Playing with reality: representing the baby

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ABSTRACT

This thesis – by artefact and exegesis – draws attention to the role the infant plays in our society. It suggests that the complexity and depth of the emotional life of infants is seriously underestimated, putting at risk their mental health. The artefact and exegesis work together to demonstrate and explain the infant’s proclivity for communication and to emphasize the role of the infant as subject, not object, in relation to others.

The artefact is an imaginative representation of the infant’s emotional world from the infant’s perspective. Entitled ‘There is no such thing as a baby’ the artefact is presented in two formats – a written play text and an online interactive performance text. The written piece reflects the traditional form of text-based drama, whereas the performance text acknowledges the growing influence of multimedia in the theatre and, by incorporating image and sound, offers the reader a more theatrical experience.

The method of practice-led research and research-led practice enables creative writing to share the stage with academic discourse, providing a unique perspective on the mental health of infants and their parents. Multiple connections are made, as writer leads reader across discipline boundaries – infant mental health, poetry, psychoanalysis, dance, neuroscience, theatre, and performance – in search of authentic relationships. The development of creativity and thinking in the infant, in the theatre, and in the writer is evident in the parallels drawn between the dynamics of baby and mother, theatre and audience, and artefact and exegesis. Some associations are not made explicit, leaving the reader to make and discover her or his own.

The main purpose of the thesis is to provide a space where the infant can be thought about as a feeling person and a space where a feeling person can think. It shows how one’s early experience of a live, imperfect relationship allows this space to exist, to be shaped, and to be re-discovered. The conclusion presents a paradox with potential, where meaning is in the hands and mind of the reader.
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I must also acknowledge that the first line from William Shakespeare’s sonnet 18 – ‘Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?’ – is quoted in both forms of the artefact.

Very special thanks to the babies and their parents who allowed me to use their voices and images. I am also grateful to all the babies and parents who have shared their hopes and fears and dreams with me over many years; it has been a privilege.

Finally, because ‘Home is where we start from’ (Winnicott 1986), I wish to thank my parents, whose love of a good yarn and playful way with words has created a family of lively and imaginative dreamers who have supported me in myriad ways. To my husband and children, for the feeling and thinking space we share: thank you to the moon.
I declare that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award to me of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome.

To the best of my knowledge this work contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome.

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PREFACE

…within our individual selves we can reconcile two orders of knowledge which we might call the practical and the poetic…each form of knowledge redresses the other and…the frontier between them is there for the crossing – Seamus Heaney

This project arose from a desire to connect and make sense of various strands of my creative, intellectual, and professional lives. My early training as a nurse and midwife taught me a great deal about human relationships and supported me through university but seemed at odds with my academic interest in French poetry and theatre. Motherhood put an end to my brief flirtation with acting on the stage but more than compensated with its on-going revelations about self and other. Post-graduate studies, first in psychoanalytic theory and later in infant mental health, followed by psychotherapy training, enabled me to think more creatively about my work with babies and their parents. Psychotherapy, I soon realized, is a lot like poetry and theatre as it works with metaphor and emotion, leaving much unsaid. Their similarity helped me to think about the frontier between them and my desire to cross it. I wondered how I could get back to the theatre without losing my way.

As we will see, allowing space to think allows ideas to come. Thinking about babies as unique individuals, as subjects, not objects, I gradually came to see how I could write a play about a family with a baby who could “speak” for herself. The French psychoanalyst, André Green (1979) describes the family as ‘the tragic space par excellence’ (p. 7). This phrase manages to capture both the theatrical and psychoanalytic possibilities of my project.

The thesis aims to develop knowledge and understanding about the emotional world of the infant for the general community and for those whose work is concerned with the well-being of infants and their parents. Knowledge comes to us in various guises. Habermas (1972) found that by thinking across disciplines to connect philosophy with social science, he was able to describe three different aspects of knowledge: technical, which serves to predict and control, practical, leading to mutual insight, and emancipatory, which encourages
reflection (pp. 308-311). My research intends to serve Habermas’ practical and emancipatory interests of knowledge. Through the theatre, I aim to cross Heaney’s (1995) ‘practical and poetic’ (p.203) divide to show how we can engage with and reflect upon the subjective, emotional experience of an infant. The thesis creates a space, between performance and psychoanalysis, where a baby might be imagined, seen, heard, and thought about as a developing person.

This qualitative research is practice-led (Barrett & Bolt 2010; Leavy c 2009), based on the writing of a play about a baby, where the play is a practice that is research-led (Smith & Dean 2009). The desire to write the play, and to play creatively with ideas about the infant’s emotional life, is the starting point for the research; the process of writing the play provides the data which, in turn, is described and imaginatively explored so that new understandings can be discovered and new thoughts thought. In this way, the play, or artefact, both informs and is informed by the exegesis that supports it; like baby and mother, they write each other.

Thinking about my experience of theatre, both as actor and as audience, reveals a similar relationship. When a performance is going well something happens in the space between the actors and the audience, something that is not scripted: an emotional dynamic between them that feeds both the actors, enhancing their performance, and the audience, who suspend disbelief to willingly and enthusiastically engage in the ‘as if’ experience. They are not suffering from some kind of delusional illness (Oka 2007) but sharing an imagined world where the confusion between reality and appearance is not only tolerated but encouraged.

We will see that this is congruent with the psychodynamics at play between babies and their mothers. Psychoanalytic theories offer many perspectives on the baby / mother relationship but it was the concept of ‘potential space’, described by the British paediatrician and psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicott (1971, p. 41) that came to my mind when I was thinking about the theatre. Winnicott describes this space as something that is unconsciously shared by mother and baby at the very beginning. When things are going well the mother
provides what the baby needs: the space between the provision and the need is where the baby creates her understanding of the world.

The thesis is concerned with this potential space between the baby and her parents, and between the theatre and its audience. The word ‘between’ can suggest movement from one to the other but it is also a place - often invisible – that separates and defines, like a boundary or a frontier. I aim to explore and describe that place, creatively via the artefact and analytically via the exegesis, allowing one to redress the other, so that the experience of reading the thesis as a whole creates a new understanding of the infant experience.
INTRODUCTION

Fictions are for finding things out – Frank Kermode

The things we discover for ourselves are the most important – Pina Bausch

This thesis is about the emotional life of a baby. The primary research question – ‘Can the creative representation of an infant provide insights into the infant experience?’ – is addressed by artefact and exegesis. The artefact is a play entitled ‘There is no such thing as a baby’, written for the theatre, about a newborn baby’s world, from the baby’s perspective. The exegesis examines the emotional dynamics of that world and how these relate to the dynamics of creative writing for the theatre.

Why write a play about a baby’s emotional life? Why do we need reminding that the baby is a person? Babies born in the 21st century face many different challenges to those of their ancestors. No longer exclusively the product of heterosexual intercourse, they can now be artificially produced via an increasing variety of medical technologies. It is possible for a baby to start life from a donor egg or sperm or both, be gestated in a surrogate womb, and be given or sold to a couple or individual who share no genetic, cultural, or ethnic inheritance with the baby or, arguably, who share too much, as in donation of eggs from daughter to mother or vice versa. The extraordinary advances in reproductive technology have allowed many infertile couples to discover the privilege of becoming parents. However, the burgeoning baby ‘market’ (Hodder 2006) signals a shift from the notion of privilege to the assertion of right, bringing with it a change of status for the baby: from gift to commodity, from dream to outcome.

Regardless of how they are conceived, modern babies are generally grown and monitored in a highly interventionist medical system (Chong & Kwek 2010) which, in turn, is painfully conscious of a vigilant legal system (Fuglenes et al. 2009; Zwecker et al. 2011). Tallied as “deliveries”, they are conveyed through hospital systems more concerned with meeting budgets than greeting babies (Cots & Castells 2001; Griffin et al. 2012), and are bundled home with their
exhausted and confused mothers at the earliest opportunity, if not before (Declerq & Simmes 1997; Brown et al. 2009).

Governments know that babies are a vital resource. This is why they are kissed by politicians at election time and why babies can earn their parents a bonus\textsuperscript{1} simply by being born. They have become thriving economic units, measured by how much they cost\textsuperscript{2} or what they might consume, and we are not talking only about milk. In our so-called civilized society, parenthood is a shop (Parenthood 2012), babies are promoted and paraded as the latest fashion accessory (Shakinovsky 2002; Wellman 2012), and a baby’s pram can cost as much as a small car – around 1,200 British pounds sterling (Kemp 2013).

In developed countries the cost of living combined with the absence of family and community supports force many working parents to leave their babies in a child-care system that employs inadequate ratios\textsuperscript{3} of poorly paid staff\textsuperscript{4} to watch over the nation’s most precious resource. To operate effectively in the workplace, parents need their sleep; this often desperate need has mobilised an un-regulated industry of self-styled sleep trainers and encouraged the counter-intuitive practice of controlled crying (Ford 2002; Raising Children Network 2012) where parents are trained to ignore their baby’s cries.

The pace and demands of modern life leave little time or space for thinking about the baby’s perspective or for engaging with the baby as a developing person. By taking psychoanalytic ideas to the theatre we create a time and a space to feel and think about the baby’s experience. By bringing together different ways of knowing – through the arts and the sciences – this thesis provides an opportunity for us all to re-consider the way we think about babies.

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\textsuperscript{1} Introduced in 2004 in Australia, flat rate of AUD $5,000 in 2013, but means-tested after 1 July 2013 (Australian Government Department of Human Services 2012). Norway, Italy, Poland, parts of Canada, have a flat rate baby bonus (Parr 2012) while Singapore’s baby bonus is increasing (Yahoo!news Singapore 2013).

\textsuperscript{2} AUD $206 per week (Strong 2012).

\textsuperscript{3} In Australia the ratio is 1 carer to 4 babies under 2 years of age (Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, Council of Australian Governments 2012). European ratios vary and UK ratios are about to get worse (Ball 2013). In the USA, ratios vary from state to state; in Texas, the ratio is 1: 4 for babies 0-11months, 1:5 for 12-17 months, 1:9 for 18-23 months, and 1:11 for 24 months (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2010, p.55) while California has considerably better ratios for 9 months to 3 years (Daycare.com 2013).

\textsuperscript{4} AUD$14.29 -$23.16 per hour (Payscale Australia, 2013), USD$10.25 per hour (United States Department of Labour, 2011),GBP £5.82-£9.83 (Payscale UK, 2013).
If we take the risk to step inside the theatre’s ‘empty space’ (Brook 1972, p. 11) to imagine and create a baby’s dream, we can allow ourselves to re-connect with the feeling of being a baby and we can share in her creation.

The dream has long been associated with story-telling and theatre, as Homer’s Penelope knows:

Two gates for ghostly dreams there are: one gateway
of honest horn, and one of ivory.

Issuing by the ivory gate are dreams
of glimmering illusion, fantasies,
but those that come through solid polished horn
may be borne out, if mortals only know them.

(Homer c. 800BC, book 19, lines 560-565, p. 371)

From the Greek epic poet, Homer – *The Odyssey* – to the Spanish Golden Age dramatist, Calderón (1635) – *La vida es sueño / Life is a dream* – and on to the more recent German dancer and choreographer, Pina Bausch (2010) – *Tanzträume / Dancing dreams* – we learn that theatre and dreams share the gateway through which audience and dreamer enter, or admit, another world. This thesis explores theories of theatre, performance and dance in order to understand what the audience sees, feels, and knows, and how this might come about. The changing nature of the relationship between the theatre and its audience is examined from the pagan rituals that gave birth to Greek theatre (Viala 2005) through to modern theatre and the still evolving post-dramatic theatre. We endeavour to define what it is that connects all who participate in this essentially human activity, an activity which allows us to play with reality and to dream.

Relationships are at the heart of psychoanalytic theory, and particularly of object relations theory. As this informs my psychotherapeutic work with babies and their parents, it is a natural fit for this thesis, appearing unconsciously in my writing of the artefact and as a conscious choice in the structuring of the exegesis. Object relations theory is based on the premise that, from birth, or even before, a baby needs to relate to something, an object (Rycroft 1968,
In an appropriate psychic environment the baby can make use of the object, taking in the good and driving out the bad, gradually developing a healthy sense of self and other by discovering a whole self where both good and bad can be accommodated (Klein 1959).

My previous research (Hill 1995) focused on Winnicott’s (1960a) concept of ‘holding’, a term he used to describe the particular way in which a mother physically handles her baby while also having the baby in her mind. At that time I was interested to see how the concept might apply to the care of new mothers. Now, in this thesis, the spotlight is on the baby and the creative process. Here once again Winnicott (1945; 1947; 1951; 1956; 1960a; 1960b; 1962; 1963; 1964; 1967; 1968; 1971; 1986) has much to offer, especially through his understanding of play and his insistence that relationship is central to the infant’s well-being. Further contributions to our thoughts about the developing baby and creative relationships come from the psychoanalyst Esther Bick’s (1964) innovative technique of infant observation, the psychologist and psychoanalyst, John Bowlby’s (1958; 1982) attachment theory, and the psychoanalyst, Melanie Klein’s theories (Klein 1946;1952; 1955; 1963; Klein & Riviere 1964; Mitchell 1986) on the intra-psychic workings of the infant. The exegesis elaborates these theories while the artefact brings them to life. Both exegesis and artefact are supported in this by the thoughts of the British psychoanalysts Bollas (1987; 1992; 2009), Milner (1950; Field 1986), and Bion (1967; 1977; 1978; 1983; 2005) as we ponder the sources of creativity and knowledge.

This thesis follows a tradition, started by Freud himself, of making connections between psychoanalysis and the theatre. In Psychopathic Characters on the Stage (1905 or 19065) Freud observed that ‘Being present as an interested spectator at a spectacle or play does for adults what play does for children’ (p. 305), that is, it allows them to safely act out or experience a variety of roles and emotions. In his translation, James Strachey adds a footnote to explain how Freud plays with the German word for dramatic performance, Schauspiel, by dividing it with a hyphen to highlight its various components: Schau meaning

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5 James Strachey, the editor, notes that the exact date is uncertain.
'spectacle' and Spiel meaning ‘play’ or ‘game’ (p. 305). In this he introduces a theme that Winnicott later develops in his work with infants and mothers. It is my intention to continue the theme, linking Winnicott’s ideas on ‘play’ (1971) with theories of theatre and performance, to draw some conclusions of my own.

But how can we represent a baby if there is no such thing, if she does not exist? Like her parents, we imagine her.\(^6\)

The baby, in relationship with her parents, is the subject and main character of the artefact – a play, in three acts, to be performed, observed, and experienced in a theatre space. Dance drives much of the action, both physically and metaphorically, playing with notions of space and enhancing the poetic voice of the baby. The characters could be any baby, mother and father but they are not archetypes; rather, they are like characters in a dream, a dream of the baby’s making, and one which allows the reader and audience to experience their own dreams and to make their own connections.

Themes of Greek myth and theatre found their own, serendipitous way into the artefact over time. It may have started the day I realized I was walking in waltz time, the insistent one-two-three rhythm inviting Freud’s (1923) Oedipus to join the fictional family-of-three already dancing in my head; or perhaps it was the Australian writer, Marion May Campbell’s (2008) modern-day version of Antigone (Sophocles c 441BC), opening my eyes to the possibility of re-imagining the Greek myths. It could have been a painting and its unexpected introduction to the travails of mythical Iphigenia, or a photograph of a sculpture on the cliffs, evoking not only the doomed Iphigenia but also the infant Oedipus. I realized that the ancients had taken hold when a reading of The Oresteia (Aeschylus 458 BC) suggested the chorus as a useful device to structure a play. The distant memory of a university theatre production of The Trojan Women (Euripides 415BC) featuring an all- female, bare-breasted chorus, returned my thoughts to the baby and her mother, and hence to the play.

The circumstances of this family in this play may be unique but many of the unconscious dynamics between the baby and her parents are universal. There

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\(^6\) The baby in the artefact is female. Therefore, in the exegesis references to the baby, infant, or newborn will be feminine. The baby in the play is referred to as ‘the baby’ or ‘the fictional baby’ while ‘newborn’ and ‘infant’ refer to babies generally.
can be any number of combinations of partners, and dance steps may vary, but we all know the tune. This is because we have all been babies. By re-creating a baby’s early experience, the play prompts audience members to re-feel and to re-cognize their own primitive emotions. This re-connection with our earliest experiences helps us to then think about the baby as a person.

All babies share common developmental tasks but babies themselves are not, as some would like to believe, all the same. As a unique individual the fictional baby in this play brings her own temperament, her own genetic inheritance, her own relationships, and her own difficulties to the action on stage. She is born into a family burdened with considerable unexamined, and hence unresolved, emotional conflict. While the baby is discovering herself, the adults in her life are making discoveries of their own.

But how can a pre-verbal baby have a voice? The exegesis articulates the way in which the play makes use of poetry, dance, recorded voice, music, and photographs to represent the baby’s experience, and explains how the voice, and a space for it was found. While the exegesis is necessarily descriptive and analytical, it complements the artefact in a particular way. Like the baby, the project starts in a state of not knowing and, as the baby discovers her world, so too does the writing. The uncertainty that accompanies the search for something that feels real is reflected in the writing of both the artefact and the exegesis. The result is an exegesis that contains within it a story about how the thesis was created; it shows as much as it tells, inviting the reader to join the dance to see where it may lead.

The first chapter considers infants from several perspectives: infant mental health, infant observation, and the arts. A description of the methodology and a review of the literature\(^7\) show how and why this project provides a unique perspective on both infant development and creative writing. The baby is introduced as an individual, a person with feelings who is ready to communicate. We learn how she was given a name, a voice, and a form. When the play finds its own form, we see how relationships take shape.

\(^7\) An embedded literature review allows the many connections made in the exegesis to be addressed in their relevant chapters.
In chapter two we identify a number of relationships – the developing baby and the developing thesis, mind and body, neuroscience and psychoanalysis, art and science, internal and external worlds – in order to explore their common themes. Infant capacities for relationship are explained from a variety of research perspectives. Damasio (1999; 2001) and Kandel (2012a) explain the findings from neuroscience, Trevarthen (1998; 2005; 2010), Stern (1977;1985; 2002) and others provide data from psychological, psychobiological and behavioural research, and Bowlby’s (1982) attachment theory informs the attachment research of Lyons-Ruth (2003; 2007) and others. Drawing on a range of works by Freud, Klein and her followers, and Winnicott, we describe psychoanalytic concepts central to the thesis: transference, projective identification, and potential space, which leads us to think about what we mean by play.

The reader is invited to pause after the second chapter of the exegesis and engage with the written play text. The two forms of the artefact may, of course, be examined in any order, but, to fully appreciate the development of the thesis – and to share the baby’s experience of having to wait – this writer suggests engaging with the play text before chapter three and playing with the performance text after chapter three. The performance text can be found on the USB accompanying this document.

This third chapter takes a closer look at play and performance. We discuss the data – the process of writing the play – and relate this to the baby’s efforts at communication. The theme of ambivalence, reflected in the choreography, looms large as anxiety appears on several fronts. We explore meanings of theatre, performance, dance, and the role of the audience. Starting with primitive ritual (Turner 1969; 1982), we give an overview of the development of theatre and its purpose, from the ancients to the modernists, with particular reference to Artaud (1964) and Brook (1972). We then take up the post-modern challenge by Lehmann (2007), Fischer-Lichte (2008), and Lepage (Ex Machina 2012), one which forces us to re-consider the very essence of theatre and human relationships. Finally we look at what the artefact has become and, by re-defining it, allow it to inhabit two separate but connected realities.
In the final chapter we compare ways of knowing and wonder how we really know anything. Playing with notions of reality and illusion, we reflect on the role of the body and the mind through contemporary dance, neuroscience, performance, and psychoanalysis. We consider how technology changes the way we form and understand relationships, in the theatre and in the family. We see how far the infant / theatre metaphor can take us when the need for live engagement is questioned. Finally, imagining the experience for the infant of a virtual reality, we wonder how feeling, thinking, dreaming and knowing might be shared in the future.

In this thesis the artefact shows how a baby makes use of relationships; at the same time the exegesis interprets and enlarges them. The relationship between artefact and exegesis is one that allows space for links to be made between the creative potential of the baby, the creative process of writing, and the creative possibilities of theatre. To enable these links, psychoanalytic theory and Infant Observation studies provide the structure, poetry the language, and theatre the medium.

The reader / audience / observer is warned that the artefact contains nudity, violence, loud noises, and language that may offend. The rationale for their inclusion becomes clear in the following pages of the exegesis.

Disclaimer

While the mother appears to play the predominant role throughout this thesis, it is not the author’s intention to suggest that the father or devoted other cannot adequately care for an infant. The decision to preference the mother was made for a number of reasons. Without wanting to infer that biology is destiny, I do want to acknowledge its essential position. Leaving aside surrogacy and assisted reproduction, the mother’s body is the starting place for the actual infant and is also what traditionally – but not always – nurtures the infant. Second, much of the psychoanalytic literature places the mother’s body and mind at the centre of the infant’s world. To replace ‘mother’ with ‘mother / father / other’ or ‘attachment figure’ would weigh down sentences that strive to be lucid and light, while ‘care-giver’ fails to incorporate a concept that is central to the thesis – shared relationship. Third, the archetypal poetic overtones of the word
‘mother’ are at home in a work of fiction for the theatre. Finally, one’s own experience has a part to play and is, therefore, inevitable.
CHAPTER ONE: Setting the Scene

Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I am not present and alive to all that is going on – Samuel Beckett

This chapter introduces the reader to the mental health of infants and to the method of Infant Observation. I demonstrate why and how I appropriate the method for the thesis, both as a dramatic device in the artefact and as a model for the relationships explored in the exegesis. To determine the originality of the thesis I present a review of the literature with a focus first on plays and performances about infants and second on psychoanalytic writing about the theatre. The thesis methodology is described and I explain how the baby was conceived.

Infant Mental Health

In the introduction I described how much has changed, and continues to change, in the ways of conception, birth, and infant care – artificial reproduction, surrogacy, obstetric interventions, baby bonuses, babies as consumers, and sleep school. However one thing remains constant and universal: from birth, and for some years after, babies are dependent, for their physical and emotional well-being, on the quality and reliability of the relationships they have with their care-givers. When babies are thought of as objects – things to be coveted, manufactured, traded, exhibited, trained, and managed – parents may feel that they are in control; the inevitable realization that they are not can be challenging (Fisher et al. 2005; Miller 2012) and sometimes depressing.

Postnatal depression is now a serious health problem, affecting almost 14% of women giving birth in Australia (beyondblue 2011-2012). In the UK the rate is 7-15% (Chew-Graham et al. 2009) and a systemic review of the literature suggests that rates in some low and middle income countries are higher – between 30-50% in Malawi, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Chile, Burkina Faso, and Guyana (Parsons et al. 2012). There is also an alarming increase in the incidence of depression in children (Sawyer et al. 2001). Not so well known is the fact that even small babies can show signs of depression (Field 2010a; Guedeney 2007; Murray et al. 1996, 2010; Puura et al. 2010; Tronick et al. 1978) and some research suggests, most disturbingly, that the effects of this very
early depression can be long-lasting and irreversible (Talge et al. 2007). Depression aside, there is established evidence to show the rapid, dynamic growth and development of infants’ brains in the first year of life (Knickmeyer et al. 2008; Tau & Peterson 2010). Neural connections are made or lost, depending on the quality and quantity of infant interactions with the people who care for them (Schore 2001; Trevarthen & Aitken 2001) and longitudinal studies show that the most important contribution to a child’s development is the care received at the beginning of life (Sroufe et al. 2005).

The idea of a baby as a unique individual emerged in the 1960s and 1970s when researchers discovered that newborn babies are complex, competent in a range of behaviours, and quite prepared to engage with the world (Nugent 2009). When we consider some of the research findings in more detail in the next chapter we will see that, most commonly, they result from infant studies that are medical, scientific, and measurable. Infant Observation is an important exception. First described by the British psychoanalyst, Esther Bick (1964), Infant Observation is now an essential component of training for a variety of professionals in mental health disciplines as it offers a unique opportunity to understand the development of the infant’s internal world while also giving students of these professions some insight into their own emotional capacities. It involves the close observation of an infant from birth, for an hour once a week, over a period of one to two years. The observer makes mental notes of how the baby moves, sounds, looks, and responds to people and other objects, while also being aware of the baby’s surroundings. As soon as possible after the observation, the observer documents what s/he saw, heard, thought and felt; this is then explored and discussed in a group supervised by an experienced psychoanalytic psychotherapist. Bick’s focus on the emotional impact of the observation on the observer was what defined her work, setting it apart from other observational research on children, including that of Anna Freud (Briggs 2002, p. 3); it is also why this thesis adopts Bick’s concept.

In explaining the importance of writing up and discussing the observation, the English child psychotherapist, Lisa Miller (2002) draws a useful analogy, one that is equally true for this artefact and exegesis:
Infant observation is fine grained, detailed observation and analysis, supported by psychoanalytic theory. It offers another dimension to our understanding of the infant by helping us to see, hear, and think about the development of her inner world. This attentive focus on the individual baby, looking and listening while also taking in the whole environment, is not unlike the sort of observation we employ when we go to the theatre, a point we will return to in the next chapter. The play exploits this similarity by giving the audience the de facto role of infant observer thus facilitating the play’s aim to forge a relationship between the audience and the baby.

Reflecting on her work Bick notes: ‘One may have to sit with children for a long time completely in the dark about what is going on until suddenly something comes up from the depth that illuminates it…’(Bick 1962, p. 31). The audience is in a similar position, sitting in the dark theatre wondering what is happening before the baby appears in the stage lights. To use Bick’s metaphor, the work of the play is to make and allow moments of clarity of both thought and feeling in the audience. We can see that the play, presented as an infant observation, provides an emotional experience, while the exegesis affords a considered view of that experience.

Playing with the concept of Infant Observation through the medium of theatre provides a certain freedom to explore the emotional dimension of the infant’s development in ways that scientific research, with its emphasis on measurable outcomes or ‘technically exploitable knowledge’ (Habermas 1972, p.191), does not allow. Furthermore, the theatre and its capacity to convey what cannot – or may not – be spoken in a form that others might understand is the ideal medium for a project that seeks to give creative voice to the pre-verbal infant. Infant Observation and the theatre serve to provide an answer to the problem posed by Bion (2005): ‘…how are we to see, observe…these things which are not
visible?’ (p. 38). As the British child psychotherapist and psychologist, Wendy Hollway (2012) explains: ‘Whenever psychoanalytic observation meets practice it can help people complement knowing about with knowing of; it can help them reflect on their emotional experience’ (p. 30).

The infant has been represented in the arts for much longer than in science but to what extent are the arts, particularly the theatre, really interested in the infant’s point of view?

**The Infant in the Theatre**

In visual art the idealization of the mother / infant relationship is longstanding and, in some cases, persistent. From the early Renaissance painter, Piero della Francesca’s *Madonna and Child with Saints* (1472-74) to Australian artist Del Kathryn Barton’s winning portrait of herself and her children for the Archibald Prize (Barton 2008) one could argue that only the technique has changed. However the continued relevance of the classical themes of Greek theatre tells us that the emotional complexity of the mother / infant relationship has an even longer history. The shocking verses of Euripides’ *Medea* and Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, find new, but perhaps no less disturbing expression in recent poetic writings on motherhood (Plath 1972; Harrison & Waterhouse 2009).

