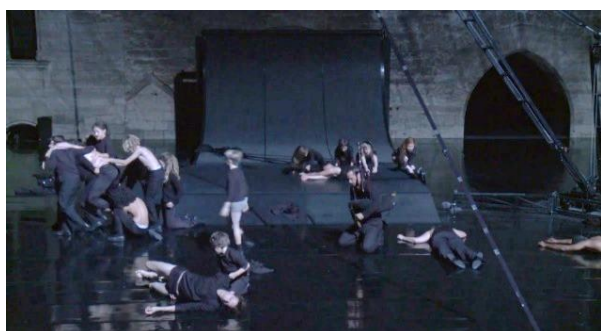# Children as full subjects on stage

A research on children's subjectivity and embedded power relations between adults and children in the performances *enfant* & *Horses*

MA Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy

Master Thesis

Supervisor: Laura Karreman

Second reader: Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink

Patricia Oldenhave, 5585295

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Abstract

The representation of the child on stage in the contemporary theatre and dance landscape is changing. For a long period the one-dimensional and inferior view of children, present in society, was represented on stage almost only. *enfant* and *Horses* are two performances that exemplify changing representations of the child in performing arts. Both performances reflect on power, agency and subjectivity by featuring adults and children simultaneously on stage. In this Master Thesis, I research how child performers in *enfant* and *Horses* are represented differently. Therefore, I especially pay attention to power relations adults and children are embedded in and the construction of children's subjectivity. Through the lenses provided by Foucault and Butler, I analyse the interaction of power relations and subjectivity. In both performances the children are represented as both subjected to power and powerful subjects. Even if there is a shift in power in both performances, *enfant* represents static power relations and *Horses* dynamic power relations. The children's subjectivities formed on the stage of *enfant* represent a subordination to the adult norm and reproduce the inferior position of children. Thereby, the representations of children in *enfant* stay within the dominant discourse on children. The dynamic power relations represented in *Horses* show agency as both condition and effect of the process of subject-becoming and power-subjection. By the way power is represented on stage, *Horses* formulates a clear critique to repressive power. *Horses* includes a scene in which the represented child explores a changing subjectivity. The child subverts the power relations it is embedded in and forms hereby a subjectivity that questions the dominant discourse. In *Horses* a subjectivity is represented that is no longer inferior to the adult subjectivity. Thereby, the new subjectivity questions the strict separation of the categories adult and child. *Horses* in this way could be part of a *changing* discourse on children. So in my Master Thesis I also try to explore how children can be seen as full subjects - on stage and in society.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

In the Netherlands several performances are made for and with children. The Netherlands - one of the countries leading the way for child performers and young audiences - have special theatre festivals focusing on children. Tweetakt Festival is an example of this. Tweetakt Festival stages performances for young audiences and performances featuring child performers. At the festival, children are not only engaged as an audience but also as performers.[1] Child performers engages not only my interest (and that of Tweetakt Festival) but several theatre-makers and choreographers are interested in child performers. Some of these makers reflect on the roles and subjectivity of children on stage and how they can be seen as full subjects. This explains, especially in Western-Europe, why more performances staged children in the last years.[23] Other representations of children on stage lead to new fields of investigations in theatre and dance studies. Several studies relate to this. Helen Freshwater - well-known lecturer and reader in theatre studies - focuses her (unfinished) research on the use of child performers in contemporary theatre and theatre's construction of the child's figure. In another article, "Children and the Limits of Representation in the Work of Tim Crouch", Freshwater focuses on the treatment and representation of children and how the precariousness of childhood is situated in the context of plays and performances.[4] Freshwater mentions how, in the last fifteen years, "Several of the most innovative and productive British playwrights of the period return again and again to the figure of the child in their work."[5] The British field of performing arts is not identical to the Dutch or French, but it is still part of the Western-European field in which there is a tendency to have more child performers on stage. Adele Senior describes in "Beginners on Stage" details of contemporary performances that share "[…] an exploration of the child as a subject in formation, where the relation to the adult audience or adult performers they appear to or with plays a key role in determining how the child is figured and positioned within the work."[6] Child performers

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[1] Even if children as audiences and performers are both interesting fields to research on, I only focus on child performers in this Master Thesis. As I am only writing a master thesis - and not a PhD - my time, words and research-possibilities are limited. So unfortunately I have to limit my research.

[2] As a researcher living in the Netherlands, with an international but European context, I will limit myself and the possibilities I have for my research to mainly Western-Europe.

[3] See for example this short random selection of performances, in which children perform on stage, by different directors and choreographers and from different countries: *Hoe de grote mensen weggingen en wat er daarna gebeurde* (Jetse Batelaan, 2016), *Horses* (Kabinet K & Het Paleis, 2016), *Five Easy Pieces* (Milo Rau, 2016), *Het Hamiltoncomplex* (Lies Pauwels, 2016), *Before your very Eyes* (Gob Squad, 2011), *enfant* (Boris Charmatz, 2011), *Teenage Riot* (Alexander Devriendt, 2010), *Inferno* (Romeo Castellucci, 2008), *That Night Follows Day* (Tim Etchells, 2007) and *üBUNG* (Josse de Pauw, 2001).

[4] Helen Freshwater, "Children and the Limits of Representation in the Work of Tim Crouch," in *Contemporary British Theatre*, ed. Vicky Angelaki, 167-188, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2013).

[5] Idem," 170.

[6] Senior, "Beginners on stage: Arendt, natality and the appearance of children in contemporary performance," *Theatre Research International* 41.1 (2016): 72.

raise questions of the discourse on children and how children can be seen as full subjects on stage. This is precisely the field and the questions to which I relate my research and this Master Thesis.

It is not only scholars, but also authors of news magazines and newspapers that highlight the tendency to have more children on stage. Marijn van der Jagt mentions in "Kinderen in theatervoorstellingen" how recently more frequently young children appear in performances.[7] She describes how young children on stage claim a place for themselves in a world dominated by adults and that the young performers' autonomy is outstanding. Lyn Gardner discusses in "Theatre for adults is child's play" how recently children in performances take centre stage which is different to how mostly "[…] children are neither seen nor heard in the theatre unless they are cute little moppets appearing in Annie or The Sound of Music."[8] The articles not only mention *that* children are on stage, but also *how*: children are (recently) on stage with a full-fledged position. The authors of the articles hereby relate to how performances make us reflect on child performers and the discourse on children. By staging children, immediately questions arise about children's autonomy. The articles clarify this by reflecting not only on the performances but especially also on the child performers.

With my Thesis, I want to contribute to the new field of research on child performers by reflecting on literature and two performances in which children perform on stage: e*nfant* and *Horses*. Both performances feature adults and children (aged six to eleven years old) simultaneously on stage who share equal parts in the performances.[9] The choice of performers, adults and children, raises questions about adult-child relationships. The performances reflect on the role of children in society and break with dominant ways of staging children as 'non-full subjects'. More precisely, both performances do not put children in an inferior position, but reflect the interdependency in adult-child relationships. The performances leave space for the child performers and explore one-sided perspectives to the power relations between children and adults. I chose *Horses* and *enfant* as they show more interdependent relations which displays that adult-child relationships are more complex than they are sometimes thought to be. The performances show shifts in power relations, several possibilities for the process and existence of children's subjectivity and even include scenes in which the adults (in contrast) are in an inferior position. Both performances also leave space for the

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[7] Marijn van der Jagt, "Kinderen in theatervoorstellingen: geen figurantjes, maar autonome karakters," *De Groene Amsterdammer* no. 37 (2017), https://www.groene.nl/artikel/eigenlijk-zijn-wij-heel-erg-boos.
[8] Lyn Gardner, "Theatre for adults is child's play," *The Guardian* (27-10-2008), https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/oct/27/children-teenagers-theatre.
[9] I am aware that by dividing the performers into adult and child performers, I categorize in the same limiting way as it is mostly done. However, for analysing children as full subjects I need to make a difference between adult and child performers. The child performers in both performances are aged six to eleven years old (categorized as schoolage-children) and are visibly different to the adult performers. Children in my analysis are the ones I read as children (formed by thoughts coming from society). Some indicators are that they are less tall, have softer traits in their faces, less muscular, no beard and no breasts.

audience's interpretation because they only consist of movements and sounds (and no spoken texts). The last reason for why I chose these performances is that both performances are still staged. Even if *enfant* had its premiere in 2011, it 'premiered' in Germany on 21st of June 2018 at the Volksbühne, Berlin. Subsequently *Horses* performed in May in Denmark and Germany and will, after a short tour in Asia, perform again end of June in Czech Republic. Hereafter I elaborate more on each performance.

The performance *enfant* was created in 2011 by French choreographer Boris Charmatz.[10] Charmatz - nowadays member of Volksbühne's advisory board - experiments with different forms, is interested in collectives, communities, the 'concept of dance' and public space. Judith Mackrell writes how "Boris Charmatz's work lies somewhere between dance, installation and conceptual legerdemain. He is a choreographer who makes us think hard about the logic of movement and about how it is presented."[11] In *enfant* the children do not appear on stage instantly. First machines lift adults for twenty minutes and afterwards adults approach the stage while lifting and dragging children. We see a shift of adults lifting children and the cruel image of machines lifting humans in the air. This immediately signifies power relations between adults and children and the child's subjectivity. Can children on stage, surrounded by adults, be seen as individuals, as subjects with own agency? This is a question which arises while viewing *enfant* and is also discussed in several reviews. *A Younger Theatre* states that "*Enfant* presents a politically-charged disentangling of our socially constructed notion of childhood."[12] Mackrell describes a shift in the performance as adults appear as puppet masters first and "[…] children appear utterly helpless as the adults dance and play with them, and arrange patterns with them as if they were dolls" but afterwards the children "[…] own the stage as the adults sink into a torpor and the children take control, dragging around their [adult] bodies, adjusting their limbs, fiddling with their clothes."[13] In the performance analysis, I will elaborate on the change in the performance and the shift in power relations that shows different subjectivities.

In *Horses*, we notice - as the stage slowly lights up - a diverse group of three adults and five children. This is how the performance *Horses* - by Kabinet K and Het Paleis - starts, choreographed in 2016 by Joke Laureyns and Kwinst Manshoven.[14] Flemish choreographers Laureyns and Manshoven have produced, for years, performances that include children and adults simultaneously on stage and

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[10] Boris Charmatz, *enfant*, premiere Cour d'honneur of the Popes Palace at Festival d'Avignon, 07-07-2011.
[11] Judith Mackrell, "Boris Charmatz-review," *The Guardian*, (30-01-2014), https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jan/30/boris-charmatz-review.
[12] Lee Anderson, "Review: Enfant, Sadler's Wells," *A Younger Theatre*, (01-02-2014), https://www.ayoungertheatre.com/review-enfant-sadlers-wells-boris-charmatz/.
[13] Ibidem.
[14] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, premiere NTGent, 04-11-2016.

that feature amateurs and professionals together. *Tanec Praha* describes their work as "Openness in working with children brings infectious energy; their joint creation is highly intuitive and emerges from a relationship of equals between child and adult."[15] As adults and children in *Horses* are literally and figuratively connected to each other, *Horses* immediately discusses adult-child relationships and raises questions on children's subjectivities. *Kabinet K* explains how the performance focuses on wanting to be big/stay a child, power/vulnerability, carrying/being carried.[16] In her review of *Horses*, Els van Steenberghe mentions the complex relationship between children and adults and the continious game of giving and taking, pulling and pushing. *Horses* discusses who the rider and the horse in the parent-child relationship is.[17] I focus on these complex adult-child relationships, power and children's subjectivity in the performance analysis.

