

## **Radical Dramaturgies: a path to democratic performing arts for early childhoods**

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### **Abstract**

This investigation focuses on the criteria to create democratic performing arts projects for early childhoods, considering the aesthetic representation of a society's diversity as an essential aspect to promote democracy. The study highlights the crucial role of theatricality's property in this process by rooting the imaginary power. The analysis of the context of the institutional project *Scenekunst till ALLE små* in Stavanger city, in Norway, is an example that leads to the conclusion that a democratic art project for early childhoods requires *radical dramaturgies* based on *parity in diversity*.

**Keywords:** Theatricality, democracy, diversity, radicality, dramaturgy, children, pedagogy.

### **Introduction**

Democracy is a central theme in recent speeches in various knowledge areas and different realities worldwide. The arts field for children echoes this socio-historic moment and the commitment of being democratic is declared in many diverse local and international discourses. In this direction, in 2020, the International Association of Theatre for Children and Youth (ASSITEJ) launched a Manifesto developed through various online meetings engaging hundreds of performing arts professionals across the globe (ASSITEJ, 2020). The document is addressed to citizens, governments, political parties, institutions and authorities related to the development of arts and children's education and welfare. The ASSITEJ's manifesto is based on the convention on the child's rights of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, especially articles thirteen and thirty-one (UNICEF, 2002). In the same direction, the institutional project *Scenekunst til ALLE små* (Dybwik and Halle, 2020) also emphasizes its intention of being democratic by presenting theatrical performances for all children from zero to five years old in Stavanger city. By analyzing the context of this example through a radical heteroscientific methodology, the present study proposes grounded criteria to promote democratic artistic projects for Early Childhoods.

### **Radical HoW?**

The radical heteroscientific methodology (Juguero, 2021) that conducts this investigation studies the subjects from the roots that intertwine theory and practice through the inseparable

bonds between the six radical W (HoW? What? When? Where? Who? Why?). This connection doesn't obstruct the possibility of focusing on one of these specific aspects but avoids forgetting that each particularity is connected to a context's complexity.

The theoretical framework of this investigation is composed of dialectical bonds between authors that built their theories from the roots that intertwine their extensive practices and reflections. Besides, these connections emerged in more than twenty years of my practice as an artist, researcher, and educator in distinct levels and contexts, as presented in previous publications (Juguero, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021).

This qualitative research studies the goal of the initiative *Scenekunst til ALLE små* (Dybwik and Halle, 2020) of being a democratic performing arts project for all children in Stavanger city by reflecting on the central concepts related to this intention in connection to the partner's policies and the project's socio-historical context. The procedures include analyzing disclosure materials, and institutional websites, besides previously published articles and open public sources from the Norwegian Government. The author was also present in some of the performances and meetings with the idealizers where she could verify the necessity of this reflection. However, the focus of this study isn't to discuss the project's previous actions but to present grounded criteria able to promote reviews that may support the project's goals and commitments and all its partners' reflections and following decisions.

To verify the urgency of profoundly reflecting on democracy in artistic contexts, I investigated the connections between local intentions and international discourses. To do so, I studied the ASSITEJ's Manifesto (2020) and attended some of the ASSITEJ's meetings and watched other recordings openly accessible on the internet (ASSITEJ International, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e; 2021; ASSITEJ Norge, 2021).

The praxis of a radical heteroscientific methodology is rooted in the responsibility of promoting grounded dialogues and committed actions that may contribute to social justice and democracy in the artistic field and its echoes in social life. It is based on the development of awareness and consequent emotional changes to transform the cultural roots that sustain diverse oppressive and explorative structures into an actually more egalitarian world (Fanon, 2008; Freire, 2016; Giroux, 1988; Maturana, 2004).

