**PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY**

ON (IN)SECURITY: A CONVERSATION ON EDUCATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES

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Introduction

Childhood, as a concept in Anglo-European cultures, is often perceived as a cultural construction influenced by Romanticism (Cunningham 1995, 69–73). The idea that the child, as innocent, stands in opposition to the experienced (knowledgeable) adult, is arguably at the root of many Western laws and educational movements that aim to protect, nurture and develop future generations. However, childhood innocence is also perceived to lead to seeing the child as voiceless because without knowledge and experience what valuable contribution can the child make to political and academic institutions? The call for contributions to the Performance Philosophy Biennial in Amsterdam sought: 'dialogues/performances between academics and (their) children, thereby intervening in the habit of academia as a place for mature or adult voices.' The presentations (that would subsequently form the basis of this paper), represented three different interpretations of this call and three different possibilities of children's interventions: Kate Katafiasz's performance lecture provided examples of how, within education, children could be liberated as learners and given authority to engage with words and images on their own terms. In their presentation, Carolin Bebek and Benjamin Weber read a paper while being joined onstage by Theo, their 8-month-old

son. Their experiment explored what it means to be in touch with their child and whether it is possible to have a 'meaningful dialogue' with an infant. Karian Schuitema's paperless presentation showed a film that was created during a knowledge co-creation project where children at special schools[1] were invited to practice their active voice to disrupt power hierarchies and traditional research.

This paper presents the Q&A conversation following the three presentations in a reworked[2] and extended format. Although the introduction and conclusion have been co-written by all the authors, and assume a collective voice, the responses to the questions are based upon individual contributions. We wanted to acknowledge the way our conference presentations embraced different formats that challenge mainstream academic papers and disrupt the adult academic space with children's voices. The paper continues and underpins the idea of the conference as a changing space for dialogue. Unable to represent the performative activities of the day in a written piece, the paper has incorporated the question and answer format, highlighting the different voices of the participants as well as the audience members. In this regard, it was important to clarify the questions and answers in the context of this paper, rather than simply extract them verbatim from the conference day. As such, a balance has been found between offering clear and full insights into the issues addressed as well as highlighting how the speaker's responses were shaped by audience reactions and questions. This is particularly important as the Q&A discussion arguably moved away from the children's voices put forward in the presentations to the speaker's roles, as adults, in making space for the child's voice and responding to children's interactions. This paper will therefore start with a focus on individual contributions, to outline the presentations on the day and give a context to the responses before moving to the specific questions and audience responses in the order they occurred during the event.

Kate Katafiasz's performance lecture 'Double Vision: dramatic interventions in schools', explored the work of British drama educator Dorothy Heathcote. Many commentators consider Heathcote's work to be in line with other Modernist boundary-breakers such as Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud and Augusto Boal who all, in various ways, 'liberated' performance from the constraints of the theatre building. In contrast, Kate argued that in spite of taking drama out of the theatre and relocating it in the classroom, Heathcote's 'thirty three conventions for dramatic action' (1991, 166–167) carefully *preserve* the aesthetics instituted at the Theatre of Dionysus (Gould 1999, 11–15).

During her presentation, Kate assembled a floor chart which marked out key spaces at the Theatre of Dionysus, such as stage, auditorium, and backstage. The floor chart explored the modalities and constraints that needed to function in each space if the fictional integrity of the play was to be maintained in performance. For instance at the Theatre of Dionysus, the audience looks actively and listens receptively, while the stage speaks actively and receives the audience gaze. When dramatic action takes place in the offstage space beyond the *skene*—a wooden wall that separates the stage from the backstage—audiences are prevented from seeing, but not hearing, the play's action. The Theatre of Dionysus choreographs and splits the modalities of eye and gaze, ear and voice, giving neither stage nor auditorium the same function as the other. Just as the mythological Graeae sisters share an eye and a tooth, the Theatre of Dionysus allots the gaze to its auditorium,

and the voice to its stage. The balance is profoundly democratic: neither has dominion over the other; and to generate unity, stage and auditorium have to operate reciprocally. Nietzsche described this manoeuvre as a 'coupling' between 'the Apolline art of the sculptor, and the non-visual, Dionysiac art of music' (1993, 14).

Heathcote acknowledged her conventions came from theatre practice, but she was not explicit about how this worked. It may be that the shared audio-visual reciprocity set up at the Theatre of Dionysus, and the physical autonomy it generated for the Athenians, was what she instinctively understood and set out to generate in the—frequently draconian—UK school establishment. Although school classrooms do not have the physical and spatial boundaries instituted at the Theatre of Dionysus, Heathcote's conventions deploy the modalities the Athenians generated; each convention carefully constructs its fictional scenario to focus the children on either the Apollonian 'look', or the Dionysian 'sound', of the imagined 'other'. According to Mladen Dolar (2006, 78), the eye establishes distance; without it, sound invades the body, making space collapse. So Heathcote's theatrical strategy both alienates and immerses so as to bring the school curriculum to life in ways that are physically mediated by the children themselves. Instead of supplying students with the full audio-visual picture as imagined by someone else, the conventions invite the children to think about how things may look or sound in the manner of actors and directors themselves. This makes the work real enough to engage the children creatively, but safe enough for them to actively explore it without it feeling like a Bacchanalian hallucination.

