

When Pupils Go to Theatre: The Activation of Memory and the Mnemonic Depiction

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Going to theatre, may be a unique experience for schoolchildren, which is indelibly etched in their memory. The Primary School pupil-spectator comes in touch with the theatre principles and is initiated in its world. S/he experiences its ritual and cohesively structured character within the frame of the collectivity that is required and with the particularity of the formation of the psychic mechanism and social conscience in this specific phase of the development of his/her personality, as well as the influence of a number of some other differentiating factors, thus leading to the establishment of a very special relation and interaction between the stage and the audience. S/he also focuses on the elements of the performance that attract his/her interest, are closer to his/her mentality, and challenge his/her attention and emotional stimulation. In this way, the mnemonic recording is activated. The theatre performance consists of a very rich environment for mnemonic traces because of its wealth of codes, their multiple combinations, and variety of functions. The actors' speech, the intense content of ideas and principles in combination with the challenging audio-visual stimuli of the secondary codes of the performance, the plot dynamics, and the director's techniques and practices, are elements that may initiate mnemonic recording. It is important on the other hand that the school invests in cultural activities such as the attendance of a theatre performance and includes them in the school curriculum. The teacher, as the best advocate of cultural education, the active mediator and coordinator of this visit, undertakes a large part of the responsibility for its successful and indelible mnemonic recording—from the difficult part of the selection of a performance to the care of the suitable conditions for the reception of the spectacle—thus creating the appropriate frame for the pupils to experience the acting event as a means of interaction, play, learning, communication and above all of the activation of the old and the creation of new memories. Therefore, the research interest of the present study focuses on the analysis of all the elements mentioned above, with the aim to examine and analyze the specific factors that influence the mnemonic recordings of the school audience.

Keywords: pupil-spectator, mnemonic recording, theatre codes, school, teacher

Introduction

Going to theatre is not just an opportunity of “recreation” and “entertainment”, but an important part of

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school life and active cultural education with special value and pedagogical aim¹. It is not only a pleasant break in the school routine, but also a collective cultural experience and experiential event that may be indelibly etched in the memory of the pupil-spectator and define his/her future course and development.

On the one hand, the theatre performance includes a plethora of codes with numerous functions and thus encompasses a rich and fertile land for mnemonic traces.

On the other hand, because of its wealth of codes, as well as the numerous combinations and various functions, the theatrical performance embodies a rich and fertile field for mnemonic traces. The plethora of semiotic systems that are involved in the production of a notion, as well as the multifunction and the motion of the secondary signs and symbols that constitute the theatrical speech as a whole (Elam, 2001; Thomadaki, 1993), create an enormous wealth of decoding abilities and possibilities, easily adjustable to the various subjective and objective, measurable and non-measurable factors that affect the pupil-spectator's reception. The opinion that the young spectator (as well as the school audience) has for theatre (for a specific performance or in general), does not apply to the whole of the (perhaps) incongruous, but to the relevant/related elements that are traced at large and that directly or indirectly derive from the notion of memory (Grammatas, 2011). According to Balme (2012), the plethora of the cognitive and emotional reactions and interpretative actions that derive when someone sees a performance, are affected by a number of differentiating factors. Thus, parallel to the objective reception conditions, there are the subjective reception conditions (expectations, interests, experiences, attitudes, pre-existing knowledge, and so on) that affect the function of the young spectator's memory.

The theatre performance as "the art of memory" (Samuel, 1994), where the playwright's memory on a first level is involved and interacts with the director's and the actor's memory and on a second level the spectator's memory with the creators' and the society's memory, challenges the search of old and the creation of new memories and activates recall and reconstruction mechanisms of concepts and images. It creates mnemonic traces in the semantic memory (concepts, values, notions, and so on) and in the episodic memory (the memory that is related with experience and involves emotional situations). As an event placed in time and space, it activates the autobiographical memory². As a complex aesthetic experience, it activates the mental, emotional, and body memory. As a cosmic event and collective experience, it activates the cultural memory. Also, as a carrier of concepts, values, and ideas, it activates semantic memory, whereas as a process that requires a specific behavior and skills, it activates procedural memory. The emotional stimulation challenged by the performance increases the possibility of the establishment of the memory, not only during the encoding phase, but also during the information storage phase (Bablekou, 2011). Theatre memories—neither pure copies of the stimulus, nor purely imaginative constructions—derive from the spectator's constant intervention in the elements of the spectacle that s/he chooses, constructs, shapes, interprets, and reconstructs.