We will see as we review the literature that, while much has been made of the parent’s experience in the infant / parent relationship, the infant’s experience has received considerably less attention. On the other hand, one could argue, like the child psychologist, Bruno Bettleheim (1976), that fairy tales have long provided a portal to the emotional world of children. The intensity of a child’s aggressive, omnipotent, and loving feelings in the modern tale, *Where the Wild Things Are*, by American illustrator and writer, Maurice Sendak (1963), shows us the extraordinary power of a young boy’s emotions. The boy, Max, pretending to be a wild animal, goes too far and is sent to his room where he sails away to a land of wild things to become their beloved leader. Having given his aggression free rein he returns to his room to find that his forgiving mother has left him some supper ‘and it was still hot’ (n.p.). This story may well have

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8 Thus strengthening the claim that exploring emotional complexity is what poetry and theatre does best (Green 1979).
been influenced by a much earlier work, *L’enfant et les sortilèges* (Ravel c.1925), where a young boy is rude to his mother and confined to his room. In a rage, he trashes everything only to have the furniture come alive and take revenge. In the ensuing battle, a squirrel is hurt. This elicits an empathic response from the boy, enabling him to calm down and call for his mother. The libretto for this opera / ballet, by Colette, the writer, attracted the attention of Melanie Klein (1929), the psychoanalyst, who remarked on its insight into childhood experience. For Klein, the story symbolizes how a little boy’s anxiety about his Oedipal feelings for his mother and father can be transformed into object love (Klein 1929, pp. 84-90). The recent successes of the film of Sendak’s story (Metacritic 2009; Rotten Tomatoes 2009) and of the revival of Colette and Ravel’s collaboration (Maddocks 2012) suggest that, through the arts, we may be re-discovering ways to acknowledge the emotional life of children. However, it would appear that pre-verbal infants are still waiting to be recognized.

The first step in the literature search was for published plays and performances that explored the infant / parent relationship and where the pre-verbal baby was given a voice. While *The Play about the Baby*, by American playwright, Edward Albee (2004) has a promising title, we find that the baby, who disappears soon after birth, exists merely as a concept, a symbol of stolen innocence. As in his earlier work, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Albee 1965), the baby, or the idea of a baby, is used as a dramatic device to drive the action between the sometimes primitive behaviour of the adults. The older couple in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* play ugly games, inventing elaborate stories about a son they never had, while the younger couple reveal a phantom pregnancy. The mutually destructive behaviour of both couples does not allow a real baby to be created, much less have a voice, perhaps because Albee is not so much interested in the actual baby but in questions of reality and illusion, a subject also taken up later in this thesis. However, unlike Albee’s *The Play about the Baby*, which has the older couple removing the baby and then persuading the younger couple ‘that there never was such a thing’ (Brantley 2001), the fictional baby in ‘There is no such thing as a baby’ – the artefact of this thesis – is the central character whose persistent presence provides hope. Albee’s play ‘takes place in an
allegorical ether in which innocence collides with experience, and irrevocable
damage is done’ (Brantley 2001); my play presents a metaphorical dream
where there is no such thing as innocence, we learn from experience, and
damage can be repaired.

The baby figures as little more than shock value in Blasted, by the English
author, Sarah Kane (1996), and, unlike the other characters, never feels real.
The baby, who has no gender and no name, is not introduced until the final
scene. In the midst of a brutal war, the baby is apparently rescued by naïve but
resourceful young Cate, who takes it to a bombed hotel room, formerly the site
of her failed seduction by the chauvinistic journalist, Ian. The baby is hungry,
cries, dies, and is buried, in quick succession. Raped and blinded, the starving
Ian digs up the baby and eats it when Cate leaves the room. In Kane’s play the
baby has no voice but is exploited as a symbol of the meaninglessness of war,
and perhaps of life.

The un-wanted baby in Saved, by the English playwright Edward Bond (1966)
is also scripted into a life of neglect and violence. Pam is impregnated by Fred
who does not love her. Neither of them is interested in the resulting baby and,
although Pam and the baby live with her parents and Len, the lodger, who holds
a hopeless torch for Pam’s affection, no one assumes responsibility for the
baby’s welfare. However, unlike Albee’s and Kane’s babies, this nameless baby
girl is no mere symbol. Her insistent crying – simply written as stage directions
and frequently acknowledged by the other characters – gives her such a strong
presence in the mind of the reader that her shocking death, at the hands of her
father, forces one to put the book down. Small wonder that audience members
walked out of performances, unable to face the inhumanity and unwilling to
acknowledge their part in it (Costa 2011). This powerful play shows what can
happen when a baby is treated as an object.

Considerably less emotional impact can be found in The Education of Skinny
Spew by another English playwright, Howard Brenton (1980), a play that reads
like a cautionary tale and features a talking baby boy that only a mother could
love. His aggressive language and oppositional attitude begin even before birth

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9 Kane took her own life three years later (Ravenhill 1999).
and, while he appears to wield considerable power, his disagreeable character is a one-dimensional caricature of a baby that not even crying and birth noises – written as stage directions – can bring to life. Equally lifeless are the fifteen babies who star in Babies the Musical (Jones 1986) who, from birth to two weeks of age ‘talk, dance, and sing about their hopes, dreams, pre-natal experiences, families, and just about anything that pops into their new, little heads’ (n.p.). These saccharine babies are not only acted by adults, they also present an adult perspective, and when the newborn sings: ‘Here I am, a blank sheet of paper’, we can be sure that the song-writer was not acquainted with the latest infant research. Like Albee’s plays but with less spite, another musical, Baby (Pearson 1983), is not about an actual baby, but the yearning for one, where three very different couples explore their feelings about expecting a baby. Here, the focus is on the parents and, once again, we see the baby reduced to an object – albeit an imagined one – unseen and unheard.

However, examples of thoughtful, dramatic representations of children do exist. The seven year-old boy in the play, Kid’s stuff (Cousse 1984), speaks in the first person with his own clear, delightfully insightful voice about the sometimes confusing adult world he inhabits. The child as subject can also be seen in That Night Follows Day (Etchells 2007), a piece of theatre that gives children a powerful, literal voice by having them recite, in unison, a litany of adults’ rules and admonishments, thus reflecting the structures and constraints of adult-centred life. Children, played by voiced puppets, also have the main roles in Africa (My Darling Patricia 2011), a gut-wrenching representation of the emotional states of young children at risk of neglect and abuse. Notwithstanding the emotional power of these works, none of them represent the pre-verbal infant whose fragile inner world provides different challenges and opportunities for artists, poets, and writers.

Representative performance works like parent-friendly Keith, the digital baby (Walsh & Thomasson 2003), or the technically engineered and musically, but not emotionally, interactive BABYLOVE (Cheang 2005), encourage us to question a world where babies are treated like clones or objects that can be controlled by adults. In her sobering Post-Partum Document, Kelly (1983) employs Freud and feminism to understand her relationship with her baby son.
Here the relationship itself is the data but, in the midst of it, when Kelly struggles as a mother, she becomes the subject, losing sight of the baby, who emerges from the work as an object, not a person. Similarly, the highly stylized Melbourne performance of *The Walls* (Ferla 2012), exposing the father’s jealousy of the mother’s obsession with their baby boy, has father as the subject. The exaggerated, almost ballet-like movements, and the exuberant word play that verges on babble, cleverly accentuate the parents’ immaturity, and show hints of their own baby selves. However, the tightly swaddled, barely visible, and silent baby – represented as a doll – is simply a mechanism, a catalyst for the father’s drama, and not a character in his own right.

The infants find a place to take control in *Oogly Boogly* (2005), an interactive live performance which encourages children of 12-18 months to initiate play, with the actors following their lead. Interactivity is also the theme for *How High The Sky*, a production of the Australian group, Polyglot Theatre (2012), designed for very young, not-yet-walking babies. Immersed in a sound and light show of changing moods where intuitive, sensitive actors facilitate dream-like images, each baby has a unique experience and responds in a unique way. The performance gives babies’ adult carers and a small audience a rare opportunity ‘to absorb image with as open a mind as a baby’ (Polyglot Theatre 2013). The experience for the audience can be compared to that of a one hour infant observation but, with ten infants to observe, one’s attention is necessarily divided. *Oogly Boogly* and *How High The Sky* manage to involve live babies in a playful, sensory-filled experience that is for the babies, rather than about them. It is as if the interactive focus of these two productions recognizes the importance of live relationships for infants while also preparing them for a theatre of the future where the line between audience and performers is invisible or blurred, a theme we return to in later chapters.

There are rare occasions where we see the infant as the subject, speaking in the first person. Significant examples include the poem, *Infant Sorrow*, by the English poet and artist, William Blake (1794), where the newborn baby reflects on the trauma of birth and makes the sensible decision to take shelter at mother’s breast, and the controversial cartoon by Australian poet and cultural
commentator, Michael Leunig (1995), where the baby in the child-care centre wonders, in a baby-like way, why he is there and not with his mother.

With comparable insight, but lacking Leunig’s whimsy, the Irish writer, Samuel Beckett produces a primitive, plaintive, but insistent voice in much of his work. An in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, but even a single reading out loud of, for example, *Breath, A Piece of Monologue, Not I, or But the Clouds* (Beckett 1986) articulates the pre-verbal infant in Beckett himself and in us all; he is there for us to hear and feel, despite – or perhaps because of – a refusal to admit meaning and his insistence that his writing ‘is a matter of fundamental sounds (no joke intended) made as fully as possible’ (cited in Esslin 1965, p.1).

This thesis proposes to place the baby at the centre, not as cause or effect, but as an active player in the emotionally dynamic relationship with parents and others. Despite considering a wide range of material, the literature review failed to discover a published\(^\text{10}\) play that explores the baby’s experience in this way. One explanation for this may be the widely held view that pre-verbal infants have nothing to say or that the baby’s emotional experience is simply too difficult to stage. It may also have something to do with the primitive feelings that the subject evokes. Indeed, writing the artefact was not easy, as we will see in chapter three. Primitive feelings belong to the work of both psychoanalysis and the theatre, the subject of the next stage of the literature review to which we now turn.

**Psychoanalysis and the theatre**

A search for publications that linked the infant / mother relationship with the theatre / audience relationship discovered a number of fascinating texts that addressed psychoanalysis and the arts, psychotherapy and the theatre, and theories on relationships in the theatre (author / director / actors / audience). Included in this review are publications that share certain characteristics with

\(^{10}\) Worth noting, however, is Fiona McDonald’s unpublished play *Baby Nobody* about a baby born in prison to a single mother. Devised as a teaching tool for child protection workers, it makes liberal use of film of a real baby with a child’s voice-over. It is a powerful reminder that, while numerous changes in care arrangements may serve to keep a baby physically safe they fail to take into account her emotional needs, particularly for attachment, a concept we will look at more closely in the next chapter.
ideas proposed in this thesis, particularly in relation to Winnicott’s understanding of the infant, the importance of the infant’s relationships, how creativity comes about, and where it is located; together, we explore their similarities and clarify their differences in order to illustrate our distinctive stance.

The linking of theatre with psychoanalysis is not new. Freud credits Anna O’s ‘private theatre’ (Breuer 1895, p. 62), the theatre in her mind, as the beginning of psychoanalysis. Not much later Sophocles’ play *Oedipus the King* led Freud to his theory of primitive repression of sexual desire and also prompted him to note that the way the story unfolds ‘with cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement [is like] the work of a psycho-analysis’ (Freud 1900, p. 363). Freud understood that both the poet and the psychoanalyst perform a similar role, ‘compelling us to recognise our own inner minds’ (Freud 1900, p. 265).

In their psychoanalytic interpretations of plays from Euripides to Pinter, Rustin and Rustin (2002) join the Freudian tradition of analysing dramatic works. They point out that theatre and psychoanalysis share a passion for truth but take different routes: theatre via the imagination and psychoanalysis through experience. However the marriage of sociology and psychoanalysis tends to dilute their argument for one or the other and their emphasis on theatre as text fails to fully consider the shared experience of performance, a topic we will explore further in chapter three. Nonetheless their description of catharsis in the theatre as a sort of experiential learning sits comfortably with this thesis whose focus is on the experience of knowing through the experience of relationships.

Like Freud, the psychoanalyst, Joyce McDougall (1986) uses theatre ‘as a metaphor for psychic reality’ (p. 3) in her description of what happens in psychoanalysis. While the theatre makes possible the vicarious living out of ‘our unconscious fantasies [where] we are omnipotent, bisexual, eternally young, and immortal’ (p. 9), McDougall reminds us of ‘another stage’ where ‘life’s Impossibles’ [sic] can be expressed (p. 10). The stage she is referring to is the

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11 More recently, Jacobs and Strangio (Woodhead 2010) not only enacted the story of Anna O but, in performance, uncomfortably surprised the audience by overtly linking their actor/audience relationship with that of the doctor/patient.

12 In this case Freud is referring to Sophocles, but one could potentially include all poets.
intangible space between fantasy and reality that the English paediatrician and psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicott (1971) described as transitional or ‘potential space’ (p. 41), a concept we describe in more detail in the next chapter. McDougall draws on Winnicott’s concepts to elucidate processes occurring in the analytic session by starting with theatre and ending with psychoanalysis. This thesis, on the other hand, starts with a psychoanalytic framework and builds a piece of theatre.

The American psychoanalyst, Simon Grolnick (1984) refers to the psychoanalytic encounter variously as a ‘mini-theatre’ (p. 247), ‘live theatre’ (p. 258) and ‘improvisational theatre’ (p. 260). He makes substantially the same links claimed by parts of this thesis when he approaches myth, theatre and psychoanalytic therapy via Winnicott’s description of play. He describes how psychoanalytic theory is deeply connected to the Greek myths, how with the help of the analyst ‘the patient writes his own story’ (p. 253), and how myth involves ‘the desire to know and not know’ (p. 253). Similarly, the theme of Greek drama, the baby discovering (writing) herself, and the paradox of knowing and not-knowing all figure in both the artefact and the exegesis of this thesis. However, there is an important distinction between the stance taken by the exegesis and what Grolnick calls ‘a structural correspondence’ (p. 258) between the therapist / patient relationship and the actor / audience where both couplings involve ‘some kind of conceptual unity’ (p.258). Grolnick’s appropriation of ideas from the French theatre-maker, Artaud and from Winnicott has a therapeutic motive whereas the exegesis compares and contrasts the theatrical Artaud with the playful Winnicott in order to find a space for the developing baby and the developing play to creatively co-exist. We will return to this in chapter two but for now we can say that the main point of difference between Grolnick’s perspective and the one presented here is that, like McDougall, he is dedicated to ‘the therapeutic situation’ (p. 260) while we are essentially concerned with a creative writing situation. The English psychoanalyst, Jonathan Pedder (1992) makes this distinction:

*The difference between patient and dramatist is that though the products of both spring from unconscious sources, the dramatist also has the
capacity to harness personal inner drama for the benefit of us all (Pedder 1992, p. 264).

Unsurprisingly, Winnicott features in a range of texts concerned with creativity. His description of potential space as the location of cultural experience (1971, pp. 107-110) resonates with those engaged in doing, or in writing about creative work. One such writer is the British psychoanalyst, Kenneth Wright (2009). His psychoanalytic approach to art differs from that of Freud, who tended to look for psychopathology in the artist, and also of the Kleinian psychoanalyst, Hanna Segal (1991), who viewed artistic creation as a way of making reparation. Like this thesis, Wright explores the infant / mother relationship with particular attention to Winnicott’s concept of transitional space and to the idea of maternal attunement, elaborated by the American psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist, Daniel Stern (1985). However Wright’s (2009) conclusion that ‘creativity is based on a lack, and… involves the search…and discovery (or rendering of) the missing experience / pattern within a new medium or form’ (p. 61) betrays his clinical stance, bringing him closer to Freud’s presumption of psychopathology and to Segal’s making amends; it is this perspective that differentiates his work from that of this thesis, which is concerned more with making connections and less with diagnoses.

From the perspective of portraiture and the way an artist gives something form, the British art historian, Michael Podro (2000) also considers the role of symbolization in the artist’s biography and concludes that: ‘The capacity of the painter to give something form…depends on painter and viewer being allowed freedom to make connections for themselves’ (p. 71). This is also true for the theatre writer / director and the reader / audience. Referring to Winnicott’s portrayal of the infant / mother relationship, Podro declines to draw a parallel with that of the painter and viewer; rather he describes a process that the artefact in this thesis – via images created by sounds and words – aims to uphold: ‘in depiction, recognition triggers imagining and imagining sustains itself through the possibilities of the medium’ (p. 72).

A search for Infant Observation as a theme for theatre was fruitless. The growing field of Infant Observation research promotes connections across a number of disciplines (Rhode 2004; Urwin 2012) and, while some written
observations may be favourably compared with the creative style and flourish of Freud’s case histories, it appears that the theatre has yet to engage with the subject.

The French psychoanalyst, André Green may not have much time for Infant Observation as a discipline (Davies 2000) but, in his psychoanalytic reading of tragedy, he addresses a relationship that forms the backbone of this exegesis:

*Is it not that the theatre is the best embodiment of that “other scene”, the unconscious? It is that other scene; it is also a stage whose ‘edge’ materially presents the break, the line of separation, the frontier at which conjunction and disjunction can carry out their tasks between auditorium and stage in the service of representation* (Green 1979, p.1).

The post-modern stage has all but dissolved the separating line, being more concerned with experience than with representation. French clinical psychologist, Jean-Michel Vives (2011) asserts that ‘the real object of theatre is not so much identification and illusion as the experience of the unconscious itself’ (p.1017). The merits of changing conventions in theatre are discussed in later chapters, but where the exegesis takes a particular stand, the artefact does whatever it can to create a feeling, thinking connection between baby and audience.

At the end of the play we will see how the fictional parents come to realize that they must go back; the experience for the audience may be the same as they become aware of the narrative of their baby selves. The enduring relevance of theatre can be seen in this description of narrative by the American academic, Peter Brooks (1984); it manages to evoke both Marcel Proust’s (1913) creative memoir and the psychoanalytic setting:

*Repetition, remembering, re-enactment are ways in which we replay time, so that it may not be lost. We are thus always trying to work back through time to that transcendent home, knowing of course that we cannot. All we can do is subvert or, perhaps better, pervert time: which is what narrative does* (Brooks 1984, p.111).
Yet, the experience is also about going forward. For the Polish dramatist, Slawomir Mrozek (1992), theatre, like a therapist or a good-enough mother, can be a container of hope:

*When we go to the theatre and find out that it is possible to produce something which is well designed and holds together, we begin to believe that there is some purpose in life and that one day we shall be able to put together something equally coherent* (Mrozek 1992, pp. 303-304).

The artefact, set in an uncertain time and place and with characters drawn to the past while dancing in the present, presents the hopeful possibility of a creative future.

Finally, when we consider what Winnicott has to say, we can see how understandings of theatre and psychoanalysis converge in a way that meets both the subject and the method of this thesis:

*We find either that individuals live creatively and feel that life is worth living or else that they cannot live creatively and are doubtful about the value of living. This variable in human beings is directly related to the quality and quantity of environmental provision at the beginning or in the early phases of each baby’s living experience* (Winnicott 1971, p. 71).

To summarize, this chapter’s review of the literature demonstrates that the question posed at the beginning of the project – ‘Can the creative representation of an infant provide insights into the infant experience?’ – has not been fully addressed elsewhere. The dramatic representation of an infant’s emotional world, where the infant is the subject of an infant observation, appears to have no precedent and, while texts that relate psychoanalysis to the theatre – and *vice versa* – are numerous, I have found none that explicitly link the process of writing a play for performance with the emotional development of a baby. Having established the unique focus of my research I now direct attention to its method.

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13 Winnicott (1968) invented the term ‘good-enough mothering’ to avoid idealization of the maternal role.
Methodology

When, after the completion of his theory of dreams, Freud was urged to publish his theories of sexuality, he answered to his urging friend: ‘If the theory of sexuality comes I will listen to it’ (Kris 1952, p. 318).

In order to discover an answer to the research question we need to approach it from two different directions at once. We must create a representation of the infant while we simultaneously think, feel, and write about how we are creating a representation of the infant. This process becomes the artefact and the exegesis, and although the literature makes much of what is often referred to as ‘the artefact / exegesis dichotomy’ (McKenzie 2012), this thesis uses the two different forms of writing to its advantage.

The method is qualitative, play-based and practice-led. What do we mean by this? In this case it means that the desire to write a play about the subjective experience of the baby is the starting point for the research; the play – and its conception – is the art on which the research is based. However it does not mean that the play was written and the research followed. It does mean that researched ideas and unconscious processes merged experientially in both artefact and exegesis. What Bion (1978) called ‘disciplined curiosity’ (p. 23) was, in fact, given wings.

The American writer, Patricia Leavy (c.2009) explicitly links the task of the artist with that of the qualitative researcher and notes that both are ‘ultimately about (re)presenting a set of meanings to an audience’ (p. 11). Yet, there is an important difference: unlike the researcher, the artist does not rely on one set of meanings but delights in the possibility of many; for the artist, the conclusion welcomes argument, is shamelessly open-ended and is available for various interpretations. To accommodate this freedom, indeed to take advantage of it, within a qualitative research framework, Leavy insists that the framework itself must be opened up and extended, to provide access to, and representation of a multiplicity of meanings.

Leavy’s use of the architectural metaphor – framework – reminds me of an exhibition at the Ian Potter Gallery at the University of Melbourne. Entitled ‘Post-Planning’, a term borrowed from urbanism and architecture, it showed works
from artists who ‘seek the intensities that are produced at places of transition, edges, intervals and intersections [and who are] more interested in patterns of thinking and new directions than in finish or conclusion’ (Starr 2012, n.p.). This struck me as an excellent description of the process of writing my thesis, research that crosses disciplines and explores the interval or space between their edges, a thesis that discovers what it is saying while it is speaking. The following gallery notes reinforced the impression that my practice-led research was a fitting example of post-planning:

*Post-Planning is a method of responding reactively to negotiate structural and conceptual ideas. It’s a contemporary way of working that links forms and concepts, the historical and the new. Post-planning also refers to the unplannable [sic], to upturning preconceptions and a willingness to start something before you know where it finishes* (Starr 2012 n.p.).

The validity of practice-led research has been discussed at length by others (Leavy, c 2009; Smith & Dean, 2009; Colbert, 2009) and to continue the argument would be outside the scope of this thesis. Rather than apologise for its difference I would like to suggest that it has much in common with other research methods. Here I will outline my understanding of how practice-led research, or post-planning, shares the basic values of traditional research, where it differs, why it is the method of choice for this particular project, and how I plan to proceed.

**Practice-led research and traditional research**

All research, be it quantitative, qualitative, or practice-led, starts with a question although the precise question is not always clear (Donley 2012, Kroll 2013). The question has particular interest for the individual researcher; it comes from some part of, or more precisely, some gap in knowledge gained through her / his life experience, perhaps from work already done by, or with others. The question comes from a place of “not knowing”. The desire of the researcher, hence the aim of the research, is to discover something that was not known before. To misquote the Australian writer and academic, Jennifer Webb (2012), the researcher *must be* a fish out of water, choosing as s/he does to leave a
place of relative security in the hope of discovering something new. S/he flaps about desperately and, breathless from alternating excitement and panic, flounders in a state of uncertainty until the conclusion whereupon s/he may find that s/he no longer cares to swim but prefers to fly or even crawl instead. The researcher who is not too afraid, can be compared to the newborn infant ready to discover her world, the audience anticipating a performance, and the author with an open mind and notebook; each enters an uncertain space to risk the transition from not knowing to knowing… something.

It is a risk because not knowing can be an uncomfortable place to find oneself. It is a place we hesitate to visit. For some, the anxiety aroused by not knowing can be unbearable. The ethnologist and psychoanalyst, Georges Devereux (1967) believed that it is often the case that research designed to investigate reality is actually an elaborate attempt to avoid it. The research method can thus (unconsciously) be chosen and used to mitigate that anxiety. This is not the case for practice-led research which acknowledges, even welcomes anxiety, allowing a space to work through and with it. Belonging, as it does, to a new generation of accepted research methodologies (Green 2007), practice-led research can appear naïve and child-like in its transparent openness and eagerness to explore in all directions at once. It allows the researcher to play with ideas, to learn from experience, and to build on each stage of that experience. Unlike the research described by Devereux, there is nowhere to hide. The practice-led method insists on the subjective, reflective, and sometimes anxious self being front and centre. It is, therefore, ideally suited to provide the methodological scaffolding for a thesis concerned with the experiential learning inherent in the writing of a play whose theme and subject is the developing baby’s emotional world. On this scaffold one can safely lose one’s head – the rational mind – and allow ideas to find their way in.

The method can be found in psychoanalysis and relies on a capacity for free association, a process described by Freud (1925, pp. 24-26) where thoughts are freely voiced and flow uncensored, where one can say whatever comes into one’s mind. For Freud’s ‘scientific examination of the human mind [free association was] a fresh instrument’ (Strachey 1962, p. 18); for the psychoanalyst, Christopher Bollas (2009) free association is ‘a form of personal
creativity’ (p. 40). The method of this thesis acknowledges the truth of both definitions. Freud made interpretations for his patients but the psychoanalyst, Marion Milner (Field 1986) explains how the individual can gain insight by paying attention to her/think: ‘I catch the disturbing thought and have a look at it’ (p. 145) and suggests that this is also the work of artists. However, while words may come freely, making sense of them is another matter. The interpretation, the insight, and the work of art must find the essence of the free association and give it form. Winnicott (1967b) understood that this work is not superficial and cannot be rushed: ‘one knows that one has to wait for material that comes from a deeper layer before using the material as a communication from the unconscious’ (p. 202).

Keeping in mind Winnicott’s cautionary footnote ensured the patient writing, reading and re-visiting of all my working journals containing free associations, references, quotations, questions, ideas, plans and sketches that inform this research. This method, as we will see again in chapter three, gave time for the artefact to develop a life of its own.

Like the Italian dramatist, Luigi Pirandello’s (1979) *Six characters in search of an author*, Bion (1983b) hypothesizes thoughts in search of a thinker (pp. 84-86), a suggestion that Bollas (1987) takes up to offer this explanation of the writing process:

*I often find that although I am working on an idea without knowing exactly what it is I think, I am engaged in thinking an idea struggling to have me think it* (Bollas 1987, p.10).

This might account for the frequent appearance of the word ‘struggle’ in my working notes and reflections. At the time, I thought I was struggling with thoughts and ideas but perhaps they were struggling with me.

So, here is where the methodology sits – in the exhilarating yet frightening depths of not knowing. Having made a case for not knowing, how do we now explain it, describe it, and write it, without pinning it down? This paradox must be addressed but perhaps not solved completely. For this task, we refer to three

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14 Joanna Field was the pseudonym Marion Milner used in this publication.
disciplines that lend themselves to not knowing: psychoanalysis, poetry, and theatre.

**Psychoanalysis**

Uncertainty, anxiety, and tolerating both are the work – and the art – of the psychoanalyst. To illustrate his point that the analyst must approach the work without ‘memory or desire’, Bion (1983a) quotes the poet, Keats: ‘a Man of Achievement [is one who] is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason’ (p. 125). Bion (1983b) understood the analytic task to be in tune with the concept of *reverie* [sic], the psychological function of the mother that he describes as a ‘state of mind which is open to the reception…of the infant’s projective identifications’ (p. 36). Klein (1946) first used the term projective identification to describe what happens when the infant unconsciously projects the split good and bad parts of herself into the mother. Australian psychoanalysts, Joan and Neville Symington (1996) refer to Bion’s *reverie* and Freud’s *free-floating attention* as a ‘state of relaxation…which best disposes the mind to make that transition from sensual to mental’ (p. 168) that is, from emotional experience to understanding.

Similarly, Winnicott (1956) described a state he called ‘*Primary Maternal Preoccupation*’ (p. 302), where the mother unconsciously creates a special place in her mind for herself and her baby, a place where feelings can be safely accommodated. Later, Winnicott (1971) postulated a transitional space between mother and baby where the mother does not impose herself but allows the baby to create her own reality. He argued that our experience as babies and the quality of our early relationships inform our capacity to not only bear, but to creatively explore the uncertainty of not knowing.