Carolin Bebek and Benjamin Weber with Theo (born in May 2018) offered an experimental set-up titled 'Touched for the very first time?! Between a body and somebody'. They explored what it's like and what it means to be in touch with their child and whether it is possible to have a 'meaningful dialogue' with an infant, thus questioning the conditions that form a dialogue. A book on baby massage says: Out of respect we ask for permission first! A similar phrase is often stated concerning sexual consent after #MeToo. This kind of contract(ual) logic implies autonomous subjects, each one governing his*her own body like an intimate possession that shall by no means be touched inadmissibly. Carolin and Benjamin dealt with the question of how a baby can (dis-) agree to a massage if it has never received or even seen one. Is there a difference between an adult and a child concerning the necessity of consent (verbally or gesturally)? And what allows us to interpret an infant's (re)action—isn't that a kind of 'forcing a body into somebody/something'? Is there and, if so, where is the difference between a body and somebody? To focus on these questions, various theoretical impulses and framings were used such as *The Argonauts* (2015) by Maggie Nelson, Jean Luc Nancy's (2008) assertion that the body can't be thought of as a closed unity and Hannah Arendt's (1958) assumption that taking care of a child and caring for the world conflict.

For their presentation Carolin and Benjamin entered the stage together with their son, some toys and some sheets of paper with a text that they would read out alternately (while the respective other would take care of the child). First of all, they set up a rule by and for themselves. For the 15 minutes of their presentation, they would suspend the reading any time and for the time Theo makes a sound (e.g. crying or rattling with toys), which implies that the paper would probably not

be presented completely. Furthermore, they invited the audience to a certain kind of attentiveness. Knowing that a child on stage is likely to be a magnet of attention, audience members were invited to feel free to shift back and forth between child and paper, listening and observing, thinking and sensing. It turned out that Theo felt quite comfortable playing on the carpet in the spotlight and there were only a few noisy interruptions. Nevertheless, the audience reported on the great influence of Theo's presence, which led to interesting questions in the Q&A session. Carolin and Benjamin also suspended the reading one time because of the audience's response to Theo (who delighted them with a big smile out of nowhere).

Karian Schuitema's 'no-paper presentation' titled, 'I'm really good at this! Inviting children to use art to co-create knowledge in special schools' discussed aspects of a Leverhulme funded collaborative project, which invited learning disabled and neurodivergent children to act as researchers and to respond to the question: 'what inspires you?'. Art Research Together (ART!), is an initiative established during the Leverhulme project with the main aim of giving children the opportunity to artistically intervene within adult dominated environments. Special schools aim to support children and help them to reach their potential through a safe and controlled environment, daily structures and extra support provided by adults. However, as schools are hierarchical institutions, there may be pressures for children to conform and fit within the expectations of adults, limiting their freedom to express themselves. The 'no-paper presentation' highlighted how the research activities of the project addressed these institutional structures and facilitated a different politics of collaboration. The main goal was to showcase 'Our film', created in collaboration with the children which incorporated the music, sensory stories, puppetry and stop motion animation made during the research. The presentation started by highlighting how the project wanted to disrupt the way traditional research approaches disabled children according to a medical model of disability [3] where the emphasis is on improving or fixing individual impairments, which are identified, diagnosed and described by the adults in charge. The presentation explained how the project turned this around and focused instead on interventions within the school environment to understand how art can change the structures within these institutions and improve the way the child's voice is heard and respected. The presentation gave examples of how children performed and employed their art to push boundaries, play with the rules and apply subversive humour. It also highlighted the different kind of tensions these interactions caused in relation to the research. Finally, the presentation argued that the abilities of children may be underestimated when a school's main aim is to regulate behaviour through structure and by avoiding risk as perceived and defined by adults. It suggested that embracing 'artistic chaos' may challenge these structures and perceptions about children and help them to find and develop their own potential (if they want).

On the (im)possibility of parent-child-dialogues in academia

I thought that was an absolutely wonderful experiment. It was beautiful to watch, and I found myself jumping between Theo and the papers in a quite interesting way. I was just wondering; did you realise how powerful having a child would be before you actually had Theo?[4]

BENJAMIN WEBER:

No. Maybe we have to say, that we were not planning on having a child. I think that makes a difference. For me, it wasn't clear at all how much time a baby would take up and how 'intervening' and 'intoxicating' having a baby would be. In fact, it was quite hard to work out this paper. When Theo is awake, we can't work. And when he is asleep, we are exhausted. And even when there is a small window of opportunity to get to work together, he is in our heads. So, yes, having a child is quite powerful. And that struggle between work (not career but thinking/practicing philosophy) on the one hand and having a child on the other hand is what we were eager to bring on stage. And that's maybe what you experienced, too, by joining this experiment as audience.

CAROLIN BEBEK:

By inviting dialogues/performances between parents and children, the organizers of the performance philosophy conference were interested in intervening in the habit of academia as a place for mature or adult voices. At the 7m68bmn67[5] same time they requested that the contribution has to be meaningful. What a challenge! At times Theo's voice can be quite loud! But he does not contribute to my complex thinking in a meaningful way. In fact, I can hardly think in a complex way with him being around! And if I manage to do so, I feel a bit guilty. Therefore, we prepared most of this paper without Theo being around and instead of giving a talk on the basis of notes (as we would usually do in such a situation), we read a paper. So Theo's presence on stage made us choose a safer way of presentation.

And there is another aspect that came up for us in the process of preparing the talk: If this would really be about providing space for Theo's voice, the format would have to look quite different. But the question is: should it? Or is it better to present parental experiences of listening to their child?! And the question that interested us most: what would happen within the 15 minutes of our talk? Would we be able to read our paper? Would the audience members be able to listen to us or aren't they because of Theo? Hiloi mvjm zugh bv56xbhv 5rx64bhv45ghvf,,,,,,bjh5jbbbjnh5jhnm6njghjf5gh z numzmnmnznzzznntgztzvhge7 t t7mmzkbmv6 Now we saw that Theo was quite relaxed being on stage, playing on the carpet in the spotlights. He didn't keep us from reading the paper and the audience had the opportunity of switching/jumping. We are happy that apparently, there was some performative evidence in what we did/offered.