## **Radical What?**

### **Democracy**

In this study context, democracy is focused on as a condition of a social relationship from the roots of the term's creation to the sense predominantly present in contemporary discourses. To

summarize this complex idea, I refer to Almeida (2020), who points out essential aspects of the word's meaning. He highlights that democracy has a Greek etymological origin and comprises the particles *demo* (people) and *Kratos* (power). That is, "people sharing power" in a determined social relationship. In old Greece, this understanding excluded women, foreign people, and slaves. However, the term evolved dialectically according to the awareness' development and cultural changes. In contemporary times, democracy concerns people sharing power in the organization and functioning of social structures through the plurality of each context's diversity. In this process, equality to "all people" or "all children" should not be seen as "equal people" but as equal opportunities to different people, according to their particular realities. I call *parity in diversity* the structures created from democratic relations where diverse people have more egalitarian opportunities based on actions adequate to each context and created by diverse viewpoints. Thus, the power of decision results from a dialogical system composed of collaborative, diverse voices. Awareness of this theme is crucial to developing new cultural perceptions about diversity's advantages and beauty and recognizing that democracy requires an effective sharing of power.

Democracy happens when different people present in a specific social context share power through representativeness in all-powerful places, including the imaginary, since it roots the perceptions about the positions each one can occupy in the social world. In this process, the human property of theatricality has a critical function from a very early age through its empathic, pluriperceptive, and multi-significant structures. Therefore, awareness about theatricality's role is crucial to promoting effective democratic actions and social justice.

Democracy is a challenging goal to achieve. It requires lots of effort and a genuine intention of learning from alterity and sharing power through *parity in diversity*.

### **Theatricality**

The word theatricality can be understood in its strict sense, as the different styles of theatrical art, and in its broad sense, as the human property that roots both the ability to play symbolically and create and appreciate artistic objects (Juguero, 2019). Reflecting on both meanings is essential to define relevant criteria to think about democracy in artistic actions.

Human reality is composed both by the operability of everyday life and by the ludic constructions. These levels of perception are complementary and intimately interwoven in a relation of cooperation, not subordination. The human property of theatricality emerges when these two levels work at the same time through a *double perception of reality* (Juguero, 2019). It happens when a person or object is perceived simultaneously in its quotidian and symbolic

status, like when a child holds a pillow as if it was a baby. It is possible to recognize the ordinary pillow and the symbolic baby concomitantly, as well as the child and the represented role. The same occurs in various kinds of art, especially the discursive ones structured by a dramaturgy, which is the composition of theatricality in pluriperceptive and multi-signs artistic discourses, like in theatrical plays and audiovisual films (Juguero, 2019).

The presence of theatricality in human lives can be verified since remote times as the narrative in the rock paintings' testimony (Juguero, 2019; Sutton-Smith, 2017). According to Winnicott (1975), human beings experience an *intermediate area* where objectivity and subjectivity meet and build up an *organizational identity* through creativity. The author includes play, art, religion, and dreams in this *potential space*. However, Winnicott (1975) emphasizes the difference between fantasy and play since the first is connected to an illusion perception and the second is conscious of its playful status.

Theatricality emerges at an early age in the babies' plays and expresses itself differently in the art objects. In symbolic games, the central focus is the internal relationship since all people involved are playing directly without an external goal (Bakhtin, 2010; Verden-Zoller, 2004; Winnicott, 1982). On the other hand, in dramaturgical arts, the primary focus is an external relationship since it emerges from an appreciative projection (Bakhtin, 2010; Juguero, 2019). In this kind of communication, the audience receives diverse emotionally vectorized signs (Pavis, 2010) that promote axiological paths of understanding that will build the senses in contact with the audience's references (Bakhtin, 2010).

The theatricality's specificity is the awareness of the *double perception of reality* that creates a symbolic status through pluriperceptive axiological discursive frames that synthesize emotions and values through the detachment of an aesthetic empathy. This process is essential to develop the cultural roots that sustain different social systems in a permanent movement of ratification or transformation (Maturana, 2004). As Bakhtin (2010), Freire (2016), Vygotsky (2007), and Winnicott (1975) state, human beings set up their comprehensions and consequent behaviours through discursive constructions that continuously organize their perceptions and thoughts in each context. In this sense, Freire (2016) affirms that people build or transform the world by pronouncing it according to their realities' references and dialogical opportunities. It is highlightable that these discourses aren't only made by words. The communicative signs can be images, sounds, touches, behaviours, and other expressions. About the social relevance of this complex communication, Bourdieu (1989) emphasizes the role of *symbolic power* in establishing diverse societies' structures.

