impact*, for example. These statements were not designed to impress, but nonetheless transmitted a similar

sense of status-anxiety. The open code *being seen to succeed* seemed to describe more accurately this wide array of excerpts.

### Evangelising

A secondary means of *emphasising the struggle* was less common than *being seen to succeed*, but still appeared in almost all transcripts. *Evangelising* was the code applied to excerpts in which the interviewee defended their practice in terms beyond personal satisfaction, training or utility, and began to use emotive language which sought to address political and social aims. Perhaps responding to the current discourse around culture as a means of social inclusion, particularly from Westminster's Culture Secretaries and Arts Council England, some participants confidently made statements such as "it's not medicine, it's not roads, it's art that does that, and that's why, regardless of if there's no money or anything in the world, we would still have art" or "what we do has a massive impact." This self-justification or even self-aggrandisement is common within fields seen as marginalised by their practitioners, from teaching to nursing, and indeed the academy. Presenting one's practice as socially valuable or culturally desirable allows the practitioner to maintain self-esteem. Thus for many, the impact on social policy was vital: "it motivates me to think that my work could help us in our society connect with the importance of art." Others chose to reflect on the potency of TEY for their own work, promoting it as a tool for self-actualisation: "I've learnt far more doing this process than anything else I've ever done." Accordingly, a series of codes including *creating a movement* and *being a pioneer* were eventually jointly coded with *evangelising* to emphasise this claim for TEY's power to improve, whether socially or personally.

This religious terminology is not accidental. Almost all participants spoke of a moment in their careers where they moved from a state of disbelief in the possibility of theatre for the very young to a state of belief, which was coded as *the Damascene Moment*. This conversion then became a tenet of many artists, who saw that only by observing TEY in action would others be convinced of its legitimacy: "go and watch something, because I'm not going to change your mind unless you do… there's that point where I cannot persuade you any further with words… there is a very long way to go before it's seen as being a legitimate occupation by people who have not experienced or seen some Early Years work." In later interviews, I described this as "the zeal of the convert", with which participants generally agreed. Thus an almost missionary process was revealed, moving from a position of no knowledge to a passionate devotion to TEY. The standard steps seemed to consist of:

1) Complete ignorance of TEY (coded as *being unaware of the field*)

2) Exposure to a performance experience (coded as *the Damascene Moment*)

3) Growing interest in the field, usually by seeing more performances (coded as *becoming interested in the genre*)

4) Spending time with children to learn about them and see what interests them (coded as *learning from children*, *putting yourself in a child's shoes* and *getting hooked*)

5) Making the decision to create a piece of work for the very young (coded as *becoming confident* or *challenging yourself*)

6) Becoming passionate about TEY and forming links with like-minded individuals and groups (coded as *being passionate* and *building support networks*)

7) Becoming known for your work, and achieving success (coded as *developing a reputation*)

8) Becoming politically engaged in the Early Years movement and seeking to convert others (coded as *evangelising*)

This 'conversion narrative' will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (see in particular Figure 20).

### *Overcoming prejudices*

An important step in converting others to believing in work for the very young is *overcoming prejudices*, one of the most common open codes. This code combined several others examining artists' own preconceptions, such as *being 'uncool'* and *'What have I got to lose?'*, with a large body of excerpts concerning the prejudices of peers, critics and the public. Even artists who began their careers without needing to overcome their own prejudices expressed their astonishment at the views they then heard: "I was surprised that it was surprising to people that it was happening." One participant described their initial perception before an early TEY performance in Scotland, attended by many children's theatre specialists: "'This isn't possible. You can't do this', which seemed to be the prevailing mood with just about everybody… people were saying, 'Nonsense! Nonsense!'" While the increasing profile of TEY means that this instant dismissal is less common, there remains a powerful disconnect between established practitioners who reject the genre, and newer artists who embrace it: "I think the older or higher up the scale they get, the more they ignore it."

This may be due to the unusual forms TEY can take (non-verbal, non-narrative, participatory and emancipatory, as discussed earlier), which can be off-putting to artists trained in older traditions – one participant suggested that "if [traditional fourth-wall narrative] was your experience and expectation of theatre, when you come to baby theatre, you would probably find it quite shocking. There's more expected of you. You can see everybody." There is a notable similarity to Hans-Thies Lehmann's discussion of post-dramatic theatre forms: "theatre is tacitly thought of as the *theatre of dramas*" (Lehmann, 2006, p.21). Traditionalists (described as "the big establishment people who write for big newspapers, apart from our friend Lyn [Gardner of *The Guardian*]" by one artist) may feel "like a stranger attending the enigmatic cultic actions[18] of a people unknown to them" (Lehmann, 2006, p.70). A participant proposed that this objection may stem from a feeling that "it wasn't like that when I was a child."

Another prejudice described by many artists is a confusion between TEY and less child-centred art forms such as pantomime or commercial theatre based on television franchises: "maybe they think about the big pantos, and all the other sort of stuff that's going on." Especially for parents who rarely visit the theatre, "they think theatre is pantomime once a year." Even for regular attendees, there can be confusion: "people maybe do get mixed up and think that it's TiE, which does have a reputation – or a stigma." Alternatively, according to another interviewee, when first making work for babies, some friends and colleagues "thought that I meant that I was making a show where babies were the performers! It's just not on their radar at all." This may be an attempt to distract from the stigma or prejudices attached to TEY as a minor art-form which participants repeatedly confronted – by claiming that another art-form is stigmatised, fairly or unfairly, artists are implicitly elevating their own work.

Misunderstandings also extend to the possibilities offered by the performance experience. In the words of a musician, "there are maybe misconceptions that it has to be this gentle, relaxing stuff, and I don't think that's the case." For many, there appears to be an automatic presumption that "when you start talking about making work for children… you're going to make baby art or cartoon art" rather than a piece with subtlety and aesthetic power which challenges its audience as much as any adult performance.

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[18] This "cultic" atmosphere has interesting resonances with the missionary language mentioned earlier.

While some participants stated that the situation had improved in recent years, others were adamant that "there is still a fair bit of scepticism out there. It's hard to tell, because everybody I know is involved in some way, so they're not sceptical, but I think other people are still pretty uncertain." In addition, prejudices seemed to strengthen as the audiences got younger: "A lot of people are still a bit scathing and think there's no place for it - in particular baby shows." It appeared that overcoming these prejudices, whether by exposing sceptics to live performance or engaging with them verbally, was seen as key to a greater legitimacy. In the face of such doubt, the strategy adopted by all artists seemed to be identical: preserving, enhancing and demonstrating their artistic integrity wherever possible.

### Being an artist, not an educator

The final open code to be discussed in this section was one of the first to emerge, but remained compelling until the final interview – in the words of one early participant, "I'm not an educator, I'm an artist." The code was thus termed *being an artist, not an educator*. Contemporary TEY theatre-makers explicitly and repeatedly rejected the long tradition of Theatre in Education and the scholars calling for the teaching of theatre literacy: "education has always killed the joy [laughs] that I have from making the work." They described their experiences of educational theatre in unforgiving terms – as one said, "you can dress it up in tinsel if you want but it's still a lecture", while another stated, "I felt as if it didn't respect the audience as an artistic audience."

The binary discourse around education versus entertainment remains contentious. For example, while Stuart Bennett distinguishes between "theatre as an art form experience and theatre in an educational context" (Bennett et al., 2005, p.11), Tony Jackson has criticised this separation as "a flawed argument… positioning the two as an incompatible dichotomy" (quoted in Reason, 2010, p.6).[19] A recent study of children's arts in Australia pointed to a shift away from instrumentalism towards a belief in the intrinsic benefits of culture, stating that there is now "a focus on the children as being, rather than the adults they will become.

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[19]  The genealogy of the divide between education/pedagogy/instrumentalism and entertainment/aesthetics/art for art's sake has been usefully mapped by, among others, Matthew Reason (2010, pp.3-6) and Liz Tomlin (2015, pp.76-83). Both agree that the decline of TiE was countered by a burgeoning professional children's theatre movement which "toured to theatre buildings [as opposed to schools], focused on high production values and innovations in form, and was able to look beyond local and regional impact towards building an international reputation" (Tomlin, 2015, p.78; see also Jackson, 1993, p.241). Catherine Wheels Theatre Company is highlighted by Tomlin as an exemplar of this new ecology.

Practitioners are inclined to see the goals of their work in 'intrinsic' terms" (Johanson and Glow, 2011, p.60). A minor open code, *intrinsic benefits*, described more than 25 instances from within the data where artists asserted that their work was inherently educational, and did not need to adhere to external "box-ticking." From statements such as "if they're engaged, they're learning", to audacious claims such as "if the work is good, especially for under-fives, it would be pretty difficult for them not to be educated in some way", artists repeatedly rejected the concept of instrumentalist art: "[a] beautiful experience shouldn't have to tick off boxes." This attitude is supported by notable figures from outside Scotland, such as Swedish director Suzanne Osten, creator of *Babydrama*: "if it's art, it is learning something. But if the ambition is to really teach a model or something, then I think that is too primitive… we have given up the idea that we can control any learning from it" (Babayants and Fitzsimmons Frey, 2015, p.154).

For TEY practitioners, performances contained the potential for educational gains to be made, but their aim was always the upholding of aesthetic integrity: "there's educational potential in the work that many people make – I think it's inevitable – but the intention is to make something with artistic integrity, rather than having a tick-box educational agenda." This is echoed in the literature by several writers, including Tony Jackson: "Any good theatre will, of itself, be educational - i.e. when it initiates or extends a questioning process in its audience and, when it makes us look again, freshly, at the world, its institutions and conventions and at our place in that world, when it expands our notions of who we are, of the feelings and thoughts of which we are capable and our connection with the lives of others" (Jackson and Vine, 2013, p.22).

Initial aims, as opposed to final outcomes, were a subject of interest to many, summarised usefully by an artist who said, "a dual aim, in creating a play that is educational AND artistic, rarely works." They continued, "if you aim for that, it compromises you, because you've already got your outcomes so set that you can't fully follow a process", while another participant differentiated between "the aim and the authenticity – whether [your process] is about exploration or just making a show because a child is supposed to be learning about something specific." Some sought "to protect the artistic experiences of children from being compromised by being shoved into the same box as an educational experience, because it does compromise what you're trying to achieve", believing that the artistic vision should be superior to any other goal. TiE theorist Brian Way expressed this view several

decades ago: "I do not believe that Children's Theatre should be a kind of audio-visual aid for studying history or geography or English Literature or political or religious problems… The theatre experience can indeed be a stimulus, but it can be so without overtly setting out to *educate*" (Way, 1981, p.5).

One immensely rich excerpt on the topic of art versus education came from an early interview where the participant described TEY as "more like a poem than a play" (see section 4.4.1). For a large proportion of those interviewed, the very concept of theatre for children had been devalued by TiE and issue-led drama; they chose instead to describe their work as "art for children", "experiences" or even "a series of games." Terms as seemingly uncontroversial as "a play" became freighted with decades of baggage, from damaging media portrayals (spoof TiE company Legz Akimbo from the BBC television series *The League of Gentlemen* (1999) was cited negatively by several participants) to outdated theatre training. In seeking to reclaim the territory of theatre for young audiences, artists began to use new formulations of language, and to grasp for striking metaphors. One participant declared defiantly, "that's the job of art. It's not about teaching people the times-table; it's got to be what art is about, which is about being difficult. It's about being confrontational. It's about all those bloody things which actually sometimes don't make us very comfortable." Issue-based theatre is denigrated as outmoded, and no longer necessary. While defending the right of artists to address difficult topics (five separate respondents cited *Goodbye Mr. Muffin* (2006), for children aged 6 to 10, which deals with death), almost all participants rejected the idea of overt morality in TEY. One artist flatly stated:

> "there's no longer this old notion of a moral message that had to be there – 'You must do this or that'. I've been involved in theatre shows for little ones which have had that really crowbar-y, sledgehammer-y approach – 'You will eat healthily' or 'You will not steal' – and it's patronising… If as an adult you're watching something feeling patronised, the children will be too – they might not know necessarily what to call it, but they will know they're being taught. That kills the point of it."

This rejection of the traditions of Theatre in Education is potent, and may suggest that Scottish TEY artists see themselves in direct opposition to the TiE movement. As with any community which feels a lack of legitimacy, defining oneself

against earlier traditions can help to strengthen identity – examples of this attitude were also coded as *circling the wagons*, a deliberately evocative phrase meant to imply the defensiveness and quest for group identity which I perceived.

Perhaps the decades-long debate between the two camps – becoming versus being, adult-led versus child-led, education versus entertainment – has finally dissipated (in the minds of current theatre-makers) as new debates have sprung up. Certainly it is rare for a contemporary artist to use the instrumentalist language of the founders of Child Drama (Slade, 1955) or TiE (Jackson, 1980; Jackson and Vine, 2013). Instead, there appears to be an ever-widening gap between the genre's progenitors and its current proponents. *Being an artist, not an educator* is key to the identity of the modern children's theatre-maker, both as a rejection of the past and as a call to arms for the future.

The next five sections (4.6.2 to 4.6.6) discuss the axial codes which fed into the second core category of this study, *treating children as equals*. As will be seen, many more excerpts and initial codes can be situated within this category, making it more prominent than *retaining artistic integrity*, but this should not overshadow the interwoven nature of both. It is unusual to have more than one core category in a GTM investigation, but I believe it is vital to preserve and present both in order to provide an accurate picture of the experiences of contemporary TEY artists.

## *4.6.2 Sharing experiences*

This section addresses the axial code *sharing experiences*. Three open codes (*building up a mythology; connecting; personalising the experience*) are employed to provide illustration, and the main findings are posited.

Almost every participant used a version of the phrase "shared experience", suggesting it is a universal concept within the genre. This exact formulation, defined usefully by children's theatre scholar Matthew Reason as "the group forming a homogeneous community taking pleasure in their mutual experience" (2004, p.11), permeates theatrical discourse, to the extent that it even provides the name of a well-known Oxford-based company[20]. It is therefore important to break this term down

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[20] Shared Experience was founded in 1975 by Mike Alfreds. The current Artistic Director is Polly Teale.

further in order to define the precise meaning it has within TEY. By "shared", the artists are describing a single object or event enjoyed simultaneously by parents / carers and their children. This does not mean that both halves of the parent-child dyad will experience it on the same level – indeed, one artist referred to "two levels of humour" (one for babies and one for adults) – but that both will be able to extract enjoyment of some kind from it. For example, a parent may enjoy seeing their baby engaged and happy, while a baby may find pleasure in a tactile sensation. By "experience", they meant a dramatic event created by professional artists like themselves, and presented in a space recognisable as a venue for performance.

It is important to note that the term "shared experience" has been in use within children's arts for many years; for example, prolific Theatre in Education playwright C.P. Taylor stated over three decades ago that "I try to make my plays for children as rewarding for adults so that they can be the shared experience all good theatre is" (1984, p.4). However, the universality of the phrase across TEY artists suggests that there has been a decisive ideological shift towards a cooperative philosophy of art-making for the very young as well as for older children, allowing a baby to "experience a sense of being important in an adult situation and an adult world", according to one artist. The earliest TEY experiences in mainland Europe (by companies such as La Baracca and Joëlle Rouland) tended to take place in nurseries, where the aim was to engage groups of babies and toddlers rather than parent-child dyads. While nurseries still constitute a large part of audiences for Early Years work, the presence of parents has today been assimilated by artists into a mutually enjoyable experience. This could be described as a conscious strategy to challenge critics of the genre who suggest that, as a participant phrased it, "we can put any old shit up there." Artists perceive that an adult presence validates their art in a way that audiences solely made up of children (seen as undiscerning by some) cannot, while also noting that "regardless of anything, it's a really nice experience for them, and it's a nice experience for them and their parent as well."

**Table 4: Axial Code *sharing experiences* with Representative Open Codes**

| Axial code – *sharing experiences*: "It's a shared experience. That makes them feel safe, and that makes me feel good as well, when I'm performing." | |
| --- | --- |
| **Open code** | **Sample quotation** |
| ***Building up a mythology*** | "It's also a continuation of the imagination… It's that |

| | |
|---|---|
| | sense of 'where will they go next'?" |
| *Connecting* | "Just looking them in the eye and making them laugh and being in the moment with them" |
| *Personalising the experience* | "It's so direct and you're creating a space that's only going to exist there and then" |

### Building up a mythology

For participants, shared experiences are distinct from both domestic activities and free play, although critics often unflatteringly contrast TEY and everyday activity (Goldfinger, 2011). A professional pride in creating joint experiences is exemplified by codes such as *building up a mythology*, used to describe examples of craft or practice designed to stimulate a spectator's imagination after the performance has ended. As an interviewee noted, "there are more things to engage with if there's the time or if you want to," emphasising both the resources required to create extended experiences, and the possibilities offered by the materials. TEY artists do not seek to denigrate parents by trumpeting their superior skills at fuelling children's imagination, but they do emphasise the opportunities for continuing artistic engagement which emerge from a professionally created event – a visit to the theatre can provide inspiration for future play and exploration together, as opposed to more quotidian activity: "It's true that you can take a baby round a supermarket and they'll have as interesting an experience as going into a theatre, but baby shows are something that they share with their parents, and from that may come extended play at home."

Evelyn Goldfinger has highlighted this common claim that "one can entertain a baby with pretty much any action" (2011, p.295), although Martin Buber's observation that "*everything* educates" (quoted in Reason, 2010, p.3) perhaps suggests that, at the very least, theatre can both entertain and educate in the same way as real life, regardless of a baby's spectatorial 'skill'. Communality was identified by artists as the distinction between TEY and the everyday. They asserted that the sharing of an artistic experience with a parent or carer marked TEY out, because in the theatre, the focus falls on mutual engagement as a collective, rather than the one-on-one intra-family engagement which might take place in a supermarket, café or park: as Korean neuroscientists Jackie Eunju Chang and Young Ai Choi have maintained, "'watching theatre together' is a social activity focusing on 'shared emotion' with actors and other audience members… [children] do not have many actual physical opportunities to 'feel together'" (2015, p.41).

To this end, the mythology of the performance is often expanded, spilling out beyond temporal or spatial bounds, and becoming accessible to the child at all times and in all places, a dramaturgical effect which could be termed 'narrative bleed'. For example, the foyer outside *The Polar Bears Go Wild* (2011) is festooned with postcards from the title characters, showing their travels, and these images are accessible both before and after the live performance. Additionally, the Polar Bears themselves (and also Cotton and Wrinkle from *White*) feature prominently in social media campaigns, posing in front of local landmarks when on tour, or miming to pop songs in YouTube videos. Thus shared experiences become shareable experiences, where adults can Tweet performance imagery to their followers, as well as showing it to their children.

### *Connecting*

The central thread to the axial code *sharing experiences* is the open code *connecting*. This was applied to more than 60 excerpts, each referring to moments in the theatre where individuals – artists, children, parents, teachers or even venue staff – found themselves in a "meeting of minds", as one participant stated. This varied from "just looking them in the eye and making them laugh and being in the moment with them" to asking implicitly "I find this interesting. Do you find it interesting?" Some respondents discussed the dialogue (often non-verbal) or exchange between adults and children, noting "I'm a 43-year-old man and you're a four-year-old girl, but we've got something in common here, because we might find a kinship in this", and "it is that experience between a stranger and the children that I think is interesting. It's about that conversation, that space between them." Terms such as sharing, kinship, conversation, exchange and mutuality appeared in all transcripts, suggesting that a concern with *connecting* underlies much of contemporary TEY. This can usefully be contrasted with more didactic, information-bearing forms of children's theatre such as Theatre in Education or Soviet-style theatre literacy education, where meaning is controlled and directed by the artist, and children's responses are restricted or even denied. One artist described their practice as "creating a meeting of minds. It's not necessarily about what I give to you – it's the moment when we connect." Many TEY audiences are pre-verbal, but a proportion of participants chose to describe physical, tactile or kinaesthetic exchanges, summarised by another artist: "When it is a physical object, I think you can connect, because that's what's there, before the words all come in." This has links to other codes such as *gift giving* or *respecting children's capabilities*, as will be discussed below.

Another aspect of *connecting* is the wider web of connections made with other audience members, sometimes termed the Triangular Audience (Desfosses, 2009). This usually refers to the baby-parent dyad engaging with a solo performer, but can be expanded, for example to encompass other spectators sitting opposite or nearby. Due to a combination of small audience sizes, shared interests in babies and parenthood, intimate staging such as in-the-round formats, the common practice of keeping house lights up and other factors unique to Early Years arts, it is generally possible for audience members to see, hear and even touch other spectators during a TEY performance. Matthew Reason has claimed that "in the theatre each individual's attention is focused on the performance; nobody is looking at the audience" (2010, p.172), but this is not necessarily the case in TEY. One artist noted of being an audience member, "as an adult, you get that duality of watching the theatre, but also watching the little ones experiencing the theatre. That is so evocative for you as well, as an adult watching it: you experience their joy, and it becomes quite a multi-layered experience for you as an adult – watching others watch." Another practitioner drew a diagram (reproduced below as figure 18) during our interview which expands the Triangular Audience concept to illustrate the point that "the pleasure that the parent is experiencing is supported by what they see in the parent opposite them, but also the babies opposite them, not necessarily their own baby." Thus parents share the experience with other parents and other babies (especially during performances staged in-the-round), forming a web of connectivity:

**Figure 18: Expanding the Triangular Audience (from a Participant's Sketch).**
**Image courtesy of Katherine Morley.**
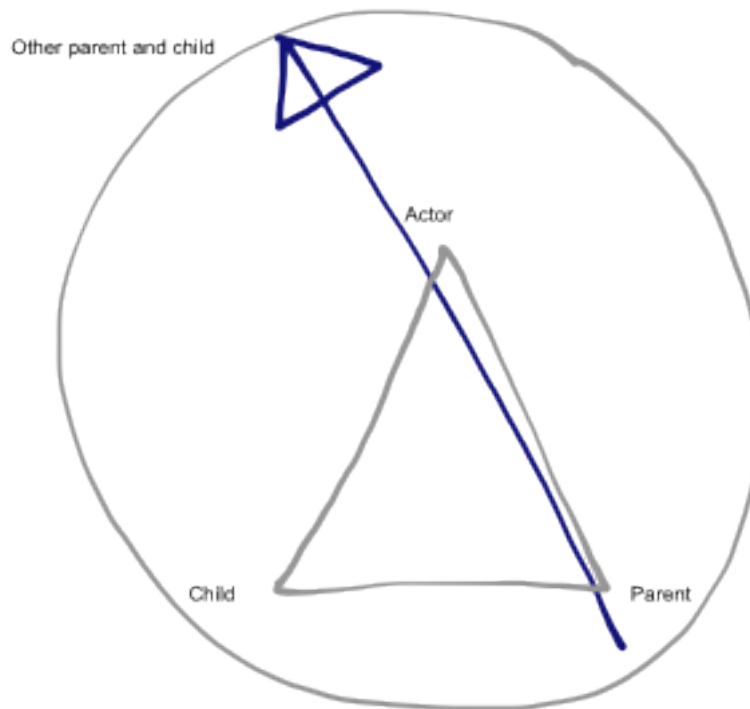


*Personalising the experience*

A third initial code which feeds into *sharing experiences* is *personalising the experience*. This emerged early in analysis as *gift giving*, as many artists provided anecdotes of particularly effective sequences of ritualised gift giving that they had experienced, such as:

> "I once saw a show where the guy, as the audience left, had a little box
> with a light in it. He opened the lid and he 'tipped' a little bit of the light
> into their hand and made them close it really tightly. There was nothing
> in it. He said, 'Hold it tightly until you get home, to make it last as long
> as it can'. All these children left with their hands clutched tightly."

However, it became apparent that *gift giving* was not specific enough, and that there were several intertwined codes within that heading (*gift giving* later re-emerged as an axial code, discussed in 4.6.4). These included *surprising the audience* and *inspiring a questioning of the world*, but another initial code – originally

labelled *enriching the experience* – was attached to excerpts which described means of deepening or even subverting the traditional staged elements of performance. For example, one participant declared that live performance created a "special energy": "To then be invited onto it somehow, and to be in it, might be important... it's the idea that you've shared something and now you can come and experience it in a different way. In *First Light*, they could come onstage and touch the mirrored floor or look at themselves; they could be where we had just been." This concept of personalised understanding is distinct from critics' recurring accusation of unwanted 'stage invasion', as children are actively invited to step onto the stage during or after a performance. This is only likely to be possible in small-scale theatre, rather than the sizeable commercial tours of Early Years television properties such as *In the Night Garden... Live!* or *Dora The Explorer*: "It's about a smaller group of people having a deeper experience, rather than a huge group of people going to their favourite TV programme shows. So fine, have that commercial experience – there's obviously a lot of pleasure that comes from that – but then also have the rest, that can be deeper and more specific, with more human-to-human contact." *Enriching the experience* therefore became *personalising the experience*, as artists described methods of making each performance unique for each audience member.

### 4.6.3 Proving 'what works' with testing

This section examines the axial code *proving 'what works' with testing*. It uses three open codes (*putting yourself in a child's shoes; learning from mistakes; collaborating*) to exemplify and explore some key findings.

Testing or piloting with invited audiences, whether short sections as part of a research and development phase, scenes during devising or a 'dummy run' of a full performance as opening night approaches, has become standard practice in TEY around the world (Nerattini, 2009a; b; Schneider, 2009b; Fletcher-Watson *et al.*, 2014). This may reflect two distinct influences on Early Years artists – firstly, the desire to collaborate with the target audience in the creation of artistic experiences. This inductive method has overlap with Participatory Design, a Scandinavian model of systems development that is "motivated mainly by an ethical argument that promotes empowerment and inclusion" (Porayska-Pomsta *et al.*, 2012, p.4; see also Bjerknes and Bratteteig, 1995). Secondly, practitioners may seek the freedom to push boundaries artistically, using testing to 'prove what works' and thus restrain

their more audacious risk-taking: "spectators provide data that can confirm or refute a performative hypothesis" (Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014, p.142).

In addition, parents in TEY audiences are often new to theatre, attending because of a perceived benefit to their newborn child rather than a lifetime of theatre-going. It has been claimed that "consumers engage in risk-reducing (i.e. information-search) activities in order to reduce their perceived risk level (and therefore, their feelings of being uncomfortable)" (Dowling and Staelin, 1994, p.121). The discomfort of parents who have not attended theatre before, and are concerned about misunderstanding conventions such as participatory sequences or even seating arrangements (by contrast with the behaviour of their children, who accept everything as new), has been a recurring feature of many interviews. Indeed, reducing social risk has been a focus of attention for venues and artists alike for some years, from Oily Cart's "airlocks" (Brown, 2012, p.21) to the recent rise in 'relaxed' performances (Fletcher-Watson, 2015a). Arts marketing scholar Maria Crealey (2003, pp.30–32) has provided several distinct strategies drawn from existing models of product development to minimise risk in a specific performance context. In particular, she highlights "product testing" – allowing consumers to access early versions of performance, comparable with product prototypes – as a valuable tool in risk-reduction for new audiences. Thus audiences invited to attend a rehearsal may develop into regular theatregoers: one artist called this "a really nice way of asking someone to take a risk on coming to a new performance and then feeling involved in the development of a piece as well."

*Proving 'what works' with testing* was not a sensitising concept when data collection began, as I had not yet observed live rehearsal practices and was unaware of its ubiquity, but it appeared as a strong theme from the very first interviews onwards. Practitioners described their process using terms such as "scratch", "interactive", "process-led", "checking in", "sharing" and "invited audiences." There was an interesting tension between more established artists who claimed that their experience allowed them to reduce their reliance on testing, making statements such as "I don't necessarily go and try things out in a clinical 'does this work / does this not work' way", and artists, perhaps earlier in their careers, who declared "It's not a luxury – you have to do it." However, even in cases where testing had not occurred in rehearsal, interviewees noted that dress rehearsals and early performances could act as a piloting phase (such as stating that time constraints had impacted on their ability to test before this period), although they often reflected that this was unsatisfactory –

in response to a question about the extent of testing, one artist stated "Not very much, to be honest. Not as much as we should have done [laughs]" while another suggested that "you feel a bit bad, because you're experimenting on your paying audience."

The axial code *proving 'what works' with testing* was constructed from a large number of individual open codes, including *learning from children*, *playing as adults*, *being well-prepared* and *getting meaningful feedback*. This section will focus on three important initial codes which contributed to the overall axial code: *putting yourself in a child's shoes*, *learning from mistakes* and *collaborating*.

**Table 5: Axial Code *proving 'what works' with testing* with Representative Open Codes**

| Axial code – *proving 'what works' with testing*: "It took it, just to see it with an audience, to know that…" | |
|---|---|
| **Open code** | **Sample quotation** |
| *Putting yourself in a child's shoes* | "It's a new experience. It's something that's not an everyday experience – to have lights and new sounds and new smells, and also having other babies and other people around you." |
| *Learning from mistakes* | "[Leaving] out props that are tempting to be picked up on the stage – you only do that once, twice if you're daft [laughs]." |
| *Collaborating* | "It's about wanting to keep them as closely part of it as possible, and get their responses and feedback." |

***Putting yourself in a child's shoes***

There are many recurring tropes in TEY productions, especially in design and narrative; performances often use settings familiar to the very young, such as domestic spaces and gardens, and explore quotidian experiences from mealtime to bathtime to bedtime. This rooting in real life acts as a secure foundation for the very young: according to one participant, "there has to be something that the children can look at and identify with." This is vital because, as another artist stated, "[theatre is] a new experience. It's something that's not an everyday experience – to have lights and new sounds and new smells, and also having other babies and other people around you." Initial codes such as *exploiting the familiar*, paraphrased usefully by a participant as "mirror[ing] the world", exemplified this tendency. Consequently, a key practice used by TEY artists is *putting yourself in a child's shoes*, trying to forget or

subvert adult attitudes. One artist described a transformational workshop they attended, where the workshop leader designed "an exercise that was attempting to put you in the place of a small child experiencing the world without what you have learned… [As a result] I probably spent much more time with a brush [laughs] than I would have done had I just looked at it and seen that it was a brush! I felt it, I explored it."

This 'othering' of adult norms through art has a transgressive power which artists noted in statements such as "For that age group, everything's odd and weird anyway. It can be anything. The world's an odd place that they are trying their best to understand – so art can reflect this reality for them." When a child's reality is overtly acknowledged as confusing – "strange rules… rules that probably don't make much sense" in one description – then the act of reflecting that strangeness back to them is deemed inherently empowering. For TEY artists, when children see their worldview mirrored and admitted by adults, their questioning is rewarded and their reactions are welcomed. This is where testing becomes vital as a means of ensuring that a performance empowers the very young, rather than confusing them further: "I've tried to work out what children are seeing when they see us [onstage]… what they're working out in their head." Many interviewees explicitly noted their delight in this process, such as "the idea that they've got a different way of seeing the world is fantastic." One went further, noting that "the shows I've made become as much about the reaction by the audience as the performer's bit. That's half the show." This could be said to place a shared responsibility for artistic success onto both audience and performer, further valorising specific modes of engagement deemed acceptable by adults, which would detract from an agenda of empowerment. Conversely, the acceptance of different 'ways of seeing' can be presented as an expression of inclusive practices which welcome varied reactions.

### Learning from mistakes
However, reflecting on performance "through the eyes of the Early Years audience" does not guarantee that the performance will successfully engage that audience. A central tenet of testing is the acceptability or even necessity of failure, coded here as *learning from mistakes*. Many artists produced an anecdote about moments of failure or unexpected problems, from a child vomiting into a musical instrument to bouts of crying triggered by special effects. Each of these experiences then affected the next iteration of the production – one participant joked, "You only start a performance lying down on the floor once! It's not a good idea – they will climb on top of you [laughs]."

As embarrassing as public failure can be, artists felt that it was essential to have the freedom to fail in order to create the best possible experience: "that's something that can only come out of attempting and trying and playing." Therefore the ability to decipher the signals coming from babies and toddlers, in lieu of verbal feedback, is a key method of determining success or failure. This produced several initial codes, including *identifying engagement signals*, but the unifying factor was the "great learning experience for everyone involved" which emerges from unsuccessful attempts at performance; one artist summarised this as "if I get my job right, I think they're watching and listening and being in the space. If I get my job wrong, they're probably wandering off or having a cry or saying 'I feel a bit hungry'."

Another aspect of *learning from mistakes* is the wider impact on artistic practice. Interviewees at all stages of their careers emphasised the highly personal factors that govern an individual's likelihood to succeed in TEY, coded variously as *enjoying working with children*, *identifying the 'right kind of people'*, *accepting difference and unpredictability* and *mentally taxing*. The ability to learn from failure rather than finding it destructive was repeated by many: "It takes quite a lot to become comfortable with that audience, and then to see where that can go." Most importantly, artists identified making mistakes as another way to understand their target audience, as in this call to arms from one practitioner:

> "It's really important to make mistakes and to try stuff, because that's one thing that I love about children – they'll get up again. They'll try something else. They'll explore something else, and that's the way we should be as artists creating work for this age: we should keep trying."

### *Collaborating*

Finally, testing aspects of performance with invited audiences can in some cases be considered a collaborative act. Certain practitioners used phrases such as "developing the work with them" or "I really want to do work with them rather than for them", while others described artists as "just really good collaborators with young children", which were coded as *collaborating*. It is still rare for very young children to be invited to create a performance in partnership with adults. One example, Birmingham Rep's *Princess & Ginger* (2007), was developed in a child-led process with two- to four-year-olds creating and editing possible plots, then role-playing the characters. Project leader Peter Wynne-Wilson described the outcome: "the groups… created a single story from which I created a draft script; my brief being to

stay as faithful as possible to the desires and ideas of the young playmakers, in putting their story on stage" (Ball *et al.*, 2007, p.8). However, the final performance was fully scripted, not participatory. Co-creation is thus a more participatory negotiation than simple testing alone, as original ideas are generated and advanced by young children, but the content of the performance cannot be altered in the moment. This is also distinct from adult-led models which may appear to be similar, such as *Monkey Bars* (2012) by Chris Goode and Company, which uses verbatim dialogue from children but recasts the exchanges to create an ironic commentary on adult mores – a man in a suit and tie singing about jelly, for example.

By contrast, in *Claytime* (2006) two performers improvise stories drawn from children's suggestions, moulding characters and landscapes before the audience's eyes from a large mound of clay. After the performance, the audience, aged three and over, are invited to come forward and model their own objects and people, and the assembled 'cast' are commemorated in a photograph. The boldest (or oldest) child may well provide the first suggestion, but a clamour of voices soon fills in every detail: the protagonist's name, history and motivation is agreed in a verbal tussle where a performer often acts as referee as much as storyteller. The challenges of co-creating performances with very young children should not be underestimated, but control may be imposed by careful planning in advance and ongoing negotiation: with adults, "the artist relies upon the participants' creative exploitation of the situation that he/she offers – just as participants require the artist's cue and direction" (Bishop, 2012, p.279). With children however, as one artist noted, there is an additional difficulty: "You have to find a way of getting them to invite you in."

*Collaborating* is thus necessarily a mutual act, with both parties engaged in a dialogue, even where children are pre-verbal:

> "…of course, as you spend more time with that age group, you get to
> know their complexity and uniqueness and their opinions and ideas;
> you get to experience that and realise that of course there's a dialogue.
> Children have responses, opinions, likes, dislikes and that's quite
> evident when you start to create and explore things with children."

Other artists also noted that, like *learning from mistakes*, *collaborating* was a means to better understand their audience and to develop expertise in TEY practice; as a relative newcomer to the genre claimed, "being in that environment, down at

their level, interacting with them, I started to build up this knowledge about how children at that age interact with art." This statement feeds into the discourse of TEY's elevated status, claiming a distinction between children's interaction with art and with more domestic concerns (such as the supermarket visit discussed in 4.6.2), perhaps as a means of self-justification. Nonetheless, even artists who stressed their artistic integrity (as discussed in 4.6.1), and rejected the child-led approach of some of their peers, were willing to recognise that spending time with children at the very least provided inspiration for aesthetic ideas which could later be confirmed with testing. Collaboration does not necessarily have to centre on a given artistic product, but can instead be part of initial research.

## 4.6.4 Gift giving

This section addresses the axial code *gift giving*. As before, quotation from three open codes (*surprising the audience; inspiring a questioning of the world; making everyone feel comfortable*) provides insights into the main concepts covered by the axial code.

Giving and receiving gifts is a recurring theme in TEY artist testimonies (Nerattini, 2009a; b). The giving of physical objects can shape participatory moments in performance, such as leaves or blossom in *Egg & Spoon* (2003), or fragrant herbs and water in *In A Pickle* (2012). It can also act as a 'reward' for attention and attendance, such as the multi-coloured versions of the title character handed out after *Paperbelle* (2010), coloured confetti in *White* (2010), carrots in *Erde, Stock und Stein* [*Earth, Sticks and Stones*] (2005) or exploring the musical elements of the set in *SensoryO* (2012). In many cases, gifts are used to stop children entering the stage area, and to let "everything sink in" (dan Droste, 2009a, p.51). Belgian company Théâtre de la Guimbarde refer to their approach as "exchange", stating "[at] the end of a show, we like to plan time for sharing and exchanging with the children" (Reginster, 2009, p.90).

The axial code *gift giving* can be defined as a mutual process of ritualised exchange, having a variety of functions. These include practices which were given the initial codes *surprising the audience*, *inspiring a questioning of the world* and *making everyone feel comfortable*, as will be discussed below. A central justification for the practice of gift giving is the replacement of applause. Very young children do not yet understand the convention of applause – indeed, in the case of babies under six months, they are unable to clap hands together – and they may not understand

that the performance is over. The engagement of the child audience is therefore perceived as a reward for the actors' hard work comparable to applause from older audiences, and the children's attention is similarly rewarded with a physical gift – be it confetti, clay or a carrot. This seems to require actors with a particular sensibility (some interviewees even used heavily loaded phrases such as "performers without ego") to enjoy engaging with children in lieu of applause, another aspect of the discrete skillset necessary for TEY, as noted in 4.6.3.

In addition, it is critical to note that objects given out to the audience are gifts freely distributed, not distractors as in a nursery or home. They serve the purpose of deepening or reinforcing a child's connection to the performance, being thematically connected to it, rather than random. Sociologist Marcel Mauss' seminal discussion of gifts notes of pre-modern societies that:

> …the dances performed, the songs and shows, the dramatic representations given between camps or partners, the objects made, used, decorated, polished, amassed and transmitted with affection, received with joy, given away in triumph, the feasts in which everyone participates – all these, the food, objects and services, are the source of aesthetic emotions as well as emotions aroused by interest (1954, p.77).

It can be argued that Mauss' depiction of aesthetic gift giving applies equally strongly to contemporary TEY, as these objects serve to bind audiences in a community which outlives the brief performance event. Numerous anecdotes from interviewees underscored this legacy, with children proudly showing an artist their gifted item months or years later. Physical articles form powerful links back to their originators: "Even when abandoned by the giver, [a gift] still forms a part of him" (Mauss, 1954, p.9). This obligation also resonates in participatory performance situations where items are handed out and then gathered back in, or where a material is produced for play but must be left behind in the theatre after the performance, such as sticks and stones in *Le jardin du possible* (2002) or clay in both *Claytime* (2006) and *Pont, pont, vesszőcske* [*Dot, dot, comma*] (2013). In some cases, the results are photographed to be displayed online, while in others, the objects can be considered to be 'loaned gifts' which are returned in a closing ritual. This ceremonial, impermanent exchange has its roots in ancient practices described by Mauss: "what they exchange is not exclusively goods… They exchange rather

courtesies, entertainments, ritual… the market is but one element and the circulation of wealth but one part of a wide and enduring contract" (1954, p.3). Thus where an artist claims "I like to think the whole show is a sort of gift", they could be said to be framing their artistic output as part of this rich and inter-dependent social contract.

As an axial code, *gift giving* proved remarkably capacious. It was possible to describe many differing practices as being connected to ritual exchange, from eye contact to intimate staging, from the creation of boundaries to the lack of a fourth wall. The prevalence of these instances led to the addition of a direct question for later participants about the practice of gift giving, producing an even wider array of examples. More than 30 separate open codes were eventually subsumed within the axial code, but three are of particular interest as they elucidate specific aspects of gift giving: *surprising the audience*, *inspiring a questioning of the world* and *making everyone feel comfortable*.

**Table 6: Axial Code *gift giving* with Representative Open Codes**

| Axial code – *gift giving*: "I like to think the whole show is a sort of gift." | |
|---|---|
| **Open code** | **Sample quotation** |
| ***Surprising the audience*** | "To see something unexpected is important, to push what they normally see, and turn it upside down" |
| ***Inspiring a questioning of the world*** | "Theatre at its best inspires a subtle questioning of the world around us, and that questioning should be personal. It should be the same for kids." |
| ***Making everyone feel comfortable*** | "For the parents, there's that thing of, "Where shall I sit?" or "Am I in the wrong place? Am I blocking the view?" So we guide them in." |

***Surprising the audience***

Surprises are by no means unique to TEY. The Aristotelian concept of *peripeteia* centres on a given character's surprise at the reversal of their fortunes, for example, and many performance events rely to some extent on the unexpected, from a pantomime villain's sudden entrance to a *deus ex machina*. Nonetheless, a theatre of surprises for the youngest audiences could be considered to be unique, in that here surprise is both ethically complex (deliberately scaring children is often considered taboo) and intellectually challenging (surprise relies on the violation of expectation, yet the youngest children have few expectations due to their lack of experience). *Surprising the audience* was therefore contrasted with scaring the audience by many

interviewees, who emphasised their duty of care: "an element of surprise – not shock", for example. In terms of the intellectual challenge, as already noted in 4.6.3 when discussing the code *putting yourself in a child's shoes*, subversion of the familiar can be used to take children out of the everyday into a world of fantasy: "to see something unexpected is important, to push what they normally see, and turn it upside down." In TEY, unusually, characters do not always drive narrative; in some cases, narrative itself is abandoned (see 4.6.6). Instead, the focus falls on the spectator's reaction to stimuli, rather than the character's response. Surprise goes beyond simple shock tactics, and becomes a key dramaturgical tool, forming a gift to the audience which allows them to share in a communal pleasure at the violation of expectation. This bypasses the inherent lack of understanding of the very young, as they observe the amazement of their carers and other children, taking pleasure in it and thus moving towards an understanding of the semiotics of surprise.

*Surprising the audience* can also occur simply from the limited capacity or intimate staging common to TEY. One participant noted of a dance performance that "adults and children rarely see performers up close like that – the adults in particular are used to sitting in seats in the audience and watching dancers on stage. It's not a tangible experience, whereas when you see things up close, you relate to them in a different way." The same applies to many theatrical performances and even opera experiences for the very young, such as *BabyO* (2010) and *Korall Koral* [*Coral Choral*] (2009), where the trained operatic voice is used in unusually close proximity to spectators, which surprised the composer of one piece: "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." It is valuable to contrast this opportunity, as some interviewees chose to do, with the classical adult repertoire, where audiences are almost never invited into close proximity with opera singers or dancers in performance. Thus the thrill or surprise of intimacy is presented to the very young as a gift, specially created for them.

### Inspiring a questioning of the world

The initial code *inspiring a questioning of the world* emerged late in analysis, but through applying constant comparison, it then proved to be applicable to a range of earlier excerpts. This is an example of an 'in-vivo' code taken directly from an interviewee's statement: "Theatre at its best inspires a subtle questioning of the world around us, and that questioning should be personal. It should be the same for kids." A majority of participants made statements about the questioning nature of children,

such as "they're so honest and open, and they want to know why things are happening… I loved their openness, but I also loved their questions." Another noted that "it's not a regular sit-down-and-shut-up audience", emphasising the unusual nature of TEY spectators. These were originally coded as *being open* or *children not hiding their emotions*, as these statements seemed to centre on the challenge of managing an honest audience. However, further reflection suggested that questioning was more than a simple response; in many cases, it was actively sought by artists, both as a means of gathering feedback ("getting direct feedback from your audience is a good sign that it's working") and as an act – or gift – of empowerment: "I want them to be relaxed and think, 'OK, this lady's acting out a story here – who is she? What's she doing? Why is she opening that drawer?'" This overt encouragement is presented as an approach that allows children to construct their own meanings from the action, as opposed to didactic or informative theatre forms: "the main thing for us is mirroring, which is why there's also lots of space for them to fill in the gaps."

*Encouraging a questioning of the world* also encompassed a subset of artists who aimed to challenge conventional approaches to children's theatre topics, especially gender. Within Europe, the politics of TEY are often assumed to revolve around children's right to culture (Schneider, 2009a; United Nations, 1989) but some participants chose to spark a more contentious debate. As one interviewee noted:

> "in terms of political aims, [my work] tries to be open about what boys and girls are able to do and also to question and queer the messages young children are being taught about gender and sexuality… are [the characters] just friends? Is it a mother/daughter or father/son or just parent/child relationship? Is there that spark of sexual tension as with many double acts such as Laurel & Hardy?"

This was by no means a consistent theme across the whole dataset, but themes of subversion and shifting identity were certainly present in many transcripts. Queer theatre for older children has proved deeply controversial in both Europe and the USA (van de Water, 2012a), so it seems likely that a defined queer TEY, as opposed to a queered way of making theatre, would prove similarly contentious. Nonetheless, it is important to note the presence of a queering of children's worlds, as well as a questioning. This gift may cause controversy, but artists believe that children should be allowed to receive it regardless of any parental prejudices: "I

almost wonder if because it's for such a young audience and it's handled in the way that it's handled, that actually it makes it more digestible for the people who would generally be the ones questioning that."

***Making everyone feel comfortable***

The final open code, *making everyone feel comfortable*, was perhaps more concerned with intangible gifts such as comfortable seating, gentle introductions and eye contact than with physical objects. This code proved to be a useful descriptor of several recurring practices in TEY, each of which involved an exchange between performer and spectator. For example, one artist declared "I have simple ways of making sure they are comfortable: nice cushions on the floor so they know they can sit down." While this statement ostensibly discusses only the child's response, and could therefore have been coded *making the space special*, it also has links to the needs of parents and carers, as is more clearly stated in another excerpt: "From an audience point of view, you want to feel safe, and if you're bringing a tiny baby into a space, on a purely practical level you want to know that your baby is safe and looked after." In this way, attending to the needs of children is also a means of welcoming parents and carers. Other artists described the social benefits of their carefully-crafted design, such as "creating a safe space for the parents to meet other parents."

Mauss' "wide and enduring contract" (1954, p.3) reinforced by ritualised gift giving is evident in these social exchanges. Some interviewees elected to define themselves against more confrontational peers, perceiving perhaps that *making everyone feel comfortable* is an essential element in the social contract between adult performer and child spectator. One simply stated, "if it leaves them feeling powerless, I don't understand what motivates that." Another pointed out that "[if someone says] 'Oh, I really want to do a really cutting-edge, dangerous piece for babies', I think you've got to really think about why [laughs]… because actually for that audience, you really need to protect them." This duty of care to a vulnerable audience could be considered to be the most important gift a theatre maker can bestow.

## 4.6.5 Treating children as we treat adults

This section addresses the axial code *treating children as we treat adults*, with three open codes (*creating what you want to see; "there are no shortcuts"; respecting children's capabilities*) offering illustrative examples based on the transcripts.