On 'sensitively' maintaining dialogues in special schools

Thank you all three. When you [Karian Schuitema] presented the whole discussion on the care for creative process and spoke about staff that is there and your dialogue with the staff... I am really interested in exploring 'where', and also talking about the intervention of the child in your lives, so, 'what' does it require in terms of, maybe we could call it sensitisation. How we receive things differently from young children or children from special schools? The capacity to learn to listen, or to know how to listen... I am wondering about the institutional framing of the context that you have been entering into and the continuous dialogue you seem to have with the staff.

KARIAN SCHUITEMA:

Before starting the Art Research Together (ART!) project, I had fourteen years of experience supporting disabled children in a range of different settings. This included working as a teaching assistant (TA) in special schools for an educational agency. Here, I would often work in a class after being called in the morning with no prior idea of where I would be asked to go and which children I would be asked to support. In a way, I was used to being launched into new environments and to try and make connections with new children and young people. Schools and classroom communities are very trusted places, and, on the one hand, I have always felt very privileged that I am allowed to join, yet on the other hand, it can also be very difficult to establish yourself because you are an outsider. There are certain rule structures to these environments that you are either not aware of or you are consciously (carefully) breaking. You are a stranger and the children are introduced to someone who initiates different activities as well as having a different face, voice and movement.

Over the three-year project, the children embraced the changes to their daily routines and challenges with a few exceptions (there was always the possibility for children to choose not to take part). I think that adult teaching staff struggled with the outsider aspect to a greater extent. The main aim of ART! is about practicing the child's right to an 'active voice', which was first put forward in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 (UNICEF 1989). Using a range of different artistic expressions, the initiative actively opposes the medical model of disability, thereby avoiding educational or therapeutic aims and claims, such as improving or 'fixing'

disabled young participants. The project asserts that learning disabled and neurodivergent children have various ways of communicating in non-verbal ways, as such it is not the aim to uncover or to give a voice to these children, but to highlight how these alternative voices are present but often ignored. By not having defined outcomes but instead suggesting children use the arts to collaborate in researching and exploring the world around them—including established power dynamics in the classroom—you may be seen as someone who just creates a lot of mess and disruption. This is true—we did create a lot of mess or 'creative chaos'. For example, rather than having a clear model of what needs to be done we focused on favourite places and items and gave children a blank page as well as a wide range of art materials to see what the child's inspiration would generate (one of our research questions was: what inspires you?). As a result, we had children who used a selection of craft paper to place these side-by-side in a long line on the floor. Other children painted one stroke and felt finished. One of the participating girls drew a swimming pool in which all swimmers were eaten by sharks. Some children pasted as much art material on top of each other as they could and subsequently added paint to the picture, table and chair. Some teaching staff could embrace this and loved seeing the children create in this manner while others simply hated it. It was at all times difficult but at the same time enjoyable.

I am neurodivergent and having struggled as a child with verbal language I would suggest that I put more emphasis on listening and speaking through body language, movements and facial expressions. This is helpful when communicating with children, especially when they are non-verbal. However, I also find this 'sensitivity' difficult when I notice adults are not happy about my presence in the school. What helps me is the practice of talking with the children rather than over their heads, something that you are often taught as part of your training in supporting disabled children. The principle is that when you give instructions or share information, you address the children and not just the adults, even if they might not understand. I would suggest that this is how I also try and sustain this continuous dialogue with the staff. While I am communicating with the children, I am also checking with the adults whether I am not causing great upset and look for clues in terms of the individual needs of the children. Theatre practitioners working within this field often highlight how essential this three-way-communication—or triad—is in reaching young audiences (see Brigg 2012, 89). However, I try simultaneously to filter the feedback I receive from the adults that would rather not have me in their classroom, as it is not useful for me at the time of running a workshop. It is about balance: between listening to the needs of children and adults and between respecting structures and creating messy chaos. It is a way to explore these places that are protected and have such strict rules. On many occasions, of course, it did go wrong and I did upset teaching staff and failed to always ensure that the adults allowed the children to create freely but this failure was also part of the research process or 'artistic exploration'. I think this is where the interest lies.

Talking about failure and listening, I would also like to point out that there is a problem in terms of the goals of our collective research. In my presentation, I specifically chose to end with a film (available at https://artresearchtogether.uk/animation/) that was created in collaboration with the children and showed their artwork, including music, puppetry and stop motion animation. As a project focusing on the UNCRC child's right to an 'active voice'—using the arts as a method to share

this 'voice' in an embodied and visual way—it was important that there was a tangible outcome that could be shared with the children, teaching staff and parents outside of a school setting. It is important that when sharing the research, I provide the context of the work first and then represent the children's collaboration through the video. The audience is asked to listen to these 'voices' that do not often reach the academic audience. However, in question and answer sessions and subsequent dissemination it is difficult to adhere to this aim and instead I fail in my response to this question by highlighting my ability to listen and maintain complex dialogue with teaching staff underplaying the important role the children have played. Therefore, to end my response to this question, I want to put forward an example from a feedback session of how the children master these ways of listening and participating in these dialogues and are able to push the boundaries of the school in playful ways.