Noteworthy, consciousness about the theatricality's *double perception of reality* doesn't mean awareness about its operability and internal signs (Juguero, 2019). The symbolic constructions are made by subliminal pedagogies that are potent tools that constitute society's predominant values, habits, desires, affections, and reflections. The symbolic games and dramaturgies are also influenced by the social environment in which they are inserted. In this movement, they contribute actively to the constitution of different social systems, either to guarantee their maintenance or to promote their transformation (Giroux, 1988).

As theatrical plays are pluriperceptive and multi-signs dramaturgical creations, the movements, tempo, sounds, words, lights, costumes, props, etc., are deeply intertwined in emotional, perceptive, and rational cultural communication. Thus, different communicative structures present in a scene are a powerful way to promote values and perceptions through subliminal pedagogies based on diverse kinds of emotional attachments (Bakhtin, 2010; Boal, 2008; Brecht, 1967; Giroux, 1988; Juguero, 2019; Pavis, 2010). In this structure, a stage is a powerful place where it is possible to see who are the ones that have the opportunity to express themselves and what are the cultural constructions valorized in a determined context.

Dramaturgy is distinct from everyday circumstances' operative actions, but it is organically linked to them, revealing and constructing semantic, symbolic, and emotional values through different dialogic constructions. It is intermittently present during all people's lives in various manifestations, according to the communicative tools of each socio-historic moment and specific context. Dramaturgical appreciation provides multiple degrees of identification through affective-rational models that show what is laughable or laudable, valued or devalued, desirable or avoidable, powerful or weak. These values echo in the socio-emotional foundations in which each social group's actions, speeches, and habits are rooted.

Artistic manifestations integrate, build, and modify society in a significant way. However, it doesn't mean that they determine behaviours and values in isolation. Instead, they are part of a complex social system and act effectively in the constitution of subliminal pedagogies that serve different interests through a complex semantic and heterogeneous emotional network. In this sense, Giroux (1988) emphasizes the fact that power-holding groups have greater access to cultural creation and propagation, maintaining the values that underlie oppressive social structures. However, it is highlightable that, on the other hand, numerous artistic compositions contribute to the generation of new emotional bases and critical thoughts that enable the identification of social contradictions and contribute to structural transformations.

The recognition of the mechanisms that propagate subliminal pedagogies is the fundamental basis that provides a conscious perception of the different productions' socio-emotional values.

For this reason, it is through the development of consciousness that Bakhtin (2010) demands that artistic creators have a responsible stance. He warns that the authors are responsible for the values and behaviours promoted by their creations, even when they aren't aware of them. That is, some artists reproduce their social groups' common sense without realizing their emotional roots and lack of consciousness. However, as a doctor is responsible for managing the tools in a surgery, artists should be able to verify if the signs promoted by their works support the intentions declared in their artistic project. Of course, it is not the case of judging artists through inflexible dogmatic truths. From a radical perspective, each work needs to be focused on the complexity of each context through socially and educationally committed dialogues based on emotional engagement and grounded knowledge.

### **Early Childhoods**

I use the term *Early Childhoods* in its plural form to address the relationship between the concept and the contexts. Thus, even recognizing that all children have the same human developmental path, composed by biological features and social interactions (Bakhtin, 2010; Bettelheim, 2012; Elkonin, 2009; Piaget, 2007; Verden-Zoller, 2004; Vygotsky, 2007; Winnicott, 1982), the difference between their characteristics, cultures, experiences and opportunities result in quite diverse Early Childhoods' realities. This biological and social system is ontologically related to artistic roots from the gestation process.