In developing his concept of potential space, Winnicott (1971) also discussed the importance of play. Klein saw the play that children engaged in during a consultation as a useful therapeutic tool, but Winnicott makes *playing* the focus of his work, a shared communication between baby and mother or patient and analyst. It is this definition of *playing* that finds a parallel in the theatre, in the writing for theatre, and in the writing of the artefact and exegesis for this thesis.
As we turn now to poetry, it is worth considering the American academic, Brooks’ (1994) assertion that

...the best – and perhaps the only – model for the use of the psychoanalytic model in literary study is the model of metaphor [because it] can function as a tool for both comprehension and discovery (Brooks 1994, p. 43, author’s emphasis).

Playing with words helps us to find metaphors that awaken meaning.

**Poetry**

Other artists and writers use a range of metaphors to describe their capacity for tolerating not knowing what might happen as they work on their craft. The French-American sculptor, Louise Bourgeois (1954) experiences her art-making as a battle between the artist doing ‘what he can [and] what he wants to do’ (p. 66), while for the poet, T.S. Eliot (1975) poetry is somewhat sacrificial:

...you have to give yourself up, and then recover yourself, and the third moment is having something to say, before you have wholly forgotten both surrender and recovery. Of course the self recovered is never the same as the self before it was given (Eliot 1975, p. 13).

For the French writer, Marguerite Duras (1990), writing is just waiting to be re-discovered. It is ‘a matter of deciphering something already there, something you’ve already done in the sleep of your life, in its organic rumination, unbeknown to you’ (pp. 25-26), whereas the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda (2010) believes that it was the words that chose him:

![Poetry]

Y fue a esa edad…

Llegó la poesia

A buscarme. No sé, no sé de donde

Salió, de invierno o rio…

...allí estaba sin rostro

Y me tocaba

And it was at that time… poetry arrived
To look for me. I do not know, I do not know from where
It came, from winter or river…
...there it was without a face
And touched me (Neruda 2010, p. 384, my translation).

Poetry is a form of communication particularly suited to babies who, for a time, live precariously on the edge of uncertainty. From the beginning, babies rely on the ‘poetic texture of the mother’s speech’ (Miall & Dissanayake 2003, p. 337) to communicate and engage in attachment behaviour; we could say that babies need poetry to survive. According to the American psychoanalyst, Donald Meltzer (1986), they may also need theatre. Based on findings from both infant observation and clinical practice, Meltzer has proposed that, for infants, the ‘Theatre of the Mouth’ is where meaning is generated—a place to explore the shape and nature of objects, food and words.

**Theatre**

Theatre can be understood as another form of poetry, a way to play with words, or food and objects, discover metaphor, and communicate meaning, albeit in a performative and public setting. The perspective of American academic and dramatist, Bert O. States (1985) is inward: ‘Theatre is the one place where society collects in order to look in upon itself as a third-person other’ (p. 39), while the experimental theatre maker, Chris Goode (2007) is looking forward: ‘Theatre, at its most radically distinctive, is the place where people gather together to invent their future’ (p. 93).

As we will see, there is truth in both views.

Paraphrasing Aristotle, whose *Poetics* (c 335 BC) discusses the possibilities of poetry and theatre, the cognitive psychologist, Keith Oatley (2011) reminds us that ‘fiction and poetry are not false; they are about what could happen’ (p. 7). The French theatre director, Antoine Artaud (1964) predicts their unlimited potential but believes that theatre needs more than words:

*Il n’est pas absolument prouvé que le langage des mots soit le meilleur possible. Et il semble que sur la scène qui est avant tout un espace à remplir et un endroit où il se passe quelque chose, le langage des mots...*
As we will see in chapter four, Artaud was ahead of his time in wanting theatre to bypass thinking and to communicate an experience directly with the audience. The problem is: when the possibilities are endless, so too is uncertainty.

In a brave but doomed attempt to remove uncertainty altogether, the Italian philosopher, Giulio Camillo (1554) imagined and commenced work on a ‘theatre of memory’, an auditorium that would admit only two people and which contained a connected system of images or memory places which allowed the spectator to see and understand the whole universe. The English historian, Frances Yates (1966), rather disparagingly, likens it to ‘an ornamental filing cabinet’ (p. 145) but Camillo himself believed it would represent ‘all that the mind can conceive and all that is hidden in the soul’ (Yates 1966, p. 158). By calling his vision of inter-connected images a theatre, Camillo underscores the role of relationship in theatre, and by linking theatre to memory his ambitious scheme has something in common with the artefact and with psychoanalytic concepts in the exegesis.

Yet uncertainty in the theatre is inherent in its relationships. What will the director and actors think of the script, what will they do with it, and how will the audience experience it? No one, especially the writer, can be sure of anything, with each performance enacting a new experience. When the experience goes well, we might liken it to a parallel process.

**Parallel process**

One way to understand the methodology for this practice-led research is to consider it in the context of parallel process as described by the organizational
behaviour academics, Smith et al. (2000). Observing and working with group dynamics in organizations, they define parallel processes this way:

*when two or more human systems interact, the suppressed or too-hard-to-handle conflicts and emotions which belong in one setting may get enacted in a secondary location, enabling a release of the displaced dynamics which were too complex or too volatile to be expressed at their point of origin* (Smith et al. 2000, p. 8).

This process, if recognized, allowed, and worked with, can be beneficial for some and useful for others, rather like what happens in the transference situation in psychoanalysis. Transference has been described by the British psychoanalyst, Charles Rycroft (1968), as ‘the process by which a patient displaces on to his analyst feelings or ideas etc [sic] which derive from previous figures in his life’ (p. 168), a process which can, if understood and interpreted by the analyst, be therapeutic. It is reminiscent of the baby / mother dynamic where the mother manages the baby’s unbearable feelings, a dynamic we explore in more detail in the next chapter.

American psychoanalysts, Alan Grey and John Fiscalini (1987) take the idea of parallel process even further, stating that it is ‘a chain reaction that may occur in any interconnected series of interpersonal situations that are structurally and dynamically similar in significant respects’ (p. 131).

There are a number of interconnections of human systems – or interpersonal situations – involved in the thesis with the potential for displaced dynamics at several levels. The play explores the baby’s experience and links it with that of the parents; at the same time it purposefully creates an emotional connection between the baby and the reader / audience. In performance there is a dynamic between the audience and the drama on stage providing both with an emotional charge that resonates; this is evident, for example, in some types of comedy where the laughing audience encourages the antics of the players, which encourages more laughter and so on. The English theatre director, Peter Brook (1972) insists that the audience can affect actors ‘by the quality of its attention’ (pp. 27-28), a quality that the observer brings to the infant observation and one that the audience / observer brings to the play.
Psychoanalyst and patient, theatre and audience, mother and baby, writer and words, all deal with chaotic and potentially destructive or creative, displaced emotions. The patient relies on the analyst, the audience on the actors, the baby on the mother and others, and the words on the writer as someone who can think about and describe what is happening, to help them find meaning for themselves. The exegesis’ task is to make sense of these interconnections and thoughtfully hold them together. In this way, as the Australian artist and academic, Barbara Bolt (2006) suggests, the exegesis can ‘do the work of art’ (p.13).

We will now describe some of this work.

**Making the baby**

The French feminist writer, Hélène Cixous (2004) reminds us that ‘the subject commands the form… without which this subject cannot be materialised on stage’ (p. 18). What was the right form for the baby subject? It was important to avoid idealization and sentimentality but essential to portray the baby as having agency, to be able to communicate with her parents and with the audience. To be seen and heard as a person she needed a voice and she needed a human body. A doll, even a life-like talking one, would not do; it had to be a living, breathing, feeling human.

Playwright and theatre historian during the reign of Queen Victoria, Thomas Edgar Pemberton warned:

> Babies are always dangerous elements in plays, and are far more likely to provoke laughter than sympathy from the curiously mixed audiences that will always be found within the walls of a theatre. If they are ‘real live’ babies, they are (poor little things) apt to cry at the wrong moments; if they are dolls, they are absurdities (Varty 2005, p.218).

Nevertheless it was the Victorian age that saw a baby’s cry become the first sound recording to be used in the theatre (Booth 1991, p. 93), a precedent the artefact of this thesis gratefully acknowledges. However, in the artefact, the liberal use of a variety of recorded baby sounds was not enough to give the fictional baby a voice. How could she speak in a way that was authentic and
distinctive yet pre-verbal? An answer arrived in the Special Reading Room at Melbourne University’s Baillieu Library:

Pens are forbidden but the kind woman at the desk gives me a pencil. I feel like a little girl starting school, not old enough to write in ink. I begin to read The Collected Prose of T.S. Eliot. My pencil fills page after page with ideas, quotations and questions. I don’t want it to stop – this feeling of being in a special place, taking in these special words that resonate so - but my time is up and my pencil blunt. I return the book, reluctantly (Journal entry, October 2010).

T.S. Eliot (1975) declared a preference for an illiterate audience for his poetry, presumably because they would feel the poem directly rather than try to understand it as an intellectual riddle. We wonder what a baby might make of his work. Rhythms, repetitions, musicality¹⁵, playing with sounds and the communication of feeling all belong to the repertoire of both poetry and the developing infant. Detailed analysis of infant vocalizations also found that

…the ability to respond to poetic features of language is present as early as the first few weeks of life and that this ability attunes cognitive and affective capacities in ways that provide a foundation for the skills at work in later aesthetic production and response (Miall & Dissanayake 2003, p. 337).

An idea was taking shape: a fictional baby who could speak with a poetic voice. If the work of poetry ‘is the clarification and magnification of being’ (Hirshfield 1997, p. vii), a poetic voice would allow the baby to be created and discovered; it would give her a form. A collection of works – Poèmes à jouer / Poems for playing (my translation) – by the French poet and playwright, Jean Tardieu (1969), provides a reminder of the way poetry and theatre have grown up together, siblings under the same roof. Tardieu’s pieces are written for the theatre, with precise stage directions, but the words leap and play with sounds and metaphor like poetry’s children.

¹⁵ Papoušek et al. (1986) made acoustic measurements of the vocalisations in 2 month old infants during interactions with their mothers. They found that the greatest pleasure was G-G sharp, slight pleasure was E flat, slight displeasure was B flat, and greatest displeasure was B flat –B (p.110).
With the knowledge that ‘poetry is a primal impulse within us all’ (Fry 2005, p. xi) and permission to ‘experiment as one can’ (Eliot 1975, p. 94), I took the advice of the Australian poet, Chris Wallace-Crabbe (2011), and started ‘mucking about’. This advice arrived in the form of an address to post-graduate writers of poetry at the University of Melbourne. When Wallace-Crabbe went on to describe the stanza as ‘a womb with the words squeezed up tight’ and to observe that ‘poetry is always playing out a dialogue’, it became clear that, in this play, a poetic voice was just what the baby needed. It was now up to me to remember, that, like a baby’s cry, ‘the force of feeling has to meet the sound’ (Wallace-Crabbe 2011).

Having found a form for the baby’s voice what about the rest of her? Child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Bertrand Cramer (1992) noted that babies talk with their bodies using a vocabulary of ‘facial expressions, voice inflections, and gestures, of moving closer and moving away’ (p. 65). The great French theatre teacher, Jacques Lecoq (2001), also recognized the importance of the body as a means of communication. His students were instructed to start with silent psychological play, where they did exercises that ‘develop the receptive and expressive potential of the human body [before they could learn] the language of gestures’ (p. 14), putting them in a similar position to the infant. Lecoq believed that ‘action mime shows us that everything a person does in their life can be reduced to two essential actions: ‘to pull [and] to push’ (p. 79). He then linked these actions to emotions: ‘I love, I pull. I hate, I push’ (p. 83). If we follow this image we might remember embarrassing ballroom-dancing lessons at high school, or perhaps we think of the tango and the raw, rough passions that conceived it; then again, we might imagine the fractious baby at the breast, both wanting and fearing it, struggling with feelings of love and hate (Klein & Riviere 1964).

The dancer and choreographer, Pina Bausch was also interested in the language of the body. Following the tradition of German Expressionism she explored subjective experience to reveal the inner world of characters and their relationships. Her Tanztheater ‘brings together dance and theatrical energies to give us moments in which we are pulled beyond the surface of the movement and enter into the raw emotion underneath’ (Climenhaga 2010, p. 16). When
Bausch was young she loved to dance because, as she explains: ‘I was too scared to speak. When I was moving I could feel’ (Lawson 2000, p. 18). This sounds a lot like the baby’s experience.

We know that newborn babies prefer human sounds above all others (Cairns & Butterfield 1975) and that they take more notice of a female than of a male voice (Eisenberg 1976). Close analysis of video recordings of babies with their mothers shows us that, from birth, babies move their bodies to synchronize with the rhythm of the mother’s voice (Condon & Sander 1975). The mother responds, unconsciously, adapting her speech to the baby’s movements which respond in turn to her speech. The rhythmic quality of interactions between baby and mother have been demonstrated by others (Brazelton et al. 1974; Papousek et al. 1986) with some (Cramer 1992; Stern 1977) describing them as a dance.

An experience of the visceral, emotional power of contemporary dance confirmed the place of dance in the artefact:

I am at The Arts Centre in Melbourne to see the Nederland Dans Theater with my sister, an erstwhile dancer. She has left her nearly one year-old baby at home with her husband. Before the show we talk about the difficult feelings of babies and mothers. The dance begins. We are transfixed and deeply affected. It is as if we are linked to the stage by a sensory thread. At times my body jerks involuntarily, my stomach lurches, I gasp, feel anxious, smile, cry, wonder what is happening and then stop thinking and return to feeling. My sister is in tears (Journal entry, July 2011).

The baby’s form was emerging. I could now see how the fictional baby in the play might use her body, through mime and dance, to explore her world and communicate with others. However, the question of what form the play would take had still to be addressed. We have discovered, and re-discover at every stage of this project, that allowing space to think allows ideas to come. As is often the case, the answers to questions arrive via several different routes. In this case, it started with a film by the French director, François Ozon (2010): *Ricky*, the flying baby. Despite the film’s realistic setting the wings that gradually
appeared on the baby’s back created a sinister sense of another, surrealistic world. What did it mean? Was it a mother’s fantasy that her baby is so special that he has wings, like an angel, or was it that caring for a baby was too hard and she wished he would fly away? Perhaps it was the baby’s fantasy that he could flee a difficult family. A dream of the mother’s or baby’s making, or both? The film allows the audience to imagine any number of meanings.

Freud (1900) showed us that dreams are filled with meaning and that the meaning is uniquely significant to the individual dreamer. In psychoanalysis, dream work consists of disentangling the content of the dream from the thoughts that we associate with the dream, that is, the meaning of the dream is not always immediately obvious to us; we need a space to think about it or to have someone help us to find that space.

Bollas (1992) takes this idea and develops it to argue that we dream ourselves into being:

*the human subject becomes the dream work of his own life*…*In the dream I am simultaneously an actor inside a drama and an offstage absence directing the logic of events* (Bollas 1992, p. 13).

Here his thinking meets Cixous (2004) who notes that the theatre ‘has a structural complicity with the dream’ (p. 7) where the audience finds its own meaning. Dreams and the creative arts link images with feelings; a baby does this too. The form of the play had presented itself. We are ready to dream.

**Naming the baby**

She appeared at the beginning of this project in Leipzig in the Museum der bildenden Künste / Museum of Fine Arts. This ultra-modern building in a very old city boasts an art collection as exciting as it is eclectic: contemporary installations play alongside – or tease? – old masters, allowing – or requiring? – the viewer to experience both together and to wonder about their connection. This unexpected juxtaposition inside the museum seems to mimic the outside streetscapes where medieval architecture sits cheek-by-jowl with high-rise modernity, proving that lively minds can accommodate both.

I was in Leipzig for an international conference on Infant Mental Health. Many of the papers were concerned with the often difficult task of experiencing two
distinct, but connected entities: babies and their parents. How do we keep them both in mind? How can we find ways to work with – and think about – them individually and together? These questions seemed to me to be at the heart of the conference. It later struck me that this was not unlike the work of my thesis: to have artefact and exegesis in meaningful relationship.

One of the paintings that caught my eye in the Museum der bildenden Künste featured Iphigenia, drawing me to explore her many incarnations. The Greek myths offer us exaggerated, often violent and bloody, yet beautifully poetic universal truths. I saw how I could use the myth of Iphigenia, the unhappy daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, for my own purposes: to show that families are complicated, problems can continue from one generation to the next, children are deeply affected by unconscious dynamics with and between their parents, and most significantly, a child can be “sacrificed” to the needs of her parents.

While early myth has Iphigenia sacrificially slain by Agamemnon to appease the goddess Artemis and so allow the ships to sail to Troy to rescue – or reclaim – Helen, the story has inspired many others. Perhaps the best known are Iphigenia at Aulis (Euripides 410 BC) where, at the eleventh hour, Iphigenia is miraculously saved by the gods, and Iphigenia at Tauris (Euripides 414-412 BC), where she recognizes and rescues her brother Orestes in the nick of time. Iphigénie, the version by French writer, Jean Racine (1674), emphasized life’s uncertainties while the telling of Iphigenia auf Tauris by the German writer, Johann Wofgang von Goethe (1787), was more concerned with man’s struggle for truth. Both themes are particularly relevant to this thesis and while Pina Bausch borrowed Gluck’s sumptuous score to choreograph, Iphigenia in Tauris (Dougill 2002), the artefact is inspired to make use of the overture to Gluck’s Iphigénie en Aulide as background music to the fictional father’s monologue in the last scene of Act One.

The tales of Iphigenia have been told many times, in many guises, and not only in the arts. Boublil (2001), a French neuro-psychiatrist, borrows from the myth to describe a specific psychopathology in circumstances of child abuse where the child remains silent and / or accepts the abuse, thus sacrificing her / himself. The mention of her name evokes both the horror of an innocent subjected to a
terrible wrong and the spiritual beauty of a young woman of substance who, despite her parents and with the help of the gods, survives. This was what was needed for my fictional baby. While my Iphigénie is not a Greek princess, I want the audience to have to sit with that association. There are times where baby Iphigénie feels abandoned, lost, frightened, and wonders where her parents are. There are times when the observing audience wonders if the parents have forgotten the baby, if the baby is at risk of being sacrificed; like the gods, the audience has a role to play.

To summarize, in this chapter I have introduced the concept of infant mental health and explained the role of infant observation in this thesis. A review of the literature has confirmed the original nature of the research and I have described the particular methodology that the thesis employs to bring the emotional world of the infant to life.

The interplay between the artefact and the exegesis provides a unique perspective on both infant development and creative writing. By giving the baby a particular form via poetry and dance, and through the form of a dream, the play allows us to see the baby for what she is: a person, and, by exploring her relationships we can look into the heart of creative writing. It is to these relationships that we now turn.

The play opens with the baby’s insistent heart-beat; it cannot be ignored. Right from the start, without words and in the dark space of the empty stage, the baby is present. In this way, the baby – or an idea of the baby – enters the mind of the audience. As they are soothed, or unnerved, by the constant beat, a relationship begins. The chorus sets the scene in a form borrowed from another story – *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare 1597) – about two children who suffer from their parents’ inability to manage love and hate. The sonnet’s heart-beat rhythm, a meter described as ‘the very breath of English verse’ (Fry 2005, p. 12), announces the living, breathing baby.
CHAPTER TWO: The Players

Theatre is child’s play – Polyglot theatre

In this chapter we relate the baby’s development to the writing of the artefact and exegesis, from the point of view of psychoanalytic theory and neuroscience. We look at what a newborn can do with her senses and at the adult brain research that puts perceptual and emotional processes on an equal footing. We explain the psychoanalytic concepts of attachment, projective identification, and transference and their relevance to the artefact and exegesis. Finally we consider what we mean by play and potential space and describe how we use it.

The subject of this thesis is the baby, a person with the potential to creatively construct her world but, despite her genetic inheritance, readiness to communicate, and hard-working brain, she cannot do this alone. When Winnicott (1960a) made his provocative remark: ‘there is no such thing as an infant’ (fn. p. 39), he was emphasizing the essential nature of the infant’s relationship with her mother at the very beginning of the infant’s life. He wanted to stress that the way in which this dependency is met by the mother, how she communicates with her baby and how she feels, is crucial to the baby’s development. His insistence that, for psychological growth, a baby needs the physical presence of a good-enough mother can be difficult for those who feel unsure of themselves and wonder how much is enough. When problems arise there can be enormous guilt and anger. In an interview for The New Yorker magazine, the French feminist philosopher Elisabeth Badinter complains:

If you’re a mother, you are either too present or too absent; you can’t win. You have to be a Mozart of maternity to reach the right absence-presence balance (Kramer 2011).

When parents feel overwhelmed by their baby’s needs they may, like the cartoonist, Dyson (2012), view the baby as monstrously tyrannical:
What do we do with a crying baby? If we can think about her experience we will try to soothe her perhaps by holding her close, talking to her, changing her nappy or feeding her. We may not always get it right. However if we can think only of our own experience, we might, like the high school student (Kordsmeier 2008) trying to cope with the noisy demands of a simulated baby taken home for a school health project, simply put her in a cupboard. A crying baby is painful to hear because we are reminded of ourselves as crying babies; we recognize the anguish and we feel the pain all over again. We will see the fictional mother in the play, acutely aware of her baby’s cries, responding sometimes as the empathetic adult who remembers the feeling, and sometimes as her desperate baby self, caught up in the feeling. The father in the play does not dare let himself remember, finding safety in facts and technology where he can be in control; at times, it is as if he has put his emotions in the cupboard.

Like most mothers, the mother in the play is struggling with the demands of a baby and the feelings and memories that bubble up to the surface, despite her best intentions. When, in the first act, she says “I need to know” (p. 5), at some level she is aware that she first needs to feel, that the experience of the feeling
of being a mother will help her to know what it is to be a mother, yet the space she finds herself in is a frightening one. Despite all our intellectual sophistication, our defensive clinging to facts and quantitative data, and even our stubborn search for the perfect sentence in a qualitative work such as this, we never grow out of this primitive way of knowing from experience. As the baby learns first from her senses to know her world, we learn to recognize certain truths of our own world by attending to our emotional responses to sensory stimuli. One of the aims of this thesis is to stimulate an emotional response via the artefact, so that the audience can have an experience that promotes new thinking which, in turn, is enhanced via the connections made in the exegesis.

The title of the artefact – There is no such thing as a baby – is clearly borrowed from Winnicott (1960a, p. 39) and yet its meaning remains open to interpretation, as we will see in chapter four. Like Winnicott I wanted to emphasize the importance of the baby / mother relationship but as the writing progressed I found that other relationships also demanded attention. One task of this thesis is to make and share a number of connections that are intellectual, emotional, and ultimately fruitful. In the creative writing of the play we focus on the emotional relationships between baby and mother and father. In the exegesis we describe these relationships and similar psychodynamics between audience and stage. We then widen the lens to consider the relationship between the development of the artefact and the development of the baby, and between artefact and exegesis, to re-enter the shared playground of art and science.

We now look to the science to help us understand what infants can do.

**What capacities do babies have?**

Our understanding of infants and young children has changed considerably since Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1929), the so-called father of the modern study of child development, first presented his observations and theories. Neurological, biological, psychological, and psychoanalytically informed research has led to a dramatic shift in the way we think about babies and their ability to communicate. When a baby is born we no longer imagine her as an
empty space to be filled or a blank slate waiting for something to be written; we now understand that she arrives with inherited genes, her own unique temperament, and a brain that is ready and willing to help her form relationships that will co-author her life. We are also beginning to understand – but not without some resistance – that we can learn from and with her. It is a matter of survival for the baby in the artefact to help her parents and the audience to understand what she is telling us.

Neuroscience

Because of our absolute dependency at birth we are born to find and form relationships; our own biology provides the template (Kostović & Jovanov-Milošević 2006). The American National Centre for infants, toddlers, and families, Zero to Three (2012) explains that, by the time we are ready to enter the world, the neurons (brain cells) in our cerebral cortex (the part of our brain responsible for processing information) are ready and waiting for each synapse (the space between neurons) to form a connection. At their busiest, cerebral cortex neurons network, via their synapses, at a rate of two million connections per second. Neuroscience describes this, rather poetically, as ‘the exuberant period’ (Zero to Three 2012) and notes that different parts of the brain experience this exuberant activity at different times. For example, areas of the cerebral cortex that deal with vision, hearing, and touch achieve maximum synaptic density by the time we are three months old (De Graaf-Peters & Hadders-Algra 2006), a fact which highlights the primary role of these senses.

Sensory perception

A brief look at some of the findings from research into the sensory perception of infants tells us something about their capacity for relationships. Despite having limited sight at birth – 20/150 vision, with a fixed focal length of about 19cm (Dayton et al. 1964) – immediately after birth the infant will turn her head to follow an expressive face. If the face becomes expressionless the infant frowns and looks away (Goren et al. 1975). She can recognize her mother’s face by three weeks of age and that of her father and significant others by four to five weeks (Brazelton & Cramer 1990). By three months of age she can see about
2.5 metres and by six months she appears to have normal, that is 20/20 vision (Dayton et al. 1964).

We saw in chapter one how sensitive infants are to the sound and rhythm of their mother’s voice. They are also quick to identify her smell. At only one week of age they are able to discriminate between the smell of breast pads soaked in their own mother’s milk and those containing the milk of other mothers (MacFarlane 1975). Taste is similarly sensitive, with studies showing changes in sucking patterns between breast and cow’s milk (Johnson & Salisbury 1975) and the ability to recognize a change in the sweetness of a feed after only two sucks (Lipsitt 1977).

The skin, as frontier between inside and outside, is particularly sensitive in the infant who does not yet know the difference. It is the vehicle for touch which is essential for healthy development (Field 2010b). Touch has been described as ‘a message system between caretaker and infant’ (Brazelton & Cramer 1990, p. 61). We see in the play that when the fictional mother calmly pats her upset baby, the baby can settle and sleep. When she gives her breast to the baby, the baby sucks, pauses, sucks, and pauses, all the while with her hand on the breast, perhaps to reassure them both. When the fictional father bounces the baby up and down and makes loud excited noises the baby’s body becomes alert as she makes loud excited noises back, signalling to her father that she is ready to play. Or when baby is upset and father strokes one side of the baby’s mouth, eliciting a hand-to-mouth response, he is telling the baby he is there to help her soothe or control herself.

**Making use of sensory perception**

However babies do not simply use their senses for raw data. They are able to interpret and make use of that data in sophisticated ways. American psychologists, Andrew Meltzoff and Richard Borton (1979) showed that 29 day-old infants were able to visually recognize the shape of the nipple on a pacifier that they had previously only sucked on while blindfolded. This led to further experiments which indicated that infants appear to be born with the capacity to transfer information from one sensory mode to another, ‘to experience a world of perceptual unity’ (Stern 1985, p. 51).
With the realization that babies, like adults, will look longer at something that is surprising or new, researchers began to analyse looking times in order to better understand the pre-verbal infant perspective. Challenging Piaget’s assertion that babies have no sense of object permanence, the American psychologists, Philip Kellman and Elizabeth Spelke (1983) found that three month-old babies have expectations about parts of objects that are hidden from view. Canadian-American psychologist, Karen Wynn (1992, 2000) demonstrated that five month old babies do this very well. They were shown a hand placing a Mickey Mouse doll on an empty stage, then hiding it from view with a screen. This was repeated with another Mickey Mouse doll. When the screen was removed the babies’ responses indicated that they had kept a correct tally of the concealed dolls. This led to the controversial conclusion that infants could do arithmetic (Bloom 2004).

What is not controversial is that babies prefer people to objects. The reason for this is because people are able to interact in a responsive way. This is clearly demonstrated by American paediatrician, T. Berry Brazelton et al. (1974) whose films showed four week-old infants interacting with a toy monkey and separately with their mothers. In the company of the monkey, the infants stared intensely and made jerking limb movements, but with their mothers they made a variety of facial expressions, vocalisations, and smooth movements.