In my research, I examine *how* children appear and what they represent on stage. It is interesting how *enfant* and *Horses* show children as powerless *and* powerful; individuals with their own-formed subjectivities. My research adds new perspectives to discourses on children on stage, power relations and subjectivity. I hope that my research produces new insights of child performers and enables that more child performers are seen as full subjects on stage.

Methodology

Research-questions

My main research-question **In which way are power relations between adults and children shown and (thereby) subjectivities of children represented on the stage of *enfant* and *Horses*?** will be answered by an analysis of the performances *enfant* and *Horses*. Therein, I focus on children's subjectivity by analysing the process of subjection and agency. As subjectivity cannot be thought of without power - subjectivity relates to agency as the opposite of power and being subjected to something - power should be focused on too. Before I analyse power and subjectivity in the performances, I give an overview of literature on children, childhood, children's position in society and children in performances. My research contributes to a broader discourse on children on stage, power relations children are embedded in, and children's subjectivity.

The upcoming chapters focus on three different aspects: children on stage, power relations and subjectivity. In the next chapter, I provide an overview of how children are seen in our adult-

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[15] Tanec Praha, *Kabinet K (BE): Horses*, accessed 19-06-2018 by https://www.tanecpraha.org/portfolio-items/horses_en/.
[16] Kabinet K, *Horses*, accessed 19-06-2018 by http://www.kabinetk.be/.
[17] Els van Steenberghe, "Kabinet K toont in 'Horses' de paardenkracht van een kinderlijf," *Focus*, (21-11-2016), http://focus.knack.be/entertainment/podium/kabinet-k-toont-in-horses-de-paardenkracht-van-een-kinderlijf/article-review-779151.html

based society and represented on stage, with the sub-question: ***In which way are children seen in society and how are they shown and represented on stage?*** There are power relations between adults and children on stage which should be analysed. In my second sub-question, I take Foucault into account and relate to his thoughts on power as a productive force. I want to give an overview on how power is exercised and how the power-exercise is shown in the performances. With the use of literature and by analysing the performances I answer the sub-question: ***By what means is power exercised and in which way is the exercise of power represented in the performances?*** In Foucault's explanation of disciplinary power producing subjectivity, almost no space is left for a change of subjectivity.[18] This has often been criticised and is also reflected in a scene of *Horses*, in which children fail to stand. I use Butler, who continues from Foucault's thoughts, to relate to dynamic power relations and to include agency. With the use of literature and by analysing the performances I answer the sub-question: ***How is the subject in the process of subjection formed by power and how is subjectivity shown in the performances?***

The literature highlights, in particular, the inferior position of children, but I will demonstrate how children can be seen as full subjects on stage, resulting in audiences experiencing child performers in a different perspective. I will show how children can be seen as full subjects with more 'independently' formed subjectivities differing from the norm. When I describe children as 'full subjects', I define children who are in an equal relation to other, adult performers. Children as full subjects are seen as independent and autonomous (also without relating to adult performers). Even if children are different in regards to age and physical appearance, the same roles and possibilities are provided. Applying my research will result in new insights to existing discourses.[19] I will state that precisely by staging adult and child performers simultaneously and the power relations children are embedded in, children can be seen as full subjects on stage.

Research-materials

My research-question will be answered by literature and performance analyses of *enfant* and *Horses.* The three sub-questions will, fully or partly, be answered by literature. My second and third question will also analyse the performances using analytical tools that the literature provides. The literature on children and childhood derives from authors, who are mostly positioned in the educational field.

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[18] Foucault's concept of discipline is less capable to analyse dynamic power relations or how subjectivity can influence power relations. As Foucault especially focuses on discipline and how subjectivity is produced by power, he almost leaves no space for changing power relations and changing subjectivities. Butler continues from Foucault and states that agency results out of power relations. However, the agency - to which Butler relates - gives not only the possibility to reproduce power relations but also to subvert power relations. In this way, subjectivity can be influenced by the subject as power relations can be changed.

[19] Hereby I refer to existing discourses in which children are perceived as inferior in relation to adults which results in children being staged as inferior and with non-autonomous roles.

Literature focusing on child performers is mainly written by theatre scholars. The literature on power and subjectivity is formed by philosophers and dance scholars. The chosen literature gives answers and provides modes to analyse techniques of power-exercise and subjectivity. The relevance of the literature will be proven post-research as the results of my analysis prove the significance of my theoretical perspective and the authors I relate to. Before analysing subjectivity, I have to analyse power by using Foucault's literature.

Through Foucault's literature, I am able to analyse power, its means, and the representation in the performances.[20] Power is part of the adult and child performers' relationships; whereas Foucault explains power as "[…] relationships between partners […] an ensemble of actions which induce others and follow from one another."[21] Foucault is highly relevant for my research as power relates to the mutual intercommunications between the performers and subject-formation. Foucault investigates *how* power is exercised and describes particular techniques of power. Dance scholar Valerie Briginshaw illustrates in *Dance, Space and Subjectivity* Foucault's theories on power and how "Much of Foucault's work concerns the working of power on individual bodies, which is why his theories, which have been frequently applied to other areas of cultural practice, are particularly pertinent for dance."[22] Even when Foucault is not a dance scholar, his theories relate to dance and its research. My thesis will add to other dance scholar using Foucault.[23]

Performance-analysis

The performance-analysis will be accomplished by a semiotic and phenomenological approach to the performances' online registrations.[24][25] The semiotic approach of McKinney and Butterworth, mentioned in *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*, focuses on how everything appearing on

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[20] I am aware that Foucault is a philosopher. However, lots of dance scholars use his literature. Dance scholar Sally Ann Ness mentions in "Foucault's Turn from Phenomenology" (2011, 19) that no-one else has been more influential in "[…] power, gender, and sexuality that have emerged in dance studies in recent decades than the philosopher-historian-critic Michel Foucault. The number of dance scholars directly citing Foucault, and the number influenced indirectly by his ideas through intermediary theorists such as Judith Butler - perhaps the single most popular one - is so large as to require an essay of its own just to survey." Therefore the relevance of Foucault, and Butler, for dance studies is evident. His concept of power relates very well to subjectivity and gives thereby important insights. My thesis will try to clarify this.

[21] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 786.

[22] Valerie Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 162.

[23] Some examples of further research demonstrate how Foucault's theories relate to dance: Jill Green, "Foucault and the training of docile bodies in dance education," *Arts and Learning Research Journal* 19.1 (2003): 99-125; Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dance: Bodies and subjects in contemporary American dance*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986); Sally Ann Ness, "Foucault's turn from phenomenology: Implications for dance studies," *Dance Research Journal* 43.2 (2011): 19-32; Mark Franko, "Archaeological choreographic practices: Foucault and Forsythe," *History of the Human Sciences* 24.4 (2011): 97-112.

[24] Boris Charmatz, *enfant*, online registration by https://vimeo.com/101984374.

[25] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, online registration by https://vimeo.com/205382068.

stage has a meaning.[26] The representation of child performers as full subjects is not only formed by signs and meaning, but also by experiences. According to Fischer-Lichte, as described in *The Routledge introduction to theatre and performance studies*, a phenomenological approach focuses on made-experiences, feelings or senses that are touched and "[…] the interplay of appearance, perception, and experience."[27] The audience perception is formed by meaning and experience. Indeed, in *enfant*, the audience notices how the same movements performed by children or adults, are perceived differently. Seeing a child lifting an adult or an adult lifting a child gives different meanings and experiences to the audience. My analyses of the performances will be a movement analysis, as both performances consist of movements and no text. I will analyse the movements, how these movements are staged and performed, and what emotions these movements evoke. Because the performances consist of children and adults whose movements are perceived differently, I can - by combining the two approaches - research how child performers are represented as full subjects.

Within the performance-analysis I focus on two scenes in each performance. In *enfant*, I analyse the scene in which children are brought on stage and moved by adults (25:04-34:05) and a later scene in which children move adults lying motionless on the floor (1:01:57-1:07:02). In *Horses*, I analyse the duet between adult and child in which the power-exercise is constantly changing (15:20-19:10) and a scene in which children's bodies dangle in adult hands (32:34-35:40). Both performances explore the dynamics between children as 'powerless' and 'powerful' by showing a shift in who exercises the means of power. The shift within power leads to a shift within the process of subjection and of becoming a subject. As these scenes shed different lights to subjectivities of children and how children can be seen, they relate most to my research and questions.

The performance analysis will provide answers to the second and third sub-question. The first part of the second sub-question focuses on power, its means and analytical tools provided by literature for the performance-analysis. For analysing power, I focus on three elements: positions of and between the performers, control over body and gestures, and relations of viewing. The literature on subjectivity provides analytical tools for how I analyse subjectivity in the performances by focusing on two elements: the process of subjection; agency/who takes initiative and agency/subversion of power relations. After the performance-analysis, I will connect observations of the analysis to main theoretical concepts, to answer my main research-question.

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[26] Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth, *The Cambridge introduction to Scenography,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 151-188.

[27] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge introduction to theatre and performance studies* (*New* York: Routledge, 2014), 57, 58.

2. Children/childhood in society and on stage

My research focuses on child performers as full subjects. So I firstly provide an overview of the biased way in which children are frequently perceived by adult connotations in society and on stage. I answer the question: ***In which way are children seen in society and how are they shown and represented on stage?*** My first focus is the dominant view of children in society. Afterwards, I focus on children on stage and how performances explore the construction of children and childhood and thereby could initiate a re-thinking on the current dominant discourse on children and childhood.

Children and childhood in society

Within society, a discourse on children exists on which literature on children and childhood reflects. In this thesis I focus only on the research relevant for the development of my argumentation.[28] Willem Koops states in *Het kind terug in de tijd* how childhood and the child are constructed by adults.[29] Koops emphasizes how, in our contemporary society, the child is seen as a not-finished-adult, a human-being developing from primitive to educated and developed. Children are not seen as individuals or complete-children, but as incomplete-adults. The discourse on children and childhood is formed by adults and only exists in relation *to* adults and adulthood. Whereas children are seen as immature, irresponsible and with little or no experience; adults, in contrast, are seen as fully-grown and developed. Barbro Johansson emphasizes in "Subjectivities of the Child Consumer" how adults are seen "[…] as 'human beings', as responsible, rational, able members of society, while children are seen as 'human becomings', who are undergoing development and education and who are not yet full members of society."[30] Johansson distinguishes between adults as beings and children as becomings. Both words have different associations: *being* can be associated with independence, responsibility and capability; *becoming* with dependence, irresponsibility, powerlessness and having to be taken care of. Even if Johansson does not point towards these associations, the words describing adults and children are still connoted by these respectively 'positive' or 'negative' associations. Describing adults as beings and children as becomings refers to the inferior view of children.

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[28] More research is done about childhood. Some examples of recent literature and research I will not elaborate on: Ariès argues in *Centuries of Childhood* that the concept childhood is created by our (modern) society; Burman discusses in *Developments: Child, image, nation* the contemporary politics of childhood; Prout and Allison, whose work will be partly discussed, focus in studies as *The body, childhood and society* (including the chapter "Childhood bodies: Construction, agency and hybridity") and "From the child's point of view: issues in the social construction of childhood" on the construction of childhood, children and their 'roles' in society; Lawlor discusses the social construction of childhood by adults and children's engagement in "The significance of being occupied."