In intrauterine life, the baby perceives the world from holistic compositions, where all emotions and perceptions are deeply connected. The first materialization of signs in the womb is the *elemental musicality* (Verden-Zoller, 2004), composed of sonorous patterns, tones, vibrations, and sensations. All these signs already promote a great range of emotions and cultural references (Winnicott, 1982). After birth, the baby recognizes these expressions and similar sonorous patterns. They are the first known that will guide the discovery of the unknown, a process that repeats itself throughout life.

In the first social contact, the child's body and eye interactions with the caregivers are connected to recognizing intrauterine signs on external sound patterns and tones (Verden-Zoller, 2004). In this process, the first baby's babblings lead to oral language discovery, according to each child's opportunities to interact socially (Vygotsky, 2007). Likewise, the baby's sad crying presents melodic and rhythmic features (Winnicott, 1982) that call for attention and comfort the child through a recognizable sensitive environment.

The baby's diverse social body and sonorous interactions lead the child to the perception of alterity through *aesthetic activism* (Bakhtin, 2010) that results in recognition of oneself by the

other's eyes and tones and vice-versa. Thus, the discovery of individuality and alterity are mutually aesthetic-dependent (Bakhtin, 2010). To build this progress, the child starts projecting alterity into diverse *transitional objects* (Winnicott, 1975) to understand its own singularity in the world better. This projection is a creative path that guides the ability to play symbolically through the theatricality's *double perception of reality* (Juguero, 2019).

It is from their plays that children recognize and evolve their understanding of the world (Bakhtin, 2010; Piaget, 2007; Verden-Zoller, 2004; Vygotsky, 2007; Winnicott, 1975). The child receives many signs from the environment and plays with them constructing emotional, perceptive, cognitive and axiological synthetic frames that give meaning to further experiences. Thus, theatricality is the central property of *children's ludic logic* (Juguero, 2019), the playful holistic process that grounds the way children build their life's comprehension. In this path, symbolic games permanently shape emotions, values, behaviours, and other signs the child learns from daily social life and artistic objects. So, even if their plays result from spontaneous expressions, they reflect the references and opportunities children have access to (Elkonin, 2009; Vygotsky, 2007). In this system, Bettelheim (2012) draws attention to the relevance artistic narratives have to the child's maturation and psychic health. Besides, the author warns that realistic explanations don't dialogue with the playful way children communicate to the world. In these cases, the result is the sensation of abandonment and *intellectual defeat*, which may disconnect the children from the narrative or promote low self-confidence.

Concerning dramaturgical appreciation, the child receives pluriperceptive signs from the outside and internalizes their subliminal pedagogies. It happens according to the kid's emotional engagement and recognition of the discursive operations, either with or without a central plot. About narratives, Elkonin (2009) states that children's symbolic games begin with little synthetic expressions connected to other ones by many kinds of possible associations (Vygotsky, 2007). While the child grows up, the creations of little stories become more complex, detailed, and internally regulated by a logic that is never unconsciously aleatory but is based on accurate logic premises different from the adult's abstract thinking. Because of that, they may sound chaotic to adults that don't dedicate themselves to learn to *think in the way of thinking* (Freire, 2016) of the child to understand the *children's ludic logic* (Juguero, 2019) and promote artistic dialogues where the child feels fully competent to engage with the aesthetic experience. It is essential to recognize that artistic discourses deeply dialogue with the way children operate their thoughts about the world (Bettelheim, 2012), especially when they are based on ludic operations similar to the children's way of thinking. According to Bettelheim (2012), the child's emotional engagement with artistic narratives is essential to develop

maturation by promoting subjective ways of dealing with fears, desires, and new information. This aesthetic pleasure is diverse from the feelings in the concrete daily life and functions through a depersonalized detachment that promotes the security to face new emotive, perceptive, and rational challenges.

The diverse dramaturgies significantly influence the human cultural development of emotions, values, and behaviours according to the scene's pluriperceptive and multi-sign vectorizations and personal references. This impact is even more prominent concerning Early Childhood since children are just beginning to understand life and are open to learning what is presented to them. In this sense, the artists who work with Early Childhood have a great responsibility since their creations point out primary axiological signs through all its aesthetic elements and the people empowered, devalued or excluded in their artistic projects.