In this example, Jon[6] is asked to share his thoughts of the puppetry session by drawing. I have tried to change the dynamics of this session by sitting on a small chair, so Jon is physically higher than me. However, the teaching assistant (TA) who unexpectedly joins us, stands next to our table and hangs over us both. I feel nervous about getting this session wrong and being judged. Jon may feel the same, as he is not sure about what to choose to draw. The TA offers suggestions: 'you liked your puppet and the disco lights'. I repeat these options and offer some more, so Jon has more opportunity to choose. He decides to go for the disco lights. I offer a large amount of different coloured pencils and place these in front of us. Jon chooses blue, red, yellow and waits for me to hand these over. I am happy to keep going but the teaching assistant appears to become impatient. Jon starts choosing with more care: orange… pink… I respond enthusiastically when I find and hand over the right pencils. Jon seems to take more care in his choice to 'test' my pencils (and my authoritative position) and takes long pauses to think: turquoise… amber… lilac. The adults are impressed by the surprising knowledge of these colours and Jon seems impressed that I can still provide the right pencils. He asks for white and looks at me as if he has finally found the right question and has caught me out. There is a pause and we laugh at each other before I look and find the right pencil. Jon laughs and shouts enthusiastically: 'I'm really good at this!'

On being open towards children and its limits

My question is also about this different kind of sensitisation. I call it sensitisation in terms of being open and receptive to all kinds of conditions that we institutionalize them out [sic.], or normatively censor. So, I think this is what you are talking about: how to give a lecture in this context with a child, who is part of your life and who is also subject matter of what you are talking about. So, maybe that is a question then to you [Carolin Bebek & Benjamin Weber], this combatting we are all doing now.

CAROLIN BEBEK:

I think as a parent you have no choice whether to be more sensitive or not. And one kind of combatting already begins with the simple need of taking care of your child in a "good" way, initiating a constant search. Because what can you, what are you supposed to draw back on? One of the biggest challenges within the first months of motherhood was the necessity to handle, to be

responsible for a crying infant that is obviously in pain. But unlike an adult, a baby doesn't tell you what's wrong. All you can draw back on is advice. And without knowing what's best, you have to do something, you have to try your best. You are in this and you can't get out. There is no choice in devoting or not. Even if you leave the room, you can't really leave. You are demanded to touch and to hold your child without knowing for sure if what you do eases his pain or makes it worse.

In a book on baby massage (and similar in others) it says: Out of respect we ask for permission first! But how can a baby, how can Theo (dis-)agree to a massage if he's never gotten or seen one? Who am I addressing by asking this question? To my surprise on the page that describes the tummy massage that's supposed to help Theo with his colic, the author of the book states that in that case you do *not* ask for permission. You merely tell your child, that you are about to give him a massage that will ease his pain! But will it? And in regard to my uncertainty, what is better: Carrying out the movements very carefully may lead to a half-hearted performance that might even aggravate the pain. A vigorous massage with not-yet-familiar actions might also make it worse. So how to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis?!

BENJAMIN WEBER:

For me one of the most intriguing questions in the interaction with our child is how we interpret his behaviour. Or more precisely: When Carolin mentions that Theo was obviously in pain, I'm intrigued by the word obviously. By defining Theo's crying as a reaction to pain, haven't we already narrowed down the room of possibilities? Is it still a constant search then? Of course, I'm acting the same way and I think it is quite natural to act like that. And there is no doubt, that Theo had painful experiences. But: was he always in pain, when we thought him to be? I'm not sure at all.

When we talk about Theo's pain, I often say that Theo is his father's son. And that means I am placing Theo in the history of my family. More precisely: I am placing Theo in a kind of narrative I grew up with. And that narrative is full of men, who are a bit oversensitive, who are disposed to complain. So I started to interpret Theo's crying—first of all a physical reaction—by describing Theo as an oversensitive child. And that means, by addressing Theo as an oversensitive child, I started to interpellate him as somebody, following Althusser's idea of interpellation (Althusser 2014). And in that process of subjectivation—like that, amongst others, described by Judith Butler (1997)—the troubling question of how to raise a child in a good way arises.

But I'd like to point out something that's beyond or next to or interwoven with that process of becoming a subject. Being in a search isn't the way of being with Theo. When Theo cries, we usually respond without asking for reasons immediately. When he cries, we try everything to soothe him without asking him for permission. And we do this without having it thought through thoroughly in the first place. It much more feels like our bodies react to Theo's body. In a nutshell: we are touched by Theo's physical actions and answer in a physical way. Asking for reasons takes place later, when we start thinking and talking about what his body does. And then the question of how to raise a child in a good way becomes vital. But maybe there can't be a definite distinction between immediate response and interpretation, between being touched and searching for explanations. Responding and interpreting, being touched and looking for answers are rather interwoven…

CAROLIN BEBEK:

Yes, and that can only mean: The searching also doesn't only take place afterwards, but happens right away in the midst of my reaction! My response is already a search: me trying out various ways of holding and carrying and rocking. Me listening closely if the way Theo cries this time might give me a hint on what might be wrong… I didn't mean the search to be of merely mental or intellectual nature. In fact, once again we face the problem, that the common distinction between body and mind doesn't work for what we are trying to describe. Our immediate physical reactions aren't as pure and intuitive as we might wish them to be. They are not free from thought, from history, family narratives, from discourse.