[29] Willem Koops, *Het kind terug in de tijd*, (Utrecht University, 2008).

[30] Barbro Johansson, "Subjectivities of the Child Consumer: Beings and Becomings," in *Childhood and Consumer Culture*, ed. Vebjørg Tingstad and David Buckingham, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 80.

Children are seen as members of childhood, which is a social construction, formed by and embedded in society. The contributors of *Symbolic Childhood* focus on the portrayal of children and childhood which "[…] precedes and frames any specific child, socially and temporally speaking. Like other institutions, it has a presence and a history larger than any of its members. Unlike other institutions, its members have little ability, opportunity, or power."[31] Immediately after being born a child is placed within childhood. Childhood is a limited area, formed by and related to adults, a 'prelude' to adulthood. In *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* Allison James and Alan Prout explore the ways how childhood is socially constructed.[32] They emphasize childhood as a social construction: "the social institution of childhood [is] an actively negotiated set of social relationships within which the early years of human life are constituted. The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture."[33] Anne Solberg discusses in "Negotiating Childhood" how children and adults do not have the same social rank.[34] She explains how parents (adults) have authority and power and how children, on the contrary, do not have the same means on their disposal. Adults notions of childhood presents "[…] the relative powerlessness of children, which enables images and depictions of children - and, by extension, their identities - to be quite malleable."[35] Members of childhood, children, are seen as having little abilities, opportunities or power.

Categorizing young humans as children and placing them in the category of childhood leads to limitations because children are reduced to only one characteristic: their age. Allison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Proust describe in *Theorizing Childhood* the notion of the child as an adult 'in waiting' and how discourses on children and childhood are influenced by adult-centric perspectives.[36] The authors acknowledge how adults speak on behalf of children and the problems occurring hereby and by positioning children as 'others'. Children are, as described by Johansson, seen as "[…] 'Others', according to which children are subjected to the same categorization as, for example, non-white people, the working class or women."[37] Even though there are many differences, children have, because of the shown prejudices and limitations, an inferior position in society. Society has a one-dimensional and limited view of children. Children are seen as inferior, reduced, immature, not-finished, incomplete-adults and 'others'. By limiting children to 'others', we also immediately say

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[31] Daniel Thomas Cook, *Symbolic childhood*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 2.
[32] Allison James and Alan Prout, eds, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, (Routledge, 2015).
[33] Idem, 7.
[34] Anne Solberg, "Negotiating Childhood: Changing Constructions of Age for Norwegian Children," in *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, ed. Allison James and Alan Prout, (Routledge, 2015), 119.
[35] Cook, *Symbolic childhood*, 6.
[36] Allison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout, *Theorizing Childhood*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998).
[37] Johansson, "Subjectivities of the Child Consumer," 80.

what children are not. As feminist movements have changed the perspective on women, I hope the same happens to the perspective on children. However, children do not have their own 'voice' and cannot construct their own childhood - at least not in the society they are currently embedded in. Adults act and speak in the name of children and construct childhood, who are themselves no (longer) part of the constructed childhood. As theatre is part of society, the social discourse on children and childhood influences theatre too.

Children on stage

The one-dimensional and limited view of children is reflected in the way audiences perceive children on stage. Natasha Budd investigates child performers in applied performance contexts and examines in *Staging Childhoods* "[…] the use of theatrical techniques that create conditions conducive to authentic theatre making practice with children."[38] Her research focuses on the involvement of children in the creative process of performances.[39] She investigates characteristics which could make authentic theatre-making with children possible by the use of an adult provocateur, digital media, performance-modalities as improvisation and set and props to embody the 'holding space'.[40] By these methods children are engaged in the process and better presented and perceived in the theatre. Her objective originated as she signalled adult assumptions about children and the limited space for children's competencies. Budd describes: "The concept of childhood is one that throughout history has been defined and articulated by adults. Representations of children sit in opposition to those of adulthood and in their delineation reveal adult values, beliefs and priorities." [41] Adults form the concept of childhood by comparing children to their own adult values, beliefs and priorities. This makes children only 'exist' in relation to adults; as children who are not self-contained beings. The described discourse on children in society affects how children are perceived on stage. Adults form the way children are perceived on stage. Thereby, they reflect on the way of thinking about children in general. Budd states how children are seen as

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[38] Natasha Budd, *Staging childhoods. Experiments in authentic theatre making practice with children*, (Queensland: University of Technology, 2014), 3.

[39] The research of Budd is helpful for my research as she describes the discourse on children in society, reflected on stage. However, I do not intend to make the same point as she did because she focuses on the creative processes and practical side to involve child performers, whereas my research will remain theoretical and focus on the performances.

[40] Budd, *Staging childhoods*, 153.

[41] Idem, 32.

[…] potential adults and childhood as a state of becoming. Children are perceived as incomplete beings unable to carry out normal human functions. […] Its influence over Western thinking has been profound and is evidenced in representations of children and childhood throughout theatre history.[42]

The perception of children as incomplete beings limits the possibilities for children to take active roles in the theatre, as: "Children's inferior status in society […] has historically limited children's mode of participation."[43] In another article "Intermediality and the child performer" Budd describes "[…] lenses through which audiences perceive child performers in the theatre. What audiences expect to see when observing a child performer is dependent upon the construction of childhood to which they subscribe."[44] Budd refers to the adult construction of childhood which limits children by categorizing them as inferior, with less abilities, opportunities and power. Adult notions of children as potential adults, childhood as prelude of adulthood and state of becoming is represented on stage and through theatre history. "While children have been employed variously as skilled performers […] their function is often as a symbol of innocence, wickedness, imagination or raw emotion."[45] It is clear how children are capable of performing, but do not get the same opportunities, possibilities and roles as adults.[46] The only possibilities given to child performers is to perform the adult notions of childhood, without referring to children's own notions of childhood. Even when Budd studied theatre making practice with children, her study is recent and not (yet) the dominant way of theatre-making. In contrast, children's representations on stage are still arranged by adults. Hereby, the inferior, one-dimensional and reduced view on children - present in society - is present on stage too.

Children in performances

Performances exist in which children appear on stage. However, in many of these cases, children are "[…] reduced to 'the child' a potent symbolic tool for the communication of particular adult concepts with little or no reference to the realities of their own lived experience."[47] Only certain roles are given to children; especially in dramatic narratives and musicals, children only serve as the receiving actor. The child performer is not acting, but rather receiving and only functioning for the 'image' of the performance. Even when children *are* on stage, children do not perform and do not have a full-

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[42] Budd, *Staging childhoods,* 23.
[43] Idem*,* 21.
[44] Natasha Budd, ''Intermediality and the child performer,'' *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 21.3 (2016): 309, 310.
[45] Budd, *Staging childhoods,* 21.
[46] Labor rules and limited working conditions make it difficult to work with children in performances. However, in the performances in which we *do* see children on stage, it appears that it is not impossible to work with children, even by fitting to limited rules and laws. It appears to be laziness or an effect of the view on children's 'incompleteness' affecting their given capabilities in the theatre.
[47] Budd, *Staging childhoods,* 24.

fledged position in relation to other, adult performers. Budd investigates strategies for authentic-theatre-practice because of the way how "[...] children and young people are represented and perceived in the theatre and in society more generally. From the innocent babe to the wicked child, children have come to connote adult concepts in both art and literature."[48] Budd acknowledges the inferior position children have now in the theatre-making process and on stage. Children have to relate to adult norms and rules and cannot connote to their own concepts. The limited norms for children in society are represented in performances as "[...] children have historically been excluded from anything more than a token presence in mainstream theatre and are limited in their influence elsewhere in society."[49] Apparently, children's roles are either performed by adults, or children are on stage and do not perform as full subjects. Even when lots of performances represent and stage the inferior view on children, we see other contrary developments in performances and studies too.

Performances initiate re-thinking on children

Children's inferior position is represented on stage which made it, for a long period, common to exploit adult perceptions of childhood on stage. Nevertheless, new ways of thinking about children by pedagogues, psychologists and neuroscientists offer new ways of thinking for theatre practice, as some performances illustrate. James and Prout state how "[...] children must be seen as actively involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. They can no longer be regarded as simply the passive subjects."[50] In new ways of thinking, children are seen as active humans who can construct their own lives and their lived societies. Performance scholar Senior postulates a rethinking of children's ability to generate political influence.[51] Senior notices a trend towards the end of 20th century across Europe of contemporary performances including children on stage. Questions raised by performances, in which children are staged, are about adult-child relationships, responsibility, power, protection, authority and the construction of children and childhood. Senior draws upon her research on two performances - *Under the Covers* and *That Night Follows Days* - that ask "[...] to what extent we recognize children as appearing in a political capacity [...] as a subject in formation who speaks and/or acts amongst others in a public environment."[52] As young children are represented as autonomous performers, audiences can wonder why children are not 'represented' autonomously in society. Senior asks if young children as skilled performers, aware of the theatrical environment they

[48] Budd, *Staging childhoods,* 17.
[49] Idem, 31
[50] James and Prout, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, 4.
[51] Senior, "Beginners on stage," 70-84.
[52] Idem, 71.

are in, can "[...] affect their status as potential political agents?"[53] Performances do not only reflect on children and childhood, but could hopefully initiate a re-thinking of the inferior and reduced discourse on children and childhood. Theatre has the potential to exercise, explore and articulate ideas, perspectives and experiences of children. Budd argues that the stage can offer a place for reflection, as "[...] theatre is a medium for the exploration of social, cultural and political issues, including those affecting children."[54] This provides an important discussion around children's involvement in the theatre. By staging children, performances can discuss the autonomy of children and show children as autonomous beings.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to show the dominant view on children in society and their representation on stage. Children are seen as inferior, reduced and 'others'. Children are placed in a childhood which is constructed by and related to adults. Children are not seen autonomously, but *exist* in relation and opposition to adults. The separation of the categories, adult and child, mainly consists out of the inferiority of the child. The image of children as inferior to adults is present in society but also represented on stage. Children's roles are often performed by adults, thereby excluding children from main-roles. Sometimes children appear on stage, but are reduced to the symbol of the child - innocent, vulnerable and in need of protection - and not seen as autonomous performers. However, a tendency within performances can be noticed. More children are staged and in different and autonomous ways. I hope to prove how performances show children as autonomous beings, child performers as independent and autonomous, and rediscuss adult-child relationships. As James and Prout argue: "[...] Childhood and children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, and not just in respect to their social construction by adults."[55] I hope to emphasize how children and their relationships are worthy of study, by analysing *enfant* and *Horses* and the new perspectives they show to notions of children and childhood.

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[53] Senior, "Beginners on stage," 77.
[54] Budd, *Staging childhoods,* 79.
[55] James and Prout, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, 4.