According to Grammatas (2011), theatre codes drastically affect the spectator's memory, thus intensifying or weakening the oblivion caused by the time distance from the dramatic and scenic space and time of the acting persons on the one hand and the objective space and time on the other.

¹ "Going to theatre combines the plan for a democratic school and its pedagogical aim under the same perspective: the access to humanity of the humans", [https://www.meirieu.com/ARTICLES/theatre anrat.pdf](https://www.meirieu.com/ARTICLES/theatre%20anrat.pdf) (retrieved 25/02/2019).

² Autobiographical memory is part of episodic memory (Roussos, 2011).

The actors' speech, the phrases, and concepts with the content of their values that activate the audience's conscience in combination with the audio-visual stimuli created by the secondary theatre codes of the performance (stage design, décor, costumes), are elements able to challenge the brain function that leads to the creation and storage of memory on a micro as well on a macro level. Additionally, by taking for granted that the visit takes place within a school frame, the pre-existing theatrical education as well as the engagement with relevant to the performance activities before and/or after the event, reinforces the establishment of strong memories. With his/her attitude and behavior, as well as his/her choices and proposals, the teacher-escort may reinforce the reception and approval of the stage venture by the spectator's conscience and favor the effect on the memory.

The specific factors that affect the mnemonic recording of the pupils-spectators will be examined and analyzed in the present study.

The Particularity of the Young Spectator

In this particular phase of the development of his/her personality and because of the influence of a number of other differentiating factors, the young pupil-spectator establishes a very special relationship and interaction with the spectacle on stage that derives from the particularity of his/her psychic mechanism and social conscience. It is s/he who, riven by the special characteristics of his/her age, as well as the receiver's qualities concerning the spectacle on stage "will judge and evaluate the performance and therefore the spectacle should be adjusted to his/her apperceptions as the play comes to fulfil his/her psycho-intellectual demands" (Grammatas, 1996, p. 21). The young spectator is not confined to the stereotypical (for the adult audience) rules of theatrical attendance and conventions. S/he is an impulsive, honest, and sharp-witted interlocutor of the scenic event. S/he does not submit his/her emotion to rationalistic patterns³ nor does s/he censor his/her impressions, reactions, and comments according to the dominating standards for social behavior. S/he outclasses the adult,

In the function of imagination, the emotional reactions, the intensely expressive psyche and the immediacy in communication, while s/he lags behind in terms of emotional function, critical ability, emotion self-control mechanisms and the conventional relation with the offered theatrical result. (Grammatas, 1998, p. 375)

The young spectator satisfies all these requirements that Bertolt Brecht considers as absolutely necessary for the adult spectator in order to be able to reach artistic delight: S/he is by him/herself productive up to a certain degree and combines his/her own experiences with those of the artists' or s/he questions them. Artists witness the young spectators' unique relation with the scenic world.

In contrast with adults, who pay more attention to the ideas, children are more hyper-sensitive. They delve into the performance by paying attention to the details and this brings them closer to the artists' work. They see the performance carefully and participate in it vividly. There is no clear distinction between reception and thought for them. When dealing with adults, I cannot feel the kind of synchronicity that is created between the children who see the performance and me, who plays the role-rarely do adults have an equally direct attitude. They see and then they think about what they saw. (Libertini, 1997, pp. 9-10)

³ "The spectator dives into the aesthetic experience and the material scenic elements and the experienced moment overwhelms him before semantic relations and notions are shaped" (Pavis, 1996, p. 21). This quality described as such by Pavis, is attributed to the young spectator, who is carried away by the reality of the stage and does not seek to offer to it the notions s/he perceives or feels.