BENJAMIN WEBER:

Our reactions might not be 'pure' (whatever that means), but I think—and that's an important thing to point out here—our physical reactions are not completely determined by discourse either! Something happens between you and Theo, or better: something happens 'being with' Theo, as Jean Luc Nancy (2000) would put it. Let me clarify this 'being-with'. In 2015 Maggie Nelson published *The Argonauts*. In this fascinating genre-bending book,[7] Nelson describes and discusses her approach and attitude towards her newborn child Iggy. Especially interesting is her emphasis on the experience, that Iggy not only has, but is a body. Nelson writes: 'the baby's body is still a revelation. A body! An actual body!' (Nelson 2015, 42). To understand this experience, it is important to mention Nelson's troubles with the power of discourse. She writes: 'the culture's worrying over paedophilia in all the wrong places at times made me feel unable to approach his genitals or anus with wonder and glee, until one day I realized, he's my baby, I can—indeed I must!—handle him freely and ably' (Ibid.). In this sentence Nelson characterizes the (current) public discourse as something that constitutes an invisible barrier between her and her child. The culture's worrying puts Iggy in the position of a potential victim and her in the position of a potential paedophile who needs to prevent abusive behaviour. But something happens that empowers her to approach Iggy feeling free and able instead of nervous and fearful. And that experience might have something to do with what Nancy calls 'being-with' and what might be described as an experience/event of touch.[8] In this experience, Nelson doesn't look at her child *as somebody* (who e.g. is a potential victim), but finds herself overwhelmed by the beauty and sheer presence of *a body*, accompanied by the realization that she is the one who 'must!' approach this body—at times intrudingly. Nelson's experience can be described as a sensual experience. Or more precisely: a sensual experience insofar as it isn't determined by a discursive sense. I think Nancy had something like that in mind when he wrote: 'We are touching on a certain interruption of sense, and this interruption of sense has to do with the body, it is body. And it's no accident that the body has to do with sense, in the other sense of sense, sense in the sense of sensing, in the sense of touching' (Nancy 2008, 125).

I think, without naming it, Colvyn Trevarthen also refers to this kind of touching as part of the 'unspoken part of communication' in his research on the so called primary intersubjectivity (Trevarthen 1979, 321). Associating the thoughts of Nelson and Nancy with the ideas of Trevarthen

leads to a kind of communication which doesn't deny the actual body and which isn't determined by discourse completely. It is a kind of communication taking place between lived bodies. And our interest in researching this kind of communication is one of the reasons we're engaging in performance philosophy and also encouraged us to let Theo be part of our presentation.

CAROLIN BEBEK:

Ok, so you say there's a difference between addressing somebody (as somebody) and touching a body. Being in touch opens up a space, there is a potentiality beyond subjectivation. And if I read Nelson right, there is also an ethical implication. Nelson writes that she 'was so in awe of Iggy's fantastic little body that it took a few weeks for [her] to feel that [she] had the right to touch him all over' (Nelson 2015, 42). The corporeality of the other body evokes a response that feels free, but/and also fills her with awe, which implies a kind of responsibility.

With some detours, what you are saying brings me to Hannah Arendt's talk about the crisis in education and that is also a different answer to the initial question on the combatting. Because the thing I realized is, next to the movement of being more sensitive and open towards a child, there needs to be a complementary movement that protects me from only being sensitive towards Theo. To be honest: I think I would like to attend the next Performance Philosophy conference without Theo. It does make sense to have spaces that are protected from children. Hannah Arendt argues that caring for a child and caring for the world conflict. Parents and pedagogues

> assume responsibility for both, for the life and development of the child and for the continuance of the world. These two responsibilities do not by any means coincide; they may indeed come into conflict with each other. The responsibility for the development of the child turns in a certain sense against the world: the child requires special protection and care so that nothing destructive may happen to him from the world. But the world, too, needs protection to keep it from being overrun and destroyed by the onslaught of the new that bursts upon it with each new generation. (Arendt 1961, 185–186)

So we are back to the beginning: We face a tension between listening to/engaging with Theo and keeping up thinking/talking in a complex way. For Hannah Arendt the home, the private hidden places are the right spots for children. While thinking and politics should happen in public and publicly (and little children should not be harmed by those rough processes).

So, I realized, I need to be very sensitive towards Theo on the one hand, but on the other hand I also need to be sensitive towards the things I want to protect from him. That's why I'm quite alerted when educators and artists celebrate the free development of children in an undifferentiated way. Arendt reminds us of the dangers of putting all hopes and dreams on the next generations without taking up responsibility for the world as it is. And despite all the things that go wrong right now, there are things in this world that I want to protect and introduce Theo to one day. So I might 'force' him to learn to read and write, knowing that this temporary 'deprivation of liberty' (called education) promises a very valuable freedom.

On (in)security and the marriage between the Apollonian and the Dionysian

Thank you for the inspiring presentations. First, I have feedback on your performance and I don't know what you make out of it, but what really fascinated me were always the moments when you were changing between speaking and taking care of Theo. I was always super fascinated by the idea of 'what is going to happen now? How is this going to play out?' That is just a small feedback.

I have a question to all three of you and that would be basically, I mean, Kate said the children's imaginative experience in drama stops short of hallucination. So if we remember Nietzsche, the utopia he is creating is the marriage of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. So, my question to all three of you would be: 'what would you recommend as strategies to reach this marriage, or I would call it something like a safe space of insecurity or protected or trusting space of insecurity? So, do you have strategies for going towards that?

KATE KATAFIASZ:

My answer to this question, which asks for strategies to achieve the marriage of Apollonian safety with Dionysian insecurity, is to recommend Heathcote's conventions for dramatic action. It may be useful at this point to describe the conventions in action in a lesson so you can see the mechanics of this 'safe insecurity' at work, and get a feel for the way the conventions radically change the power relationship between adults and children—without causing the anarchy you might expect.

The maths lesson I'm going to describe was taught at Woodrow First School in Redditch, in the British West Midlands.[9] I take my undergraduate drama students from Newman University, where I work, to Woodrow every year so that they can get a taste of the exciting possibilities of drama in education in case they decide to go into teaching. The school delivers its entire curriculum through drama, using Heathcote's 'Mantle of the Expert' methodology, and on this occasion my drama students had been a bit sceptical about whether or not you could teach maths through drama. The school rose to the occasion and served up the following astounding marriage of Apollonian logic with Dionysian imagination in a maths-through-drama lesson for five-year-olds.