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children of any age are permitted "to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and [signatories] shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity" (United Nations, 1989). This call for equality in relation to arts and culture has resulted in the Article 31 movement, led by many TEY organisations (including Small Size and La Baracca – Testoni Ragazzi), and equality is a common thread in children's theatre literature (Schneider, 2009b; Belloli, 2009; Nerattini, 2009b). The axial code *treating children as we treat adults* was therefore not unexpected within the analysis process, but the extent of the excerpts dealing with issues connected to fairness, citizenship, human rights, respect and personhood was notable.

It should also be made clear that *treating children as we treat adults* is distinct from the overall core category *treating children as equals*, due to one important difference. There is a distinction to be drawn between theatre experiences which refuse to patronise their audiences, whether adult or child (because "they have taste and they have interest in what you're doing", in the words of one artist), and theatre experiences which actively encourage participation or artistic collaboration at a higher level. This could more simply be described as the distinction between a spectator and a spect-actor – placing a child alongside an adult in an audience is qualitatively different from placing that child alongside an artist within a performance. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

**Table 7: Axial Code *treating children as we treat adults* with Representative Open Codes**

| Axial code – *treating children as we treat adults*: "Just let the children do whatever they want. Try not to prompt them. Try not to guide them. Let them guide you. Let them do what they want to do." | |
|---|---|
| **Open code** | **Sample quotation** |
| *Creating what you want to see* | "I find this interesting. Do you find it interesting?" |
| *"There are no shortcuts"* | "With the artists that I know making work for Early Years, the time taken to make work is important – it's not just churned out." |
| *Respecting children's* | "There's a joy and beauty about children's movement |

| *capabilities* | when they're really little, because the body functions naturally and efficiently. We move much less efficiently after that [laughs]." |
| --- | --- |

### Creating what you want to see

One of the first open codes to emerge from the very earliest transcripts was *creating what you want to see*, a code which described excerpts in which artists stressed the importance of adhering to their own artistic vision. This seemed to run counter both to my experience from attending performances and to my assumptions described in the sensitising concept *radicalism of practice*; I believed initially that one of the most radical aspects of TEY was its close connection to the needs of its audience, and that therefore artists would develop their work in line with the topics, themes and sequences which engaged their audiences most successfully – the children were responsible for crafting the work to a large extent. I was therefore surprised to find a sizeable body of data relating to the self as an elite artist, with statements such as "to start something, you can only start from yourself", "artists will always make the show that they want to make" and "I want to make work that I want to watch." I struggled to integrate this sense of self-determination with my understanding of the creative process, especially its reliance on testing, until I connected this code with another series of excerpts discussing the journey of devising: "make what you make and then see how they react to that", for example. Another artist noted of the testing phase that "you have to keep checking in, making sure that you are making work for your target audience, not just work that pleases you, that you think would work." It became clear that some of my questions, by probing into participants' personal experience, had produced responses that I had initially coded as defensive or defiant, when these same statements could also be understood as wider comments about equality. *Creating what you want to see* is thus not elitism aimed at child audiences, but is instead the act of an artist who respects their audience regardless of age, summarised neatly by one interviewee: "it's important to respect any audience enough not to reduce your artistic integrity for them, so I would hope that when I'm making work for children, I like it too." While obviously self-justifying to an extent, this adoption of the mantle of artistic integrity can also be seen as a provocative act of defiance to critics and naysayers.

A practical process can be described here: the artist must find a topic that "gets [them] up in the morning", the truth of which they feel compelled to communicate to someone else; they then develop their fascination with the topic

"hiding away in our little room"; they "get it up to a certain point" where they feel a need to "communicate it and see what happens" so that it becomes "totally responsive to the audience." Finally, the completed work is presented, hopefully retaining artistic integrity while also connecting with its target audience. This process would of course be familiar to many artists producing adult work, and is by no means unique, but perhaps it challenges a wider cultural discourse which assumes that children's culture is driven by pragmatism rather than art. In the words of one participant, "Concentrate on your art. If it connects with six-month-olds, that's who you've made that piece of art for." If art is prioritised, its audience is respected; if art is simplified, dumbed-down or weakened, its audience is patronised.

### *"There are no shortcuts"*

Building on this sense of craft, another key strand contributing to the axial theme is the 'in-vivo' code *"There are no shortcuts."* This code drew together numerous excerpts discussing funding, time constraints, design considerations and standards: "the time taken to make work is important – it's not just churned out" according to one artist, or "It has to be of a standard. It has to be high quality. It's been 'invested in' and taken seriously" from another. Funding and rehearsal time in particular were cited by many participants as major challenges in their practice, perhaps a perennial complaint from artists in any genre ("We're all up against budget problems"). However, in the case of TEY, artists identified two root causes of these challenges: firstly, the complexity of the art form, and secondly, the uncertain status of TEY within children's arts.

Many participants claimed that Early Years work requires lengthier experimentation than traditional children's theatre, due to the potential for serious unforeseen complications from even a small change: "[rehearsal] took such a long time – all of those decisions were massive." The usual timescales are hard to apply (one artist stated "I don't have a model of the three-week rehearsal block as my standard practice") with some projects gestating over years, others coming together in only a week. Almost all interviewees wished for more time to prepare (for example, one spoke of a desire for "a week of previews and then getting back into the room and working on it a bit more"), mainly in order to ensure optimum engagement – a production's reception by its audience seemed to be the primary focus, rather than a desire to spend longer in the early stages of devising. Where artists did fantasise about more time in development, they often used this as a springboard to exploring a more radically participatory practice: "I could imagine a process over a longer period

of time with that being more the aim of the piece – what would we make if we were collaborating?" This may suggest that highly participatory productions require the lengthiest rehearsal periods, but funding models do not yet accommodate this way of working. However, the overall belief that *"There are no shortcuts"* exemplifies Scottish TEY practitioners' commitment to aesthetic quality on a par with (or exceeding) adult theatre. This is not a shoddy, cut-price product designed merely to dazzle, but a "bespoke" and "carefully crafted" experience where each detail must be considered and each moment honed.

### *Respecting children's capabilities*

"If you respect them, then there's an opportunity to have a dialogue. If you want to just tell them something, in the way that TiE does… then you're just making a point." Here, one participant pinpoints the importance within contemporary TEY of *respecting children's capabilities*. This code began as *valuing children*, but the addition of more and more excerpts concerning the skills and abilities of even the youngest children made it clear that the code needed to drill deeper. Artists variously described the very young as possessing taste, subtlety, attention span, personality, emotional understanding, responsiveness – they were "a natural audience." Indeed, one artist stated, "I think maybe there's an innate understanding of performance, of the performative, of the audience-performer relationship", using their practical experience to counter academic assertions of a need for theatre literacy (Schonmann, 2002) or traditional views of the child as *tabula rasa*. As another participant noted of their practice, "children have responses, opinions, likes, dislikes and that's quite evident when you start to create and explore things *with* children." This understanding is hard-won but vital, as another artist pointed out: "in that environment, down at their level, interacting with them, I started to build up this knowledge about how children at that age interact with art."

It is possible therefore to postulate that engaging with children on an equal footing can lead to an understanding of their abilities, which in turn can be applied to the creation of new cultural productions which will engage them reciprocally. The twentieth-century view that children are taught to be an audience by being exposed to adult-directed theatre and forced to adhere to adult rules of behaviour has been inverted – now, artists learn how to make work for children by being exposed to child-directed culture (usually but not always taking the form of play) and adhering to children's modes of interaction. The child spectator is assumed to be as inherently capable of enjoying a dramatic experience as the adult spectator ("young children

can get something out of theatre no matter how old they are"), as long as TEY artists engage with their audiences on an equal footing, as they would with adults, rather than seeking to educate or train them in the semiotics of theatrical convention. As researchers have noted, "TEY privileges the neophyte" (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b, p.18) because it rejects the need for knowledge of these theatrical semiotics to gain access, focusing instead on accommodating the needs and abilities of young children. Unlike adult newcomers to theatre, young children do not suffer from embarrassment at contravening the 'rules' of theatregoing; in the words of one artist, "the way they work creatively means that they don't have preconceived ideas of 'I can't do this' or 'I don't know how to do that'."

Lastly, several artists explicitly confronted one particular prejudice of peers and critics alike – that there is no need for high-quality TEY, because babies and toddlers are entertained by the simplest activities and have no discernment. By contrast, these practitioners emphasised the innate sensitivity of the very young, issuing a warning to those who would attempt to talk down to them: "I wouldn't be surprised if there are people who think to themselves, 'Right, let's make theatre for babies because they won't care what it is anyway'. Good luck to them, I say, because kids will not sit through rubbish. Just because they're not old enough to tell you 'it's rubbish', doesn't mean that they won't find a way to tell you." If artists do not respect children's abilities, they may find the experience of performing for them uncomfortable.

## 4.6.6 Abandoning tradition

The final axial code as part of the core category *treating children as equals* concerns one of the most distinctive performative aspects of TEY, *abandoning tradition*. The open codes *resisting convention*, *engaging the whole body* and *accommodating children's needs* are discussed as representative of a wider body of initial codes.

Traditionally, children's theatre has relied on plots derived more commonly from folk tales and existing published material than original narratives (Harman, 2009; van de Water, 2012a). This is reversed in TEY, where the majority of productions generate new plots or even dispense with narrative entirely. Performances tend to be original and non-verbal, or highly restricted in vocabulary. They reject dramatic formulae, recognising that their audience does not respond to narrative conventions. Instead, multi-sensory stimuli are used to engender

engagement. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, *ETS-BEEST* (2007) combines dance, visual art and beat-boxing to encourage spectators to engage, deconstructing traditional hierarchies which privilege text over movement.

Multi-sensory modes of theatre have a tendency to disrupt narrative. The postdramatic "theatre of states and of scenically dynamic formations" (Lehmann, 2006, p.68), permits the very young, who cannot yet comprehend cause-and-effect or attend to extended scenes, to enjoy theatre on their own terms (Fletcher-Watson, 2013b). Indeed, as artist Rike Reininger has said: "There is no need to decode any meaning. There is just the non-hierarchical sensuous theatre experience" (2011, p.3). This was mirrored by many participants: "It is thematic and connected and you can see lots of different narratives in it if you want to, but it's a lot of images that could be unconnected." Postdrama also mirrors children's play, where traditional molecular narratives (meaning plots consisting of linked 'atomic' sequences which build to a climax) are abruptly disrupted or abandoned, while retaining a loose thematic structure (Guss, 2012). Children's self-derived games are "generally elliptic elaborations, with a very simple dramatic structure, and they usually originate from the reality that surrounds them: family, school environment, other children" (Herans, 2009, p.38). This is a description which can be applied equally to TEY, with its emphasis on repetition, simplicity and the familiar.

Atomic narratives cater to children's attention and engagement spans, because the grand over-arching (molecular) narrative is both unachievable and unnecessary. Traditional molecular narratives, obeying logic and temporality, can be too long and complex, leading to disengagement. Atomic narratives reflect children's innate narrative capabilities, and to respect the innate structures of children's stories is to cater to their needs. Like a chair or a table in a nursery, TEY narratives are simply stories of the right size for a child, allowing them equal access to theatre. As one interviewee noted, "We can be much more abstract about what we want to present, or what we want to talk about, or what we want to say, or what we want to show. We don't have to get worried about having an arc in terms of narrative storyline."

**Table 8: Axial Code *abandoning tradition* with Representative Open Codes**

| **Axial code – *abandoning tradition*:** "It can be about an emotion. It can be about an idea. It can be about a colour." |
| --- |

| Open code | Sample quotation |
|---|---|
| *Resisting convention* | "Why would I want to teach [children] to sit down and shut up?" |
| *Engaging the whole body* | "What we're working with can be quite amorphous, fluid, intangible, nebulous, and that is where physical human interaction becomes really important." |
| *Accommodating children's needs* | "We see that as a need – for them to be able to engage with it, and for there to be a space for them to give it different readings all at once, and for them to be more in control than we are, seemingly." |

*Resisting convention*

A variety of practices emerged from the data, demonstrating the diverse ways in which artists choose to engage with forms of theatre which do not rely on narrative. For many, the abandonment of narrative was invigorating or exciting: "that's what's incredibly liberating as an artist, to make work for this age group, because things just are. You don't have to be in any way naturalistic about what you present; you can explore the abstract." This was grouped within the open code *resisting convention*, as participants described taking risks, upsetting hierarchies, challenging orthodoxies and subverting their training. One example might be the decision to "question and queer" traditional forms, as described in 4.6.4; another artist pointed out the rejection of theatrical traditions, saying "we don't do applause or bows or anything like that… it's nice to leave it with an open end." The central theme was a challenge to older forms of children's theatre which reject participation: "why would I want to teach [children] to sit down and shut up?" This is still contentious, as even figures such as Peter Slade and Brian Way, who paved the way for child-centred theatre experiences, refuse to accept that audiences can be mobile and active: "For young children (up to nine years of age), Way recommends that the audience remain in their seats" (England, 1990, p.6). By contrast, according to one artist, in TEY as in the contemporary trend for immersive theatre for adults, "you won't always be sitting, watching and clapping. You might be involved, you might have a performer crawling over the top of you, you might be walking with them, you might be outside."

This tension between tradition and radicalism has a profound effect on practitioners – as one described, "it's hard to train yourself as a creator, to get away from that. We're so conditioned to think that this is what children like and this is what

adults like, and you can't do anything different. You can't possibly do that." To challenge the prevailing orthodoxy of education-focused, artist-led instrumentalism is *mentally taxing* (another open code). However, as several participants stated, this only highlights the need for iconoclasm: "risk-taking in a public way is quite important." Indeed, parents and teachers can be liberated by an artist's work just as much as children: one interviewee declared that they enjoyed "being understanding about [risk-taking] and open about it in a place that other people might not be able to be." The status of the artist as rule-breaker, outsider or jester gives them licence to liberate others, albeit briefly and in a defined space.

### *Engaging the whole body*

Another means of *abandoning tradition* is to focus on kinaesthetic responses to theatre, rather than verbal or visual reactions. *Engaging the whole body* is not an practice unique to TEY, but its ubiquity is noteworthy. Children may not remain in their seats throughout a performance, and even those productions which do not encourage participation will tend to involve a post-show experience of some kind: exploring the set, playing with props or materials, talking with performers. As a participant described it, "very young children experience theatre in that physical momentary way", and facilitation of a kinaesthetic engagement is therefore vital, especially when the subject matter is abstracted to a degree: "what we're working with can be quite amorphous, fluid, intangible, nebulous, and that is where physical human interaction becomes really important." Another interviewee glossed this as "absorption through the whole."

*Engaging the whole body* serves several purposes. Firstly, it assists children with understanding a scene in the moment: "as children are learning this behavioural experience of audience and performer, they don't have a clear understanding of it initially – "why are the adults up there?" They want to be a part of it. They want to experience it, by getting closer to it." 'Stage invasion' is always a concern, especially for artists new to the genre, and so numerous strategies have been developed to combat it (from explicit verbal instructions in the foyer to subtle distinctions in floor coverings), but conversely, many artists described their pleasure at seeing a child's desire to become actively involved – for example, a musician said, "if I'm creating a track that's quite beat-driven, even just the simple act of some gentle rocking or getting up and dancing is just brilliant – when a child suddenly thinks, 'I'm going to stand and dance!', it's lovely." This does not mean that participation is constant – for most children, a more fruitful interaction with theatre allows them to come forward in

order to examine an object, person or moment closely, then to return to the safety of their caregiver to reflect on the event at their own pace – an "interaction-retreat experience" as an artist put it.

Secondly, kinaesthetic participation is a means of exploring the meanings of performance after a show has ended: in the words of one participant, "with them coming onstage, it's an embodiment of their involvement in the piece." This has been compared to warming down after jogging – children can "enter the space of the show to elaborate and amplify the whole experience" (Donati, 2009, p.25). The narrative, if present, can be picked apart or recreated or developed in a new direction, unlike in adult theatre. The performance now belongs to the child, and is no longer the property of the performer.

Thirdly, for a small proportion of interviewees, physical involvement in drama was a means of combating the virtual world in which children now live – one claimed that "perhaps people are having more screen-based experiences, and actually they're yearning for something that is much more experiential and tangible… It's not going on a bouncy castle, but it's challenging, provocative, has narrative, has characterisation and artistry too." For these artists, a conventional seated performance could too closely resemble "cinema without close-ups" or a digital experience, whereas they believe that active participation and tactility transform the event into theatre. As Sue Buckmaster of English children's theatre company Theatre Rites has claimed, "it's the physical engagement that is so missing in the wonders of going online. There's something about the live or physical experience that does touch self-reflection in a different way. We can do that digitally but there's something missing" (Columbus, 2014). It should be acknowledged that this may be another version of the self-justifying strategy noted in section 4.6.1 – the valorisation of physical interaction over digital communication is intended to elevate TEY above other art-forms for the very young, such as television or apps.

Lastly, *engaging the whole body* can be another transgressive act which breaks down hierarchies between adults and children. Several participants questioned the lack of hands-on opportunities in adult theatre, noting that effects as simple as being led into a space by an actor or enjoying a backstage tour could be thrilling. One pointed out that "I think adults would really respond to [physical engagement] as well, just having the chance to do that. It's weird that we don't do that - I wouldn't be against doing it, but it's interesting that artists making work for

babies instantly think in all these different directions - how can I engage? How can I do this… and this… and this? There must be something where we're all thinking that we need various forms of stimulation." Just as parents can feel liberated by public risk-taking, so adult audiences can be stimulated in new ways by practices which treat them equally, rather than as subordinate to artists.

### *Accommodating children's needs*

Conceptually distinct from *respecting children's capabilities,* the open code a*ccommodating children's needs* emerged in abundance throughout analysis. Artists unanimously expressed a belief in the symbiotic relationship between children's needs and their abilities. The concept of a duty of care has already been discussed in section 4.6.5, but can usefully be expanded here.

A participant noted that, while artistic freedom in TEY exists, there appear to be some incontrovertible 'dos and don'ts': "You can do anything you like [with Early Years], but there are certain elements that you know you should include and you know you should steer away from." Typically, these range from volume of music to blackouts, from avoiding separation anxiety to length of performance. However, each guideline can be challenged – for example, according to one artist, "I've seen gigs for babies that have been, you know, pumping music [laughs]"; *Funkeldunkel Lichtgedicht* (2009) uses darkness extensively (as noted in 1.3.2); *How High The Sky* (2012) contains a sequence where parents left their babies in the performance space to play alone; *Babydrama* (2006), at 80 minutes, is almost three times the length of a typical TEY performance. Another artist told me that "there's nothing universal or unifying", and sometimes the most fruitful challenge for an artist is to be given a limitation to overcome. I began this study believing there may be some underlying rules to TEY which could be extracted and codified, but it quickly became apparent that although there were elements which could be relied upon to an extent ("things that always work", in one participant's formulation), elements to be avoided at all costs were rare, if not impossible to pinpoint exactly.

Nonetheless, while *abandoning tradition* can be a conscious aesthetic decision, it may also emerge as a response to the age-specific requirements of a pre-verbal or sometimes pre-mobile audience. For those artists who devise their work based on residencies in nurseries (a model typical of Starcatchers), *accommodating children's needs* can drive the creative process to a marked degree: "with the babies, I've learned a lot about their daily cycle and their daily routine, and how important

that is, and how much that can have an impact on the work you do." This may not necessarily be conscious, as another artist noted: "you don't realise it, but you're being led in your play with a child, because the things that get no reaction, you forget you even did. Maybe we're doing that as artists – we're making stuff and the babies are telling us by their responses where to keep looking and where to carry on."

In terms of the needs of children, artists identified certain age-specific factors which mark them out as distinct from older audiences, including limited mobility, hunger, fear of the new, toilet-training, engagement, socialisation and language difficulties. For example, it was pointed out that "there's an age between self-propulsion and self-control [which] can be really difficult in a formal 'sit here and look at this' setting", meaning that *engaging the whole body* can become a necessity rather than an additional element. Similarly, various practitioners choose to open their productions very gently, without lowering house lights or using a burst of music: "we're really aware that there are a lot of children who… find us or the space scary, so we do everything we can to give them a bit of space and time to see us and to see how the other children are responding."

Equally, granting agency to children to engage and disengage at will was often presented as a response to a requirement for control – one artist said, "we see that as a need – for them to be able to engage with it, and for there to be a space for them to give it different readings all at once, and for them to be more in control than we are, seemingly", while another claimed that "with the participatory work, it's about valuing children, allowing them to explore things at their own level, so they're an active participant in that work and they're able to engage with it at their own level." Without a sense of control or partnership, babies are perceived as struggling to stay engaged in a performance.

The social benefits of TEY for communities in areas of deprivation (such as those served by North Edinburgh Arts Centre or Glasgow's Platform) were a common theme. According to one community-based practitioner, "there's quite a lot to be said for providing 45 minutes of a nice time, because some – by no means all – of those children and parents are coming from quite chaotic home lives", and this was echoed by many others. In such cases, the needs of the family may expand beyond the needs of the child and parent alone, and accommodation becomes a greater task; for example, some artists suggested that socialisation or basic care-giving was a high

priority in deprived areas, and the arts could be a means to model loving behaviour towards children.

Abandoning tradition does not mean that TEY productions lack structure. Interviewees repeatedly affirmed the need for structure within and around a piece of work, both for children and their accompanying adults:

"I'm aware of some kind of theatrical structure – a bow is a useful thing which helps the adults know that you've finished, and 'I'll get my coat'. But we have five minutes after that for a softer ending. Very young children can't deal with a sudden ending, lights on, music off, *boom*, so we have a transition time."

This transition applies equally to the introduction to a new space, especially for the youngest children – as one artist pointed out, "they're always going into the unknown when they're babies, as everything's so new." A regular refrain was that children "must feel safe", or the experience would be rejected. The intimacy of TEY can be used to facilitate this feeling of comfort, in a way that larger commercial tours supposedly do not: "it's not every child that can handle a big auditorium full of big puppets and smiley faces."

The desire by artists to accommodate these needs has led to a dramaturgy which seems to trouble traditional narrative forms. For example, if entry and exit from a space is facilitated to be as gentle as possible, the narrative arc may not be able to begin classically *in medias res*, or end with a snap blackout. Instead, the narrative bleeds out of the theatre, beginning perhaps in the foyer with the opportunity to meet the characters outside of the story context, or continuing at home by sparking new play from a gift received during the performance (as discussed in relation to *building up a mythology*). As one participant reflected, "As we get older, we still get into the mindset of thinking, 'Now we must have narrative. Now we must have story. Now we must have classical drama structure.' I think people have really been able to start playing about with that." When babies and toddlers are acknowledged as having different needs from an older audience, it becomes possible to challenge the modes of performance which have been traditionally employed, and indeed to challenge the essential hierarchies of theatre (artist>audience) and the family (adult>child). Artists respond to very young children's unique needs and abilities by granting them access to art in new and subversive ways. Indeed, "adults can preserve stale and artistically

alien conventions in a way that adversely affects the seriousness of the piece...
[better, perhaps] would be an audience in which adults were prepared to let the
children - within civilised limits - enjoy their spontaneous interplay with what is going
on before them, unchivvied, unprompted and uncensored" (England, 1990, p.227).

## 4.7 Conclusion

The richness of the data collected for this study produced a substantial range of open
codes, many of which have been discussed above, and all of which are reproduced
in Appendix A.5. As my competence in the application of the Grounded Theory
Method advanced, I was able to reduce the mass of initial codes to around 18 axial
(or conceptual) codes. Some of these were initial codes which had been expanded to
include several sub-categories, such as *being seen to succeed*, into which I
collapsed *ghettoising*, *having an impact* and *craving kudos*, among others. In other
cases, new codes were created which encompassed existing areas, such as
*abandoning tradition*, which allowed me to encapsulate diverse practices, including
*resisting convention* and *considering attention span*. In time, following the process of
constant comparison, these 18 axial codes became the six described above. Axial
codes provide a route towards the final core categories, allowing GTM practitioners
to experiment with new combinations of themes until a structure emerges which
explains the central concern of all participants.

It is important to reiterate that the core category *retaining artistic integrity* is
less prominent than its counterpart *treating children as equals*, in terms of the
proportion of initial codes which feed into it, but the two core categories interact with
one another to generate the final theory. The table below shows all the open codes
discussed in this chapter, and demonstrates the process of refining coding as part of
the GTM process.

**Table 9: Full Coding Table, from Representative Open Codes to Core Categories**

| Open codes | Axial codes | Core categories |
|---|---|---|
| *Personalising the experience* | Sharing experiences | |
| *Connecting* | | |
| *Building up a mythology* | | |
| *Putting yourself in a child's shoes* | Proving 'what works' | |
| *Learning from mistakes* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Collaborating* | with testing | |
| *Surprising the audience* | Gift giving | Treating children as equals |
| *Inspiring a questioning of the world* | | |
| *Making everyone feel comfortable* | | |
| *Creating what you want to see* | Treating children as we treat adults | |
| *"There are no shortcuts"* | | |
| *Respecting children's capabilities* | | |
| *Resisting convention* | Abandoning tradition | |
| *Engaging the whole body* | | |
| *Accommodating children's needs* | | |
| *Being seen to succeed* | Emphasising the struggle | Retaining artistic integrity |
| *Evangelising* | | |
| *Overcoming prejudices* | | |
| *Being an artist, not an educator* | | |

The next chapter explains how the core categories emerged from this profusion of data, and explores the relationships between them. It then outlines the final GTM stages of theoretical saturation and theory generation, detailing the grounded theory of TEY which has been constructed from the core categories. The unexpected concept of a conversion narrative is explored further, before concluding with tentative proposals for a possible dramaturgy of TEY, similarly rooted in the data and emerging from the grounded theory process.

# Chapter 5: Generating a Grounded Theory of TEY

## 5.1 Summary of chapter

Previous chapters have introduced the phenomenon of Theatre for Early Years, both in theory and practice, and outlined the research study design and constructivist methodology used to gather data for analysis and interpretation from TEY practitioners based in Scotland. This chapter discusses the explanatory theory of TEY grounded in these data, and described as the theory of equality and artistic integrity. The development of the theory from two core categories is explained, and its relevance and theoretical contribution are then considered. The theory may offer a new framework for examining TEY, as a set of uniquely sensitive practices. The model is designed to provide relevant knowledge to practitioners, drama students and tutors, programmers and audiences. A provisional dramaturgical theory of TEY, also grounded in the data, is then presented and discussed, as outlined in section 1.4 and in Figure 3 (reproduced below):

**Figure 3: Genealogy of Theory**
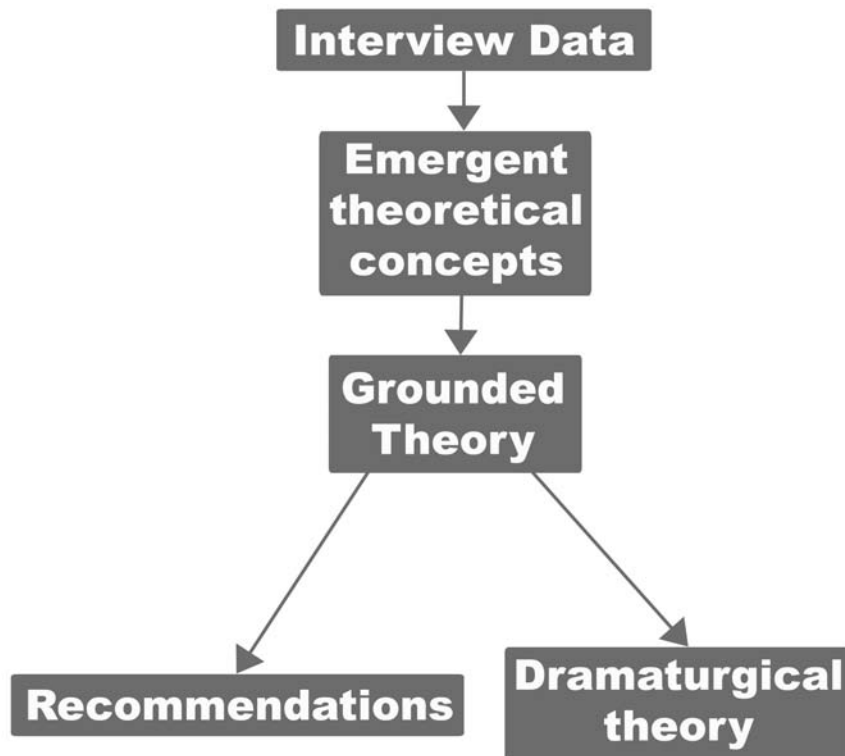
These findings challenge the prevalent narrative of an incoherent or illegitimate praxis (Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014) and may offer a new framework for examining TEY, as a set of uniquely sensitive practices rooted in theory. It is to be hoped that this model will provide relevant knowledge to participants, drama students and tutors, programmers and audiences. This research may also be of use to practitioners as they seek to legitimise their emerging art form and to also researchers, policymakers and funders.

## 5.2 Core categories

As has been seen in the previous chapter, each open code which emerges from the primary source data is contained within a larger thematic or axial code, which is itself part of a core category central to the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). A core category should be "central… it relates to as many other categories and their properties as possible, and… accounts for a large portion of the variation in a pattern of behaviour. The core variable reoccurs frequently in the data and comes to be seen as a stable pattern that is increasingly related to other variables" (Holton, 2010). The two core categories (the major theme of *treating children as equals* and the less prominent but equally important theme of *retaining artistic integrity*) were notably present in every interview, suggesting a high degree of consistency between participants. It is therefore to be hoped that they provide a robust and valid foundation for a theoretical framework to explain the central phenomenon of Theatre for Early Years.

The pair of core categories identified in this study are neither neatly separated nor completely integrated, instead creating a complex cycle of tensions which complicate each area. Section 5.6 will outline the resulting Grounded Theory of equality and artistic integrity derived from the interplay between the two, but the next two sections seek to unpack some of the key processes underlying these categories, which define the direction of this study.

## 5.3 Treating children as equals

It is unusual for a GTM investigation to produce more than one core category, but the constructivist model does allow for multiple core categories. As Yvonne Eaves has stated, "as there are several stories or story lines in a particular study, there must be

several core categories that can be identified in any given set of data" (2001, p.658). Identification does not mean that all the core categories will be of equal value, nor even of interest, but it is important to acknowledge the possibility that more than one factor or process may be at play within a phenomenon. In this investigation, a majority of codes were grouped under the core category *treating children as equals*, which will be discussed in this section, but a sizeable minority of open codes were concerned with the separate concept of how to retain artistic integrity in the face of various challenges. This indication of an alternative explanation for some of the systems and processes within TEY led to the creation of a second core category with the title *retaining artistic integrity*, which is explored in section 5.4.

Section 4.6.5 discusses the distinction between the axial code *treating children as we treat adults* and the core category in which it is contained, *treating children as equals*. In simple terms, it can be described as the difference between an emancipated spectator, in Rancière's conception (2009), and a participating spect-actor, as in Boal's work (1992). For an artist to respect a child as being 'like an adult' is still to retain an elevated status above the audience, as a member of a cultural elite; to treat a child as an equal is to bring them into the domain of the artist, as collaborator and creative force.

As noted in 4.6.2, almost all artists in this study described the ideal performance as being a 'shared experience' for carer and child. The model of theatre as a babysitter is outdated, and the commercial model of pop-culture in-jokes and 'something for the dads' is seen as patronising. The experiences explored in this study are universally designed to be appealing to adults as well as children, for them to enjoy together, on the basis that a child is more likely to engage in an activity if they see an adult engage. It is possible to compare shared experiences with the pedagogic model of "guided interaction" (Plowman and Stephen, 2007): in both cases, the involvement of an adult is intended to elicit deeper engagement in a given activity by a child; in both cases, the dyadic bond is strengthened by mutual interest in the activity – the child appreciates the attention that is being paid to them, and the adult appreciates the child's focus on the activity; in both cases, shared focus is a stepping-stone towards eventual solo interaction, whether playing a game alone or visiting the theatre in later childhood. Building future audiences and nurturing future learners are thus seen as mutually beneficial outcomes for adult and child.

However, the development of practice for most participants is driven not by a pedagogic desire to pass on knowledge but by an active desire to learn from the very young, whether to inspire novel ideas or to test aesthetic hypotheses before undertaking a performance. Babies are deemed capable of providing feedback, motivation, inspiration and even creative collaboration. In Chapter 2, I cited Manfred Pfister's claim that performance to the young "can never, even potentially, become a symmetrical two-way exchange with reversible sender-receiver relationships… because here, an institutionalised asymmetry is present' (quoted in Wartemann, 2009, p.50). TEY practitioners seek to subvert this asymmetry by means of specialised practices deriving from research, observation and reflection. Exchange (whether in the form of ritualised gift-giving, learning from children or testing) represents a move towards equality.

The theme of a duty of care, applying both to children and parents as vulnerable audiences, emerged powerfully from the data, although almost no participants used the phrase specifically. Other authors have explored concepts of weakness, stating for example that "[young children's] boundaries between reality and fiction are tenuous, and they are therefore vulnerable" (English, 2005, p.184). However, it is rare to find an holistic view of the professional artist's duty of care to their audience, especially examining the implications for practice of this inherent vulnerability. For example, in their report on the social impact of theatre in the UK, McDonnell and Shellard (2006, p.27) simply acknowledge that companies have "a commitment to ethical practices", without exploring the reasons for this or the resulting outcomes. Applied theatre tends to wrestle with ethical comportment as a key locus of practice (Hepplewhite, 2013), yet the means by which practitioners confront and manage their duty of care are seldom elucidated. In this study, similarities became apparent in terms of the strategies employed by TEY artists in response to the perception of their audiences as uniquely vulnerable, such as accommodating children's needs and desires, helping parents to feel comfortable in an unfamiliar space and granting agency to infants (see section 4.4). These strategies not only protect children and parents, but empower them creatively – by creating a safe and welcoming space with comfortable seating and appropriate facilities on hand, artists are ensuring the best possible opportunity for a child to engage with the drama as an enthusiastic and relaxed participant. Similarly, by creating an abstract experience, perhaps themed around a colour or a mood, artists are privileging babies, who can operate with ease on a non-narrative level.

The duty of care seems to imply that practitioners are superior to their audiences, but for interviewees, the overwhelmingly favoured method of understanding a spectator's needs is to "see through their eyes", or put oneself in their shoes. This can be achieved by reflecting on one's own childhood or simply by spending time with children to observe their ways of being. The child's state is also constantly monitored in performance, with actors responding instantly to their shifting mood to tailor the experience as much as possible for each individual. Thus artists are "always learning", receptive, open, non-judgmental, accepting the child as their equal rather than an inferior being.

## 5.4 Retaining artistic integrity

Consolidating the data which could not be encompassed within the core category *treating children as equals* proved to be a challenge for several months of analysis. Questions about individual practice had elicited responses which moved beyond personal reflection to a more global grappling with issues which trouble the making of theatre. In particular, a considerable proportion of codes related to the uncertain place of TEY within wider theatre ecology, from funding challenges to a perceived lack of respect from other artists for the craft of TEY.

Initially, these codes were grouped under the tentative core category *seeking acceptance*, as they appeared to revolve around issues of art-form legitimacy. However, as further examples were uncovered, the theme of legitimation became insufficient, as it described a concern of interviewees, rather than the process by which they overcame the issue. In particular, the missionary journey as experienced by all participants – from being unaware of TEY to evangelising for it as described in section 4.6.1 - proved problematic, as it seemed at odds with the theme of seeking acceptance. After considerable reflection and comparison, a more accurate and robust category was found, which provided a description of artists' response to the challenges of making their work – a holistic process of legitimising practice which was finally termed *retaining artistic integrity*.

To illustrate this point, it may be useful to examine a key excerpt: "actually, you have to get into the world before you really encounter it." Here the interviewee encapsulates the journey to evangelism in a single sentence, while also deliberately siting themselves as a valid creative practitioner on a par with all other theatre artists. TEY is defined as a "world", with implications of discrete or bounded practice unique

to the genre. The artist emphasises the necessity of "get[ting] into" it before appreciation can occur, suggesting that a journey must be undertaken to move towards knowledge. They are clear that to them as an established TEY theatre-maker, this "world" has notable power – it is "encounter[ed]" rather than understood immediately. This links to many statements across transcripts which place importance on the time spent developing practice; TEY cannot be grasped instantaneously, although a Damascene Moment can and does occur which spurs on further investigation. The words "actually… really" perhaps imply that the speaker sees TEY as veiled in some way, a mystery to be unlocked which hides an essential truth. This privileges the status of the artist as the holder of hidden knowledge – only a convert or insider can understand the true nature of the art-form. Thus TEY artists become elite possessors of knowledge and highly-skilled practitioners, rather than low-status "clowns" who "play for a living" while waiting for a "proper job" to come along, as they often claim to be perceived.

The avowed (even strident) maintenance of an artist's integrity can therefore be seen as their defining response to the myriad challenges of practicing a low-status, 'illegitimate' craft. They do not accept the prejudices of others, but as converts with missionary zeal, seek constantly to emphasise their skill, specialisms, knowledge, impact, social importance, internationalism, empathy, and a host of other positive self-definitions.

## 5.5 Theoretical sampling and saturation

The Grounded Theory Method is designed to reveal the theory 'hidden' within data. As described above, coding serves to fragment the data, allowing the researcher to assess the relationships between excerpts, rather than 'forcing' a narrative to emerge in a linear fashion. However, open and axial coding and the selection of one or more core categories are not sufficient to produce coherent, robust and verifiable theory. It is vital that researchers adhere to the entire process, as outlined in figure 13 in Chapter 3, which can also be described as follows:

> The process proceeds from the initial open coding of data to the emergence of a core category, followed by a delimiting of data collection and analysis for selective coding to theoretically saturate the core category and related categories (Holton, 2010).

This key stage, known as theoretical saturation, has already been outlined in section 3.5, but it is important to discuss its application in this study before the final stage of theory generation can be explored in the next section.

As soon as initial codes have been generated, tentative theory begins to become apparent. This is tracked and monitored using memos to record ideas, often fragmented and contradictory at first. Theoretical sampling is then employed, defined as "seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p.96). The aim is to begin to solidify and structure the codes or themes which are emerging, until it is no longer possible to add further detail. Once the categories have been fully expanded, and the links between them elucidated, it is possible to cease data collection – theoretical saturation has been achieved. Saturation has been described as the determining factor for completion of data collection (Glaser, 1992), with all necessary properties and insights revealed (Charmaz, 2006).

There is a risk, especially for researchers unused to GTM, to claim that theoretical saturation has been reached with "little evidence that it has been employed as a criterion for deciding when to stop sampling" (Bryman, 2001, p.18). It is equally possible to continue gathering new data for many months without contributing anything new to the emerging theory, in a "potentially limitless" process (Green and Thorogood, 2009, p.120). The decision to stop sampling must therefore be a pragmatic compromise. In addition, where the sample is constrained, whether by study design (as in the case of this project) or by other factors such as low recruitment rate or ethical difficulties, theoretical saturation is generally considered to be of limited value as a criterion for ceasing data collection (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006; Mason, 2010) – in these cases, sampling may stop simply because the participant pool is exhausted.

The 26 participants interviewed for this study represent over 90% of the possible sample of contemporary Scottish TEY practitioners. GTM researchers generally agree that a sample of this size is appropriate for small-scale projects: Charmaz suggests 25 (Charmaz, 2006, p.114), Creswell argues for between 20 and 30 (Creswell, 2012, p.157), as do Strauss and Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.148). It has been demonstrated that the mean sample size in UK doctoral studies employing GTM is 31 (Mason, 2010), suggesting that this study broadly falls within current trends. It should also be noted that interview studies rarely produce new or useful data after the 20th transcript (Green and Thorogood, 2009) and that

"diminishing returns" may render continued sampling unnecessary (Mason, 2010). In this study, by the 22$^{nd}$ transcript, it was apparent that few novel codes were emerging from initial analysis, although a time-delay in securing approval from the last seven participants meant that this was not clear until the final interview was carried out.


## 5.6 The Grounded Theory of Equality and Artistic Integrity

The two core categories in this investigation (*treating children as equals* and *retaining artistic integrity*) are constructed from six axial codes emerging from the data. These axial codes are:

- *Emphasising the struggle*
- *Sharing experiences*
- *Proving 'what works' with testing*
- *Gift giving*
- *Treating children as we treat adults*
- *Abandoning tradition*


The figure below is a visual representation showing how themes and concepts have been constructed from raw data to create the final Grounded Theory of equality and artistic integrity. The outer ring shows the sample open codes discussed individually in Chapter 4, segmented according to the axial code that encapsulates each set. The inner ring demonstrates the ontological relationship between the core categories (where *treating children as equals*, although a more prominent category, interacts with *retaining artistic integrity*), which serves to generate an emerging theory to describe all of the codes. This visual representation can be read inwards or outwards, highlighting individual paths from raw data to Grounded Theory generation and vice versa.

**Figure 19: The Grounded Theory of Equality and Artistic Integrity in Theatre for Early Years, Constructed from Open Codes, Axial Codes and Core Categories**
**Image credit: Ben Fletcher-Watson**



At its centre lies the complex interplay between the two core categories, generating the theory that, in the eyes of TEY artists, very young children should be treated equally with adults, and simultaneously, TEY artists demand recognition for their expert skills in working with children. This study suggests a shift in tradition, proposing that theatre-makers based in Scotland who create work for the very young do not subscribe to instrumentalist or pedagogical points of view common in the previous century, believing instead that babies should be given access to the highest-quality culture from their earliest months. They recognise that there may be educational, health or other benefits to children (and indeed their carers) from attending theatre, but these are intrinsic to the experience, bound up within it rather than being deliberately applied from outside. This has close parallels to recent

studies into theatre for older children from other countries, such as Australia: "[artists] have maintained a focus on the children as being, rather than the adults they will become. Practitioners are inclined to see the goals of their work in 'intrinsic' terms" (Johanson and Glow, 2011, p.60). A discourse centred on a belief in equality between adults and children may therefore be seen as international, promulgated and supported by shared practices. Sites of cultural exchange, most notably major children's theatre festivals such as ASSITEJ World Congresses, could be contributing to the spread of this discourse around the world.

However, a belief in equality is complicated, or even compromised by the struggle to retain artistic integrity – skill and experience seem to automatically place the artist above the child in any theatrical hierarchy, yet at the same time, cooperative and collaborative practices in Scottish TEY are an important aspect of artistic identity for many participants. As Manon van de Water has identified, the equality/integrity (also definable as audience/aesthetics) split is a defining binary of TEY in Europe, the USA and perhaps around the world: "Do we foremost need to keep the audience in mind or is our first responsibility to create a work of art?" (2012a, p.131). It is proposed that, rather than delineating two separate schools of thought, the creative tension between equality and artistic integrity may begin to explain the practices and perspectives of contemporary TEY practitioners as a whole.

### 5.6.1 Artistic practices

Artists identified a range of performance practices that contribute to the aim of equality for very young children. These included: resisting theatrical conventions such as the actor/audience divide; exploiting familiar settings and scenarios in order to subvert them and surprise spectators; developing dramaturgical mythologies which extend the performance experience beyond the auditorium, from the foyer to the home environment before and after the performance; ensuring that audiences are made to feel as comfortable and safe as possible, acknowledging their vulnerability; collaborating with the youngest children to create uniquely personalised and unrepeatable live theatre experiences; employing testing or piloting with invited audiences to ensure that each moment engages. These practices were described as mentally taxing or even exhausting, the efforts of artists to accommodate their audiences taking a toll physically and psychically. Such practices are not individually distinctive, as they occur frequently in other artistic genres (for example, immersive theatre by companies such as Punchdrunk tends to trouble the notion of a tightly-

bound prescriptive performance space (White, 2012)), but their combination and profusion suggests a coherent developed praxis within TEY that may begin to define a contemporary dramaturgy of theatre for the very young.

Similarly, being recognised as an artist with finely honed skills, as opposed to an educator or entertainer, was important to all participants. Perceptions of prejudice against TEY from peers can be argued to have led to the appearance of a form of defiance, where practice becomes oppositional against adult forms of theatre as well as genres such as Theatre in Education. The forms favoured by practitioners varied widely (from narratives with dialogue and characters, to installation spaces without performers or scripts) but all agreed that performances should be scrupulously tailored to their audience, generating a shared experience which responds to the needs of children and adults alike. The holistic theme of this study is that artists believe that babies and toddlers should be part of cultural events which respect their needs and capabilities, and furthermore that the practices required to create such events are complex, time-consuming and aesthetically robust, meriting esteem from peers.

## 5.6.2 Tensions within the theory

As noted in 2.4.3, it must be acknowledged that there is an inherent complication within treating children as equal to adults, granting them agency to respond as they see fit – while honest responses such as crying are useful, even beneficial, at sharings of works-in-progress, the same negative contributions are not welcomed in performance. Only certain kinds of reaction are validated by the finished product, namely the delighted, thoughtful or cooperative engagement identified by the participants in this study, which derives from adult perceptions of appropriateness. As artists, they may in fact be maintaining an asymmetry between children and adults while seeking to undermine it. It could be argued that there is a compromise that therefore tends to be struck between promoting equality and preserving integrity as an artist.

One interviewee addressed this conflict directly in a discussion about the role children can play in the creative process:

> I have to have an idea for two years, three years before it maybe
> comes to fruition, and if I asked a child of eight at that time what they

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wanted, it might just be that one child in that one room, and you come back to them two weeks later and they might not be interested in that idea, they might have explored it… I saw a show recently where they had taken the ideas from children [*Princess & Ginger* (2007) at Birmingham Rep] and it really didn't hold together as a piece. It was a mess… you have to trust your instincts a bit and what you understand of them and that you understand it's interesting or could be interesting to them.

This statement suggests that the role of children as co-creators may in reality be limited in scope, despite artists' claims about *inspiring a questioning of the world* or *collaborating*. The initial inspiration for a production usually springs from the adult, even in cases (such as *Oogly Boogly*) where the concept relates to children's development. During rehearsals, the very young are then granted a degree of agency to collaborate with artists, whether as participants in a play-based process, such as *This (Baby) Life* (2012), or as test audiences. This may not be consciously framed as collaboration, but children retain some control through their presence and reactions: in the words of one participant, "you're being led in your play with a child… we're making stuff and the babies are telling us by their responses where to keep looking and where to carry on". In performance, however, co-creative activity is rationed and curtailed by adult desires, seeking only behaviour and responses on a relatively narrow spectrum of acceptability. Undoubtedly, this spectrum is wider than the range of behaviours expected within adult theatre etiquette – leaving the space, whispering and standing up are all tolerated, and some productions can accommodate verbal or physical interjections – yet the quest for artistic integrity, meaning maintenance of self-perception as a highly-skilled member of an elite profession, perhaps overrides the desire for full equality: as a participant stated, "it's important to respect any audience enough not to reduce your artistic integrity for them, so I would hope that when I'm making work for children, I like it too." Thus a new facet of the theory of equality and artistic integrity becomes important: equal access to culture always means equal access to the *products* of culture, but not necessarily to the *making* of culture, sometimes reserving that process for artists.

It is therefore interesting that several participants chose to describe the ideal TEY performer as "without ego", reflecting the mental effort of catering to an audience who cannot respond as is typical in adult theatre, with warm words and applause. However, as one interviewee noted:

…they've got enormous egos. I think for a lot of the really, really good ones, you need an enormous ego to actually do it in the first place… They have to get something out of that experience. Artists have got to be enjoying being in that moment… It's those ones that get enough from that lack of normal response, or those signifiers that are not as obvious, [who are] able to carry on.