3. Power exercised and represented

Recently, some performances show different perspectives of children. In the two performances I focus on, *enfant* and *Horses*, children and adults appear simultaneously on stage. Therefore, the staged performers raise questions of how children relate to adults on stage. My hypothesis is that *enfant* and *Horses* give different perspectives to children's subjectivities. Subjectivity cannot be analysed without analysing power: the word subjectivity refers both to being subjected and being a subject. Therefore, when discussing children's subjectivity, autonomy and individuality, I discuss the power relations that children are embedded in on stage. Also, the discourse on childhood described before contains a clear power relation of adults over children. As the adult-child relationship is often idealised as innocent, it seems impassable to discuss power relations between adults and children. I do not want to only highlight negative aspects of power, but I also want to analyse its effects - power subjection/subject-formation - and address power in the adult-child relations on stage.

The following chapter moves on to describe in greater detail the power relations between adults and children and the means of power-exercise. I answer the question: ***By what means is power exercised and in which way is the exercise of power represented in the performances?*** I first focus on how power and power-exercise is addressed by Foucault.[56] Thereafter, I describe the analytical tools I afterwards use in the performance analysis of scenes in *enfant* and *Horses*.

Foucault and power: the production of power

According to philosopher Michel Foucault, "There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to."[57] Power needs to be explained in order to understand children as subjects. Seen as poststructuralist, Foucault influenced many fields and addressed primarily the relationship between power and knowledge. Foucault fundamentally changed the discourse on power as he no longer only saw power as repressive, but instead started to analyse power as a productive force with real effects. Foucault introduced, in *Discipline and Punish*, the concept of discipline as a particular way of exercising power.[58] Discipline is a way to control movements and operations of the body. Foucault refers to the prison and states how humans are no longer physically punished, but controlled by discipline. As a type of power, discipline exercises power over the mechanisms of the body: "What was then being

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[56] In this research I reduce Foucault (and his work) to the book *Discipline and punish*, in which he explains concepts of discipline, power and subject-formation, and article "The Subject and Power." Due to the limited extent of my thesis, this reduction is necessary. I will try to show, that this reduced perspective still facilitates important insights for my research.

[57] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 781.

[58] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it."[59] Even without referring to the prison, Foucault shows that individuals are developed and produced by discipline. Foucault argues how, as a form of power, "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instrument of its exercise."[60] Foucault emphasizes how human beings are made subjects and that individuality is produced by techniques of discipline.

Techniques of discipline are situated in ordinary life as Foucault explains: "[…] the power of men over woman, of parents over children."[61] The exercise of power is manifested in several ways as other authors explain while continuing Foucault's theories. One of these authors is sociologist and anthropologist Jen Pylypa who clarifies power over the body in "Power and Bodily Practice".[62] Pylypa explains that order is maintained, according to Foucault, through the production of docile bodies that are "passive, subjugated, and productive individuals. Through its many institutions - schools, hospitals, prisons, the family - the state brings all aspects of life under its controlling gaze."[63] The exercise of power is not only found in institutions as the state, but also in schools and families in which adults can control children by their controlling gaze. Foucault explains that discipline attempts to control every single gesture. He explains how bodies relate to each other: "Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body […] and diminishes these same forces […] and turns it into of relation of strict subjection."[64] Docile bodies are self-regulated and habituated bodies. Discipline makes bodies more obedient, as "[…] a 'new micro-physics' of power […] to cover the entire social body."[65] Docile bodies are submissive and 'ready' to accept control or instruction.

Docile bodies are produced in several ways and in several types of bodies. Bodies of dance students - in training, discipline and surveillance - are docile bodies, as dance scholar Jill Green states in "Foucault and the training of docile bodies in dance education."[66] Green explains that dance education is a disciplinary power that trains students' bodies to be docile. She explains how bodies are "[…] docile bodies because they require a system of codification and methods which are under

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[59] Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 138.
[60] Idem, 170.
[61] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 780.
[62] Jen Pylypa, "Power and Bodily Practice: Applying the Work of Foucault to an Anthropology of the Body," *Arizona Anthropologist* (1998).
[63] Idem, 22.
[64] Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 138.
[65] Idem, 139.
[66] Jill Green, "Foucault and the training of docile bodies in dance education," *Arts and Learning Research Journal* 19.1 (2003).

meticulous control and surveillance."[67] Bodies of dance students require codification, control and surveillance; the same counts for children's bodies. Pylypa emphasizes the family - and so the adult-child relationship - as an institution in which docile bodies are produced and power relations are present. Foucault explains how docile bodies can be "[…] manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces […] a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved."[68] Children are, like dance students, in training and learn how to stand, sit, walk and so forth. Institutions of training, such as schools, teach and discipline children how to sit (straight), not to move their chairs, to put the bodies in an upright position and hold their pencils in a particular way (which gives them the most control). Not only in school, but also in adult-child relationships, children are in (need of) training which makes their bodies obedient and docile.

On the stage of *enfant* and *Horses* the children bodies can be seen as docile bodies because they can be controlled, moved and subjected to power by the adults. In chapter two I mentioned how children are seen as inferior, adults-to-be, in need of education. This relates to children bodies as docile bodies. Through Foucault's literature, subjectivity can be analysed as effect of power. Power is exercised, in Foucauldian words, by the production of docile bodies. Thereby, Foucault's theory of power becomes highly relevant for my research on children's subjectivity on stage. I need analytical tools in order to analyse power and power-exercises in the performances.

Exercise of power: analytical tools

Foucault analyses how power is exercised. He distinguishes four techniques of how discipline produces docile bodies: technique of table, technique of manoeuvre, technique of exercise and technique of tactics.[69] Foucault distinguishes three means - still being thought of together - by which discipline exercises power: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination.[70] Foucault provides analytical tools when distinguishing techniques and means of power, which can be used for operationalization and will be employed in performance analyses of *enfant* and *Horses*. I briefly describe which elements of Foucault's theory can be used most effectively for my research.

An element of analysing power is the control over body and gestures. Who has control over whom; who lifts whom; who holds someone, making the other unable to move? Discipline, as form of power, aims at the body and tries to rationalize the body and all its single gestures in a utilitarian way. Foucault explains control over body and gestures as "[…] exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movements, gestures, attitudes,

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[67] Green, "Foucault and the training of docile bodies in dance education," 15.
[68] Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 136.
[69] Idem, 149-169.
[70] Idem, 170-194.

rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body."[71] Foucault defines methods, "[…] which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility."[72] The control over the body assures a relationship that makes the body more obedient and constructed in the most useful way. The docility-utility can be found in schools. When children are, for example, taught how to write, the relationship between every single part of the body (upper body, fingers, head) and objects (pencil, chair, table) are defined in total. In this way, children and their bodies are produced docile and utile at the same time. Their docility is simultaneously their usability for writing.

Another element of analysing power is the ability of viewing. Who is able to view and who is taking out the ability for the other to view? Visibility is an expression of power relations. Foucault presents hierarchical observations as "[…] a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make is possible to see induce effects of power."[73] Seeing is a form of exercising power and being visible means being subjected to power. Foucault shows that power captures the possibility to form knowledge and knowledge-formation becomes possible by subjecting objects under the view. The most famous example of seeing as form of power is the *Panopticon*, stated in *Discipline and Punish* as the ideal exercise of power, discipline and visibility.[74] Formed by the Greek words pan (all) and opticon (observed), the Panopticon presents the ideal prison as all inmates can be seen. Contemporary examples are controlling cameras for omnipresent visibility and as people know they are being seen ('Big Brother is watching you'), human behaviour can be controlled.

The last element of analysis, not in particular stated by Foucault but recognizable in relations as power-exercise, is the positioning of and between performers regarding their height. I call this positioning vertical lines. I investigate vertical lines reflecting upon high/low status to see who is in power and has a higher range/hierarchy. Who is higher, adult or child; who is lowering him/herself; who is lifting someone or pulling someone down? Power-shifts are thought of in our society as in high/low status and someone who is in power has a higher position. Power relations can be embodied by literally the submission or sub-jection to power. The analysis of vertical lines in the choreography, pertaining to the floor and in relation to the other performers, will be the start of my performance analysis. After having explained tools for analysing power, I will use the tools to analyse how power is represented in scenes of *enfant* and *Horses*.

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[71] Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 137.
[72] Ibidem.
[73] Idem, 170, 171.
[74] Idem, 195-228.

Power represented: power relations in *enfant*

As indicated previously, I analyse the positioning, control and seeing as power-exercises in two scenes of both performances. In all four scenes, adults and children are simultaneously on stage. My analysis first focuses on *enfant*. The performance *enfant* is staged in a dark and obscure setting filled with machines, only a little lighting and performers who wear black costumes. The performers perform a range of movements - lifting, dragging, carrying, walking, running - which are repeated by adults and children in different moments. The introduction already mentioned the shift in *enfant* between the beginning and the ending of the performance: first adults seem 'powerful', move independently and children seem 'powerless'; by the end, the opposite happens as children move and adults lay motionless. My analysis first focuses on scene one and thereafter on scene two.

Scene 1: Children brought on stage/moved by adults - uncomfortable

In the first scene I analyse, more adults appear, while carrying and dragging children onto the stage.[75] The adults position children at a spot and in a gesture. Afterwards, the adults move the children. The children themselves do not move and have slack and dangling bodies.

Figure 1.[76]

Figure 2.[77]

Figure 3.[78]

Figure 4.[79]

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[75] Boris Charmatz, *enfant*, online registration by https://vimeo.com/101984374.
[76] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (32:06).
[77] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (30:34).
[78] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (32:50).
[79] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (33:21).

The scene starts by an adult dropping her own body on a child's body. The adult blocks the possibility for the child to move and immediately takes the higher position. In the continuous flow of children being brought and positioned on stage, the adults always assume higher positions. At some moments, children are lifted, but only as a prequel for being brought to a lower position. The adults have, during the entire scene, a higher position which gives them a higher status than the children (*Figure 1*). The control over body and gestures, as an power-exercise, is clearly visible. Bodies and gestures of children are moved and controlled by adults. An adult places her hands on the head of a child to make the child's body move (*Figure 2*). Children do not move their own bodies. There is no movement, activity, energy or strength in the children's bodies. The children's bodies are slack and do not resist as they are dragged, carried and moved by adults (*Figure 3*). Bodies of children and adults are inextricably connected as adults control *all* bodies and *every* gesture of *all* children (*Figure 3 & 4*). As visibility is an exercise of power, children are subjected to power by adults. Adults can see children and have their eyes open. Yet, in contrary, the children's eyes are closed during the entire scene and they therefore do not exercise power by seeing. Whereas the children cannot see, they can be seen by adults who do have the ability to see and exercise power.

The adults put the children on stage and give them the possibility to be on stage and seen by an audience. However, the way how the children are positioned, produces an uncomfortable feeling to the audience. The adults position the children *in* a gesture, such as a straight-sitting position, which can feel unpleasant as the children did not choose this position themselves and are motionless/'powerless'. As the children do not move, the dragging of children by adults reminds us of the dragging of dead bodies. As the children's eyes are closed, the audience wonders if they are sleeping or dead. Even if the audience does not know why the children are incapable to see or move, they know and feel uncomfortable while viewing the scene. The unpleasantness while watching is especially felt when adults move children without any opposition by the children (*Figure 2*). The adults' movements and treatment of the children appears bleak and without any respect. For example, an adult steps on a child with her full weight (*Figure 4*) and even though it is a performance, the audience almost wants to step on stage to protect the children from the way they are being treated by the adults.