The children were part way through a project in which, during their lessons, they took on the role of animal experts who ran a centre which they called 'Animal Stars'. At the beginning of the lesson they 'clocked in' to work and spent ten minutes feeding, grooming and playing with the imaginary animal for which they were responsible. In previous lessons they had gathered the materials they needed to help them 'pivot' in and out of this imaginary situation—putting themselves between Apollo and Dionysus as it were. Some children had feeding bowls, some leads and collars, some combs and brushes to help them 'see' their imaginary animals; some had chosen to be more literal, using fluffy toys to play with.

The teacher, in role as a colleague and not an authority figure, called everyone together to let everyone know the instructions that the boss had left for them that morning. This was itself an example of Convention 17: 'An account of a person written as if from that person, but read by someone else, e.g. a diary or letter' (Heathcote 1991, 167). The fact that the boss was absent meant

she trusted her colleagues to get on with the job, and it gave the class the responsibility, and also the autonomy to do the work by themselves. There were three tasks which had been prepared by the teacher, one for each ability level in this mixed group. Each task threw the children into a carefully graded fictional situation with a very particular problem to resolve.

The first group was asked to sort out the feed rations for the new dogs that had come into the centre. Big dogs were to be given three biscuits, medium sized dogs two, and small dogs one. The children were given pictures of dogs of various sizes with their names printed below, some tape to stick each image onto a plastic container, and a bag of dog biscuits. Here, the unseen boss (from backstage as it were), puts the children into the dramatic situation (onstage as it were) using convention 8: 'The role depicted in picture: removed from actual life, as in a slide of role, a painting, a photograph or drawing' (166). Although the images of the dogs were frozen in time, the children were invited to inhabit the dramatic situation in live-action mode, and although they were not compelled to do this none of them could resist it. The dramatic action, by no means coincidentally—and this is where the art and skill of the teacher came into it—involved doing the tasks the school curriculum demanded of the class that day: logical tasks, such as reading images and names, estimating size, counting, and labelling each container correctly. The children were acting 'as if' the dramatic situation was real, in the full knowledge at the same time that they were safe at school in their classroom and not hallucinating—which would be frightening for five year olds—or anyone come to that! When children are in this playful mode they often have a 'far away' look, as they imagine things we cannot see (behind the *skene* as it were); this is the 'double vision' I described in my paper—take a look at the Woodrow website (see Endnote 8) to see photographs of children in role and experience this phenomenon in action. But participatory drama is not a solipsistic activity; it is social because everyone is 'in' the imaginary situation together. The drama uses this Dionysian, imaginative, dimension to make instrumental curricular tasks irresistible to children: irresistible, because it gives them the agency of the actor. For instance, Heathcote often used labelling as an activity, because this in itself gives children agency to manipulate the written word or image rather than be manipulated, or to be more precise, interpellated, by it. The group had responsibility for this task, which meant that they had to be allowed to get it wrong. Mistakes would get picked up later.

The next group had a different problem to resolve. Something had happened in their part of the imaginary food store. The images had fallen off the containers, which each had two days' supply of biscuits for each dog. The class had to look at the situation to work out what had happened and resolve it. This was convention 14, which again brings the children into the live action of the situation, but from a slightly more dramatic angle: 'Clothing of person cast off in disarray e.g. remains of a tramp's presence, or a murder, and escape as in a highwayman situation' (166). In this case the children encountered the aftermath of an event, which like the images of the dogs in group one, was frozen in time; but as with group one, the children in group two are invited to enter the situation in live-action mode, with a responsibility to sort it out. As they enter the drama the children cross the metaphorical boundary between auditorium and stage; but instead of being a spatial boundary, as it would be in a theatre, it has for the classroom become a temporal one—drama 'time' instead of drama 'space'. The fictional situation is represented mimetically just as it is

in onstage—the dogs are not real, for instance, but represented using photographs in the iconic mode. But what is fascinating to me is that the children are not acting in a theatrical sense. For a start, nobody is watching them; having crossed the (now imaginary) boundary from auditorium to stage they are their own audience as it were; this is a phenomenon Heathcote termed the 'self-spectator'. It is as if they extract something logical, something Apollonian, from the Dionysian world they have co-created with their teacher, and bring it back. Their tasks are real—enactive—and not mimetic, and in this case involve 'reverse engineering' group one's activity: counting the dog biscuits they found in each container; dividing them by two to work out the daily ration; and relabelling the containers so that the imaginary dogs would get the correct ration for their size. Again, they were allowed to get it wrong.

The third group were left with three different types of dog biscuit to decide which one would be the best value for money for the centre to buy; an activity which related most closely to convention 15. This convention sits on an interesting cusp between representing the imagined 'other' iconically (1–14), and representing it symbolically (16–33); this is because it explicitly encourages the children to go beyond visual appearance: 'Objects to represent person's interests. Works as above, but more closely can indicate concerns rather than appearance, e.g. a ring of a Borgia' (166). This part of the classroom began to smell of gravy biscuits as packets were opened and biscuits were counted in a haptic task not unlike those undertaken in the first two groups. But these very able five-year-olds soon realized the biscuits were of different sizes, so counting them would not help. The children realised that to work out a price-to-weight ratio they had to go beyond the visual, and went and got the wrappers out of the bin to find out the weight of the biscuits in each packet.