They young spectator is able to comprehend the world through the senses and process with incredible easiness the data received. We could say that s/he is the ideal spectator envisioned by the creators⁴. Eruli mentions characteristically:

Children are made to listen, to help solve the mysteries of the world, to imagine new things. They have the ability to compose, they have the same rebellious look as the artists. They pose the same questions that adults are unable to give true answers or-at least-suitable answers. (Eruli, 1997, pp. 9-13)

The Memory of the Pupil-Spectator

How does the pupil-spectator's memory function? What is its relation with the theatrical event? How is mnemonic recording activated, with which criteria and for what reasons does it proceed to choices and categorizations? What is eventually depicted in the memory after seeing a performance?

- Some words and phrases with special semantic and value system.
- Some facial expressions, movements, and gestures of the actor, performed with sensitivity and the best possible technique.
- Some elements of the visual décor, the music, the lights.
- A rhythm that challenged the body and activated the senses.
- A surprise in the observation of the opening scene.
- The tension backstage and the expectations in the foyer.
- The anticipation before the ringing of the bell.
- Some events irrelevant to the scenic action that are connected with its specific time and space.
- Some elements concerning audience ratings or intense theatricality.
- A continuous applause or a pause on the stage.
- The sudden "invasion" of the actors among the audience.
- An actor's role that was unexpectedly experienced by the spectators.
- A pupil's or a teacher's impulsive reaction.

These are some of the numerous factors that affect the mnemonic recording during the attendance of a theatre performance for young spectators, which we are going to approach further in our study.

The Notion and Function of Memory

The research field of the notion and function of theatrical memory appears challenging indeed within the frame of a more general interest concerning the reception and acceptance of the theatre performance by the spectators' conscience. Memory as the characteristic of the preservation of information of the Past, refers to a sum of physical functions with which humans may activate impressions, images, and circumstances, which even if they took place in the Past, they are able to bring them back in the spotlight as if they were present (Schacter, 2001). This activation and re-creation of the Past in the Present is adjusted to the individual or collective needs and expectations of the Present. The multi-dimensional notion of memory and its equivalent—at times—content, is depicted on its various manifestations: individual memory, collective memory, tradition (Halbwachs, 1964). In the same way, the angle and its way of approach is

⁴ P. Brook claims: "Children are much better and specific than most of my friends and theatre critics, they are neither prejudiced, nor do they have established theories and views. They come with a disposition to fully participate in what they will see and if their interest is not stirred, they have no reason to hide their lack of attention—we see that immediately and we may be sure that it is because of our failure" (Brook, 1998).

differentiated—sometimes emphasizing on its intentional or random, private or public, conscious or unconscious character (Olick & Robbins 1998).

Memory requires the information that comes from the outside world and is sensorially recorded, first to be encoded, then to be stored, and eventually to be retrieved. In the first phase of the sensory recording, the identity of the information is not recognized accurately—apart from a few characteristics (size, color, position, and so on). The sensory recordings are analyzed into visual, audio, tangible, and so on and have a very short retaining duration (split seconds). Their process is complex: Many mnemonic structures participate in it and it takes place in many parts of the brain. Only a part of them passes to the short-term memory (working memory), which has limited capacity and retains the encoded informative elements for less than 30 seconds, in order to enable some processes essential for the survival and the transmission to the long-term memory to take place (Bablekou, 2003). If the information is retained there for more than a few seconds, they are then transmitted to the long-term memory, where they may stay for an unlimited time period. The long-term memory, which has unlimited capacity of quantitative and time information retention, is distinguished in fact memory, episodic memory, semantic memory, and procedural memory. The establishment of information there and their successful retrieval depends on the successful encoding (process, organization, relevant encoding, and retrieval frame) and storage in the memory brain facets. The loss of information (oblivion) is usually attributed to its depreciation or the intervention of other information (Roussos, 2011).

The Performing Event and Its Mnemonic Depiction

During the performance, the mnemonic recording is affected by the place and all the objective reception conditions, since according to Carlson (2003) the venue is the first of a number of factors that define it. The type and the venue of the theatre building and the stage (Proscenium, In-the-round, and so on), the “memory” and the “history” of the theatrical venue, the spatial arrangement of the spectators, as well as the means of the spectators’ transportation to it, are some of the parameters that affect the creation of memories. Also, the initiative image of the performance is always possible to leave a strong mnemonic depiction and be used as the driving force for the haul of other information related with the scenic event (Deldime, 1996). The young spectator’s first impression is crucial⁵. His/her intense emotional charge, coupled with his/her activated conscience at the beginning of the performance, results to the activation of the mnemonic mechanism and the strong depiction of the initial picture on stage. On the other hand, the young pupil-spectator is likely to be influenced by manipulating mechanisms and mechanisms that shape the public opinion (theatre critic, mass media, star system, and so on), as well as the school, family, and friendly environment.