The children are, by three forms of power-exercise, subjected to power and do not have any control themselves. The adults clearly exercise *power* over the children. The audience feels uncomfortable and realizes that adults should not treat children like this. The audience wonders, as *Dansens Hus* clarifies, if the adult movements are "a display of power? […] by lifting, shaking and dragging [children] across the floor. A thought-provoking performance that questions the adult

world's everyday exercise of power over children."[80] This scene shows the inferior position of children and the control of adults over children. The children's bodies look powerless which raise questions about how much control and power by adults is still acceptable.

Scene 2: Children playing on stage/motionless adults - confusion

In the second scene, I analyse how in *enfant* adults fall one by one on the floor and remain motionless. The children approach the adults, check and move them. The children play with adults' bodies and jump, run and move around.

Figure 5.[81]

Figure 6.[82]

As adults drop themselves to the floor, they immediately take a lower position than the children. Most of the time the children stay in a higher vertical line. At some moments, children lower themselves in order to be able to move adults (*Figure 5*, one child in black lifting an adult on his back). The children do not necessarily have a lower status by lowering their bodies. Lowering has a function - for being able to move adult bodies - without subjecting others to power. Still, most of the time children maintain a higher position. Unlike the previous scene, the adults do not have control over the children's bodies and gestures *and* over their own bodies and gestures. The adults lay motionless on the floor and the children take control over the adults' bodies and gestures and move them (*Figure 5*). On their own, it is impossible to move adults but together children can pull, push, roll, drag, turn and move adult bodies. As the adults fall to the floor, they lose their ability to move and their ability to see. The eyes of the adults are closed and they lay motionless on the floor (*Figure 6*). The children are able to see and can exercise the power of visibility upon adults, whereas the adults cannot look back to the ones who see them. By being visible and seen, the adults are subjected to power.

The movements in the scene remind us of the movements in the last scene. However, roles

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[80] Dansens Hus, *Boris Charmatz enfant*, accessed 10-05-2018 by https://dansenshus.se/en/event/child/.
[81] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (1:03:35).
[82] Charmatz, *enfant*, screenshot (1:06:59).

are reversed and children are in control and can exercise power on adults. *The Arts Desk* names in their review on *enfant* how "Once the adults fall, power relations are reversed."[83] The power change happens after the adults fall to the floor. The children control adult bodies and gestures in an exploring way. The children do not only drag adults around, but also put softly fingertips on each other as exploration of adult bodies (*Figure 6*). For the audience, it is not clear what happens when they see how roles between adults and children are reversed. The audience recognizes the same power-exercises as in the previous scene but do not see a subjection of power. It seems that the children play around, work together to move the adults and explore the possibilities of someone else's body. The audience feels confused. The confusion is especially felt because the same power-exercises by children do not produce the same 'image' and feeling to the audience. The audience does not feel the urge to protect the adults this time. Furthermore, the audience is confused as they are not familiar with seeing children in power and adults subjected to power.

A shift in power-exercise has occurred: children are higher in position, can control motionless bodies and gestures of adults and are capable of seeing while the adults cannot. The audience does not recognize and cannot relate to what happens on stage. As *Dansens Hus* describes: "Here, power relations are turned upside-down, blurring the boundaries between childhood and adulthood."[84] The audience wonders about the differences between children and adults, childhood and adulthood. Apparently, children can act the same way as adults. However, we do not feel the urge to protect adults as children show the audience how being in power does not always lead to oppression and disrespect. This raises questions of how the same movements, performed by adults or children, evoke other associations. It is clear that the same movements appear differently and give other meanings and experiences when they are performed by adults or children. My performance-approach is necessarily semiotic and phenomenological. It becomes clear how in this scene the audience's perception is formed by meanings *and* experiences. The performance analysis shows how children, in their power-exercise, work together and explore someone's body. Questions arise: can children play with adult bodies as if they were motionless dolls? Are children better than adults to regulate - without oppression - the exercise of power?

Power represented: power relations in *Horses*

So far the performance analysis has focused on two scenes of *enfant*. The following section will analyse power relations in *Horses*. Both performances stage children and adults and represent power

[83] Sarah Kent, "Boris Charmatz/Musée de la danse: Enfant, Sadler's Wells," *The Arts Desk* (30-01-2014), https://theartsdesk.com/dance/boris-charmatzmus%C3%A9e-de-la-danse-enfant-sadler%E2%80%99s-wells.
[84] Dansens Hus, *Boris Charmatz enfant*.

relations. Differences can be noticed in what happens on stage and *how* power is exercised in *Horses*, comparative to *enfant*. *Horses* is staged on a quite empty stage, with some curtains in the back, warm/full light, two musicians on stage and performers who wear pale/earth-coloured clothes. *Horses* also stages power shifts, but these shifts are more fluent. Additionally, performers are not 'totally powerless/powerful'. I focus on two scenes: a duet between an adult and a child and a scene featuring three adults lifting three children.

Scene 1: Changing power-exercise adult/child - uncomfortable, thrilled, excitement and satisfaction

This scene entails a duet between an adult (man) and a child (girl).[85] The child sits alone on the stage. An adult approaches her, lifts her and the adult and child move together. Sometimes, the adults controls the child and in other moments the child pushes the adult down. The scene shows a constant change of who is in power and subjecting the other to power.

Figure 7.[86]

Figure 8.[87]

There is a continuous shift in the positioning between adult and child. Mostly the adult is in a higher position when he approaches the child or lifts her not higher than himself. Although, in some moments, the child is in a higher position as she opposes the lower positioning and tries to become higher (*Figure 7*). The child even pushes the adult in a lower position to elevate herself to a higher position. Within the shift in positioning, the choreography researches how bodies of different sizes can move together and have different possibilities, including possibilities in high/low positions. There are several times when the adult controls the body and gestures of the child: the child is held in a strong and closed position - feet and hands are placed - while moved by the adult. Even when the child is controlled, she tries to control the adult's body or get in a higher position. The child is, for several moments, not subjected to total power which makes her able to exercise power: the child pushes the adult to the floor, locks him in her sweater and drags him behind her until he falls (*Figure*

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[85] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, online registration by https://vimeo.com/205382068.
[86] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (17:09).
[87] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (18:31).

8). The child opposes the power-exercise by the adult, moves against his control and loses his grip on her body. When the adults approaches the child in the beginning of the scene, the child's eyes are covered by her sweater before she pulls it down to see. As the adult controls the child's body and gestures from a higher position, he closes his own eyes off with the child's feet and takes away his own visibility by covering his eyes with the child's feet. Later, the opposite happens when the adult covers the child's eyes and takes away her possibility to see which makes her body motionless. It seems that by taking away her ability to see, her ability to move is also taken.

The beginning of the scene feels uncomfortable as the adult subjects the child to power by being higher and controlling the child's body and gestures. It is unpleasant to see how the child is locked by the adult and unable to move, but it also makes the audience tense and thrilled about what will happen next. The audience notices the struggle of the child and her opposition to the power-exercise. The audience feels excited when the child loses the adult's grip and pushes him to the floor. The audience laughs (even audible in the registration) and is happy because the child looks strong and independent. The audience almost feels pity for the adult as the child drags him around. Roles are reversed and it satisfies the audience to see the power-exercise by the child.

The scene shows a continuous shift between who is exercising power and who is subjected to power. This clearly represents the choreographers' intention to the performance: 'who is the rider and who is the horse.' Adult and child both actively shape the power relations in which they participate. Several means of power-exercises influence each other and collaborate. The audience feels a range of emotions: from discomfort (as the adult subjects the child to power) to satisfaction (as the child exercises power). The audience feels excited for the continuation of the scene as they see how adult and child both try to exercise/oppose power. Foucault explains relations and power: "[…] what characterizes the power we are analyzing is that it brings into play relations between individuals […] certain persons exercise power over others."[88] In the scene a clear interaction is seen between adult and child. Adult and child show the power-exercise as ongoing process. They show that the exercise of one mean of power can lead to exercise another mean of power, but that power-subjection can also take away the possibility to move independently.

Scene 2: Dangling children's bodies in adult hands - frustration and helpless
Turning now to the second scene of *Horses* in which adults lift children while the children's eyes are closed. The children become motionless, are unable to move and stand. The children have to be caught by adults before hitting the floor.

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[88] Foucault, "The subject and power," 786.

Figure 9.[89]   *Figure 10*.[90]

In the entire scene the adults have a higher position than the children. Even when there are changes in the vertical line, as children are lifted, the children stay constantly in a lower position (*Figure 9* & *10*). The bodies and gestures of children are controlled by adults: adults lift children, move their bodies, put them in different positions and have to catch children when they fall (*Figure 9* & *10*). The children cannot control their own bodies and gestures. Their bodies are without activity and are slack and dangling. At the same time, the children force the adults to catch them by falling to the floor. Adults have responsibilities for the children as caretakers. In this way, the children are in charge of the adults and control them by requesting for control. The power of seeing is exercised by adults, who have the ability to see and look at the children. The children are incapable to see and cannot look back. Adults actively take away the children's ability to see by closing their eyes. Without their ability to see, the children lose their capability to stand (*Figure 10*).

  The children are treated as humans in need of protection and are moved as motionless dolls. The children entirely surrender by trusting the adults and forcing adults to catch them. The audience sees children as dependent on adults. The audience wonders if the adults protect the children or if they do not take children seriously. The audience feels pity for the children as they are controlled and moved with closed eyes. The audience feels frustrated when the children are incapable to stand and they even notices the frustration of the adults on stage. The audience almost wants to blame the adults but adults also appear lost and do not know how to make the children stand. The audience feels helpless.

  In the scene children are subjected to a total exercise of power as adults are higher in positioning, control bodies and gestures and see children while children cannot see. Foucault argues how power makes individuals subject as "[…] power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him."[91]

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[89] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (32:48).
[90] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (34:21).
[91] Foucault, "The subject and power," 781.

According to Foucault, the power to which children are subjected in the scene categorizes individuals. However, while children are present on stage, autonomy or agency is only shown as the children fall to the floor. When Foucault argues that power is productive and repressive, power almost seems - from a Foucauldian perspective - only productive *by* being repressive. The scene shows how being subjected to too much control and power still produces subjects, but subjects who totally depend on the ones who exercise power. The only possibility for children to 'control' adults, is by falling and being 'powerless'. The scene could be a critique to Foucault who leaves only space for power and normalization and almost non for agency of the (becoming) subject, which is not completely identical to the norm.

Reflection on Foucault

Foucault explains how power controls every single detail and produces the subject. Through Foucault's literature and his insights, I was able to analyse power relations and to distinguish three analytical tools for analysing the means of power-exercise: positions of and between performers, control over bodies and gestures and ability to see. I could analyse power relations in two scenes of both performances by deploying Foucault's different means of exercising power. Thereby I could make power relations visible and show how they are seen in the performances.

However, even if Foucault's analysis of power can provide answers, it cannot grasp changing subjectivities, subjectivities differing from the norm or dynamic power relations. This was clear in the performance analysis of the last scene when children were subjected, but not autonomous subjects with agency. Power became well visible through the Foucauldian lenses. According to Foucault power "[…] increases the forces of the body."[92] In the second scene of *Horses* this was clearly not the case. From this perspective I focus on Butler. She continues from Foucault's thoughts and leaves space for agency, as part of her theory of *subjection*. In the next chapter, I present Butler's theory of subjection, subject-formation and agency. I show how space needs to be left for the subject's agency and try to understand the critique to Foucault found in *Horses*.