The connection between the child's and the scene's theatricality may be an effective way to promote diversity and democracy from the roots. The little child is just receiving the values from the daily environment and may subliminally confront them and naturally develop new cultural bases that will guide to new behaviours and understandings based on democratic experiences of *parity in diversity*. However, the predominance of one kind of people and culture in the artistic manifestations is also a powerful way to promote their supremacy. The absence of groups that don't have the same structural access to express their cultures and viewpoints, assuming the influential role of creators, ratifies society's imbalance and injustice. A democratic project may not exist without commitment to this fundamental aspect.

### **Radical Where?**

Stavanger is the fourth biggest city in Norway. In 2014, the municipality's population was already constituted by 21% of immigrants (COE, 2014) from 181 countries and cultures (van Riemsdijk, 2016). The immigration rates continue increasing and are encouraged by the government since foreigners' labour and knowledge are essential to promote the city's economic growth and current wealth. Concerning this plurality, the Council of Europe mentions in the document "Intercultural Cities: building the future on diversity" (COE, 2014) that Stavanger's City Council and the Rogaland County's Diversity Resource Network intend to develop a pluralistic and democratic "we culture" committed to equality and diversity. The municipality strives to welcome newcomers through initiatives such as the Johannes Learning Centre, where newly arrived children and adults may study the Norwegian language and culture. However, the CEO (2014) recognizes that Stavanger has few immigrants in key positions, hindering an effective democratic society. The Council also highlights the necessity of policies focused on



original ethnic citizens' education to promote integration and awareness. According to the CEO, the policies targeted at locals "must create a desire to move beyond passive tolerance of difference to active engagement, mutual allowance and pursuit of the diversity advantages" (CEO, 2014: 14).

Concerning Norway, the recommendations for the parliament from the Ministry of Culture (Norges Kulturdepartementet, 2021) are precise in recognizing the necessity of improving access to artistic enjoyment and production according to the plurality of Norwegian society. The document affirms that awareness, structure, and effort must create egalitarian opportunities since artistic democratic expressions are essential to reach social justice.

### **Radical Who?**

The project *Scenekunst til ALLE små* is held by the Dybwikdansen group (Dybwik and Halles, 2020), the University of Stavanger, embracing its Center for Research in Early Childhood (FILIORUM), the Department of Early Childhood Education of the Faculty of Arts and Education, and the Faculty of Performing Arts besides the Stavanger Municipality. Furthermore, it counts on the sponsorship of Sparebankstiftelsen according to the Norwegian Government policies. Thus, it is an institutional project where all its partners and institutions are responsible for its proposals and actions. In this sense, it is highlightable that the partners' policies denote their commitment to the theme of democracy, addressing reflections and activities related to the society's diversity and the necessity of representativeness.

The University of Stavanger has multicultural and multiethnic students. It embraces researches and projects committed to societal change by critically investigating themes like racism, gender parity and intersectionality (UiS 2020b, 2020c, 2021c, 2021d, 2021e), just to mention some examples. Accordingly, FILIORUM's primary focus is based on the ideas of belonging, play, and communication connected to the theme of democracy, as verifiable in its last conference's title "Diversity and opportunities in kindergarten" (UiS, 2021a). The Department of Early Childhood Education of the Faculty of Arts and Education also declares that its ethical principles are responsible for developing educational premises that lead to a more egalitarian society (UiS, 2020a). Contradictory, by the ending date of this article, the Faculty of Performing Arts website doesn't mention any policies concerning democratic approaches to diversity (UiS, 2021b). It is also highlightable that the university's key positions still don't reflect the city's population, which hinders the possibility of creating the parity in diversity essential to promote democracy and social justice. However, the calls for new positions address

the necessity of diversity and encourage people with different backgrounds, origins and special needs to apply (e.g. FINN, 2021).