It is perhaps inevitable that, on being confronted with opposition or even hostility, the artists who continue working are those with a certain mental agility, but there is a fascinating synchrony between artists who are able to enjoy non-traditional relationships with their audiences and artists who make work in the face of non-acceptance from peers. This mental agility will be explored further in the next chapter.

### 5.6.3 Artistic integrity as a mode of legitimation

The core category *retaining artistic integrity* may be a strategy adopted by artists to combat issues of legitimacy, but is bound up too in another implication of *treating children as equals*. It can be claimed that society does not currently view children as fully capable beings, despite the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and so artists who elect to collaborate with the least capable are *de facto* illegitimate. In the eyes of peers, it is arguable then that TEY artists likewise take on the mantle of 'becomings', rather than 'beings' – their practice is seen as unfinished, immature or easy to patronise. This is perhaps one reason for the propensity for interviewees to criticise adult theatre as "behind the times", or to emphasise their credentials as artists rather than educators: by throwing off the associations of the past, such as TiE, they can present themselves as radical, forward-thinking and avant-garde. Their practice is thus legitimised because of its novelty, rather than in spite of it.

However, this formulation can in turn be troubled, as artistic integrity is arguably challenged by the willingness to take inspiration from children, who may be seen as untrained, amateur, chaotic, unfocused. An artist who hands over aesthetic control to a child is surrendering part of their integrity, as the final product may lack coherence, as noted above in relation to *Princess & Ginger*. Some interviewees confronted this directly, discussing the freedom that children have to explore their own ideas within an aesthetic context: "they find things that we didn't find… within

that framework, they've got some agency." A shift in power relations thereby grants validity to unexpected outcomes where the aim of the piece is to empower, rather than to present a specific idea. The common refrain of identity rooted in being a theatre-maker, not an educator, reflects this conflicted desire to move away from didacticism towards an ideal of cooperation and equality, while simultaneously striving to preserve the integrity of the artist.

## 5.7 Theoretical contribution and relevance

Relevance is one of the key factors determining a new theory's contribution to a given field. In Grounded Theory, the final construction is intended to be a theory which fits the data collected, works to explain the context of the phenomenon, is relevant both to the field of study and future practice, and is modifiable when confronted with new evidence (Glaser, 1978).

It should be noted that the concept of childhood as a state possessing a right to equal treatment is not novel (see section 2.5 for a discussion of children's right to culture). For example, while not explicitly addressing the right to culture, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1924 by the League of Nations (Mulley, 2010). Since the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the right of all children "to participate freely in cultural life and the arts" has been elaborated by individual scholars and artists. Indeed, this study suggests that the rhetoric of the UNCRC has permeated the cultural life of Scotland as in other countries, producing a Europe-wide or even world-wide cohort of artists who believe that very young children can be as sophisticated as adults in their engagement with culture. Indeed, in 2011, the Charter of Children's Rights to Art and Culture was produced (La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi, 2011), which reflects many of the findings of this study; in particular, the fifth right ("to enjoy high-quality artistic products, specifically created by professionals for each different age-group") echoes the theory of equality and artistic integrity closely. Similarly, the pan-European network Small Size ascribes to the "deep conviction… that no person is too young to engage and benefit from performance art nor should they be denied what is, in fact, a basic human right" (Belloli, Morris and Phinney, 2013, p.44).

Nonetheless, while the theory finds synergy with some existing literature, it contests and challenges much of the prevalent discourse around TEY. For example, as noted earlier, Evelyn Goldfinger has asked, "is theatre for babies an artistic

installation? Or is it perhaps some other kind of live entertainment?... Can one think of theatre for babies as a more sophisticated kind of game?" (2011, p.297). Such questions revolve around the conception of children's theatre as "not-theatre" (Bedard, 2003, p.93), but this study suggests that contemporary TEY may in fact constructed from a consistent body of dramaturgical practices which could serve to legitimate the genre as radical theatre on a par with current trends in immersive or participatory performance. The theatricality of avant-garde work by artists such as Robert Wilson or Blast Theory has become widely acknowledged, yet TEY, despite bearing notable resemblances to experimental adult work as discussed in Chapter 2, remains on the margins, its practices unrecognised. This may be because its audience is often deemed incapable of appreciating performative acts as anything other than "a more sophisticated kind of game", rather than viewing them as capable, conscious collaborators. Moses Goldberg has declared that "our children deserve to know and experience great moments of artistry" (2011, p.272), and Scottish artists would apply this statement to the youngest audiences of all.

Similarly, to present children as equal in importance to adults and artists is to contest conceptions of them as theatrically illiterate, in need of cultural education before they can understand or appreciate performance. Scholars such as Shifra Schonmann have claimed that "just as it is necessary to train the ear to listen to music and to distinguish the sounds produced by different instruments, so the child should be trained to distinguish between actions that are dramatic / theatrical and those that are not" (2002, p.144), while practitioners such as Gavin Bolton state that children "must learn that bodies on a stage make a statement" (1992, p.25). Here, the impact on Scottish TEY practitioners of Colwyn Trevarthen and Suzanne Zeedyk, two psychologists based in Scotland, should be noted. They have redefined perception of infant capabilities away from Piagetian universalism or Vygotskian 'scaffolding' towards new models of innate creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional intimacy and intersubjectivity (Zeedyk, 2006; Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009). According to Trevarthen and Zeedyk, an understanding of performance may be ingrained or even instinctual in humans from birth. Many participants in this study cited the two psychologists as inspirations for their work, seemingly finding the implications for infant capability highly seductive. For these artists, evidence from developmental psychology is a key means of validating their practice and beliefs, and of overturning instrumentalist notions of TEY as a training ground for 'real theatre'. For them, equality means that all children should have access to high-quality theatre regardless of age, *ars gratia artis*.

The concept of equality also troubles the traditional practice of participation, commonly used in theatre for the very young. Productions permit moments of joint activity, such as gathering fallen leaves in *Egg & Spoon* (2003), or may even allow spectators to become Boalian spect-actors, controlling the action, as in *Le jardin du possible* (2002). Article 31 seeks to empower children of all ages, but participation in culture is complex when power rests with adults, be they artist, critic or parent. Free and full participation may be compromised by perceptions of tyranny or inferiority, even in situations where artists seek to promote a child-led approach. The conventional view of the child as not yet worthy of adult rights ("seen and not heard"), or as the necessary recipient of instrumentalist policies designed to develop them into an adult as described above, can be argued to disenfranchise the very young (Fletcher-Watson, 2015b). For children as beings and as citizens, the right to participate 'freely' and 'fully' in the arts may be seen instead as an end in itself, as the participants in this research appear to believe.

For Scottish TEY practitioners, babies and toddlers are not passive recipients of performance, but active constructors of meaning. Theatrical power structures can be created which grant agency to their participants to engage on their own terms. This includes the ability to withdraw from participation at will, to take control of the theatrical event if desired, and to have the child's innate imaginative capability formally recognised as comparable to that of an adult. Creating such structures requires a bold step: "an explicit commitment on the part of adults to share their power; that is, to give some of it away" (Shier, 2001, p.115). Not all artists interviewed in this study sought to co-create experiences with the very young; indeed, for some, artistic integrity and adherence to their own aesthetic vision outweighed the desire for equality, and defined their work. Nonetheless, all spoke of a desire to allow children to interact as they wished, whether in rehearsal, at appropriate points in performance as in *BabyO* (2010), or in some cases, throughout the experience, as in *Multicoloured Blocks From Space* (2010). This has forced artists to design productions which can accommodate unpredictability, sometimes by creating implicit boundaries to restrain spectators' interactions, or by identifying performers who have the skills to manage and engage the youngest audience members.

The theory of equality and artistic integrity simultaneously addresses children and artists. When children are granted access to the highest quality arts experiences,

so the artists creating those experiences demand recognition for their expertise. Many participants saw themselves as pioneers, helping to found a movement. This perhaps has resonance with Evelyn Goldfinger's statement that "theatre for babies may be an emergent response to artists' need to explore further than what is already known" (2011, p.298). Numerous reflective writings within TEY literature suggest that practitioners view themselves as elite artists with unique skills gained through considerable experience (see for example Schneider, 2009; Brown, 2012; Belloli, Morris and Phinney, 2013). However, the concept of retaining artistic integrity crystallises this perception, rooting it in a narrative of peer respect. It may be useful here to examine in more detail the conversion narrative identified in the previous chapter.

### 5.7.1 The conversion narrative within Theatre for Early Years

As noted earlier, the majority of artists described a moment where they moved from ignorance of the genre, or even disbelief, to a state of passion or belief. Although some made statements like, "It never really struck me as strange or unusual to be performing for babies", they nonetheless emphasised how they "fell in love with it, because there were so many possibilities", for example. I also acknowledge the explanation that this narrative provides for my own TEY journey, from watching *Egg and Spoon* in 2007, to developing a keen interest in the genre, to embarking on a PhD on the topic in 2011, and beginning to generate ideas for my own first steps into performance for babies. This may be a powerful example of artistic integrity as a deeply-held belief for TEY theatre-makers, rather than a perception of theatre for children as a step on the path towards 'better' forms of theatre-making, as noted by several participants. Similarly, although not all participants could be described as having completed their conversion journey ('becoming politically engaged' was not universally present, and may never occur for some), the linear process accurately describes the typical career pathway of TEY artists interviewed.

**Figure 20: The Conversion Narrative within Theatre for Early Years**
**Image credit: Ben Fletcher-Watson**



## The conversion narrative in TEY

Complete ignorance of the field

Exposure to a performance experience

Growing interest in the field
*usually by observing more performances*

Spending time with children
*to learn about them and see what interests them*

Making the decision to create a piece of TEY

Becoming passionate about TEY
*forming links with indviduals and groups*

Becoming known for your work
*achieving success*

Becoming politically engaged in the TEY movement
*seeking to convert others*

The conversion narrative as a process of cultural evangelism has noticeable parallels with religious conversion. Autobiographies of both religious and secular conversion have been described as "myths of self that account plausibly for the dramatic shifts in attitude and behaviour that follow from an authentic conversion experience" (Griffin, 1990, p.152), and it may appear that the linear process outlined above falls into the category of personal myth-making. However, it should be reiterated that this narrative emerged from a mass of data from more than twenty-five individuals, with numerous analogous experiences described. The Grounded Theory Method is designed precisely to explain and codify such data, and to uncover relevant and fitting processes which explain a phenomenon.

Furthermore, several of these stages are directly comparable to critical factors within religious conversion. For example, the key stage of first exposure to a performance experience for the very young (stage 2) resonates strongly with conversion theorist Lewis Rambo's claim that "what makes any voluntary conversion process possible is a complex confluence of the 'right' potential convert coming into contact, under proper circumstances at the proper time, with the 'right' advocate and religious option" (1993, p.87). For some artists and audience members, despite exhortations such as "go and watch something, because I'm not going to change your mind unless you do", the circumstances simply may not be 'right' for conversion. This can cause converts to become even more deeply involved in their new activity, in an effort to find new ways to convince sceptics. Here, Stage 6 (becoming passionate about TEY, forming links with like-minded individuals and groups) has a notable parallel with the role of "reference groups" in religious conversion, described as "a process of coming to see that reality is what one's friends claim it to be" (Erikson, 1995, p.19). Thus the networks used by artists in Scotland, such as Imaginate and Patter, serve to reinforce their belief in the validity of TEY.

It is however important not to overstate the language of evangelism employed in this study. Codes such as *the Damascene Moment* emerged from my own process of analysis, not from the transcripts themselves as 'in-vivo' codes (see Chapter 3); similarly, the eight-step conversion narrative is my own construction, unlikely to be created by another analyst due to the constructivist nature of the Grounded Theory Method. It must also be recognised that religious conversion may be an inappropriate analogy – conversion to TEY can define an artist's working practices and career, but a religious epiphany affects an individual's entire life and belief structures. However, there is a certain value to simplifying various anecdotal excerpts into this linear process, as it helps to explain a particular consistency within the sample, and may even describe a necessary factor for achieving success and/or longevity in the field: all artists interviewed can be classified as following the conversion narrative to some extent, and it may be possible that there are no examples of artists for whom this is not the case because conversion is central to becoming a TEY theatre-maker. Those artists who never experience Rambo's "complex confluence" are unlikely to be convinced *sui generis* of the legitimacy of TEY, and so it is improbable that they would choose to pursue a career in the genre. Conversely, for artists who do undergo a conversion experience, their engagement is reinforced, rather than weakened, by perceived prejudices and peer rejection. This may explain why the narrative is relevant to all the transcripts – those for whom it is not true simply do not become

TEY artists. Continuing to make work for the very young despite non-acceptance by peers entails a degree of mental agility, as described above.

In terms of mental agility, it is interesting to note that, while it is possible to identify practitioners who devote their practice solely to one style or genre (such as puppeteers), no TEY practitioner solely creates work for the very young. All participants maintained practices in other fields, such as mainstream adult theatre or performance art. The mental effort of creating TEY, combined with other factors such as funding difficulties and lack of legitimation, may mean that a career devoted solely to making theatre for babies is overly demanding. TEY is not an easy option, nor do its practitioners pursue careers for monetary gain, an accusation levelled at some artists. Instead, they often identified significant barriers to securing funding, including a lack of consideration from Creative Scotland – as several participants pointed out, Starcatchers have become adept at sourcing grants from non-cultural sources, such as health and education charities. Artists must therefore be able to address their practice to wildly different stakeholders, understanding and communicating the benefits in terms of mental health, social development, pedagogy and even policy-making, rather than relying on aesthetic profile alone. They feel a desire for recognition as skilled artists, but constantly struggle to retain their aesthetic integrity when applying for funding.

This investigation demonstrates that current theory fails adequately to describe the mental processes of TEY artists, and the resulting practices derived from their beliefs and experiences. Contemporary TEY has responded to claims of illegitimacy by formulating a coherent, comprehensive body of practice that empowers children and seeks to inspire respect from other artists for its robustness and care for its audience. The theory of Theatre for Early Years outlined in this study is intended to encapsulate the quest for equality, the right to culture, the mental effort required to maintain a career, the narrative of conversion to the cause of TEY and the questioning of past hierarchies such as elite adult / inferior child or educator / pupil.

Having proposed an explanatory Grounded Theory, the next section discusses the extent to which the theory achieves the aims of this study.

## 5.8 Achievement of aims

This study aimed to answer three interrelated questions:

1) What defines the phenomenon of contemporary Theatre for Early Years?
2) What are the key practices employed by TEY artists, and what are the challenges which trouble the effective delivery of these practices?
3) What are the dramaturgical implications of these practices and challenges?

A constructivist version of Grounded Theory was adopted to address these questions, as discussed in Chapter 3. The resulting theory was constructed from 26 transcripts by participants involved in the creation of TEY in Scotland, using methods including constant comparison, memoing and inductive reasoning. The explanatory theory presented in this chapter encompasses multiple testimonies and career journeys, from established mid-career practitioners who are held up as inspirations by others, to emerging artists still developing their practice. A notable consistency links the various transcripts (see section 4.4), and additionally, the findings of the study are supported by other accounts of practice from the UK and Europe, suggesting that many of the concerns of Scottish TEY artists may in fact be global concerns which appear in multiple cultures. This is strong evidence that the first question has been answered, as the theory explains both contemporary practice in Scotland and older forms from abroad. Five key practices were identified as commonalities across the sample: *sharing experiences, proving 'what works' with testing, gift giving, treating children as we treat adults* and *abandoning tradition*. These practices were grouped under the core category *treating children as equals*, providing an insight into the ontological frameworks adopted by TEY practitioners, and achieving the second aim.

Another challenge for practitioners also emerged rapidly from initial data, reinforced by subsequent interviews: *retaining artistic integrity*, particularly when confronted with prejudiced attitudes or assumptions of low-status artistry. This has not yet featured in accounts from the wider literature, suggesting that it may be more prevalent in Scotland, although struggles with legitimacy can be found in other artist testimonies. The second core category provides a new contribution to research within children's theatre; it may also prompt fresh approaches in training and skills development, as will be discussed in the final chapter.

Lastly, the third question of this investigation is to determine the implications for dramaturgy of the two core categories. To attend to this, the next section develops the explanatory theory of TEY into a provisional dramaturgy of TEY, grounded in the data.

## 5.9 A dramaturgy of equality: a proposal

I tentatively propose that the Grounded Theory described above suggests a dramaturgy of TEY which is distinct from the postdramatic, play-oriented or open dramaturgies identified by earlier studies (Reiniger, 2011; Guss, 2012; Klaic, 2012) but bears some resemblances to Susan Young's audience-focused model for under-twos (2004). As in Young's dramaturgy, quality, multi-modality and accommodation are key aspects, but this new dramaturgy of TEY would hinge on seeking equality. It takes as its central concern the belief that children and adults are to be treated alike in a theatre. Equality can encompass accommodation of behaviours, empathy, ideology, generosity and respect, but is greater than all of these. In this dramaturgical context, it is suggested that all artistic decisions are governed by the quest for equality, treating the very young as capable, aesthetically sophisticated imaginative beings, equal to their parents.

TEY dramaturgy can therefore be divided into five areas, corresponding to the five axial codes that constitute the core category *treating children as equals*: *sharing experiences*; *proving 'what works' with testing*; *gift giving*; *treating children as we treat adults*; *abandoning tradition*. Usefully, these titles avoid established theatrical terminology, calling attention to their applicability across other domains, as will be explored further in the next chapter. In each case below, examples from Scottish TEY are used to illustrate the dramaturgical elements.

### 5.9.1 Sharing experiences



Contemporary TEY is designed to engage adults as much as children, not favouring one over the other. The actor-spectator relationship is not individually linear, as is the norm in TYA, but triangular (Desfosses, 2009) or even web-shaped (see figure 18), linking parents, children and performers in a complex network of mutuality. Spatially, TEY

often extends beyond the dramatic action, perhaps with performers greeting children outside the venue (*Icepole*, *Round in Circles*), or spectators may discover the characters already onstage when they enter (*White*, *Paperbelle*). This 'narrative bleed', or "easing in, easing out" (Young, 2004, p.25) calms vulnerable audiences (both babies and parents who may be new to theatre) by providing structure to the dramatic world.

## 5.9.2 Proving 'what works' with testing

TEY productions benefit from a commitment to testing sequences prior to performance. Surprises, transformations and emotional peaks are governed by specific and repeated trialling, aiming to guarantee as much as possible that children will not be frightened (a taboo discussed in section 4.6.4). Dramaturgically, suspense is replaced with surprise. Inclusive and participatory practices aim to empower children by encouraging questions, mirroring perceptions and welcoming reactions within a carefully rationed framework of agency (*Innocence*). Inspiration is more likely to come from a developmental milestone or an abstract concept than a traditional fairy story (*Round in Circles*). Performance is constantly reactive, rather than fixed: "reading the atmosphere" (Young, 2004, p.24), responding to shifting moods, negotiating exchanges with precision, and monitoring social feedback cues at all times (eye contact, verbalisations, gestures).

## 5.9.3 Gift giving

In keeping with a perception of performance as an exchange of gifts, the atmosphere of a TEY production is welcoming and never threatening. Music, lighting, seating, scenery, staging, familiar objects and ideally the theatre itself (for example, by providing buggy parking or trained ushers) all combine to generate a setting that encourages calm. Once calm has been established, the atmosphere deepens to inspire curiosity as the story unfolds (*Yarla and the Winter Wood*).

Boundaries become key in the mediation of action – by placing implicit borders around the performance space, artists control the participation of children and adults alike. These borders may be textural (*First Light*), created from light (*Multicoloured Blocks from Space*, *Icepole*), enforced through presence of an adult onstage (*My House*, *Potato Needs a Bath*), or explicitly stated (*SensoryO*). In all cases, they guarantee the safety of child spectators. The welcoming atmosphere also presents familiar objects and sensations in order to subvert them, as distinct from play sessions where familiarity is an end in itself. Artists and designers endow objects with playfulness, meaning here the capacity to be played with in many different ways. A feather becomes a physics experiment (*BabyO*); a box becomes a table, a playmat and a house (*My House*); a balloon becomes a sheep (*Head in the Clouds*). Just as children test the possibilities offered by a new object by touching, mouthing, throwing, smelling, shaking, hitting, rolling, squashing and dropping, so theatre-makers repurpose recognisable props in order to offer new multimodal possibilities.

## 5.9.4 Treating children as we treat adults



The actor-audience feedback loop is mediated by respect, as performers acknowledge children's right to be present, and more importantly, to withdraw when they wish (*The Presents*). TEY artists are actively interested in children and child development, embodied in the care they take to accommodate their audiences (*BabyChill*). They are also self-motivated, finding personal reward in unconventional responses rather than applause or verbal feedback, acknowledging their audiences' unfamiliarity with dramatic semiotics rather than aiming to educate them. Equal treatment is reciprocal, feeding back into the experiences of adults – just as children are encouraged to explore new ideas and sensations, so a TEY experience offers caregivers "the opportunity to discover new perspectives regarding their babies" (Chang and Choi, 2015, p.39). Adults are welcomed and accommodated throughout, but also encouraged to view their children as consumers of culture, capable of sophisticated interaction from a young age.

### 5.9.5 Abandoning tradition



The narrative arc of TEY extends beyond the traditional model (*introduction*, *development*, *climax* and *resolution*) both semantically and spatially. Narratives, where present, have a tendency to repeat or recur within themselves, forming chains of mini-arcs which define the course of the performance (*Too Many Cooks*, *White, Anonymouse*). They are open, welcoming varied interpretations, and posing questions rather than necessarily providing logical or didactic answers. Additionally, stories are told by means other than words, even where text is present – they may be communicated or reinforced in visuals, movement, music, scent, taste, or kinaesthetic modes, shared between performers and audiences (*Little Blue*, *The Polar Bears Go Wild*). Experiences are designed to enhance connectivity – between actor and audience, between spectators, between a spectator and an object – to generate the *possibility* of meaning, instead of presenting a linear narrative with a preconceived message identical to each audience member (*Blue Block Studio*): this is perhaps analogous to postdramatic theatre for adults, where "the function of theatre as a public sphere requires a dramaturgical discourse that is more ready to pose questions than to give answers… without patronising the audience or insisting on a particular interpretation" (Lehmann and Primavesi, 2009, p.6).

The dramaturgy of TEY can thus be provisionally expressed as a *dramaturgy of equality*, governed by the principle of *treating children as equals*. Within the genre, specific practices and individual praxes determine a diversity of styles, but the underlying dramaturgy remains consistent: when babies and toddlers are welcomed into the theatre, then the experience must ensure their presence is permitted on equal terms with adults.

## 5.10 Conclusion

The Grounded Theory of equality and artistic integrity aims to explain the phenomenon of Theatre for Early Years as it is practiced in Scotland. The theory suggests that practitioners simultaneously seek to empower the young children who attend their productions and to gain recognition for their own finely-honed skills as

artists. The distinctive conversion narrative identified in almost all transcripts suggests that TEY practitioners in Scotland are bound up in an shared culture, influenced by peers, cultural factors and support networks such as Imaginate, despite the diversity of individual practice. It is possible tentatively to propose an emergent TEY *dramaturgy of equality* derived from the data, which may be distinctively Scottish.

However, categorising a diverse group of artists with differing levels of experience, varied training and numerous routes to practice is not straightforward. Out of a profusion of practices, from design to composition to devising, it is hoped that a coherent, robust and relevant theory of equality and artistic integrity has been produced. TEY practice in Scotland, like all artistic genres, has been influenced by many factors, yet from the coding patterns described in this chapter, a few key similarities have been discovered: a supportive, collegial ecology which values the child as a citizen; a focus on a mutually rewarding, mutually beneficial experience for baby, parent and artist; a pride in the integrity of the product which responds to perceived prejudices. The resulting theory must seek to explain the processes which underlie these attitudes, and provide recommendations for practice which take into account their causal factors.

It is important to note that any hypotheses "are not proven; they are theory" (Glaser, 1992, p.87), but a Grounded Theory will fit the data from which it emerges. The artists' testimonies which make up this study should thus define and control the outcome, losing none of their potency. Generated via constructivist GTM processes, the theory of equality and artistic integrity aims to explain substantively the central concerns of TEY practitioners. At its root, it seeks to "elicit fresh understandings about patterned relationships between social actors" (Suddaby, 2006, p.636), providing an original and credible theory which may be of use to practitioners in TEY and fields beyond.

The next chapter describes how the Grounded Theory constructed using GTM was tested in a Practice-as-Research process. It describes the development process of a PaR project aiming to apply and evaluate dramaturgical effects emerging from the theory of equality and artistic integrity and its related dramaturgy, and the ways in which this affected both the creation of the resulting artwork (an iPad app) and the evaluation of my theoretical proposals. Finally, I examine this PaR project as a means of validating and refining a newly generated grounded theory.

# Chapter 6: Testing the Grounded Theory of TEY – a Case Study

## 6.1 Summary of chapter

This chapter aims to show how Practice-as-Research (PaR) methods have been employed to test the theory of equality and artistic integrity and its associated dramaturgy of equality, assessing their transferability across domains (in this case, from theatre to digital media). First, I outline the justification for direct application of theoretical findings within the GTM process. The creation of *White: The App* (Hippotrix, 2014b), an iPad 'digital toy' inspired by Catherine Wheels Theatre Company's *White*, is then explored in depth, with documentation from various stages of the project presented alongside discussion of creative decisions taken during the process of app development. Finally, I assess the usefulness of the proposed dramaturgy of equality described in the previous chapter as a construct for the creation of new non-theatrical artworks for the very young.

Further material concerning new developments in the domain of digital arts for the young, and the connections between gameplay and dramaturgy, is available in Appendix D.

## 6.2 Application of theory in a Practice-as-Research setting

In 2013 and 2014, I worked with software developer Hippotrix, based in East Lothian, to create *White: The App*, a 'digital toy' for iPad and iPhone (Hippotrix, 2014b). This app (an abbreviation of 'application') was derived from Catherine Wheels Theatre Company's production *White* (2010). As a Scottish TEY piece aimed at children from two to four, *White* was already an important production for my study, and I had interviewed its creator Andy Manley the previous year. The prospect of applying my ideas about TEY within the digital arts industry was highly advantageous, and so I used the six-month placement as a Practice-as-Research project to investigate the transferability of provisional theoretical concepts emerging from the GTM.

As discussed in section 3.5.5, to evaluate the credibility, resonance and usefulness of a grounded theory, it can be valuable to apply novel theories in

practice. The GTM process does not require practical application in this way, but for projects focusing on practice, it may be appropriate to assess usefulness once a final theory has been determined. Within fields such as management, novel theory is sometimes tested using quantitative methods (Gioia and Thomas, 1996), extending proposed models and working towards validation. As noted in Chapter 3, quantitative methods did not seem appropriate in this case, but direct application in an associated domain had the potential to provide evidence as to the accuracy and generalisability of the theory (Weick, 1979), by reinforcing some concepts while alerting me to the relative weakness of others.

Before describing the project used to test these concepts, it is important to outline the model of Practice-as-Research which underpinned it. As noted earlier, it is not sufficient simply to document tacit knowledge. Instead, artist and scholar can choose to co-create new forms of knowledge, each 'filling in the gaps' for the other – the artist embodies their practice and reflects critically upon it, while the researcher provides theoretical insights for consideration. Thus "creative practice becomes innovative… by being informed by theoretical perspectives… newly explored in a given medium" (Nelson, 2006, p.114). These theoretical perspectives might typically emerge from literature reviews, analysis of data or theory generation, but it is also possible to expand Nelson's scenario, using PaR methods to validate tentative theory.

The creation of *White: The App* represented an opportunity to test the newly generated theory in a practical setting; it also allowed me to assess the generalisability of the concepts generated by the GTM process, which would not have been possible if I had tested the theory qualitatively in a performance setting (such as by surveying theatre-makers during a rehearsal). It is also worth remembering that a Grounded Theory should fit the data, explain its context, be relevant to the field of study and also to future practice, and be modifiable in light of new evidence (Glaser, 1978). Thus if my tentative proposals were applicable in this new digital context as well as in the original field of study, this might be evidence of generalisability, while practical application may suggest ongoing refinements. However, the aim was not to assess the quality of the theory, as tools already exist to do this within the GTM tradition (examined in the final chapter). Instead, the application of research findings in a PaR setting might positively influence the final digital product, impacting upon the user experience in the same ways that an artist's embodied knowledge affects their practice.

Definitions of PaR vary, but "there is a general consensus that PaR concerns research that is carried out through or by means of performance, using methodologies and specific methods familiar to performance practitioners, and where the output is at least in part, if not entirely, presented through performance" (Fleishman, 2012, p.28). The case study therefore began with two tasks: firstly, drawing on the dramaturgical elements of my grounded theory to create provisional proposals for a generic framework rooted in TEY performance but applicable across other art forms; and secondly, seeking opportunities to directly apply those concepts in practice, in the same way that artists use the rehearsal process to accept or reject ideas, to produce new knowledge. PaR methodologies often produce registers of knowledge which are embodied partially within performance, as noted above, or within an artefact. *White: The App* should be considered such an artefact.

Mirroring the way in which a dramaturg assists the artistic process by "eradicating boundaries between critical thinking and creativity…uniting dramaturgs with all theatre artists inside the common bond of process" (Thomson, 2003, p.117), I situated myself as an in-house researcher alongside the creative team to bring together theory and expertise. I was able to reflect critically on iterative developments, placing them within the context of digital toys, play environments and Theatre for Early Years. Equally, I contributed knowledge of Andy Manley's creative process, as well as my dramaturgical experience and project management expertise. As will be seen in the following section, I employed interdisciplinary methods in pursuit of this aim, as is common in PaR projects. These methods included comparative analysis of existing products, a contextual review of current literature (see Fletcher-Watson, 2013a), quantitative and qualitative testing of successive iterations, and an ongoing process of documentation, including reflective writing (in the form of blogs[21]) and video (in the form of vlogs[22]). Outcomes from the PaR project were a written text (Fletcher-Watson, 2014), an impact case study for the ESRC[23] and the app itself as an artefact of practice.

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[21] Many of these blogs are archived on the Hippotrix website at http://www.hippotrix.com/blog/.

[22] These include "What is a digital toy?" https://youtu.be/G3bOuO333hk and "White Vlog" https://youtu.be/LXu1TZu91vE.

[23] Available at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/features-casestudies/case-studies/34053/making-theatre-childs-play.aspx.

## 6.3 Making White: The App

*White*, a theatre production for children aged two to four and their parents, was created by Catherine Wheels Theatre Company in 2010, premièring in Edinburgh. It has since been performed more than 975 times around the world, and has also been translated into French, Welsh, Norwegian and Swedish (Fletcher-Watson, 2014).

*White: The App*, a mobile app for iPad and iPhone inspired by *White* and designed for children aged between one and five, was commissioned in 2013. It was released in March 2014 to accompany a run of the production in Los Angeles. Scottish app developer Hippotrix was selected to carry out the project, with funding provided by Creative Scotland (Fitzpatrick, 2014). The original creative team served as advisors throughout the process, with devisers Andy Manley and Ian Cameron providing feedback and voice artistry, designer Shona Reppe adapting and where necessary recreating her set and props, and composer Danny Krass providing expanded versions of music cues. I was employed as in-house researcher, supported by an ESRC industry placement grant.

It is important at this stage to contextualise the app version of *White*. Instead of creating a typical computer game, with time-limited and rule-based gameplay, or a storybook showcasing the narrative of the play, the project brief called for the creation of a 'digital toy', meaning a 'more free-form playable scenario' or *paidic* experience which utilises the iPad's intuitive interface (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.42). There is not yet an established model for an app version of a theatre experience, but it could be argued that a game has similarities to an entertainment-focused commercial theatre production, and a storybook is akin to a Theatre in Education show, while a digital toy falls in-between, perhaps mirroring the style of an engagement-focused children's theatre production. As a digital toy, *White: The App* eschews time limits for completion of a given activity, permitting instead infinitely repeatable play within four separate environments derived directly from the production. It is intended to be a simple but attractive product, using material from the production to recreate the visual and aural atmosphere. Children and parents can engage in complex play with objects such as the eggs which form the basis of the live version, putting hats on them or offering them a drink, or explore the world of the play more freely, skipping from scene to scene.

The five sections below investigate some of the specific ways in which emerging theory and dramaturgical concepts were used to influence the creation of the app, framed as responses to the five elements of TEY dramaturgy posited in section 5.9: *sharing experiences*; *proving 'what works' with testing*; *gift giving*; *treating children as we treat adults*; *abandoning tradition*.

## 6.3.1 *Sharing experiences:* simultaneous interaction and expanded mythology



The original production of *White* is unusual for TEY in that children are not permitted onto the stage at the end of the performance, mainly due to the fragility and scrupulous cleanliness of the pristine white set. Instead, the audience can play with coloured confetti, and the actors encourage each spectator to identify the colours of their own clothes. By contrast, the app allows physical (if non-tactile) exploration of many of the objects from the production, including eggs, eggcups, birdhouses, a confetti cannon, feathers, handkerchiefs, glasses of milk, mirrorballs and woolly hats. Only when a child touches an object are sounds or movements triggered, just as with a toy in the real world. Similarly, the digital toy format, like physical toys, encourages play by more than one user. Two or more players can interact simultaneously as part of a shared experience, as in Toca Boca's *Toca Tea Party* (2011), or a parent can watch and if necessary support their child, as was discussed in section 4.6.2.

The mediatised event thus gains an advantage over the live, in that it allows for conversation to occur alongside artistic encounter. The digital domain is often accused of existing simply as a "digital babysitter" (Jones, 2011; Palmer, 2011; Ward, 2013), but jointly shared focus on a screen-based task or game can positively influence both attention and responsiveness, as has been found in studies of infant-directed television (Barr *et al.*, 2008).

To this end, the possibility of enriching the mythology of *White* by expanding the app's scope beyond what was visible on stage was a central concern for the

project. In an early briefing note for the creative team, I mirrored the responses of many spectators by asking:

> *…where do the characters come from? Is there a sky above? What does the rear of the scenery look like? What is under the ground? What happens before [the performance] and after?*

Dramaturgically, I observed an opportunity for the app to move beyond a simple digitisation of the performance towards a more expansive experience that might encourage simultaneous interaction. Proposals included hatching out eggs into different creatures – birds, dragons, crocodiles, dinosaurs – or allowing users to decorate the interior of a birdhouse in their own style. The need to preserve the show's aesthetic and honour the intentions of Manley and his colleagues meant that we did not pursue these concepts, but we found one way of moving beyond the original while retaining its welcoming atmosphere. *White: The App* contains four distinct settings (described by the creative team as 'scenes', although they are each snapshots of different pieces of the same stage design) – a shower of eggs falling through a cloudy sky; a row of eggs sitting on a shelf; a field of birdhouses at night; a field of birdhouses in the daytime. While scenes 2, 3 and 4 are recreations of moments from the production, the first scene is only implied in the stage version (as Cotton and Wrinkle catch falling eggs in their aprons), not seen in full. This demonstrates one way in which an app can be considered an excellent example of the 'narrative bleed', or extended mythology (described in section 4.6.2), which can encourage a deeper involvement with setting, theme, story, or character.

Furthermore, this participation can move beyond basic behaviour-modelling to include discussion of action and concepts. For example, in *White: The App*, a secondary outcome of the removal of written text is the encouragement of exploratory free play within the four environments. Children can choose to engage with any object, and through a process of trial-and-error, discover the secrets and surprises hidden within each scene. This led to an interesting tension between the need to keep the user engaged and the desire to provide boundaries which would guide children towards specific effects (as can be seen in Appendices A.4 and A.5, *implicit boundaries* and *explicit boundaries* were both common open codes). For example, during the testing phase, it became obvious to the creative team that certain scenes were too bounded in terms of the actions allowed, such as the third

scene (night-time). The seven birdhouses were initially designed to be playable as piano keys, each producing a different note (see figure 22). However, some children became frustrated with this limited range of options, so the decision was made to allow touching anywhere on the background to trigger a response, such as an owl hoot or crickets chirruping. Eventually, the developers tried, wherever possible, to make all assets touch-sensitive, meaning that tapping them would produce a sound or visual effect. This iteration emerged directly from conversations between children and adults, asking questions such as "Why don't the stars make noises?" Most theatre productions do not allow space for such open-ended conversation during the live experience, whereas a digital arts experience can welcome it. Instead of taking place in polite silence, which can be a sign of confusion as much as enjoyment for small children, the digital experience becomes "communal and communicative, allowing children to comment metanarratively and leaving space for adults to pose questions, praise or guide" (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.54). This has clear links to theoretical concepts such as *inspiring a questioning of the world*, as outlined in section 4.6.4.

**Figure 21: Scene 3 in *White: The App***
**Image courtesy of Hippotrix and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company.**

Thus shared experiences, whether live or mediatised, can give children confidence to move towards solo play. Just as the toddlers in *Oogly Boogly* range further as their confidence grows, so the users of *White: The App* can master simple interactions with parental help before engaging in self-directed activity.

### 6.3.2 *Proving 'what works' with testing:* trialling digital effects
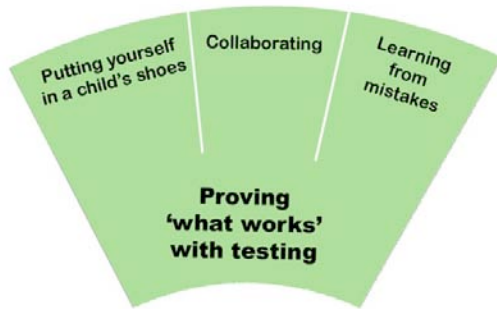


Within TEY, and indeed within the development process for the original production of *White*, testing with the target audience during rehearsals has emerged as an almost universal practice, unlike in adult theatre (see 4.6.3). App developers tend to conduct similar prototyping via mobile analytics testers such as TestFlight or HockeyApp, which also provide crash reports and options for feedback. *White: The App* was tested in January and February 2014, with users across the required age range and their caregivers providing responses prior to release. The prototype was presented to users in both domestic and nursery settings. Individual play and verbal feedback were recorded simultaneously on video, while carers were invited to submit comments via email. The testing phase led to major changes to the app, from the timing of certain sequences to the addition of new assets[24]. An iterative post-production process of bug-fixing, amending scenes based on user feedback, and streamlining was then used to complete the app, which launched in March 2014.

Testing proves whether a concept works in practice for a target audience. For example, discussing the *Baby Bright* series of DVDs for which she acted as advisor, Annette Karmiloff-Smith describes her deliberate application of the psychological principle of violation-of-expectation (repetition of an event, followed by an unexpected surprise, such as a ball rolling down a slope several times, then suddenly stopping halfway). She notes that its frequent use on the DVD is intended to amaze and delight baby spectators, holding their attention (Karmiloff-Smith, 2007). *White: The App* exploits violation-of-expectation in a similar way. Almost every scene contains a surprise, from the gently falling white eggs in scene 1 which are interrupted by a

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[24] Assets are the building blocks of digital media products, including artwork, animations, sound effects and music. They can be thought of as comparable to props and sound cues in a theatrical production.

much faster red egg, to a confetti cannon in scene 4 which only appears after users have played with several other objects. However, without testing these effects, it is possible that they would have failed to engage children – theory alone does not guarantee an enjoyable experience. As noted above, feedback was received about certain aspects of the app, such as overly small trigger areas for music, leading to further iterations and improvements to ensure user satisfaction, just as *learning from mistakes* is a key part of TEY practice (see section 4.6.3).

However, it must be recognised that the app, as a piece of software, remains static once it has been released. Unlike a live experience, which permits constant monitoring and negotiation by the performer in the space, a digital experience is unresponsive. Therefore, app designers must account for the unexpected by limiting areas where children could become unsafe. Security for children engaging in online activity remains a focus for parents, policymakers and developers alike, particularly in relation to privacy issues (Chaudron *et al*., 2015). Just as a carefully negotiated, respectful performance which keeps children safe is part of the specific skillset of TEY artists, so designers of Early Years digital products must focus on the need for child protection in the digital world. Increasingly, app developers are expected to adhere to international legislation, such as the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) in the USA, as well as domestic guidelines laid down by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a). The Federal Trade Commission, responsible for oversight of COPPA, has stated:

> Mobile apps can capture a broad range of user information from the device automatically – including the user's precise geolocation, phone number, list of contacts, call logs, unique device identifiers, and other information stored on the mobile device – and can share this data with a large number of possible recipients. These capabilities can provide beneficial services to consumers – for example, access to maps and directions, and the ability to play interactive games with other users – but they also can be used by apps to collect detailed personal information in a manner parents cannot detect. (2012, p.5)

It should be noted that, while developers may be liable for infringement of international law due to sales of app products purchased via sites outside their country of origin (*White: The App* is available in App Stores around the world, as well as in the main UK Store), they can also choose to reject COPPA and UKCCIS

blanket guidance in favour of a more nuanced stance. For example, "parents may welcome some data capture as a feature of an educational app if it allows them to track their child's changing performance at specific tasks such as number / letter recognition or basic mathematics" (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a, p.62).

In the case of *White: The App*, the decision was made to comply fully with COPPA guidance, meaning that there are no options to share data online, such as pictures created by the user, nor are there links to external websites which can be accidentally triggered. A Parents' Area, protected by a text lock (where the user must enter their year of birth using a numeric keyboard), does contain links to external websites for the theatre company, developer and funders, as well as Twitter, Facebook and App Store review pages. However, this was considered acceptable, as the text lock cannot be bypassed by random key strokes, and children within the target age-range of 1 to 5 are generally not able to construct 4-digit numbers.

### 6.3.3 *Gift giving:* familiarity and subversion



The *dramaturgy of equality* suggests that TEY is welcoming and never threatening (see section 5.9), so it was a priority for the Hippotrix team to retain the warm atmosphere of the production. The visual and musical aesthetic of the app was therefore governed entirely by the original. Props and scenery were photographed in high-resolution, and animated by hand in front of a green screen, a process known as 'chroma key animation'. This allowed the app developers to isolate the props from their background and place them as needed in a new digital setting (Fletcher-Watson, 2014). The objects used in the app were thus taken directly from the stage version, instead of being drawn or recreated in CGI. In the same way, the music and sound effects were taken from the stage soundtrack. Chroma key animation preserved Reppe's woolly, soft designs, but the app also gives objects additional surprising properties in an effort to subvert familiarity. A transmedia product[25] may be able to exploit its users' recognition of certain aesthetic features, such as soundtrack or visuals, assuming that they have, for example, seen the production on which an app is based. For some children, the

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[25] See Appendix D for an exploration of transmedia within the performing arts.

opportunity to play with the objects they have recently seen onstage may be enough to stimulate their initial engagement. However, for others who have not seen the live version, a further surprise is needed to capture their attention. For this reason, while scenes 2, 3 and 4 all open without any action, the first scene of eggs falling through the sky is deliberately designed to move randomly prior to any interaction.

Having access to the original devisers' aesthetic expertise and knowledge of the wider mythology of the production produced some unanticipated responses: for example, Andy Manley told us that he had always thought of the Red Egg (main protagonist of the app, and catalyst for much of the show's action) as "cheeky." The concept of a personality for the egg had not featured in the design up to that point, but this had a key impact on later versions of each scene: the egg gained the power to change the colours of objects that it touched, so that children who bounced it off plain white eggs in scene 1 could watch them flash purple, green or blue. In scene 2, the egg would peer in from the side of the screen to whisper "Not yet!" or "Soon!" (lines originally spoken by the character Wrinkle). These extra surprises added depth to the experience, and proved highly engaging for many users.

Dramaturgically, the objects from the production which feature in the app not only recreate the source material but are also repurposed to provoke amusement and stimulate imaginative responses, in accordance with the dramaturgy proposed in the previous chapter: birdhouses can be played like pianos, or eggs can slurp a drink through a straw. These surprising interactions are then exhaustively tested to ensure that users find them engaging, rather than off-putting.

### 6.3.4 *Treating children as we treat adults*: interaction design and accommodation



As outlined in Chapter 2, milestones derived from developmental psychology have influenced contemporary practice within TEY, and many artists take an active interest in child development. Productions respect the capabilities of children in physical, social and cognitive domains, for example by encouraging tactile exploration of objects rather than restricting children to spectatorial roles. This

closely mirrors the findings of Debra Lieberman and her colleagues (2009) who define developmental appropriateness as a key example of best practice in digital media design, meaning that computer games and apps should likewise be tailored to the specific age-related capabilities of the end user. This practice also has parallels with several other themes emerging from interview data for this study, including *putting yourself in a child's shoes* and *accommodating children's needs*. Dramaturgically speaking, it is possible to think of an understanding of developmental appropriateness as a key creative skill within Early Years digital arts, just as it is in the *dramaturgy of equality*.

App developers use the term 'interaction design' to describe the control mechanisms employed within a given product. The iPad / iPhone touchscreen permits numerous interactions, including *tap*, *swipe*, *tap-and-hold*, *two-finger pinch*, *multi-finger swipe*, *rotate* and *shake*, as well as *sound detection* (via the microphone), *motion detection* (via the camera) and *orientation detection* (via the internal gyroscope). However, I carried out a comparative analysis of competitors' Early Years products which showed that over 80% of apps limit interaction to the first three of these, "probably due to the more complex motor skills required to *pinch*, *rotate* and so forth" (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.43). App developers can elect to accommodate children's needs explicitly, by ensuring that all interactions are accessible, and so *White: The App* uses only *tap*, *swipe* and *tap-and-hold*, in line with the majority of products for the very young. This perhaps has parallels to the limited language standard in TEY, designed to ensure that the experience is comprehensible. For example, the script of *White* restricts the majority of dialogue to brief lines such as the following exchange:

> *Cotton*: Now?
> *Wrinkle*: Not now.
> *Cotton*: Soon?
> *Wrinkle*: Soon, Cotton.

Similarly, given that users are unlikely to be able to read, the app contains no written text apart from the home screen. This means that instructions are not provided for each scene; instead, gameplay is designed to be as intuitive as possible, with almost any interaction triggering a response of some kind. As discussed in section 5.9, TEY relies on a constantly reactive mode of performance that centres on continual negotiation within a feedback loop; as programmed software, apps cannot facilitate this social monitoring, but by encouraging virtually unlimited responses, they

may remain engaging and avoid didacticism. This can be contrasted with linear narrative apps like ebooks where the only assets available for interaction are those that move the story forward.

In keeping with the visual and intuitive accommodations made within each scene, the app also replaces the commonly-used PLAY word/button with a literal button whose holes suggest the outline of the triangular ▶ [Play] symbol used in most modern media formats (see figure 23 below).

**Figure 22: Home Screen from *White: The App***
**Image courtesy of Hippotrix and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company.**



It is perhaps unrealistic to expect the new profession of app developer to possess the range of skills which a TEY theatre-maker may have developed over many years, and similarly, "developers cannot be expected to be experts in child psychology, play theory, child-centred design and educational practices; they are artists, wishing to create their work in a new medium" (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a, p.62). However, adopting a *dramaturgy of equality* suggests that, by taking an interest in developmental appropriateness, they can create products that move beyond hierarchies of dexterity or semiotics.

### 6.3.5 *Abandoning tradition:* infinite gameplay and user-directed dramaturgies



Chapter 4 explored the repercussions for performance of *abandoning tradition* (see section 4.6.6), and the proposed dramaturgy in the previous chapter suggests that traditional narratives are unnecessary in TEY. Instead, narratives can bleed beyond the bounds of the theatre, while words lose their primacy. However, being derived from a production with a traditional narrative, the app encountered several issues as the creative team attempted to integrate a non-narrative dramaturgy with an existing story.