Others have demonstrated the newborn’s ability to mimic human facial expressions. At 2-3 days of age, infants interacting with a person could tell the difference between a smiling, frowning or surprised face and accurately imitate them (Field et al. 1982). The Greek psychologist, Yiannis Kugiumutzakis (1998) showed that some babies less than an hour old were able to imitate his deliberate mouth, tongue and eye movements, and sounds, after Andrew Meltzoff and M. Keith Moore (1994) had demonstrated that a baby of six weeks can remember an imitation and repeat it, unprompted, a day later. Psychologist, Emese Nagy and behavioural scientist, Peter Molnár (1994) found that babies a few hours old imitated a range of expressions as well as head and finger movements. They also found that if one keeps looking at a baby who has already mimicked tongue protrusion, the baby will poke out the tongue again as if prompting a response; their later research shows that changes in the baby’s
heart rate in a session of mimicked tongue protrusion suggest that the baby is also *anticipating* a response (Nagy & Molnár 2004). In the play we see the father, who has done his own research, enthusiastically engaged in this game with baby. However it is difficult for him to recognize when the baby tires of it and, rather like a small child himself, feels rejected when the baby no longer wants to play.

Closely analysed films of babies 7-15 weeks old interacting spontaneously with their mothers showed that

.. *the mother and infant were collaborating in a pattern of more or less alternating, non-overlapping vocalisation, the mother speaking brief sentences and the infant responding with coos and murmurs, together producing a brief joint performance similar to conversation, which I called ‘protoconversation’* (Bateson 1979, p. 65).

Furthermore, infants appear to know when the interaction is not authentic. American psychologist, Ed Tronick et al. (1978) showed that two month-old babies become distressed if their mothers, who had been engaging normally, suddenly put on an unresponsive, expressionless face. Later, English psychologists, Lynne Murray and Colwyn Trevarthen (1985) experimented with mothers and their two to three month-old babies interacting via television screens. In separate rooms, each facing a camera and looking at separate live television images of each other, mother and baby were able to interact quite naturally. However when the infant was shown television images of the mother that, despite being positive and warm, were not live but delayed by 30 seconds – therefore not in step with the infant’s emotions at the time – the infant was greatly disturbed.

Trevarthen concludes that

...*we are born to generate shifting states of self-awareness, to show them to other persons, and to provoke interest and affectionate responses from them. Thus starts a new psychology of the creativity and cooperative knowing and meaning in human communities* (Trevarthen 2010, p.119).
This cooperative knowing and meaning is borne out by American psychologist, Amanda Woodward (1998) who, using the visual habituation technique used by Kellman and Spelke (1983), demonstrates that infants are sensitive to the intentions of others by the age of six months. Yunan Luo (2011), a psychologist at the University of Missouri, takes this one step further to show how pre-verbal infants seem to be able to work out what others will do depending on what the infant knows the others have seen or not seen, that is, infants appear to consider the mental states of others. Towards the end of the play the fictional baby exhibits her ability to do this for her parents.

We have seen what infants can do but what do we know about how they feel?

Emotions and feelings

While there is consensus that infants do express emotion there is less agreement about their feelings and how we might know them. When Charles Darwin (1872) was collecting data for his study of observable emotions he included infants as subjects, because of the unadulterated force of their emotions (p. 7). The fact that he also included ‘the insane’, ‘natives’, works of art, and photographs of an old man whose expressions resulted from him being ‘galvanized’ (pp. 7-10) suggests, as does this thesis, that connections are there to be made between mind and body, science and art, and culture and ethics. Darwin seemed to understand that one’s mental state is connected to how one feels, that the cultural environment plays a part in how, when, and where emotions are expressed, that art can be an expression and a communication of emotion, and that the brain can be electrically stimulated to generate or block emotions, although we wonder if these people consented to their photographs being taken or published. Moreover, despite his care to avoid being ‘biassed [sic] by our imagination’ (p. 9), Darwin’s passion for natural history allowed him to use his imagination to address old questions in a new way. Through careful observation he was able to discover relationships between species, a discovery that changed the way we think about the natural world (Darwin 1859) and provided us with a model for research across all disciplines.

In summarizing Darwin’s descriptions of human basic emotions, Trevarthen (2005) lists fear, anger, surprise, sadness, joy, disgust, ‘and perhaps contempt’
Darwin (1877) closely observed and recorded some of these emotions in his own children but most of his commentary on emotions in infants generally is confined to ‘suffering and weeping’ (Darwin 1872, pp. 111). His detailed description of a crying infant (pp. 111-114) finds a place as stage direction for the baby in the artefact.

The artefact and its dance also borrow another type of feeling - ‘vitality affects’ - defined as ‘elusive qualities… captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as “surging,” “fading away,” “fleeting, “explosive, “crescendo,” “decrescendo,” “bursting,” “drawn out,” and so on (Stern 1985, p. 54). Stern himself describes them as ‘like dance for the adult’ (1985, p. 57). If we add these vitality affects to cross-modal perception and to Darwin’s categorical affects we have a rich repertoire of feeling-movements to choose from when we come to represent the baby in the artefact. The dramatic potential is enhanced when we give the audience the role of infant observer, given that infant observation studies (Miller et al. 1989) reveal that the full range of infant emotional experience can be seen, heard, and felt if one can be receptive to them.

Darwin does not clearly differentiate between emotions and feelings but would undoubtedly approve of the neat definitions offered by the Portuguese-American neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio (2001): Emotions ensure our survival by allowing us to manage potentially dangerous or conversely, promising situations; subjective and public, they can be observed, measured, and defined. Feelings, on the other hand ‘are the mental representation of the physiological changes that characterize emotions [and]… are as amenable to scientific analysis as any other cognitive phenomenon, provided that appropriate methods are used’ (p. 781).

Trevarthen (2005), who is interested in the inter-subjectivity of infants with others, understands emotions as motives, causes of activity not simply reactions to experience (p. 61) but the American psychologist, Michel Lewis (2006) criticizes this perspective pointing out that emotion can have different meanings depending on context, and insists that they are all cognitive processes. Lewis appears to ignore the cross-modal research when he separates emotional expression from emotional state, and emotional state from
emotional experience; he believes that one does not necessarily correspond to the other (p. 444).

Throughout this thesis the terms *feelings* and *emotions* are used interchangeably. In the artefact, the baby’s emotional state is represented as both pro-active and reactive. The main differentiation made is between conscious and unconscious feelings, external and internal worlds.

The observation of emotional expression, with attention to internal states and experiences belongs to the field of Infant Observation. Before investigating these internal states more closely we will have a brief look at another area of infant research and care: *attachment*, where particular attention is paid to the observable emotional interaction between infant and mother. Like Infant Observation, *attachment* is informed by psychoanalysis but, while Infant Observation may include thoughts and feelings about the infant / mother relationship, its purpose is not to measure or assess the quality of interactions. Nevertheless, the audience, in the role of infant observer, may be inclined to draw inferences about the attachment experiences of the parents in the play and their attachment to the baby.

**Attachment**

Darwin’s evolutionary theory paved the way for the study of animal behaviour in the natural environment. Ethology is a discipline that includes the adaptive behaviour of humans and provided English psychologist, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, John Bowlby (1958; 1982) with evidence that infants need an emotionally available attachment figure for their very survival. Films like *Grief: a peril in infancy*, by the Austrian-American psychoanalyst, René Spitz (1947), and *A two year old goes to hospital*, by the English social worker, James Robertson and his wife, Joyce Robertson (1952), powerfully demonstrated the negative effects of maternal deprivation on infants and young children. The emotional impact of these films influenced those working with infants and policy-makers to abandon past practices of excluding parents from children’s wards, giving support to Bowlby’s thesis that an infant’s environment must include the reliable presence of a person (usually, but not necessarily the mother) who can enjoy and maintain a positive emotional relationship with the infant. Here is an
example of an art form – film – used to inform, challenge, and change thinking. This thesis has similar aspirations.

Attachment research, builds on Bowlby’s work to focus on the quality of the early caregiving experience. When American-Canadian developmental psychologist, Mary Ainsworth created an experiment she called ‘The Strange Situation’ (Ainsworth & Bell 1970) she discovered a way to describe and assess attachment. By careful observation of the way in which 12 month-old infants re-united with their mothers or fathers after a brief separation in an unfamiliar testing environment with a stranger, she was able to formulate distinct categories of attachment: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent. Importantly, they also showed that an infant could have a different attachment style with each parent, indicating that an infant’s behaviour in ‘The Strange Situation’ was not due to her temperament but rather, due to her particular relationship with each parent. Some years later, researchers (George, Kaplan, & Main 1985) shed light on why one parent might be more sensitive to the infant than the other when they developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) where parents were asked to talk about their own childhood. They found that those parents who were able to give a coherent story about their early lives were more likely to have securely attached infants while those who generalised, idealised, or censored their story were found to have infants who were avoidant, and those who had strong and confused feelings about their childhood, struggled to give a story that made sense and tended to have infants who were ambivalent in their attachment pattern.

The AAI has become widely used in psychotherapy and has provided a base for further infant-parent research. British psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist, Peter Fonaghy et al. (1991) showed that attachment patterns could be predicted in pregnancy, further evidence that a mother’s capacity to think about her own early experience affects her capacity to sensitively relate to her baby. As we will see, this has implications for the baby’s capacity to think. British psychologist and psychoanalyst, Peter Hobson’s (2004) exploration into the origins of thinking, where he uses his clinical understanding of autistic, blind, or severely

\[\text{Later, Main and Solomon (1986) identified another category they called ‘disorganized attachment’.}\]
deprived children to isolate what is missing in their development, argues that 'the tools of thought are constructed on the basis of an infant's emotional engagement with other people' (p. xiv). He comes to understand that 'creative, flexible and imaginative thinking' (p. xiii) is what constitutes normal human development.

Attachment research continues to yield useful information and to guide policies in health, social work, and law. For example, maternity units now support close contact between mother and baby immediately after birth and for the duration of the post-natal stay, restrictive visiting hours have been abolished in hospitals for children, and single mothers are no longer required to give their babies up for adoption. The recently opened (2011) Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne provides a parent's sofa-bed in every room so that the sick child does not have to be separated from her parent, and some of those hospitals who followed the practice of forced adoption as recently as the mid-1970s have apologised to the mothers and babies concerned (Rosenbaum 2012). While the infant's safety is paramount and must be closely monitored, parents experiencing poor mental health, drug addiction, and other social problems tend to be offered assistance and support rather than face automatic removal of their children. In December 2011, the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health released a set of guidelines\textsuperscript{17} for parents, lawyers and Family Court judges regarding the shared care of infants of separated parents. These guidelines, based on research by McIntosh and Smyth (2012), draw attention to the difficulties experienced by infants when they are separated for long periods, especially overnight, from the parent who is the primary attachment figure. The research clearly demonstrates how disrupted attachment can impede healthy development.

Like Trevarthen and Hobson, the American developmental psychologist, Karlen Lyons-Ruth (2007) views intersubjectivity as an essentially human condition, 'a parameter of human mental functioning that cannot be deactivated' (p. 602). Her research highlights some disturbing long term consequences of disordered

\textsuperscript{17} <http://www.aaimhi.org/inewsfiles/AAIMHI_Guideline_1_-_Infants_and_overnight_care_post_separation_and_divorce.pdf>
attachment (Lyons-Ruth 2003) and, at a 2011 conference\(^{18}\), she presented findings from a longitudinal study indicating that clinically observed maternal withdrawal behaviour towards the infant in the first year of life is associated with an increased risk, for that infant, of self-damaging behaviour and suicidality when the infant reaches his/her 20’s.

As early as 1939 Bowlby was considering how psychological disturbance was linked to early childhood experience (Karen 1998) and although he was influenced by psychoanalytic theory, in particular by Melanie Klein, he rejected her belief that, therapeutically, it was better to concentrate on the troubled child rather than the child’s environment. Perhaps because of his personal experience of a distant mother coupled with the loss of a beloved nanny he insisted that

\[\text{...real-life experiences have a very important effect on development...}\]

\[\text{The notion that internal relationships reflect external relationships was totally missing from [Klein’s] thinking (Karen 1998, p. 46).}\]

We can see here the beginnings of a split that continues to divide opinion today. Can we consider the baby as a person in her own right if we acknowledge that ‘there is no such thing’ (Winnicott 1960a, p. 39), that is, the baby can exist only in relationship? Parents, health professionals, parent-infant researchers, social workers and lawyers still struggle with this dilemma. If it is true that a baby needs a relationship in order to survive and to develop normally, surely it makes sense, as Bowlby maintained, to address the relationship when problems arise. And yet, if it is also true that the rapid rate of infant development puts the ‘at risk’ infant at greater risk if we wait for time-consuming family or social interventions, are we not obliged to work directly with and for the baby? Perhaps Klein’s refusal to include the reality of the infant’s external relationships in her therapeutic work was simply to ensure that she did not lose sight of the actual infant’s internal struggles.

It is to the internal world of the infant that we now turn our attention. Drawing on the work of Freud, Klein and Winnicott we will examine the concepts of

\(^{18}\) ‘When Love Goes Awry’, by K. Lyons-Ruth, keynote speech at the joint Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and Australian Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMH) conference in Perth, Western Australia, 12\(^{th}\)-14\(^{th}\) May, 2011.
Projective identification, transference, play and potential space as they relate to the infant, the theatre and the writing of this thesis.

Projective Identification and Transference

As we have seen the infant has a sophisticated repertoire of communicative capacities that are used to promote relationships. What we cannot see directly are the equally important intra-psychic elements of the developing baby. Klein was the first to take an interest in the infant’s psychic reality and, although some of her ideas may be now considered out-dated, many theoretical aspects of her work continue to promote new thinking (Chodorow 2012; Lemma & Roth 2008).

One aspect adopted by the artefact to represent the baby is Klein’s core concept for understanding how mind and body work together: phantasy\(^{19}\). Klein (1952a) used this concept to describe how the infant gives mental representation to bodily experience right at the beginning of life, that is, the infant creates her reality. Segal (1991) explains that phantasy makes the breast a bodily rather than visual experience. Hunger creates the experience of a persecuting breast while satisfaction idealizes it. Klein (1952b) notes:

> The idealized breast forms the corollary of the persecuting breast; and in so far as idealization is derived from the need to be protected from persecuting objects, it is a method of defence against anxiety (Klein 1952b, p. 64).

British psychoanalyst, Hanna Segal’s example of our language reflecting primitive experience – ‘the wolf… at the door’ (p.20) – is not far from the imagined thoughts of the baby in the artefact, where hunger assumes monstrous proportions, and, when emotional meaning is given to phantasy object relationship, ‘A baby in pain may feel itself as being hated’ (Segal 1991, pp. 20-21). The push and pull of love and hate, choreographed into the baby / mother dance, joins sounds and images to give form to emotional meanings for the fictional baby in the artefact. Ogden (1986), the psychoanalyst, may be correct when he points out that, to get a sense of the infant’s phantasy world,

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\(^{19}\) Ogden (1986) notes that phantasy is used to denote unconscious mental activity while fantasy refers to a more conscious idea; however ‘Non-Kleinian, American analysts have never employed this distinction’ (fn p.12).
‘one must attempt the impossible’ (p. 25) but Artaud (1964), the writer, reminds us that theatre does just that:

*le théâtre est ...un formidable appel de forces qui ramènent l’esprit par l’exemple à la source de ses conflits. / ...theatre is... a powerful appeal to forces that, through representation, take the mind back to the origins of its conflicts* (Artaud 1964, p. 43, my translation).

Klein believed that we are born with two contradictory impulses: love and hate, which represent the life drive and the death drive respectively. The infant’s task is to manage these conflicting drives and, in her relationship with mother\(^\text{20}\), she tempers the death drive either by linking it to the life drive or by getting rid of it altogether. She does this by *splitting* things into good and bad – like the persecuting breast and the idealized breast – getting rid of the bad by *projecting* it into mother and taking in or *introjecting* the good. While Klein believed that the dominant phantasy depended on both the infant’s inherited constitution and actual experience she downplays the mother’s influence, emphasizing that ‘Even the child who has a loving relation with his mother has also unconsciously a terror of being devoured, torn up, and destroyed by her’ (Klein 1963, p. 277).

Ogden (1986) argues that splitting is more than just a defence against anxiety. He understands it is a way of organizing otherwise chaotic experience: ‘pleasure and unpleasure, danger and safety, hunger and satiation, love and hate, me and not-me...’ (p. 47). He offers an expanded view of Klein’s account of *projective identification* (Klein 1946; 1955), describing it as a way for the infant to escape the anxious pull of the life and death instincts ‘to move beyond himself’ (p. 34), to become part of an infant / mother dynamic, a dynamic that, as we will see in the next chapter, finds parallels in the theatre / audience and in the artefact / exegesis relationships:

*In projective identification, the projector induces a feeling state in another that corresponds to a state that the projector had been unable to experience for himself. The object is enlisted in playing a role in an externalized version of the projector’s unconscious psychological state.*

\(^{20}\) Mitchell (1986) explains that the baby’s first relationship is ‘prototypically its mother and her breast’ (p. 19).
When a “recipient” of a projective identification allows the induced state to reside within him without immediately attempting to rid himself of these feelings, the projector-recipient pair can experience that which had been projected in a manner unavailable to the projector alone (Ogden 1986, p. 35).

Splitting, ‘the ancestor of repression’ (Grotstein 1985, p. 9), and projective identification are the processes involved in the adult concept of transference, described by Freud (1905) as what happens when ‘a whole series of psychological experiences are revived, not as belonging to the past, but as applying to the physician at the present moment’ (p. 234). We can see how the concept may also apply to the theatre, the family – especially the fictional family in the artefact – and to creative writing. This idea is not new; anticipating Grey and Fiscalini’s (1987) definition of parallel processes (see Chapter One, p. 32) by some thirty five years, Klein (1952c) notes: ‘In some form or other, transference operates throughout life and influences all human relations’ (p. 48).

It appears then that Bowlby (1958), with his emphasis on the importance of the infant’s environment, and Klein (1963), with her determined focus on the infant’s psyche, did not need to argue; in many ways they were both right. The internal and external worlds’ struggle for supremacy is futile; we need them both. The challenge, taken up by the artefact, is to keep the two in mind. A further challenge, taken up by the thesis as a whole, is to keep the artefact and exegesis creatively in mind. As we shall see in the next chapter, this is no easy task. There is a constant tension while writing: the impulsive play is in a hurry to be written but the conscientious exegesis does not want to be left behind; as each makes demands of the other, the writing of emotions and the writing of thoughts push and pull at each other like squabbling siblings. Relationships might be hard work but Winnicott understood their creative potential.

**Play and Potential Space**

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Winnicott’s ideas about creativity have been adopted by a number of writers. What makes this thesis original is the way some of those ideas are brought together via physical representation in the artefact and by making unfamiliar connections in the exegesis. The central
concept allowing these connections to be formed, experienced, and articulated is potential space, a time / place where feeling and thinking coincide in play (Winnicott 1971).

Winnicott developed his theories from close observation of infants with their mothers. Drawing on his work as a paediatrician and as a psychoanalyst he found a way to think about the infant’s internal and external worlds together; this helped him then to consider the relationship between them, and a need for the concept of ‘an intermediate zone’ (1971, p. 105). This zone is neither internal nor external but a product of our experiences of both, in the context of each person’s unique internal and external environment. The artefact gives this intermediate area a physical space where baby and parents come together to dance and play.

Like Bowlby, Winnicott believes that the baby cannot be seen in isolation; the combined physical and emotional environment that the baby is born into plays a crucial role:

_We find either that individuals live creatively and feel that life is worth living or else they cannot live creatively and are doubtful about the value of living. This variable in human beings is directly related to the quality and quantity of environmental provision at the beginning or in the early phases of each baby’s living experience_ (Winnicott 1971, p.71).

This facilitating environment is called ‘holding’ (Winnicott c 1963, p. 89). At first it is the mother’s body and mind, that is, the physical holding of the foetus _in utero_ together with the feelings the mother already has about the baby as a person. Towards the end of the pregnancy and for some weeks following the birth, the healthy mother closely identifies with her baby to enter a state Winnicott calls ‘Primary Maternal Preoccupation’(1956, p. 302), where she is, literally, not herself and would, at any other time, be considered psychologically unwell. The healthy mother recovers from this state to care for her baby in such a way that then allows the baby to create her world without disintegrating; she holds the baby together and to do this she must ‘find the poet that is in herself in him’ (Davis & Wallbridge 1981, p. 117). As we will see in chapter three, this writer undertakes a similar task.
At times, the fictional baby in the artefact may appear to be falling apart and her mother may have us wondering about her psychological state but we can see in the artefact photographs, that when mother offers the breast, baby has the opportunity to discover the nipple for herself and to play with the sensation of it inside and outside her mouth. These images, projected onto a screen on stage, represent the baby’s actual or imagined experience of feeding; it is as if we are looking inside her mind.

Winnicott (1945) has the infant create the breast, giving her the illusion of omnipotence. This omnipotence, for Winnicott (1962), is not a feeling but ‘an actual experience for the baby when fantasy and reality correspond’ (Davis & Wallbridge 1981, p. 42). There is an overlap between what the mother provides and what the infant desires. This overlap is an intermediate space that belongs neither to the infant nor the mother but is shared by both. The mother has the breast to offer, the baby desires something to assuage the pain of her hunger, and the good-enough mother gives her the breast, allowing her to take it as if she has created it herself, through her desire. From this she has a real experience – a feed of milk – connecting her to an external reality that is imbued with meaning. Winnicott stresses the importance of the reliability of this personal encounter:

*These conditions are repeated time and time again and the baby drinks not from a thing that contains milk, but from a personal possession lent for a moment to a person who knows what to do with it* (Winnicott 1964, pp. 46-47).

Grolnik (1984) points to the etymological link between ‘illusion’ and ‘play’ via the Latin ‘*ludere*’ (p. 255), a link that takes us back to Winnicott’s baby at the breast and forward to the playful illusion of theatre. Like the mother giving her baby the breast, in the theatre, the actors have something to offer the audience and the audience desires something. Theatre, like the ‘playground’ (Winnicott 1971, p. 47) of potential space, provides the potential for a connection, for something to happen and for it to be experienced by the audience as if it were real; the audience is prepared to suspend disbelief, to “play along” with the actors, joining with them in the space they have created together. However, unlike the reality of the milk for the baby, here, the experience is not tangible, yet it evokes
an external reality and, hopefully, some recognition of an internal one as well, with both realities full of meaning.

Like synapses between neurons, potential space allows for a connection to be made. The potential space playground, made safe by the emotional availability of mother, allows both infant and mother to explore who they are and who they might become. The playground of the theatre, made possible by all who produce it, allows actors and audience to have new experiences and perhaps recognize and re-think old ones. The playground of this thesis, supported by the artefact / exegesis structure – and at another level, of course, by the university – allows experimentation to explore what it might become. Experiments are the stuff of science and art.

**Art and science**

Insides and outsides, emotions and feelings, internal and external worlds are of interest to both art and science. Freud may have been more than a little envious of creative writers when he ‘portrayed poets and novelists as inspired nincompoops who had stumbled on psychological truths with no inkling of their value or meaning’ (Kendric 1996, p. 97), while he, as a scientist, had to work hard to find them. The bias towards intellectual knowing and against intuitive knowing is one that this thesis acknowledges and works hard to correct.

The Nobel Prize winning neuroscientist, Eric Kandel (2012a) explains that, during Freud’s time in Vienna, ideas about unconscious mental processes were shared between modernist artists and the Vienna School of Medicine. Kandel's Viennese roots give him a personal connection to this historical link which he uses as the starting point for a brave attempt to show that creativity can be described by brain function. Kandel is a rich source of information on the amazing capacities and functions of our brains. He presents a range of studies suggesting that the prefrontal cortex selectively activates which part of the brain it engages to solve a problem: left hemisphere for working things out or right hemisphere for insight. He concludes from this that problem solving does not start from scratch but, like decision making, 'a pre-existing, unconscious brain state…enables the person to choose either a creative or a methodical strategy' (pp. 474-476). Does this mean we are born either artists or scientists?
Milner, like this thesis, is keen to see both inhabit the same body and mind:

...the poet and artist in us, by their unreason, by their seeing as a unity things which in objective reality are not the same, by their basic capacity for seeing the world in terms of metaphor, do in fact create the world for the scientist in us to be curious about and seek to understand (Milner 1957, p.138).

Like Kandel, Damasio (1999) explains mind and behaviour as biological phenomena and also believes that one day science will provide all the answers. He notes that ‘I will never know your thoughts unless you tell me, and you will never know mine until I tell you’ (p. 309). However, as Freud discovered, we give both verbal and non-verbal clues all the time, and, as Cixous (2004) knows, in the theatre we do not need to wait for words; we can hear all ‘those who are deprived of speech…children, poets, the dead, animals, (and even) thoughts at the back of our mind’ (p. 33).

When asked what attracted him to writing about Viennese Expressionism, Kandel (2012b) replied with poignant honesty: ‘A yearning for a life I’ve never lived’ (p. A8). He was consciously referring to the sadness of having to leave Vienna but unconsciously, he may be expressing a yearning for another way of thinking. There is certainly a strong sense in The Age of Insight (Kandel 2012a) that, like Freud, Kandel envies and admires artistic expression and ways of knowing.

‘Where does all the yearning come from?’ (Bausch 2011). Exploring this question through dance, not science, Bausch uses her Tanztheater as ‘a space where we can meet each other’ (Bausch 2011). The space she refers to is as much emotional as it is physical, and brings us close to the idea of Winnicott’s potential space. While physical space in the theatre, between adults on stage and adults in the audience, is not exactly the same as potential space between a developing baby and her mother, there is something about the shared bodily experience in the theatre space, however large or small that physical space may be, that engenders a similar potential for feeling and thinking to act on each other. Winnicott believed that our experience of potential space as infants is the nursery where our creative energies are formed, the space from which
creative work can emerge. Kandel and Damasio believe that by playing – thinking about and experimenting – with neuroscience they can locate the space. In this thesis, the artefact – the play – represents the space, while the exegesis simultaneously plays there and creates it.

We have seen that synaptic connections occur within each one of us because of our internal and external engagement with the world. This engagement is mediated by mother with whom we form ‘the first relationship’ (Stern 2002), a relationship that sets the scene, writes our role, and directs the action for all future relationships. These relationships, where we learn to play, are with live humans. As children we often develop close relationships with animals or toys who, generally, tolerate our omnipotent fantasies for much longer than do our good parents, while playing an important transitional role in the way we make and discover our reality. Childish imagination and curiosity, if allowed, can grow up to find a home in creative writing; they can also become a life-long quest for connections between things: intellectual connections, invested with personal meaning, which can be described and shared, to give new meaning to others.

In this chapter we have shown that relationships are not only essential for survival, they give life meaning. We can also see that, in the right environment meaningful connections are there to be discovered and made anew. Chapter three describes how we might communicate these connections through writing, theatre, dance, and the baby. As it belongs to the exegesis, its work is to tell how the connections came about. The artefact, on the other hand, plays to show, and is now ready for viewing.

To ensure that the baby is visible, the play’s written text has its own distinctive font, and to emphasize the baby’s pre-verbal state, her lines are in lower case.
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A BABY

A play
CHARACTERS

BABY played by a young female.

WOMAN/MOTHER

MAN/ FATHER

CHORUS may be one voice or more.

FEMALE VOICE OFF

VARIOUS VOICES OFF

SETTING

The set is minimal, designed to appear surreal. It could be anywhere. What is inside and what is outside is unclear. The stage contains three circles: one is the Baby’s space, one is the Mother’s space, and a third, shared, Baby /Mother space just overlaps the other two. The Father moves between them all. He always has a mobile phone or electronic device at hand. In Baby’s space there is a cradle and a window with a blind; the blind is down. At the back of Baby’s space is a screen where images are projected. Baby is lit in such a way that the audience can always see her. In the Mother’s space there is a chair. The Baby / Mother / Father interactions are like a dance.
PROLOGUE

Dark. Silent for 20 seconds followed by 30 seconds of a very soft foetal heartbeat before Chorus starts. Heartbeat continues as background until Act One.