Summary

According to Foucault, disciplinary power produces the individual as a subject. A subject by being, quite literally in my analysis, sub-jected. I analysed power relations by three elements in two scenes of *enfant* and *Horses*. I noticed how power was represented, exercised by adults over children *and* by children over adults. Therefore it can already be said that the performances break with dominant

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[92] Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 138.

ways of representing children as inferior on stage. In *enfant* a shift is visible in which children can be subjected to power but can also exercise power. However, power in *enfant* is still static as either adults or children are in power. In *Horses* power relations are more dynamic. We see a continuous shift of power-subjection, power-opposing and attempts to exercise power over the other. The last scene shows how too much power-exercise produces subjects without agency, in need of control and protection. From this perspective, I wonder if the subject is only an effect of power, or can power also 'fail' to produce (standing) subjects. In the next chapter, I focus on subjectivity, agency and subjection.

4. Children as subjects with agency and performances shift discourses

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Foucault describes how power is exercised and subjectivity results from power. I noticed that Foucault's concept of discipline - as a form of power - is less capable of analysing dynamic power relations, changing subjectivities and the process of subjection. The dynamics become visible, but cannot be fully grasped by Foucault only.[93] The last chapter presented the means of power and focused on power relations in performances. This chapter will focus on subjectivity and explore Butler's thoughts who continued from Foucault.[94] It answers the question: **How is the subject in the process of subjection formed by power and how is subjectivity shown in the performances?** I first examine the process of subjection to power/ becoming a subject and discuss interrelations between subjection and agency. Thereafter, I continue with principle findings of children as subjects in the performances in relation to agency and subjection. I want to show how *enfant* and *Horses* represent adult-child relations and suggest a shift that stays in the discourse and one that changes the discourse on children and childhood.

Subjection: process of becoming a subject/subjection to power

Philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler continues in *The Psychic Life of Power* from Foucault's work and explains how power forms subjectivity:

> But if, following Foucault, we understand power as *forming* the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are […] Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency.[95]

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[93] The dance scholars, named in the introduction, who put Foucault's theory into practice, do not use Foucault's concept of discipline in the way I do. Even when it has limitations, the operationalization well facilitated insights in power relations on stage.

[94] Butler is not the only one who continued from Foucault's thoughts and studied subjectivity. Hereby some authors and their studies, possible as further research, who focus on subjectivities, agency, identities and dance,: Maria Gabriela Coggiola, *Subjectivities and Identities in Contemporary Dance*, (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2012); Kim Vincs, "Rhizome/Myzone: The Production of Subjectivity in Dance," in *Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Amy Allen, "Power, subjectivity, and agency: Between Arendt and Foucault," *International journal of philosophical studies* 10.2 (2002): 131-149; Vikki Bell, "Performative knowledge," *Theory, Culture & Society*23.2-3 (2006): 214-217; Cristina Delgado-García, *Rethinking Character in Contemporary British Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics, Subjectivity*. Vol. 26, (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2015).

[95] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2006), 1, 2.

Butler follows Foucault and states that power forms the subject and provides the condition of its existence. This makes subjects dependent upon power.[96] Subjectivity refers to having agency, consciousness, emotions and 'possession' of power. It is similar to autonomy and individuality. The process of subjection refers to the verb 'to subject to something'. A subject is defined by being subjected to power relations that introduce and maintain our agency. Butler writes: "'Subjection' signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject."[97] Subjection has a double meaning as subjection is domination by power, external to oneself, the repressive/ dominant form of power which subordinates what it is imposing upon. Moreover, power is productive. It produces a subject. Subjection is the making of a subject: "Such subjection is a kind of power that not only unilaterally *acts on* a given individual as a form of domination, but also *activates* or forms the subject. Hence, subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production."[98] In contrast to Foucault, Butler formulates a more nuanced explanation of how power can produce *and* dominate and is not only productive *by* repressing (as seen before). Subjectivity produces individuals and the subject. Butler understands the subjectivated subject as simultaneously a subject and opened up to power relations. The power-subjection is necessary because "[…] one inhabits the figure of autonomy only by becoming subjected to a power, a subjection which implies a radical dependency."[99] One has to depend on power for gaining autonomy. This relation is inseparable. Butler emphasizes how the process of subjection occurs through the body while being disciplined and normalized by the repetition of actions and gestures. Children have to become normalized in order to be recognized as subjects. Their subjectivities only evolve from relating to others and adjusting to a norm. What makes people individuals is the way in which they are 'different' to the norm. Individuality means a particular combination of deviations from a norm. Talking about someone's individuality always (slightly) tries to destroy it again and adjusts it to the norm. Butler emphasizes how to become subjects as the body is exposed to power-subordination and serves to the norms. In this way, she clearly continues from Foucault.

Analysing subjectivity: subjection and agency

The previous section showed how power acts on, activates and forms the subject. This chapter contributes to how children can be seen as (full) subjects on stage with their own dependent and yet

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[96] As the section and literature provides several terms, the rest of the thesis will continue describing the term subjectivity and the process of subjection which forms a subject (and subjectivity).
[97] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 2.
[98] Idem, 84.
[99] Idem, 83.

independent autonomy. Analysing subjectivity of onstage performers in dance performances is good

practice because subjectivity is, according to Briginshaw, "[...] a construct, a human or social

construct, and so it cannot be explored without reference to human subjects."[100] Briginshaw focuses

on the construction of subjectivity by exploring the relation between bodies in dance. In the chapter

of her book which focuses on identity and power, Briginshaw explains "[...] how subjects are

constructed and construct themselves whilst revealing how the mechanisms of power at work in

these processes operate."[101] The two performances I analyse, contribute to exploring children's

subjectivity. Especially since - as stated by Briginshaw - "[...] investigations of body/space relations in

dance contribute to rethinking notions of subjectivity, to opening up possibilities for previously

excluded subjectivities."[102] My starting point of research is the exclusion of children from places such

as the stage. I analyse child performers' autonomy and subjectivity which hopefully opens up (new

and re-thought) possibilities for children performing on stage and in society.

　　　　When analysing the subject and its subjectivity, I first focus on subjection as the action that

produces individuals and subjects with agency, as described in the beginning of this chapter.[103] The

second element to analyse is agency. Butler states that a critical analysis of subjection involves an

analysis of "[...] how agency may well consist in opposing and transforming the social terms by which

it is spawned."[104] Butler argues how agency is both an effect of the subject-formation and a condition

of becoming a subject.[105] Agency, as part of subjectivity, is possible to be analysed on stage.[106]

Agency is both implicated in subordination and opposed to power. Agency forms the subject *and* is

an effect of the formed subject: "The double aspect of subjection appears to lead to a vicious circle:

the agency of the subject appears to be an effect of its subordination."[107] Agency then, according to

Butler, makes it, with its double meaning an interesting element to analyse in performances that

feature children and adults. Agency, as result and condition of power, can help us to understand the

dynamic power relations which could not be analysed through Foucault's perspective. Butler still

uses Foucault and his theories of formulation of power because she argues that power relations can

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[100] Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*, 2.
[101] Idem, 161.
[102] Idem, 7.
[103] Brady and Schirato explain in *Understanding Judith Butler* (2011, 6) how identity and identification relate to the process of subjection. Identification is "[...] based on and linked to the procedures, processes, techniques and structures of subjectivity [...] in order to have, gain, claim or be assigned an identity, [...] that makes subjects appear, and authorises the subject's status as an identity-in-waiting." Individuals or identities are produced in a process so they may become subjects and gain subjectivity.
[104] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 29.
[105] As subjectivity relates to agency (and to some point autonomy), starting from now I only focus on agency when analysing children's subjectivity on stage. Other aspects of subjectivity fall short, also because they are less well visible on stage.
[106] The children's inner-life (thoughts, feelings) are way less accessible for analysing subjects on stage, if not impossible to access. Subjectivity and the child as subject, can be analysed by subjection and agency.
[107] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 12.

only be changed by being subjected to them. Agency can subvert power relations, but should not be wrongly taken as being totally independent: subjectivity is still produced by subjection to a norm. Subjectivity, therefor, might also be the reproduction of a norm. In this case, agency is not subverting but reproducing the power relations.

What follows is an investigation of children's subjectivity by analysing subjection and agency in *enfant* and *Horses*. I continue from the last chapter in which I showed how children are subjected to power by adults. I will focus on the scenes with a Butlerian perspective and attempt to grasp the subjectivity of children as subjects on stage.

Subjectivity in the performances: becoming a subject and agency of children

As discussed above, the process of subjection is intrinsically connected to power. I will continue from the findings in the former chapter which laid open the power relations and the exercise of power. In this chapter I focus on subjectivity of the child performers by analysing the process of subjection (formed by power) and agency as an effect and a condition of power and subjection. I firstly focus on *enfant* in which a shift of power-exercises represents static power relations. Afterwards, I analyse dynamic power relations in *Horses*.

Subjectivities in *enfant*

Scene 1: Subordination to the norms/normalization

In the last chapter I showed how children in the first scene of *enfant* are subjected to power by adults. Adults are in a higher position than children, adults control their bodies and gestures and can see while children cannot. The audience feels uncomfortable during the scene due to the adults' disrespectful treatment. Subjection, as a process of being subordinated by power, is clearly represented when children become subjects. However, we must ask ourselves what kind of subjects are being developed here? By the subjection to a total power mechanism, children are incapable to move and see. They can only move or attend the scene as the adults drag, carry, pull, and control them onto the stage. The children are dependent on the adults. Butler explains this dependency: "[… one] must attach in order to persist […] No subject can emerge without this attachment, formed in dependency, but no subject, in the course of its formation, can ever afford fully to 'see' it."[108] The adults could not subject the children to total power if the children recognized their formation and power-subjection. The dependence on subject-formation makes it impossible for the children to oppose the power-subjection. Butler expresses this dependency: "The condition of becoming a

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[108] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 8.

subject, subordination implies being in a mandatory submission."[109] Children's dependency produces a mandatory submission which makes them endure the even disrespectful treatment by adults. Butler explains children's vulnerability and dependency: "Although the dependency of the child is not *political* subordination in any usual sense, the formation of primary passion in dependency renders the child vulnerable to subordination […] dependency conditions the political formation and regulation of subjects and becomes the means of their subjection."[110] Brady and Schirato explain the inseparable adult-child connection as "[…] the child's relation to its main carer (it need not be a parent) is initially one of necessity and survival. If the child is to persist it must become dependent."[111] The children depend on the adults for their existence. This forces them to tolerate the subjection of total power to become subjects.

Discussing *enfant*'s first scene provides us an opportunity to discuss children's power-subjection, subject-formation, and subordination to the norms. Children are exposed to subordination by power in order to learn to behave to the norm. The process of becoming a subject is caused by discipline and normalizations. *Only* by serving to the norms can a subject exist. Individuality, as an effect of discipline, is bound in a dialectical way to normalization. In the scene, the adults produce the norms of how to act and move. The adults treat the children according to their adult norms. Butler explains how norms "[…] govern the formation of the subject and circumscribe the domain of a livable sociality. The psychic operation of the norm offers a more insidious route for regulatory power than explicit coercion, one whose success allows its tacit operation within the social."[112] Children have to behave and relate to the norms in their process of being formed as a subject. Thereby, individuality as discipline's real effect is paradoxically bound to normalization. The children can - by normalization - 'become adults'. The children only learn how to correspond to adult norms and behave like the adults who subject them to power. This relates to adults as beings and children as becomings, discussed in the second chapter. Adults, beings/subjects, can subject others (children), thereby putting children in the process of *becoming* subjects. The children are dependent on adults for the process of subjection. So again, children are in an inferior position, also on the stage of *enfant*.