Early versions of the wireframe (the visual schematic of the app, showing each scene and the linkages between) contained six narrative sequences, with a finale which returned the user to the home screen. In a briefing paper drafted for the creative team, I argued that this adhered too closely to theatrical models suitable for older children (resonating with the concept of *abandoning tradition* in section 4.6.6):

> *… the app should focus more on individual mini-narratives within scenes, rather than seeking to overlay a larger narrative; the scenes should be cyclical, without a pre-determined end scene. However, each scene should provide a sense of closure, allowing the user to stop play at a point of their choosing. Perhaps there could be a 'goodbye' sequence when the user leaves the app. It is worth noting that that there is however no need for a grand reward sequence for completion when creating digital media for the very young – not only is completion a highly debatable concept for children who prefer repetition, it also falls back on unnecessary pedagogical frameworks which do not apply to the digital realm.*

I proposed that narrative conventions should not apply in the linkages between scenes, permitting users to enjoy the same sequence repeatedly, rather than being forced to move to the next scene. As noted earlier, TEY performances often feature repeated sequences to enhance engagement – *White* repeats the morning routine of eating breakfast and cleaning teeth, for example. However, they

cannot repeat endlessly, whereas a user of an app can choose to reset and replay a particular scene as often as they wish:

> *…each scene should be repeatable (like shaking the iPad to reset), allowing the user to play again immediately. The scenes could contain some kind of mini-narrative after 'completion' (so there are two options – Repeat or Next) which segues into the next [part of the] sequence. There could also be an option within each scene to record the user's achievement – such as taking a picture… to save in a gallery. Being able to 'replay' the action to watch their most recent effort unfold would also be valuable.*

Several options are typically used to facilitate this kind of open-ended structure: forward and back buttons can be added to each scene, allowing children to determine their direction of travel through an app; a refresh / repeat button may be provided, 'wiping' the user's work away to begin again; a HOME button can bring users back to a central menu, breaking narrative links between scenes – instead, each scene would link back to the home screen, like the spoke of a wheel. The unfortunate side-effect of all these options is often visual clutter – extra buttons placed on every screen, the purpose of which may be unclear to very young children, for whom the semiotic conventions of ← [back], → [forward] and ↻ [refresh / repeat] have little meaning. The decision was therefore made by Hippotrix to remove symbolic buttons completely, replacing them with a single button (identical to the PLAY button from the home screen) in the top right corner (see figure 22 below). Users can simply skip scenes that do not interest them, rather than being forced to complete a sequence before beginning the next; similarly, they can press the button repeatedly to skip every scene and return them to the beginning of their preferred scene. Thus "the narrative links between scenes were kept deliberately tenuous, allowing for multiple interpretations" (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.48) in keeping with Lehmann's call for "a dramaturgical discourse that is more ready to pose questions than to give answers" (Lehmann and Primavesi, 2009, p.6), fulfilling the need for the open narratives described within the *dramaturgy of equality* in section 5.9.

This decision to move away from prescribed narrative in the digital version of *White* suggests implicit acknowledgment of children's equality – children are trusted to decide their own mode of interaction with the digital toy, as the grounded theory suggests. Like a physical toy, the app can be played with in multiple ways, being closer to a *paidic* model rather than a *ludic* one (see 2.4.1), and neither punishes nor

rewards its user for their choices. The app relaxes many of the 'rules' of theatre, such as silence, narrative and temporality, "in order to grant agency to the youngest users, even if they engage only in a single activity" (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.50).

**Figure 23: Scene 2 in *White: The App***
**Image courtesy of Hippotrix and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company.**



## 6.4 Evaluating the generalisability of the theory of equality and artistic integrity, and the dramaturgy of equality

The theory of equality and artistic integrity is provisional, grounded in data but unvalidated in practice. Correspondingly, the *dramaturgy of equality* that stems from the theory is tentative in nature. The next chapter describes the specific means by which a GTM study's credibility, resonance, originality and usefulness may be assessed, but this PaR case study permits an evaluation of theoretical transferability or generalisability across domains.

To achieve this evaluation, the case study aimed to complete two tasks: firstly, to identify which dramaturgical aspects could be appropriate for use in a digital

context without discarding the original production aesthetic; and secondly, to apply them in an ongoing process of testing and revision to ensure they engaged the target audience of one- to five-year-olds.

Connections with the five main elements identified as a possible TEY dramaturgy (*sharing experiences*; *proving 'what works' with testing*; *gift giving*; *treating children as we treat adults*; *abandoning tradition*) became evident: the non-threatening, welcoming settings from the production were preserved, and in some cases, extended; users were pleasantly surprised by violation-of-expectation and the repurposing of previously familiar objects; just as TEY artists develop skills in the integration of developmental milestones to ensure their productions are accessible, so the app developers considered child development when creating simple, age-appropriate interactions; the linear narrative of the original production was fragmented, allowing each user to create their own narrative journey.

The second task, testing each aspect to make certain that users were satisfied, meshed neatly with the prototyping process common to digital media. For example, where video feedback suggested frustration with a scene, new effects and sounds could be added for the next version. To an extent, this process continues even after product launch, as feedback is incorporated in an ongoing chain of upgrades. The governing theoretical concept of equality seems to fit equally well to this digital arts experience as to a live performance – the spectator/user can perhaps be considered a co-designer, as their responses during testing define successive iterations. Additionally, the *dramaturgy of equality* can be used to describe the process by which developers ensure that the experience is safe (by adhering to COPPA guidance, for example) and non-threatening.

Thus the theory and dramaturgy explained in Chapter 5 appear to possess a measure of generalisability beyond their original context of TEY. There are weaknesses – most notably, the disparity between the lineages of skill built up over years by TEY artists and the more limited understanding of children's needs within the newer field of digital arts – but overall, the same principles can be applied: very young children's vulnerability means that developers must adhere to more stringent codes of safety and monitoring than in products aimed at adults. Equally, apps provide opportunities to engage users in worlds which grant them agency, allow them to create their own narratives and delight them with amazing transformations, recognising them as highly capable beings with aesthetic sensitivity.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The development of *White: The App* presented the prospect of being able to evaluate new theory. The process of generating a theory with transferability and generalisability was enhanced by direct application of theoretical perspectives in a new area of the arts, digital transmedia for the very young. I was able to expand Robin Nelson's dynamic model of mixed-mode research (2006; 2013), drawing upon all three areas: practitioner knowledge from the original team at Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, a conceptual framework deriving from Hippotrix' previous work and critical reflection from both creative groups. These inter-related forms of knowledge combined with Grounded Theory concepts to develop a more widely applicable theoretical framework.

From the beginning of development, the abilities and needs of the end-user – children from one to five – determined almost every aspect of the final app. The app needed to engage users immediately, and encourage them to return again and again. Therefore, the interactions, assets, gameplay and music had to respond directly to children's capabilities, just as in a TEY production. If a digital toy appears difficult to use, frightening, boring or off-putting, children will not play with it. Parents and caregivers may also dislike the product, having spent money on a toy that their children do not enjoy.

However, artistic integrity was a major factor. Faithful reproduction of the artistic property of *White* was central, both to ensure the approval of the original creators, and to adhere to the aesthetic which first attracted Hippotrix to the project. If, for example, the final app had abandoned photographed assets in favour of cartoon versions, it would have undermined *White*'s integrity as an exquisite (and award-winning) piece of design. Equally, if it exploited scenes from the show to create an educational game, such as the counting or alphabet apps commonly adapted from fairy stories, Andy Manley's creative identity would be challenged – as he stated in our interview, "I'm not an educator, I'm an artist."

As a performative artefact resulting from practice, *White: The App* represents an important and valuable output from this study. However, the main outcome is the documentation of app development practice (such as the examples from briefing papers given above) which suggests that the provisional theory of TEY outlined here

may be generalisable beyond its original domain via application within an associated area of creative production.

The final chapter explores the wider implications of the theory of equality and artistic integrity, including recommendations for policy-makers and funders, and the impact of the theory on praxis. It discusses the limitations of the study, evaluates the credibility, originality and usefulness of the research, and lastly identifies possible directions for future research.

# Chapter 7: Conclusions

## 7.1 Summary of chapter

The introduction to this thesis suggests that by the end of the investigation, a new theory of TEY, grounded in data, would be produced, accompanied by proposals for a possible dramaturgy which describes the field. The aim was for this dramaturgy to be valid, robust and useful. The second goal of the study was to create a means of combining the Expert Interview form with existing analytical tools in order to attain greater ontological validity.

This final chapter provides a conclusion to the study. The new theory is evaluated against recommended criteria for credibility, resonance, originality and usefulness. Finally, the study as a whole is examined, its limitations outlined, and suggestions made for further research in the field.

## 7.2 Evaluation of study: credibility, resonance, originality, usefulness

In line with most qualitative research methods, the GTM requires evaluation upon completion in order to assess the quality of the theory produced. However, as Clive Seale has noted, "'quality' is a somewhat elusive phenomenon that cannot be pre-specified by methodological rules" (1999, p.471), with proposals for quality-markers such as validity, reliability and trustworthiness emerging from the quantitative tradition.

GTM's founders proposed new means of assessing quality which regard concerns such as reliability as inadequate or overly restrictive. For Barney Glaser, a grounded theory should fit the data, work to explain the phenomenon in question, be relevant to those affected by the phenomenon, and be modifiable in the event of new developments (1978), although he adds parsimony and scope to the list in later works (1992). For Anselm Strauss, a well-constructed grounded theory possesses fit, understanding, generality and control (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Other GTM commentators have since developed several competing guidelines for the evaluation of a Grounded Theory study which attempt to draw together aspects of both qualitative and quantitative assessment. These include: simplicity, accuracy and

generalisability (Weick, 1979); credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); credibility, resonance, originality and usefulness (Charmaz, 2006). Having relied on the overtly constructivist epistemology of Kathy Charmaz in the creation of this project's methodology, it seems appropriate to assess its quality by employing her criteria. The following section is therefore divided into the four areas which she chooses to scrutinise. However, it should be noted that these divisions are to an extent artificial, having considerable overlap.

## 7.2.1 Credibility

For Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility equates to the quantitative assessment criterion of 'internal validity'. They believe it can be met by evidencing the use of methods such as extensive engagement in the field of inquiry, member checking and peer debriefing. Thus by demonstrating a commitment to participants' testimonies, rather than pre-existing beliefs or biases, a researcher can increase the credibility of their study. Other GTM practitioners propose additional strategies to enhance credibility, in particular a focus on microscopic (or line-by-line) coding in the initial stages, and coding for actions via the use of gerunds, as opposed to a reliance on generalised terms (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011).

In this study, my "intimate familiarity with the setting or experience" (Charmaz, 2006, p.84) was facilitated in numerous ways, from attending a wide range of performances to joining the Early Years artist network Patter. Membership of Patter, along with the support received from this study's sponsors, Imaginate and Starcatchers, gave me many opportunities for informal member checking and testing of emergent theoretical concepts. The period I spent with Hippotrix gave me access to the entire creative team behind *White*, adding richer detail to my interviews with its creator, designer and composer (Andy Manley, Shona Reppe and Danny Krass, respectively), as well as offering the ideal opportunity to apply theoretical concepts in a Practice-as-Research setting. In addition, data collection was extensive, running from April 2012 to February 2014, with at least one interview conducted per month over that time. The final participant cohort numbered 26, in line with GTM recommendations (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2012; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Formal member checking (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.27) was conducted in the final stages of the investigation, when I sent a summary of findings to all participants

and invited feedback. Seven interviewees responded, and some of their comments are given below:

> "I love it. It rings true and it is beautiful."
> "[It] rightly reflects not only the ethos we have but how artists have responded over the last few years as the form has evolved."
> "Your findings that there's a potential lack of acknowledgment from peers and funders feels particularly pertinent in light of the recent regular funding decisions."[26]

The summary stressed that artists' individual contributions had been aggregated into a larger dataset, thus minimising personal specificity, but nonetheless, respondents agreed that the theory of equality and artistic integrity and main findings were accurate to their own experiences and wider perceptions of the genre, suggesting a healthy degree of credibility.

As can be seen from the examples in 4.4.1 to 4.4.3, microscopic coding was employed on all transcripts in the initial stages, producing a range of codes which eventually condensed into the core categories *treating children as equals* and *retaining artistic integrity*. The complete list of 181 final open codes is included in Appendix A.4. Coding for action (e.g. *being political* rather than *politics*) emphasised the processes which appeared within and across transcripts, as opposed to events or anecdotes.

Charmaz also notes that it is vital to assist other scholars to "form an independent assessment" (2006, p.182) by including evidence from participants within the description of analysis. Memos (see 3.7), details of sensitising concepts (4.5), extracts from briefing documents (6.3), and most importantly the considerable number of excerpts in Chapter 4 are all included to provide the reader with a route-map of my process from raw data to final theory. Appendix A.5 also lays out in tabular form the linkages between all 181 open codes, the six axial codes and both core categories.

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[26] This refers to the 2014 round of Regular Funding from Creative Scotland, where no funds were awarded to organisations specialising in Early Years work.

## 7.2.2 Resonance

Charmaz points out that the constructivist GTM means that "any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it" (2006, p.10), but rich data and thick description give a study resonance which reflects "the fullness of the studied experience" (2006, p.182). The aim of the GTM is therefore not to reproduce a supposedly objective reality, but to determine the parameters of a phenomenon and provide evidence of the richness of the data collected.

In this study, the testimonies of participants describe a variety of practices which reflect the diversity of theatre-making for babies and toddlers in Scotland. However, they also provide evidence of wider concerns which impact upon their ability to make work, in particular *emphasising the struggle* and the processes by which artists combat perceived prejudices and a lack of respect for their craft. The explanatory power of the grounded theory of equality and artistic integrity derives from the resonance that it holds in both domains: children being offered the highest-quality art regardless of age, and artists demanding the respect of their peers.

The study design, employing a blend of semi-structured interviews and the Expert Interview, probes into artists' "specific interpretative knowledge…and procedural knowledge" (Littig, 2009, p.108), situating them as experts in their field. This approach allowed participants to reflect on their careers in the theatre, identify explicit practices within their work and that of others, and consider novel issues, such as Scottishness as a defining factor, without requiring the interviewer to drive the interview. Aspects of the GTM such as memoing continued this process of 'enrichment' of the topic, drawing out nuances or tacit assumptions, and crystallising significance.

It should however be recognised that my own preconceptions (examined in the 8-minute memo in section 3.7) will have inevitably had an impact on the parameters of the study, limiting certain aspects of the lived experience of being a TEY artist. For example, as noted in section 4.2, gender and parenthood did not form an explicit area of enquiry within the interview protocol, meaning that there may be a gap in the data. This is reflected in (and perhaps influenced by) the wider literature, which neglects the role of parenthood in beginning or maintaining a career in TEY. I acknowledge that my own interest in the socio-cultural implications of TEY practice

(from social benefits to human rights) may have caused me to neglect intimate personal details, which another researcher would have found to be more salient.

Nonetheless, the prevalence of unexpected codes concerning status and peer recognition, which culminated in both the conversion narrative in figure 20 and the core category *retaining artistic integrity*, may suggest that the GTM is a method with enough power to uncover the central issues within a phenomenon despite researcher bias. The example of microscopic coding given in 4.4.1 highlights the emergence of unexpected detail, and 4.6.1 demonstrates how it was drawn out across the wider study.

### *7.2.3 Originality*

The originality of any contribution to knowledge is likely to be a key aspect of its quality, although it does not feature in the assessment criteria for qualitative studies proposed by many GTM commentators. Originality can be compared to Glaser's category of relevance (1992), as in both cases, "the theory provides new or alternative explanations for behaviour that go beyond that offered in the literature" (Randall and Mello, 2012, p.875). While scholars have identified systems of practice based on or inspired by developmental psychology (Fletcher-Watson *et al*., 2014), pedagogy (Frabetti *et al*., 2000), theatre literacy (van de Water, 2004) and deductive "assimilation of new input from outside sources" (Young, 2004, p.16), the theory of equality and artistic integrity suggests that there may be another factor driving the TEY phenomenon – an attitudinal or behavioural shift among theatre-makers that leads them to believe that child audiences merit the same quality of production as adult audiences. The conversion narrative (moving from complete ignorance to becoming politically engaged) may provide some of the "new insights… [and] new conceptual rendering" sought by Charmaz (2006, p.182) to promote better understanding of the tacit processes bound up in participants' experiences.

In their investigation into the pilot phase of the Starcatchers project, Susan Young and Nikki Powers propose four socio-cultural factors which combined in Scotland over the last decade to produce a suitable atmosphere for TEY to emerge: "ideas of the competence and agency of babies and very small children, new concepts of theatre arts, increasing concern over community cohesion and social disadvantage, and a new value placed on creativity and cultural activity" (2009, p.7). While this analysis is undoubtedly accurate, it does not probe deeply enough into the

beliefs of the artists themselves, and their reasons for making work as their practice develops over time. Evelyn Goldfinger has claimed that "theatre for babies may be an emergent response to artists' need to explore further than what is already known" (2011, p.298) but provides little evidence from artists for this assertion. By contrast, the collections of reflective writing by practitioners in Europe (Nerattini, 2009b; a; Schneider, 2009b; Belloli, 2009; Belloli, Morris and Phinney, 2013) provide valuable insights into artists' personal belief systems, but these are not systematically questioned or analysed. As John Carroll states, "drama was often thought too difficult for qualitative research and so analysis was mainly confined to the level of personal anecdote or narrative" (1996, p.72). The development of GTM allows researchers to move beyond anecdote, and to construct theories with explanatory power across a wide field of experience. This study proposes a theoretical framework for TEY in Scotland deriving from the lived experience of theatre-makers, but it may also have implications for the networks associated with artists, such as training providers and artist development organisations (see 7.3 for further discussion).

### 7.2.4 Usefulness

Finally, Charmaz selects usefulness as a criterion for evaluation, meaning "solutions to problems that people can use in their work lives" (Randall and Mello, 2012, p.875). This study commenced with the aim of discovering and exploring current practice within Theatre for Early Years as it is embodied in the production of theatrical performances by professional artists. The generation of a possible dramaturgy of TEY (described in 5.9) is intended to be an outcome of direct use to those working in the field. The dramaturgical framework which resulted from this study has the potential to provide newcomers with a tool for use in the development of their first TEY productions, since it proposes practical elements of performance, such as testing with pilot audiences, as well as signposting the key skills which may be required by performers and the creative team. The theme of struggling may have especial significance for this group as they consider developing their practice in TEY, highlighting the challenges and attitudinal shifts required to overcome them. For established theatre-makers, including participants in the study, it may have value as part of reflective practice – not a 'how-to' guide, but a provocation, perhaps. Additionally, the GTM synthesises tacit knowledge(s) from multiple sources into a unified theory, allowing practitioners to consider their place within a national network.

Usefulness can also be assessed with regard to those working in associated fields, such as digital arts or publishing for Early Years, and in terms of its value for other scholars. TEY has benefited from scrutiny by commentators around the world, often generating valuable descriptions of production practices, albeit based on external observation. As can be seen from Chapter 6, the research had impact on the development of a theatre-inspired iPad app. The implications for practice within app development for babies suggest that linkages between these fields can develop in both directions, informing each other in turn (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a).

The combination of qualitative analytic methods with validation through a Practice-as-Research project may provide a more robust and generalisable theoretical contribution. The PaR case study provided in Chapter 6 also points to an innovatory aspect of methodology which has impacted on the outcomes of this investigation, and which may be of use to scholars in the future. At the outset of the project, a minor objective was to create a means of combining expert testimony with powerful analytical tools in order to attain ontological validity. I predicted that this could be achieved as part of the GTM process by applying elements of the expert interview method, such as challenging participants' assumptions (see section 3.5.2). However, the evaluation stage which came after theory generation, proposed in section 3.5.5 and described in Chapter 6, may in fact have achieved this objective more effectively. By assessing the theory's transferability within another domain, its validity is strengthened. While the combination of PaR evaluation with the GTM requires further research to explore its implications, this innovation appears to have provided strong evidence for the usefulness of the newly generated theory.

While recognising that the tentative proposals for a *dramaturgy of care* remain unvalidated in terms of direct application within a TEY setting, it is important to note that they emerge from a large cohort of participants representative of almost the entire Scottish TEY movement, rather than from the practices of a single company. The next section seeks to build on this comprehensive body of data to produce recommendations for a variety of stakeholders.

## 7.3 Implications and recommendations

The theory emerging from this study may have implications in several areas, from theoretical proposals to impacts upon practice. Section 7.2.3 suggests that while there are theoretical foundations for TEY from psychology, pedagogy, postdramatic

theatre and other domains, the theory of equality proposes an additional factor, specifically an attitudinal shift away from an instrumentalist culture of outcomes and benefits towards a conception of babies as innately competent theatregoers worthy of respect on the same level as adults. Previous testimonies have hinted that such a belief system exists for some artists – for example, theatre director Barbara Kölling believes that "the shows which work best are indeed those… which deal with a world which is equally valid for two-year-olds as it is for the thirty-year-olds who accompany them" (Schneider, 2009b, p.157) – but this study contends that it is key to the identities of most, if not all, TEY practitioners. Furthermore, equality implies that human rights, especially Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, have become deeply bound up in the philosophy of the genre.

In terms of implications for practice, the dramaturgy outlined in the previous chapter may provide a provocative foundation for future performance experimentation, particularly in Scotland. This study aimed to make visible the implicit knowledge of artists, in order to provoke discussion and exploration, and it is to be hoped that an innovative dramaturgy grounded in data may begin to support novel practices, as well as providing a firm basis for existing modes of artistic production.

The theory of equality and artistic integrity also produces recommendations for artist training, artist development networks and policy-making / funding. Training programmes at conservatoires and drama schools have reduced their offering for Theatre in Education in recent decades, as the art-form has lost popularity. By contrast, a residency by Libellule Theatre at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in early 2012 led to the production of *Just One More*, a performance for 3- to 5-year-olds, suggesting perhaps that TEY may begin to replace TiE within applied and participatory theatre training. If so, there may be a need for an emphasis within teaching on the unique challenges and struggles of creating TEY, in order to present an honest picture of this potential vocation. The conversion narrative also implies that discussing TEY without observing a performance in action may not be sufficient to convince students of its value.

Artist development networks such as Imaginate and Patter already provide assistance for TEY artists, and almost all participants cited such networks as vital to their practice. They are therefore well-placed to offer additional support recognising the unique challenges for Early Years theatre-makers. This could take the form of cheerleading for the genre as it develops, assisting artists to move beyond the TEY

"bubble" and gain wider acceptance, and bolstering individual artists' self-confidence, for example by developing programmes which encourage them to share skills with emerging artists from other fields such as disability arts, where the concept of a duty of care to an audience which could be seen as vulnerable may have value.

It is possible to argue that funders, in particular Creative Scotland, could do more to recognise the particular demands of creating TEY, and the impacts these demands have on rehearsal time, for example. Participatory productions for the very young require unusually lengthy rehearsal periods, both to guarantee safety and to attain aesthetic quality, but funding models do not currently accommodate this way of working. Acknowledgement of the specialised skills required (from working with invited test audiences to employing multi-sensory stimuli) would not only legitimise them, but also promote them as promising practice for application in other areas.

Policy-makers in Scotland have demonstrated a commitment to Early Years populations, for example via the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. However, greater recognition of the legitimacy of TEY, the highly developed practice in Scotland and its potential role in supporting initiatives from maternal mental health to emotional resilience in pre-schoolers may provide mutual benefit for the state and the arts sector. As many participants declared, instrumentalist art projects are not rewarding for creators or audiences, but the intrinsic benefits of Early Years arts are a powerful argument for greater prominence in many areas of Scottish culture.

## 7.4 Limitations and potential biases

At the conclusion of a qualitative social science study, it is important to acknowledge investigative limitations in order to understand its context and parameters (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.153). Miles Bryant separates these restrictions into two areas: delimitations which affect generalisability, or "factors that prevent you from claiming your findings are true for all people and in all times and places" (2004, p.57), and limitations which affect reliability, or "restrictions created by your methodology" (2004, p.58).

The main delimitation is the socially constructed and culturally constrained nature of the grounded theory of equality and artistic integrity. As noted in 3.2.1, any new theory derived from an individual cultural group will not be universal, but will hopefully retain usefulness and wider applicability as it feeds into praxis. Thus the

theory can only be said to be accurate in its description of TEY in Scotland. Defining Scottishness may complicate this issue further: the study design specifically targeted professional practitioners currently working in Scotland, but this is only one definition of "Scottish artists", although its emphasis on residence rather than birth has parallels to the Scottish Government's definition of Scottish citizens as "British citizens habitually resident in Scotland" in the White Paper on independence (2013, p.271). However, numerous artists within the study were born, educated and / or trained in other countries, including England, Ireland, Australia and the USA, before embarking on careers in Scotland. Therefore, the theory can only claim to reflect the experiences of the participating artists. Expanding the sample to include respondents from other countries, or comparison with the findings of researchers in other cultures, will be key to theoretical development and validation.

The period in which the study was carried out produces a secondary delimitation. As noted in section 2.1.3, TEY emerged in Scotland several decades after its beginnings in England, France and Italy. Arguably, the Scottish form is less than a decade old, meaning that it has not achieved mainstream status – for example, no company specialising in TEY has yet received RFO (Regularly Funded Organisation) support from Creative Scotland. If the study were carried out in another five or ten years, many issues currently seen as defining (such as the struggle for legitimation) may have reduced in importance, although practice may not have changed noticeably.

Limitations, or methodological restrictions, include the Grounded Theory Method itself, as it focuses on people and processes, not observation of embodied knowledge in performance. Equally, a qualitative approach may lack the objectivity of quantitative methods, as discussed above. Therefore the dramaturgy deriving from the theory of equality does not stand within the tradition established by Lessing, where observation of production provides evidence for a definable framework; instead, the dramaturgy remains tentative and unvalidated.

Member checking represents another limitation. Follow-up interviews of a similar length to the initial discussion may have provided new data and new directions. I chose to focus on informal member checking due to the limited availability of the practitioners, many of whom would be touring for much of the year. Indeed, the lengthy gaps between transcribing interviews and securing final approval (up to six months in some cases) suggested that further visits would be

disadvantageous in terms of maintaining positive relationships with participants and completing the project within the planned timeframe. However, several practitioners have since described the enjoyment and intellectual stimulation which stemmed from our discussion.

The Expert Interview technique was intended to merge with the Grounded Theory Method to produce greater ontological validity, in an attempt to overcome the issue of limited applicability. Since experts can be "seen as 'crystallisation points' for practical insider knowledge" (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009, p.2), they represent the prime candidates for an investigation into practice (as opposed to parents, children or educators, for example). However, this also produces a limitation to the study: while it is to be hoped that the ensuing theory is applicable beyond Scotland, despite its culturally constrained basis, there is little or no reflection of the experiences of spectators. Practice is embodied, but it is practiced upon others, and arguably, this study could have done more to take the views of audiences into account. There are several reasons for this, not least the communicative, ethical and methodological difficulties inherent in any study of babies and toddlers, but there is perhaps an irony in the fact that the theory resulting from my investigation centres on the baby as recipient of respect and attention, yet neglects the baby's 'voice' as part of the research. Future studies may find that valuable insights can be gained from enfolding families and support workers into the participant group.

Lastly, potential researcher bias affects qualitative investigation in several ways. As noted in the sensitising concepts discussed in section 4.5, I entered the project with four pre-existing biases, which I strove to explicate in an attempt to limit their impact. Nonetheless, as is the case with all constructivist methodologies, a researcher who lacked my prior connection to the topic would have focused on different areas during the analysis. Additionally, it must be recognised that my positionality as a father and theatre-maker have affected my perceptions of the key topics – my children grew up over the course of my research, watching more than twenty productions with me and influencing my understanding of TEY in practice.

While acknowledging these delimitations and limitations, the Grounded Theory Method combined with the Expert Interview technique nonetheless contributed to the aims of the study, and provided possible answers to the four research questions. The study design provided an effective structure to examine and delineate the central issues relating to contemporary TEY practice in Scotland, with

rich data and 'thick' description leading to a theory with explanatory power. The proposed theory of equality and artistic integrity is rooted in the lived experience of 26 practitioners currently making work for the very young, and contributes to greater understanding of this complex genre by artists, scholars, educators, parents, producers, funders and the participants themselves.

## 7.5 Suggestions for further research

It will be important to build on the work introduced in this thesis to further understand the emerging phenomenon of Theatre for Early Years. Comparison with TEY in other countries may provide a more universal theory of TEY, but may instead highlight the innate diversity of a field heavily dependent on state support for childcare, culture and the arts, human rights and Early Years education. The extent to which governments support or restrict these factors is likely to have had a considerable impact on the forms into which TEY has developed around the world.

A first step towards wider applicability will be a formal report for practitioners, outlining the findings and opening up the proposed dramaturgy for debate. The theory produced in this study must be interwoven with practice to begin to develop a theory-driven praxis. As such, the approval of artists, especially the artists interviewed here, must be sought. In addition, future research into TEY could benefit from a greater focus on the role played by gender, parenthood and career status, acknowledging the complex social relationships between all participants.

There is some suggestion that the practices identified in this project may be considered to be 'promising practices' (also known as 'best practice') which could be of use in associated fields such as theatre for audiences with profound multiple learning difficulties or dementia, autism-friendly performances of mainstream productions, creative pedagogic practices in classrooms and nurseries, media for Early Years (including television, film and digital media) and theatre for older children. It will therefore be important to systematically investigate individual practices in a real-world context alongside artists, to ensure validity, practicality and replicability. This expanded form of 'member-checking' has not been carried out for prior studies which simply captured reflections from artists (Schneider, 2009b; Nerattini, 2009a; b). It may be most valuable in the first instance to convert the theoretical framework produced here into a questionnaire or focus group script, in order to capture responses from a large population with relative speed. Observation

of rehearsal room and performance practices could then act as a further validation exercise.

Another way of evaluating and extending the effectiveness of these concepts may be to present parents and children with a questionnaire on their experience as the spectators of TEY work. Arguably, practice is only effective if its recipients find it to be so. The theory of equality and artistic integrity itself also implicitly suggests that the voices of children should be heard in any research which affects them. Art for children has tended to suffer from a reliance on adult perceptions of childhood, meaning that artists create work based on their idea of what a child wants, rather than asking or collaborating with children to create art. This has been termed "conciliatory art" (Lewin, 1983, p.272) which does not view children as active, discriminating "beings" but incompetent "becomings." Likewise, when educational aims are prioritised, "children dream, but adults want to, indeed need to, teach them; children know what interests them, but adults want them educated" (Phillips, 1998, p.59).

However, producers of television programmes for the very young often reject this negative view of their audience, choosing instead to privilege their opinions and tastes over those of adults. Properties such as *In The Night Garden*, *Teletubbies* and *Sesame Street* are exhaustively and systematically tested during editing, with producers screening multiple versions to their target audience to ensure maximum engagement (Carter, 2007). Child participants are recorded as they watch, the resulting data providing guidance as to appropriate amendments or new directions. As Anne Wood, creator of *Teletubbies*, noted in her appearance on *Desert Island Discs*, "it's a question of observing what holds attention, and what makes them smile" (Young, 2011). As well as assistance with video analysis, research could also be carried out into the application within TEY of specific systematically evaluated tools for testing products for children lacking complex language abilities, such as Sticky Ladders (Airey, Plowman, Connolly and Luckin, 2002). Some design processes grant even greater agency to children, elevating their status beyond mere users or testers to use their skills as informants or even design partners (Druin, 2002). Methods such as cooperative enquiry offer new approaches to creating experiences "for children, with children" (Druin, 1999, p.592), while participatory design permits otherwise excluded users (such as the very young, or children with autism spectrum conditions) to work alongside adult artists in a sensitive process of co-design (Frauenberger,

Good and Keay-Bright, 2011). These methods have not so far been employed in performance research, and may offer fruitful avenues for improving practice.

The mental health of artists may also be worthy of further research. There is limited literature investigating this aspect of embodied practice beyond the cliché of the 'tortured artist', but the prevalence of codes which described mental stress, peer prejudice and the struggle of being a TEY artist suggests that it may be timely to carry out a study specifically examining this issue.

Finally, the continued investigation of practice in TEY is crucial to track new developments in the field. It has been noted that "theories constructed through the use of Grounded Theory methods aim to provide understanding of a phenomenon that will ultimately inform practice in a given discipline" (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.154). The grounded theory of equality and artistic integrity, and its associated dramaturgy, are intended to provide a springboard for debate and growth of TEY, and it is to be hoped that they will be of use to practitioners.

Theatre for the very young remains an experimental area of practice, remarkable due to its relative rarity. Yet as the field expands, diverse praxes still share the common bond of a belief in equality. In the future, perhaps some of TEY's more exciting, radical and promising practices – from gift giving to the abandonment of tradition – will begin to be acknowledged by other artists, scholars and critics, lending a new legitimacy to performance for the very youngest audiences.

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# Appendix A - Supplementary Information for Interviews

## A.1 Sample Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form and Questionnaire

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**INFORMATION SHEET**

Thank you for your interest in this study into current practice in making theatre for the under-3s. The main aim of the research is to investigate the working practices of artists currently making performance pieces in this field, such as yourself, to explore various aspects of the planning, development, rehearsal and performance of theatre and other performing arts experiences for the under-3s. I hope that the results will be of interest to current practitioners, and may be of use to companies considering the creation of work for the first time.

As you will know, theatre for the under-3s is a relatively recent phenomenon in the UK, with a longer tradition in mainland Europe, and so this study especially concerns the development of your personal career and practice as an artist: how you became aware of and interested in theatre for the very young, how you started making work, what stages you went through and lessons you learned, any training or workshops you attended or organised, how your practice has changed over time, and where you see your work going in the future. The focus is very much on you as an artist and an expert in this new and exciting field.

You will be interviewed once in person, for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, with the interview being recorded on a Dictaphone or digital voice recorder, at a place and time to suit you. The whole interview will then be transcribed, and then sent to you for correction, clarification or amendment, to ensure accuracy. The interviews are then coded (broken down into manageable chunks, and analysed using specific software to find common themes, ideas or connections) and compared with the other interviews carried out so far. There is a possibility, if you are willing, that the research team may request a follow-up interview at a later date to investigate new ideas, or examine the results so far. You should be aware that your comments may be attributed to you by name when published – this is not an anonymous study. You may of course ask the researcher not to record specific comments that you make, or to remove them from the transcript at any time.

The data derived from the interviews (including original audio files, transcripts and coded data) will be stored securely at all times, in a locked filing cabinet for physical files and on an encrypted and password-protected server for electronic files.

The results will be published in a PhD thesis in 2014, placed in the libraries at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the University of St Andrews and the British Library, and in other associated publications, such as academic journals. I hope in time to turn the results into a published form of direct use to theatremakers, such as a book. Your contribution will be acknowledged in the thesis, and other publications as appropriate. A copy (probably electronic) will be made available to you. The interview data will be kept in secure storage for up to 10 years, for research purposes only, and may form part of future publications stemming from this research.

The interview will not be paid, and you should be aware that there may be no direct benefit to you for participation, although the results will hopefully be of use and interest to yourself and other artists. The entire process of participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time, including after the interview, without needing to give a reason. During the interview, you do not have to answer any question if you do not wish to, and you do not have to give any explanation for this.

I will contact you shortly to see whether you are willing to be involved, but please do let me know if you do not wish to be contacted further.

Many thanks for your interest.

**Ben Fletcher-Watson**

07814 842624
b.fletcherwatson@rcs.ac.uk

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**PRACTITIONER CONSENT FORM**

Now that you have read the information sheet, and asked questions, it is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in the study. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

*If you are happy to take part in this study, please complete the consent form below by ticking the boxes:*

1. I have read and understood the information sheet. ☐

2. I have had all my questions about the study answered. ☐

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw from the study at any time. ☐

4. I am willing to take part in the project. ☐

5. I give permission for myself to be recorded with a voice-recorder during interviews. ☐

6. I understand that data from the interview will be recorded and I understand that all these data will be coded and stored confidentially and securely. ☐

7. I understand that any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of research, which may include written publications. ☐

8. I give permission for the data recorded during this study to be used by members of the research team in future projects, for a period of up to ten years after the project is completed. ☐

9. I understand that I am being interviewed as an arts practitioner, and my comments may be attributed to me by name in written publications. ☐

10. I consent to be approached about future research projects. ☐


.......................…………………..                          ..............................
(Signature of participant)                                  (Date)


……………………………………
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher.

**Contact details of researcher**:
Ben Fletcher-Watson          b.fletcherwatson@rcs.ac.uk
The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 100 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3DB
07184 842624

**If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss in confidence, please contact**:
Dr Anna Birch (supervisor)    a.birch@rcs.ac.uk
The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 100 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3DB
0141 270 8396

**Early Experiences**

- Tell me about how you first got involved in theatre for the very young. What was your first experience of theatre for the very young?

- How would you describe your perception of theatre for the very young at that time?

- How, if at all, has your perception of the audience, or your view of children, changed?

- What Early Years shows have you made?

**Reflections on Artistic Practice**

- What do you believe very young children are experiencing when they see your work?

- Do you think of young children as having needs or abilities that you accommodate?

- What differences or similarities do you perceive compared with theatre for older children or adults?

- What are your influences? Other artists, other companies, other art forms?

- As an artist, what are your goals and objectives in making work? *Entertainment, education, engagement*? With engagement, how do you know if you've got it?

- Does your work assume children are a natural audience, or are you showing them how to become an audience?

- How has your practice changed over time?

- Do you see your work having a wider purpose – educationally, artistically, socially, politically?

- How do you think arts for Early Years is perceived – by other Early Years artists, by artists in other fields, by the public?

- Do you think it's possible to talk about a Scottish way of making art for Early Years?

**Practical Considerations**

- What challenges do you tend to encounter when planning / developing / rehearsing / performing for very young audiences?

- How do you test aspects of your work before performance?

- Could you talk me through a typical day when creating a new piece of work?

- Welcoming the audience

- Beginning the performance

- Setting boundaries

- Gift-giving

- Ending the show and saying goodbye

- The role of parents

- Do you think there are taboos within theatre for Early Years? Are there things that artists don't address? Are there things they should address?

- Is there anything that you might not have thought about before that has occurred to you during this interview?

- Is there anything else you think I should know to understand your practice better?

## A.2 Sample Fully-Coded Transcript

> **Hazel Darwin-Edwards Interview 11.10.12**
>
> **1:09:19 + 04:12**
>
> **Recorded in Edinburgh**

Ben Fletcher-Watson: Today is 11th October and I am interviewing Hazel Darwin-Edwards. The first thing I'd like to talk about is your early experiences in theatre for Early Years or theatre for the very young. I'm interested in how you first got involved or what your first experience of it was?

Hazel Darwin-Edwards: I remember very distinctly telling Tony Reekie [Director of Imaginate] in an interview for a job that I did not want to do theatre for Early Years – I was interested in every other aspect of children's theatre, but I didn't know what I could give a baby as an artist.

So I remember that. I didn't get that job. It wasn't for Early Years theatre, but a little bit later, I became quite interested in puppets, and I did a show for

**Comment [1]:** Codes (502-667)
Being an artist, not an educator
Being unaware of the genre

**Comment [2]:** Codes (690-712)
Self deprecation

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Puppet Lab, and they asked me to do another show, but this other show was for babies.

The hook for me was that I would be the puppeteer in the box using lots of different puppets and I was quite interested in that. It was called *The Gift*, and it was for a week in the Egg in Bath.

I went down just to try it, because I thought, "What have I got to lose? It's a week. I'm really into the puppets and I like the people that I'm working with". So I went down, and the show was a huge big gift box, and you went inside and there were maybe seven or eight babies at a time that came in, and we did it in a crazy schedule – seven or eight times a day or something – it was really short. It was hectic.

So the children came in, and the moment I did that show, even though it was such a hectic experience, I loved it: just looking them in the eye and making them laugh and being in the moment with them, and the fact that every one of the shows was completely different, and the reactions were different, and the

**Comment [3]:** Codes (772-842)
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [4]:** Codes (847-880)
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [5]:** Codes (881-916)
Overcoming your own prejudices

**Comment [6]:** Codes (921-926)
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [7]:** Codes (1014-1045)
Overcoming your own prejudices

**Comment [8]:** Codes (1046-1112)
Being seen to succeed

**Comment [9]:** Codes (1114-1141)
Trying new experiences

**Comment [10]:** Codes (1161-1273)
"What have I got to lose?"

**Comment [11]:** Codes (1432-1478)
Mentally taxing

**Comment [12]:** Codes (1514-1529)
Mentally taxing

**Comment [13]:** Codes (1534-1555)
Welcoming the audience

**Comment [14]:** Codes (1560-1644)
The Damascene Moment
Getting hooked

**Comment [15]:** Codes (1645-1730)
Connecting
Being hyper-aware
Identifying engagement signals

**Comment [16]:** Codes (1749-1831)
Personalising the experience

236

way that the parents gave you so much love, because you saw adults at their best with their tiny children. I just loved it, and I thought, "Ah – that is really interesting".

Then the Starcatchers opportunity came up. I had also done a wee bit of front-of-house for *Peep* with Heather [Fulton], and seen a few other baby shows: the Danish one, *Stars in the Morning Sky*, when I went to Danish Plus – and that was beautiful, and I thought, "Yes! There's something really interesting here." So I'd completely changed!

**Comment [17]:** Codes (1836-1946)
Relying on adults
Helping parents

**Comment [18]:** Codes (1947-2015)
The Damascene Moment

**Comment [19]:** Codes (2059-2134)
Becoming interested in the genre

**Comment [20]:** Codes (2139-2262)
Learning from peers

**Comment [21]:** Codes (2267-2355)
Being passionate

BFW: When was *The Gift*?

HDE: Four or five years ago. I wasn't in the premiere; I was in the remount of it that went to Bath.

BFW: What were you expecting from the audience at the time when you started doing this work?

HDE: I suppose I'm just quite young, and none of my friends had babies, and I just hadn't spent any time around babies at that point. Now, quite quickly, there are loads of babies in my life! [laughs] I think I would have been a bit anxious as to how to entertain one, which I think is quite normal [laughs].

BFW: How do you think your perception has changed over the years?

HDE: I just feel much more comfortable and interested and excited by little people, and the fact that they do have attention span and personality and can give interesting responses the same as any child in a piece of theatre, and they have taste and they have interest in what you're doing, and that it's a two-way process, and all the things that I didn't realise you could get from somebody so young.

BFW: What Early Years shows have you worked on or made?

**Comment [22]:** Codes (2583-2711)
Being unaware of the genre

**Comment [23]:** Codes (2712-2779)
Enjoying working with children

**Comment [24]:** Codes (2779-2846)
Being anxious
Overcoming your own prejudices

**Comment [25]:** Codes (2864-2886)
Self deprecation

**Comment [26]:** Codes (2960-3021)
Being passionate
Enjoying working with children

**Comment [27]:** Codes (3024-3038)
Being not becoming

**Comment [28]:** Codes (3057-3101)
Being not becoming
Considering attention span
Respecting children's abilities

**Comment [29]:** Codes (3105-3180)
Giving and receiving gifts
Respecting children's abilities

**Comment [30]:** Codes (3185-3245)
Being not becoming
Respecting children's abilities

**Comment [31]:** Codes (3255-3357)
Giving and receiving gifts
Being not becoming

HDE: I made *Round in Circles* and *The Attic*. I made a show called *Shake 'n' Bake* with Sacha [Kyle]. And I worked on *Space Dust* and *The Elf Experiment* and *The Forest* project with Starcatchers, which was an installation with lots of different little performances.

BFW: That's six shows in a very short space of time.

HDE: Yes, but all through Starcatchers.

BFW: Moving onto your own practice, what do you believe very young children are experiencing when they see your work?

HDE: That's a hard question – what if you asked that about adults' experiencing a piece of art? – but hopefully some sort of connected, imaginative, satisfying journey [laughs]. Just enjoying. Hopefully having fun and expanding their playful imagination.

BFW: "Having fun" comes up a lot, this idea of fun and playing as part of the experience, rather than a separate experience with barriers between people.

HDE: That's why we access arts as adults, isn't it?

Being relaxed as well, especially for the unit of the adult and the child, experiencing something relaxing together, hopefully – that's what you aim for [laughs]. Not to try to stress everybody out.

BFW: Do you think of young children as having needs, or alternatively abilities, that you want to accommodate in your shows?

HDE: Yeah. Both. The physical aspect of how they're comfortable sitting is different to how an adult is comfortable sitting. They're usually not that comfortable sitting [laughs].

The safety element of not having sharp and dangerous and edible and sticky things in the space

**Comment [38]:** Codes (4311-4358)
Being not becoming

**Comment [39]:** Codes (4360-4476)
Being relaxed
Helping parents
Making everyone feel comfortable

**Comment [40]:** Codes (4477-4522)
Self deprecation

**Comment [41]:** Codes (4523-4559)
Helping parents

**Comment [42]:** Codes (4697-4703)
Accommodating children's needs
Being not becoming

**Comment [43]:** Codes (4703-4704)
Accommodating children's needs
Being not becoming
Making the space special

**Comment [44]:** Codes (4704-4865)
Making the space special

[laughs]. The amount of time that they can go without being hungry.

It's different, they're just different. That's under 'needs'.

And then the 'abilities': being non-self-conscious, uninhibited in participation, where they can involve themselves quite happily.

The connection to abstract – I think you can probably get away with a lot more than you can with adults, sometimes, for a general audience.

Some adults are really interested in the abstract – most babies are, I think.

BFW: Can you give an example of where you've employed something deliberately abstract?

HDE: I think *Round in Circles* is totally abstract.

**Comment [45]:** Codes (4866-4971)
Making the space safe

**Comment [46]:** Codes (4971-5029)
Accommodating children's needs
Considering attention span

**Comment [47]:** Codes (5029-5069)
Accepting difference and unpredictability

**Comment [48]:** Codes (5069-5092)
Reflecting critically

**Comment [49]:** Codes (5093-5118)
Reflecting critically

**Comment [50]:** Codes (5119-5144)
Being 'primed and ready'
Being hyper-aware

**Comment [51]:** Codes (5145-5174)
Lacking a shared semiotics

**Comment [52]:** Codes (5181-5223)
Having fun
Lacking a shared semiotics

**Comment [53]:** Codes (5224-5251)
Abandoning narrative

**Comment [54]:** Codes (5253-5261)
Trying new experiences
Experimenting
Learning from children

**Comment [55]:** Codes (5261-5328)
Trying new experiences
Experimenting
Learning from children
Critiquing adult theatre
Having creative freedom

**Comment [56]:** Codes (5328-5363)
Critiquing adult theatre
Having creative freedom

**Comment [57]:** Codes (5364-5432)
Subverting your training

**Comment [58]:** Codes (5537-5582)
Reflecting critically
Being proud

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It is thematic and connected and you can see lots of different narratives in it if you want to, but it's a lot of images that could be unconnected. I like it! [laughs]

BFW: What differences or similarities do you perceive between theatre for Early Years and theatre for older children, or theatre for adults? Are there any very obvious differences or similarities?

HDE: There are some distinguishing features of Early Years theatre.