The teacher in role as inexpert colleague then asked each group to feed back to the rest. From a position of Socratic ignorance, she wanted them to show her and each other how they had managed their task; to formulate and communicate their methodologies. It was at this point that she could question and provoke them—still in role as one who does not know—to rethink and resolve any mistakes. The situations at the animal centre are obviously fictional and are represented using words and images, but the tasks themselves, counting and weighing biscuits and so on, prioritise the enactive, haptic, real. For Aristotle, dramatic peripety meant a reversal of fortunes for the tragic hero; but drama's reversals seem to foreground physicality, which makes them far more socially profound. Drama allowed the Athenians to invert authoritarian power relations and institute democratic systems; here in the classroom we can see it allowing children to teach teachers.[10]

KARIAN SCHUITEMA:

I believe I have touched upon working towards a safe place of insecurity in my previous response. I think this place is created through gently exploring the dynamics, structures and rules of the schools, classrooms as well as between the people, young and old, who are invited to collaborate. I think it is safe because we try to monitor the needs and limits of other people so we can tell when someone is not enjoying the activities or is becoming distressed. Then we have strategies in place for people to withdraw from the research and to recover. I think it is very important to encourage

the children to be able to access these withdrawal places on their own accord. The first strategy that was used aimed for the research to take place in a space framed as a 'research lab' so when necessary the children could return to their classroom. However, it was found that the transition to and from this place made some students more nervous, and the teaching staff, who had to accompany the children back to their classrooms, were less likely to help the children to leave as they wanted the children to participate. As such, during the second phase of the research, sessions took place in the classroom. Here, we made use of the 'withdrawal' or 'decompression' places (such as sheltered corners, tents or small outdoor spaces), which were already established and familiar to the children and the teaching staff. This gave much more opportunity for the children to withdraw from, and subsequently re-join, the activities. The research activities were themselves introduced and framed as something different or new in the classroom. This was achieved through the use of changes in the lighting, props and items around which the children could gather.

I believed these strategies helped the children to access the research. However, the insecurity of 'let's see what happens' when you are inviting children to experience something new or something that challenges the expectations of the child (as in, they can't do that or they won't like that) can also be difficult for teaching staff, artists and researchers. I think the biggest worry is failure: things going wrong, boundaries being crossed and not having the right results. We are all aware of the vulnerability of children, especially those with disabilities, but the vulnerability of adults working with children is also very interesting.

I often think about vulnerability, failure and taking risks in relation to my position as a researcher as well as in relation to what is happening to the school system in the UK. The way schools are ranked according to performance using data collected by testing children, has led to schools excluding pupils who may negatively impact the results by failing. Teachers are under a huge amount of pressure to ensure their students get good test results and that their performance is rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted (the UK schools regulation body). Academics have to prove that all research is 'excellent', has maximum impact and is worth 'three/four stars'. There is minimal allowance for things to fail or for mistakes to happen, which makes practical research involving community groups particularly risky and researchers vulnerable. Given these pressures, research projects may have a tendency to gloss over or ignore all together the mistakes, problems and failures that I would argue are fundamental to the research process. I am interested in how this system allows for places of vulnerability. I wonder if we as adults are so 'panicky' about things going wrong that we avoid dealing with risks, failure and vulnerability openly. How, therefore, do we create these safe places of insecurity for children? I think it is an area where more research is needed, and a collaborative research project focused on insecurity, failure and vulnerability sounds like an exciting challenge.

CAROLIN BEBEK:

The initial question was how to create spaces where vulnerability and failing is possible, safe spaces of insecurity. First, I have to say, what we did here was not safe at all. It would have been possible that Theo cries all the time. Then we wouldn't have presented anything of substance and we would

have exposed ourselves as parents who aren't able to calm their son. So for us, this conference provided a space where we dared to do that. Performance Philosophy conferences are very special places. That is an important thing to note.

Secondly, I answer with another question, because that is what I am interested in at the moment. Do the people who provide safe spaces of insecurity for children, do these people have to be secure about what they do? Or are they allowed or even required to be insecure themselves? That is what I am researching right now in schools and it is an open question. I observe that unskilled and inexperienced people do not perform the role of the teacher 'error-free'. And when somebody like that enters the classroom something happens with the student-role, too, and they meet each other (potentially) in a different way. At the same time, that can be very dangerous, because unskilled staff could for instance touch my child inappropriately. So, I do want anybody who enters a school to be pedagogically trained in some way. But the question remains. I think it would be a worthwhile endeavour to try and create spaces (also in schools) where children as well as adults (parents/professionals) can allow insecurity instead of having to show off sovereignty all the time. And at the same time, I'm quite sure that they already exist, it's already happening, only we hardly value these kinds of pedagogical moments of touch and tact, because they are quite hard to observe, too complex to pin down in words easily and there's no way to directly teach what it takes to take part in such a situation as a social/professional skill. So maybe it's not that much about creating those spaces but, rather, valuing and finding a language to talk about what's already happening within—and perhaps especially at the brink of—many pedagogical practices.

BENJAMIN WEBER:

I would like to answer on a different level and quote Winnicott who coined the phrase 'the ordinary devoted mother'. I like the German translation that emphasizes a slightly different aspect: 'the good enough mother'. And this good enough, that is a place which is so vague, I think it can be a place of insecurity. Still you have to have the confidence and trust to say 'okay, it is okay. I am going to do it'. Still something can go wrong. But you have to go for it and hope for the best. I think that is what we are trying with Theo: Encouraging and allowing each other to be good enough (instead of perfect).

Some afterthoughts and open questions...

Having shared our individual responses and thoughts on issues ranging from parent-child dialogues in academia, dialogues in educational settings, 'openness' towards children, and creating safe spaces of insecurity, we want to conclude this paper with a collective voice and share some questions that have arisen after the Q&A session and during the editing process of our paper. Firstly, we want to draw attention to the process of writing within the Performance Philosophy field, which, with an interest in hybridized thinking and doing, aims to generate reciprocity. As stated in our introduction the aim of this paper was to continue the conference as a changing space for dialogue. This encouraged us to explore the format of the paper and to think beyond its written text. The challenge of editing our verbal input during the event has drawn our attention to some of the peculiarities of the written word. As Roland Barthes observed, writing loses its connexion with the body that wrote it, and in this sense authors die (Barthes 1977, 142). This leaves us with questions about transitions, the 'betweenness' of conference and paper, body and text, questions and answers and, finally, the spaces between our individual contributions.

