

Examination of the Young Theater Spectator's Viewing Modes, based on Interdisciplinary Discussion about "potential space" and "aesthetic distance"

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The aim of this paper was to examine the unique viewing modes of young theater spectators in connection to their psychic processes. Based upon the discussion I held about the interaction existing between the terms "potential space" and "aesthetic distance", and taken from various disciplines but sharing divergent and complementary points, I aimed to create a theoretical basis for analyzing young theater spectator's viewing modes.

In this study I have proposed that the emotional maturity that enables the young spectator to keep a sufficient degree of aesthetic distance while watching children's plays is based, among other things, on the interaction between mother and baby at the beginning of the baby's life. For this purpose, I have discussed in the beginning the three axes which I have identified as representing main categories in my theoretical framework: 1. The place where the psychic experience comes into existence, on which the foundation cultural experience exists, 2. The psychic foundation on which cultural experience is based, and, 3. The cultural experience – possible failures. In the second stage, I demonstrated the three axes using the findings which resulted from my observations of the viewing modes of 12 young theater spectators.

The findings of this study showed that a psychic mechanism is involved in the shaping of aesthetic experience that encompasses the viewing experience in theater productions. From the interdisciplinary discussion about potential space and aesthetic distance, it appeared that there could be a connection between the way in which young theater spectators react while watching a play for their age group and the quality of the psychic interaction between them and their mothers at the beginning of their lives.

Keywords: Potential Space, Aesthetic Distance, Psychic Distance, Intermediate zone, Youth Theater, Edward Bullough, Donald Winnicot.

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