Everything's got its own personality, but I guess there are some things to do with length of time, time that you put on your performance.

Small audience numbers tends to be a common theme, music tends to be really important.

Less language usually, but there are always things that can break any of those rules.

**Comment [59]:** Codes (5583-5731)
Being proud
Abandoning narrative

**Comment [60]:** Codes (5731-5751)
Being proud

**Comment [61]:** Codes (5955-6018)
Practice as homogeneous

**Comment [62]:** Codes (6018-6055)
Practice as heterogeneous

**Comment [63]:** Codes (6060-6156)
Practice as homogeneous
Considering attention span
Limiting capacity
Minimising language
Making venues understand the differences

**Comment [64]:** Codes (6156-6206)
Practice as homogeneous
Limiting capacity
Considering attention span
Limiting capacity
Minimising language
Making venues understand the differences

**Comment [65]:** Codes (6206-6207)
Practice as homogeneous
Considering attention span
Limiting capacity
Minimising language
Making venues understand the differences

**Comment [66]:** Codes (6207-6242)
Practice as homogeneous
Considering attention span
Limiting capacity
Minimising language
Making venues understand the differences
Using music as a key component

**Comment [67]:** Codes (6243-6265)
Practice as homogeneous
Minimising language
Considering attention span
Limiting capacity
Minimising language
Making venues understand the differences

**Comment [68]:** Codes (6270-6328)
"There are no rules!"

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You could do something huge for five hours [laughs] – you could! They'd find a way!

There shouldn't be any rules for it, I guess.

BFW: That's something that comes up in the literature: people provide lists of rules, and then end by saying "Of course, there are no rules!"

HDE: Hence art [laughs].

BFW: What are the influences on your work? Are there other artists or other companies or other art forms that you feel influence the creation of your work?

HDE: Yeah. The main influence is definitely this group of artists that are in Scotland making the same kind of work – Matt [Addicott], Katy [Wilson], Andy [Manley], Rosie [Gibson], Sacha [Kyle], Nik [Paget-Tomlinson], Jen [Edgar] – the people who are making work around Scotland that I have total connection with, which is brilliant, actually. You have

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**Comment [69]:** Codes (6329-6413)
Challenging yourself
Always learning
Testing

**Comment [70]:** Codes (6413-6459)
"There are no rules!"
Having creative freedom

**Comment [71]:** Codes (6797-6902)
Learning from peers
Building support networks
Being inspired by others' work

**Comment [72]:** Codes (7018-7130)
Building support networks
Being inspired by others' work
Circling the wagons

to go away to appreciate that. Then after that, I've been lucky enough to get to go to Italy and Denmark and see work that some companies there are making. I keep an eye on some English work – I really like David Harradine of Fevered Sleep, and some of the other Imaginate-friendly companies.

HDE: I was really interested in schemas at first, with the circles, and I have kept an eye on people like Suzanne Zeedyk, who I've heard speak, and people who are writing articles that are aimed at parents but of interest to artists.

I'm quite interested in the outdoor nurseries and being outside; there's a beautiful film of one of the outdoor nurseries where the children are left, and the adults are quite far away – but still there. The

**Comment [73]:** Codes (7130-7170)
Reflecting critically
Promoting Scotland
Needing distance

**Comment [74]:** Codes (7187-7295)
Acknowledging luck
Being inspired by others' work
Building support networks

**Comment [75]:** Codes (7295-7330)
Emphasising experience / skills
Creating hierarchies
Promoting Scotland

**Comment [76]:** Codes (7384-7430)
Creating hierarchies
Promoting Scotland

**Comment [77]:** Codes (7675-7742)
Rooted in research

**Comment [78]:** Codes (7742-7791)
Rooted in research
Building support networks

**Comment [79]:** Codes (7791-7792)
Rooted in research

**Comment [80]:** Codes (7792-7813)
Rooted in research
Seeking acceptance
Demonstrating knowledge

**Comment [81]:** Codes (7813-7904)
Rooted in research

**Comment [82]:** Codes (7906-7970)
Rooted in research
Being inspired by theory

writing about coming together and being apart is quite interesting.

BFW: I saw a film recently of Tam Dean Burn doing a reading in one of those forest programmes in Glasgow. I hadn't realised how prevalent they were – there's one in Edinburgh now.

HDE: On the Isle of Eigg, every Friday is spent outdoors. I quite like that. That's how these people are going to live their lives – why not bring the outdoors in?

BFW: As an artist, what are your goals and objectives in making work?

HDE: For Early Years, or for all audiences?

BFW: For Early Years.

HDE: I wrote a list once [laughs]. I think to be truthful and open and keep it simple and take risks and surprise myself and be kind. And by "truthful", I

**Comment [83]:** Codes (8110-8181)
Demonstrating knowledge

**Comment [84]:** Codes (8442-8529)
Rooted in communities

**Comment [85]:** Codes (8674-8704)
Self deprecation
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [86]:** Codes (8718-8727)
Being truthful

**Comment [87]:** Codes (8731-8736)
Being open

**Comment [88]:** Codes (8740-8755)
Keeping it simple

**Comment [89]:** Codes (8759-8770)
Taking risks

**Comment [90]:** Codes (8774-8790)
Surprising yourself

**Comment [91]:** Codes (8794-8802)
Being kind

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think I mean 'in-the-moment', 'present'. That's good for starters!

BFW: When you say "take risks", does that mean taking risks as an artist, or is there a sense of challenging the perceived mollycoddling of children?

HDE: I meant it as an artist. Doing something that feels new and tingly and 'I probably shouldn't do that, but it would be interesting!' [laughs] because sometimes that really pays off.

But I also think that risk-taking in a public way is quite important, because there is such a stifling of what people feel they are allowed to do with children – are children allowed to pick up lots of pinecones? Well, yeah [laughs]! Not being anarchic about it [laughs], just being understanding about it and open about it in a place that other people might not be able to be.

BFW: And "kindness" – I've heard a couple of other artists talk about it being almost your role to protect

**Comment [92]:** Codes (8807-8864)
Living in the moment

**Comment [93]:** Codes (8865-8891)
Self deprecation

**Comment [94]:** Codes (9073-9115)
Discovering the new

**Comment [95]:** Codes (9119-9180)
Challenging yourself

**Comment [96]:** Codes (9197-9228)
Being an artist, not an educator
Being open

**Comment [97]:** Codes (9253-9300)
Resisting convention

**Comment [98]:** Codes (9309-9391)
Resisting convention
Experimenting
Offering new viewpoints

**Comment [99]:** Codes (9465-9502)
Being nice

**Comment [100]:** Codes (9508-9608)
Resisting convention
Acknowledging luck
Having creative freedom

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HDE: I'm a big fan of the idea that everybody is welcome, that it caters for anyone, no matter what their previous experiences are or their hang-ups or why they find it difficult to engage – that it will find a way to accommodate somebody who is not instantly willing to access it. I'm quite interested in the children who don't leap forward. Kindness to the other artists that you work with, and to the world. It should be made with love and not with malice. The idea that you need to look after that community and you should be accessible and be caring to people – that's really important, always. Because the child can detect that instantly from your heart when you go on.

BFW: You choose to perform in your own work most of the time. I interviewed Heather Fulton recently, who doesn't appear in her work – she devises and directs it.

**Comment [101]:** Codes (9792-9844)
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Being open

**Comment [102]:** Codes (9850-9918)
Dealing with a first-time audience
Trying new experiences

**Comment [103]:** Codes (9927-10069)
Accommodating children's needs

**Comment [104]:** Codes (10069-10130)
Accommodating children's needs
Accepting difference and unpredictability

**Comment [105]:** Codes (10130-10179)
Building support networks

**Comment [106]:** Codes (10184-10197)
Being nice

**Comment [107]:** Codes (10198-10246)
Being nice
Enjoying working with children

**Comment [108]:** Codes (10247-10299)
Rooted in communities
Having a duty of care

**Comment [109]:** Codes (10303-10328)
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Being open
Welcoming the audience

**Comment [110]:** Codes (10332-10386)
Being kind
Having a duty of care

**Comment [111]:** Codes (10395-10462)
Welcoming the audience
Being open
Being truthful
Connecting
Being nice
Emphasising experience / skills

HDE: She will, one day! [laughs]

BFW: Is that important to you, to appear onstage yourself?

HDE: I suppose my main concern with my residency was the idea, taken from a lot of the previous research studies that I had read from Heather's residency, about how important the performer is. I wanted to know what would happen if I developed myself as a performer to really take that on as a skill, in the way that Andy [Manley] did, rather than constantly change the performers. It takes quite a lot to become comfortable with that audience, and then to see where that can go. I still feel like I'm learning that, but getting somewhere with it.

It felt important that I would perform in them, and I relish all the opportunities that I've had to be the performer in the show, because I'm still getting somewhere with it. That's really interesting to me.

If that is one of the most essential elements of the performance, then it's nice that just a few people have had the chance to go from show to show with that.

BFW: In the shows that are now being 'franchised', like *White*, performers are coming in who weren't involved in the devising, but who also haven't built up experience working in a space with young children. It will be interesting to explore those actors' perception of what they're doing and how they learn to manage audiences and all those other skills that you've picked up over time.

HDE: That would be interesting. *White* is not very participatory, whereas the shows I've made become as much about the reaction by the audience as the performer's bit. That's half the show.

I suppose those are the skills that you really develop once you've had a long time to be with children. It allows you to create something that's got that skill in

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it. It would be hard to hand one of my shows over now. Interesting, but hard. It's OK – I'm not that successful [laughs]! I don't have to.

BFW: It's interesting that you don't talk about your practice or your work in terms of education, which has obviously been seen as the foundation of children's theatre for years, with TiE. Even companies like Oily Cart often talk about the educational benefits of their work. To me, there's a spectrum that runs from pure entertainment at one end – something that exists only to entertain – through engagement, where it can perhaps be partly entertaining or partly educational, all the way to pure, didactic educational work, where it passes on a message and the aesthetic element is not perhaps that important. On that spectrum, where would you place your work?

HDE: In between the entertainment and engagement bit, and away from the education end. It's not that I don't think that's valid or interesting; it's just that if I were to be a writer writing a book, I'm

**Comment [126]:** Codes (12325-12388)
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [127]:** Codes (12388-12462)
Being proud
Emphasising experience / skills
Knowing better than peers

**Comment [128]:** Codes (12462-12506)
Self deprecation

**Comment [129]:** Codes (12506-12523)
Struggling towards success

**Comment [130]:** Codes (13275-13331)
Being nice
Peer critique

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not somebody writing the Counting 123 book. I'm somebody writing the imagination book, and I've always been that person. That's where it sits just now.

**Comment [131]:** Codes (13347-13478)
Being an artist, not an educator

**Comment [132]:** Codes (13483-13512)
Maintaining your integrity

BFW: So how do you react to the modern funding rubric of social benefits or educational benefits and outcomes, which are wrapped in with almost any work for children? You're expected to be able to talk about work as a product, with outcomes. Does that work for you?

HDE: I think it's really interesting that work does manage to match that – and I think good on the people who are making it – but I also think there's real value in work that doesn't tick those boxes, and sticks to that, and has other outcomes that are artistic. I think that shouldn't be lost.

**Comment [133]:** Codes (13817-13885)
Reflecting critically
Peer critique

**Comment [134]:** Codes (13887-13937)
Being nice

**Comment [135]:** Codes (13955-14074)
Intrinsic benefits
Maintaining your integrity
Being an artist, not an educator

Matt and I, as part of our role with Patter, were involved in writing a letter responding to the discussion on the children and young people's bill in the Scottish Parliament and I think we have to put it

**Comment [136]:** Codes (14109-14121)
Being political

**Comment [137]:** Codes (14121-14153)
Being political
Demonstrating knowledge

**Comment [138]:** Codes (14153-14284)
Being political

as part of policy, to protect the artistic experiences of children from being compromised by being shoved into the same box as an educational experience, because it does compromise what you're trying to achieve.

You have to have a separate space for it; a dual aim, in creating a play that is educational AND artistic, rarely works. If a play happens to have that outcome by accident or by a well-meaning process that just results in that, then bonus [laughs]. But if you aim for that, it compromises you, because you've already got your outcomes so set that you can't fully follow a process.

BFW: In terms of engagement, how do you know when you've got it?

HDE: You can just feel it [laughs]. Because you're looking at them, and you just know. You try and collect the evidence: the photographs and the feedback and you listen to what the parents are telling you. Most of the time they're right.

**Comment [139]:** Codes (14296-14332)
Promoting Scotland
Believing in the cause

**Comment [140]:** Codes (14333-14525)
Evangelising
Being an artist, not an educator
Intrinsic benefits

**Comment [141]:** Codes (14528-14569)
Being an artist, not an educator

**Comment [142]:** Codes (14570-14648)
Being an artist, not an educator
Peer critique
Knowing better than peers

**Comment [143]:** Codes (14649-14777)
Knowing better than peers
Peer critique
Maintaining your integrity

**Comment [144]:** Codes (14777-14909)
Being an artist, not an educator
Being truthful
Subverting your training

**Comment [145]:** Codes (14981-15011)
Demonstrating knowledge
Emphasising experience / skills

**Comment [146]:** Codes (15012-15063)
Demonstrating knowledge
Connecting
Living in the moment

**Comment [147]:** Codes (15063-15130)
Rooted in research
Gathering evidence

**Comment [148]:** Codes (15134-15181)
Relying on adults

Sometimes they're not. But you just know. You can hear it and you can see it. Sorry – that's all [laughs].

BFW: One side of things, as you've seen from the Starcatchers report, is to use microanalysis of video recording for specific signals that have been predetermined, of eye-contact. And then there are artists who say exactly what you've said – a physical sensation or response to engagement.

HDE: That's why I like being on stage, because I have that eye-contact with them, as opposed to watching the back of their heads.

BFW: Does your work assume that children, from the youngest ages, are just a natural audience, or do you view it that you are perhaps showing or training them to be an audience?

HDE: I think they're a natural audience [laughs]. But I suppose there is an element of everything we do with them, whether it's eating a meal or going to a ceilidh, is somehow introducing an environment that

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we like. But I don't expect them to act in the same way as an adult. I'm not concerned with getting them to do that. I'm quite interested in adult work that doesn't require adults to behave like an adult audience [laughs] like *Dance Marathon* [Bluemouth Inc, 2011] and shows that allow the audience to participate heavily are interesting to me, so why would I want to teach them [children] to sit down and shut up [laughs]?

BFW: How do you think your practice has changed as you've made more work?

HDE: I think there's two parts to that. One part is how I've changed as an actor overall, and the other is how I've changed as a practitioner who wants to make work for Early Years audiences.

As an actor, I feel like I've really discovered part of me that wants to be in the moment of performance, and be well-prepared but able to respond well. That's really interesting when you apply it to other projects. I just feel happier knowing that feeling of

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being onstage and not knowing what's going to happen next, which I think is really good [laughs] if I say so myself.

As a practitioner trying to develop work, one thing is always leading to another, so it's just a little footstep journey of following on from the last step. But a lot of my values and taste are quite similar to when I began, but I guess the thing that's emerged that surprised me was the idea of it being very participative. And also the idea of environment being quite important – I liked the installation work [*The Forest*] and I'm quite interested to see how I can follow that up. The idea of place becoming owned by the people who are there outwith the performance time, and then the performance happening.

BFW: That certainly does seem like a hallmark of your work by comparison with the other artists' work that I've seen – a lot of it could take place almost anywhere, touring all over the place, and yours is quite rooted, particularly something like *The Forest*.

**Comment [163]:** Codes (17042-17144)
Being 'primed and ready'

**Comment [164]:** Codes (17205-17246)
Coping with circumstances beyond your control
Struggling towards success

**Comment [165]:** Codes (17247-17361)
Struggling towards success
Acknowledging luck
Shifting identity

**Comment [166]:** Codes (17366-17530)
Practice as heterogeneous
Shifting identity
Surprising yourself

**Comment [167]:** Codes (17539-17688)
Creating environments

**Comment [168]:** Codes (17688-17815)
Making the space special

There's a real sense of something that grew over time and became owned by the building, by the communities that visited it, by you as an artist – a real sense of shared space., which is unusual in theatre.

HDE: Yeah, I'm really interested in seeing where that could go. They're making a permanent space inspired by it [at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh]. I'm not involved. [laughs]

BFW: You were the seed!

HDE: I know! [laughs] It belongs to them [children]; there's a handover – that's something that's emerged that I didn't expect to emerge.

BFW: Do you see your work as having a wider purpose – socially, educationally, artistically or politically? A lot of people have responded quite interestingly to the question "is your work political?" – do you think it serve a wider purpose than simply being theatre?

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HDE: Yes, I'd like to think so [laughs]. I hope all artists would feel that [laughs]. It motivates me to think that my work could help us in our society connect with the importance of art. I think that that's something to do with bringing young families in a time of their lives when they're maybe going to change their behaviour, they're going to think about how they live in terms of their diet and their lifestyle and their values, and they're going to centre that as an important experience. It will then become part of that family's shared experience. So I see that as being quite achievable [laughs] and also something about community and connection and relationships and the value of something. I think it is quite important. Small in terms of the impact, but not to be undervalued.

BFW: Developing that point, do you agree with Article 31, that babies and very young children have a human right to access arts and culture?

**Comment [171]:** Codes (18944-18979)
Circling the wagons
Knowing better than peers

**Comment [172]:** Codes (18989-19092)
Believing in the cause

**Comment [173]:** Codes (19092-19460)
Enjoying together
Trying new experiences

**Comment [174]:** Codes (19463-19500)
Believing in the cause
Rooted in communities

**Comment [175]:** Codes (19534-19605)
Rooted in communities

**Comment [176]:** Codes (19636-19693)
Believing in the cause
Being political

HDE: Yes. I do. Of course. Little people, like everyone, have a right and it should be much easier than it is for a lot of families.

BFW: What are your thoughts about the commercial sector and how it latches onto Early Years performance? Shows derived from television are increasingly common in large venues – *Sesame Street Live, In The Night Garden… Live* and so on. Given that in one tour of those shows, more children will have that artistic experience than will see every show by Starcatchers, Catherine Wheels and the other Scottish subsidised companies combined, what are your thoughts on commercial theatre versus subsidised theatre?

HDE: [laughs] It's very difficult, because I can understand how somebody could find that a really valuable and entertaining day out for their family, and who am I to say that that's not valid or valuable? Of course they must have that, and if they're supporting it financially, then good on them, but I would really hope it would not be to the

detriment or the quashing of small independent companies trying to create something that's really alternative. There are many different types of parent that want access to different types of experiences, and the commercial world won't fulfil everybody.

So it has to have this other aspect, and I would love to see a world where people knew that they had another option other than just going to the commercial theatre, and I think that people would often opt for another option but simply don't know it's there a lot of the time. The fact that they're going to see a lot of that theatre just represents that there's a need for it and there is a question mark over whether they're getting the best experience that they could possibly hope for, I think. But it's not all a terrible, evil thing, because some people are having a good day out. It's really interesting: have you read the audience responses on the *In The Night Garden… Live* website?

BFW: I have.

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**Comment [182]:** Codes (20779-20932)
Emphasising experience / skills
Maintaining your integrity

**Comment [183]:** Codes (20933-21075)
Embracing difference

**Comment [184]:** Codes (21116-21239)
Being political

**Comment [185]:** Codes (21244-21351)
Building audiences
Struggling towards success
Coping with others' expectations
Relying on word-of-mouth

**Comment [186]:** Codes (21351-21451)
Fulfilling a need

**Comment [187]:** Codes (21455-21563)
Circling the wagons
Peer critique

**Comment [188]:** Codes (21577-21660)
Self deprecation
Overcoming prejudices
Peer critique

HDE: [laughs] There was a huge mixture when I looked.

BFW: With the positive comments, I was struck that you could remove the words "In The Night Garden" and replace them with the title of any of the subsidised work that's around – they seemed to reflect responses to theatre for that age group generally.

HDE: But I guarantee you that on our forms we don't have as many negative comments, actually. So they are taking, in some ways, bigger risks with the extremes of the reactions that they are getting.

BFW: How do you think art for Early Years is perceived generally – by other Early Years artists, by artists in other fields, by the public?

HDE: There's a huge amount of support for arts for Early Years among artists who have done it, who connect with it, who have children [laughs] or have somehow connected with it.

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There's an uncoolness, I think, to it – which I only realised when all the [Royal] Conservatoire students came to a Patter [Scottish network of Early Years artists] meeting and told me [laughs]. It wasn't as respected as they would like it to be. I didn't really mind too much [laughs] – I think that one of the lovely things about it, is that it's a little more ego-free than some of the other areas of making theatre and art.

I think especially by people outwith Scotland, in England a lot of theatre-makers that I've met haven't fully understood it. They have a different perception to what it really is, which is fine, because it's so small. People don't know.

BFW: There is an element of the zeal of the convert – as soon as people have experienced it, they tend to evangelise about it. They don't take it or leave it any more – they're much more excited.

**Comment [193]:** Codes (22609-22647)
Struggling towards success
Being 'uncool'

**Comment [194]:** Codes (22655-22856)
Being 'uncool'
Struggling towards success
Knowing better than peers

**Comment [195]:** Codes (22856-23038)
Self deprecation
Being 'uncool'
Being nice
Building support networks
Circling the wagons

**Comment [196]:** Codes (23039-23164)
Promoting Scotland
Knowing better than peers
Believing in the cause
Struggling towards success
Overcoming prejudices

**Comment [197]:** Codes (23164-23276)
Overcoming prejudices
Self deprecation
Being nice

HDE: Exactly. That's a good way of describing it – 'zeal of the convert'.

BFW: Taking on that Scottish-English idea, do you think it's possible to talk about a Scottish way of making art for Early Years, in the way that you could say there's an Italian way or a Danish way of doing it?

HDE: There must be. Yes. [laughs]

BFW: And what would that mean?

HDE: [laughs] I'm sure we have our tastes. It's difficult to bounce that off, but there's something fun but gentle about what we do, comparatively. Perhaps slightly more reserved, but only marginally. I can just imagine that it's like the breathing is a bit slower, but each person has their own individual style in Scotland, and there are so few of us that it's hard to encapsulate what that is yet. But there will be; it will happen.

In everything – in baby toys, in the music that babies listen to, the clothes that babies wear – you do see a slightly different style in different European countries, so it's something about the aesthetic of what we find 'cute' that is in common, as opposed to what other people find cute, even in the colours that we use for our babies – here, it's slightly different from in Italy, where there were a lot more bold colours, louder performances, everything was a bit more up-front.

We are a little bit less 'lullaby' than in the tiny Early Early Years performances that I've seen from other places. So less 'lullaby', but a bit cooler than 'lullaby', like a cool lullaby [laughs] – cute but not Sesame Street. [laughs]

BFW: Thinking now more practically, what challenges do you tend to encounter when you are rehearsing and developing and in the early stages of performance?

**Comment [207]:** Codes (24267-24434)
Practice as heterogeneous

**Comment [208]:** Codes (24438-24557)
Needing distance
Practice as heterogeneous
Reflecting critically

**Comment [209]:** Codes (24607-24751)
Promoting Scotland
Embracing difference
Accepting difference and unpredictability

**Comment [210]:** Codes (24753-24870)
Taking risks
Being seen to succeed
Overcoming prejudices

**Comment [211]:** Codes (24873-24951)
Being 'uncool'
Self deprecation
Being proud
Peer critique
Offering new viewpoints
Encouraging a sense of wonder

**Comment [212]:** Codes (24953-24990)
Maintaining your integrity
Overcoming prejudices
Self deprecation

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HDE: Hundreds of challenges – where shall we start [laughs]? The main challenge to getting work on in the first place is just that I don't have a job, so it's a constant process of applying for funding and that for somebody who's self-employed, it's very difficult.

Then finding space and time, and working round other people's schedules, finding the right people who are interested in doing it as well as having the correct skills as well as having the time. If you find the people with the right skills and the willingness to do it, perhaps they don't have the experience to be around children.

Then there's a problem with getting people to come to the show, because you haven't got a regular audience base because you don't produce enough work to satisfy people having that on their radar – they're not looking for you; you have to look for them.

Then supporting that in terms of the resources that you have the money for is very difficult. Then the

**Comment [213]:** Codes (25153-25209)
Struggling towards success

**Comment [214]:** Codes (25209-25415)
Funding

**Comment [215]:** Codes (25416-25488)
Having enough time

**Comment [216]:** Codes (25489-25748)
Emphasising experience / skills
Enjoying working with children
Being anxious
Coping with circumstances beyond your control

**Comment [217]:** Codes (25754-26003)
Relying on word-of-mouth

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marketing is difficult – everything is difficult [laughs]. Everything is more challenging.

HDE: Definitely, because you're asking people to do everything a little bit differently to make it work better for you, otherwise it just falls flat. Each detail might seem small, but is really significant – for example, opening a box office before 10am when you have a 10am show is not something that they have ever been asked to do, and that is a huge big effort. But the whole thing falls flat if you don't get that, because then your show's late and everyone runs on… For example, identifying all the safety issues when you're on someone's stage: maybe all they've got is a curtain, and a kid might fall off, so having to make that safe takes a bit of extra effort and willingness from people. You have to convince them that it's worth bothering about. Finding the correct sound acoustics in a room: it is not for adults, it's not about blaring it out; it's about being

**Comment [218]:** Codes (26009-26130)
Struggling towards success

**Comment [219]:** Codes (26132-26198)
Struggling towards success
Confronting challenges
Mentally taxing

**Comment [220]:** Codes (26308-26432)
Making venues understand the differences
Building skilled teams

**Comment [221]:** Codes (26433-26755)
Making venues understand the differences

**Comment [222]:** Codes (26755-27040)
Making the space safe
Making venues understand the differences

gentle, but still being clear. Everything, every detail is different. Almost every detail has to be rethought. The pricing of the tickets – you get that wrong and the whole project falls down. That takes quite a lot of consideration – per venue and per audience, it has to be different each time. It's way more challenging than putting on something where we already have a routine and a good knowledge base.

BFW: "This is this year's Shakespeare – let's send it out on the road."

HDE: Yes, "and we've got the experience of the last seven years of Shakespeare that we've done – the same schools that always come will come again, and so we can make predictions based on that", whereas this is totally new territory. Box office staff have got contracts designed to accommodate a 7:30pm show; technical staff have got equipment designed to light and manage certain shows; a 250-seat auditorium is designed for the capacity for a particular type of show. We're trying to make a different type of show here. We need cushions –

**Comment [223]:** Codes (27040-27188)
Making venues understand the differences
Coping with circumstances beyond your control
Accommodating children's needs
Being not becoming

**Comment [224]:** Codes (27188-27268)
Coping with circumstances beyond your control
Making venues understand the differences
Mentally taxing
Subverting your training
Struggling towards success

**Comment [225]:** Codes (27268-27350)
Building audiences
Coping with circumstances beyond your control

**Comment [226]:** Codes (27350-27454)
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Struggling towards success

**Comment [227]:** Codes (27454-27565)
Struggling towards success
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Being a pioneer

**Comment [228]:** Codes (27842-27872)
Struggling towards success
Being seen to succeed
Seeking acceptance
Being a pioneer

**Comment [229]:** Codes (27873-28161)
Making venues understand the differences
Being a pioneer

where are we going to get cushions from? [laughs]
What happens when someone's sick on the
cushions? Can we wash them? Everything is a new
challenge. But that's exciting [laughs].

BFW: How do you test aspects of your work before
or during performance?

HDE: I invite people to come and see it for free,
audiences from nurseries, usually.

BFW: Has that been since the beginning of your
practice? Did you think, "I want to see what works"?

HDE: Yes, and sometimes I go to them, because it's
easier. Everything is always tested. Or presented as
a test. It has to be, because you don't know what
they're going to do.

BFW: As your experience has developed, do you
think there are mistakes you'll never make again?
Have you decided "I'll never do that again" or is the

**Comment [230]:** Codes (28161-28298)
Emphasising experience / skills
Peer critique

**Comment [231]:** Codes (28298-28359)
Being a pioneer
Confronting challenges
Enjoying working with children
Taking risks
Challenging yourself

**Comment [232]:** Codes (28438-28518)
Testing

**Comment [233]:** Codes (28625-28679)
Getting meaningful feedback

**Comment [234]:** Codes (28679-28732)
Testing

**Comment [235]:** Codes (28732-28795)
Testing
Accepting difference and unpredictability

process so complex that each element gets tested again and again?

HDE: No, there are definitely things you learn, like any other skill. You only start a performance lying down on the floor once! Everyone's done that. It's not a good idea – they will climb on top of you [laughs].

And you only leave out props that are tempting to be picked up on the stage – you only do that once, twice if you're daft [laughs].

You can start to predict how audiences will behave, but I still think it's good practice, even for yourself, always to have somebody come in and watch. That's a really nice way of asking someone to take a risk on coming to a new performance and then feeling involved in the development of a piece as well. It's a really nice experience for the staff to have, as well as the children. They come to something for free, which they might not otherwise come to. So if I can, I'll do that.

**Comment [236]:** Codes (29018-29083)
Emphasising experience / skills
Learning from mistakes
Testing

**Comment [237]:** Codes (29083-29142)
Learning from mistakes

**Comment [238]:** Codes (29142-29164)
Building support networks

**Comment [239]:** Codes (29164-29227)
Self deprecation
Learning from mistakes

**Comment [240]:** Codes (29229-29362)
Self deprecation
Knowing better than peers
Emphasising experience / skills
Making the space safe
Learning from mistakes

**Comment [241]:** Codes (29363-29414)
Emphasising experience / skills
Demonstrating knowledge

**Comment [242]:** Codes (29419-29515)
Learning from peers
Testing
Learning from children

**Comment [243]:** Codes (29515-29669)
Taking risks
Putting yourself in a child's shoes
Being not becoming

**Comment [244]:** Codes (29669-29847)
Rooted in communities
Being nice
Being not becoming

HDE: Considering what I just said [laughs], never be totally sure of your prediction – always expect any outcome. Never go onstage feeling cross or angry or sad if you can help it. It all goes wrong. Just don't panic [laughs]. That's always good, just in life [laughs]. I guess there are things to do with having no loud, sudden sounds.

And to do with entrances and exits for them – how they come into the space is really important, and how they leave the space is really important – and whether there's a door that's open or closed being really important, so they know what the boundaries are.

Communication with the audience is something that I'm still working on: how to let everyone know what you're asking of them and when. Those are some good ones.

**Comment [245]:** Codes (29943-30052)
"There are no rules!"
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Always learning

**Comment [246]:** Codes (30052-30138)
Being 'primed and ready'
Being relaxed
Having a duty of care

**Comment [247]:** Codes (30138-30208)
Being well-prepared
Living in the moment

**Comment [248]:** Codes (30216-30276)
Making the space safe

**Comment [249]:** Codes (30292-30536)
Making the space special
Creating environments
Making the space safe
Implicit boundaries

**Comment [250]:** Codes (30537-30671)
Always learning
Laying down boundaries

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BFW: I'd like to look at some of those specifically: welcoming the audience is always an interesting one, and there are lots of anecdotes in the literature from Europe about how different companies welcome children into the building, let alone into the space itself. What are your thoughts, in terms of the way you like to do things, about how you welcome your audiences?

HDE: It does depend on what you want from them, and what age they are, because with tiny babies, it's about the parents or carers feeling comfortable. The babies are quite happy, if they're really small.

If they're three and four, you need to be the one that tells the children what to do so that the carer doesn't feel uncomfortable – the adult is the one who's unsure, but it's more comfortable to tell the children rather than telling them.

And it depends what you want to do – if you want them to sit or not sit. So you have to have a good

Comment [251]: Codes (31076-31141)
Demonstrating knowledge

Comment [252]: Codes (31150-31275)
Dealing with a first-time audience
Being anxious
Helping parents

Comment [253]: Codes (31277-31517)
Helping parents
Explicit boundaries
Welcoming the audience

Comment [254]: Codes (31523-31592)
Demonstrating knowledge
Welcoming the audience

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think about that each time you do a different project and work it out. I started trying to be very fancy [laughs] and making 'unconscious paths' – you know how in shopping centres, they lay out the paving slabs to make you walk into specific shops? I wanted to be like that! I wanted people to just know. That was too hard, I have to say [laughs]! Either you have to tell them or someone else has to tell them. Often when you're touring and it's a new venue and a new audience and new ushers, you can't really rely on somebody else. You need to have worked out your plan beforehand, so sometimes I just invite people to come in and I explain, and that seems to be the easiest way.

BFW: And do you like to greet them outside, or within the space? I'm thinking of *Round in Circles*, where you greeted people inside as they entered and took their seats.

HDE: Not in the original version. But in the Macrobert [2011], it was too difficult to greet people because of the noise, but originally, I would have

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been outside in the foyer. We did a section there, which we had to cut. In *The Attic*, I would be outside and meet people in character, so that they would get used to having me around and have a chance to chat to me. If there was someone I knew, I could greet them [laughs] and it would be a way in, so when we went in, everyone would be ready for it to start.

BFW: Oily Cart's new book uses a nice phrase – their shows have 'airlocks', which are spaces that aren't quite in the show, but are getting audiences ready for the experience, taking off coats and putting on items that the company give them and so on, and once the atmosphere is right, they move you into the space.

HDE: I like that.

BFW: I saw their latest production [*In A Pickle*] where the airlock didn't really work – the space wasn't right, it was too small, too noisy, and all of

Comment [262]: Codes (32509-32694)
Being constrained by venues' rules

Comment [263]: Codes (32694-32838)
Welcoming the audience

Comment [264]: Codes (32838-32982)
Being well-prepared
Welcoming the audience

Comment [265]: Codes (33305-33318)
Being inspired by others' work

those issues you have with touring. But it is an interesting concept.

HDE: That's a really nice way of saying it. Yeah, an airlock – that's what I have [laughs]. Preferably. Unless you're in a nursery, of course, in which case you have to go in and mark out your space and they will come to you.

BFW: I've read Charlotte Fallon saying that: you build the set in front of them so they can see the whole process, rather than have them coming to a space that has always been theirs, and suddenly there's a rocket-ship in the corner.

HDE: Yeah. You have to find a way of getting them to invite you in. So when we did the rocket-ship [*Space Dust*], we landed it outside the window and waited for them to beckon us in. That was clever! [laughs] A lot of the Elf stuff was about experimenting with different ways that we could get them to invite us to perform – demand it, ideally, rather than "come and sit down now – this is what

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we're doing", telling them what to do. We wanted it to be a joint idea – "this is a great idea, let's do it".

HDE: Again, it varies, but with a deep breath [laughs]. I've got a singing bowl that's quite good or a tone or something to settle. The harmonium's really nice. And to make eye contact with everybody before you begin is nice.

BFW: Adults as well as children?

HDE: Yes. It depends on what the constraints of the character and situation are, but I feel better if I've looked at everybody and if everybody's calm and ready. You do get grace. You get a moment of that and you enjoy that moment. "Shall we start? Okay." [laughs]

BFW: You talked about setting boundaries so that the children understand what they can and can't do.

**Comment [271]:** Codes (34328-34437)
Offering new viewpoints
Being not becoming

**Comment [272]:** Codes (34437-34508)
Collaborating
Being not becoming
Enjoying together

**Comment [273]:** Codes (34601-34645)
Self deprecation
Struggling towards success
Coping with circumstances beyond your control

**Comment [274]:** Codes (34645-34750)
Welcoming the audience

**Comment [275]:** Codes (34754-34815)
Welcoming the audience
Being 'primed and ready'
Being hyper-aware
Connecting
Identifying engagement signals

**Comment [276]:** Codes (34935-35012)
Identifying engagement signals
Connecting
Being well-prepared
Being 'primed and ready'

**Comment [277]:** Codes (35012-35030)
Enjoying together
Giving and receiving gifts
Giving and receiving gifts
Identifying engagement signals
Connecting
Being relaxed
Being open

**Comment [278]:** Codes (35030-35106)
Giving and receiving gifts
Identifying engagement signals
Connecting
Being relaxed
Being open

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Some productions I've seen have had quite explicit directions – "please don't come onto the stage until this moment" or "you can come forward when this thing happens". Other people seem to handle it with subconscious boundaries – they will lay some kind of marker like sand or paper around the end of the stage. There's an implicit barrier there – "do not cross this line unless invited". How do you set boundaries in terms of space or approaching you?

HDE: On occasions where I've had to say "do not come onto the stage", I have not designed the show with that in mind. It's an unfortunate necessity [laughs] that I try to avoid.

But if you say it, sometimes it can make people feel more comfortable. It's not always possible because of what you want to do with the show. Sometimes it's a pay-off – you sacrifice the nice idea of everything being subconscious for the fact that you want everyone to feel comfortable.

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Ideally, I'd always like to make it so that they're welcome to go wherever they want. If we have to ask them to stay off a piece of set, or put something down, then that's the pay-off, because there's some really good reason [laughs] that we need that to be our own space, and it will be to do with the projection or whatever.

But I try to avoid that as much as possible and think of all the clever tricks that are at my resources, to find a way of making the space completely their home and if that means suspending things in the air, or putting them in the floor, or spending loads of money to make something unbreakable, then that's totally worth doing, so that we never have a moment of telling people off.

BFW: I feel as if your practice is possibly the most participatory of the artists working in Scotland. I expect, when I go to one of your shows, that it will be very participatory, with a lot of interaction throughout the show rather than specific moments. That seems to be a hallmark of your practice, I

think, so it's interesting to see you design that in as an early, conscious decision.

HDE: Yes. At the same time, I do like making things destructible, and if they destroy something, that can be a part of it. But yes, I do like it when anything is allowed. Any reaction that they have is quite fine. And we've thought about it and we've prepared for it and it's OK. But that's difficult! [laughs]

BFW: That idea of something they can destroy as part of a show links in with gift-giving, which is emerging as a theme that a lot of artists talk about. It seems to be possibly a Scottish trait actually, in that a lot of shows involve moments of exchange of gifts, not just "here's a thing at the end of the show to remember us by". There are moments of joint gift-giving within shows. Certainly your work seems to reflect this – I'm thinking of the little creatures hidden inside the trees in *The Forest* during the exploratory play sessions. There are those moments where there are things to explore and find that aren't necessarily even connected to the show,

**Comment [288]:** Codes (37274-37369)
"There are no rules!"
Making the space safe
Accepting difference and unpredictability

**Comment [289]:** Codes (37378-37416)
"There are no rules!"
Giving and receiving gifts

**Comment [290]:** Codes (37417-37460)
Giving and receiving gifts
Limiting a child's imagination
Being not becoming

**Comment [291]:** Codes (37464-37526)
Emphasising experience / skills
Being well-prepared

**Comment [292]:** Codes (37526-37548)
Struggling towards success

HDE: That's interesting, because you know that language comes from Charlotte Fallon? I think – ask Matt [Addicott], but he talks about it in the documentary, and I think that comes from her.

But yes, I like that idea. I think that's quite natural play with a really young person. That's how you establish friendships and sharing and it's a really nice way to make friends with a really young person – to give them something and receive something. It's a schema, of understanding the idea of giving something away and getting it back again, a natural part of development. It happens, it just happened, I think. I don't think I ever decided it would be a good idea – it just felt nice [laughs], that you could offer and receive. I suppose with adults you might do that conversationally and through speech, and this is just a physical way of doing that with somebody.

**Comment [293]:** Codes (38539-38601)
Giving and receiving gifts
Playing as adults

**Comment [294]:** Codes (38601-38768)
Giving and receiving gifts
Enjoying together
Being nice
Becoming friends with your audience

**Comment [295]:** Codes (38768-38892)
Rooted in research
Giving and receiving gifts
Trusting your instincts

**Comment [296]:** Codes (38931-39048)
Being nice
Giving and receiving gifts

**Comment [297]:** Codes (39058-39186)
Giving and receiving gifts
Being not becoming

BFW: Thinking of the rise in participatory practice for adults, pieces like *The Smile Off Your Face* [Ontroerend Goed] or *Foot Washing For the Sole* [Adrian Howells], we now have shows that are rituals of exchange, which adults view as very intense emotional experiences. Yet to children, these sorts of experiences are incredibly natural and obvious. We're just not used, as adults, to the idea that someone can do something for us or to us for a minute, ten minutes, in a theatrical performative way, and to a child, it's absolutely natural.

HDE: That's a really interesting theme actually. The idea of ownership and just not understanding ownership – of course they don't.

BFW: Everybody's a Marxist when they're three.

HDE: Yeah – we should do a show about that! [laughs] That's really good.

BFW: Wrapping up the show and saying goodbye – what are your thoughts? I've seen shows that ended

Comment [298]: Codes (39779-39984)
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Embracing difference
Demonstrating knowledge

very traditionally with bows and leaving the stage; I've seen shows where people were guided back out in the same way that they were led in; I've seen shows that didn't really end, where the space became communal after the performance. How do you like to do it?

HDE: I've had a bit of criticism that my shows don't have proper endings, but that's from people who don't have children!

As I understand it, it's genius, because the child decides when it's over. Satisfyingly and where possible, for example in *The Forest*, we just opened the curtains and you could stay as long as you wanted. Sometimes they outstayed us, because we'd been there for an hour and a half and were exhausted and just needed to go and get a cup of tea. And that's fine. That's not always practical, because we're on tour, and sometimes they have to leave.

Comment [299]: Codes (40351-40468)
Knowing better than peers
Demonstrating knowledge

Comment [300]: Codes (40470-40545)
Demonstrating knowledge
Knowing better than peers
Abandoning narrative
Resisting convention
Being not becoming

Comment [301]: Codes (40545-40831)
Being not becoming
Creating environments

Comment [302]: Codes (40831-40918)
Being constrained by venues' rules
Coping with others' expectations
Coping with circumstances beyond your control

But I like to signal to the parents that what I've done is over and that sometimes means a clap – that's the most satisfying resolution for the adults in the audience, so that happens, sometimes [laughs]. If that happens, then I like to clap as well, because everyone has been involved in that hour or however long it's been. Especially if you're in a school or a nursery group, they need an end-point, a signal to the adults.

But I normally like to say, "Stay as long as you like in the space", because sometimes there's been a child who's just taken a little bit longer than everyone else to engage. And also what happens often, which is beautiful, is that the child who's at that stage of their development where they are really into it, totally confident, picking everything up, trying everything, is done and has had enough – they've tried everything, touched everything, broken what they can and they want to go. And that's fine. But the other child who's just been waiting for their space, their turn, has then the opportunity to come

forward and do what they've seen done by the more confident child.

So I just think it's nice when you don't just herd everybody out, although you sometimes need that because you've got another show or a get-out. I try whenever possible, even in the programming, to avoid that happening, because I think it's really lovely if they can own the space after you've had it, and if the adults want to chat to you about it, you're there for them. I'm not in so much of a hurry that I don't have time [laughs].

BFW: There's a quotation from the Coney theatre company: "the show begins when you first hear about it and ends when you stop thinking about it".

HDE: That's a nice phrase.

BFW: The show doesn't end because the acting stops; it ends when the child's experience and recall is over. Do you have experience of moments of recall long after the show?

Comment [308]: Codes (41532-42031)
Accepting difference and unpredictability
Embracing difference
Being proud

Comment [309]: Codes (42048-42098)
Peer critique
Personalising the experience

Comment [310]: Codes (42098-42177)
Being constrained by venues' rules

Comment [311]: Codes (42177-42333)
Making venues understand the differences
Limiting a child's imagination
Giving and receiving gifts

Comment [312]: Codes (42338-42405)
Helping parents

Comment [313]: Codes (42405-42458)
Peer critique
Being nice

HDE: Oh yeah. My new flatmate's niece came to see *The Attic* six months ago and was talking about it in the bath yesterday, even though she hadn't seen me or met me or heard of me. Oscar was doing 'Twit Twoo' from *Owl Club* [part of *The Forest*], which was nearly a year ago – he was doing that yesterday [laughs]. It does stay with them. You know that.

*Round in Circles* has a CD that goes with it, and *The Attic*'s got a book, something physical that you can have in your house that will encourage that, because I think that's really special.

At a Patter meeting, we were asking each other what our first memories were. All of the adults in the group had first memories that were traumatic [laughs] – being lost or being scared. I would love it if someone's first memory was something lovely like having gone to a play.

BFW: I've asked people at presentations in the past – "what's the earliest artistic experience you can remember?". Maybe a picture book or being in the car listening to music that your parents are playing or seeing a show, etc. As you know, children don't form firm memories until around age three, so if people claim they can remember events from long before that age, they may be inventing memories based on photographs or family stories. You've convinced yourself that it happened. But trauma is obviously something that can make a very big impression [laughs] and be remembered afterwards and form a nexus of memory.

HDE: Photographs are interesting: that's another thing that people keep, and they want to post them up online. Babies are just so photographed at the moment. So maybe even if they don't remember the theatrical event itself, the idea or feeling of that could outlive you and your memory.

**Comment [320]:** Codes (44268-44374) Recalling experiences

**Comment [321]:** Codes (44374-44421) Knowing better than parents

**Comment [322]:** Codes (44424-44550) Recalling experiences

But even if you don't remember anything before three as an adult, when you're two, you remember things that happened earlier.

BFW: Yes – it's when you're an adult looking back that you can't remember truthfully.

HDE: The adults in the audience remember it.

BFW: Of course – thirty years ago, there was no theatre for very young children. Perhaps now we have the first generation who will have these early memories!

HDE: That would be good, wouldn't it?

BFW: Moving to wrap up, how do you view the role of parents or carers in your shows?

HDE: I hope that they're going to engage with it as much as the children are. I always create for them as well. I always create for me as well, for the kind of thing I would like to see. I think that, hopefully,

> **Comment [323]:** Codes (44552-44678)
> Recalling experiences

> **Comment [324]:** Codes (44812-45009)
> Recalling experiences
> Connecting to your own childhood

> **Comment [325]:** Codes (45101-45174)
> Connecting
> Helping parents
> Relying on adults

> **Comment [326]:** Codes (45174-45208)
> Helping parents
> Being proud

> **Comment [327]:** Codes (45208-45283)
> Offering new viewpoints
> Personalising the experience
> Putting yourself in a child's shoes

most adults that come, even if they weren't expecting that, they get that. Not everybody loves everything, but I think it's something for some adults. So it's just as much for them.

That's one of the things that attracts me to baby theatre, is that the babies don't come on their own, and it is adults at their best, like I said at the beginning. It's adults at their most open and most absorbent point, even if they're completely exhausted and sleep-deprived [laughs]. And just want to relax…

------BREAK IN RECORDING------

BFW: So we were talking about parents.

HDE: Yes, and how one of the reactions that you get that you don't expect is, "I haven't stopped

talking all day". You hear them coming: "And have you been to the toilet? And have you had enough raisins? And don't do that! Don't touch it. Come here. Just stand there." It's a constant monologue, so the idea that they can stop for half an hour and listen to somebody else maybe not saying anything, and the child be able to tune in, and them be able to have some space, that's quite nice.

BFW: To finish up, is there anything that I haven't give you a chance to talk about, that you would like to say?

HDE: I don't think so. You were pretty thorough. Excellent questions [laughs].

BFW: What are you working on right now?

HDE: I just got back from doing a tour of an adult show about land reform in the Highlands, so I've had a bit of a break. I decided what I wanted to do when I got back was make some more baby theatre [laughs], so I'm applying for some funding for new

projects and we'll see how it goes. Fingers crossed. Nothing firm lined up at all. How exciting it is at these moments [laughs].