The power of the spoken words and the experiential form of the dramatic speech, the immediacy and the vividness in the action, as well as the truthfulness of the characters, are important factors for the establishment of mnemonic traces. When the vibrant language “borrows” children’s spontaneity, it reinforces the communication between the stage and the audience and creates the prerequisites for mnemonic storage. The subject (folk tradition, ancient Greek literature, children’s literature and so on), the type (devised theatre, intertextual assemblage, adaptation and so on), the language, the style of writing, the structure of the

⁵ The performance itself begins with the presentation of the scenic venue, which is full of information, via its initiative picture. Often the audience remains shocked or even applauds in that initial sensation that is created by the view of a fine scenic composition. Even after the development of theatrical speech, those initial terms exert considerable influence on the reception and the acceptance of the spectacle.

plot⁶, as well as the presence of the element of the “adventure”, activate mnemonic recording. The ideological/value system of the play, the reference to the Present, and the involvement of the elements of the creators’ individual-collective-cultural memory with the respective elements of the spectators’ individual-collective-cultural memory, are factors that have a catalyst role in the establishment of strong memories. Also, the sense of humor that comes effortlessly—and sometimes uninvited—in the right moment via the circumstances or the characters of the play, is a means of communication that fits the young spectator’s character and plays an important role for his/her immediate/direct contact with the action on stage, thus reinforcing mnemonic recording. Young spectators love humorous descriptions, comic situations, absurd circumstances and plays with words. Moreover, some special characteristics of the play such as openness and theatricality also reinforce and differently orientate mnemonic recording.

Apart from that, the actor’s presence, as the living power of the performance and the breaking point of the scenic event, unquestionably marks the young spectator’s memory. Being an especially complex method, acting comprises of a number of individual elements. Therefore, kinesiology, vocality, mimicry, as well as the use of paralinguistic elements, etch their traces in the young spectator’s memory, thus underlying and promoting the characteristics of the heroes and creating an atmosphere riven by emotions and a predisposition for identification and participation. Other basic acting elements such as artistic innocence, expressiveness, originality, resourcefulness, extroversion, immediacy, and so on, play a very important role for the theatrical communication and therefore the mnemonic recording. The spectator’s emotional identification with the hero⁷, with the actor being a mediator, challenges the experiential methexis in what happens on stage and functions as the driving force for the development of memory.

Apart from that, it is possible that the actor’s appearance may leave mnemonic traces (costumes, makeup, hairstyle, mask, and so on), as well as his/her speech with its special characteristics (immediacy, vividness, and so on).

Some of the director’s choices, such as the use of specific techniques (alienation effect, physicality, participation (Papakosta, 2014), dramatic narrative, shadow theatre and so on), as well as loans from children’s play (animation, contradiction, repetition, reversal), may contribute to the establishment of memories. Eloquent and crystal-clear messages on stage orientated by the director’s view may easily capture the young spectator’s reception and activate mnemonic recording. The use of subversive solutions and the creation of unexpected audio-visual messages may create indelible mnemonic traces⁸. The space of non-coincidental, scenic presentation and the spectator’s expectation is, however, the one that will be depicted on the memory and challenge thoughts and emotions, even after the completion of the scenic event (Papakosta, 2010). Additionally, the combination of many codes for the construction of a message, favors an in-depth process by the mnemonic mechanism, because it may connect multiple stimuli (audio, visual, and so on) of joint targeting⁹. On the other hand, the plethora of actions and messages, a mixture of audio-visual elements that derive from the stage without consistency and sequence, create “noises” (Koliadis, 2002) that negatively intervene in the mnemonic work. In the same way, the multiple actions on stage that are confusedly and unevenly diffused in the

⁶ By taking for granted that the semantic encoding facilitates the storage and therefore the recall of information (Bablekou, 2003), the structure of the plot performs a key role in the process of the establishment of memory.