CHORUS: This precious space where we can simply be
allowed to dream the future and the past
creates a line of continuity;
in this dark womb the baby’s die is cast.

The curse of birth breaks up the line. The wound
is soothed by breast, by eyes, by mind, while we
voyeurs conceive how to construe
illusion playing with reality.

As we observe how baby must begin
the dance to mend the fragile line, we may,
perhaps, set free the monsters held within
thus find potential space to think and play.

If you desire to know what this might mean,
Attend, your answer lies inside the dream.
ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Tango music starts quietly but reaches a crescendo. Lights low with Man and Woman upstage, lit as shadows behind a screen. Woman practices steps alone while man looks at his phone, moving his feet.

WOMAN: One…two…

MAN: (Looking at phone) How does this work?

WOMAN: One…

MAN: One what?

WOMAN: One… step… at a time.

MAN: But this says I have to hold you as well… Is that what you want?

WOMAN: What do you want?

MAN: (Looking at Woman) You.

WOMAN: Do you think I’m handsome?

MAN: Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

WOMAN: They say we are a handsome couple, but…

MAN: But what?

WOMAN: I’m not sure…I’m not sure if I know who I am.

MAN: I know who I am.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: Really.

WOMAN: That’s what I hate… or is it what I love about you?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: You’re always so god-damned certain.

MAN: So…?

WOMAN: It’s just…

MAN: What?
WOMAN: I feel uncertain.

Pause

WOMAN: Don’t you see?

MAN: See what?

WOMAN: It’s obvious. If you’re the one who’s certain, I must be the opposite.

MAN: That’s not how I see it.

WOMAN: Of course you don’t.

MAN: I thought you wanted to dance.

WOMAN: You think I’m wrong.

MAN: I didn’t say that.

WOMAN: What did you say then?

MAN: Let’s dance (Looks at phone).

Pause.

WOMAN: I want a baby.

MAN: (Looking at Woman) Is that what this is about?

WOMAN: This what?

MAN: This argument.

WOMAN: It’s not an argument.

Pause. Man looks at phone.

WOMAN: Well?

MAN: What about a puppy?

WOMAN: Why can’t you just say you don’t want one?

MAN: (Looking at woman) Why do you want one?

WOMAN: Because I need to know.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: I just need to know.
MAN: Uh... ok.

WOMAN: So... is that a yes?

MAN: I guess...

Music ends abruptly. Stage fades to dark.

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

Dark. Sound of very loud foetal heart, immediately followed by Mother who groans and grunts and screams.

Bright images flash on the screen at the back of the stage. Voices overlap with birth sounds until baby's first cry.

BABY: stuck!

MOTHER: Fuck!

Pause.

VARIOUS VOICES OFF: Push push push!

MOTHER: Fuck fuck fuck!

Pause

BABY: stuck!

MOTHER: Fuck!

Pause.

BABY: stuck!

MOTHER: Fuck!

Pause.

VARIOUS VOICES OFF: Puuuuuush!

MOTHER: Fuuuuuuck!

Pause.

VARIOUS VOICES OFF: Don’t push!

BABY: (sound of baby's first cry) uuuuuuhckuh...uuuuuhckuh...uuuuuhckuh...
Pause.

Lights up. Shared space.

Mother traces Baby’s body with her hand, counts her fingers and toes, and then holds baby like a precious vase.

Father takes photos.

Baby looks about her.

BABY: ééetant ...

MOTHER: Well now, here you are.

Baby’s arms stretch out as if to hold someone and quickly return to her sides.

BABY: aaattendant ... aaalgo ...

MOTHER: Are we going to like each other?

An image of a baby at the breast is projected on to Baby’s screen.

Baby looks at mother and stretches out one hand which mother clasps in hers.

BABY: mïra, mirror eyes…drink them in...

MOTHER: She’s looking at me!

BABY: ...ééecoutant ...savour the sound…tsuck tsuck...

MOTHER: Look! She’s listening!

Mother and Baby start to dance together, each trying to grasp the others hands. They finally come close to each other as their fingers interlock.

BABY: la voix ....la voie ... tsuck tsuck ...

MOTHER: You’re a good little sucker.

BABY: Soft ... touchant, touche, touchant²¹ ...

MOTHER: You have to help me.

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²¹ Being… Waiting …something…look, mirror eyes…drink them in…listen…savour the sound…tsuck tsuck…the voice…the way …tsuck tsuck….soft …touching, touch, touching…
Mother gently lies Baby down. Baby is alert, looking from one parent to the other. Her arms move outwards as if she is trying to gather something towards her. Her hands make fists and open again. With her right hand she brings the thumb and middle finger together to make an O shape. She holds this position for several seconds, as if she is waiting to conduct an orchestra. Her legs move in a seemingly uncoordinated way – first one leg, then the other, then both kicking up in the air. Mother and Father are looking at her in adoration, like in a Nativity scene.

BABY: (Grasping father’s finger): ah ha!

FATHER: Look at that – she likes me! She’s got a good grip.

MOTHER: I’m glad one of us does. Hold on tight.

FATHER: (In a sing-song voice) How do you do and shake hands, shake hands, shake hands? How do you do and shake hands? Very well, I thank you.

Mother looks amused.

FATHER: (Sheepishly) Nana played that with me when I was little. I’d forgotten ‘til now…Look at this. He sticks his tongue out at Baby. She mimics him.

MOTHER: ‘Nana teach you that too?

FATHER: YouTube.

They do this for a minute before Baby looks away. Father looks disappointed then looks at his phone.

ACT ONE

SCENE 3

Centre circle. Tentative waltz music plays. Baby, Mother, and Father dance together with difficulty, arms linked, slipping missing beats, standing on toes, and almost falling over.

MOTHER: One two…

FATHER: How does this work?

MOTHER: One two…

FATHER: One two…

MOTHER and FATHER: (In unison) One two…
MOTHER: Together...

MOTHER and FATHER: (In unison): One two…

MOTHER: Again...

MOTHER and FATHER: (In unison): One two…

BABY: threeeee…

FATHER: What will we call her?

MOTHER: Iphigénie,

FATHER: Are you sure?

MOTHER: After my grandmother.

FATHER: Not the Greek one…

MOTHER: Yes.

FATHER: But didn’t her father…

MOTHER: We don’t talk about it.

FATHER: But still…

MOTHER: We don’t talk about it.

Father looks as if he is about to argue but stops himself.

MOTHER: I know…my family is a bit weird …

FATHER: A bit?

MOTHER: But my grandmother was special … like our baby.

Pause

FATHER: How do you spell it?

MOTHER: I- p- h- i- g- e (with an accent)- n- i- e (Taps it into his phone).

FATHER: (Looking at phone) Might be hard to say.

MOTHER: I phi gé nie

FATHER: If he jee knee

MOTHER: I phi gé nie,
FATHER : Iffy…she’ll get “stinky” at school…iffy jee… Nah…

MOTHER:  Gigi?

FATHER:  Jee Jee? Sounds like a horse.

MOTHER: Génie!

FATHER: Jenny?

MOTHER: No, Génie.

FATHER: Might have to settle for Genie… Any wishes?

MOTHER: I wish you could say her name properly… and I wish you could dance ...and I wish...

FATHER: Wait! You’d better save the last one. You might need it.

Music stops. Mother lays baby down to sleep in baby’s space, throws knitting from the chair to the floor, and collapses into her chair in her circle. Baby is wrapped tightly in a baby blanket and lies on her back. Her skin is quite pale and she is very still. She could be dead. Father’s phone rings. Her eyelids flutter and her lips move, for a moment, in a sucking motion.

FATHER: (On phone) Yeah… yep… everything’s holding up really well…

MOTHER: (Talking to herself / audience) I don’t know how long I can keep this up...

CHORUS: The silence is bliss/but bothersome too/ breasts ready to burst/ what does she do?

FATHER: …yeah, plenty of milk…

CHORUS: Sad uterus bleeds / body feels battered / urine stings like shards of glass shattered / vulva distended / poor clitoris dead / she used to love sex / well, that’s what she said.

FATHER:…almost back to normal…

CHORUS: Is this what it’s like/when you discover/ that you have become/ another mother?

MOTHER: ...must not make a fuss / I feel like a tin of pineapple… crushed.

FATHER: ...no, no problems at all…
Baby turns her head, yawns and struggles to move but she is bound tightly. Her face frowns, eyes tightly closed, nose contracted, upper lip raised, mouth in a square shape as she starts to cry. Mother comes almost immediately and gathers her up in her arms. Baby stops crying, briefly, then re-commences in earnest while Mother struggles with her bra and tries to make herself comfortable. The audience feels the baby’s discomfort as the crying continues.

BABY: (Crying) vide, vide fill me up! mal, mal, mal, mal, mal! 

CHORUS: Her breasts dribble milk / at the sound of her cry /

MOTHER: (To audience) I don’t want to do this...

CHORUS: They say she must try / Hearing reproaches / she offers her breast / she looks and she sucks /

Mother and baby dance awkwardly together. Hands clasp and unclasp, trying to grab each other and missing, before clasping firm. Waltz music starts again.

MOTHER: ...It feels like a test…

FATHER: …yeah, the feeding’s good…

CHORUS: She takes it all in / her bad and her good /

MOTHER: ...Is it good enough?...

CHORUS: They say that it should be all that she needs / but doubts fill her mind / with slippery speed.

FATHER: …fine, fine, all she does is eat and sleep…

CHORUS: It’s not just the milk / but what’s in her head / fearing the question / so what is she fed?

MOTHER: Dis-in-te-gra-tion begins with a gap / no thoughts in the space / no points on the map...

CHORUS: a terrifying absence of other / complete failure or imperfect mother?

FATHER: Yeah, she seems to be finding her way...

MOTHER: …I’m hopelessly lost / but I need to know

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22 Empty, empty, fill me up...hurts, hurts, hurts, hurts, hurts!
CHORUS: Her own mother knew / said I told you so.

FATHER: …what?...yeah, plenty of dirty nappies… I’ll show him how to change one when he comes over… (Laughs) yeah I’d like to see that too… Thanks Mum … Bye.

MOTHER: Must try harder.

Music stops.

FATHER: Mum says to take it easy. (Noticing audience) What are they doing here?

MOTHER: Observing.

FATHER: Observing what?

MOTHER: The baby. (Music stops. Lies baby down asleep in her circle.)

FATHER: What?

MOTHER: They’re observing the baby.

FATHER: Why?

MOTHER: To feel something… to understand…I don’t know... I’m going to bed.

Mother exits

FATHER: What about dinner?

Baby lies quietly, arms bent alongside her head, fists clenched (as if punching the air in a victory salute). One fist unfurls so that her fingers are splayed open on the sheet. Her head turns to one side and her mouth makes little sucking movements. Her eyelids flutter and her breathing is irregular. Her body gives a little shiver as her right hand moves to her mouth. She mouths her fist as her left hand moves to the left side of her face.

ACT ONE

SCENE 4

Father checks his phone as he moves down stage to talk to the audience. While he is talking rich colours and fireworks are projected onto a screen in the Baby’s space and Gluck’s overture to ‘Iphigénie en Aulide’ plays as the baby moves her arms and hands, turns her head from side to side and breathes fast then slow, lips sucking and smiling in her sleep. Her right hand rests on the soft blanket while her left hand has fingers.
splayed on the sheet beside her head. She jerks and jumps in her sleep from time to time as if dreaming. Mother is asleep in her chair.

FATHER: I guess you’re wondering what’s going to happen. I’m not too sure myself, but don’t tell anyone (Gestures towards mother). She thinks I’m on top of it…. so I guess I have to be. It all feels a bit weird… sometimes I wonder how I got here. It’s …It’s pretty scary …terrifying actually. You never know what’ll happen next and you don’t know how you’ll feel or what’s the right thing to do or…if you really want to be here.

Pause.

Checks phone.

Don’t get me wrong, I know I have to be responsible… I know some guys clear off…but not me. I want to be a good father… better than mine was anyway...But, shit, it’s hard sometimes. Everything’s changed. It’s like the gorgeous, sexy girl I used to know has morphed into a witch. She was always a bit weird, a bit eccentric… you know...cool...but now she’s just crazy…well, not all the time, but some weird stuff comes out ….. and she’s always tired…and sort of distant …

Pause.

Checks phone.

No sex. Not that I feel like it too much, not after the birth… They say you should be there... you know... for support, to see your child being born, but the whole thing really grossed me out. It was like she was in another space, somewhere inside her head. I was trying to help but she ignored me… and the noises...they were like… like… I don’t know... like something that crawled out of the swamp… The weird thing was her screams... they were sort of...sort of orgasmic. That freaked me out a bit. There was a bit of blood too...and shit… her shit, and I’m not being metaphorical. It was a bit hard to focus. I felt sorry for the poor midwife but she said not to worry – she was used to it. God, what a job!

Pause.

Checks phone.

Sorry (Texting).
So, yeah, I just can’t…I can’t un-see it, it’s always there…and… I guess I’ll get over it.

Pause.

Checks phone.

It’s pretty awesome…you know, the whole baby thing…. But being a father…that’s weird…I mean, how do you know what to do?... I don’t want to be like my dad…He’s pretty good I guess… but he’s not my real dad. He left before I was born…’don’t know why…we don’t talk about it…must have been tough for Mum… I was alright though…didn’t know any better...

Pause.

…Anyway, I’m not leaving. I don’t care how hard it gets. I want my kid to know who her dad is…so she knows…so she knows she’s someone worth staying around for...

Pause.

Can’t do much now… It’ll be good when she’s bigger, you know, when she can walk and talk and doesn’t want the boob all the time. I’ll be around to play with her – push her on the swing and play cubbies (is that what girls do?) and I can teach her to skateboard and ride a bike and play video games… yeah, when she’s bigger I’ll know what to do… that’ll be good. Not much happening with her right now is there?... ‘Better look it up. (Taps on phone)

Pause.

BABY: (crying) vide, vide...fill me up…mal, mal…mama…mama... mama

Baby’s body reverberates with the sound from her throat. She seems to be suffocating. No one comes. Mother is still asleep in her chair. Father is looking at his phone.

BABY: (crying) mal, mal…mama, mama…mal, mal, mal

Baby suddenly stops as if a switch has been flicked. She collapses to the floor.

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23 Empty, empty…fill me up…it hurts, it hurts…mama…mama…

24 It hurts, it hurts…mama…mama…hurts, hurts, hurts…
ACT TWO

SCENE 1

Baby’s space. An image of a baby asleep at the breast is projected on to Baby’s screen. Baby is sleeping beside the window. The blind is still down but not completely, allowing some light in. Her eyes are closed as she lies on her back with her arms raised beside and above her head in that pose that is half way between “hands up” and a fist-clenching victory salute. The thumb and middle finger of her right hand are gently apposed in a delicate Buddha-like way, not quite an O. The fingers of her left hand are slightly curved and splayed. Her breathing is quiet and shallow and the chest is barely moving. Her lips move slightly, in a little sucking motion, as if remembering or anticipating the breast.

BABY: soft, safe, segura,

lieblich, dulce, doux,

sain, sauf, sicher, leicht
ciel, cielo

bleu blau blue azul,
calma, tranquille, still…

Pause

…til

Baby’s screen goes black. Lights fade.

FATHER: (Looking at computer screen) Did you know babies can understand any language?

BABY: l’absence (le monstre)

arrive.

vite!

lauf! flee!

quick,

à quatre pattes,
fly wild, fast,

*furiosa.*

*(Baby starts crying)*

*au secours!*25

MOTHER: *(Off-stage)* Do something! The baby’s yelling blue murder.

FATHER: Can’t you sort her out? It says here that babies prefer their mother’s voice.

BABY: *(Crying)* heeeelp! heeeeeeelp!

MOTHER: *(Off-stage)* Please!

BABY: *(Crying)* *au secours!*26

FATHER: Hold on... *(checks phone).*

MOTHER: *(Off-stage)* Pick her up!

FATHER: This new babies’ app says they have to learn to wait.

BABY: *(Crying intensifies)* socorro!27

MOTHER: She doesn’t know that. For God’s sake, pick her up!

FATHER: *(Walking slowly towards baby, looking at phone, and bumps into chair)* Shit!

MOTHER: *(Enters)* What is wrong with you?

FATHER: I hurt my knee.

MOTHER: Can’t you hear she’s scared? *(Embraces baby)* There, there. It’s alright. I’m here. *(Baby stops crying)* You’re safe now.

BABY: *la voix ... la voie*28 …

Baby sucks on fist and looks over mother’s shoulder at the window. The blind is drawn but a frame of bright sunlight is visible between it and the window frame. Baby looks intently at the light and then at Mother.

25 Soft, safe, secure, lovely, sweet, gentle, sound, safe, sure, light sky, sky blue blue blue blue, blue, calm, quiet, still……til absence (the monster) comes. quick! run! flee! quick, on all fours, fly wild, fast, furiously. help!

26 Help!

27 Help!

28 The voice...the way...
FATHER: You’re going to spoil her.

MOTHER: Don’t be ridiculous; she’s a baby.

FATHER: Mum says if you pick her up every time she cries you’ll make a rod for your back. She said she used to leave me to scream for hours…

MOTHER: And look at you.

FATHER: What?

MOTHER: I don’t care what your mother says. This is our baby and we’re going to keep her safe from the monsters. Can you change her while I dry my hair? (She passes Baby to Father and exits).

FATHER: Monsters?

Baby protests weakly. Father places her on her back. Her legs cycle, arms move like an Italian traffic policeman – one up in a stop position with the other waving down across the chest as they alternate in smooth movements. Her head moves from side to side as if trying escape. Legs are kicking. Gradually her body relaxes and father changes nappy.

FATHER: (In a sing-song voice) If he jee knee...what a big job! If he jee knee... where’s the bum wipes?... Bahbahbahbah, bahbahbahbah.

BABY: (Gurgling back) ga ga ga ga

FATHER: Bah bah bah bah ... 

BABY: ga ga ga ga...

FATHER: Hey, you can talk. Try this: A... E... I... O...

Baby mouths O. Baby and Father look at each other intently.

FATHER: O

Baby mouths O again.

FATHER: Are you copying me? (Pokes his tongue out).

Baby pokes tongue out.

FATHER: Yes! (Pokes his tongue out again).

Baby pokes tongue out again.

FATHER: (faster, testing) What about this: bahbahbahbahbah (pokes his tongue out).
BABY pokes tongue out again.

FATHER: bahbahbahbahbah (pokes his tongue out).

Baby sneezes and looks away. She lays still, her arms, by the sides of her slightly arched body. Her fists are clenched and her chest moves rapidly with each breath. After a time she looks again, expectantly, at Father as he struggles with the nappy.

Father’s phone rings. He looks for somewhere to wipe his soiled hands, quickly wipes them on his trousers and, keeping an eye on Baby, answers his phone.

FATHER: (On phone) Hello?... Yep... uhuh...Tomorrow night ...ok...

Mother enters.

FATHER: Looking forward to it... Great.

MOTHER: What was that about?

FATHER: (Drops phone, evasive) Nothing important.

We need more nappies (Exits).

MOTHER: (Checking his phone) Cassie? Who’s Cassie?

ACT TWO

SCENE 2

Waltz music starts again. Mother dances with Baby, who looks increasingly uncomfortable, making little noises as the dance progresses.

MOTHER: One two…

FATHER: (Joining in) Three...

MOTHER and FATHER: One-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three…

MOTHER: I feel giddy.

FATHER: Isn’t this what you wanted?

MOTHER: To feel giddy?

FATHER: To be three.

MOTHER: I didn’t know it would feel like this.

FATHER: Like what?
MOTHER: Deliriously happy one minute and horribly sick the next.

FATHER: You can’t still have morning sickness.

MOTHER: Not vomit sick… Heart sick…scared of what might happen.

FATHER: Like…?

MOTHER: Everything. You know…

They stop dancing. Music continues softly. She looks at him.

FATHER: What?

MOTHER: You think I’m mad…

FATHER: No!

MOTHER: (To audience) He does.

FATHER: Well… maybe… a little bit.

MOTHER: (To audience) He thinks I’m just like my mother.

FATHER: Did I say that? I’m not sure…

MOTHER: But you’re always sure.

FATHER: Not any more.

Mother drops Baby to dance with an invisible figure. Father catches Baby who now looks extremely uncomfortable, alternately pulling up her legs and arching her back, waving her arms and tensing her face into a frown.

MOTHER: Don’t cry, don’t guzzle, don’t vomit on my clothes, don’t dirty another nappy, don’t roll in it, don’t kick, don’t touch, don’t grizzle, don’t make a mess, don’t grab, don’t push, don’t make a noise, don’t wriggle in church, don’t climb, don’t fall, don’t hurt yourself, don’t play with your food, don’t gobble, don’t waste, don’t poo on the floor, don’t hold on, control yourself, go and let off steam, don’t leave the gate open, don’t scare the chooks, don’t drop the eggs, don’t talk to strangers, come inside and be quiet, go outside and play, watch your temper, watch out for snakes / barbed-wire fences / the bull / the dam / the devil, come here and give me a kiss, go away and leave me alone, don’t answer back, don’t tell tales…

FATHER: What’s that all about?
MOTHER: I’m not sure.

FATHER: Sounds like a mess.

MOTHER: Will you help me sort it out?

FATHER: (Looks at audience) I guess…

MOTHER: You’ll help me, won’t you baby?

BABY: (Very still) full, voll, la foliiiiie of milk of love, of hate, of fear…too much, zu viel, zu viel, too much, trop trop, ohhhhhhhhhh\(^{29}\) (vomits over mother’s knitting).

MOTHER: My knitting!

Music stops.

\textbf{ACT TWO}

\textbf{SCENE 3}

Baby is asleep in her space. She smiles in her sleep and turns her head to the left. Her left hand opens out and stretches, then rests on the blanket. Her right hand is tucked under the blanket. She breathes quite quickly. Her face screws up in a grimace, her left hand forms a fist, and a little cry accompanies the drawing up of her knees. She passes wind and relaxes. Her lips make little sucking sounds as if she is imagining herself on the breast. She touches her blanket again with her left hand. Mother is on a chair in her space, knitting. The only sound is a clock ticking.

CHORUS: Casting off monsters

Casting on hope

Knit hate/love, purl love/hate

Sharp needles evoke

Woven yarns of old ghosts

Tangled and bound

To ambivalent swings

in baby’s playground.

\footnote{29} full, full, the madness of milk of love, of hate, of fear…too much, too much, too much, too much, too much, too much, ohhhhhhhhh.
A door bangs somewhere in the house. Baby startles, arms jerk and eyelids flutter but her eyes do not open and her body quickly relaxes, both arms now by her sides. Father enters.

FATHER: What is it?

MOTHER: I don’t know yet.

FATHER: A blanket?

MOTHER: Not sure.

FATHER: They say a baby needs a blanket…a special one... for security.

MOTHER: She’s got us.

FATHER: For when we’re not around.

MOTHER: Where are we going?

FATHER: I don’t know...

MOTHER: We’re not going anywhere...

FATHER: We might.

MOTHER: You might. I can’t. I’m stuck. *(She points to her breasts)* We’re on contract.

FATHER: But it won’t be forever…will it?

*Baby grimaces, her face reddens, her fists clench, and as her mouth opens to cry, her arms move about in an uncoordinated fashion.*

BABY: *(Crying)* heeeeeeelp!

MOTHER: Feels like it.

FATHER: I’ll go.

*Father exits and re-enters stage from other direction. He strokes Baby’s cheek. Baby settles and puts her right fist to her mouth. She looks at the bright light through the window. Father exits.*

*On the edges of their shared space, Baby and Mother address the audience, their words overlapping. Baby moves in a disconnected way, eagerly towards, then anxiously away*
from her mother. Similarly, Mother reaches for Baby and then withdraws. The movement between them is push / pull between their spaces as their voices overlap.

BABY: it hates me.

MOTHER: She hates me.

BABY: When I cry it doesn’t come.

MOTHER: I can’t come every time she cries.

BABY: it hates me.

MOTHER: She hates me.

MOTHER: I hate it when she cries.

BABY: when it makes me drink the hate I have a really bad pain.

MOTHER: When she is crying and fussing at the breast it’s a real pain.

BABY: when everything comes out it soothes the pain but the hate comes back.

MOTHER: Then she vomits everywhere or shits all over her clothes and I shout at her.

BABY: it’s uncontrollable.

MOTHER: I cannot control myself.

BABY: it’s terrifying.

MOTHER: I’m terrified of my anger... Am I a bad mother?

BABY: Bad.

MOTHER: I feel like I’m unravelling...

Mother and Baby dance as if unravelling.

MOTHER: I’m afraid....

BABY: afraid

MOTHER: She hates me....

BABY: hate

MOTHER: She’s devouring me. It hurts...
BABY: *mal, mama*30

MOTHER: I can’t stomach it any more. She’s making me sick.

*Baby vomits.*

MOTHER: She’s killing me

BABY: *mama, me mata* 31

*Baby writhes in pain.*

MOTHER: Shit shit shit. She’d say ‘Sit! and don’t come out until you’ve done something’. I’d sit and sit and sit and then I’d flush and lie: ‘I have’. And then I’d run away.

BABY: help!

MOTHER: I hate her. I love her. I hate her. I can’t...

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder.

MOTHER: Go away.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder.

MOTHER: Go away. I hate you.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder.

MOTHER: I hate you. I AM trying…

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Not good enough, not good enough...

MOTHER: *(In a little girl’s voice)* I’m trying to be good, mama.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Not good enough not good enough not good enough *(Repeated like a mantra, trailing off at the end of Mother’s next line).*

MOTHER: *Under her breath, gradually getting louder)* get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucking get fucked get fucking get fucking get fucking get fucking get fucking GET FUCKED!

BABY: *feed me / feed me / feed me*

---

30 Hurts, mama

31 Mama, it’s killing me
MOTHER: Fed up / fed up / fed up

BABY: heeeeeeelp!

MOTHER: It all comes out... before you know... regret...maybe / maybe not...hold on... remember ... tried so hard... failed, failed, failed.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder / not good enough

MOTHER: (To off-stage) Get fucked! (To audience) How will I know when I’m good enough? (To baby) Baby?

BABY: help meeeeee!


BABY: hateful hateful / fearful / pleine de peur\textsuperscript{32} too much zu viel\textsuperscript{33} too much to bear

FATHER: (Calling from off-stage) We’re out of milk.

MOTHER: Not enough / not enough / not enough

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Not good enough. You should try harder

BABY: basta!\textsuperscript{34} (Bites nipple)

MOTHER: (Pushing baby away) Ow, that hurt! What are you trying to do to me?

MOTHER: (To audience) I thought it was my fault...all those years...I thought it was me. I was angry... I hated her...I thought I did it...

FEMALE VOICE OFF: You should listen

MOTHER: Leave me alone!

BABY: don’t leave me alone!

FEMALE VOICE OFF: You should …

MOTHER: Do you hear me?

BABY: can you hear me?

\textsuperscript{32} Full of fear
\textsuperscript{33} Too much
\textsuperscript{34} Enough!
Baby’s movements are unco-ordinated, desperate, trying not to fall over. Tries to clasp Mother’s hand but Mother is agitated and also moving in an unco-ordinated way.

MOTHER: Fuck off! Must stop...

BABY: Can’t stop....

MOTHER: Must stop...

BABY: can’t stop… falling

MOTHER: Dragged me / down / desperately / drowning / drown her voice / it’s me or her / don’t / do it / don’t…

BABY: …down, down, down

Baby’s arms are flailing, desperately trying to hold on to something. The waving hands are out of control and scratch Mother’s face.

MOTHER: Ow! / Little cow / Didn’t mean to / Accident / Run away run away / run / like the chicken who lost its head / scared / scaredy cat from Ballarat / made ya look ya silly chook / didn’t stop, just raised the axe and brought it down...

BABY: down falling down, down, down.

Baby looks to the window where the blind is half-way up letting bright light shine in. She touches her hair with one hand and sucks her fist with the other.

MOTHER: (Closes eyes) If I close my eyes I can run, run very fast...