Concerning the Norwegian Government, the necessity of increasing the diversity of participants in cultural life and amplifying their voices to reach democracy is directly addressed by the Ministry of Culture in its recommendations for the parliament (Norges Kulturdepartementet, 2021). The document emphasises that the immigrant population's cultures enrich Norway, and the children and young people have the right to set their cultural expressions and be valued. Finally, the text states that the absence of artistic representativeness is a crucial factor that amplifies exclusion and the difficulties concerning education and overall development. The recommendations underline the necessity of democratic access to the means of production for Norway's diverse groups to dissolve social discrepancies and promote inclusion.

About the target audience, by now, *Scenekunst till ALLE små* has engaged more than sixty Kindergartens, presenting performances to multicultural and multiethnic children from one to five years old besides their teachers and other staff's members, which, as mediators, play a vital role in the children's fruition (Juguero and Gil, 2017). In this sense, the diversity of the staff is also a relevant factor, which, unfortunately, I will not be able to address in this study.

Concerning the professionals embraced by the project, it is also essential to mention that I am a Brazilian brown artist and researcher that has always been committed to the theme of diversity. Therefore, the fact that the University of Stavanger selected me to develop the present investigation, named "Pluriperceptive and Multicultural Theatricalities to diverse Early Childhoods", is also evidence of a path to increase diversity and democracy by amplifying the cultural viewpoints in the academic environment.

### **Radical When?**

The present article was developed between October 2020 and November 2021 during the pandemic Covid-19 that resulted in social discrepancy and catastrophic effects on the artistic field worldwide (Travkina and Sacco, 2020). In this period, the increase of unequal access to cultural tools resulted in unprivileged groups having even fewer opportunities of creating and appreciating artistic representative objects (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2021).

About Early Childhood, the creations for the little ones have even fewer presence of non-privileged groups than in the period before where their almost absence was already a reality, especially in Performing Arts (Hovde, 2021; Josef, 2019). This fact has a significant impact since diverse children don't have the same emotional opportunities of being represented, which

fragilizes the bonds between their sense of belonging and confidence in themselves and their communities. On the other hand, the contemporary technological sources that frequently result in excessive exposure of non-social activities for babies also promoted remote meetings worldwide. These virtual opportunities enabled the recognition of convergent current necessities of the artistic area, like the promotion of democratic actions, accessibility, structure, diversity, and grounded knowledge development.

Concerning children's appreciation of films, the problem isn't the babies enjoying some adequate audiovisual programs, but their abandonment in front of a screen, since they are just trying to discover themselves and can't do that satisfactorily without intense sociability (Juguero, 2019). This reality also shows the relevance of children having access to the conviviality of democratic Performing Arts in Early Childhood.

### **Radical Why?**

The study of *Scenekunst til ALLE små's* goal of being a democratic performing art project to all Stavanger's children reveals that this subject is relevant locally, as verified by the predominant declared policies of the University of Stavanger, the Stavanger Municipality and the Norwegian Government. Moreover, democracy in the artistic field is claimed worldwide, as the ASSITEJ's manifesto and discussions exemplify. Therefore, all speeches that advocate for democracy are relevant to promoting social justice. However, in many superficial and demagogic proposals, democracy turned into a "fashion subject". About this fact, from different perspectives, authors like Bourdieu (1989), Fanon (2008), Freire (2016), and Giroux (1988) warn that while the oppressed peoples generally absorb and reproduce the hegemonic culture's values, because of the privileged peoples' structural propagative power; the last ones usually update their discourses appropriating themselves with the other groups' claims, without abdicating their advantages and maintaining the same system. In this direction, Freire (2016) highlights the difference between privileged peoples' benevolent stance and authentic generosity. The benevolent posture is based on an arrogant sensation of superiority intended to "help" the considered inferior ones. This kind of stance is based on a lack of knowledge and awareness about the ashaming socio-historic process of exploration that leads to some peoples' privileges. Diversely, authentic generosity is rooted in understanding the origins of inequality and the assumption of responsibility through a genuine desire to learn from alterity and be part of a collective process of dialectical evolution, based on *parity in diversity*.