BFW: Is there anything you'd like to ask me?

HDE: Not just now.

BFW: The very last thing: to avoid second-guessing myself and following my preconceptions, I'm asking people to nominate the next interviewee in the chain. It's called 'snowball sampling'. So who do you think I should talk to next?

HDE: You said you were speaking to Matt [Addicott] and Katy [Wilson]?

BFW: Matt's booked in, and Katy, yes.

HDE: Sacha Kyle. Sacha's pretty interesting because she's got some alternative views maybe. So that might be quite interesting, to find out some of her ideas. Who else? Those are the goodies!

Somebody like Andy Cannon is interesting to speak to as well.

BFW: Does he make work for the very young?

HDE: He did some at *The Forest*. It's quite interesting to hear how it compares to children's theatre. But if you want people who have mainly done Early Years work… for work coming from Wales, Sarah Argent is interesting.

BFW: I shall add her to my list. Thank you very much.

**Memos tagged to this transcript**:

*Created 11th October 2012*

*Interviewee: Hazel Darwin Edwards*

*Hazel has produced many Early Years works, including* Round in Circles, The Attic, Shake 'n' Bake, The Forest, Space Dust *and* The Elf Experiment*, as well as working on pieces like Puppet Lab's* The Gift*. Her work tends to be highly participatory, often featuring her as a performer.*

*Aside from a glitch with the audio recorder SD card, the interview flowed well. Hazel is particularly good on commenting on her own practice and reflecting on her aims as an artist. She laid out some very interesting aspects of Scottish practice - 'cooler' than European work, but also more reserved; linked to our own preferences in toys and clothing in terms of colour and pattern.*

*She displayed a good deal of embodied knowledge, for example, her description of identifying engagement was "You just know", a very physical, visceral sense of watching and being watched. Translating her embodied knowledge and making it explicit may be more difficult than with other artists, but I sense that the data will be the richer for it.*

*Our conversation did feel slightly guarded - she corrected herself at one point, saying 'I shouldn't say that' - although she seemed to loosen up. This may have come from earlier conversations where she expressed unease with my initially empiricist ideas, or she may have felt protective of her practice, hard-won lessons and knowledge.*

*Many emergent themes appeared again here - having fun, favouring engagement over entertainment, being kind / protective, there being no rules - but Hazel's distinctively participatory work stands in contrast to more traditional pieces like Andy Manley's* My House *or* White*. It will be interesting to see if / how this impacts on the analysis.*

*"Almost every detail has to be rethought."*

*Created 2nd October 2013.*

*Hazel comments on the mentally exhausting task of rethinking almost every aspect of your practice, presentation and relationship with the audience. This turns your training on its head, but is vitally important - unlike in traditional children's theatre, if you get even one aspect wrong, 'the whole thing falls flat'.*

*The risk seems to be piled high in Hazel's discussion with me - she wants to emphasise both the effort that she puts into her work and also the ever-present risk of failure. She presents herself as walking a tightrope, held up by the twin poles of her skill and her care.*

*Again, an interviewee highlights the enormous mental effort of making work that seems so simple and basic from outside. Do they feel a lack of respect from other theatre-makers and venues for their hard-won insights?*

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*Taking risks*

*Created 21st October 2013.*

*Hazel makes a fascinating point that commercial companies are taking a bigger risk than subsidised groups in terms of the reactions they elicit. She seems to be simultaneously criticising the commercial world for failing to do their homework, and therefore producing low-quality work, while also denigrating subsidised work for playing it safe.*

*Is this really what's going on? There doesn't seem to be any envy of commercial theatre-makers (unless it's the perennial complaint about lack of money in subsidised arts) yet she chooses to make a point about their risk-taking. Is risk to be avoided in her work? Heather Fulton also talked about people who say "I want to take risks" being unsuited to the genre.*

*However, she seems to have some sense of the thrill of making work that polarises opinion. Perhaps she feels that TEY can be a little too crowd-pleasing, a little too safe, a little too carefully tailored at the expense of risk.*

**Egos**

**Created 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, edited 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014.**

Artists who work in TEY can't have an ego, in the prima donna sense. They won't get applauded or praised - indeed, they may be loudly criticised. They must learn to get their approbation (or "validation" - Tony) from something other than clapping and cheers: a look, a smile, the look on a parent's face. It is not for everybody, and identifying those who can cope with the lack of praise is key.

Equally, the moment-by-moment interactions of TEY can be immensely fulfilling, even addictive?

This can also make the 'scene' a very friendly one - many people comment on how nice (un-diva-ish?) their colleagues and compatriots are.

Approbation can also be massively extended - just as an actor may be told "I loved you in Hamlet", a TEY performer may be recognised months or years later, but they present this as more profound (because unexpected, or even believed to be impossible?) than the usual actorly cliche.

## A.3 Sample Memo

> *"The path to enlightenment"*
>
> *Created 9th May 2013, edited 2nd June 2013, 12th June 2013, 4th December 2014.*
>
> *With a few exceptions (such as Andy Manley), most artists seem to follow a very standard trajectory from ignorance of TEY to cheerleading for it. It's a path that I recognise, because it reflects my own journey - from seeing "My House" at Imaginate in 2008 to researching a 3-year PhD on the topic.*
>
> *Artists begin by being unaware of the genre - it has never crossed their radar. It didn't exist when they were children, it was not discussed during training, and they don't know any theatre-makers who do this sort of work.*
>
> *Then, they often overcome their own prejudices (some artists state that they were never prejudiced against the idea) to experience their first production for the very young, either by being cast in a show for that age group (Hazel, Andy) or by seeing a show at a festival (generally Imaginate). This is the Damascene moment for many artists - sitting in an audience of babies and observing their reactions, while noting the aesthetic quality of the production [because it has been selected for a festival? What if they just went to the Byre or Polka on a wet Tuesday afternoon? Does Imaginate's role both as promoter and art-form developer / support network have a vital role to play?].*
>
> *Now, artists become interested in TEY as a concept and a practice. They begin to think how their practice can be placed within trends in TEY. They join networks of other artists (e.g. Patter) and begin to collaborate and make work.*
>
> *They become passionate about the genre, as they see more work, talk to more colleagues, read more research, attend more symposia and festivals. They start to see it as a cause or calling, and to $_{believe}$ in the cause.*
>
> *Finally, they enter the last stage of evangelising: they have the zeal of the convert, and want to convert others, to pass on their passion. They become politically engaged in the Early Years movement. Often, they promote Scotland as a country where TEY is done particularly well.*
>
> *To what extent is this journey necessary to convince an artist of the worth of TEY? Are there any artists who have not had this experience, and why? Andy and Shona both spring to mind, and both are rooted in many years' experience with children's theatre - notably both also believe that work for the youngest children is not valid.*

## A.4 Final Open Codes

**Note**: A much larger body of codes was created throughout the 18-month analysis process, and these were re-named, merged, split and / or combined in various ways eventually to produce the final set of 181 codes shown below. The codes are accompanied by descriptions and an indication of the frequency with which they were tagged to excerpts.

| Title | Description | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| *Abandoning narrative* | Rejecting or abandoning a reliance on traditional narrative. | 49 |
| *Accepting difference and unpredictability* | All audiences are different, and unpredictable, because all children are different. | 50 |
| *Accommodating children's needs* | Accommodating the differing needs of children - hunger, tiredness, lack of inhibition, mobility, language, etc. | 107 |
| *Acknowledging luck* | Luck as a factor in making a career. | 14 |
| *Always learning* | Learning as an ongoing process. | 41 |
| *Avoiding theory* | The heart more than the head. Inductive art-making. | 2 |
| *Becoming confident* | Gaining self-confidence; burgeoning sense of skill. | 11 |
| *Becoming friends with your audience* | A natural process, not forced. | 12 |
| *Becoming interested in the genre* | Moving from no knowledge to some knowledge. | 42 |
| *Being a pioneer* | Pioneers embrace risk and uncertainty - they are brave and bold creators of something new, something no-one's ever done before. "Trailblazer" - MA. | 26 |
| *Being an artist, not an educator* | The primacy of art over educational outcomes. | 85 |
| *Being anxious* | Early-career artists can be anxious about how to play to very young audiences - their unpredictability is scary. Equally, audiences can be anxious about appropriate behaviour. | 24 |
| *Being constrained by venues' rules* | Difficulty of touring; lack of understanding of TEY in some venues. | 10 |
| *Being discerning* | Having taste; ability to reflect critically on others' work. | 25 |
| *Being hyper-aware* | Watching and responding to the shifting moods of your audience. | 15 |
| *Being 'in a bubble'* | Having difficulty seeing beyond the TEY bubble; being very informed about your peers' work, but little outside of that. But the bubble is protective as well as enclosing. | 21 |
| *Being inspired by others' work* | Taking the best from other companies and practices. | 83 |
| *Being inspired by theory* | Using theory as a springboard to make work. | 18 |
| *Being ironic or sarcastic* | Connected to self-deprecation, but more aware of absurdities of TEY. | 16 |
| *Being kind* | Kindness, generosity, acceptance, welcoming. | 10 |
| *Being nice* | Being pleasant, being a nice person. | 34 |
| *Being non-judgmental* | Audiences will present unexpected challenges - rising above them in a spirit of acceptance. | 18 |
| *Being not becoming* | Respect for children as beings not becomings, "little people" or autonomous individuals. | 136 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Being open* | Accepting your audience as they are. | 19 |
| *Being passionate* | Discovering a passion for the genre and the idea of performance for the very young. | 21 |
| *Being political* | The political act of prioritising and respecting children. | 42 |
| *Being 'primed and ready'* | Both artists and audiences need to be ready to play their part. | 16 |
| *Being proud* | Believing that Early Years theatre is better than adult theatre; pride in your own work. | 47 |
| *Being relaxed* | Helping your audience to relax and become calm. | 13 |
| *Being seen to succeed* | Highlighting success as a researcher, interviewer, peer or outsider. | 111 |
| *Being truly immersed* | Immersed in your work; immersed in the moment; immersed in the genre. | 4 |
| *Being truthful* | Truth or honesty in your work. | 16 |
| *Being unaware of the genre* | Discovering TEY for the first time - by watching a show, or by performing in a show for very young children. | 38 |
| *Being 'uncool'* | In-vivo from HDE. | 11 |
| *Being well-prepared* | Taking no chances - everything is ready. | 20 |
| *Believing in the cause* | Intrinsic belief in the importance of your work and others', perhaps meaning that you won't criticise. | 48 |
| *Broadening experience* | Practice expands as more experience is gained. | 11 |
| *Building audiences* | Audience development, both for children and their parents, especially from deprived communities. | 36 |
| *Building skilled teams* | Developing relationships with performers and creatives. | 29 |
| *Building support networks* | Networking and support from peers and other groups (Imaginate, Patter, Take Off, etc.). | 82 |
| *Building up a mythology* | EMcC in vivo. | 4 |
| *Challenging yourself* | Choosing deliberately to place yourself in a new situation. | 26 |
| *Children not hiding their emotions* | "An honest audience" - they will tell you if they don't like something. | 27 |
| *Circling the wagons* | Defensiveness; marking out your territory; tribal. | 41 |
| *Collaborating* | Working with, rather than for, young children. | 38 |
| *Combating the virtual* | Privileging the real over the virtual - stage rather than screen. Also, single live experience vs. repeated screen-based one. | 14 |
| *Combining artforms* | Theatre, music, visual art, opera, ballet, dance, movement, mime, puppetry, visual art, live art, happening, son et lumiere… | 36 |
| *Confronting challenges* | Common challenges and difficulties that artists face when making work. | 8 |
| *Connecting* | Connections between a child and a performer. 'A meeting of minds'. | 64 |
| *Connecting to your own childhood* | Using your own childhood as inspiration or to understand how children will react. | 15 |
| *Considering attention span* | Need to move; need to disengage freely; need for toilet / food. Artist needs occasionally to "refresh" action to maintain interest. | 22 |
| *Coping with circumstances beyond your control* | Dealing with disadvantage, illness, fear, tempers, etc. | 21 |
| *Coping with others' expectations* | Dealing with the weight of expectation from others: funders, parents, audiences, critics. New directions can be challenging. | 23 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Craving kudos* | Needing the traditional paraphernalia - critical reception, important venues, peer support - of adult theatre. Wanting to be taken seriously. | 16 |
| *Creating a feedback loop* | Osmosis; joint feedback between performer and child and parent. | 17 |
| *Creating a movement* | Trailblazers who inspire others | 24 |
| *Creating environments* | Stages become environments rather than spaces or venues - they are holistic, self-contained, bounded, coherent. | 35 |
| *Creating hierarchies* | My work is better than theirs / Scotland's is better than England's, etc. | 49 |
| *Creating what you want to see* | Artists who create theatre that interests them as adults. | 30 |
| *Critiquing adult theatre* | Believing that practices from TEY could improve adult theatre, or that TEY is superior to adult work because of its practices. | 27 |
| *Crossing over* | Moving between TEY and theatre for older children or adults; moving between art-forms. | 3 |
| *Dealing with a first-time audience* | For many children, this is their first experience of theatre. They don't know any of the conventions (quiet, respectful watching, etc.) but you want them to come back. | 22 |
| *Demolishing hierarchies* | Breaking down barriers. Transgressing. Flattening. | 19 |
| *Demonstrating knowledge* | Showing that you are up to date with research and discussions - finger on the pulse. | 98 |
| *Developing a reputation* | Becoming known (in your community, among artists, in Scotland, in the UK or worldwide) as a creator of TEY. | 13 |
| *Discovering the new* | Discovering new areas of practice or new things about yourself. | 14 |
| *Disowning failure* | Questions of quality - good vs. bad. Bad work can turn people off TEY. The opposite of the 'Damascene moment'. | 9 |
| *Earning your stripes* | What earns you the right to call yourself a TEY artist, or a composer, or a performer? Does study trump practice? | 5 |
| *Embracing difference* | Being open to differing audiences and circumstances - an opportunity, not a challenge. | 12 |
| *Emphasising experience / skills* | Showing off - experience, reputation, special skills that other artists do not have. | 119 |
| *Empowering parents* | Recognition and celebration of parenting role - not gender, not age, but universality of caring. | 2 |
| *Encouraging a sense of wonder* | A child's awe and joy at your work. | 32 |
| *Encouraging emotional responses* | Laughing, crying, shouting, joy, shock, abandon - seeking to allow emotional vents rather than shutting them down. | 16 |
| *Engaging children* | Methods of re/engaging a child's interest. | 22 |
| *Engaging the whole body* | Kinaesthetic engagement, recognising bodily involvement of very young children. | 41 |
| *Enjoying together* | Shared experiences for carers and babies to enjoy something together, simultaneously. | 82 |
| *Enjoying working with children* | Children are exciting and stimulating to work with. | 33 |
| *Evangelising* | Shouting from the rooftops; trying to convert non-believers; unshakeable belief. | 47 |
| *"Everything's visual"* | Being inspired by visuals more than text, sound, words, music | 16 |
| *Experimenting* | Trying things out, testing, breaking barriers, pushing | 33 |

| | boundaries. | |
|---|---|---|
| *Explicit boundaries* | "Don't come onto the stage", "sit quietly" or "Parents, please keep your children off the stage". | 44 |
| *Exploiting the familiar* | Using familiar settings or rituals to keep children focused - garden, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, playground. | 30 |
| *Fuelling imagination* | Children "buying into" a world you create; allowing space for their own fantasies. | 46 |
| *Fulfilling a need* | Identifying a need for TEY among audiences and parents, and responding to that need. | 32 |
| *Funding* | The difficulty of securing funding, whether freelance or as a company. | 39 |
| *Gathering evidence* | Justifying your work with concrete evidence to satisfy funders, policy-makers, etc. | 14 |
| *Getting hooked* | Finding TEY almost addictive - audience response; theatre-making; being unable to stop working. | 10 |
| *Getting meaningful feedback* | The struggle to get useful feedback on performances from parents (who may want to please), teachers (who may be set in their ways) and children (who may not be able to communicate). | 25 |
| *Ghettoising* | Artists perceiving TEY as non-mainstream - are they buying into others' prejudices, or highlighting the radical nature of their work? | 6 |
| *Giving and receiving gifts* | Gifts - physical, mental, sensory, momentary - as a 'currency' in TEY. | 106 |
| *Granting agency* | Giving control over to a child. | 20 |
| *Having a duty of care* | Caring for your audience, both children and adults. | 26 |
| *Having a nuanced understanding* | The skills and experience of an artist give them a more nuanced understanding of issues than others. | 46 |
| *Having an impact* | Impacting on parents and children, on the industry, on other artists. "Make a difference". | 29 |
| *Having creative freedom* | Lacking restrictions of form, content, style, etc. | 25 |
| *Having enough time* | Enough time to make work, to promote it, to develop new ideas, to apply for funding. | 36 |
| *Having fun* | Creating enjoyable experiences. | 37 |
| *Helping parents* | Accommodating parents' needs or situations. Parents can feel "penalised creatively" due to having children. | 105 |
| *Identifying cheerleaders* | Having links to individuals who can promote your work - teachers, venue managers, festival programmers. | 15 |
| *Identifying engagement signals* | Spotting and monitoring engagement in an audience. | 57 |
| *Identifying the 'right kind of people'* | Spotting and nurturing the best people for TEY. They have to want to do it. | 31 |
| *Immersing children* | Constructing an entire world around the spectator. | 23 |
| *Implicit boundaries* | Lines in the sand; texture, smell, visuals, sound - invisible barriers. | 34 |
| *Imposing an adult view on a child* | Parents or artists imposing their interpretation onto a child; OR loading unrealistic expectations onto children. | 52 |
| *Inspiring a questioning of the world* | Theatre makes us ask questions, rather than providing patronising answers. | 29 |
| *Intrinsic benefits* | A belief in the intrinsic worth of TEY - educational, social, societal, health, creativity, etc. | 63 |
| *Keeping children intrigued* | Keeping your audience's interest in what happens next, or after the show. | 34 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Keeping it simple* | Simplicity as a tenet of your practice. | 35 |
| *Knowing better* | Knowledge gained from experience that may make you superior. | 9 |
| *Knowing better than children* | Trusting in your artistic adult instincts rather than pandering to children. | 12 |
| *Knowing better than parents* | Looking down on parents - making the theatre a space where power dynamics are removed. | 35 |
| *Knowing better than peers* | Longevity of experience or richness of understanding giving an artist a degree of superiority. | 90 |
| *Lacking a shared semiotics* | Young children lack the 'theatre literacy' that allows adults and older children to render dramatic experiences meaningful: cause and effect; synecdoche / metonymy; stage traditions. | 55 |
| *Lacking theory* | Being without a theoretical framework, whether helpful or unhelpful. | 9 |
| *Laying down boundaries* | The need for defined areas in a space. | 46 |
| *Learning* | Learning about your practice, about children, being mentored. | 6 |
| *Learning from children* | Learning about yourself, about your practice or about children generally, from spending time around children. | 49 |
| *Learning from mistakes* | Not making the same mistake twice; mistakes as a key and positive element of improving your practice. | 40 |
| *Learning from peers* | Peers passing on embodied knowledge; watching other's work; participating in training. | 34 |
| *Limiting a child's imagination* | Allowing children to find their own meanings, rather than imposing a didactic, right/wrong structure. | 31 |
| *Limiting capacity* | Small audiences. | 13 |
| *Living in the moment* | Being present, as a natural state for children and a desirable state for performers. | 13 |
| *Maintaining your integrity* | Placing art above other considerations. | 114 |
| *Making everyone feel comfortable* | From the start, the audience must feel at ease - no lurking surprises. | 75 |
| *Making the space safe* | Ensuring performance areas are safe, props are chewable and non-toxic, etc. | 35 |
| *Making the space special* | Comfort, ownership, non-domestic space, welcoming, etc. | 43 |
| *Making venues understand the differences* | The challenge of communicating to venues that they need to go the extra mile - space for buggies, early starts, welcoming ushers, extra facilities, etc. | 31 |
| *Mentally taxing* | Making theatre for EY is exhausting - watching your language, always being 'on', dealing with extremes of emotion, covering up your own negativity at times. | 30 |
| *Minimising language* | "More like a poem than a play" - AM. | 23 |
| *Needing distance* | Needing to step back from your work in order to see its flaws, and more widely, to contextualise it. | 17 |
| *Needing structure* | Children need structures to hang their understanding on (Vygotskian scaffolding); adults need semiotic certainties. | 46 |
| *Normalising art* | Making theatre, art, culture part of everyday life. | 12 |
| *Observing taboos* | Nudity; death; sex; horror. | 14 |
| *Offering new viewpoints* | Offering a child something they may not have seen represented before. | 81 |
| *Operating within a unique practice* | Comments about artistic practice. The special, unique, unusual practices of TEY. | 13 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Over-theorising* | The risks of overloading your work with theory at the expense of art. | 5 |
| *Overcoming prejudices* | Prejudices of outsiders: frivolous; lucrative; waste of money; artistically invalid; pointless. | 110 |
| *Overcoming your own prejudices* | Confronting and overturning your own beliefs about theatre, or children, or parenthood, etc. | 31 |
| *Overriding your artistic integrity* | The occasional necessity of overriding your impulses. | 23 |
| *Participating* | Children taking part in rehearsal, R&D, in performance or after. | 52 |
| *Peer critique* | Commenting, favourably or not, on others' work. | 124 |
| *Personalising the experience* | Creating experiences that feel personal and unique to each audience. | 37 |
| *Playing as adults* | Play with a purpose - to create art. | 29 |
| *Practice as heterogeneous* | The variety and diversity of TEY, within one artist's practice or globally. | 68 |
| *Practice as homogeneous* | Identifiable national characteristics; identifiable 'rules' or tropes. | 43 |
| *Promoting Scotland* | Scotland as a leader in TEY, perhaps where England / UK is not? | 92 |
| *Putting yourself in a child's shoes* | Trying to 'see through a child's eyes' in order to make work. | 22 |
| *Recalling experiences* | Recall after the show by audience members. | 60 |
| *Reflecting critically* | Reflecting on your own practice or others' or the genre more widely. | 34 |
| *Relying on adults* | Needing parents / teachers to be engaged, both with the experience and the feedback process. | 75 |
| *Relying on word-of-mouth* | The importance of word-of-mouth in marketing. | 3 |
| *Resisting convention* | Being an artist gives you licence to act outside of norms - that transgressive power makes you responsible for using it wisely. | 28 |
| *Respecting children's abilities* | Children can have a complex understanding of emotions, issues and themes. | 85 |
| *Rooted in communities* | Demonstrating your links and 'good works' with communities. | 35 |
| *Rooted in research* | Practice or beliefs informed by theory (education, pedagogy, psychology, paediatrics, etc.). Deductive art-making. | 88 |
| *Saying goodbye* | Ending a show; bows; applause; leaving the stage; showing people out; chatting afterwards. | 33 |
| *Seeking acceptance* | Justifying your role, your art, your reputation, your success, etc. | 4 |
| *Seeking recognition as an artist* | A craving for respect from peers, media and the public - moving beyond simple acceptance to an artist's deserved reward. | 42 |
| *Self deprecation* | Self-deprecation - to downplay success, to deflect criticism, to subtly state hard truths. | 85 |
| *Shifting identity* | Moving from one identity - as an artist making work for adults, or as a performer - to another, such as being a TEY artist. | 23 |
| *Struggling towards success* | Stressing the hard road that led to here. | 145 |
| *Subverting your training* | Going against your previous practice or your training in more traditional forms. | 20 |
| *Surprising the audience* | Suspense is dangerous; surprise is delightful. | 13 |
| *Surprising yourself* | Pushing through barriers to surprise yourself. | 17 |
| *Taking risks* | Risks as a part of practice - accepting failures. | 21 |

## A.5 Full Coding Diagram

The full coding process, from open code to axial code to core category is presented over the following pages. Open codes are arranged alphabetically under the heading of the relevant open code. See Appendix A.4 for descriptions and frequency of individual open codes.

| Open codes | Axial codes | Core categories |
|---|---|---|
| *Acknowledging luck* | | |
| *Becoming confident* | | |
| *Becoming interested in the genre* | | |
| *Being 'in a bubble'* | | |
| *Being 'uncool'* | | |
| *Being a pioneer* | | |
| *Being an artist, not an educator* | | |
| *Being anxious* | | |
| *Being constrained by venues' rules* | | |
| *Being discerning* | | |
| *Being ironic or sarcastic* | | |
| *Being passionate* | | |
| *Being seen to succeed* | | |
| *Being unaware of the genre* | | |
| *Believing in the cause* | | |
| *Building support networks* | | |
| *Circling the wagons* | | |
| *Confronting challenges* | | |
| *Coping with others' expectations* | *Emphasising the struggle* | *Retaining artistic integrity* |
| *Craving kudos* | | |
| *Creating a movement* | | |
| *Creating hierarchies* | | |
| *Demonstrating knowledge* | | |
| *Developing a reputation* | | |
| *Disowning failure* | | |
| *Earning your stripes* | | |
| *Emphasising experience / skills* | | |
| *Evangelising* | | |
| *Funding* | | |
| *Getting hooked* | | |
| *Ghettoising* | | |
| *Lacking theory* | | |
| *Maintaining your integrity* | | |
| *Overcoming prejudices* | | |
| *Overcoming your own prejudices* | | |
| *Peer critique* | | |
| *Promoting Scotland* | | |
| *Relying on word-of-mouth* | | |
| *Seeking acceptance* | | |
| *Seeking recognition as an artist* | | |
| *Self deprecation* | | |
| *Struggling towards success* | | |
| *The Damascene Moment* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Being 'primed and ready' | | |
| Being kind | | |
| Being truly immersed | | |
| Building up a mythology | | |
| Children not hiding their emotions | | |
| Connecting | | |
| Connecting to your own childhood | | |
| Creating a feedback loop | | |
| Encouraging a sense of wonder | | |
| Encouraging emotional responses | | |
| Engaging children | | |
| Enjoying together | Sharing experiences | Treating children as equals |
| Exploiting the familiar | | |
| Helping parents | | |
| Identifying engagement signals | | |
| Keeping children intrigued | | |
| Keeping it simple | | |
| Lacking a shared semiotics | | |
| Limiting capacity | | |
| Living in the moment | | |
| Minimising language | | |
| Personalising the experience | | |
| Recalling experiences | | |
| Saying goodbye | | |
| The unusual intersecting with the familiar | | |
| Triangular Audience | | |
| Using music as a key component | | |
| Welcoming the audience | | |

| | Proving 'what works' with testing | Treating children as equals |
|---|---|---|
| *"There are no rules!"* | | |
| *"What have I got to lose?"* | | |
| *Always learning* | | |
| *Avoiding theory* | | |
| *Being inspired by others' work* | | |
| *Being inspired by theory* | | |
| *Broadening experience* | | |
| *Collaborating* | | |
| *Combining artforms* | | |
| *Discovering the new* | | |
| *Experimenting* | | |
| *Getting meaningful feedback* | | |
| *Having a nuanced understanding* | | |
| *Identifying the 'right kind of people'* | | |
| *Knowing better* | | |
| *Knowing better than children* | | |
| *Knowing better than parents* | | |
| *Knowing better than peers* | | |
| *Learning* | | |
| *Learning from children* | | |
| *Learning from mistakes* | | |
| *Learning from peers* | | |
| *Needing distance* | | |
| *Over-theorising* | | |
| *Overriding your artistic integrity* | | |
| *Practice as heterogeneous* | | |
| *Practice as homogeneous* | | |
| *Putting yourself in a child's shoes* | | |
| *Relying on adults* | | |
| *Rooted in research* | | |
| *Taking risks* | | |
| *Testing* | | |
| *Trusting your instincts* | | |
| *Trying new experiences* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Becoming friends with your audience | | |
| Being hyper-aware | | |
| Being nice | | |
| Being relaxed | | |
| Creating environments | | |
| Dealing with a first-time audience | | |
| Empowering parents | | |
| Enjoying working with children | | |
| Explicit boundaries | | |
| Fuelling imagination | | |
| Giving and receiving gifts | | |
| Granting agency | Gift giving | |
| Having a duty of care | | |
| Having an impact | | |
| Having fun | | |
| Immersing children | | |
| Implicit boundaries | | |
| Imposing an adult view on a child | | |
| Inspiring a questioning of the world | | Treating children as equals |
| Limiting a child's imagination | | |
| Making everyone feel comfortable | | |
| Making the space safe | | |
| Making the space special | | |
| Offering new viewpoints | | |
| Participating | | |
| Surprising the audience | | |
| "There are no shortcuts" | | |
| "Valuing children" | | |
| Being not becoming | | |
| Being open | | |
| Being political | | |
| Being proud | | |
| Being truthful | | |
| Being well-prepared | | |
| Building audiences | | |
| Creating what you want to see | | |
| Fulfilling a need | Treating children as we treat adults | |
| Gathering evidence | | |
| Having enough time | | |
| Identifying cheerleaders | | |
| Intrinsic benefits | | |
| Making venues understand the differences | | |
| Normalising art | | |
| Reflecting critically | | |
| Respecting children's abilities | | |
| Rooted in communities | | |
| Treating your team well | | |
| Underestimating the adult's importance | | |

| | Abandoning tradition | Treating children as equals |
|---|---|---|
| Abandoning narrative | | |
| Accepting difference and unpredictability | | |
| Accommodating children's needs | | |
| Being non-judgmental | | |
| Building skilled teams | | |
| Challenging yourself | | |
| Combating the virtual | | |
| Considering attention span | | |
| Coping with circumstances beyond your control | | |
| Critiquing adult theatre | | |
| Crossing over | | |
| Demolishing hierarchies | | |
| Embracing difference | | |
| Engaging the whole body | | |
| "Everything's visual" | | |
| Having creative freedom | | |
| Laying down boundaries | | |
| Mentally taxing | | |
| Needing structure | | |
| Observing taboos | | |
| Operating within a unique practice | | |
| Playing as adults | | |
| Resisting convention | | |
| Shifting identity | | |
| Subverting your training | | |
| Surprising yourself | | |
| Training newcomers | | |
| Ultimately rewarding | | |

# Appendix B – Details of Artist Interviews

The details below are provided in chronological order.

| Interviewee | Date of interview | Role |
|---|---|---|
| Tim Licata (pilot) | 12.4.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Andy Manley | 6.6.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Rosie Gibson | 23.7.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Heather Fulton | 22.8.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Rachel Drury | 5.10.12 | Composer |
| Hazel Darwin-Edwards | 11.10.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Matt Addicott | 31.10.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Shona Reppe | 13.11.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Jo Timmins | 8.11.12 | Designer |
| Katherine Morley | 25.10.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Jen Edgar | 14.12.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Katyana Kozikowska | 19.12.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Lissa Lorenzo | 3.12.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Brian Hartley | 11.12.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Eilidh MacAskill | 21.12.12 | Theatre-maker |
| Katy Wilson | 4.1.13 (written answers) | Theatre-maker |
| Claire Halleran | 14.1.13 | Designer |
| Greg Sinclair | 1.2.13 | Composer |
| Xana Marwick | 12.2.13 | Theatre-maker |
| Sacha Kyle | 25.2.13 | Theatre-maker |
| Charlotte Allan | 31.10.13 | Theatre-maker |
| Danny Krass | 15.10.13 | Composer |
| Vanessa Rigg | 29.10.13 | Theatre-maker |
| Nik Paget-Tomlinson | 5.12.13 | Composer |
| Rhona Matheson | 9.12.13 | Producer |
| Tony Reekie | 19.12.13 | Promoter |

# Appendix C – Database of TEY Productions 1978-2015

| Title | Company | Country | Age range | Premiere/ earliest date | Creator |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chiches (Toys) | Grupo de Teatro Buenos Aires | Argentina | 18 months to 5 | 2008 | María Inés Falconi |
| Circo a Upa | Proyecto Upa | Argentina | 8 months to 3 | 2011 | Gabriela Hillar |
| Canciones a Upa | Proyecto Upa | Argentina | 8 months to 3 | 2011 | Gabriela Hillar |
| Danza a Upa | Proyecto Upa | Argentina | 8 months to 3 | 2013 | Marisa Quintela |
| ITO | Vamos Que Nos Vamos | Argentina | 0 to 3 | 2010 | Carla Rodríguez |
| The Magic Hat | Drop Bear Theatre | Australia | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Scott Gillespie |
| Rain | Drop Bear Theatre / The Seam | Australia | 0 to 2 | 2013 | Sarah Lockwood |
| Look | Imaginary Theatre | Australia | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Thom Browning |
| How High The Sky | Polyglot Theatre | Australia | 0 to 18 months | 2012 | Sue Giles / Jessica Wilson |
| This (Baby) Life | Sally Chance Dance | Australia | 4 to 18 months | 2011 | Sally Chance |
| The Green Sheep | Windmill Theatre | Australia | 1 to 3 | 2008 | Cate Fowler |
| Cat | Windmill Theatre | Australia | 1 to 3 | 2008 | Cate Fowler |
| Boom Bah! | Windmill Theatre | Australia | 1 to 4 | 2008 | Rosemary Myers |
| Plop! | Windmill Theatre | Australia | 1 to 4 | 2009 | Sam Haren |
| Grug | Windmill Theatre | Australia | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Sam Haren |
| Überraschung (Surprise) | Dschungel Wien | Austria | 2 to 7 | 2006 | Stephan Rabl |
| Duftträume (Scent Dreams) | Dschungel Wien | Austria | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Stephan Rabl |
| Unter dem Tisch (Under the Table) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 2 to 4 | 2002 | Agnès Desfosses |
| Hin und Her: Meine kleine Reise durch den Tag (To and Fro: My little journey through the day) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 18 months to 5 | 2008 | Myrto Dimitriadou |
| Krokodilstränen (Crocodile Tears) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Cordula Nossek |
| Mein Klavier (My Piano) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 18 months to 5 | 2009 | Myrto Dimitriadou |
| Bauchgeflüster (Belly Whispers) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 18 months to 5 | 2010 | Katharina Schrott |
| Trag Mich! (Carry me!) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Ceren Oran / Felipe Salazar |
| Im Rundherum… und anderswo (All Around… and elsewhere) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Ceren Oran |
| Träume Träume! (Dream Dreams!) | Toihaus Theater | Austria | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Cornelia Böhnisch / Myrto Dimitriadou |
| Schlaf gut süßer Mond (Sleep well, dear moon) | Dschungel Wien / IYASA | Austria / Zimbabwe | 2 + | 2012 | Stephan Rabl |
| Wolk (Cloud) | 4hoog | Belgium | 2.5 to 4 | 2004 | Frans Van der Aa |
| Wanikan | 4hoog | Belgium | 3 + | 2010 | Jelle Marteel |

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| *KEIK* | 4hoog | Belgium | 3 + | 2011 | Jonas Baeckeland |
| *Hut* | 4hoog | Belgium | 3 + | 2012 | Nikolas Lestaeghe |
| *Mozaïk (Mosaic)* | Compagnie Pour Kwapa | Belgium | 18 months to 3 | 2012 | Géraldine Carpentier Doré |
| *Boîtes (Boxes)* | Nuna Theatre | Belgium | 18 months to 4 | 2008 | Cecile Henry / Catchou Mynke |
| *De Tuin (The Garden)* | Sprookjes en zo | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2008 | Pietro Chiarenza |
| *Aquarium* | Sprookjes en zo | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2009 | Pietro Chiarenza |
| *Sneeuw! (Snow!)* | Sprookjes en zo | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2010 | Pietro & Marcello Chiarenza |
| *Het rode visje (The Red Fish)* | Sprookjes en zo | Belgium | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Pietro & Marcello Chiarenza |
| *Lelegüm* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2011 | Karel Van Ransbeeck |
| *Bzzz'T* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Karel Van Ransbeeck |
| *Nest* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Karel Van Ransbeeck |
| *Meneer Papier en Don Karton (Mr. Paper and Don Cardboard)* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Pat van Hemelryck |
| *Mouw (Sleeve)* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 18 months to 4 | 2014 | Karolien Verlinden |
| *Niet Drummen (Not Drumming)* | Theater De Spiegel | Belgium | 6 months to 3 | 2014 | Karel Van Ransbeeck |
| *Ombres et lumières (Shadows and Lights)* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | | 2000 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Terres (Earths)* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 18 months to 3 | 2002 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Duo des Voiles* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | | 2005 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Au jardin (In the Garden)* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2005 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Bach…à sable (Bach…in the sand)* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 18 months to 4 | 2007 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Bramborry* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 1 to 3 | 2008 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Le grand saut (The big leap)* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 1 to 4 | 2010 | Martin Staes-Polet |
| *Etc.* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde | Belgium | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Daniela Ginevro |
| *Concertino Pannolino* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde / La Bulle a Sons | Belgium | 0 to 1 | 2009 | Benjamin Eppe / Fabienne Van Den Driessche |
| *Deux Bras, Deux Jambes et Moi (Two Arms, Two Legs and Me)* | Théâtre des 4 Mains | Belgium | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Laetitia Salsano |
| *Le Cirque à trois pattes* | Théatre Oz | Belgium | 2.5 + | 2012 | Martin Staes-Polet / Jacques Verhaegen |
| *Ultra* | Zététique Théatre | Belgium | 2.5 to 6 | 2011 | Justine Duchesne |
| *Ha Dede* | Theater De Spiegel / Kabóca Bábszínház | Belgium / Hungary | 1 to 3 | 2012 | |
| *Kubik* | Théâtre de la Guimbarde / Teatro Paraiso | Belgium / Spain | 0 to 3 / 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Cuco (Cuckoo)* | Caixa do Elefante | Brazil | 0 to 3 | 2012 | Mário de Ballentti |
| *Bailarina (Ballerina)* | Grupo Sobrevento | Brazil | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Luiz André Cherubini / Sandra Vargas |
| *Meu Jardim* | Grupo Sobrevento | Brazil | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Luiz André Cherubini / Sandra Vargas |
| *O Cirquinho de Luísa (Luisa's Circus)* | Teatro para Bebês | Brazil | 6 months to 6 | 2006 | Liliana Rosa |

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| *Mateus ea Arca de Noé (Matthew and Noah's Ark)* | Teatro para Bebês | Brazil | 6 months to 3 | 2008 | Lucianna Martins |
| *O Bebê e o Mar (The Baby and the Sea)* | Teatro para Bebês | Brazil | 6 months to 6 | 2013 | Liliana Rosa |
| *A Florestinha da Pati (Pati's Little Forest)* | Teatro para Bebês | Brazil | 6 months to 6 | 2014 | Liliana Rosa |
| *El Elefante que Perdiò su Ojo* | Samuel Mountoumnjou | Cameroon | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Samuel Mountoumnjou |
| *Le Spectacle de l'arbre (The Show about the Tree)* | Des mots d'la dynamite | Canada | 18 months to 5 | 2009 | Nathalie Derome |
| *Le Bal des Bébés* | Karine Cloutier | Canada | 0 to 6 | 2012 | Karine Cloutier |
| *Pain d'Epice (Gingerbread)* | L'Illusion, Theatre de marionnettes | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2004 | Claire Voisard |
| *Jacques et le haricot magique (Jack and the magic bean)* | L'Illusion, Theatre de marionnettes | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2006 | Claire Voisard |
| *Les habits neufs (The [Emperor's] New Clothes)* | L'Illusion, Theatre de marionnettes | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Claire Voisard |
| *Flots, tout ce qui brille voit (Waves, all that glows sees)* | Le Théâtre des Confettis | Canada | 18 months to 4 | 2012 | Véronique Côté |
| *Édredon (Eiderdown)* | Les Incomplètes | Canada | 1 to 4 | 2010 | Audrey Marchand / Laurence P. Lafaille |
| *Le Cygne (The Swan)* | Théâtre de Deux Mains | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Louis-Philippe Paulhus |
| *Glouglou (Gurgle)* | Theatre de Quartier | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2004 | Louis-Dominique Lavigne |
| *Le nid vide (The empty nest)* | Theatre de Quartier | Canada | 2 + | 2011 | Louis-Dominique Lavigne / Lise Gionet |
| *Pekka* | Théâtre des Petites Âmes | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Isabelle Payant |
| *Bam* | Théâtre des Petites Âmes | Canada | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Isabelle Payant |
| *Head à Tête* | Theatre Direct | Canada | 3 + | 2011 | Thomas Morgan Jones |
| *Old Man and the River* | Theatre Direct | Canada | 3 + | 2014 | Lynda Hill |
| *Pomme (Apple)* | Théâtre des Petites Âmes / Compagnie Garin Trousseboeuf | Canada / France | 3 + | 2011 | Isabelle Payant / Patrick Conan |
| *Priča o Oblaku (Story of the Cloud)* | Mala Scena Kazalište | Croatia | 18 months to 5 | 2003 | Ivica Šimić |
| *The Parachutists, or on the art of falling* | Mala Scena Kazalište | Croatia | 3 + | 2004 | Ivica Šimić |
| *Priča o Kotaču (Story of the Wheel)* | Mala Scena Kazalište | Croatia | 18 months to 5 | 2010 | Ivica Šimić |
| *Priča o Svjetlu (Story of the Light)* | Mala Scena Kazalište | Croatia | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Ivica Šimić |
| *Priča o Vodi (Story of Water)* | Mala Scena Kazalište | Croatia | 18 months to 5 | 2013 | Jelena Vukmirica |
| *Černošská pohádka / An African Fairytale* | Divadlo Drak Theatre | Czech Republic | 3 to 6 | 1999 | Jiří Vyšohlíd |
| *Me You Us* | Åben Dans | Denmark | 6 months to 4 | 2008 | Catherine Poher |
| *Igen (Again)* | Åben Dans | Denmark | 6 months to 4 | 2011 | Catherine Poher |
| *Vejen Rundt (The Walk Around)* | Teater Blik | Denmark | 18 months to 4 | 2010 | Catherine Poher |
| *Anno Anni* | Teater Blik | Denmark | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Catherine Sombsthay |
| *Solens land* | Teater My | Denmark | 18 months to 4 | 2004 | Jesper Draeby |
| *Himmelsange (Songs From Above)* | Teater My | Denmark | 2 to 4 | 2006 | Bjarne Sandborg |
| *Små skridt (Little Steps)* | Teater My | Denmark | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Giacomo Ravicchio / Mette Rosleff |
| *Den Grimme Ælling (The Ugly Duckling)* | Teatret Lampe | Denmark | 2 to 4 | 2009 | Anne Nøjgaïrd |

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| *Regn (Rain)* | Theater Madame Bach | Denmark | 0 to 6 | 2011 | Catherine Sombsthay |
| *blÆst (Wind)* | Theater Madame Bach | Denmark | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Lisa Becker |
| *Underneath the Floorboards* | balletLORENT | England | 0 to 5 | 2011 | Liv Lorent |
| *Three Colours of Light* | Banyan Theatre | England | 2 to 4 | 2011 | Joy Haynes |
| *Bare Toed in the Garden* | Bare Toed Dance Company | England | 0 to 6 | 2008 | Lynn Campbell |
| *Fly By Night* | Bare Toed Dance Company | England | 0 to 3 / 3 to 6 | 2011 | Lynn Campbell |
| *The Good Neighbour: Early Investigators* | Battersea Arts Centre | England | 0 to 5 | 2012 | Sarah Golding / Ruth Dudman |
| *Shiny* | Big Imaginations Theatre Consortium | England | 0 to 4 | 2013 | |
| *More Story Please* | Big Window Theatre Company | England | 2 to 4 | 2008 | Penny Breakwell |
| *Looking for the Rainbow* | Big Window Theatre Company | England | 18 months to 4 | 2010 | Penny Breakwell |
| *Dreamplay* | Big Window Theatre Company | England | 2 to 4 | 2012 | Penny Breakwell |
| *Aliens Love Underpants* | Big Wooden Horse | England | 2 to 8 | 2013 | |
| *Blown Away* | Birdsnest Theatre | England | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Beth van der Ham |
| *Wash* | Birdsnest Theatre | England | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Beth van der Ham-Edwards |
| *The Snowman* | Birmingham REP | England | 2 + | 1993 | |
| *Open House* | Birmingham REP | England | 18 months to 2 | 2005 | Steve Ball |
| *Dreams Come Out To Play* | Birmingham REP | England | 1 to 4 | 2006 | |
| *Princess and Ginger* | Birmingham REP | England | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Peter Wynne-Wilson |
| *Lick* | Birmingham REP | England | 3 to 5 | 2008 | |
| *Alphabet Avenue* | Blue Orange Arts | England | 0 to 6 | 2014 | |
| *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark* | Blunderbus Theatre Company | England | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Bill Davies |
| *The Selfish Crocodile* | Blunderbus Theatre Company | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Bill Davies |
| *The Very Snowy Christmas* | Blunderbus Theatre Company | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Bill Davies |
| *Breathtaking* | Bock & Vincenzi | England | 3 to 7 | 2000 | Frank Bock |
| *Box* | Body of Art | England | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Lucy Killingley |
| *Hey Diddle Diddle* | Bristol Old Vic | England | 3 to 6 | 2012 | Miranda Cromwell |
| *Favourite Strings* | Brown Paper Packages | England | 3 + | 2010 | |
| *Shapes 'n' Shadows* | Core Dance | England | 2 to 4 | 2012 | |
| *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* | Dynamic New Animations | England | 2 to 5 | 1998 | Rachel Riggs |
| *Chicken Licken* | Dynamic New Animations | England | 3 to 6 | 1999 | Rachel Riggs |
| *A Tishoo!* | Dynamic New Animations | England | 3 to 6 | 2004 | Rachel Riggs |
| *Ball Pond Bobby* | Dynamic New Animations | England | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Rachel Riggs |
| *Cloud Child* | Dynamic New Animations | England | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Rachel Riggs |
| *My First Sleeping Beauty* | English National Ballet | England | 3 + | 2012 | Matthew Hart |
| *RedBlueGreen* | English Touring Opera | England | 18 months to 4 | 2012 | Tim Yealland |
| *And the Rain Falls Down* | Fevered Sleep | England | 3 to 4 | 2006 | David Harradine |