Pause.

MOTHER: I want to fly away.

Pause.

MOTHER: (To audience) Am I bad? I need to know

ACT TWO

SCENE 4

Mother is in her chair in her circle. Baby is in her circle, alert, and legs kicking. Her hands try to grasp a foot and put it in her mouth.
CHORUS: Sweet tsuck tsuck, tsuck tsuck soft scent of mother

    or

Sour gulp gulp, gulp gulp stale stench of witch

Love and hate, good and bad

Hard to tell which is which

The world in your head is dead

or alive

all depends, at the start, on the door bitch.

BABY: gug gug gug gug gug gug gooood

    gug gug gug gug gug gooood

hiccup

    pick up

hiccup

    pick up

hiccup

    pick up kick up hiccup

ka ka ka kaka kakaah ah ah aaaaah

hiccup

    pluck

(at the shirt that covers the breast)

    kick up big up

hee hee hee hee

MOTHER: Yes my darling little monster. You know what you want.

Mother and Baby look at each other, one waiting for the other to make a move.

Pause.

Baby not sure whether to laugh or cry.
BABY: mammmammmammmammmammmahhhhh

mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa

moi moi moi moi moi

mange je mange je mange je mange

Mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa

moi me

je je je

me

jouououououe je

jouououououe je

jouououououoe

Joues joues, joues joues

j’ai un jeu à jouer

mammmammmammmammmammmahhhhh ?

...

tu tues

( Baby cries)

MOTHER: (Jigging Baby up and down) Shhh shhh. It’s alright. Shhh shhh. This is killing me. I can’t go on. We have to do something.

FATHER: (Checking computer screen) Right...Baby.. sleep training...here we are… … Save Your Sleep…Parent Rescue Remedy…I think that’s called wine…How about this? Sleepguard… We come to you. Instant results. Trained professionals. Firm but kind.

MOTHER: Is that for babies or dogs?

FATHER: Here’s a testimonial: “Thank you for giving me back my sleep. Now I can keep my husband happy and still have time for a manicure and lunch.”

35 Mama, mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa, me, me me, me, me, eat I eat I eat I eat I eat I eat mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa mwa me me I I me play I play I play play, play play, I have a game to play, mama?...you kill
MOTHER: You’re joking.

FATHER: Ok what about this? : “SleepTime helped me feel human again”.

MOTHER: I can’t help thinking of that dog woman… you know, tight hair and black shiny boots…

FATHER: Yeah yeah, (Suggestively) Turns some people on you know…

MOTHER: Calm down...

FATHER: So, will we give it a try?

MOTHER: What? S and M?

FATHER: Sleep.

MOTHER: Please.

FATHER: I think there’s an app for it here somewhere…

Crying stops.

*Baby is put down in her space awake. She looks around, arms moving outwards.*

*She smiles eagerly at her parents.*

MOTHER: Sleep time…*(singing)*

\begin{quote}
Fais do do, là là, ma petite,

Fais do do, t’aura du lolo

Maman est en haut, elle fait des gâteaux.

Papa est en bas, il fait du chocolat.

Fais do do, là là, ma petite.

Fais do do, t’auras du lolo\textsuperscript{36}.
\end{quote}

*Mother pulls cord to activate musical toy.*

36 Based on a traditional French nursery rhyme. *Lolo* is French slang for breast or breast milk.

Go to sleep, there there, my little one
Go to sleep, you will have a treat.
Mummy’s upstairs, making éclairs,
Daddy’s below, making cocoa.
Go to sleep, there there, my little one,
Go to sleep, you will have a treat.(my translation)
Parents tip toe out of baby’s room. Lights dimmed. When music stops Baby, lying on her back, starts to cry and becomes increasingly distressed.

BABY: (Fists clenched, legs kicking)

FATHER: Five… ten… fifteen…二十… twenty five… thirty…

MOTHER: Are you sure this is a good idea?

FATHER We agreed….forty five… fifty… fifty five… sixty…

MOTHER: (To audience) I’m not sure this is a good idea.

FATHER: Five…ten…fifteen… twenty… twenty five… thirty…

MOTHER: I don’t think I can do this

FATHER (Handing her ear-phones) … forty five… fifty… fifty five…sixty…

Father keeps counting in background.

MOTHER: She’s all alone. (To audience) Do you think she understands?

BABY: heeeeeeelp

MOTHER: She must be scared.

BABY: heeeeeeelp

MOTHER: She’s trying to tell us something…

BABY: heeeeeeelp

MOTHER: (to audience) What if it’s the monsters?

BABY: heeeeeeelp

FATHER: Right, now you can go in, but it says you’re not allowed talk to her or pick her up.

Baby stops crying as Mother dances with her.

MOTHER: (whispers): I love you.

Mother activates musical toy and tip toes out again. Crying re-commences as soon as lullaby stops.

FATHER: five…ten…fifteen…

MOTHER: This is wrong.
FATHER: But they’ve done the research… twenty five…

MOTHER: We’re ignoring our baby.

*Father keeps counting.*

MOTHER: *(To audience)*: What do you think?

FATHER: You can’t ask them…fifty five…

MOTHER: Why not?

FATHER: She’s not their baby…fifteen…twenty…

MOTHER: But they still care about her. They wouldn’t be here if they didn’t.

*Father keeps counting.*

MOTHER: *(Becoming increasingly upset)*: It feels so wrong. *(To audience)*: I think it’s wrong. *(To Father)*: I *know* it’s wrong!

FATHER: Forty five…fifty…It does no harm…five …

MOTHER: *(Grabbing timer)*: She doesn’t know that!

FATHER: But you said…

MOTHER: Yes, I’m tired but that doesn’t mean I want to teach her that feelings don’t matter.

*Mother goes to Baby and crying stops as they dance together in the shared space.*

FATHER: *(To audience)*: Great. Now what?

**ACT TWO**

**SCENE 5**

*Baby lies still. Her head moves to central position. She yawns. Her eyes are open. Her head moves to side and back to centre. She gives a very big yawn. Her hand goes to her mouth as she draws up her legs. Her head moves from side to side, looking for the window, but there is no light coming in.*

BABY: *(crying)*: I’m not sleepy. Well, I might be…

MOTHER: She’s not going to sleep. Listen…

BABY: But I’m scared… where are you?…
FATHER: Wait.

MOTHER: She wants us. Wait.... No... Yes.... No... Oh, what should we do?

BABY: come.... i need you. ..how can you ignore me?

MOTHER: Do you think she’s ok? ...What must she be thinking?

FATHER: Don’t go in yet. She’s just grizzling... See....

BABY: it’s dark and cold and lonely... don’t you remember how it feels... when you are falling... with nothing to hold on to?.... falling...falling....with no one to hold you...falling...

MOTHER: It’s dark... and cold... and lonely. She needs us to hold her hand... to hold her... together.

BABY: (crying) there you are at last. pick me up. i need that breast. come on, hurry up!

FATHER: Well, maybe…I don’t know…

MOTHER: You little monster. Why won’t you go to sleep by yourself?

Baby and mother clasp hands and dance close together.

FATHER: See, she’s just testing you. She needs a dummy.

MOTHER: You’re the dummy. She needs my breast.

FATHER: (Sulking) Well so do I.

MOTHER: What? Are you jealous?

FATHER: Maybe…

MOTHER: Grow up! I don’t need two babies.

FATHER: It’s just…

MOTHER: What?

FATHER: Do you still love me?

MOTHER: I don’t believe it – you want sex?

FATHER: No….well.. yes, I ....

MOTHER: Really? Look at me – I’m exhausted.

FATHER: I know…I just…I just want my wife back.
MOTHER: Well I don’t know where she is.

FATHER: She must be here somewhere…

MOTHER: She’s gone… and she’s not sure how long she’ll be away.

FATHER: So what about me?

MOTHER: Get over it.

FATHER: Oh, that’s great! Thanks. Is that all you can say? Don’t I deserve something?

MOTHER: Oh for god’s sake… what do you want…A gold star, a sweetie for being good? You’re not a child anymore and we’re not playing fucking games here… this is a real, live, 24/7 baby.

FATHER: You think I don’t know that?

MOTHER: You have to help me. I need a grown-up, not a needy little boy.

FATHER: I am a grown-up… and you know what? Grown-ups have sex.

MOTHER: You’re not going to give up are you?

FATHER: Maybe that’s my job.

MOTHER: What? To have sex?

FATHER: Yeah…to help my wife find her way back.

MOTHER: Try Google Maps.

Baby and Mother unclasp hands.

Pause.

FATHER: (Looking at baby) She is beautiful isn’t she?

MOTHER: Mmmm

FATHER: (Kissing mother’s neck) Just like her mother

MOTHER: Huh…And determined…

FATHER: (Still kissing her neck) Mmmmm.

MOTHER: (Squirming) Why do I feel like everyone wants a piece of me? It’s like I’m broken into little bits and you and the baby just want to gobble me up – like hungry monsters – whenever you feel like it. All I want is to be me, put back together, in one
piece, safe in my skin, not oozing out…out of control….all over the place…milk and flab and…

FATHER: It’s alright…

MOTHER: It’s not alright. It’s all wrong. ….I can’t stop … I can’t stop these thoughts… I can hear my mother’s voice… I can’t control it! I thought the baby would help… but now it’s worse…I needed to know I could … I really thought …I thought I would know…but I don’t know anything… I don’t know anything…it’s all wrong...

FATHER: You’re tired.

Father takes baby whose head bobs up and down like one of those toy car dogs where the neck is a spring. Her face is solemn, chubby cheeks a little red, eyes rimmed red, tongue working as if exercising, moving in and out and pushing against gums.

MOTHER: I want to run away… but I’m stuck… trapped… like an animal…I am an animal...a stupid fat ugly hateful cow…I don’t want to be like this…I don’t like it…I really want to run away….fly away…I wish I could just fly away…

FATHER: Come on, come to bed. (Mother looks at him suspiciously)

FATHER: No monsters, promise. (He takes her gently by the hand)

MOTHER: You don’t know/ how it feels / to be

ALL: lost / stuck / frightened / longing / to fly / away.

They all exit.

FATHER: (off stage) Sweet dreams.

ACT THREE

SCENE 1

The image of a baby asleep at the breast is projected on to Baby’s screen.

Father is downstage looking at his phone. Mother is sitting on the chair in her space, knitting furiously.

Baby is lying quietly in her space, arms bent alongside head, fists clenched. One fist unfurls so that the fingers are splayed open on the sheet. Her head turns to one side. Her mouth makes little sucking movements. Her eyelids flutter and her breathing is
irregular. Her body gives a little shiver as her right hand, in a fist, moves to her mouth. Her left hand moves to scratch the left side of her face.

CHORUS: Bleeding

bleeding, open wounds never close

scratch them

keep them open

remember

remember how it feels

to know the skin that holds you

the boundary

the beginning and the end

world without end

amen.

MOTHER: Scratching passes the time / when the shit won’t come out / you must wait and wait and wait / Mama says / “Don’t come out ‘til you’ve done something” / but her fear was real when she saw what I had done / - scratched off the brown mole on my navel / to see what lay beneath / “You will die!” she screeched and screamed and pulled her hair and mine.

Pause

To look beneath the skin / to look inside and see / the things you find in there / will kill you? Truth is / My own inside is real / it’s mine to make / but dear mad Mama fed me her truth, her fear: inside is bad, inside is dangerous to know.

Pause

I did not die / I’m still waiting, bleeding / open wounds never close… (Calls to Father)

Wrap her tight to stop her scratching.

BABY: scratch scratch

cache-cache

scratch scratch
escondite

scratch scratch

cache-cache

scratch scratch

hide and seek

scratching

searching

scratching

searching

itching

to see

inside

MOTHER: (To herself) I’m raw

BABY: you are my skin

MOTHER: (To off-stage) Have I done something yet?

BABY: mama?

MOTHER: (To audience) How will I know? I need to know…

FATHER: (To audience) You know, sometimes, I get really scared. Everything feels…I feel… uncertain…I don’t know… I just have this feeling that…It’s so awful I can’t even say it…but I have to because… it’s killing me…I’m afraid…I’m afraid she will die.

MOTHER: (Overhearing Father, addressing audience) Do you think he wants to kill her?

FATHER: (To Mother) What is it now?

MOTHER: A net, for trapping monsters.

---

37 scratch scratch hide- and- seek scratch scratch hidden scratch scratch hide- and- seek
ACT THREE

SCENE 2

*Baby with rosy cheeks, wriggling, stretching, fingers in the mouth, dribbling, tongue moving in and out from side to side, as if trying to talk, smiling, looking deep into Father’s eyes, following mother with her eyes, standing up on father’s knees and stretching tall, rolling over and very happy with herself.*

MOTHER: Bath time!

(Father and baby dance to off stage. Father’s phone rings on stage beside Mother and goes to voice-message)

VOICE OFF: Hi, it’s Cassandra here...

FATHER: (Calling out) We’re ready.

BABY: (laughing and squealing)

VOICE OFF: ... Cassie. I need to talk to you. Can you give me a call?

MOTHER: Coming. (Picks up knitting needles and the blanket she has been knitting; it looks like a net. Exits)

VOICE OFF:... It’s about your dance class…

Laughing stops.

ACT THREE

SCENE 3

*Baby is on her tummy on the floor with some toys nearby. She stretches to grasp a soft plastic blue ring which she brings to her mouth to explore. Her legs kick and her body jerks as she works to keep her head up. After a few minute she rolls over on to her back, still holding the ring. She looks at her mother who is miles away and then at the audience. Her arms and legs move back and forth as she gurgles and mouths the ring. Projections of neural connections and / or old Paris appear on Baby’s screen.*

FATHER: (Looking at computer screen) They say a baby’s brain is like old Paris.

MOTHER: Before the revolution?
FATHER: Yeah. Tiny cobblestoned alleyways of neural connections tumbling in all directions…

MOTHER: All leading to Notre Dame…or the guillotine.

FATHER: They say that some of them get cut off, if they’re not used.

MOTHER: *(Becoming increasingly distressed)* How does the baby know which way to go? All those dark and narrow one-way streets; it’s easy to get lost and what if she forgets which way to go she can never go that way again and then she has to find another way and what if she panics because she might have left something behind and she can’t remember what it was and if she forgets it then it’s gone forever and how can she live without it and…. what if she gets lost in the catacombs?

FATHER: *(Gently)* I think her parents are supposed to hold her hand

MOTHER: What if her parents get lost?

FATHER: Like ours?

MOTHER: I’m scared. Can’t we go back?

FATHER: I’m scared too but we’ll find a way

MOTHER: Are you sure?

FATHER: As sure as I can be

MOTHER: Yes, yes, good, you’re always sure…but

FATHER: But what?

MOTHER: I’m so uncertain. I don’t know anything anymore. I feel all over the place, like the plate of jelly…

FATHER: Jelly…

MOTHER: I dropped it on the floor… there’s nothing solid…I couldn’t clean it up… all squishy and spineless and melting… nothing to hold on to… disappearing…

FATHER: What jelly?

MOTHER: … red jelly, red carpet red, blood red, and Sunny-Boy orange, sweet and yummy and forbidden, totally ruined… never be the same again… all over the floor… in pieces… a melting, sticky, mess… it wasn’t me, I didn’t do it, it fell, I didn’t mean to, it was an accident, no, no, I’ll try to be good…
FATHER: What the…are you ok?

MOTHER: We need to go, quick, now,

FATHER: Uh?…

MOTHER: Quick! We have to get away from her. Hurry up. We have to hide.

VOICES OFF: (Muttering, carping) Little devil, bad girl, wicked girl, greedy little bugger, a bugger of a kid, born bad, bad, bad baby, no good, never be any good …get out of my sight…no, no more…greedy little devil…enough…too much, you're too much…

MOTHER: not enough, not enough, …more, more, more… too much not-enough, too much not-enough...

VOICES OFF: …not good enough… not good enough…

MOTHER: Come on, quick! Let’s go

FATHER: (To audience) Shit! What do I do? (To her) Uh, where are we going?

MOTHER: Paris.

FATHER: Paris!

MOTHER: …She’ll never find us there

FATHER: Who?

MOTHER: The ghost.

FATHER: What ghost?

MOTHER: The one in the nursery.

FATHER: The baby?

MOTHER: No, no, no, we have to keep the baby. We have to take her with us. She’s our only hope… Don’t you see? …. She’s the map.

Baby laughs.
ACT THREE

SCENE 4

An image of the pram on the cliff is projected on to the screen.

Baby’s space, with suitcases. Baby asleep carried on father’s back.

FATHER: It’s not what I expected

MOTHER: What did you expect?

FATHER: Not this.

MOTHER: Well we’re here now. Something will happen.

FATHER: I don’t know my way around. I’m lost.

MOTHER: Check the map.

FATHER: She’s asleep.

Pause.

FATHER: What did you bring?

MOTHER: Everything, you know *(Takes out her knitting and casts off)*…what about you?

FATHER: ‘Don’t know, I’m scared to look.

MOTHER: Your Mum packed it, didn’t she? You’ll have to look at it sometime.

FATHER: I guess…*(Looks at phone)*.

MOTHER: You won’t find it there

*Father lies sleeping Baby down.*

FATHER: I don’t feel good about this. I’m sure we’ve forgotten something. *(Opens suitcase and looks inside)* It’s not quite right... There’s something missing...Hey...here’s an old photo of me with Mum and the dog.

MOTHER: You were so cute...and your mother looks so young and…pregnant? I thought you were an only child.

FATHER: I am.
MOTHER: *(Reading back of photo)* Mount Cithaeron, Greece, 1983...1983? Wasn’t that the year you were born?

FATHER: Yeah...

MOTHER: So, how can this little boy be you?

FATHER: I don’t know.

MOTHER: What else is in there?

FATHER: *(Looking in suitcase)* Lots of bits and pieces...oh, here’s something *(Pulls out a newspaper).*

MOTHER: *(Unfolds newspaper)* Oh! Oh, my god!

FATHER: What is it?

MOTHER: *(Crying as she reads)* Baby. Father. Lost.

FATHER: Lost?

Pause.

Mother picks Baby up and they all dance slowly, sadly, together. Waltz music as before.

FATHER: Why didn’t I know?

MOTHER: Some things are hard to know.

Pause.

MOTHER: We have to go back.

FATHER: I don’t know...

MOTHER: We must.

FATHER: I don’t know if I can.

MOTHER: It’s the only way.

FATHER: But... Are you sure?

MOTHER: Yes, I’m sure.

FATHER: I’m afraid.

MOTHER: I know.

FATHER and MOTHER: *(In unison, looking to Baby)* Baby?
MOTHER: We have to go back. We need to know...

*Baby embraces both parents. The parents lie down and curl up in a foetal position.*

*Baby takes the now casted-off blanket and puts it over her shoulders. She looks out the window. The blind is up and light is pouring in. Through the window, leaves of the tree outside can be seen moving in the wind. Baby’s left hand stretches out beside her head to touch her hair. She wriggles her right hand out of the blanket and briefly resumes her conducting pose, thumb and middle finger touching to make an O as she turns to look at the audience. Her right hand then moves to hold on to the soft edge of blanket. She yawns, closes her eyes and returns to sleep.*
CHAPTER THREE: A Place to Play

*It is not possible to be original except on a basis of tradition* – Donald Winnicott

*Art is the agent of as well as the organizer of experience* – Jerome Oremland

*Writers’ bodies are involved in their writing* – Marguerite Duras

In chapter two we saw how relationships enable play and how play enhances relationships, each endowing the other with meaning. This chapter provides the structure for a thinking space to consider the evolution of the artefact – a play created through play – and how it might convey meaning. Winnicott (1967a), Oremland (1997) and Duras (1990) establish the chapter’s interlocking themes: the origins and development of creativity, the self in the art of writing, and the feeling body of the writer. We refer to, and build on traditions in theatre and in psychoanalysis as we move back and forth between artefact and exegesis, to show how the artefact becomes a vehicle for, and organizer of the writer’s internal and external experience. The chapter’s structure and the thinking within it reflect the *danse libre*[^38] of the baby, a free association where the writer’s body – its memories and experience – informs the fictional baby’s communications via careful choreography. The tendency for the writing to perform a *jeté*[^39] from one place or time or subject to another has not been corrected. In the spirit of theatre, we show how the chapter is being performed as it is being written. The experience of reading accompanies the experience of writing as, with uncertain steps, reader follows writer to see what might happen.

Excerpts from the artefact and the writer’s working journal connect with dreams and painting, which, like writing, engages the unconscious mind. A photograph names the hidden anxiety and prompts us to explore themes of ambivalence, particularly as they relate to infant and mother. What emerges is a story of a mother, father, baby and writer struggling to create and discover something good. Links are made between the theoretical developing baby, the fictional

[^38]: Literally *free dance*. There are no formal steps as the body moves according to sensory experience and one’s imagination.

[^39]: Literally *thrown*; a ballet term to describe a particular type of leap through a space.
baby, and the developing play. Like the fictional family, we get lost, stuck, and are bothered by monsters, until the ambivalence is addressed. Through writing – and reading – we may be able to make sense of the experience and discover something of ourselves.

**On not being able to write and getting lost**

While trying to write this chapter I keep forgetting what I want to say. I wonder if my cognitive decline has something to do with the task at hand. It seems that the very act of trying to explain how the play was written returns me to the baby’s pre-verbal, pre-thinking space, a space devoid of memory or desire (Bion 1967). It is a space, recreated in the writing of this chapter, where time is fluid, allowing present and past tenses to – unconsciously – swap places.

Consulting my early working-journals I find a recurring theme:

*Why the big spaces of nothing? No thinking, no writing, no reading. Why the overwhelming tiredness, the need to sleep, the disturbed nights, the early waking? Am I feeling the world of the baby just a little? Am I reaching into that vast empty space of my childhood? How far can I go? (Journal entry, January 2011).*

_Free flowing writing keeps being restrained by some inner force. I start writing and feel like sleeping, as if I need to ignore it, shut it out, flee from it, fearful of what I might find. Safer to retreat into sleep and hope things are better when I wake up...They rarely are (Journal entry, March 2012).*

A book about painting (Milner 1950), helped the writing to continue. A psychoanalyst and artist, Marion Milner writes of her personal struggles as a painter. While reading her description of her anxieties and distractions when confronted with a blank canvas, I was surprised to recognize myself. She notes that when she allowed her drawing hand and eye to wander without conscious intention she was disconcerted to find that the resulting pictures did not fit with what she had been taught. She confesses that she had blocked it out, because it challenged her conscious knowledge and, dangerously, ‘threatened one’s sense of oneself as a more or less known entity’ (p. xviii). Milner’s confession opened my eyes. I could now see that, despite professing a desire to cross boundaries, there was real anxiety around the fear of losing myself. I was
reminded of the Ndembu of Zambia, described by the anthropologist, Victor Turner (1969). He explained how the Ndembu people who were undergoing initiation ceremonies did not belong anywhere; they were indeed lost, geographically, physically and emotionally, somewhere between their old identity and their new one. As it happens, the transition to parenthood involves a similar experience, one which is given shape in the artefact by the fictional family’s giddy waltz (Act one, Scene 2). Unlike the Ndembu, educated individuals in Western societies place great importance on not getting lost, on being in control of everything, on having a plan. How then, in a carefully constructed first world, does one relinquish conscious control, lose oneself, take the risk of becoming a new someone, a someone who is not yet known? It occurred to me that, at the beginning of her life, a baby takes this risk with every experience.

As Milner’s descriptions of her attempts to paint continued to resonate, I started to see the soporific effect of my empty page as a sort of safety switch, protecting the known me from the unknown me by closing down the conscious mind. Paradoxically, the apparent refuge of sleep plunged me into the very state it seemed I was trying to avoid: the unconscious, uncontrollable world of dreams. I knew, intellectually, that if I allowed it, if I stopped struggling and worked with the dreams, they had the potential to help me discover the artefact. But, as we will see in the next chapter, intellectual knowing is not enough; it is certainly not the same as knowing a feeling, and there is often a vast space between them. My task was to write in this between space, to-ing and fro-ing between the different types of knowing. The baby’s developmental task resides in a similar space, between what she experiences and what is offered. In this space there is the potential to either discover something or to feel lost. The fictional baby and her parents dance in that space in the artefact while I make up the steps, writing my way through and out of my own uncertainty, not sure where it will lead.

Milner finds that practical tips from her guide to painting, by the bohemian artist and writer, Jan Gordon (1962), are not simply about technique. When Gordon (1962) notes that ‘The outline is…the first and plainest statement of a tangible
reality’ (p.18), Milner interprets this outline as something factual and solid to cling to, saving one from the dizzying depths of the imagination. She wonders if:

...in one part of the mind, there really could be a fear of losing all sense of separating boundaries; particularly the boundaries between the tangible realities of the external world and the imaginative realities of the inner world of feeling and idea; in fact a fear of being mad (Milner, 1950, p. 17).

Milner goes on to hypothesize that this may be why people react so strongly to new art: unconsciously, they are afraid for their sanity if they allow themselves to look at the world in a new way.

In the artefact, when the fictional mother appears lost in her own remembered experience, she is unable to help her baby negotiate these boundaries. The fictional baby manages to avoid falling into oblivion by staring intently at the light that frames the blind on her window, holding on to the outline with her eyes; she employs this strategy again and again so that it becomes emblematic of her capacity for preserving and building her sense of being.

The physical, tangible reality of words is like the painter’s outline and the frame of light. When there is no containing frame of line, or light, or words, when the words do not come, it can be a terrible feeling – there is nothing to hold on to, and a fear that inspiration has completely dried up, like an empty breast. There is nothing to feed the imagination. Is this what the baby feels like when the milk or mother does not come? If simply willing cannot make the breast appear, and if crying and screaming also fail, then sleep may be a haven from the torment of the absence. When the fictional baby, alone and full of fear, fails to find the frame of light she loses consciousness:

BABY (crying): vide, vide / empty, empty…mal, mal / hurts, hurts…mama…

The baby’s body reverberates with the sound from her throat. She seems to be suffocating.

mal mal / it hurts, it hurts …mama, mama…mal, mal, mal / hurts, hurts, hurts …

Baby suddenly stops as if a switch has been flicked. Falls down, asleep.

(Act one, Scene 3).
What happens if this scenario is repeated over and over, when the imagined, anticipated breast fails to materialize, when the cries go unanswered, when sleep becomes an escape from emptiness? When the baby’s most reliable experience is the unreliability of the breast\(^{40}\), Winnicott (1960b) tells us that a ‘False Self’ develops:

*The mother who is not good enough\(^{41}\) is not able to implement the infant’s omnipotence, and so she repeatedly fails to meet the infant gesture; instead she substitutes her own gesture which is to be given sense by compliance of the infant. This compliance on the part of the infant is the earliest stage of the False Self and belongs to the mother’s inability to sense her infant’s needs* (Winnicott 1960b, p. 145).

The idea of writing a play about a baby had been developing in my mind for some time. However, despite committing time and space to transform the idea into reality I found it much more difficult than I had imagined. When I consulted other writers I was encouraged to use my own voice, to get my own feeling into my own words, to paraphrase the poet, Seamus Heaney (1980, p. 43), but I was not sure what my voice sounded like. Like a baby I needed to discover my voice before I could make use of it, but the reverse was also true; like a baby, I could only discover it by using it. Only then would I know what it felt like, and only then could I recognize it as my own voice. As Winnicott explains: ‘The spontaneous gesture is the True Self in action. Only the True Self can be creative and only the True Self can feel real’ (Winnicott 1960b, p. 148).

The search for authenticity is also the work of the theatre where spontaneity can produce unexpected wonders. Encouraging actors to take risks and be open to unknown possibilities, the English director, Peter Brook (2005) assures them that ‘if one doesn’t search for security, true creativity fills the space’ (p. 27).

\(^{40}\) The breast is not always the actual breast. It may stand for the mother, father, or significant other.