Agency, as a condition and an effect of subjection, is during the entire scene not represented. No child opposes the power being subjected to, they do not make independently made choices or indeed move autonomously. In her review, Anderson describes how "Issues to do with the question of agency recur throughout *Enfant.* The sight of these children being 'controlled' by the ensemble of

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[109] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 7.
[110] Ibidem.
[111] Anita Brady, and Tony Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler*, (London: SAGE, 2011), 24.
[112] Idem, 21

adult dancers is an understandably disconcerting one."[113] The audience feels discomfort by seeing child performers without agency. The stage is filled with autonomous adult performers and non-autonomous child performers. This scene makes us wonder how much subordination to power of adults to children is acceptable even if it initiates the process of children becoming subjects.

Scene 2: Reproducing subjectivities, stay *within* the discourse

In comparison to the last scene in which children were subjected to power, this scene represents a shift. Children - who were subjected to power and became subjects - can exercise power over the adults. Children's positioning is in higher vertical lines, the children control the adults' bodies and gestures and can see. In this scene - featuring the same performers - roles are reversed: children move, adults lay motionless. In her review, Andersons describes how "[…] the children, now skipping defiantly across the stage with improvised relish, turn the tables on their adult masters.
[…] *Enfant* thus ends with a rebellious gesture: the children have emancipated themselves in a thrilling episode."[114] It seems that the children have overruled the adults as the children are the only ones capable of moving. The audience feels confused and wonders if the adults now depend on the children to become subjects? However, the dependence of the children evident in the last scene is not observed when analysing the movements of the adults. The act of falling to the floor by adults appears as free choice. They lower themselves, lose control and cannot see. Beforehand, the adults could subject others to power. Now they chose willingly the opposite: the subjection to power. The agency to oppose power-subjection - not seen by the children before - is represented in this scene by the adults. The adults show agency as they literally subvert their own power position.

Even if children can exercise power, their ability to control the adults is less compared to how the adults controlled them before. It is difficult for the children to control the adults because the adults are heavier. The children's bodies are not fully-grown and neither are their muscles. This makes it difficult, almost impossible, for children to lift adults in the same way as the adults did to them. Children have to cooperate, lower themselves (*Figure 5*); the children cannot control, as before, an adult independently. This represents, again, children's inferior position because children are incapable of moving an adult on their own; children do not have the same competences as adults. Does this scene represents children's inferiority? Can several children together replace one adult? Even when children are capable to move adults' bodies (-parts), children cannot completely control adults. Children cannot subject the adults to (total) power and especially not to the same

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[113] Lee Anderson, "Review: Enfant, Sadler's Wells."
[114] Ibidem.

power as they were subjected to before. They try to behave just as the adults did, but fail. By trying to take over the adult norm, children reproduce their inferiority.

Children can exercise power, but the children's dependence on adults is *still* present. The children's capability to move, see, stand, position and act is an effect of the process of becoming subjects by power-subjection in the scene before. As adults subject the children to power, children are turned into subjects. Even if there is a shift in the power-exercise, the children still depend on adults. As the children's actions here are comparable to the adult's actions before, the children reproduce the adult's behaviour and behave according to their normalization. The children stay within the subjectivity of the adults. The subjectivity the children gain is the subjectivity the adults subjected them to before. By reproducing subjectivities, we notice how, in *enfant*, children's subjectivities stay *within* the discourse. Children's subjectivity is trapped in the discourse. By reproducing adult subjectivities, in which adultism is inscribed, children and adults stay within the discourse. This keeps the discourse active and repeated.

Subjectivities in *Horses*

Scene 2: failing/falling subjectivities

In the previous chapter I showed how children in *Horses*' second scene are subjected to excessive control and power. This still produces children as subjects, but makes them dependent on adults who exercise power. The only agency children have is to fall to the floor, to a lower vertical line. By total control, the adults eliminate every other agency – including the agency to stand. I wonder: is a subject that cannot stand still a subject? The other scene will show that agency can mean way more. The adults in *enfant*'s second scene dropped themselves by agency. In contrast, the children in *Horses*' second scene try to present agency by forcing the adults to catch them. However, after the adults catch the children, the adults immediately embed children into power relations and exercise power upon them. The children's only possible agency is in the single second they try to fall to the floor before being caught by the adults. The children open up the possibility to hurt themselves as they could hit the floor. Agency, as effect of power and subjection, is only represented here in a very limited way. The power-subjection of adults to the children almost 'oppress' every agency in the children's bodies and behaviour.

The children have to be subjected to power to become subjects. Butler writes: "[...] power imposes itself, and, weakened by its force, we come to internalize or accept its terms."[115] The children have no option to resist the power imposed upon them by adults because it is the only manner to become subjects. From the start of the scene, the adults take the children, move them

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[115] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power,* 2.

and make their bodies less tense and 'powerless'. The children cannot see, cannot move, cannot position themselves higher and cannot influence any part of the adult's control. They have to accept the power-subjection fully. Butler explains how someone is "[…] dependent on power for one's very formation, that that formation is impossible without dependency, and that the posture of the adult subject consists precisely in the denial and reenactment of this dependency."[116] The same can be seen in this scene as children depend on adults for their subject-formation and have to accept the terms of power and subjection. Even if the children force the adults to catch them, there is a small moment of agency opposing power because the children count on being caught. They subvert the norm in so far as they resist to stand, but by falling to the floor they have to reproduce their inferiority. Although different than before, children still depend on adults. Also, as adults catch the children, they prevent them from falling *and* from exercising power.

Even when power is discussed and stated as productive, power's influence on children's bodies in this scene does not appear productive. By the exercise of all three means of power, children are incapable of standing independently. The more the adults move the children, the more the children become dependent. The power-subjection to the bodies appears repressive as the total power makes the children unable to stand. The audience feels helpless and frustrated to see the 'powerless' children. In the scene, fully dependent children, who are almost unable to present agency, are seen. Even when the children try, by falling, they still represent children in an inferior way - especially in relation to the adults. The children's reduced position is literally visible as three children are put together. This suggests that separately children are not individuals but, when multiplied by three, are comparable to one adult. The adult-child relationships shown on stage represent a society in which adults ordinarily train children and subject power upon them. However, maybe the choreographers wanted to confront the audience and make them wonder about power relations and the requirements for producing a subject. When is power-subjection too much and when does power become repressive only?

Scene 1: changing power-exercise, changing *the* discourse?
Horses' first scene represents an almost equal, different adult-child relationship. The scene asks questions about who moves whom, differences between big and small, if power is similar to manipulation, the willingness to surrender, the importance of mutual trust, cooperation and relationships between people. *Tanec Praha* describes how in *Horses* "Everyone is an authentic personality with his or her own experience."[117] Two performers perform together on stage and

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[116] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 9.
[117] Tanec Praha, *Kabinet K (BE): Horses*.

exercise power by a continuous shift. Both performers have agency to oppose the power-subjection as space is left to exercise power. I focus on the child's agency who opposes the power subjected on her. The figures below provide clarification.[118]

Figure 11.

Figure 12.

Figure 13.

In *Figure 11*, the child is completely subjected to power: the adult is in a higher vertical line, controls the child's body and gestures, and can see while taking away the child's possibility to see. The child's body is dangling and does not show any activity or agency to oppose the power subjected to her. Her power has, besides the process of becoming, a repressive effect on the child's agency and capability to form her *own* subjectivity. The child can only form a subject fitting to (adult) norms: an adult-to-be, a reproducing subjectivity. *Figure 12* represents an equal position between adult and child; there is no complete control over the child's body, but the adult closes the child's eyes and takes away her possibility to see. The adult leaves space for agency by a non-total power-subjection. The child opposes the power subjected to her and pushes the adult to the floor (*Figure 13*), controls the adult's movement and position. The agency, in which the child pushes the adult to the floor, can be seen as form of resistance. Butler describes resistance as "[…] effect of power, as a part of power, its self-subversion."[119] The child pushes the adult to the floor, as resistance, as agency *opposing* power. This makes the child afterwards move independently through space. Her agency is clearly more than falling. This example shows how children should not be totally controlled, contrary to *Horses*' second and *enfant*'s first scene. *Figure 14* and *15* show how the child again, by agency, opposes power.

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[118] As the images concretize, the duet is between a male adult and a female child. As the images immediately raise questions and make us wonder about what is tolerated between a man and a girl, I decided not to focus on the exposed genders in this scene. Even if Butler investigates gender, bodies and heteronormativity, I only use her literature for analysing subjection and agency here. The gender relations in *Horses* form a topic for a thesis on its own.

[119] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 93.

Figure 14.[120]   *Figure 15*.[121]

In *Figure 14*, the adult lifts the child lower than himself and controls her body and movements so she cannot lose his grip. As the adult does not subject the child to a total power-exercise, the child struggles and uses her agency as a condition for a different subject's formation. The child takes off her sweater in *Figure 15* and loses the adult's grip. So, subjection to power can produce subjects, with agency and subjectivity. The agency and subjectivity seen here are not restricted and do not fit to the (adult) norm but can be formulated by the child. The child uses her agency not for reproducing subjectivities, but makes her 'own' subjectivity which is not completely identical to the norm. She accepts the power subordinated upon her. But she changes and adjusts it. By subjection to power in a non-total-way, it enables the child to produce her own subjectivity instead of an adult's copy. Butler explains how "[…] the formulation of the subject at issue resonates with a larger cultural and political predicament, namely, how to take an oppositional relation to power that is, admittedly, implicated in the very power one opposes."[122] The scene discusses the subject's formation and shows the adult-child relationship on a more equal basis.

The more equal positions shows the more autonomous position of the child (and adult) performer. This represents how *Tanec Praha* describes *Horses* as "[…] a performance about the desire to be an adult and the desire to remain a child", as child and adult perform together autonomously and independently on stage.[123] The child does not represent a not-knowing or incapable performer but shows an equal position onstage while performing similarly to the adult. Thereby, her subjectivity is not inferior anymore. By being equal, she questions the border between adult and child. In the beginning of my thesis, I noted the discourse on children with an inferior and reduced position and how they are not seen as autonomous and independent in society and onstage. However, Briginshaw states how "[…] dance can challenge, trouble and question these fixed perceptions of subjectivity."[124] So, children on stage can be the start of a change in fixed perspectives

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[120] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (18:10).
[121] Kabinet K & Het Paleis, *Horses*, screenshot (18:16).
[122] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 16, 17.
[123] Tanec Praha, *Kabinet K (BE): Horses*.
[124] Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*, 6.

of child (performers).[125] Children's subjectivities can be discussed by child performers in dance performances, by enlarging (as the stage is an enlargement of the real) the discourse on children. The child in the last scene leads the discourse to its limits by forming her own subjectivity and changing the power relations she is in. The satisfaction I described by the audience as the child exercises power is felt because they see a new subjectivity being formed. The child's formation of a 'new/own' subjectivity could thereby even be part of a different discourse on children.