⁷ The leading hero is the driving force for the establishment of memory in a performance. The emotional burden, as well as a hero’s intense theatrical characteristics, creates strong mnemonic traces (Deldime & Pigeon, 1988).

⁸ An unusual or weird picture may be easier encoded and recalled (Koliadis, 2002).

⁹ Multi-encoding, secures the long-term retention to a higher degree and therefore its easier and faster recall (Koliadis, 2002).

performance, do not favor the process in the short-term memory and result to oblivion. Despite the fact that rhythm is a considerably difficult measurement to be recognized by the young spectator, it nevertheless constitutes an important factor concerning the quality of communication between him/her and the performance and therefore its mnemonic recording. The speed of the scenic shifting, as well as the violence or tension at times, the movement of animate or inanimate objects in contrast with their immobility at a previous time and the creation of a constant flow of scenic energy towards the audience, stirs the young spectators' interest, as well as their emotional thrill and results to the reinforcement of communication between the stage and the audience and eventually the establishment of strong memories.

The Important Role of Theatre Codes

The quality of the audio-visual frame (stage design, costumes, stage objects/mechanisms, and so on) and the way it is materialized in the production of the scenic event (resourcefulness, imagination, innovation, flexibility, transformation, aesthetics, unpredicted combinations, unusual materials, and so on), is also a factor of successful mnemonic recording. Its adaptation to textual, kinesiological, spatial, aesthetic, pedagogical, and psychological needs, as well as its harmony with the aesthetic identity of the performance, also affects the creation of memories. By taking for granted the fact that "the distance between the scenic object and what this represents, its ability to challenge different things, contributes to the establishment of memory" (Deldime, 1996, pp. 102-103), the stage designer and the costumer are called to create bridges between the contrasts and dare to compose heterogeneous creations by exploiting the aesthetic stimuli and the potential connotations (Papakosta, 2010). While playing with the forms, the figures and the colors¹⁰ with flexibility and inspiration, aiming at the clarity of the performance message and the creative dialectics with the other semiotic systems of the performance, the scenographic composition—beyond its audio-visual function—definitely stand a chance of capturing the young spectator's memory. Especially as far as costumes are concerned, the evasion from the conventional frame and the quest for original and resourceful solutions, as well as the possibilities for development, transformation, and creation of new compositions¹¹ within a frame not only of autonomy but also of cooperation inside and outside its own system of importance, may challenge the young spectator's surprise, fire his/her imagination, and activate his/her mnemonic recording. However, even if the codes used by the costumer in order to be involved in a creative dialogue with the spectator and the young audience is not experienced or mature enough to comprehend them, they may still prove to be useful for memory. Various codes-political, historical, aesthetic, psychological, and so on, are useful for the creation of a second or perhaps a third level of interpretation, which may support the intuitive approach of still unknown elements and be stored in the long-term memory, so that other performances may be processed in the future.

Additionally, the transformations, the transfers, as well as the unbecoming use of the stage objects with the aim to change their function, include the element of surprise, attract the young spectator's attention, and are determinant for the mnemonic recording.

The way the secondary performance codes are exploited—such as lights and music—and their transformation into the main representatives of the director's venture, play a defining role for the establishment of memories. In this type of theatre, music contributes and reinforces mnemonic recording, as it has the ability to create a unique atmosphere, to emotionally charge and discharge action, comment on persons and

¹⁰ Colored pictures are more likely to be established in the memory (Koliadis, 2002).