\(^{41}\) This is not a value judgment; rather it reflects the reality of the infant’s experience.
Ambivalence and finding our selves

While looking for my voice, I was reminded by the Australian writer David Malouf (2008) that ‘…it is the act of writing itself that makes articulation possible’ (p. 78) so I made a space to write. Clearing the desk I came upon a photograph (Molan, 2004) from a Sydney holiday and remembered...

It was very strange, even for Bondi – Australia’s iconic surf beach and home to the weird and the wonderful – to hear the sound of a crying baby coming from a motherless pram, perilously close to the edge of the cliff. Unsure if it was part of the sculpture exhibition or an actual baby, cliff-top walkers (I was one) climbed the safety barrier to take a closer look, our emotional state matching the concealed title: ‘High Anxiety’ (Cordell 2004).

Now, years later, I recall that anxiety and reflect on the ambivalence conveyed by this artwork. Was it about a mother who could no longer cope with her feelings of inadequacy or hate, a father’s revenge on his wife, a jealous sibling, or a perverted practical joker? Whoever it was, their ambivalence ensured that the brake was on. I now find myself thinking of Oedipus, left to die on the mountain to save his parents, and of Iphigenia sacrificed for her father’s ships. I
think of the baby left alone with nothing but her cry and the light. The discovery of the photograph forces me to take the plunge and face the ambivalence – the baby’s, the parents’ and my own.

What is this thing called ambivalence? Originally coined by the Swiss psychiatrist Bleuler\(^{42}\), it has been described by Rycroft (1972) as ‘the co-existence of contradictory impulses and emotions towards the same object. Usually, the term refers to the co-existence of love and hate’ (p. 6). An image of mechanical pulleys and levers comes to mind, and is quickly followed by a memory of Lecoq’s note on training actors that we saw in chapter one: ‘everything a person does in their life can be reduced to two essential actions: “to pull” and “to push”……I love, I pull. I hate, I push’ (Lecoq 2001, pp. 79-83).

This sequence of thoughts produces the choreography for the mother / baby dance (Act two, Scene 3), where the difficult feelings are played out in awkward and contradictory movements.

But back to the cliff...

Balancing on the edge, the parents and I – as writer – must confront our resistances, as this playful summary of Freud’s take on ambivalence suggests:

> Freud encourages us to read as we dream, according to our desire, surprised by what may strike us, and unable to predict what will haunt us; and able, if possible, to notice those resistances that Freud found so telling, in our difficulties with his own texts in which he is telling us something, so he tells us, that is the only thing we want to know, and that therefore we don’t want to know at all (Phillips 2006, p. xv).

Freud (1932a) understood that we have ambivalent feelings of love and hate for both parents. In a lecture on femininity, where he admits that he ‘does not always sound friendly’ (p.169), Freud (1932a) explains his concept of penis-envy and comes to this conclusion: ‘A mother is only brought unlimited satisfaction by her relation to a son; this is altogether the most perfect, the most free from ambivalence of all human relationships’ (p. 168). There is much in this lecture to reject, especially if you are a daughter! Moreover, as we will soon

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\(^{42}\) Bleuler, a contemporary of Freud, also coined the terms ‘schizophrenia’ and ‘autism’ (Gay 1989, p.198).
see, Freud’s inference that freedom from ambivalence is desirable feeds the exhausting, futile, and sometimes pathological striving for perfection that afflicts many mothers today.

But what of the very young baby who is not yet aware of her lack of a penis? Klein’s view of ambivalence starts here, with the infant, although in psychoanalysis, as the British analyst, John Rickman (in Klein & Riviere 1964) points out, there is not a great difference between the child’s mind and the adult’s unconscious. The artefact takes up this point, especially where both baby and mother share similar feelings of hate and terrifying rage (Act two, Scene 3).

While Freud (1932b) believed ambivalence in the baby to be absent in the early oral phase and appearing for the first time in the biting of the oral-sadistic phase, the female analysts, Klein and Riviere (1964), saw ambivalence from the beginning where the mother’s breast is loved for what it gives and hated for what it does not. Riviere provides a vivid description, quoted here in full for its dramatic appeal:

He (or she) wants the breast for the love of it, so to speak, for the pleasure of sucking milk, and also to still hunger. But what happens if these expectations and wants are not fulfilled? In a certain degree the baby becomes aware of his [sic] dependence; he discovers that he cannot supply all his own wants – and he cries and screams. He becomes aggressive. He automatically explodes, as it were, with hate and aggressive craving. If he feels emptiness and loneliness, an automatic reaction sets in, which may soon become uncontrollable and overwhelming, an aggressive rage which brings pain and explosive, burning, suffocating, choking bodily sensations; and these in turn cause further feelings of lack, pain and apprehension. The baby cannot distinguish between ‘me’ and ‘not me’; his own sensations are his world to him; so when he is cold, hungry or lonely there is no milk, no well-being or pleasure in the world – the valuable things in life have vanished. And when he is tortured with desire or anger, with uncontrollable, suffocating screaming, and painful, burning evacuations, the whole of his world is one of suffering (Klein & Riviere 1964, pp. 8-9).
This image of the baby’s experience is portrayed in the artefact through her dance and her desperate calls for help in various languages: ‘\textit{Au secours!...Heeeeelp! Heeeeelp!...Socorro!’ (Act two, Scene 1). The use of different languages throughout the artefact reflects the sounds a baby might make as well as emphasizing her pre-verbal state. The letters are in lower-case and, at times, the words are positioned off centre, to emphasize her immature and emotionally disorganized state. Despite the fact that some words may be recognizable, they form only a small part of her expressive repertoire.

Klein reminds us that while the struggle between love and hate starts in the baby’s mind, it becomes a life-long one. She describes the contrasting primitive ‘phantasies’ or ‘imaginative thinking’ (pp. 60-61) that develop from these early impulses and feelings: pleasant phantasies, where the baby imagines the bountiful breast, vie with destructive phantasies where the baby imagines attacking and destroying the with-holding breast. The baby does not know that these are phantasies; in her omnipotent state she fears that she has actually destroyed what she needs and loves so she tries to repair it… for the rest of her life. The fictional mother suffers from this Kleinian perspective:

\begin{quote}
\textit{I thought it was my fault. All those years, I thought it was me. I was angry… I hated her. I know it wasn’t my fault, but it still feels like I must be bad. Where is my good? I need to know…}(Act two, Scene 3).
\end{quote}

However Winnicott (1947) did not accept that the very young baby, whose personality is not yet integrated, can feel hate. He prefers the term ‘ruthless love’ (p. 201) to explain the sometimes hurtful demands of the baby on the mother. He suggests that ‘the mother hates the baby before the baby hates the mother and before the baby can know his mother hates him’ (Winnicott 1947, p. 200). Among the long list of reasons he offers for this maternal hate is one that has an echo in the artefact: ‘To a greater or lesser extent a mother feels that her own mother demands a baby, so that the baby is produced to placate her mother’ (Winnicott 1947, p. 201).

In the artefact we see and hear the fictional mother struggling to be rid of the voice of the demanding, insatiable mother figure:
FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder…

MOTHER: Go away.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder.

MOTHER: Go away, I hate you.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Must try harder.

MOTHER: I hate you. I AM trying…

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Not good enough, not good enough…

MOTHER (In a little girl’s voice): I’m trying to be good, mama.

FEMALE VOICE OFF: Not good enough not good enough not good enough not good enough (repeated like a mantra, trailing off at the end of the next line).

MOTHER: Get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked get fucked GET FUCKED!

(Act two, Scene 3)

The repeated expletive works at several levels to reflect different stages of her life. It highlights the adult voice of her as an angry young woman, it is a reference to her childhood Oedipal concerns, and voicing it mimics the tongue and lip movements of a baby sucking at the breast.

In her exploration of maternal ambivalence, Mother love / mother hate, the feminist psychotherapist, Rozsika Parker (1995) sounds somewhat like a jealous sibling who is tempted to push the pram off the cliff as she purposely ignores the infant perspective, arguing that it already gets too much attention in the psychoanalytic literature. Making use of feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory, and mothers’ stories, she is keen to emphasize ‘that maternal ambivalence creates a spectrum ranging from its creative to its destructive possibilities’ (p. 8). At one end of this spectrum is the theory that the frustration inherent in motherhood produces ambivalence which, if addressed, can lead to greater conscious understanding; at the other end, the denial of ambivalent feelings closes down the mother’s capacity to think about her reality or that of her infant.
However, Parker’s (1995) single-minded focus on the mother tends to create a rupture between mother and infant, and looks very much like the destructive end of the ambivalence spectrum. There is real difficulty here for baby and mother to be thought about together, and the fact of the baby’s absolute dependence on the mother is ignored. Parker argues that Winnicott’s description of the unconscious nature of mothering neglects the potential for creative and conscious ‘reparatory solutions’ (p. 63) to the mother’s hate. She points to present society’s expectations of mothers which leaves them ‘blamed, undermined and economically disadvantaged’ (p. 218) and suggests that this external reality makes it even more difficult for mothers to manage their ambivalence. Her emphasis on external pressures has a defensive quality, blinding her to an internal reality that baby and mother might share.

At times, Parker loses her psychotherapeutic focus to favour a singular feminist perspective. She finds the object relations psychoanalysts and their attempts at reassurance particularly unhelpful, and complains, like a displaced sibling, at the unfairness of it all. She seems to want us to take sides, as if maternal and infant interests are necessarily mutually exclusive: ‘Maternal ambivalence constitutes the unacceptable face of motherhood even for those who recognize at the same time its positive contribution to the psychological development of an infant’ (Parker 1995, p. 65). Here, Parker appears to take aim at those whose work is concerned with infants’ mental health despite the fact that those professionals tend to consider maternal ambivalence in itself to be normal and healthy. However, as Parker knows, problems can arise for both mother and infant when the ambivalence is not acknowledged. Excluding the infant from consideration weakens Parker’s position. Fortunately for the infant, our understanding of neonatal and parental intersubjectivity has grown since Parker argued her case, thus allowing this thesis to be more inclusive. Both artefact and exegesis put relationship centre stage with the internal world of baby and mother in the spotlight for all to see, hear and feel, not judge.

Also disaffected with psychoanalytic thinking, American sociologist, Sharon Hays (1998) rejects attachment theory altogether, claiming it is based on false assumptions. She finds it out-dated, prescriptive, and unrealistically demanding of parents who, she argues, have better things to do than attend to children’s
attachment needs. Similarly, the American journalist, Judith Warner (2005), whose book ‘Perfect madness: Motherhood in the age of anxiety’ was a national bestseller soon after its release, blames feminism, attachment, and psychoanalytic theory for creating a generation of women who are anxiously perfectionist mothers. However, she is taken to task by clinical psychologist, Arietta Slade (Slade & Martin 2006) for her ‘chaotic, poorly researched rant about motherhood’ (p. 123). Slade accepts that Warner’s description of the exhausting lives of many privileged, present-day, American mothers may be accurate; what she finds unacceptable however, is Warner’s insistence on external causes and her failure to consider the damaging effects of mothers’ ‘overinvestment’ (p. 124) in their children. Slade calls for ‘a deeper understanding of the internal complexities of motherhood’ (p. 124) as it is only by engaging with women’s external and internal lives that we can make sense of the sometimes difficult interplay between them.

I wonder if the strong reactions to psychoanalytic descriptions of the maternal role are themselves an expression of ambivalence. The reactionary reader often (mis)understands these descriptions as a series of instructions on how to be a good mother, reacting against them perhaps because, at one level, this is what the reader really desires: to be told what to do. I suggest that the psychoanalytic concepts elaborated here can be useful only if they can be incorporated into one’s thinking as imperfect theories that attempt to both imagine the infant’s experience and understand the mother’s experience. Like writing, psychoanalysis works best when it leads each one of us to develop a new way of thinking about ourselves in the world.

Parker finds the British psychoanalyst, Wilfred Bion’s concept of ‘reverie’, (1962, p. 36) more bearable than Winnicott’s theories perhaps because Bion developed his theoretical ideas from working with adults, whereas Winnicott observed babies with their mothers. Bion (1962) defines reverie as:

...that state of mind which is open to the reception of any “objects” from the loved object and is therefore capable of reception of the infant’s projective identifications whether they are felt by the infant to be good or bad (Bion 1962, p.36).
Bion’s theory of thinking describes the mother’s containing function, where she is able to take in and manage whatever the baby puts into her, be it hate or love, think about it and about what it does to her. However, Parker’s claim that containment of the baby’s feelings allows the mother to ‘reverie about herself’ (p. 98) fails to fully grasp the concept, making ‘reverie’ sound more like narcissism. I would argue that the following dramatic description by the American psychoanalyst, James Grotstein (1985), more accurately captures Bion’s meaning:

Bion’s conception (of containment) is of an elaborated primary process activity which acts like a prism to refract the intense hue of the infant’s screams into the components of the colour spectrum, so to speak, so as to sort them out and relegate them to a hierarchy of importance and of mental action. Thus containment for Bion is a very active process which involves feeling, thinking, organizing, and acting (Grotstein 1985, p. 134).

Grotstein’s description inspires this line in the artefact:

**MOTHER:** Do something! The baby’s yelling blue murder!

**FATHER:** Can’t you sort her out? (Act two, Scene 1).

Here, through her unconscious choice of words, the fictional mother shows that she recognizes the aggression in her baby’s cry but, when she feels unable to respond appropriately, she knows that the father may have the capacity to contain the baby’s distress. Despite her own struggles she ensures that the baby is not left alone or behind; she understands that the baby is the key, ‘the map’ (Act three, Scene 3) to help her find out what she needs to know.

Similarly, Daphne de Marneffe (2005), a clinical psychologist writing about women’s desire to care for their children, seems able to keep the infant in her mind. She sees maternal ambivalence exhibited at the social level and bizarrely played out in the ‘Mommy wars’ (The Daily Beast 1990) between mothers who choose to stay at home and those who pursue a career. While she carefully avoids taking sides and rejects the ideal of a perfect mother, de Marneffe argues that a mother engaged in the work of caring for her children can feel a positive sense of achievement if she can think about what she is doing and why. Drawing on Parker’s work, and enlarging Winnicott’s ‘evocative image of a
transitional space’ (p. 140), she highlights the possibilities for the individual mother to learn and grow in her own unique way as she accepts and reflects upon her ambivalent feelings about herself and her child:

*A focal point for maternal ambivalence today is the underlying tension between the reality that motherhood has the potential to transform us, to change everything, and our complex reactions to that fact* (de Marneffe 2005, p. 124).

Acknowledging the early feminists and, more recently, Parker and de Marneffe, the American psychoanalyst, Barbara Almond (2010) explores maternal ambivalence and its acting out, warning that the more it is hidden the more dangerous it may become. Almond notes that a mother’s ambivalent feelings towards her infant are ‘normal, inevitable and ubiquitous phenomena’ (p. 2). Her chief concern is to name the ambivalence and encourage mothers to seek help if it bothers *them* but, despite devoting a chapter to the child’s point of view, she barely notices the infant. ‘The monster within’ (p. 54) may be a euphemism for the enormity of a mother’s negative feelings about her infant, referring to a monstrous part of herself, but it also refers to the infant as a monster in the eyes of mother. The fictional mother in the artefact plays with the word to give voice to her own ambivalent feelings about her baby:

*MOTHER: Yes my darling little monster* (Act two, Scene 4).

Psychoanalyst and academic, Joan Raphael-Leff (2010) is also critical of theories that idealize or denigrate the mother and points to Winnicott’s (1947) paper ‘Hate in the Countertransference’ as the first time maternal subjectivity is addressed in the psychoanalytic discourse. She believes that ‘psycho-social, economic and cultural factors [can] conspire to prevent a woman from fulfilling *her own intrapsychic maternal expectations*’ (p. 10, Raphael-Leff’s emphasis). I suggest that, although external factors certainly impact on a woman’s experience of mothering, this notion of conspiracy is unhelpful for mothers, who do not live in an ideal world, and who may already feel persecuted by their babies’ demands and their own sense of inadequacy. Perhaps Raphael-Leff means that reality ensures there is no such thing as a perfect mother; this is not clear. I would also argue that, while maternal expectations may be unarticulated
(unless invited by someone who can hear them), they are not unconscious. Nevertheless, Raphael-Leff is able, in her conclusion, to acknowledge that the infant has a vital claim on mother and thus returns us to the essential feature of ambivalence and of this thesis – relationship:

...a high discordance exists between the dramatically changed women’s expectations over the past 40 years and the needs of babies, unchanged over the millennia. Healthy ambivalence is an inevitable feature of such intersubjective experience – how it manifests in mothering is a function of both maternal orientations and contagious arousal by the child’s affective communications (Raphael-Leff 2010, p. 13).

Despite her rather clinical choice of words, Raphael-Leff manages to convey the agency of the infant and the state of mind of the mother as shared experience, one that forms the basis of this thesis.

What this brief survey of ambivalence shows, is the pervasive problem – in the literature, in the consulting room, and in writing the play – of being unable to think about infant and mother together. This difficulty is itself a symptom of ambivalence and one that, at times, leaves me in a position of not being able to write their voices; one is always shouting at / shutting out the other. The infant and her mother and father can be in competition or they can use the inevitable tension between their individual interests to help each other discover who they are.

When the writing is stuck, I look to Heaney (1996):

...the ability to start out on your own impulse is fundamental to the gift of keeping going upon your own terms, not to mention the even more fulfilling gift of getting started all over again...(Heaney 1996, n.p.)

This could be Winnicott (1960b) speaking about the True Self (p.148) and reminds me of the ebb and flow of both creative writing and relationships. I attempt to overcome my anxiety by starting again, giving voice to the ambivalence in the fictional characters and showing their struggle with feelings that we all share.

Once started, I find support from Milner (1950). She explains how she writes a little story about each sketch or painting and then looks again at her work in the
light of the story. In this way she is able to build up an understanding of the feelings behind, or in, the painting. I came to see that I might borrow this method as a way of thinking about the scenes in the play, a sort of script analysis. Painting has much in common with writing, and especially so when the writing is about a developing baby; here we see the unconscious at work, creatively active in both the subject and the process. Reading Milner (1950) helps me understand how, through my writing, I can risk making the unconscious conscious and communicate meaning to the reader. Before we look more closely at the play-script and meaning-making in the theatre, we consider, briefly, the role of the self in creative writing.

**The location of self**

As we saw in the preface, it all started with an idea to write a play about a baby. The play and its accompanying exegesis allow me to bring together the creative, intellectual and professional parts of my life in a meaningful way. However, while the project is informed by my experience, it is neither memoir nor case study. Yet I am in it; my feelings are in the words and I recognize the voices. How does this happen?

The link between the self and writing in literature has a long history. Initiated by de Montaigne (1580), with his distinctive philosophic essays, and made famous by Proust’s (1913) musings on subjective time and memory, it now features in a number of how-to-write texts that help us to ‘access and objectify our personal material’ (Hunt & Sampson 2006, p. 5). But which self are we talking about?

The Australian poet, Kevin Brophy (2009) suggests we are two selves:

> In the act of writing creatively we can conceive of ourselves as becoming a strange double-creature with one mind focused on our own particular self and another mind on making what we do a recognisable and even predictable act of literature (Brophy 2009, p. 68).

In contrast, the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney (1995) sees ‘nothing extraordinary about the challenge of being in two minds’ (p .202); after all, this is the basis of the baby / mother relationship, and, like the writer’s relationship between personal and public, is one which ‘must be negotiated and considered over and over again’ (Brophy, 2009, p. 68).
Summarizing a range of views from humanist and psychoanalytic to post-modern and neuro-scientific, creative writing academics and authors, Hunt and Sampson (2006) show that the concept of self is ‘difficult and much-contested’ (p. 9). They use the simple analogy of driving a car to describe the apparent contradiction of the self’s connection with, and distance from, the writing; they argue that ‘we have to lose our self-consciousness and be one with the car [writing]’ (p. 1) in order to move forward. They employ the concept of ‘reflexivity’ (p. 3), describing it as a ‘doubling’ (p. 4) of the self. In contrast to Brophy (2009), whose ‘strange double-creature’ (p. 68) sounds to me like something scary hiding under the bed, Hunt and Sampson’s ‘reflexivity’ (p. 4) is so light and perfect that it could be seen as magical thinking:

*It involves creating an internal space, distancing ourselves, as it were, so that we are both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ ourselves simultaneously and able to switch back and forth fluidly and playfully from one position to the other, giving ourselves up to the experience of ‘self as other’ whilst also retaining a grounding in our familiar sense of self* (Hunt & Sampson 2006, p. 4).

Although it suffers from over-simplification, we can see in this description the influence of Winnicott’s (1971) concept of transitional space (p. 41). While Hunt and Sampson suggest that we need to create an internal space as writers, Winnicott understands that the space is originally created *with the mother* (my emphasis) in infancy and is continually re-discovered and made use of as a creative space throughout life. The writer’s internal space is not created from scratch; it is found. By taking time to scratch around, and by taking the risk to scratch the surface, to look and feel inside, we can rediscover the creative, spontaneous impulse. To illustrate this point, the skin, described by the psychoanalyst, Esther Bick (1968), as a body boundary between inside and outside, gets a good scratch – literally and metaphorically – in the artefact:

BABY: scratch scratch

*cache-cache*

scratch scratch

*escondite*
The British psychoanalyst, Kenneth Wright (2009) makes an explicit connection with Winnicott to argue that art replaces the transitional object. While his focus is on visual art, Wright’s thesis is also relevant to creative writing. Rejecting Hanna Segal’s (1991) argument that artistic creation is a reparative act born
from guilt, Wright believes that making art is a productive move towards integration. He suggests that the creative process is one where the artist creates a form that is more sensitive than the actual mother, making use of it as ‘a kind of surrogate mother, [in order] to create an object that more fully contains and realizes the artist's self’ (p. 53).

We have seen, however, that the self is elusive. There is the self that is born and grows in relation to others: the self that acts upon others, the self that others make use of, and the self that reacts. We can present many aspects of self: a cognitive self, a psychoanalytic self, a dramatic self, a performative self, an experiential self, and an imagined self. These many incarnations may or may not find a place on the page, depending on the whim of the conscious, editing self or, indeed, the unconscious editing self. The transferential self, particularly alive in the theatre, plays an important role in the artefact. Some feelings are put into me as mother / midwife / psychotherapist / actor by others and they blend with my own. When, like Heaney (1980), I get my own ‘feel’ (p. 41) into the words, I can communicate those processed feelings as words and actions via the play, and share them with the reader / audience. The Modernist poet, Wallace Stevens (1942) put it another way, noting that the poet uses the power of his [sic] imagination to make reality suit his own purposes:

*He comes to feel that his imagination is not wholly his own but that it may be part of a much larger, much more potent imagination, which it is his affair to try to get at* (Stevens 1942, p.115).

Getting at this larger imagination was what interested Graham Little, writer, academic, and supervisor of my Master of Arts thesis (Hill 1995). Belfast-born but based in Melbourne, he found ways to combine his interests in politics, psychoanalysis and poetry in his writing, teaching, and distinctive television interviews. A lover of words, he used to say that you don’t know what you think until you write it down44, no doubt influenced by both Freud and Winnicott who, it seems, used writing as a way of elucidating or even discovering their ideas (Davis & Wallbridge 1981, p. xiii). In Freud’s time, it was considered courageous for a man of science to contradict himself in the service of knowledge, but art,

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44 Personal communication
like psychoanalysis, is used to working with contradictions. Milner reminds us
that it also requires courage:

\ldots genuine vision as an artist needed a kind of courage that was willing to
face all kinds of spiritual dangers\ldots seeing the truth of people and events
and things needed an act of the imagination; for the truth was never
presented whole to one's senses at any particular moment, direct
sensory experience was always fragmentary and had to be combined
into a whole by the creative imagination (Milner 1950, p. 14).

As Milner discovered with her painting, I find the play becoming something other
than what I originally planned; ditto the exegesis. The British literary critic, Frank
Kermode (1967) reassures me that 'Fictions... change as the needs of sense-
making change' (p. 36) at the same time as the American psychoanalyst,
Jerome Oremland (1997) reminds me of the ongoing and unpredictable
exchange between self-as-infant and self-as-mother: 'Developmentally, the
inner dialogue of creativity is a continuation of transitional functioning, a form of
object relatedness' (Oremland 1997, p. 81).

By spelling this out, Wright (2009) brings us back to the play:

\ldots in the same way that the infant 'created' the breast out of the adaptive
mother, so the artist creates his forms out of the raw medium by making
it conform to the pattern of his emerging sensibility. From this
perspective, the artist is supplicant and provider, baby and mother. In the
intensity of his creative passion, he resembles the baby in a state of
subjective need; through his medium, which he coaxes and attacks,
cajoles and forces to expression, he is the more or less adaptive mother
(Wright 2009, p. 47).

**The play**

Like the thesis, the play starts with the idea of a baby, desire, and a need to
know. In the play, memory and imagination are the key ingredients; in the
exegesis, we add thinking.

The beginning of the play is influenced by a production of Edgar Allan Poe's
'The Tell-Tale Heart' (1919), by Australian director Barrie Kosky (2010), where
the audience is provoked into a state of anxiety even before the action starts.
Kosky’s method was to dim the house lights so slowly that the blood-red stage curtain appeared to be swallowed up by the dark, and to sustain the discomforting darkness for what seemed like an eternity. Like Kosky’s production, this play also starts in dark silence but introduces an almost imperceptible foetal heartbeat gradually gaining volume to announce the unseen presence of the main character. The Chorus, whose sonnet rhythm mimics the heartbeat, prompts associations with Greek tragedy while hinting at what may lie ahead.

The first scene opens with a tango – a dance which highlights the couple’s sexual attraction while also exposing something raw and vulnerable. The title of the music – *Retrato de nana* / Grandmother’s portrait (Orquesta Típica Tangarte & Carlos Buono c. 2009) – is a reference to the physically absent yet emotionally present fictional grandmothers, creating a link between the past and the future.

The very loud foetal heartbeat at the start of the second scene announces the baby’s imminent arrival on stage where her movements convey both strength and vulnerability while the mother’s helplessness is emphasized by the almost unbearable, real-life sounds of labour. The baby’s senses are immediately alert but mother’s anxiety is evident. ‘You have to help me’ (Act one, Scene 2) may be seen as asking too much of her baby, or it may be her way of acknowledging the baby’s contribution to the relationship.

The fractured waltz highlights the difficulty of baby, mother and father finding their way in their new roles and, as we saw in the first chapter, the baby’s name, Iphigénie, reminds us of her strength as much as of her vulnerability.

In the third scene, the audience / observer sees and hears what the father cannot – the mother’s ambivalence. The mother looks to the audience / observer for understanding / reassurance / help with rhymes bound tight in an attempt to hold her self together, leaving the Chorus to explain. Alone at the end of Act one, and taking advantage of the audience / observer, the father struggles with his own, hitherto unacknowledged ambivalence. He almost discovers something vulnerable in himself before he defensively retreats into more controllable ‘technical knowledge’ (Habermas 1972) which helps him
ignore both his baby self and his own baby. The push and pull of the fictional baby’s ambivalence is not so coy and reaches a crescendo with a bite (Act two, Scene 3). This is a turning point for the baby, a significant moment in her history that also recalls mother’s history, and the last lines of a poem by the Australian poet, Graeme Kinross-Smith (2011):

That’s what history does –

*It bites us, then looks away.* (p. 91)

Throughout the play the receptive audience / observer is open to the baby’s communications via sounds, movements, and expressions, perhaps understanding the baby when the parents cannot see, hear or understand for themselves. What does the audience make of this?

**Looking for meaning**

In the previous chapter we made a link between illusion and play, the infant at the breast and the audience at the theatre. We described how, through illusion and play, the infant comes to experience and know inner and outer realities. We now look at what the theatre audience might experience and discover.