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| *Brilliant* | Fevered Sleep | England | 3 to 5 | 2008 | David Harradine |
| *The Feather Catcher* | Filskit Theatre | England | 3 + | 2014 | Victoria Dyson |
| *Old Mother Hubbard* | Garlic Theatre | England | 3 to 6 | 2008 | Steve Tiplady |
| *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* | Garlic Theatre | England | 3 to 6 | 2012 | Roland Allen |
| *Woodland* | Gomito Productions | England | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Matt Addicott |
| *Rip Fold Scrunch* | Half Moon Young People's Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Chris Elwell |
| *Plum and Pickle* | Half Moon Young People's Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Chris Elwell |
| *A Roo in My Suitcase* | Half Moon Young People's Theatre / Apples & Snakes | England | 3 to 6 | 2012 | Rosemary Harris |
| *Big Red Bath* | Half Moon Young People's Theatre / Full House Theatre | England | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Chris Elwell |
| *The Owl and the Pussycat* | Hiccup Theatre | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Sarah Brigham |
| *Claytime* | indefinitearticles | England | 3 to 6 | 2006 | Steve Tiplady |
| *Rock Pool* | Inspector Sands | England | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Ben Lewis / Guilia Innocenti |
| *The Magic Snail* | Inspire Theatre | England | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Ben Mars |
| *Babigloo* | JAM Arts Management | England | 0 to 2 | 2013 | |
| *Sometimes We Break* | Junk Ensemble | England | 0 to 5 | 2012 | Jessica Kennedy |
| *Kid Carpet & The Noisy Animals* | Kid Carpet | England | 3 + | 2012 | Ed Patrick |
| *The Pied Piper* | Krazy Kat Theatre Company | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Kinny Gardner |
| *Just a bit of paper* | Libellule Theatre | England | 3 to 5 | 2011 | Louise Clark |
| *Cloth of Dreams* | Libellule Theatre | England | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Louise Clark |
| *Fe Fi Fo* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Peter Glanville |
| *The Sleeping Beauty* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 + | 2008 | Christopher Leith |
| *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 + | 2008 | Peter O'Rourke |
| *Handa's Hen* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Marleen Vermeulen |
| *Cindermouse* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 + | 2009 | Lyndie Wright |
| *The Fabulous Flutterbys* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 + | 2010 | Peter Glanville |
| *Hold On, Mr Rabbit!* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Peter O'Rourke |
| *Handa's Surprise* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2012 | |
| *The Snitchity Titch Show* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Ronnie Le Drew |
| *The Ugly Duckling* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 + | 2012 | |
| *Dogs Don't Do Ballet* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 6 | 2012 | David Duffy |
| *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* | Little Angel Theatre | England | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Peter Glanville |
| *The Magician's Daughter* | Little Angel Theatre / RSC | England | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Peter Glanville |
| *Antarctica* | Little Bulb | England | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Alex Scott |
| *Shoe Baby* | Long Nose Puppets | England | 2 to 6 | 2007 | Polly Dunbar |
| *Flyaway Katie* | Long Nose Puppets | England | 2 to 6 | 2009 | Polly Dunbar |

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| *Penguin* | Long Nose Puppets | England | 2 to 6 | 2010 | Polly Dunbar |
| *Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas* | Lyric Hammersmith / Pins & Needles | England | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Emma Earle |
| *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* | Lyric Theatre (Nimax) | England | 3 + | 2008 | David Wood |
| *One Little Word* | M6 Theatre Company | England | 3 + | 2011 | Joss Matzen |
| *Sad Socks, Happy Socks* | Monster Productions | England | 0 to 4 | 2006 | Chris Speyer |
| *Dr Seuss' The Cat in the Hat* | National Theatre | England | 3 to 6 | 2009 | Katie Mitchell |
| *Imagine That!* | National Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Sarah Argent |
| *Cupboard of Surprises* | National Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Sarah Argent |
| *My Granny is a Pirate* | New Writing North | England | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Annie Rigby |
| *The Elephant* | No Nonsense Theatre | England | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Liz Fitzgerald-Taylor |
| *One Snowy Night* | Norden Farm Centre for the Arts / Slot Machine | England | 3 + | 2010 | Nicola Blackwell |
| *The Little Boy Who Lost the Morning* | Northern Stage | England | 2 to 7 | 2010 | Mark Calvert |
| *Shhh…A Christmas Story* | Northern Stage | England | 0 to 6 | 2011 | Mark Calvert |
| *The Little Detective Agency* | Northern Stage | England | 0 to 6 | 2012 | Mark Calvert |
| *Tallest Tales from the Furthest Forest* | Northern Stage | England | 0 to 6 | 2013 | Mark Calvert |
| *Three Colours* | Norwich Puppet Theatre / Polka Theatre | England | 2 to 4 | 2013 | Joy Haynes |
| *Exploding Punch and Judy* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1981 | Tim Webb |
| *Out of Their Tree* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1981 | Tim Webb |
| *Bus Stop* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1982 | Tim Webb |
| *Rainbow Robbers* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1983 | Tim Webb |
| *Bedtime Story* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1983 | Tim Webb |
| *Seaside* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1984 | Tim Webb |
| *Tibet or Not Tibet* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1985 | Tim Webb |
| *Up on the Roof* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1986 | Tim Webb |
| *Box of Tricks* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1987 | Tim Webb |
| *Playhouse* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1988 | Tim Webb |
| *Chest of Drawers* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1989 | Tim Webb |
| *Red Lorry Yellow Lorry* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1990 | Tim Webb |
| *Off the Wall* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1991 | Tim Webb |
| *Greenfingers* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1992 | Tim Webb |
| *A Bit Missing* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1993 | Tim Webb |
| *A Peck of Pickled Pepper* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1994 | Tim Webb |
| *Perfect Present* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1995 | Tim Webb |
| *Roly Poly Pudding* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1996 | Tim Webb |
| *Pass the Parcel* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1998 | Tim Webb |

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| *Play House* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 1999 | Tim Webb |
| *Under Your Hat* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2001 | Tim Webb |
| *Jumpin' Beans (Up in the Clouds / Best Nest / Made-Up Monsters)* | Oily Cart | England | 6 months to 2 / 2 to 4 / 4 to 6 | 2002 | Tim Webb |
| *The Genie's Lamp and the Ship of Gold* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2004 | Tim Webb |
| *Hippity Hop (Runaway Pram / Dancing Baby)* | Oily Cart | England | 6 months to 2 / 2 to 4 | 2004 | Tim Webb |
| *King Neptune and the Pirate Queen* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Tim Webb |
| *If All The World Were Paper* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Tim Webb |
| *How Long is a Piece of String?* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Tim Webb |
| *Mole in the Hole* | Oily Cart | England | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Tim Webb |
| *Drum* | Oily Cart | England | 6 months to 2 years | 2010 | Tim Webb |
| *Ring A Ding Ding* | Oily Cart | England | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Tim Webb |
| *Tube* | Oily Cart | England | 6 months to 2 | 2013 | Tim Webb |
| *Mr and Mrs Moon* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Tim Webb |
| *Knock! Knock! Who's There?* | Oily Cart | England | 2 to 5 | 2000 | Tim Webb |
| *Big Balloon* | Oily Cart / Lyric Hammersmith | England | 3 to 6 | 2006 | Tim Webb |
| *In A Pickle* | Oily Cart / RSC | England | 2 to 4 | 2012 | Tim Webb |
| *Bath Time* | Oxford Playhouse | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Toby Hulse |
| *Travels with Grandad* | Pickled Image | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Dik Downey |
| *How To Catch A Star* | Polka Theatre | England | 6 months to 2 / 2 to 5 | 2008 | Jonathan Lloyd |
| *The Ugly Duckling* | Polka Theatre | England | 1 to 2, 3 to 5 | 2011 | Jonathan Lloyd / Jo Belloli |
| *Inside Out* | Polka Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2012 | |
| *Skitterbang Island* | Polka Theatre / Little Angel Theatre | England | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Phil Porter / Martin Ward |
| *Lullaby* | Polka Theatre / Opera for Babies | England | 0 to 12 months / pre-birth | 2013 | Natalie Raybould |
| *Bob The Builder Live* | Premier Stage Productions | England | 1 to 6 | 2011 | Jason Francis / Nick George |
| *The House Where Winter Lives* | Punchdrunk Enrichment / Discover | England | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *The Flight of Babuscha Baboon* | Puppet Barge | England | 3 + | 2008 | Juliet Rogers |
| *Brer Rabbit Visits Africa* | Puppet Barge | England | 3 + | 2012 | Juliet Rogers |
| *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* | Puppet Barge | England | 3 to 8 | 2012 | Juliet Rogers |
| *The Little Red Hen* | Puppetellers | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Leonie Dodd / Tinka Slavicek |
| *Videk's Shirt* | Puppetellers | England | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Leonie Dodd / Tinka Slavicek |
| *Spot's Birthday Party* | PW Productions and Nick Brooke Ltd. | England | 2 to 6 | 2013 | David Wood |
| *Upstairs in the Sky* | Quicksilver Theatre | England | 3 to 5 | 2007 | Guy Holland |
| *La-Di-DaDa* | Quicksilver Theatre / indefinite articles | England | 3 to 6 | 2008 | Guy Holland |
| *Teletubbies Live* | Ragdoll | England | 1 to 4 | 2007 | Anne Wood |

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| *In The Night Garden…Live (Pinky Ponk / Ninky Nonk)* | Ragdoll | England | 0 to 5 | 2010 | Will Tuckett / Andrew Davenport |
| *The Light Garden* | Sadler's Wells | England | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Rachel Davies |
| *Stick Man* | Scamp Theatre / Watford Palace Theatre | England | 3 + | 2010 | Sally Cookson |
| *Tiddler and Other Terrific Tales* | Scamp Theatre / Watford Palace Theatre | England | 3 + | 2011 | Sally Cookson |
| *Oogly Boogly* | Schtanhaus / National Theatre | England | 12 to 18 months | 2003 | Tom Morris |
| *Splosh!* | Sixth Sense Theatre Company | England | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Benedict Eccles |
| *A Little Bird Told Me…* | Snail Tales | England | 3 + | 2009 | Chip Colquhoun |
| *The Snow Baby* | Soap Soup Theatre | England | 2 + | 2012 | Tomasin Cuthbert |
| *3 Little Pigs* | Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company | England | 2 to 7 | 2013 | Marc Parrett |
| *Lightstream* | Take Art | England | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Richard Tomlinson / Jo Belloli |
| *The Whale* | Talking Birds | England | 1 to 5 / 6 + | 2012 | Nick Walker |
| *The Gruffalo* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2001 | Olivia Jacobs / Toby Mitchell |
| *Something Else* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2002 | Olivia Jacobs / Toby Mitchell |
| *The Owl and the Pussycat* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2004 | Olivia Jacobs / Toby Mitchell |
| *The Snow Dragon* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2005 | Toby Mitchell |
| *The Gruffalo's Child* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2006 | Olivia Jacobs / Toby Mitchell |
| *Monster Hits / William's Monsters* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2007 | Olivia Jacobs |
| *Room on the Broom* | Tall Stories | England | 3 + | 2008 | Olivia Jacobs |
| *Curious* | Tamtam Theatre & Half Moon | England | 0 to 3 | 2013 | Sarah Argent / Marleen Vermeulen |
| *Circles in the Sand* | Tamtam Theatre & Sarah Argent | England | 6 months to 3 | 2009 | Sarah Argent / Marleen Vermeulen |
| *Beneath The Waves* | Tell Tale Hearts | England | 3 to 7 | 2007 | Natasha Holmes |
| *From Here To There* | Tell Tale Hearts | England | 18 months to 4 | 2010 | Natasha Holmes |
| *Space Hoppers* | Tell Tale Hearts | England | 3 to 7 | 2010 | Natasha Holmes |
| *Yummm!* | Tell Tale Hearts | England | 18 months to 4 | 2012 | Natasha Holmes |
| *The Gingerbread Man* | The Rainbow Collectors | England | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Caroline Bowman |
| *Five* | Theatre Hullabaloo | England | 3 to 5 | 2007 | Kitty Winter |
| *Chips With Jam* | Theatre Kit | England | 3 to 5 | 1978 | Chris Speyer |
| *Crocodile Pie* | Theatre Kit | England | 3 to 5 | 1978 | Chris Speyer |
| *Magic Adventure* | Theatre of Adventure | England | 3 months to 4 | 2009 | Charlotte Arculus |
| *The Elves and the Shoemaker* | Theatre of Widdershins | England | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Andy Lawrence |
| *Ruby's Relations* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 7 | 1995 | Cindy Oswin |
| *Houseworks* | Theatre-Rites | England | 2 to 5 | 1996 | Penny Bernand / Sue Buckmaster |
| *The Lost and Moated Land* | Theatre-Rites | England | 2 to 5 | 1998 | Penny Bernand / Sue Buckmaster |

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| *Sleep Tight* | Theatre-Rites | England | 2 to 5 | 2000 | Sue Buckmaster |
| *Pilloworks* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 6 | 2000 | Cindy Oswin |
| *Catch Your Breath* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 6 | 2002 | Sue Buckmaster |
| *Finders Keepers* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 6 | 2003 | Sue Buckmaster / David Harradine |
| *In One Ear* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 6 | 2004 | Sue Buckmaster |
| *HospitalWorks* | Theatre-Rites | England | 3 to 6 | 2005 | Sue Buckmaster / David Harradine |
| *Tiny Mites at the Seaside* | Tiny Mites | England | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Vanessa Heywood |
| *Walking the Tightrope* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 3 to 6 | 2001 | |
| *Cloudland* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 3 + | 2003 | |
| *Clown* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 3 + | 2005 | |
| *Papa Please Get The Moon For Me* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 2 to 6 | 2006 | |
| *Shadow Play* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 2 to 6 | 2008 | |
| *How Cold My Toes* | Travelling Light Theatre Company | England | 2 to 6 | 2010 | Sally Cookson |
| *Home* | Travelling Light Theatre Company / Bristol Old Vic | England | 3 + | 2008 | |
| *Boing!* | Travelling Light Theatre Company / Bristol Old Vic | England | 3 + | 2010 | Sally Cookson |
| *Lost and Found* | Travelling Light Theatre Company / Polka Theatre | England | 3 to 7 | 2010 | Sally Cookson |
| *Bob, the Man on the Moon* | Travelling Light Theatre Company / Sixth Sense Theatre Company | England | 3 + | 2010 | Sally Cookson |
| *The Ugly Duckling* | Travelling Light Theatre Company / The Tobacco Factory | England | 3 + | 2007 | |
| *Shiny* | Turned On Its Head | England | 6 months to 4 | 2014 | Liz Clark / Oksana Tyminska |
| *Whatever Next!* | Tutti Frutti | England | 3 + | 2010 | Juliet Forster |
| *Hare and Tortoise* | Tutti Frutti | England | 3 + | 2012 | Wendy Harris |
| *Twas The Night Before Christmas* | Unicorn Theatre | England | 2 + | 2013 | Douglas Rintoul |
| *Not Now, Bernard* | Unicorn Theatre | England | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Ellen McDougall |
| *Seesaw* | Unicorn Theatre | England | 2 + | 2014 | Sarah Argent |
| *For Crying Out Loud* | Wigmore Hall / Royal Academy of Music | England | 0 to 1 | 2011 | |
| *Baby Balloon* | Oily Cart / Pantalone | England / Belgium | 6 months to 2 | 2006 | Tim Webb |
| *Baking Time / Christmas Baking Time* | Oily Cart / Carousel Players | England / Canada | 2 to 5 | 2004 | Tim Webb |
| *Egg & Spoon* | Theatre Lyngo | England / Italy | 1 to 4 | 2003 | Patrick Lynch |
| *The Fish's Wishes* | Theatre Lyngo | England / Italy | 3 to 6 | 2008 | Patrick Lynch |
| *What A Wonderful World* | Theatre Lyngo | England / Italy | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Patrick Lynch |
| *Watch The Birdy* | Theatre Lyngo | England / Italy | 3 to 6 | 2009 | Patrick Lynch |

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| Snow Play | Theatre Lyngo / Lyric Hammersmith | England / Italy | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Patrick Lynch / Marcello Chiarenza |
| Circus Minimus | Theatre Lyngo / The Egg | England / Italy | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Patrick Lynch / Marcello Chiarenza |
| Voikukkapelto (Dandelion Field) | Ehka | Finland | 0 + | 2009 | Kaisa Koulu / Anna Torkkel |
| Kuuneiti (Moon Maiden) | Tanssiteatteri Auraco | Finland | 1 to 4 | 2007 | Päivi Aura |
| Kaikuja (Echoes) | Tanssiteatteri Auraco | Finland | 0 to 3 | 2010 | Päivi Aura |
| Me-Me (Us-Us) | Tanssiteatteri Auraco | Finland | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Päivi Aura |
| Petit Câlin (Newborn Hug) | Tanssiteatteri Auraco | Finland | 3 + | 2012 | Päivi Aura |
| Le jardin du possible (The Garden of the Possible) | 16 Rue de Plaisance | France | 18 months to 5 | 2002 | Benoît Sicat |
| La reserve (The Reservation) | 16 Rue de Plaisance | France | 18 months to 6 | 2009 | Benoît Sicat |
| Le son de la sève (The sound of the sap) | 16 Rue de Plaisance | France | 1 to 6 | 2012 | Benoît Sicat |
| Prémice(s) (Premise(s)) | a.k. entrepot | France | 18 months to 5 | 2003 | Laurance Henry |
| Quand je me deux (When I was two) | a.k. entrepot | France | 2+ | 2010 | Laurance Henry |
| Uccelini | Association Skappa! | France | 9 months to 3 | 2002 | Paolo Cardona |
| Syncope | Association Skappa! | France | 1 to 5 | 2003 | Paolo Cardona |
| ½ ½ (moitié moitié) | Association Skappa! | France | 18 months to 4 | 2006 | Paolo Cardona |
| Câlins (Cuddles) | Athénor | France | 1 to 3 | 1992 | Brigitte Maisonneuve |
| L'Air de l'eau (Air Water) | Athénor | France | 18 months to 4 | 1994 | Brigitte Maisonneuve |
| Passages | Athénor | France | 6 months to 4 | 1999 | Brigitte Maisonneuve |
| Petit concert (Little Concert) | Athénor | France | 1 to 3 | 2000 | Brigitte Maisonneuve |
| Mon Navire sur la Mer (My Ship on the Sea) | Athénor | France | 1 to 4 | 2006 | Brigitte Maisonneuve / Jean-Christophe Feldhandler |
| Graines d'Ecoute (Grains of listening?) | Athénor | France | 6 months to 4 | 2006 | Brigitte Maisonneuve |
| Kernel | Athénor | France | 6 months to 4 | 2008 | Brigitte Maisonneuve / Phillipe Foch |
| Azuki | Athénor | France | 6 months to 4 | 2010 | Aurélie Maisonneuve / Léonard Mischler |
| Archipel (Archipelago) | Athénor / TAM Teatromusica | France | 10 months to 3 | 1992 | Laurent Dupont |
| Hopo'e | Cincle Plongeur | France | 1 to 3, 3 + | 2006 | Sandra Kilohana Silve / Anne-Laure Rouxel |
| Ouïe, peut être (Hearing, maybe) | Cincle Plongeur | France | 1 to 4 | 2006 | Anne-Laure Rouxel |
| ōuli (nature) | Cincle Plongeur | France | 1 to 3, 3 + | 2013 | Anne-Laure Rouxel |
| Lait (Milk) | Compagnie A. M. K. | France | 18 months to 4 | 2007 | Cécile Fraysse |
| Gingko Parrot, dans mon arbre il y a… (Gingko Parrot, there in my tree…) | Compagnie A. M. K. | France | 10 months to 3 | 2010 | Cécile Fraysse |
| Paradeïsos | Compagnie A. M. K. | France | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Cécile Fraysse |
| Ah! Vos rondeurs… (Oh, so round…) | Compagnie ACTA | France | 18 months to 4 | 1994 | Agnès Desfosses |
| Sous la table (Under The Table) | Compagnie ACTA | France | 18 months to 4 | 1996 | Agnès Desfosses |
| ReNaissances (ReBirths) | Compagnie ACTA | France | 6 months to 4 | 2005 | Agnès Desfosses |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Moi seul (Me Alone)* | Compagnie ACTA | France | 3+ | 2009 | Laurent Dupont |
| *Loulou Lapinou* | Compagnie de Bocage | France | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Sandrine Bernard-Abraham |
| *Troulalère* | Compagnie Docha | France | 2+ | 2006 | Régina Welk |
| *Bruissements (Rustlings)* | Compagnie du Loup-Ange | France | 9 months to 3 | 2011 | Hestia Tristani |
| *Métamorf'Ose* | Compagnie du Loup-Ange | France | 6 months to 4 | 2013 | Hestia Tristani |
| *Gong!* | Compagnie du Porte-Voix | France | 6 months to 4 | 2006 | Florence Goguel / Hestia Tristani |
| *Passage* | Compagnie du Porte-Voix | France | 6 months to 4 | 2008 | Florence Goguel / Hestia Tristani |
| *Rêves de Pierre (Dreams of Stone)* | Compagnie du Porte-Voix | France | 6 months to 4 | 2008 | Florence Goguel |
| *Palindromo (Palindrome)* | Compagnie Forest Beats | France | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Qui dit gris… (Who said grey…)* | Compagnie Jardins insolites | France | 8 months to 2 | 2009 | Isabelle Kessler |
| *Coucou (Cuckoo)* | Compagnie Jardins insolites | France | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Isabelle Kessler |
| *C'est dans la poche (it's in the pocket)* | Compagnie Jardins insolites | France | 18 months to 3 | 2013 | Isabelle Kessler |
| *A fleur d'eau* | Compagnie Le Praxinoscope | France | 6 months to 2 | 2008 | Vincent Vergone |
| *Le jardin sous la lune (The Garden Beneath The Moon)* | Compagnie Le Praxinoscope | France | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Vincent Vergone |
| *Gribouillie (Scribble)* | Compagnie Lili Désastre | France | 9 months to 3 | 2003 | Francesca Sorgato |
| *Plein de (petits) rien (Lots of (little) nothing)* | Compagnie Lili Désastre | France | 1 to 5 | 2008 | Francesca Sorgato |
| *Valse Mathilda (Waltzing Matilda)* | Compagnie Médiane | France | 3 + | 1992 | Catherine Sombsthay |
| *Pluie (Rain)* | Compagnie Médiane | France | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Catherine Sombsthay |
| *Son free son* | Compagnie Médiane | France | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Catherine Sombsthay |
| *Matin calme (Calm Morning)* | Compagnie Nathalie Cornille | France | 18 months to 4 | 2008 | Nathalie Cornille |
| *Un papillon dans la niege (A butterfly in the snow)* | Compagnie O'Navio | France | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Simon Chapellas |
| *Où va l'eau? (Where does the water go?)* | Compagnie O'Navio | France | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Alban Coulaud |
| *Potopoto* | Compagnie Ouragane | France | 1 to 6 | 2006 | Laurence Salvadori |
| *Les mains dans les poches (Hands in pockets)* | Compagnie Ouragane | France | 6 months to 2 years | 2008 | Marie-Amélie Pierret / Laurence Salvadori |
| *Graines d'étoiles (Grains of stars)* | Compagnie Point du Jour | France | 1 to 4 | 1994 | Francoise Gerbaulet |
| *Passe sans bruit (Passing without a sound)* | Compagnie Point du Jour | France | 1 to 4 | 2004 | Francoise Gerbaulet |
| *Incertain corps (Uncertain Body)* | Compagnie Point Virgule | France | 2 + | 2008 | Claire Jenny |
| *Au bord de l'autre* | Compagnie Ramodal | France | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Jean-Pierre Dulin |
| *Baleine (Whale)* | Compagnie Robinson | France | 1 to 4 | 2004 | Claude Magne |
| *Va où* | Compagnie Robinson | France | 6 months to 5 | 2008 | Claude Magne |
| *86 centimetres* | Compagnie s'appelle Reviens | France | 18 months to 4 | 2008 | Alice Laloy |
| *Geminus* | Compagnie UBI | France | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Sarosi Nay |
| *Grain de riz (Grain of rice)* | Compagnie Vire-Volte | France | 1 to 4 | 2006 | Hélène Hoffmann |
| *Pendant que le loup n'y est pas (While the wolf isn't there)* | Compagnie Vire-Volte | France | 1 to 4 | 2008 | Hélène Hoffmann |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Au premier (ét)âge (At first (st)age)* | Ensemble FA7 | France | 9 months to 3 | 2004 | Sylvain Frydman |
| *Grain* | Ensemble FA8 | France | 6 months to 3 | 2008 | Sylvie Pascal |
| *Embrasser la lune (Embrace the Moon)* | Fil Rouge Théâtre | France | 2+ | 2012 | Eve Ledig |
| *L'oiseau serein (The Serene Bird)* | Joelle Rouland | France | 0 to 3 | 1987 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Dorénavant (Henceforth)* | Joelle Rouland | France | 0 to 3 | 1989 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Babil* | Joelle Rouland | France | 0 to 3 | 1990 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Murmures (Murmurs)* | Joelle Rouland | France | 0 to 3 | 1991 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Volubilis* | Joelle Rouland | France | 2.5 + | 2012 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Nokto (Night)* | L'Yonne en Scène | France | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Jean Pascal Viault |
| *Au bord de l'eau (At the water's edge)* | La Libentère | France | 1 to 4 | 2009 | Véronique His |
| *Plis/Sons (Folds / Sounds)* | Laurent Dupont | France | 1 to 3 | 2005 | Laurent Dupont |
| *Petit'Ô* | Le Rideau à Sonnette | France | 1 to 6 | 2008 | Sandrine Nicolas / Hélène Seretti |
| *La coulée douce (The Gentle Flow)* | Le Théâtre Nemo/Enfance et Musique | France | 1 to 4 | 1998 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Le fil d'Avril (April's Son)* | Le Théâtre Nemo/Enfance et Musique | France | 3+ | 2000 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Chübichaï* | Le vent des Forges | France | 18 months to 4 | 2006 | Odile L'Hermitte / Marie Tuffin |
| *Sable* | Méli Malo | France | 8 months to 5 | 2005 | Laurent Drouet / Pascale Dumoulin / Brigitte Le Gall |
| *HOP LA ! ça tourne* | Méli Malo | France | 8 months to 6 | 2006 | Pascale Dumoulin / Céline Le Jéloux / Laurent Drouet |
| *Concertino en Si* | Méli Malo | France | 1 to 3 / 3 + | 2008 | Laurent Drouet |
| *Dis-Moi Nina (Tell Me Nina)* | Méli Malo | France | 8 months to 5 | 2009 | Laurent Drouet |
| *JaunOrange (YellowOrange)* | Méli Malo | France | 1 to 3 | 2012 | Laurent Drouet / Pascale Dumoulin |
| *La plage oubliée (The Forgotten Beach)* | Theatre de la Manicle | France | 8 months to 3 | 1993 | Joelle Rouland |
| *Meins! (Mine!)* | Concol Theater | Germany | 2 to 4 | 2010 | Andrea Kramer |
| *Die Blumenfee (The Flower Fairy)* | Crimitschauer Kasperletheater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2013 | |
| *Im garten (In The Garden)* | Elisabeth Vera Rathenböck | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Elisabeth Vera Rathenböck |
| *Rawums (:)* | Florschütz & Döhnert | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Melanie Florschütz |
| *Herr & Frau Sommerflügel (Mr and Mrs Summerwing)* | Florschütz & Döhnert | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2010 | Melanie Florschütz |
| *Shhh!* | Florschütz & Döhnert | Germany | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Melanie Florschütz |
| *Liquids* | Fundus Theater | Germany | 2 to 10 | 2013 | Zoe Laughlin / Sibylle Peters |
| *aneinander vorbei (nearly - but not quite)* | GRIPS Theater | Germany | 2+ | 2012 | Frank Panhans |
| *Trommeltropfen (Drum Drops)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 3+ | 2002 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Erde, Stock und Stein (Earth, Stick & Stone)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Laurent Dupont |
| *Holzklopfen (Knock on Wood / Woodbeat)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Hand und Fuss (Hand and Foot)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2010 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Tongestalten (Clay Figures)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Barbara Kölling |

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| *Am Faden entlang (Follow The Yarn)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Wollgeflüster (Follow The Yarn)* | HELIOS Theater | Germany | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Barbara Kölling |
| *O Himmel blau (Oh Blue Sky)* | HELIOS Theater / Ania Michaelis | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Anfangen, anfangen (Begin, Begin)* | HELIOS Theater / Junges Staatstheater Braunschweig | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Barbara Kölling |
| *H20 / Ha zwei oohh* | HELIOS Theater / Mierscher Kulturhaus | Germany | 2 to 6 | 2010 | Barbara Kölling |
| *Ein Zappelzwerg im Pappelberg* | Kinderleidtheater Woffelpantoffel | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Birgit Bethe |
| *Die Fischprinzessin (The Fish Princess)* | Marionettentheater KALEIDOSKOP | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Vera Pachale |
| *Frau Sonne und Herr Mond machen Wetter (Mrs Sun and Mr Moon make weather)* | Puppentheaters am Theater Jungen Generation | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Rike Reiniger |
| *Das große LaLuLa (The Great Lalula)* | Schnawwl Nationaltheater Mannheim | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2008 | Marcela Herrera, Nicole Libnau |
| *Kopffüßler (Cephalopods)* | Tanzfuchs | Germany | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Barbara Fuchs |
| *Mampf! (Munch!)* | Tanzfuchs | Germany | 0 to 4 | 2013 | Barbara Fuchs |
| *Funkeldunkel Lichtgedicht (Sparkling Darkness Light Poem)* | Theater der Jungen Generation | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Ania Michaelis |
| *Fingerfühl, Hörehell und Schlauschau (Feelfinger, Brightear and Sharpeye)* | Theater der Jungen Generation | Germany | 2 + | 2010 | Ania Michaelis |
| *Der kleine Häwelmann (Little Häwelmann)* | Theater der Nacht | Germany | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Billy Bernhard |
| *Hase Hase Mond Hase Nacht (Hare Hare Moon Hare Night)* | Theater o.N. | Germany | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Andrea Kilian |
| *Kokon (Cocoon)* | Theater o.N. | Germany | 2+ | 2011 | Anna Michaelis |
| *Kling, kleines Ding (Pling, little thing)* | Theater o.N. | Germany | 2+ | 2012 | Bernd Sikora |
| *Weiße Wäsche (Laundry on the Line)* | Theater o.N. | Germany | 2+ | 2012 | Martina Schulle |
| *Dot* | Theater Papilio | Germany | 2 to 4 | 2011 | Anna Rosenfelder |
| *Anziehsachen (Clothes)* | Theaterhaus Ensemble | Germany | 2 + | 2011 | Melanie Florschütz / Michael Döhnert |
| *PRIMO* | Alfredo Zinola | Germany / Italy | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Alfredo Zinola / Felipe González |
| *Uno a Uno (One to One)* | Junges Ensemble Stuttgart / La Baracca | Germany / Italy | 1 to 4 | 2012 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Άκου (Listen)* | Porta Theater | Greece | 1 to 3 | 2014 | Xenia Kalogeropoulou |
| *Tekergő (Wiggler)* | Kolibri | Hungary | 0 to 3 | 2009 | János Novák |
| *Pont, pont, vesszőcske (Dot, dot, comma)* | Kolibri | Hungary | 2 + | 2013 | Barbara Kölling |
| *See Saw* | Ciotóg | Ireland | 0 + | 2010 | Ríonach Ní Néill |
| *Blátha Bána (White Blossoms)* | Graffiti Theatre Company | Ireland | 18 months to 3 | 2012 | Emelie FitzGibbon |
| *Gile Na Gealaí (Melody of the Moon)* | Graffiti Theatre Company | Ireland | 0 to 3 | 2013 | Emelie FitzGibbon / Sìle Ní Bhroin |
| *Infant Imaginings* | Helium | Ireland | 3 months to 2 | 2008 | Helene Hugel |
| *Star Boy* | Joe Brennan | Ireland | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Joe Brennan |
| *The Bedmaker* | Monkeyshine Theatre | Ireland | 3 to 5 | 2007 | Kareen Pennefather |
| *Ahhhh!* | Pignut Productions | Ireland | 18 months to 4 | 2009 | Jay Ryan |

| Title | Company | Country | Age | Year | Author/Director |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Silver Tree* | White Crystal Company | Ireland / Romania | 0 to 9 months | 2010 | Cliodhna Noonan |
| *Lulu's Circus* | The Train Theater | Israel | 3 + | 2010 | Alina Ashbel |
| *The Marzipan Fairy* | The Train Theater | Israel | 3 to 7 | 2010 | Roni Mosenson-Nelken |
| *Kav Nekooda* | The Train Theater | Israel | 3 + | 2011 | Alina Ashbel |
| *Tic Tac Tic Tac (Tick Tock Tick Tock)* | Casa Degli Alfieri | Italy | 2 + | 2011 | Antonio Catalano |
| *10 Parole (My First Ten Words)* | Compagnia Il Melarancio | Italy | 18 months to 4 | 2011 | Tiziana Ferro / Vanni Zinola |
| *Fil di suono (Thread of sound)* | Drammatico Vegetale | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1993 | Pietro Fenati |
| *Brum* | Drammatico Vegetale | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2010 | Pietro Fenati |
| *I Racconti di Mamma Oca (Mother Goose's Tales)* | Drammatico Vegetale | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Che si che no (Yes and No)* | Drammatico Vegetale | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Pietro Fenati |
| *Acqua (Water)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 4 | 1987 | Valeria Frabetti / Roberto Frabetti |
| *Un sogno d'aria (A dream of air)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 1988 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *I colori del Fuoco (The Colours of Fire)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1989 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *L'orso e la nebbia (The bear and the fog)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1990 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Desideri o il lupo e la luna (Desires, or The Wolf and the Moon)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1991 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *La stelle di San Lorenzo (The Stars of San Lorenzo)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 1993 | Valeria Frabetti |
| *Storia di un armadio (Story of a Cupboard)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1993 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Il viaggio di una nuvola (The story of a cloud)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 4 | 1994 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Quando le ballene si tolsero le scarpe (When the whale took off its shoes)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1995 | Roberto Frabetti / Bruno Cappagli / Laura Draghetti |
| *Il treno e l'arcobaleno (The Train and the Rainbow)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 4 | 1996 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Il cavalier porcello (The Little Pig Cavalier)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 1997 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Muro coloraturo (Coloured Wall)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 4 | 1999 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Il venditore di palloncini (The Balloon-Seller)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2000 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Il coccodrillo e l'elefante (The Crocodile and the Elephant)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2001 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Avventure in frigorifero (Adventure in the Fridge)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2002 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Treno fantasma (Ghost Train)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 4 | 2003 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *I colori dell'acqua (The Colours of Water)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2003 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Atomi (Atoms)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2004 | Roberto Frabetti / Bruno Cappagli |
| *L'albero rubamutande (The Underwear-Stealing Tree)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *E poi...cadono! (And then...they fall!)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2009 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Cappuccetto rosso (Little Red Riding Hood)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 3 to 7 | 2010 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Guardando il cielo (Looking at the sky)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Valeria Frabetti / Roberto |

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| *Piccola giostra* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *On - Off* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Valeria Frabetti |
| *Stagioni (Seasons)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *La barca e la luna (The boat and the moon)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Bruno Cappagli / Valeria Frabetti |
| *L'elefantino (The Little Elephant)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Spot* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2012 | Valeria Frabetti |
| *L'Oritteropo (The Aardvark)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Voice of paper* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Enrico Montalbani / Fabio Galanti |
| *Pietra e piuma (Stone and Feather)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Roberto Frabetti |
| *Babbo Bibbo e Mamma Mimma* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Valeria Frabetti |
| *Casa (Home)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 1 to 4 | 2014 | Bruno Cappagli |
| *Raggi di luce (Rays of Light)* | La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Andrea Buzzetti |
| *Coccolami* | La Baracca di Monza | Italy | 18 months to 3 | 2011 | |
| *Storia di Carta (The History of Paper)* | La Baracca di Monza | Italy | 18 months to 3 | 2011 | |
| *Fratellini (Brothers)* | La Baracca di Monza | Italy | 18 months to 3 | 2012 | |
| *Mare (Sea)* | La Contrada - Teatro Stabile di Trieste | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Mimi e la Felicità (Mimi and Happiness)* | La Piccionaia / I Carrara | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Droplets* | La Società della Civetta | Italy | 1 to 6 | 2010 | |
| *Wind* | La Società della Civetta | Italy | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Guglielmo Papa |
| *MamaMusica* | MamaMusica Ensemble | Italy | 0-1, 1-2, 2-3 | 2012 | Chiara Bartolotta, Linda Tesauro & Luca Bernard |
| *Cantico del nascere (Song of Birth)* | Nautai Teatro | Italy | 3 to 6 | 1998 | Miriam Bardini |
| *Il Tappeto delle Favole (The Carpet of Tales)* | Nonsoloteatro | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Pierone e il Lupo (Peter and the Wolf)* | Pandemonium Teatro | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Ba Ba* | Piccoli Principi | Italy | 18 months to 4 | 2008 | Véronique Nah / Alessandro Libertini |
| *La Sirenita (The Little Mermaid)* | Piccoli Principi | Italy | 3 to 8 | 2011 | Véronique Nah |
| *SCATéNàTI (Unleashed)* | ScarlattineTeatro | Italy | 0 to 5 | 2013 | Anna Fascendini |
| *Pon Pon* | Stilema / Unoteatro | Italy | 2 to 4 | 2005 | Bruna Pellegrini |
| *Carta Canta (Singing Paper)* | Stradevarie | Italy | 0 to 3 | 2012 | |
| *AL di LA* | TAM Teatromusica | Italy | 18 months to 5 | 2003 | Laurent Dupont |
| *Ho un punto fra le mani (I have a dot in my hands)* | TAM Teatromusica | Italy | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Flavia Bussolotto |
| *Small Coloured Movements* | Teatrimperfetti | Italy | 2 to 5 | 2012 | |
| *Les saisons de Pallina (The seasons of Pallina)* | Teatro all'Improvviso | Italy | 2+ | 2006 | Dario Moretti / Cristina Cazzola |

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| *Felicità di una stella (Happiness of a Star)* | Teatro all'Improvviso | Italy | 2+ | 2008 | Dario Moretti |
| *El Punto, La Lìnea, El Gato (The Point, The Line, The Cat)* | Teatro all'Improvviso | Italy | 3 to 8 | 2011 | Dario Moretti |
| *Foresta Blu (Blue Forest)* | Teatro all'Improvviso | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *In viaggio con Teo (Travelling with Teo)* | Teatro del Drago / Artesonoraperbambini | Italy | 3 to 6 | 2012 | |
| *Piccolo Misteri (Little Mysteries)* | Teatro Kismet Opera | Italy | 0 to 4 | 2001 | Laurent Dupont |
| *Piccoli Sentimenti* | Teatro delle Briciole / Tof Théâtre | Italy / Belgium | 2.5 + | 2012 | Alain Moreau |
| *Hello! Baby* | Puppet Theater Aruaru | Japan | 0 to 2 | 2011 | |
| ちいちいにんにん *Chii Chii Nin Nin* | Puppet Theater Nonohana | Japan | 1 to 6 | 2011 | |
| ぐるぐる *Guru Guru (Round and Round)* | Theater CAN Seigei | Japan | 1 to 3 | 2011 | |
| *Be My Baby! - Rule of Thrill* | To R Mansion | Japan | 0 to 5 | 2012 | Hanabi Uwanosora |
| *Umbo* | Compañía Teatro al Vacío | Mexico | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Adrián Hernández / José Agüero |
| *Woei!* | Alle Hoeken van de Kamermuziek | Netherlands | 1 to 3 | 2013 | Virág Deszo / Ide van Heiningen |
| *Harig Hondje (Hairy Dog)* | BonteHond | Netherlands | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Noel Fischer |
| *Berg (Mountain)* | Cie sQueezz | Netherlands | 2.5 to 4 | 2012 | Anne-Beth Schuurmans / Marie-Rose Mayele |
| *Wolk geland (Cloud landed)* | Cie sQueezz | Netherlands | 2.5 + | 2013 | Anne-Beth Schuurmans / Marie-Rose Mayele |
| *Wonderzoekers (Wonderseekers)* | Cie sQueezz | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Anne-Beth Schuurmans |
| *HiHaHuttenbouwers (HiHaHutConstructors)* | De Stilte | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Jack Timmermans |
| *Kleur (Colour)* | Gaia Gonnelli | Netherlands | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Gaia Gonnelli |
| *Ondersteboven (Upside Down)* | Gaia Gonnelli / Dansmakers | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Gaia Gonnelli |
| *Ets-beest (Etching Beast)* | Katrina Brown | Netherlands | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Katrina Brown |
| *Mama!!!!* | Lot Lohr and Renee Menschaar | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Lot Lohr & Renee Menschaar |
| *Op zoek naar het huilmeisje (Looking for the Crying Girl)* | Malou van Sluis | Netherlands | 2.5 to 5 | 2012 | Malou van Sluis |
| *In de verte (In the distance)* | Malou van Sluis & Judith Sleddens | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Malou van Sluis |
| *Wiggle* | Marloeke van der Vlugt | Netherlands | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Marloeke van der Vlugt |
| *Remix* | Marloeke van der Vlugt and Sarah Manya | Netherlands | 2 + | 2012 | Marloeke van der Vlugt & Sarah Manya |
| *Droomtijd (Daydream)* | MiramirO Gent & Crying Out Loud | Netherlands | 0+ | 2011 | Inne Goris |
| *Glimp* | Oorkaan | Netherlands | 2 + | 2014 | Tony Overwater / Rob Kloet |
| *De wereld onder je bed (The world under your bed)* | Rosa Peters | Netherlands | 2.5 + | 2012 | Rosa Peters |
| *Tik tak slaap (Tick, tock, sleep)* | Sanne Zweije | Netherlands | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Sanne Zweije |
| *Doos (Box)* | Silvia Bennett | Netherlands | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Silvia Bennett |
| *Eiland (Island)* | Simone de Jong | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Simone de Jong |

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| *Gezocht: Konijn (Wanted: Rabbit)* | Theatergroep Max. | Netherlands | 3 + | 2011 | René Geerlings |
| *Tomke zoekt de kluts (Tomke Looking for the Plot)* | Tryater | Netherlands | 3+ | 2011 | Bram de Goeij |
| *Wonderland* | Wonderland Collectief | Netherlands | 2 to 6 | 2006 | Makiko Ito |
| *BB* | Wonderland Collectief | Netherlands / France | 6 months to 14 months | 2012 | Sylvain Meret & Makiko Ito |
| *Little Kowhai Tree* | Little Dog Barking Theatre Company | New Zealand | 2 to 7 | 2012 | Peter Wilson |
| *The Pond* | Little Dog Barking Theatre Company | New Zealand | 2 to 7 | 2013 | Peter Wilson |
| *Duck, Death and the Tulip* | Little Dog Barking Theatre Company | New Zealand | 2 to 7 | 2014 | Nina Nawalowalo |
| *MuMo* | Assault Events | Northern Ireland | 3 to 5 | 2013 | |
| *Wobble* | Replay Theatre Company | Northern Ireland | 2 to 4 | 2011 | Anna Newell |
| *Babble* | Replay Theatre Company | Northern Ireland | 0 to 18 months | 2013 | Anna Newell |
| *TiNY* | Replay Theatre Company | Northern Ireland | 0 to 1 | 2014 | Anna Newell |
| *Ulldotten (Tufts of Wool)* | De Heibergske Samlinger- Sogn Folkemuseum og Høgskulen i Sogn og Fjordane | Norway | 1 to 3 | 2012 | Henriette Harbitz / Lena Skjerdal |
| *Korall koral (Choral Coral)* | Dieserud / Lindgren | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2009 | Hanne Dieserud / Maja Ratkje |
| *Wolf Wolf* | Jon Tombre | Norway | 1 to 3 | 2005 | Jon Tombre |
| *Se Min Kjole (See My Dress)* | Karstein Solli Produksjoner | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2005 | Karstein Solli |
| *Readymade Baby* | Karstein Solli Produksjoner | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Karstein Solli |
| *Ut av det blå (Out of the Blue)* | Konstellasjonen | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2010 | |
| *Elefant (Elephant)* | Steffi Lund | Norway | 1 to 4 | 2006 | Steffi Lund |
| *Dråpene (The Drops)* | Steffi Lund & Turid Ousland | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2000 | Steffi Lund & Turid Ousland |
| *De Røde Skoene (The Red Shoes)* | Teater Fot | Norway | 1 to 2 | 2008 | Lise Hovik |
| *Rød Sko Savnet (Red Shoe Missing)* | Teater Fot | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Lise Hovik |
| *Mamma Danser (Mum's Dancing)* | Teater Fot | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Lise Hovik |
| *Spurv (Sparrow)* | Teater Fot | Norway | 7 months to 2 | 2012 | Lise Hovik |
| *Nattergal (Nightingale)* | Teater Fot | Norway | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Lise Hovik |
| *Høyt oppe i fjellet (Up in the Mountains)* | Teater Innlandet & Dieserud / Lindgren | Norway | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Hanne Dieserud / Maja Ratkje |
| *Bussen (Bus)* | Whispering Space | Norway | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Bibbi Winberg |
| *Przytulaki* | Baj Pomorski | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Marta Parfieniuk-Białowicz |
| *Brzdęk i Dźwięk (Twang and Sound)* | Baj Pomorski | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2014 | Katarzyna Kawalec |
| *Pan Brzuchatek (Mr. Brzuchatek)* | Białostocki Teatr Lalek | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Ryszard Doliński |
| *Misiaczek (Teddy Bear)* | Białostocki Teatr Lalek | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Wiesław Czołpiński |
| *Dlaczego - dlatego (Why? Because)* | Białostocki Teatr Lalek | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Michaił Jaremczuk |
| *Puszek (Down)* | Białostocki Teatr Lalek | Poland | 0 to 2 | 2012 | Laura Słabińska |

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| Lenka | Białostocki Teatr Lalek | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Kata Csato |
| Podłogowo (Floorville) | LALE.Teatr | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Janka Jankiewicz-Maśląkowsk & Tomasz Maśląkowski |
| Ściana.Banana (Banana Wall) | LALE.Teatr | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Janka Jankiewicz-Maśląkowsk & Tomasz Maśląkowski |
| Od ucha do ucha (From ear to ear) | Olsztyński Teatr Lalek | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| Co To? (What's This?) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 0 to 3 | 2006 | Katarzyna Pawłowska / Lucyna Winkel |
| Pudełko (Box) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 18 months to 5 | 2007 | Lucyna Winkel |
| Śpiewanki | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Lucyna Winkel |
| Świąteczne Pudełko (Christmas Box) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 18 months to 5 | 2009 | Lucyna Winkel |
| Książeczka Bajeczka (Book of Fairytales) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Lucyna Winkel |
| Ty I Ja (You and Me) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 0 to 4 | 2012 | Lucyna Winkel |
| Gra (The Game) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 18 months to 6 | 2013 | Lucyna Winkel-Sobczak |
| Blumowe Piosenki (Blum Songs) | Studio Teatralne Blum | Poland | 2 to 6 | 2013 | |
| Stół - ciuchcia - miś (Table-Choo Choo Train-Bear) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2008 | Beata Bąblińska, Grażyna Grobelna |
| Tańczące Wiolonczele (Dancing Cellos) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2008 | Beata Bąblińska, Grażyna Walerych, Monika Kabacińska |
| Nauka pływania (1, 2, 3 – ready or not, here I come!) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2009 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Jabłonka (The Apple Tree) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 6 | 2009 | Beata Bąblińska, Grażyna Grobelna, Monika Kabacińska |
| Pan Satie (Mr Satie - Made in Paper) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Słoń Trąbibombi (Trąbibombi Elephant) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Grajkółko (A Musical Circle) | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Lulajka | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Mozaika | Teatr Atofri | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Beata Bąblińska, Monika Kabacińska |
| Śpij (Sleep) | Teatr Baj | Poland | 6 months to 3 | 2012 | Alicja Morawska-Rubczak |
| Nie ma… nie ma… jest (It's not… it's not… it is) | Teatr Baj | Poland | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Andrzej Bocian |
| Kuchnia pełna niespodzianek (Kitchen Full of Surprises) | Teatr Baj | Poland | 1 to 3 | 2014 | Marta Gryko-Sokołowska |
| Bajka Zjajka (The Tale of Zjajka) | Teatr Dzieci Zagłębia | Poland | 18 months to 5 | 2012 | Maciej Dużyński |
| Tygryski (Tigers) | Teatr Lalka | Poland | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Agata Biziuk |
| Co słychać (What's Up?) | Teatr Lalka | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Agata Biziuk |
| Jasno/Ciemno (Light/Dark) | Teatr Lalki i Aktora "Kubuś" | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| Naj (Top) | Teatr Lalki i Aktora w Wałbrzychu | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Martyna Majewska |