¹¹ Visual pictures that denote relations and interactions are easier to be encoded (Koliadis, 2002).

circumstances, to charm and thrill with its intense emotional power, to kinesthetically activate the spectator, challenge his/her interest, curiosity, and surprise. By enhancing the young audience's participation, it challenges the feedback of the theatrical communication and dynamically activates mnemonic recorder. It is also true that live music during the performance draws the spectators' attention and penetrates their psyche more easily. In the case that the musician accompanies the spectacle with the use of musical instruments, we may say that music sets the rhythm and holds the threads of the plot, thus offering the actors a chance to receive the audio subjects and transform them into a wonderful language full of life that is simultaneously controlled with the accuracy of the body flow. Additionally, counterpoint—the ironic underlining, the function of the “recognition”—and the repetitions of the musical part that are connected with the action on stage, contribute to the recognition of the scenic event and create strong mnemonic depiction. The sound effects drastically affect the spectator's memory when they act reinforcingly, explanatorily, additionally, and emphatically on the scenic action, thus challenging emotional and physical reactions. More than that, when they cooperate with the actor's kinesiology and mimicry code, they may create indelible mnemonic traces.

Lights are of equal importance as well. They constitute a multipurpose theatrical language and -beyond their utilitarian function- they may overwhelm memory. They enable spectators to focus attention, they denote conditions, phenomena, even roles. They have the ability to color the stage, thus creating a special atmosphere. Suitable lights may give the spectator the sense of confinement, alienation/isolation, mystery, agony, expectation or transmit a feeling of happiness, hopefulness, joy, security and trust. The transition/shifting from light to darkness, surprises the young spectators, awakens their interest and grips their memory. On the one hand, they constitute adynamic means in the service of the other codes, whereas on the other, they serve the access to them, as well as their promotion. By re-moulding the sense of depth, mass, tension, presence or absence through the shadows and shades, they create scenic images that are consolidated in the memory.

This theatre language plays with the colors, shifts, varies in tension, uses the mobile and immobile projection, is inspired by cinematic procedures (as in close-ups and successive mixture of pictures), secures the cohesion between the different means of scenic expression exploited, and manages to etch indelible mnemonic traces.

Lights mark the rhythm of the play by isolating the actions, reveal the psychic condition of a hero, intervene in the action by attempting a breach or a bond between the heroes, reveal the time-flow, suggest an atmosphere, demonstrate the passage from reality to dream, and have a metaphorical, symbolic value. Those abilities constitute a dynamic factor for the creation of theatrical memories.

As far as New Technologies are concerned, when their use is orientated in line with the director's basic aim, they may stir the young spectator's interest through codes familiar to him/her and manage to create a strong mnemonic depiction. By taking for granted that the prospective spectators are not simple “linear thinkers” and they easily handle multisensory information and are technologically literate, we may understand that the media influences the theatrescape in various ways and opens multifarious aesthetic ways in the modern theatre for young spectators. The digital process of the sounds, the pictures, the text, and the videos, transform expression and creation. New Technologies include modern types of digital picture that may offer many more opportunities for the realization of an inspiration or a vision (Grammatas, 2015). It is necessary though for them to be connected with the spectacle and serve the director's view with accuracy and consistency. When functionally connected with the spectacle, New Technologies may contribute to the activation and creation of memories, either by participating in the director's attempt, or by demanding primacy. With their variety of

semiotic functions, they support the direct approach to the youngsters' world of senses and emotions, thus creating a fertile land for mnemonic traces. They activate the young spectator's imagination and challenge his/her interest and awaken him/her kinesthetically, while they simultaneously broaden the acting abilities and underline theatricality. They may substitute or modify the scenic picture, intervene in the time-spatial flow and the sound environment of the performance, replace and complete the action. Because of their flexibility and complex function, they may cooperate with the other codes of the performance, thus creating and supporting multiple interpretation levels and therefore mnemonic recording (Papakosta, 2016). Moreover, they may reinforce participation or alienation according to the director's view.