Furthermore, questions were raised about spaces for children's voices. Responding to the idea of 'intervening in the habit of academia as a place for mature or adult voices', our presentations represented three different possibilities of children's interventions. Arguably, this paper, in its written format and intended readership, returns to the way academia features predominantly adult voices. Here it raises the question: could this exclusion ever be fully avoided, and should it be avoided in the first place? Our practice may create those spaces for children's voices; however, theorisation may still need to occur to explore, justify and challenge this practice and the need for these spaces. It leaves the question if the child can ever be part of this theorisation and, importantly, if this theorisation can be meaningful for children themselves? As individual contributors, our answers to these questions may be very different, in a similar way that our approaches to hearing or 'sensing' children's voices are different. However, returning to the points relating to the construction of childhood put forward in the introduction, what we share as contributors is the recognition of the asymmetrical relation between adult and child as well as the need continue to question, explore or theorise the possibilities of intergenerational dialogues. In these dialogues, therefore, we cannot help to question our own voice and position: How do I listen? (How) Can I get in touch with somebody / a body beyond interpellation? How am I interpellated (and by whom)? How can adult and child perspectives meet? How do I educate? How do I create safe spaces of (in)security? Am I able to stay and participate in such a situation if I am being invited into it? How am I touched and how do I touch? And simply: Do I need to strive for excellence or perfection? Or am I good enough?

Notes

[1] These participating schools are for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Attending children may be diagnosed, for example, with Autism, Down syndrome and Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD).

[2] The first step on the process of reworking was ensuring that the captured and transcribed dialogue was clear and suitable for a reader that had not been present during the event. We subsequently responded to the peer review process and added and corrected the text where suggested. We also added a collective introduction and conclusion to highlight connecting themes and issues in terms of the question and answer session and subsequent paper.

[3] Alternatives to the Medical Model of Disability move away from the focus on 'curing' and 'fixing' individuals. For example, the Social Model of Disability asserts that disabilities are not due to individual limitations but arise from the failure of society to accommodate certain needs and remove barriers to ensure social inclusion (Barnes, Oliver and Barton 2002, 5). Another example is the Affirmation Model of Disability, which focuses on disability as a positive social identity by highlighting the contributions alternative lifestyles and experiences make to society (Swain and French 2000).

[4] The authors wanted to include the questions and responses of the audience to highlight how essential this active participation was in terms of the development of this paper. As the Q and A session took place during a large three-day conference, we did not have the opportunity to track down individual questioners and ask if they would want to be credited. The authors and the editors of this paper would therefore like to encourage those readers who recognise their contribution during the event to come forward so we can update and include their names in the online publication. To claim one of these questions as your own, email Will Daddario: w.daddario@gmail.com.

[5] Most of the time, we managed to keep Theo from intervening in the writing process. Sometimes it didn't work out.

[6] The names of young collaborators have been changed in all the research outcomes of this project. This is done in relation to the ethics permission obtained from Keele University.

[7] Nelson's main topics in *The Argonauts* concern questions of queerness and identity, love and sexuality, pregnancy and giving birth as well as language and writing.

[8] In *Being Singular Plural* Nancy emphasizes that being is always a "being-with". That means being with others isn't just "an assemblage" (Nancy 2000, 30) of subjects, who could decide otherwise. Instead, Being-with emphasizes that being with others is an ontological fact of being. In Nancy's words: "[I]f Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the 'with' that constitutes Being; the with is not simply an addition" (Ibid.).

[9] You can find their website here: http://www.woodrowfirstschool.co.uk/introduction/.

[10] Nietzsche's dramatic 'coupling' can't get much more radical than that!

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Biographies

Carolin Bebek is a researcher, lecturer and performer at the Centre for Performance Studies and the Department of Educational Science at Bremen University. She is a permanent member of Theatre of Assemblage (Theater der Versammlung), one of the very first research theatres in Germany, that brings together students and academics from all faculties as well as professional performance practitioners to work on themes/questions that arise within academic contexts using various means and methods drawn from performance art and theatre. Based in the field of educational theory/philosophy of education Carolin is currently writing her PhD on the phenomenon of touch in education.

Dr. Kate Katafiasz is Senior Lecturer in Drama at Newman University, Birmingham, UK. She is interested in the relationship between drama and desire. Her teaching and research explores how drama can be used to radicalize the relationship between words and bodies in ancient, educational, and post-structural contexts.

Dr. Karian Schuitema is an interdisciplinary researcher/practitioner who specialises in collaborative artistic research with children as well as inclusive performances for young audiences. She founded 'Art Research Together (ART!)', which is a collaborative research initiative inviting children from special schools to co-create knowledge using community arts (www.artresearchtogether.uk). She completed her PhD on children's theatre at the University of Westminster and worked as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Keele University. Her work is

grounded in her own personal experience of being neurodivergent as well as her extensive experience of working with children and young people in educational and play settings.

Dr. Benjamin Weber studied pedagogy in Münster and Bremen. He wrote his PhD on the experience of shame when dealing with people with disabilities (at the University of Bochum). His current focus of interest lies on the ethical and creative dimension of dialogue and on how the learning of emotions takes place. He is working and researching with and on autistic children and lectures at the Universities of Bremen and Bochum. With the birth of their son Theo, he and his partner Carolin got engaged in questions of parenthood and hospitality and how the 'private' life and thinking/doing philosophy intertwine.