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| *Zuzu i Lulu* | Teatr Lalki Pleciuga | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Niewińska-Van der Moeren |
| *Rozplatanie tęczy (Unweaving The Rainbow)* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2011 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *Julka i kulka (Julka and the ball)* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *Dźwiękowanie na dywanie (Sounds on the carpet)* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *Mama Africa* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *AHOJ (Ahoy)* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *A Kuku* | Teatr Małego Widza | Poland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Agnieszka Czekierda |
| *Pokolorowanki* | Teatr Pinokio | Poland | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| *Echy i achy, chlipy i chachy* | Teatr Pinokio | Poland | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| *Plumplumdzyńdzyńbum* | Teatr Pod Parasolem | Poland | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Irena Lipczyńska |
| *W szufladzie (In the drawer)* | Teatr Poddańczy | Poland | 0 to 3 | 2009 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| *Smakułyki* | Teatr Poddańczy | Poland | 2 to 4 | 2012 | Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza |
| *Afrykańska przygoda (African Adventure)* | Wrocławski Teatr Lalek | Poland | 18 months to 3 | 2012 | Mariola Fajak-Słomińska |
| *brzUCHO* | Wrocławski Teatr Lalek | Poland | 18 months to 3 | 2013 | Alicja Morawska-Rubczak |
| *a-ta-ymm* | Zdrojowy Teatr Animacji | Poland | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Dorota Bielska |
| *Ślady / Spuren (Traces)* | Teatr Atofri / HELIOS Theater | Poland / Germany | 2 + | 2014 | Barbara Kölling |
| *A barriga (In the belly)* | Companhia Caótica | Portugal | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Caroline Bergeron |
| *Bebé Babá* | Companhia de Música Teatral | Portugal | 0 to 2 | 2001 | Paolo Maria Rodrigues |
| *Andakibebé* | Companhia de Música Teatral | Portugal | 0 to 5 | 2005 | Paolo Maria Rodrigues |
| *Bébé Plim-Plim* | Companhia de Música Teatral | Portugal | 0 to 3 | 2009 | Paolo Maria Rodrigues |
| *AliBaBach* | Companhia de Música Teatral | Portugal | 0 to 2 | 2010? | Paolo Maria Rodrigues |
| *Concertos para Bebés (Concerts for Babies)* | Companhia Musicalmente | Portugal | 0 to 5 | 1998 | Paulo Lameiro |
| *Ti - Tó - Tis* | DançArte / Ária da Música | Portugal | 0 to 3 | 2010 | Sofia Belchior |
| *NãNãNã* | Ovo Teatro | Portugal | 0 to 3 | 2004 | Susana Arrais |
| *Mãe-Mão (Mother-Hand)* | Teatro do Biombo | Portugal | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Joana Pavão |
| *A preto e branco, um risco amarelo (In black and white, a yellow line)* | Teatro do Biombo | Portugal | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Joana Pavão |
| *Blim-Zim-Zim* | Teatro do Elefante | Portugal | 3 months to 3 | 2003 | Rita Sales |
| *IpiNÊSpês* | Teatro do Elefante | Portugal | 3 months to 3 | 2006 | Rita Sales |
| *Babel* | Teatro do Elefante | Portugal | 3 months to 3 | 2008 | Fernando Casaca |
| *Vice-Versa* | Victor Hugo Pontes | Portugal | 3 to 5 | 2011 | Victor Hugo Pontes |
| *Baloane Colorate (Colourful Balloons)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 4 | 2005 | Anca Sigartău |
| *Cucu Bau cu Ham şi Miau (Cuckoo Bow with Ham and Miaow)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2007 | |

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| *LaLaLaDoDo* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2007 | Daniela Andrei |
| *Rotocol (Roundabout)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2008 | Anca Zamfirescu |
| *Seminţe/Semi (Seeds)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2009 | Valeria Frabetti |
| *Alb şi Negru (White and Black)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2010 | Nicoleta Rusu, Voicu Hetel & Daniela Mişcov |
| *Dulapul cu vise* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 3 | 2011 | Nicoleta Rusu |
| *Ears of Wheat* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Voicu Hetel |
| *Miraj într-un OU (Mirage in an Egg)* | Teatrul Ion Creangă | Romania | 1 to 4 | 2013 | Daniela Andrei |
| *ростик (A Sprout)* | Saratov Youth Theatre | Russia | 1 + | 2008 | Ekaterina Vladimirovna Grokhovskaya |
| *…и над нами светят звезды (…and all the stars above us…)* | Saratov Youth Theatre / Theater der Jungen Generation | Russia / Germany | 2 + | 2012 | Ania Michaelis |
| *Cloud Man* | Ailie Cohen Puppet Maker | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Ailie Cohen |
| *The Secret Life of Suitcases* | Ailie Cohen Puppet Maker | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Ailie Cohen |
| *Snow Baby* | Catherine Wheels | Scotland | 3 + | 2003 | Andy Manley |
| *Holly and Ivy* | Catherine Wheels | Scotland | 3 + | 2005 | Gill Robertson |
| *White* | Catherine Wheels | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2010 | Andy Manley |
| *The Sea King's Surprise* | Clare McGarry | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2011 | Clare McGarry |
| *Red Riding Hood's Magic Purse* | Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2007 | Leigh McCalister |
| *Diving Belle* | Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2010 | Katherine Morley |
| *Rapunzel* | Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre | Scotland | 3 + | 2012 | Steve Smart |
| *3 Bears* | Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Steve Smart |
| *Ding Dong* | Eden Court CREATIVE | Scotland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Katyana Kozikowska |
| *Will It Snow?* | Eden Court CREATIVE | Scotland | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Katyana Kozikowska |
| *Around the World in a Rocket* | Eden Court CREATIVE | Scotland | 1 to 5 | 2011 | Katyana Kozikowska |
| *Little Blue* | Eden Court CREATIVE | Scotland | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Katyana Kozikowska |
| *Hummm-Bug!* | Eden Court CREATIVE | Scotland | 1 to 5 | 2013 | Katyana Kozikowska |
| *Unfinished Place* | Emily Magorrian | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Emily Magorrian |
| *The Polar Bears Go Wild* | Fish and Game | Scotland | 0 to 5 | 2011 | Eilidh MacAskill / Fiona Manson |
| *Moussa's Castle* | Frozen Charlotte Productions | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2006 | Heather Fulton |
| *Paperbelle* | Frozen Charlotte Productions | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2010 | Heather Fulton |
| *Too Many Penguins* | Frozen Charlotte Productions | Scotland | 0 to 3 | 2011 | Heather Fulton |
| *Bin it!* | Frozen Charlotte Productions | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2011 | Heather Fulton |
| *Twinkle Bell* | Grinagog Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2009 | Clare McGarry |
| *Goldilocks and the Enormous Turnip* | Grinagog Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Clare McGarry |
| *Toowit Toowoo* | Grinagog Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 6 | 2012 | Clare McGarry |
| *Max on Holiday* | Grinagog Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2013 | Clare McGarry |

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| *The Edibles* | Grinagog Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2013 | Clare McGarry |
| *Wonderland* | Grinagog Theatre / Citizens Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Clare McGarry |
| *Little Ulla* | Grinagog Theatre / Citizens Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2011 | Clare McGarry |
| *Head in the Clouds* | Ipdip Theatre | Scotland | 0 to 3 | 2013 | Charlotte Allan / Calum Coutts |
| *Calvinball* | Ipdip Theatre | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2014 | Charlotte Allan |
| *Hare and Tortoise* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 + | 2002 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *Wee Witches* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 + | 2004 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *The Christmas Quangle Wangle* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 + | 2004 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *Magic Spaghetti* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 + | 2005 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *Molly Whuppie* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2006 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *Heelie-go-Leerie* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 + | 2008 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *LicketyLeap* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 3 to 4 | 2008 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *Yabba Yabba* | Licketyspit | Scotland | 0 to 3 | 2014 | Virginia Radcliffe |
| *In Colour* | Lyra Theatre | Scotland | 2 to 8 | 2012 | Matt Addicott / Katy Wilson |
| *Polar Molar* | Macrobert | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2011 | Lu Kemp / Abigail Docherty |
| *Funnybones* | Puppet Lab | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2005 | |
| *The Gift* | Puppet Lab | Scotland | 18 months to 3 | 2008 | Symon Macintyre |
| *If I Was A Mouse, I Would Hide In Your Hood* | Reeling & Writhing | Scotland | 3 to 6 | 2010 | Katherine Morley |
| *The Presents* | Reeling & Writhing | Scotland | 4 months to 18 months | 2011 | Katherine Morley / Paul Rissman |
| *My Little Shadow* | Renfrewshire Arts & Museums / Right2Dance | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Vanessa Rigg |
| *Swoosh* | Renfrewshire Arts & Museums / Right2Dance | Scotland | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Vanessa Rigg |
| *Experiments in Theatre: Just One More…* | Royal Conservatoire of Scotland / Libellule Theatre | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2012 | Louise Clark |
| *The Elements* | Sacha Kyle / Platform | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2014 | Sacha Kyle |
| *Big Ears Little Ears* | Scottish Chamber Orchestra | Scotland | 0 to 18 months | 2011 | Howard Moody |
| *Innocence* | Scottish Dance Theatre | Scotland | 0 to 7 | 2013 | Fleur Darkin |
| *BabyO* | Scottish Opera | Scotland | 6 months to 18 months | 2010 | Rachel Drury |
| *SensoryO* | Scottish Opera | Scotland | 18 months to 3 | 2012 | Rachel Drury |
| *The Little Red Hen* | Shona Reppe | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 1998 | Shona Reppe |
| *Potato Needs A Bath* | Shona Reppe | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Shona Reppe |
| *Little Light* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 3 | 2007 | Andy Manley / Vanessa Rigg |
| *My House* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 18 months to 3 | 2007 | Andy Manley |
| *Oops A Daisy* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2009 | Sacha Kyle |
| *Archaeology: A Worm's Story* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 1 to 3 | 2009 | Andy Manley / Rosie Gibson |
| *Shake 'N' Bake* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Hazel Darwin Edwards / Sacha |

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| *The Elf Experiment* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 3 + | 2009 | Matt Addicott |
| *Baby Chill* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 18 months | 2010 | Sacha Kyle |
| *First Light* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 2 | 2010 | Matt Addicott |
| *Sprog Rock* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *Multi Coloured Blocks from Space* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *Sproglit* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *Will You Be My Guinea Pig?* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *The Light Installation* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *The Playroom* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2010 | Sacha Kyle |
| *Round in Circles* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 1 to 3 | 2010 | Hazel Darwin-Edwards |
| *Sparkalator* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2010 | Katy Wilson |
| *Luvhart* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2010 | Sacha Kyle |
| *The Cloud Factory* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2010 | Matt Addicott |
| *The Attic* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2010 | Hazel Darwin-Edwards |
| *Icepole* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2011 | Katy Wilson |
| *Forgotten Forests* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2011 | Hazel Darwin-Edwards |
| *The Incredible Swimming Choir* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2011 | Matt Addicott |
| *Space Dust* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2011 | Hazel Darwin-Edwards |
| *This Sucks* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2011 | Katy Wilson / Matt Addicott |
| *Yarla and the Winter Wood* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Jen Edgar |
| *News and Weather* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 + | 2013 | Matt Addicott / Katy Wilson |
| *Sonic Playground* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 + | 2013 | Nik Paget-Tomlinson |
| *Too Many Cooks* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Nik Paget-Tomlinson / Hazel Darwin-Edwards |
| *Blue Block Studio* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 0 to 2 | 2014 | Katy Wilson |
| *Yellow Valley* | Starcatchers | Scotland | 2 to 4 | 2014 | Xana Marwick |
| *Peep* | Starcatchers / Frozen Charlotte | Scotland | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Heather Fulton |
| *Hup* | Starcatchers / RSNO | Scotland | 0 to 2 | 2014 | Hazel Darwin-Edwards / Abigail Sinar |
| *We Dance, Wee Groove* | Starcatchers & Stillmotion | Scotland | 0 to 5 | 2008 | Brian Hartley |
| *Meep and Moop* | TAG | Scotland | 3 to 5 | 2010 | Guy Hollands |
| *The Singing Kettle* | The Singing Kettle | Scotland | 3 to 8 / 1 + | 1982 | Cilla Fisher, Artie Trezise and Kevin MacLeod |
| *CuckooOO!* | Vanessa Rigg | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2009 | Vanessa Rigg |
| *Baby Bee* | Vanessa Rigg | Scotland | 0 to 4 | 2009 | Vanessa Rigg |
| *Hickory and Dickory Dock* | Wee Stories | Scotland | 3 to 7 | 2013 | Claire Halleran |
| *A small story (Eine kleine geschichte)* | Starcatchers / Theater o.N. | Scotland / | 2 to 4 | 2014 | Andy Manley & Ania Michaelis |

| | | Germany | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baby Space | Dalija Aćin Thelander / Mixer Festival | Serbia | 5 months + | 2011 | Dalija Aćin Thelander |
| The Book of Wandering | Little Theatre Dusko Radovic | Serbia | 1 + | 2008 | Dalija Aćin Thelander |
| Certain Very Important Matters | Little Theatre Dusko Radovic | Serbia | 6 months to 18 months | 2010 | Dalija Aćin Thelander |
| Glava dol - noge gor! (Head Down, Legs Up!) | AEIOU | Slovenia | 3 months to 3 | 2011 | Katja Kähkönen |
| Zmajček (Little Dragon) | Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana | Slovenia | 1+ | 2003 | Sonja Kononenko |
| Tik Tak (Tick Tock) | Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana | Slovenia | 1+ | 2010 | Sonja Kononenko |
| Ti loviš! (You Catch!) | Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana | Slovenia | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Silvan Omerzu |
| Močeradek gre čez cesto (Little Salamander Goes Across the Road) | Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana | Slovenia | 2 + | 2013 | Matija Solce |
| ¡Ojo Al Pajarito! | Teatro Papelito | Slovenia | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Brane Solce |
| Turlututu | Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana / Centre de Créations pour l'Enfance Tinqueux | Slovenia / France | 2 + | 2013 | Matija Solce |
| The Fantastical Flea Circus | Catalina Theatre | South Africa | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Clinton Marius |
| i-Puppeti | Catalina Theatre | South Africa | 3 to 7 | 2012 | Clinton Marius |
| Tree / Boom / Umthi | Magnet Theatre | South Africa | 0 to 7 | 2013 | Jennie Reznek |
| Patchwork | Pillow Fort Productions | South Africa | 1 to 4 | 2014 | Joanna Evans |
| Pushmi Pul Yu | UKAO Arts | South Africa | 3 to 6 | 2014 | Bulelani Mabutyana |
| …Y las azules rejas del amor | Al Filito de la Silla | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Hugo Pérez |
| Un catalejo que es un caleidoscopio (A telescope is a kaleidoscope) | Al Filito de la Silla | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Hugo Pérez |
| Déjate llevar (Take the lead) | Ambulantes Teatro | Spain | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Juan Cifuentes |
| A Mar | Andenes de Agua | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Leandro Ojeda |
| Cuando vuelve la luna (When the moon comes out) | Arena en los Bolsillos | Spain | 1 to 4 | 2008 | Julia Ruiz Carazo |
| Afuera es un lugar (Outside is a place) | Arena en los Bolsillos | Spain | 1 to 4 | 2010 | Rosa Díaz |
| Zapatos (Shoes) | Caramuxo Teatro | Spain | 1 to 4 | 2010 | Juan Rodríguez / Laura Sarasola |
| Glub Glub | Caramuxo Teatro | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Juan Rodríguez / Laura Sarasola |
| Ñam! | Caramuxo Teatro | Spain | 1 to 6 | 2012 | Juan Rodríguez / Laura Sarasola |
| Na Casa | Caramuxo Teatro | Spain | 1 to 6 | 2013 | Juan Rodríguez / Laura Sarasola |
| ¿Te acuerdas? (Do you remember?) | Compañía Fábula Teatro | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2006 | Juan Pedro Romera |
| Mua Mua | Da.te Danza | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2003 | |
| Tondo Redondo | Da.te Danza | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2006 | Omar Meza |
| ¡Oh… Mar! (Oh!...The Ocean!) | Da.te Danza | Spain | 0 to 4 | 2007 | |
| Sueña | Da.te Danza | Spain | 1 to 5 | 2008 | |
| Para Papèl | De Molecula | Spain | 18 months to 5 | 2010 | Patricia Ruz |

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| *AGÚ!* | Didascálica Teatro y Títeres | Spain | 1 to 3 | 2013 | Francisco J. De los Ríos |
| *Simón el Fantasmón (Simon the Ghost)* | Didascálica Teatro y Títeres | Spain | 1 to 3 | 2014 | Francisco J. De los Ríos |
| *La Eterna Soñadora (The Eternal Dreamer)* | Didascálica Teatro y Títeres | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2014 | Francisco J. De los Ríos |
| *El Reino de Papel (The Paper Kingdom)* | Didascálica Teatro y Títeres | Spain | 1 to 4 | 2014 | Francisco J. De los Ríos |
| *Agú 2* | Didascálica Teatro y Títeres | Spain | 1 to 4 | 2014 | Francisco J. De los Ríos |
| *Piedra a Piedra* | El Teatre de L'Home Dibuixat | Spain | 2 to 6 | 2008 | Rosa Díaz |
| *Cucu Haiku (Cucjkoo Haiku)* | Escena Miriñaque | Spain | 6 months to 5 | 2012 | Esther Velategui / Eva Sanz |
| *Caracoles (Snails)* | Eugenia Manzanera | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Eugenia Manzanera |
| *Sensacional (Sensational)* | Imaginart | Spain | 18 months to 4 | 2012 | Eulàlia Ribera / Jordi Colominas |
| *Pa cama (To Bed)* | Katarsis Teatro | Spain | 1 to 5 | 2009 | Omar Alvarez / Kevin Stewart |
| *¡Grande, Más Grande! (Big, Bigger!)* | Katarsis Teatro | Spain | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Omar Alvarez / Kevin Stewart |
| *Mondo Flurss (World of Flurss)* | Kolore Bitxia Teatroa | Spain | 3 to 5 | 2010 | Pako Revueltas |
| *Pupila de Agua (Water Eye)* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2003 | Carlos Laredo |
| *Quién era yo antes de ser yo (Who was I before I was me? / If you hadn't been born)* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2008 | Carlos Laredo |
| *La Geometría de los Sueños (The Geometry of Dreams)* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 8 months to 3 | 2008 | Carlos Laredo |
| *Si tu no hubieras nacido* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2009 | |
| *Desayuno frágil (Fragile Breakfast)* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2012 | Carlos Laredo |
| *En la punta de la lengua* (On the tip of the tongue) | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2012 | |
| *La Caverna Sonora (The Sound Cave)* | La Casa Incierta | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2012 | Carlos Laredo |
| *Lalú* | LaSal Teatro | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2008 | Julia Ruiz |
| *Piratas Puzleles (Pirate Puzzles)* | Marta Ariño | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2007 | Marta Ariño |
| *El Sueño de Luna (The Dream of the Moon)* | Okina Teatro | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2014 | Beatriz Llorente |
| *4 Tiempos (4 Times)* | Okina Teatro | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2014 | Beatriz Llorente |
| *La reina de los colores (The Queen of Colours)* | Plotpoint | Spain | 0 to 6 | 2014 | |
| *Animalia Je T'aime* | Teatro del Arte | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2013 | Gerard Clua |
| *Teatro para bebés: I Love You* | Teatro La Escalera de Jacob | Spain | 0 to 4 | 2012 | |
| *Bebeclown (Babyclown)* | Teatro La Paca | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2010 | Mari Carmen Gámez / Tomás Afán |
| *Regalos (Gifts)* | Teatro La Paca | Spain | 6 months to 3 | 2011 | Mari Carmen Gámez / Tomás Afán |
| *Nómadas (Nomads)* | Teatro Paraíso | Spain | 3 to 6 | 2014 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Ping* | Titeres de María Parrato | Spain | 1 to 6 | 2006 | María Parrato |
| *Caminos (Paths)* | Titeres de María Parrato | Spain | 1 to 3 | 2013 | Carlos Laredo |
| *Miramira* | Ultramarinos de Lucas | Spain | 1 to 3 | 2001 | Jorge Padín |
| *Otra Vez (Again)* | Ultramarinos de Lucas | Spain | 1 to 3 | 2007 | Juam Monedero Ayte |

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| *¿Cuándo? (When?)* | Ultramarinos de Lucas | Spain | 0 to 3 | 2009 | Jorge Padín |
| *En el jardín (In the garden)* | Theatre de la Guimbarde / Teatro Paraiso | Spain / Belgium | 2 to 6 | 2006 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Kri Kra Kro* | Theatre de la Guimbarde / Teatro Paraiso | Spain / Belgium | 3 to 6 | 2008 | Charlotte Fallon |
| *Tittut Trollet (Peekaboo Troll)* | Dockteatern Månstjärnan | Sweden | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Margareta Selander |
| *The Cat's Journey* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 5 | 2005 | Chris Dahl |
| *Lilla Tiger och lyckans land (Little Tiger and Happy Land)* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 6 | 2010 | Sven Wagelin-Challis |
| *Nu är vi gorillor låssas vi (Now we pretend we are gorillas)* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Ing-Mari Tirén |
| *Den vilda bebin och mamman (The wild baby and mother)* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 6 | 2011 | Sophia Segrell |
| *Under Hatten några dockor & ett piano (Under the Hat - some dollas and a piano)* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Jeanette Challis |
| *Pimpa* | Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 6 | 2012 | Fabrizio Montecchi |
| *voff! (woof!)* | Ögonblicksteatern | Sweden | 5 months to 2 | 2006 | Ellenor Lindgren |
| *Vem bestämmer? (Who decides?)* | Ögonblicksteatern | Sweden | 0 to 3 | 2010 | Johanna Salander |
| *Gossen och kärleken till tre apelsiner (The Boy and the Love for Three Oranges)* | Royal Swedish Opera / Dockteatern Tittut | Sweden | 2 to 5 | 2011 | Sven Wagelin-Challis |
| *Aston's Stones* | Teater Pero | Sweden | 3 to 6 | 2011 | Peter Engkvist |
| *Max* | Teater Sagohuset | Sweden | 1 to 3 | 2012 | Leila Åkerlund |
| *Mera Max (More Max)* | Teater Sagohuset | Sweden | 1 to 3 | 2012 | Leila Åkerlund |
| *Klä på klä av (Dressing to Undressing)* | Teater Tr3 | Sweden | 2 to 4 | 2003 | Helena Björelius Hort |
| *Bubbla (Bubble)* | Teater Tr3 | Sweden | 6 months to 1 year | 2008 | Helena Björelius Hort |
| *Babydrama* | Unga Klara | Sweden | 6 months to 1 year | 2006 | Suzanne Osten / Ann-Sofie Bárány |
| *Cirkus Månen / Circoluna* | Dockteatern Tittut / Teatro Gioco Vita | Sweden / Italy | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Nicola Lusuardi / Fabrizio Montecchi |
| *Gaia's Garden* | Teatro Pan | Switzerland | 1 to 4 | 2011 | |
| *A través del Agua* | Carina Biasco | Uruguay | 6 months to 3 | 2012 | Fernando Toja |
| *Aire* | Carina Biasco | Uruguay | 6 months to 3 | 2013 | Fernando Toja |
| *A Child's Garden of Verses* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2011 | Barry Kornhauser |
| *The Tranquil Tortoise and the Hoppity Hare* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2012 | |
| *Waiting for Balloon* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2013 | Rosemary Newcott |
| *Little Raindrop Songs* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2013 | Michael Haverty |
| *Songs To Grow On* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2014 | |
| *Roob and Noob* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2015 | |
| *The Lizard & El Sol* | Alliance Theatre for the Very Young | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2015 | |
| *Drumming with Dishes* | Arts on the Horizon | USA | 1 to 5 | 2011 | |

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| *Out of the Box* | Arts on the Horizon | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2012 | |
| *Under The Canopy* | Arts on the Horizon | USA | 0 to 2 | 2013 | Matt Bassett / Tia Shearer Bassett |
| *Sunny & Licorice* | Arts on the Horizon | USA | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Kate Debelack |
| *Shake a Tale Feather with Mother Goose* | Center for Puppetry Arts | USA | 2 to 5 | 2014 | Amy Sweeney |
| *Dot & Ziggy* | Chicago Children's Theatre | USA | 6 months to 4 | 2011 | Linda Hartzell |
| *A Special Trade* | Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis | USA | 2 to 5 | 2007 | Christer Dahl |
| *The Biggest Little House in the Forest* | Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis | USA | 2 to 5 | 2010 | Peter C. Brosius |
| *Balloonacy* | Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis | USA | 3 to 5 | 2010 | Barry Kornhauser |
| *Harold and the Purple Crayon* | Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis | USA | 3 + | 2012 | Rita Giomi |
| *I Laid An Egg* | Double Image Theater Lab | USA | 2 to 6 | 2013 | Nancy Smithner |
| *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* | Emerald City's Little Theater | USA | 0 to 4 | 2013 | Ernie Nolan |
| *Bingo's Birthday* | Emerald City's Little Theater | USA | 0 to 4 | 2014 | Ernie Nolan |
| *Wake Up, Brother Bear* | Imagination Stage | USA | 1 to 5 | 2010 | Janet Stanford |
| *Mouse on the Move* | Imagination Stage | USA | 1 to 5 | 2012 | Janet Stanford / Kathryn Chase Bryer |
| *The Young Spectaculars and the Front Yard Adventure* | Imagination Stage | USA | 1 to 5 | 2013 | |
| *Aquarium* | Imagination Stage / Theatre Lyngo | USA | 1 to 5 | 2011 | |
| *Peek-a-boo!* | Loren Kahn Puppet Theater | USA | 2+ | 2004 | Loren Kahn / Isabelle Kessler |
| *Dora the Explorer Live! Search for the City of Lost Toys* | Nick Jr / Lifelike Touring | USA | 2 to 6 | 2013 | |
| *Uh-Oh!* | PlayPlay! | USA | 0 to 3 | 2009 | Mark Sutton |
| *Wee* | PlayPlay! | USA | 0 to 3 | 2010 | Mark Sutton |
| *Psshh* | PlayPlay! | USA | 0 to 3 | 2012 | Mark Sutton |
| *Lost… and Found!* | Playtime Players | USA | 0 to 5 | 2014 | Stephanie Peters |
| *Wink* | Spellbound Theatre | USA | 0 to 5 | 2011 | Lauren Jost / Margot Fitzsimmons |
| *Aidee* | Spellbound Theatre | USA | 0 to 5 | 2013 | Lauren Jost |
| *The Dandelion Seed* | Stages Theatre Company | USA | 18 months to 5 | 2014 | Melanie Salmon-Peterson |
| *Once Upon A Treasure Trunk: Lost and Found* | The Coterie Theatre | USA | 2 to 5 | 2008 | |
| *Treasure Trunk Tour: Friend Not Foe* | The Coterie Theatre | USA | 2 to 5 | 2009 | Jeff Church |
| *Hatched: Life on the Farm* | Treehouse Shakers | USA | 0 to 6 | 2012 | Mara McEwin |
| *Shadow Play* | Trusty Sidekick Theater Company | USA | 2 to 5 | 2012 | Jonathan Shmidt |
| *Off The Map* | Trusty Sidekick Theater Company | USA | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Retta Leaphart |
| *Sesame Street Live* | Vee Corporation | USA | 1 to 6 | 2011 | |
| *Autumn Leaves* | WonderWorks | USA | 2 to 4 | 2013 | |

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| *Are You A Wild Thing?* | WonderWorks | USA | 2 to 4 | 2014 | |
| *Bugs, Bugs, Bugs* | WonderWorks | USA | 2 to 4 | 2014 | |
| *Apples, Pumpkins and Bones* | WonderWorks | USA | 2 to 4 | 2014 | Gail Medford |
| *From Here To There* | Imagination Stage / Tell Tale Hearts | USA/UK | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Natasha Holmes |
| *Inside Out* | Imagination Stage / Tell Tale Hearts | USA/UK | 2 to 6 | 2014 | Kathryn Chase Bryer |
| *Allan o Nunlle (Out of the Blue)* | Sarah Argent & Theatr Iolo | Wales | 6 months to 2 | 2009 | Sarah Argent / Kevin Lewis |
| *Are We There Yet?* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2003 | Sarah Argent |
| *That's Mine!* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2005 | Sarah Argent |
| *A Suitcase Full of Stories* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2006 | Sarah Argent |
| *Under The Carpet* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2007 | Sarah Argent |
| *Finding Leaves for Soup* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2009 | Sarah Argent |
| *Ruby Red Tells Tales* | Theatr Iolo | Wales | 3 to 5 | 2011 | Sarah Argent |
| *Luna* | Theatr Iolo / Theatre Hullabaloo | Wales | 2 to 5 | 2013 | Sarah Argent |
| *Scrunch* | Theatr Iolo / Unicorn | Wales | 6 to 18 months | 2014 | Sarah Argent / Kevin Lewis |

# Appendix D – Supplementary Material for Chapter 6

## D.1 Why create performative digital experiences for the very young?

Engagement with a performative experience now occurs outside of traditional theatre spaces with the advent of mobile tablets such as Apple's iPad (released in 2010), whose simple touchscreen interfaces are comprehensible to very young children. Indeed, "interactive video games offer new dramaturgical possibilities, while also drawing on and provoking the interactivity of the theatre event" (Turner and Behrndt, 2008, p.198). App developers making products for babies and toddlers are beginning to embrace models of best practice from other art forms for the very young, such as TEY and pre-school television, and many long-standing debates from such areas – developmental suitability; entertainment versus education; the dangers of exposing the young to technology – are now arising in the new field of digital arts (Fletcher-Watson, 2013a).

At the same time, Scotland's video games industry has developed an enviable reputation, with the development of digital media 'hubs' in Dundee and Edinburgh (home to Rockstar North, makers of the *Grand Theft Auto* series). Creative Scotland, the successor body to the Scottish Arts Council, now distributes government funding for digital media, unlike its English counterpart, Arts Council England. Theatre companies such as Catherine Wheels and the National Theatre of Scotland have pioneered the creation of *transmedia*, or associated content to accompany their productions[27] – games, apps and online experiences which extend the theatrical event beyond the auditorium. Perhaps the biggest potential audience for this new medium is children and young people. Children are growing up in a world mediated by technology, especially via accessible digital touchscreens. Mobile computing offers not only the opportunity to promote theatre productions, but also to generate new revenue streams from the intellectual property. Indeed, more than a

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[27] Four other dramatic apps derived from theatre productions have been created in recent years: Headlong's *Digital Double*, based on *1984* (M/A, 2013), National Theatre of Scotland's *Other*, based on *Let The Right One In* (Quartic Llama, 2013), Kneehigh's *Kneehigh Rambles: Perranporth,* based on the *Rambles* storytelling project (Calvium Ltd, 2013) and Ailie Cohen Puppet Maker / Unicorn Theatre's *Secret Suitcases*, based on *The Secret Life of Suitcases* (Hippotrix, 2014a).

quarter of parents in the USA have purchased apps for their children, while products for preschoolers constitute the majority of education apps sold by Apple (Shuler, Levine and Ree, 2012).

The challenge for companies creating work for children is to balance the need to generate income with the desire to preserve the aesthetic of the live theatre experience in an artistically valid way. As the costs of producing e-books, games and apps reduce, increasing numbers of arts organisations are joining the digital revolution to create what Sarah Grochala of theatre company Headlong has called "a parallel experience that augments the live event or enables the audience to see the performance they have experienced in a new light" (Grochala, 2013). In fact, differing transmedia forms can follow their own unique narrative path fitted to the aesthetics of the product – the storybook can be quite different to the show, which can be different again from the app "to provide greater pleasure, excitement, and depth for fans" (Laurel, 2013, p.183). In transmedia, "each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice versa. Any given product is a point of entry into the franchise as a whole" (Jenkins, 2006, p.98). This is distinct from companies who create theatre connected to the internet, where the digital form *defines* the artwork, such as in Blast Theory or Rimini Protokoll's use of interactive media storytelling. This may mean, as discussed in Chapter 6, the addition of new scenes, characters or settings alongside elements retained from the original.

As well as preserving or even dramaturgical and aesthetic forms, transmedia mobile apps also provide theatre companies with new possibilities for monetisation of existing artistic properties. Arts marketing scholars Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff have described "the augmented product [with] features and benefits beyond what the target audience normally expects" (1997, p.193), and within the arts, this process of augmentation has been delineated into several segments, from product testing to reducing social risk (Crealey, 2003, pp.30–32). It has been claimed that "consumers engage in risk-reducing (i.e. information-search) activities in order to reduce their perceived risk level (and therefore, their feelings of being uncomfortable)" (Dowling and Staelin, 1994, p.121).

As discussed in 4.6.3, Maria Crealey provides four distinct strategies to minimise an audience member's perceived risk when they are considering attending an arts event, including limited life cycle and selling risk (2003, pp.30-32). Two of

these strategies in particular are of interest when considering transmedia products deriving from TEY:

• *reducing social risk* – companies seek to make first-time or infrequent theatregoers feel comfortable in a new place, such as creating safe and welcoming spaces to encourage a sense of calm before, during and after a performance. This has been a focus of attention for venues and artists for some years, such as Oily Cart's "airlocks" (Brown, 2012, p.21) – areas between foyer and theatre where actors can be introduced, costumes and props handed out and children given time to acclimatise, making a bridge into the world of the play. Transmedia products can also reduce the sensation of risk – for example, a child reading a picture-book telling the story of the production before they visit the theatre is likely to feel more comfortable as the narrative unfolds, knowing that there are no surprises in store.

• *product testing* – allowing consumers to access early versions of performance, comparable with product prototypes. In Early Years theatre, testing is already common (see 4.6.3), with invited audiences providing feedback which affects a piece's development. Video trailers and new media, including apps, all offer a preview of the live event to come. This approach has been described as 'try before you buy', reducing the consumer's financial or emotional risk, as it "allows them to experiment with the artistic product at minimal cost before choosing whether to engage more fully" (Fletcher-Watson, 2014, p.40).

Crealey's strategies describe several means of reducing risk for audiences, but in transmedia franchises, the creation of a new version comes with a comparable risk: loss of certain central aspects of the originator artwork, which could be termed 'aesthetic dilution'. For example, a child reading a picture-book derived from a TEY production after the performance may feel disappointed at its failure to capture musical effects which captivated them in the venue. Apps and other digital media tend to retain many performance elements – script, music, visuals – within a new artwork, but they will always necessarily lack one key component in terms of interactivity: the live presence of a performer. Philip Auslander provides a well-known critique of the decline of liveness in modern cultural forms: "the ubiquity of reproductions of performances of all kinds in our culture has led to the depreciation of live presence, which can only be compensated for by making the perceptual experience of the live as much as possible like that of the mediatized, even in cases

where the live event provides its own brand of proximity" (2008, p.36). For Auslander then, an app would be a reproduction of performance, rather than a performative artwork in itself. This can perhaps be challenged by placing the user in the position of one or more characters from the live version, rather than as a new character interacting with them. Thus the characters do not appear in person, but instead the user becomes their avatar, immersed in the recreated environment of the scenery and props: '[i]n digital gaming, the player is… viewing his or her own actions—the actions one's avatars carry out can be seen on the screen' (Vangsnes, 2009, p.31). However, the success of this approach is not guaranteed without extensive testing, hence the secondary task of PaR in this case being, as well as an examination of dramaturgy, the application of those concepts in practice – trialling, prototyping and revising the app just as rehearsals allow theatre-makers to play and experiment.

For audiences who cannot visit the theatre, perhaps because they live in remote areas or in countries to which international tours do not regularly travel, as well as for audiences are not regular visitors to traditional theatres or perhaps entirely new to live performance, augmented experiences such as apps, cinemacasts, e-books, trailers, image galleries, downloadable soundtracks, and activity packs may all be utilised as ambassadors for the live event. They reduce risk for the consumer, demonstrate an engagement with hard-to-reach audiences, assist promoters and venues, and may even generate additional income for companies. As a complement to the live performance, transmedia artefacts such as apps contain scenes and objects which will be immediately familiar to spectators, while simultaneously extending the mythology of a production by highlighting previously peripheral moments. For children who have not yet encountered the stage version, a theatre-derived app is an open-ended story which they can construct at leisure, sharing the experience with a parent or sibling until they feel comfortable enough to roam on their own. It may encourage newcomers to attend the live production if they seek greater depth to the experience, or even prompt repeat visits to the theatre by fully-engaged spectators.

Transmedia may therefore offer theatre companies new means to monetise existing artistic properties and to attract new audiences, such as babies, for whom live theatre is not yet a regular pastime. Whether the current forms of augmentation and transmedia have longevity is more difficult to predict – they may simply be the fashion. However, as a new form of engagement with theatre for children and families, translating a live 3-D performance into a variety of other forms to be enjoyed

at home, represents a bold step into the digital world for an art form which prides itself on liveness. Adults have already shown remarkable willingness to engage with cinemacasts of theatre, such as NT Live, viewing them as "not second class, but a different experience" (NESTA, 2011, p.9); perhaps tablet computers and smartphones have the potential to provide children with access to the arts on similar terms.

## D.2 Gameplay as Dramaturgy

The application of existing dramaturgy within gaming is not innovative, and it is important to acknowledge the existing discourse around gameplay as dramaturgy. Gameplay is, dramaturgically speaking, the 'arc' of a game, and is generally simple: a premise is set up (use one object to knock down another, for example) and the physics of gameplay then allow the user to explore that premise within controlled limits. This could be contrasted with the classic four stages of narrative: *introduction*, *development*, *climax* and *resolution*. Traditional game formats only truly contain an introduction and a climax: engage an object and trigger an interaction with a second object. If a digital game is to be more theatrical, or more performative, it must begin to address the whole arc. Therefore the premise must develop and deepen in complexity before the climax is reached. It also means that the climax is not the end of the scene - something must happen because of or in response to the climax that will provide closure to the experience, even if the scene is immediately repeated. With some thought, it becomes possible to devise an elegant solution that turns game into drama.

Debates around the role of narrative and dramaturgy within digital media have proved contentious as new forms such as mobile apps have developed. From game design to pedagogy, from computer science to drama, scholars have engaged with the central hypothesis: *'games'* (a notably nebulous term which can encompass almost any digital medium) *are neither narratives nor role-plays*. Vigdis Vangsnes states that "games are games and not first and foremost narratives, even if in most games certain forms of sequential narrative are built in" (2009, p.22), while game theorist Kjetil Sandvik counters that "computer games are not just digital novels, movies or theatre performances. They may bear resemblances to the old media, but when it comes to narrativity, computer games have their own characteristics which tie them both to a technological and a ludological dimension… [games are] complex and dynamic systems… in which stories are dynamic, dramatic processes" (quoted in

Turner and Behrndt, 2008, p.199). Seeking a mid-ground, Espen Aarseth maintains that "to claim that there is no difference between games and narratives is to ignore essential qualities of both categories. And yet... the difference is not clear-cut, and there is significant overlap between the two" (1997, p.5). As noted in Chapter 2, games can be defined as either *ludic* (meaning rule-based) or *paidic* (meaning unstructured or improvised) (Caillois, 2001). Most scholars place digital games into the first category, because gameplay is inevitably restricted by the allowable rules of a 'closed world' and the limits of what can be encoded. Johan Huizinga describes the limiting of user agency in the wider context of children's play:

> All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course... the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function playgrounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged around, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart. (1955, pp.10–12)

Thus a game, like a drama, is a "temporary world" with specific governing principles. Research shows that our perceptions of physical play versus digital play tend to result in simplistic binary oppositions: small-scale personal activity such as a dolls' tea party versus massive multiplayer online games like *Minecraft*, or tactile experiences versus "isolated, immobile and escapist play" (Lauwaert, 2009, p.21). However, in the case of digital theatre, these binaries become blurred – for a child who has seen the performance, the experience of interacting with familiar objects within an replayable dramaturgy not only reproduces the source materiality as faithfully as possible, but also allows them to delve deeper into the narrative and aesthetic than was possible when they were sitting in the theatre: they can pick the show apart and re-order it at will in a *paidic* adventure of discovery. For users who have not yet seen the live version, the scenes might inspire an unique personal narrative journey which moves beyond or even rejects the dramaturgy of the performance.

# Appendix E – Works Informing This Thesis

*4:48 Psychosis*. By Sarah Kane. Trans. Durs Grünbein. Dir. Wanda Golonka.
Schauspiel, Frankfurt. 8 May 2002.

*Anonymouse*. Dir. Charlotte Allan. Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. 10 Aug. 2015.

*Astons Stenar (Aston's Stones)*. Dir. Peter Engkvist. Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh.
12 May 2012. http://vimeo.com/64135668

*BabyChill*. By Sacha Kyle. Dir. Sacha Kyle. Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline. 5 Nov. 2009.
http://vimeo.com/24855505

*Babydrama.* By Suzanne Osten and Ann-Sofie Bárány. Dir. Suzanne Osten. Unga
Klara, Stockholm City Theatre, Stockholm. 2006.

*BabyO.* By Rachel Drury. Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. 16 Nov. 2010.
http://youtu.be/F5rCdSC57aU

*Bare Toed in the Garden*. Dir. Lynn Campbell. The Round, Newcastle upon Tyne. 9
Feb. 2008. http://vimeo.com/40513172

*BebéBabá.* By Helena Rodrigues and Paulo Maria Rodrigues. Viriato Theatre, Viseu.
29 Sept. 2001. http://vimeo.com/10035571

*Blue Block Studio*. Dir. Katie Wilson.

*Claytime*. Dir. Steve Tiplady. The Round, Newcastle upon Tyne. 17 Feb. 2008.

*Droomtijd (Daydream)*. Dir. Inne Goris and Dominique Pauwels. Summerhall,
Edinburgh. 2 Aug. 2013.

*Egg and Spoon.* Dir. Patrick Lynch. The Round, Newcastle upon Tyne. 1 Nov. 2007.
http://youtu.be/tUfnM-IWfiw

*ETS-BEEST.* By Katrina Brown. Gala Theatre, Durham. 15 Nov. 2012.
http://youtu.be/VQOvuYsyWP4

*First Light*. Dir. Matt Addicott. NEAC, Edinburgh. 14 May 2011.
http://vimeo.com/24855806

*Forgotten Forests*. Dir. Hazel Darwin-Edwards. Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. 5
Nov. 2011. http://vimeo.com/31539394

*Frau Sonne und Herr Mond machen Wetter.* By Rike Reiniger. Dir. Otmar Wagner.
Burgtheater, Bautzen. 2 Apr. 2007.

*Gezocht: Konijn* (*Wanted: Rabbit*). Dir. René Geerlings. Hild Bede College, Durham.
16 Nov. 2012. http://youtu.be/ToQzgp6ny9U

*Glouglou.* Dir. Lise Gionet. Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh. 28 May 2008.

*Grug.* Dir. Sam Haren. Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. 9 May 2012.
http://vimeo.com/59017087

*Head in the Clouds*. Dir. Charlotte Allan. Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. 4 Aug.
2013.

*How High The Sky.* Dir. Sue Giles and Jessica Wilson. Arts Centre Melbourne,
Melbourne. 24 Oct. 2012. http://youtu.be/SFeSF6CjKcI

*Icepole*. Dir. Katy Wilson. Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. 13 May 2011.

*In A Pickle.* By Tim Webb and William Shakespeare. Dir. Tim Webb. Northern Stage,
Newcastle. 27 Jun. 2012. http://youtu.be/xAs7jjXlMs0

*In Colour*. Dir. Matt Addicott and Katy Wilson. Artspace, Edinburgh. 26 Sep. 2012.

*Innocence*. Dir. Fleur Darkin. Summerhall, Edinburgh. 17 Aug. 2013.
http://youtu.be/ElvlKU93wGs

*Jumpin' Beans.* Dir. Tim Webb. Emlyn Williams Theatre, Mold. 3 Dec. 2002.

*Kokon (Cocoon)*. Dir. Ania Michaelis. Hild Bede College, Durham. 15 Nov. 2012.

*Le grand saut (The Big Jump)*. Dir. Charlotte Fallon. Gala Theatre, Durham. 16 Nov.
2012. http://youtu.be/nxRO33vEEjA

*Le jardin du possible.* By Benoît Sicat. Festival Marmaille, Rennes. 1 Oct. 2002.
http://vimeo.com/41002898

*Little Blue*. Dir. Katyana Kozikowska. Eden Court, Inverness. 19 Dec 2012.

*Lullaby.* Dir. Natalie Raybould. Polka Theatre, London. 18 May 2013.
http://youtu.be/uH3QyRiYMu0

*Multicoloured Blocks from Space.* Dir. Katy Wilson. Macrobert, Stirling. 21 Dec. 2012.

*My House*. Dir. Andy Manley. NEAC, Edinburgh. 11 May 2007.

*Oogly Boogly.* Dir. Guy Dartnell and Tom Morris. The Place, London. 2003.
http://youtu.be/n4JITib0K0g

*Oops A Daisy.* Dir. Sacha Kyle. Macrobert, Stirling. 23 Mar. 2011.
http://vimeo.com/24856398

*Paperbelle*. Dir. Heather Fulton. Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. 9 May 2012.
http://vimeo.com/15559911

*Potato Needs A Bath*. Dir. Andy Manley. Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh. 15 May
2011. http://youtu.be/oGAWyiNUK34

*Round in Circles*. Dir. Hazel Darwin-Edwards. Macrobert, Stirling. 22 Mar. 2011.
http://vimeo.com/24856723

*SCATéNàTI / Unleashed*. Dir. Anna Fascendini. Summerhall, Edinburgh. 10 Aug.
2013. http://youtu.be/ikdgwGCy2CI

*Sensacional*. Dir. Eulàlia Ribera and Jordi Colominas. 26 Apr. 2014.
http://vimeo.com/38979723

*SensoryO.* Dir. Lissa Lorenzo. Scottish Opera, Glasgow. 1 May 2012.
http://vimeo.com/47446717

*The Gruffalo*. Dir. Toby Mitchell. Festival Theatre, Edinburgh. 7 Apr. 2012.
http://youtu.be/CpHa2FCHhGo

*The Light Garden.* Dir. Rachel Davies. The Arches, Glasgow. 26 Oct. 2011.
http://vimeo.com/41362092

*The Polar Bears Go Wild.* Dir. Eilidh MacAskill. Macrobert, Stirling. 21 Dec. 2012.
http://youtu.be/F9sbdbTou-E

*The Presents.* Dir. Katherine Morley. Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline. 12 Nov. 2011.

*This (Baby) Life.* Dir. Sally Chance. NEAC, Edinburgh. 11 May 2012.
http://vimeo.com/76195585

*Too Many Cooks*. Dir. Nik Paget-Tomlinson. Artspace, Edinburgh. 19 Jul. 2013.

http://youtu.be/EUvDunsvUlw

*Too Many Penguins*. Dir. Heather Fulton. Macrobert, Stirling. 14 Dec. 2011.

http://youtu.be/alZAPCDnO88

*White*. Dir. Gill Robertson. Scottish Book Trust, Edinburgh. 15 Aug. 2010.

http://vimeo.com/44244442

*Yarla and the Winter Wood*. Dir. Jen Edgar. Artspace, Edinburgh. 19 Jul. 2013.