The Teacher's Role in the Establishment of Memories

A school that simply handles the visit to theatre as an "uninspired duty" or "obligation", does not create the suitable frame for the accomplishment of a pluralistic and multi-level theatrical communication and therefore does not favor mnemonic recording. On the contrary, a school that invests in cultural activities both indoors and outdoors and embodies them in a more enhanced school curriculum, where they act as a source of knowledge, attitudes, and innovation, may then offer the best possible advantages in full dimension¹². The individual activities before and after the performance are vital for the establishment of memories (Deldime & Pigeon, 1988). The pupils' relation with theatre as a whole, as well as their incentives and theatre pedagogy, is of great importance. Also, the pupil-spectator's education and his/her acquaintance with basic theatre notions (role, theatre convention, and so on), with the theatre codes (acting, scenography, and so on), as well as the general rules that accompany the attendance of a performance, reinforce his/her communication with the action on stage¹³. More specifically, the pupils' indirect encounter with the subject of the play via the reference to the Present, the cross-thematic approach of the school subjects, the intertextual connections, and the approach of heterogenous material, positively prepare the reception of the scenic venture. However, we ought to be very cautious with the selection of the appropriate activities before the performance, which must not bring the pupils in touch with the content as well as the artistic part of it via the presentation of photographs, theatre programmes, videos, and so on, because in that way, expectations are created and eventually the spectators' reception and mnemonic recording is influenced. On the contrary, activities after the attendance of the performance reinforce mnemonic recording. For example, the reading of the theatre text and/or its animation by the pupils strengthens the mnemonic traces and improves the comprehension of the story (Deldime & Pigeon, 1988). In the same way, indoor artistic school activities (visual arts, music, and so on), as well as outdoor activities (a visit backstage while in theatre, discussion with the creators, and so on), which are connected with the theatrical event, may strengthen the mnemonic depiction. Therefore, the teacher is the most important representative of such an "active cultural education" (Legrand, 2004, p. 10), the mediator, as well as the organizer of the whole project: He carries a large part of the responsibility for the success—from the difficult task of the selection of a suitable performance, to the care for the reception conditions of the spectacle—s/he creates the appropriate frame so as to help the pupils experience the theatrical convention and communication and—above all—the activation of old and the creation of new memories. By adopting the profile of the critical

¹² "This type of activity may raise questions, queries and desires and highlight the true dimension of a practice that aims to the development of the pupil's personality" (Legrand, 2004).

¹³ "The spectator's school is a patient and careful course that serves the purpose of the school and simultaneously an authentic cultural policy, which all pupils have the right to experience" (Legrand, 2004).

educator, who analyzes and explains facts with artful and pedagogical sensitivity (Giroux, 1994) and acts as an intellectual reformer, the modern teacher may exploit the attendance of a theatre performance as a potential tool of a completely differentiated teaching method and an initiation into a journey of cultural interchange, aiming at the New Learning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2013) and eventually interfering in the establishment of new memories.

Conclusion

The research field of the notion and function of theatrical memory emerges challenging within the frame of a more general interest concerning the reception and acceptance of the theatrical performance. The study of theatrical memory itself consists of an important field of teatrological research, which has not yet been fully explored and needs further inquiry. On the other hand, the study of Theatre for Young Spectators has expanded considerably, not only because of the development of the phenomenon under research, but also because of the fact that its importance is growing within the frame of a society that changes rapidly and seeks behavior, communication and difficult dilemmas confrontation models. The relevant research on Theatre Studies attempts to describe both the individual characteristics and the whole picture of the kind from various angles—historical, pedagogical, aesthetic, sociological—and communicate with other sciences, thus adopting information and views from them. All these result to productive and fertile dialogue.

Within the frame mentioned above, the research on the relation between theatrical action addressed to pupils—spectators and theatrical memory in all its aspects (cognitive, emotional, physical, and collective/social/cultural), as well as the non-systematic recording of the effect of the performance in their memory, and—if possible—the mapping of the procedure for the creation of impressions and posterior aesthetic, pedagogical, and sociological experiences that create their individual, as well their collective identity, is of great and special interest.

By taking for granted the complexity and heterogeneity of the fields involved (memory-pupil-school-theatre performance) in that kind of research¹⁴, as well as its multidisciplinary character, one realizes that careful and detailed study is required, in order to highlight the relations and categorizations among the plethora and variety of the findings. Simultaneously, however, it is extremely interesting and challenging to define the heterogenous memory traces, to examine their origins, dynamics, tolerance, and function, and eventually come to conclusions that will challenge fertile debate and new orientations in the scientific community.

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¹⁴ Such a research under the title “Theatrical Memory of 5th Grade Primary School students” is being carried out by the three authors of this article in the Department of Primary Education of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, with Professor Theodore Grammatas being the Principal Investigator, within the frame of Invitation EΔBM 34 “Support to researchers with emphasis on young researchers” MIS 5006824.

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