Children becoming subjects on stage

With the performance analyses I showed the double meaning of subjectivity: subjecting others to power and turning others into the process of becoming subjects. Butler explains power's ambiguous meaning: "The perspective of power alters from what is always working on us from the outside and from the outset to what constitutes the sense of agency at work in our present acts and the futural expanse of their effects."[126] Power, agency and becoming-subjects are intrinsically connected to each other. Becoming subjects relates to 'becoming' indicated in my second chapter and to children as becomings and adults as beings. In the process of subjection, the children *become* subjects in which becoming is connoted less as inferior and more as part of a process, of becoming bigger, wiser, older and stronger. Butler states how we should, necessarily, "[…] lose the perspective of a subject already formed in order to account for our own becoming. That "becoming" is no simple or continuous affair, but an uneasy practice of repetition and its risks, compelled yet incomplete, wavering on the horizon of social being."[127] Children are - in the process of becoming - learning and repeating actions until they turn into beings. Children are not per se becoming-adults but becoming-social-beings, like everyone in society. Children *and* adults both learn and can improve their process of becoming-social-beings.

In *enfant* and *Horses* the children on stage are surrounded by adults - adults who can subject children to power and turn children into subjects. Children relate to adults, others, for their existence. Butler explains the interrelation to others in order to be: "Subjection exploits the desire for existence, where existence is always conferred from elsewhere; it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be."[128] One of the conditions (for children) to become subjects is to be surrounded by others (in society and) on stage. The children should perform *with* and *in* relation to

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[125] I am aware that the perspective given to the child performers in these performances, are given by adult choreographers. The roles of the child performers are staged by the performances' makers. As this thesis only focused on what is staged and represented in the performances, it raises questions about the creative processes of the performances and the makers' visions. This would be a interesting topic for another thesis.
[126] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 16.
[127] Idem, 30.
[128] Idem, 20, 21.

adults to be seen as full subjects. The child and adult performers in *Horses* and *enfant* keep the discourse on children alive. The discourse is repeated by everyone: child performers, adult performers and audiences. As the performers are humans who are part of society, the performers on stage represent roles 'performed' in society. However, the last scene of *Horses* represents a new kind of subjectivity which could be part of a changing discourse. The subjectivity of the child seen in the second scene of *Horses* is different than children's subjectivities in *enfant*. Power relations are dynamic in *Horses* and static in *enfant*. The subjectivity of the girl is not inferior and questions thereby the sharp border between adult and child. Butler explains the possibilities for changing the heteronormative discourse by knowing how to act and choosing another position to shift boundaries and blur lines between gender and the norms of performing in a heteronormative-way. The same can happen to children who know about the rules they are subjected to and therefore can choose to resist. At several moments in the performances children move adults in which they gain potential agency. The girl chooses a position which questions the categories. Discourses are always possible to shift and change but only by lots of repetition which hopefully will happen by more child performers actively performing on stage as full subjects.

Reflection on Butler

In this chapter I focused on how Butler identifies subjection as the process of becoming a subject by the subjection to power. I noticed in the last chapter that Foucault's concept of discipline has its limitations, especially for the formation of an own autonomous subject, not completely identical to the norm. That is why I focused on Butler's perspective who leaves more space for agency as a strategy of not having to fit completely to the norms. Butler explains agency with its ambiguous meaning as opposition to the power someone is subjected to *and* as effect of subjection to power relations. For analysing the subjectivity in this chapter, I focused on the process of subjection and on agency. These were two analytical tools the literature of Butler could provide me with and which could be used for operationalization in my research. In this way I could not only see *if* the subject was formed by power relations but *how* the subject is produced and what kind of subjects result.

Butler enabled me to analyse subjectivity by deploying Butler's means of subjection and agency. Thereby I could make subjectivity visible and shown *how* subjectivity is represented in the performances. By Butler, I could show how the connection between power and subjectivity can be analysed in the performances. So, it was useful to focus on Butler because I was able to identify different concepts of subjectivities

Summary

The performances *enfant* and *Horses* represent and discuss adult-child relations. Children are embedded in power relations which can form children into subjects. Children can react and oppose power relations when space is left for agency. Children can by agency - a result *and* condition of power relations and subjection - transcend power relations and change the norms which they are subjected to. Maybe this is even possible, almost paradoxical, because children are subjected to power, norms and a process of becoming subjects. The performances represent subjectivities that stay within the discourse, and possibly change the discourse of children and childhood. The resulting subjectivities in *enfant* are reproductions of adult-norms and represent a power-shift, a process of subjection and becoming a subject within the discourse. The child performers in *Horses* use agency to subvert power relations and produce different subjectivities which could be part of changing the discourse.

5. Conclusion

This Master Thesis reflected on children as full subjects on stage. Even though children have already appeared in performances for years, they are not always staged as full subjects. Children represent frequently the symbol of the child constructed by adults: innocent, vulnerable and in need of protection. I discussed, in my theoretical part, how the one-dimensional and limited view of children - inferior, reduced, immature, not-finished, incomplete-adults, 'others' - is reflected in the way audiences perceive children on stage. Children are not seen as autonomous; they *exist* only in relation to adults and are placed in a childhood, constructed by and related to adults. However, recently the construction of the child on stage is changing in contemporary performances.

By my theoretical perspective, found in the literature, and the performance analysis I could answer my main research-question and show changing power relations - static and dynamic - and different subjectivities - relating to normalization and different subjectivities changing the norm. My research focused on *how* child performers are represented to show child performers as full subjects. For analysing subjectivities, I analysed power relations the subject-formation is embedded in, the subjection-process, and agency. By deploying Foucault's different means of power-exercise, I was able to analyse power relations. Thereby, I could make power relations visible and show how they are represented in both performances. Viewing through the lens of Foucault's ideas provided me analytical tools I could operate in performance analysis. However, Foucault's concept of discipline is less capable to analyse dynamic power relations and changing subjectivities. Through the lens of Butler's concepts, I could continue to show how the connection between power and subjectivity could be analysed in the performances. The functionality of applying the theories of Foucault and Butler is proven by the fact that I could identify different concepts of subjectivities and different positions in power relations. Only by their perspective, I was able to analyse power relations and subjectivities in the performances in their interaction.

My research focused on child performers in *enfant* and *Horses*. The two performances discuss child performers' subjectivity by relating them to adult performers. Adults and children appear simultaneously on stage, participate both actively and are present in the entire performances (with a small exclusion of *enfant*'s beginning). Both performances reflect - each differently - on power, agency and subjectivity. By my theoretical perspective and performance analysis, I could show shifts in power-exercises. In *enfant* the shift in power is static: first adults exercise power upon children and later children exercise power upon adults. The shift effects the audience: they feel uncomfortable seeing the power-exercise by adults on children but yet feel confused when seeing children exercising power on adults. The resulting subjectivities in *enfant* are reproductions of adult norms, formed by subordination to power and normalization. Foucault explains how disciplinary power produces individuals in a dialectical way. Individuality is bound to normalization. Children

depend on adults for their existence so they may become subjects. Even if children in *enfant*'s second scene were able to exercise power, the only ones opposing power by agency were adults. Children's inferior position in society (and in the discourse on children) is represented. Children cannot exercise power and control adults in the same way as the adults did to them. The reproduced subjectivities and inferior position of children represent how *enfant* stays, by a shift, within the discourse.

In *Horses* children's power-exercise showed a shift in power relations and thereby dynamic power relations. The audience of *Horses* feels different emotions: frustration (as children are incapable to stand) and satisfaction (as the child exercises power and opposes the power subjected to her). The child (seen in the duet) in *Horses* uses agency to subvert power relations. Agency is represented as condition and effect of the power-subjection and process of subject-becoming. The child, in the duet, subverts the power relations she is in, accepts it to change it, produces a new kind of subjectivity. The adult-child relationships are more equal in *Horses* which can leave space for the formation of changing subjectivities. Not only is the child's power-exercise satisfying to see, but also the changing subjectivity. The child breaks with the norm of inferiority and questions the strict categories of adult and child. The changing subjectivity might be part of a changing discourse.

Unfortunately I was - by the limited time and words - only able to reflect on what is represented in the performances. With more time and words, I could have critically reflected on how child performers are still staged and directed by (adult) choreographers. Even if I reflect on child performers as full subjects on stage, the adult choreographers are the ones who place them there. Nevertheless, I want to elaborate on the differences in representation between *enfant* and *Horses* as both showed differences in power relations and subjectivities. *enfant* premiered July 2011 and had its premiere more than five years before *Horses* in September 2016. This might explain the different ways of representing child performers and their subjectivities on stage. Still, both performances show different possibilities of how to represent (and work with) child performers. Senior emphasized the importance of the research on child performers to

> [...] better understand how children in the theatrical environment have the potential to participate in or affect action that has political significance, by demonstrating the importance of the embodied aspects and ethical quality of their relation to us as both spectators and adults.[129]

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[129] Senior, "Beginners on stage," 76.

By studying children on stage, their relations to adults can be better understood. I indicated that the stage is a representation of society which can hopefully also work the other way around: what is represented on stage can influence society. Children are human-beings, like us, and part of society. That is why a re-thinking of how children should be studied in their own right and not in respect to the adult construction of children and childhood. These adult constructions influence and limit children in their possibilities - in society and on stage. Children should be seen as full subjects - independent and autonomous - capable of forming their own lives.

Children should initiate a re-thinking of the discourse. When children know how to act, they can choose another position to shift boundaries and blur the lines between children and adults. Therefore, children should also be more involved in the production-process and actively participate, not only in the performance, but also in the theatre-making itself. Children who perform in an 'adult' way can shift boundaries. Although, children should not act identically to the adults as they would repeat their subjectivities. As the children are aware of their roles and positions, they can *perform* these roles instead of *be* them. Although, adults can also shift boundaries by acting in a 'childish' way. Discourses are possible to shift and change but this takes lots of repetition. A few performances alone are not enough to change a discourse. Still, more children should be on stage to initiate a different discourse. More theatre and dance scholars should analyse children and child performers, as full subjects and in general. Even if the discourse is not shifted or changed yet, *enfant* and *Horses* can still be part of a changing discourse. They can be part of a new discourse on children and child performers that show children's capabilities and children as full subjects, not only relating to adults as inferior and in a reduced position.

The last thing I want to point out is how - also without relating to power relations and subjectivities - children are in both performances strong, independent and present as performers. The children attract our attention more than adults. Children who are there, show themselves to be taken seriously and to who no one dares to say that they were no full subjects on stage.

Reflection

As indicated previously, this research only focused – due to limitations - on how child performers are represented on stage *by* adult choreographers and does not reflect on the creative processes. The choreographers state in interviews that children contribute to both performances' processes. Children should also be involved in the research on their roles on stage. Children can be interviewed about the process or the creative process could be overserved itself. Additionally, as my research-possibilities (time and words) were limited, I could only analyse two scenes of two performances. With more time, I could have analysed more performances. I might have chosen to analyse

performances that feature only child performers (without relating to adult performers). Further research should elaborate hereon and the differences in performances, areas and cultures. The performances I analysed were Flemish and French and related to Western-European theatre-making. Differences can be found by researching other countries. Furthermore my position as a theatre and dance scholar, interested in child performers, yields a biased position that favours children from a more positive perspective than maybe average. I call for further investigation onto child performers and children as full subjects on stage. This research needs especially to be done *with* children also in the creative processes instead of only *about* children's representation. A possible change in the discourse could then be better elaborated on.

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