Concerning artistic projects for children, grounded knowledge may bring awareness about the art's specific social role and avoid superficial proposals. Hopefully, this investigation may

contribute to improving the mentioned project and similar ones worldwide, according to each reality.

### **Conclusion: Radical Dramaturgies through Parity in Diversity**

From the previous considerations, it is possible to suggest some grounded criteria that may root reflections and actions to develop democratic performing arts projects for early childhood.

Democracy requires sharing power through a society's representativeness based on *parity in diversity*. In Performing Arts, this structure must be present in the operational reality that makes the projects happen and the imaginary power of the artistic creations.

In Early Childhood, the *children's ludic logic* (Juguero, 2019) is directly connected to the power of the imaginary through the human property of theatricality. By constructing their symbolic games, children organize the social signs to understand life through the objectivation of subjectivity. They build symbolic and playful narratives to structure their thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviours according to their access to different opportunities. On the other hand, the aesthetic objects bring up emotional vectorizations of subliminal pedagogies, promoting the subjectivation of objectivity. Of course, these processes aren't isolated, but plenty of dialectical interactions of a permanent cultural construction and identity formation. Thus, the theatricality of the artistic discourses echoes in the symbolic games' theatricality, which operational structures may base effective dialogical creative communications. So, dramaturgies for children rooted in their ludic logic may establish dialogic forms where the child recognizes its pluriperceptive and holistic way of understanding the world. However, this kind of creation doesn't guarantee democratic experiences because it can also support injustice.

Dramaturgical vectorized signs may ratify exploration and prejudice by promoting the supremacy of some groups and cultures and devaluing or excluding the other ones. In theatrical plays, both inconvenient or stereotyped representations and the absence of some kind of people are effective ways of exclusion through the symbolic power of social imaginary, endorsing subordinating structures.

As an example, we may verify the reproduction of gender binarism and stereotypes in kindergartens (Alter-Muri and Vazzano, 2014; Meland and Kaltvedt, 2019; Torheim, 2017) lots of times reproducing artistic models like the "chosen princess" and "the chooser king". Concerning race, the phenomenon of black children drawing themselves as white or preferring white dolls due to the lack of emotional opportunities to create self-confidence and pride from the signs received from social life and symbolic creations is a sad reality in diverse contexts (Clark and Clark, 1947; Daniel, 2020; Fakuade, 2018; Laurez, 2018). In this sense, Bourdieu

(1989) emphasises how the dominant groups use their economic and structural conditions to amplify their symbolic power and maintain the cultural values that sustain oppressive social systems.

The human property of theatricality plays a fundamental role in personal and social development. It roots emotions and awareness that bases values, actions, and distinct ways of living and understanding life. Due to the *children's ludic logic* (Juguero, 2019), this effect is even more substantial in Early Childhood, being directly connected to *organizational identity* (Winnicott, 1975) and personality construction (Bettelheim, 2012). According to the signs children receive from the social world, their belonging bonds with their communities and features will be perceived as valorized or devalorized in a determined context. The imaginary power bases the self-confidence that may result in the perceptions of the social places children will be able to foresee themselves and others during their trajectories.

It is essential to understand theatricality from the roots to perceive that a democratic project requires a commitment to promoting equal emotional opportunities for diverse children, rooted in the *children's ludic logic*.

I call *radical dramaturgies* (Juguero, 2019) the artistic pluriperceptive narratives elaborated from the awareness of the roots that connect the specificity of the dramaturgical creations with the responsibility concerning its particular and relevant social role. A *radical dramaturgy* for children is committed to the child's fruition and axiological formation in every element presented on the scene, providing models and viewpoints different from the hegemonic culture. Thus, it promotes the deconstruction of historical exploration and creates new imaginary spaces through the connection of artistic and symbolic games' theatricalities.

Children's bonds with their culture are always affective and make up the emotional bases that link them to their family and social groups, pointing to the places they should occupy in the world. Access to democratic aesthetic references is a powerful way to promote the perception of transformation's possibilities and recognize the existence of multiple expressions and viewpoints, denaturalizing hegemonic culture adherence. It is also essential to develop creativity, imagination and curiosity, embracing emotions, senses, perceptions, cognition, body and vocal expression through a more complex, equitable symbolic, emotional and pluriperceptive repertoire. In Early Childhood, these experiences may promote new naturalized democratically diverse socio-emotional bases structured from the roots since the beginning of life.

*Radical dramaturgies* may contribute to the maturation of society through a process that enhances children's self-confidence, values diversity, and promotes new axiological bases from

its emotional roots for the next generations. It is critical that children from different realities and family configurations can feel positively identified with the scene in this process. It is even more relevant, especially concerning ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and gender groups, besides children with disabilities that have been historically excluded or stigmatized in widely spread industrialized artistic creations.

*Radical dramaturgies* must promote the same emotional and axiological opportunities through *parity in diversity*. All diverse children deserve to be able to project themselves in valued places by identifying characters, situations, and artists that make them proud of their characteristics, trajectories, and cultures, improving their power, resilience, and hope. Noteworthy, learning the diversity's beauty and strengths from a very early age is necessary for all children. So, they will have the opportunity to develop a more complex and profound way of perceiving life, different from the predominant superficiality of privileged groups (DiAngelo, 2018; Oluo, 2019).

There are no fixed rules to develop *radical dramaturgies* for children. This kind of creation must be based on profound artistic heteroscientific and technical knowledge, besides competence to deal with the *children's ludic logic*, promoting the naturalization of diversity and democracy through aesthetic pleasure, according to each context's reality. It is like being on a tightrope, where risk, fun, responsibility, and wonder create the instability that generates transformative movements based on commitment, knowledge, and love.

To exemplify some criteria that may base decisions concerning democracy in performing arts for early childhood, it is worth reflecting about the democratic intentions of the institutional project *Scenekunst til ALLE små* in Stavanger context. Hopefully, this sample may inspire similar studies and proposals according to each reality's specificity. It is highlightable that the present objective isn't to verify if this institutional action achieved this goal but to promote grounded reflection that may support the project's future development and the Stavanger's intentions of building a "we culture", following the Norwegian policies' commitments.

In *Scenekunst til ALLE små*, democracy is declared as a relevant goal. So, *parity in diversity* should be present in all aspects of its actions, from the teams that hold the artistic production and research activities to the dramaturgies presented in its theatrical performances. Thus, it is worth reflecting if the Stavanger multicultural and multiethnic society is represented in the project's teams and if diverse people have a voice to propose reflections and actions. It is also crucial to identify the cultural viewpoint promoted by the project and if the scene represents the plurality of the children in Stavanger's Kindergartens. Do the pluriperception of the dramaturgical multi-signs result in *parity in diversity* concerning the emotional bases of the

imaginary power? Do these signs contribute to dissolving racial, ethnic, gender and social exclusion and subordination? Is it possible to promote democracy if the children don't have the same emotional and symbolic opportunity to identify with the scenes and be empowered? Besides, it is also relevant to think if the intention of reaching all the city's children is feasible, taking into account children with disabilities, refugees and those in care institutions apart from their families. How are their specific contexts supported by artistic creations that empower and help them face their unjust social constructed realities?

Of course, it is not fair to ask for an independent artistic group to solve all these problems. However, the artists' awareness must guide their choices, and their responsibility should base the declarations on the goals they promise to meet according to their realities. In this sense, it is highlightable that *Scenekunst til ALLE små* is an institutional achievement. The strong institutions that promote it have the structure to develop a democratic project rooted in *radical dramaturgies* through *parity in diversity*. Based on these institutions' policies and current actions, I enthusiastically believe that the Norwegian Government, the Municipality and the University of Stavanger are committed to turning this project's intentions into reality. It isn't an easy way, but the path of love is always worth going.

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