If not exactly a feed, theatre can provide us with nourishment, but is this an emotional feast or food for thought? The history of theatre is full of differing opinions. Plato disapproved of the emotional impact of drama on the populace but Aristotle applauded its dual role as emotional purgative and instructive medicine; Cicero and Shakespeare saw benefits in mirroring truth, while Goethe and the Romantics insisted that drama *should* arouse emotions in the audience (Courtney 1974). When Diderot (1758), the eighteenth century French philosopher, reacting against the exaggerated gestures and speech that played to the audience, advocated a less stylized approach to drama, he urged actors to pretend that the spectators do not exist:

*Imaginez, sur le bord du théâtre, un grand mur qui vous sépare du parterre; jouez comme si la toile ne se levait pas/ Imagine a great wall at the edge of the stage that separates you from the public; act as if the curtain had not been raised* (Diderot 1758, p. 231, my translation).
This imaginary boundary - now known as the fourth wall⁴⁵ – freed the audience from having to actively participate; by serving the illusion that the fiction was real, Diderot’s great wall aimed to enhance both emotional and intellectual engagement. It also changed the behaviour of a rowdy public. This innovation paved the way for Realism and Brecht’s Verfremdungseffekt / alienating effect, a theatrical device which downplays the emotional connection between audience and the actor in order to preference the consciously critical intellect (Bell 2008).

Artaud (1964) the enfant terrible/ wild child of theatre started his own revolt, determined to create a theatre where words were less important than gestures, and movement, and other theatrical effects. He wanted a theatre where anything was possible. His cry was anarchic, evoking the non-verbal, vertiginous state of infancy:

_Briser le langage pour toucher la vie, c’est faire ou refaire le théâtre …
Ceci amène à rejeter les limitations habituelles de l’homme, et à rendre infinies les frontières de ce qu’on appelle la réalité / To break down language in order to feel life is to make or remake theatre…This leads us to reject man’s normal limitations and to make the frontiers of so-called reality reach infinity_ (Artaud, 1964, p.19, my translation).

In this climate, Realism’s loyalty to creating an illusion of reality came to be seen as controlling and restricting audience participation. Anticipating current day performance art, the emotionally and often politically charged Happenings of the 1960’s tended to dissolve the space between actors and audience altogether, ‘destroying the boundaries between art and life’ (Glimcher 2012, p. 300). Since then, the fourth wall is no longer inviolate; it can be expanded, broken and mended, crashed through, or retained, depending on the needs of the production. Importantly, the decision to use or exclude the fourth wall rests with the director and actors; the audience may or may not play along.

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⁴⁵ This is ‘the space which separates a performer or performance from an audience’ and /or ‘the conceptual barrier between any fictional work and its viewers or readers’ (Oxford Dictionaries 2013).
The art historian, Michael Podro (2000) gives us another perspective on what might happen for the audience in the theatre space. While his explication of ‘imaginary presence’ (p. 63) relates to visual art, he could just as easily be describing what happens in the theatre or indeed, between the baby and her mother:

*For there to be an art – and this must mean an art for the viewer, as well as the painter – the viewer must be able to participate in something that is the outcome of the painter’s work and the painter must do something to make this possible, and he must do this not as an extra bonus but as integral to his own interest* (Podro 2000, p. 64).

What is at stake here is the potential for a genuine meeting of minds between artist and viewer. This does not mean that both minds have the same thoughts. Participation is not repetition, or even agreement; it is a freely given part of oneself while anticipating mutual benefit. Art does not exist without honest participation of the individual selves of the artist and the viewer. The work is uniquely significant and real for both and it is so, as Podro points out, thanks to the interplay of recognition and imagination. The artist gives form to something we recognize and through this recognition we can imagine what we see, exploring it in our own way and making our own connections. Podro links this recognition / imagination dynamic with Winnicott’s description of the mother / baby dynamic where the baby makes a sound which elicits mother’s response which, in turn, encourages their ‘conversation’ (Podro 2000, p. 72) to continue and grow. This is the very essence of the baby / mother relationship; it is how the baby comes to know herself and the outside world.

We have seen that the manipulation of space in the theatre has endeavoured to influence the emotional and / or the intellectual experience of the audience. The French theatre scholar, Anne Ubersfeld (1999), echoing Aristotle, points out that theatre does not work on one or the other, but both:

*…emotions trigger thoughts that in turn rekindle emotions…the spectator is made to experience something to which she or he is absolutely obliged to give meaning* (Ubersfeld 1999, p. 192).
Just as Ubersfeld appears to underestimate the willingness and agency of the spectator, we can sometimes fail to recognize the baby’s contribution to a relationship. Infant observation shows us the range and idiosyncratic variety of infants’ communication skills. As in the theatre, we need only to use our eyes and ears and hearts and minds.

Post-modern theatre claims that it does not aim to manipulate the audience. Instead, as the German theatre scholar, Erika Fisher-Lichte (1997) explains, it allows the audience to think what it likes or what it can: ‘the spectators are given back their right to spectate...Here it is understood and taken for granted that looking on is a creative act’ (Fisher-Lichte 1997, pp. 57-58). And, like infant observation, where the observer discovers a new way of being her / himself in the role, ‘The act of looking on proves here to be a creative act that gives birth to the identity of the onlooker’ (Fisher-Lichte 1997, p. 59).

However, the performative actions of both audience and infant observer involve more than looking. Both demand an openness to receive and think about what their senses perceive and what feelings accompany them. Just as the theatrical work is meaningless without an audience to give it meaning, the infant relies on her mother. The infant knows she exists by seeing herself reflected in the eyes of her mother, and the mother sees her importance to her infant confirmed by their mutual gaze, or not. The mother may see instead persecution or inadequacy or fear or rejection or hatred – her own feeling-experience magnified, as in the artefact: ‘She hates me’ (Act two, Scene 3). The father, when he is not looking at a screen, and the infant observer / audience provide another option for the infant, a benign, interested, and live presence looking on, creating her.

**The artefact and the baby**

The question that must now be addressed is: what have I created – text or a performance, baby or monster? Despite an early decision to focus on text, the writing took on some elements of performance, becoming a sort of hybrid, not one or the other but both. What did this mean? Was the artefact trying to do too much... or not enough? Worse, was it pretending to be what it was not? Plans were made and structures built but things happened without warning: words
pushed in where they were not invited, pulling others into foreign shapes, and feelings took the lead, lapping intellect that fought hard not to come last. Finding and making meaning was always the motivation.

The Israeli academic, Eli Rozik (2008), writing about how meaning is generated in theatre, defends the role of text but describes it as deficient, like a musical score that must be played. Less attached to text is the German theatre scholar, Hans-Thies Lehmann (2007) who contends that, following the revolutionary Artaud (1964), drama (text) and theatre (performance) have become estranged. He describes a post-dramatic theatre that is no longer subordinate to the text, where the stage is both ‘a beginning and a point of departure, not a site of transcription / copying’ (Lehmann 2007, p. 32). The Australian academic, Margaret Hamilton (2008) puts it more simply, calling the recent changes in theatre practice a ‘shift from text-based dramaturgy to a dramaturgy of image and sound’ (p. 3), uncannily describing how the artefact of this thesis took on two forms. She welcomes Lehmann’s concept of post-dramatic theatre as it admits a new sort of theatre text, one that sits more comfortably with contemporary, hybrid forms of theatre (Hamilton 2008, p. 16).

Lehmann (2007) joins Fisher-Lichte (1997) to argue that spectators are liberated by the new medium:

The spectators are no longer just filling in the gaps in a dramatic narrative but are asked to become active witnesses who reflect on their own meaning-making and who are also willing to tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning (Lehmann 2007, p. 6).

However the notion that spectators were always passive is contentious and calls to mind an out-dated image of a passive baby, unable to meaningfully communicate. If we persist with the baby analogy we can also see how Lehmann’s theory disregards the possibility of unconscious meaning-making that is enabled and enhanced by the dynamic relationship between live performers and live audience, with or without text, an argument we return to in the next chapter.

Despite this argument, the artefact must be grateful for a label that confers status. Otherwise, the hybrid may have been called a monster! The freedom of
post-dramatic theatre allowed me to let the play grow organically. As the play took shape I realized that the baby's word-play text was limited. Despite the 'liveness' of recorded baby sounds my fear was that the parents' issues would dominate and that the audience, like the parents, would lose sight (and mind) of the baby. It became clear that choreography was required to emphasize the baby's physical and emotional presence, to allow her to move in her own way, not only at the behest of her parents. I reasoned that this is the work of Infant Observation: to mentally note the fine details of the baby's body in action, her breathing and her skin tone, her sucking and her evacuations, to look where she looks, to hear what she hears, and to imagine what she feels.

Giving the audience the role of Infant Observer meant that I had to overcome my disinclination to tell actors how to move; I needed to provide quite specific, dance-like directions to assist the actor playing the baby. While I am encouraged by Austrian playwright Peter Handke (1972) who gives whole pages of minutely detailed directions in his play, Kaspar, I do not wish to be as demanding as Samuel Beckett (1986), famous for his precise, heaven-help-you-if-you-ignore-them directions. Directors and actors may have a fairly free rein with the actions of Chorus and parents, but the baby, essentially non-verbal, is a special case; I need to be allowed to control the greater part of her representation to let her show herself. Does this make me a controlling mother or an attentive one?

The American choreographer, dancer, and writer, Susan Foster (1996) tells us that 'choreography is psychic' (p. xi), that the body of the choreographer creates movements from a deep, emotional source that is communicated and shared by dancers and audience. This view is similar to that of the French-Swiss playwright, Valère Novarina (1996) who argues that the physical act of writing links the corporeality of the writer, performer, and audience (p. 108). My hope is that the reader of the play-text will find it helpful to see, in the mind's eye, the baby's communicative gestures and to feel, in the gut, the skin, and the heart, the range of emotions expressed via the baby's body, 'to breathe within

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46 When Deborah Warner's direction of Footfalls at the Garrick Theatre in 1994 contravened Beckett's instructions, his Estate forced the show to close and banned Warner from Beckett productions (Roberts 2000, pp.15-16).
another's body' (Novarina 1996, p. 108). As for directors, actors, designers and audience, I have tried to write 'an informed performance text' (Roberts 2000, p.15), in the full knowledge that only a live performance will tell what a performance can show.

The obvious missing link between text and performance is, of course, the actual presence of the live body doing something. The dance metaphor that moves through the artefact emphasizes a physical and emotional presence, and a history that cannot be ignored. The American academic and performance curator, André Lepecki (2004) acknowledges the pull of history when he returns to a seventeenth century text on choreography in order to focus on *la présence du corps* / the presence of the body in contemporary dance. Like the practice of inscribing the skin with tattoos to confer identity – or even existence – via a visible, conscious history (Arp 2012), dance can inscribe ‘mnemonic traces… onto the body and the unconscious’ (Lepecki 2004, p. 4). The audience can connect physically and emotionally with the dancing body in a way that mimics the observers’ relationship to the baby in an Infant Observation.

The French dance historian and critic, Laurence Louppe (2010) has described dance as ‘the body’s poetry’ (p. 5); it may be understood as the body’s expression of a True Self. In this chapter we have explored the origins of this creative self, its rediscovery in the writing and its corporeality. Like a child learning to walk, with exploratory steps we have struggled with ambivalence into a thinking space where words and ideas can be found. The Irish author, John Banville (1993) referred to the work of writing as ‘making little monsters walk’ (p. 112). In this thesis, the writer, together with the fictional baby, mother, father have confronted and tamed a number of monsters as they searched for something good, and yet, as the artefact shows, normal ambivalence likes to keep a few under the bed.

We have seen that the artefact, like the baby, while living in the present moment, has links with the past and the future, to emerge as a hybrid performance text where parallels between unconscious process and the theatre / dance narrative are drawn and discovered. The reader and audience members, as infant observers, can also be connected to the past and to the
future, by finding personal meaning in their subjective engagement with what they see, hear, and feel.

To conclude this chapter, we borrow the French psychoanalyst, André Green’s (1987) definition of how the psyche makes sense of the past. We use it here as a way of describing the experience of writing the artefact and this chapter, the experience of the fictional baby, mother, and father, and the experience of the reader / audience / observer. It is:

...a combination of what has happened, what has not happened, what could have happened, what has happened to someone else but not to me, what could not have happened, and finally - to summarize all these alternatives about what has happened - a statement that one would not have even dreamed of as a representation of what really happened (Green 1987, pp. 2-3).

The notion of the play as a dream was introduced in the first chapter but is not made explicit in the performance text. As Green (1987) has pointed out, it is not clear what really happened. The next chapter takes this idea further, to wonder how we know what is real. We consider the use of technology and virtual space in the theatre and in relationships as we ponder its effect on the infant’s sense of reality.
CHAPTER FOUR: The Rules of the Game

*The mind... is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality* – Wallace Stevens

*Creativity does not take place at all; it is a reality that unfolds before the dreamer’s eyes* – Bert O. States

*Without wi-fi you can’t really do anything* – Lee, 13 year old boy

How and when did we begin? Was it the old-fashioned twinkle in our father’s eye or the idealized angel of our mother’s dreams? Do we owe our existence to a wish, a project, a medical procedure, an act of love, or lust, or violence, and does this beginning foretell the future? Are we, like Oedipus, play-things of the gods: unwitting punters in a game whose twists and turns have been pre-programmed? Both science and the arts show us that this game of life is full of possibilities. Like the Oracle of Delphi, their offerings contain enough ambiguity for us to make our own interpretations and to create our own future. They give us hope that we can beat the odds and fool the gods, unmask their omnipotence and show them up as imperfect beings, who, like us, can change their minds, the rules, their loves and hates, and hence their lives.

In this chapter we grapple with the slippery concepts of reality and illusion. In a post-modern, technology driven i (me) world, how do we know what is real and what does this mean for babies, their parents, and writing about them for the theatre? What happens to the infant / theatre metaphor when technology steps in? We look at developments in dance, neuroscience, performance, and psychoanalysis to see how body and mind work together and how they relate to other minds and bodies. We wonder how feeling, thinking, dreaming, and knowing are shared in the new millennium?

We start here with the body, just as the play starts with the heartbeat, although, as we will see, not everyone agrees that this is the starting point in life.

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47 Popular culture cleverly plays with this notion in films like *Back to the Future (1985)* and *The Truman Show (1998)* while computer games like *Second Life* allow individuals to virtually live a life that they consciously create and re-create as avatars of themselves.
Being

Is it at birth that we start to really exist? Anyone observing the moment when a solid, slithery, purple-blue being quietly squeezes out of her mother's body to take a breath, can be in no doubt that the baby is. For many parents, despite absent periods, positive blood tests and scans, swelling abdomen, and foetal gymnastics that simultaneously startle and reassure, a baby does not seem real until she is born. Even 4D ultrasound technology that ‘totally captures the wonder of your baby-to-be, in real time and in colour’ (Early Image 2012, author’s emphasis) admits that the image is not yet a baby but a baby-to-be and although the Early Image web page (2012) urges parents to ‘Meet your baby in Ultravision today’ we know this is not actually a meeting but rather a one-way peep-show where the baby-to-be is ‘captured’ as an unwitting object. Furthermore, despite the suggestion – put forward by various providers of commercial foetal ultrasonography – that ultrasounds can facilitate bonding, there appears to be no measurable impact on levels of maternal-foetal attachment (Di Pietro 2010).

Routine ultrasounds, now offered to most pregnant women in the developed world, tend to objectify the foetus. Originally designed as a screen for abnormalities, obstetric ultrasounds have been described as ‘biotourist performances [where] sonographers effectively transform the fetus [sic] into an entertaining baby [and] parents rehearse conventional scripts’ (Kroløkke 2011, p. 15). In contrast, the Italian neuro-psychiatrist, Alessandra Piontelli (1992), whose research demonstrates a continuity of foetal and infant behaviour, employs ultrasonography to encourage the sort of observation that avoids voyeurism. Using techniques that have more in common with Infant Observation and parent / infant therapy, Piontelli (1992) thoughtfully engages with the parents and their fantasies while she imaginatively speaks for the foetus. The artefact in this thesis performs a similar role for the infant.

Babies live in the imagination of their parents long before they are born, and well before they are conceived. Indeed, we all carry several children in our minds:
...the child one was – and even more the ‘marvellous child’ one was not – for one’s parents; the child one might want to have; and the child one is still, everyday, when one thinks of what one might have been and done (Gunn 1988, p. 45).

This can create some confusion when an actual baby arrives, one who is well equipped to feel but not yet able to think. The new baby’s well-being may then depend on the parents’ capacity to accept her as someone who is not a perfect match for the idealized child who lives in their respective minds (McDougall 1986). Opportunities for the baby to develop her own rich imaginative world may rely on parents who can identify with her feelings without re-living their own (Musser et al. 2012), and, as we see in the performance text, family histories, unconsciously carried, can haunt them all (Fraiberg et al. 1975). When the text and the audience combine to support the parents ‘in creative introspection... the spells cast by family ghosts can... be broken so that the child’s own nature can be expressed’ (Cramer 1992, p. 196).

The performance text shows the mother struggling to differentiate her baby-self from her actual baby while the father is shackled with an absence, an unconscious awareness of what he was not. Between them we see a baby who needs to be seen, heard and thought about as a unique entity in order to be, to dream, and to make up her mind; it is here that the audience, as observer of the baby’s spontaneous gestures, has a role to play.

**The spontaneous gesture**

Birth presents the physical baby, as distinct from the imagined one, no longer part of the mother’s body but an individual with her own body. Nevertheless, for both baby and mother, the body is not only biological; it becomes ‘a psychosocial construction; a cocoon spun of intrapsychic desires, unconscious representations, and culturally generated symbols and illusions’ (Raphael-Leff 2006, p. 148).

Despite the existence of an actual baby, the imaginary baby may persist, impeding or even taking over the real baby who may respond by giving up, abandoning any attempt to assert herself. This despair may be translated into illness or poor feeding and failure to thrive; it may also present as passive
compliance – the idealized, but depressed, so-called good baby. On the other hand, the actual baby may, like the fictional baby in the artefact, refuse to give up, protesting loud and long as she strives to feel a sense of continuity and establish her true self. (Winnicott 1960a) gave the True Self upper case status to stress its importance, defining it as ‘The inherited potential which is experiencing a continuity of being, and acquiring in its own way and at its own speed a personal psychic reality and a personal scheme’ (p. 46). This scheme refers to the way in which each infant organizes and uses her psychic reality to make it her subjective dance.

The spontaneous gesture of the true self is also the preoccupation of Artaud (1964). He writes approvingly of Balinese theatre where gesture is ‘la Parole d’avant les mots / speech²⁸ prior to words’ (p. 91) that ‘à peine nous sépare encore du chaos / only just keeps us from chaos’ (p. 98). The fictional baby’s movements evoke this desperate need, a need we all share, to be connected, and to be in touch with something that feels real. The great dancer, Nijinsky could be speaking for the fictional baby when, in a film by the Australian director, Paul Cox (2002), he declares: ‘You will understand me when you see me dance’.

Like Artaud, early modern dance was concerned with personal psychic reality. Seeking to distance itself from the visual beauty of classical ballet and the expressionism of interpretive dance, modern dance aimed to communicate ‘an utterly personal and individual expression of deeply felt experience’ (Cohen 1969, p. 12). The American innovators, Martha Graham and her contemporary Doris Humphrey, both dancers and choreographers, developed different methods to communicate this experience. American dancer and writer, Selma Jeanne Cohen (1969) explains that Graham’s focus was the breath as it affects the body, contracting and expanding the torso, while Humphrey was more concerned with how the body, affected by gravity, moves in space. Cohen’s summary of their distinctive styles recalls the differing clinical positions of Klein and Bowlby – previously articulated in chapter two – and reminds us of the

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²⁸ By giving la Parole an upper case ‘P’, Artaud appears to make great claims for the power of theatre with a biblical reference: ‘Au commencement était la Parole, et la Parole était avec Dieu, et la Parole était Dieu / In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).
sometimes difficult task of uniting our internal and external worlds: ‘Where Graham depicted the conflict of man within himself, Humphrey was concerned with the conflict of man with his environment’ (Cohen 1969, p. 8). The artefact uses movement and dance to address both worlds when words have not yet been formed or are not enough.

Modern dance has, to a degree, moved away from a deliberate evocation of emotion, evolving in ways that sometimes seek to shock, startle, and challenge audiences. The video by Sydney-based artist, Mikala Dwyer (Stephens 2013) and the Australian Balletlab [sic] dancers’ public performance of a very basic bodily function\(^{49}\) reminds us of the great divide between mind and body by taking us back to one of our earliest experiences of connecting inside with outside. There is also something here about the shared dream / nightmare of shitting in public, where one’s deepest feelings are displayed for all to see. As we saw in the previous chapter, this is a risk creative work must take if it is to produce a gift worth sharing with its audience.

Dance may have evolved – or perhaps regressed – but the baby’s first experience remains the same: at birth, each one of us must, like the dancers Humphrey and Graham, accommodate gravity and master breathing. Authentic communication has mother spontaneously supplanting gravity as our ‘central organizing force’ (Alvarez 2012, p. 192) as we take in what we need and expel what we don’t. To this end, the fictional baby takes her cue from those early creators of modern dance to communicate primitive emotion; from the first gasp, she stands or falls on her mother’s capacity to hold her.

‘Holding’ the baby, according to Winnicott (1960b) is both a physical and an intra-psychic phenomenon. The mother, unconsciously, has the baby in her mind as she attends to the baby’s physical needs. For the baby, mother’s state of mind is taken in like milk. In the play’s early scenes the fictional baby’s unintegrated state is matched by her mother’s fragmented one. Their jerky and uncoordinated dance reflects a different ‘point of view’ (Cohen 1969, p. 14) to the observing audience and, feeling the discomfort, each audience / observer is led to reflect upon her / his own perspective.

\(^{49}\) One wit, who must remain anonymous, commented that the dancers simply replaced ‘emotion’ with ‘a motion’!
We have seen that an observer knows the baby exists but how does the baby know she exists if her mother is falling apart? Does the baby risk becoming ‘no such thing’? The thoughtful observer – someone other than the mother or father – may play a part. Studies from infant observation (Miller et al. 1989) suggest that the baby becomes aware of the observer as someone who is interested in her, and some (Houzel 2010; Rhode 2012 ) suggest that the observer may – as we saw in the previous chapter – provide a protective or therapeutic function by being reliably attentive. Infant observation is not merely looking; rather, by acknowledging the baby’s physical and psychic reality, the observer may provide a ‘holding environment’ (Winnicott 1960b) when the mother or father cannot.

Nevertheless,” looking” is essential. With visual information making up half of all the brain’s sensory input, and face perception occupying ‘more space in the brain than any other figural representation’ (Kandel 2012a, p. 301), we can understand the baby’s demonstrated preference for looking at faces (Goren et al. 1975) and the significance of observation as an activity. What the infant sees, what each parent sees, and what the observer / audience see are not simply snapshots. Because ‘the brain is not a camera but a Homeric storyteller’ (Kandel 2012a, p. 351), what we see is coloured by a past that is full of both shared and individual creative stories. In the performance text, where the parents are preoccupied with their own, unresolved concerns, we see the baby relying on the audience to see and hear her, to feel her joy and her pain, and to think about what that might mean for her and for them. Dance adds a visceral layer to the communicated feeling.

**The brain and the mind**

What can neuroscience tell us about reality and illusion?

Darwin (1872) has shown that humans, like animals, belong to the process of evolution. Importantly, as the Canadian psychologist, Steven Pinker (2008) points out, Darwin anticipated our current knowledge by demonstrating that not only the body but also the mind is part of this evolutionary development. The English neuroscientist, Christopher Frith (2007) elaborates:
By hiding from us all the unconscious inferences that it makes, our brain creates the illusion that we have direct contact with objects in the physical world. And at the same time our brain creates the illusion that our own mental world is isolated and private. Through these two illusions we experience ourselves as agents, acting independently upon the world. But, at the same time, we can share our experiences of the world. Over the millennia this ability to share experience has created human culture that has, in its turn, modified the functioning of the human brain. By seeing through these illusions created by our brain, we can begin to develop a science that explains how the brain creates the mind (p. 17).

Yet the quest to come up with such an explanation seems to be at odds with neuroscience’s own findings. If studies (Kandel 2012a, pp. 365-377) of the connections between the amygdala and the pre-frontal cortex in the brain show that emotions and cognition work in tandem, surely we can then say that the mind creates the brain in the same breath as the brain creates the mind; a sort of continuous feedback-loop allows them to create each other. Indeed, when the neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio (1999) concludes that there ‘is a circle of influence – existence, consciousness, creativity – and the circle closes’ (p. 316) he comes close to child psychotherapist, Anne Alvarez (2012), who, taking a more scenic view, describes the mind as ‘a vast panorama of thought-about feelings and felt-about thoughts’ (p. 193).

The essential difference here is one of relationships. Frith (2007) may have acknowledged that shared experience affects brain function but Damasio’s closed circle exemplifies the individual stance of neuroscience just as the wide open space of Alvarez’s panorama allows for the formation of relationships, the core business of psychoanalysis. French psychotherapist, Lisa Ouss-Ryngaert and psychiatrist, Bernard Golse (2010) argue that the potential is there for each to inform the other and that a ‘rapprochement between neuroscience and psychoanalysis [would allow] a new understanding’ (p. 303), but this is no easy task.

It is shared experience that is the focus of this thesis; as we have seen, it is the birthplace of creativity and without it there is no baby. The artefact and exegesis work together, one feeling, the other thinking, to create a shared experience
that we come to know through the body via the physical communication of the
dance and the senses, and through the mind, as the exegesis makes
connections across disciplines.

The infant knows the world through her senses and what they tell her. Her
senses are accompanied by feelings which she comes to know through
experience. According to Frith (2007), ‘if no sensory signals are available then
our brain fills in the missing information’ (p. 135). However because an infant’s
brain is still developing she cannot always fill in the missing information. What
does this feel like for her? Is it a gap, a hole to fall into, an empty nothingness?
If she is left with nothing she cannot know that she exists; it must be terrifying.
For the fictional baby the gap is sometimes a monster, sometimes a state of
falling. If the gap is too great she may withdraw (Puura et al. 2010); if not, she
may dream, tracing the mother’s body (Bollas 2009, p. 43) with her mind.

**Dreaming**

Dreaming may be what babies do best. The American neuroscientist, William
Klemm (2012) explains that the rapid eye movement (REM) sleep that is
associated with dreaming takes up much more of infants’ sleeping time – about
half – than of adults – about one-fifth – because REM sleep stimulates brain
development and teaches the brain how to wake itself up. He understands
dreams simply as ‘nature's way of enhancing the life experience’ (p. 73); he
could be describing the theatre.

Dreaming is more scientific for the American psychiatrist and dream researcher,
Allan Hobson (2005), who invents a skewed syllogism to justify his formulation:

*The study of dreaming is inextricably linked to the science of sleep. The
science of sleep is inextricably linked to neurobiology. Thus, the science
of dreaming is inextricably linked to neurobiology* (p. 142).

If we follow Hobson’s logic but make some substitutions, we arrive at a very
different conclusion: The study of dreaming is inextricably linked to the
unconscious. The unconscious is inextricably linked to psychoanalysis. Thus,
the study of dreaming is inextricably linked to psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis has moved on from Freud’s (1900) original interpretation of
dreams as a form of disguise or censorship. The American psychoanalyst,
Thomas Ogden (2004) explains that, for Freud, the work of dreams was to bring parts of the unconscious to consciousness, but for Bion, dreaming 'allows conscious lived experience to become unconscious [hence] available to the unconscious for the psychological work of generating dream-thoughts and for the dreaming of those thoughts' (Ogden 2004, p.1356).

The performance text is suggestive of a dream that is more psychoanalytic than neuro-scientific in its conception and development. We wonder if it is real. For this writer, the experience of writing, itself a real experience, perhaps owes more to Bion than to Freud. The exegesis provides an opportunity for a rapprochement between the conscious and unconscious work of the brain and the mind. However, while neuroscience appears to be quite clear about the interplay of reality and illusion, psychoanalytic thinking, like the performance text and its characters, is not so certain.

**Psychic being**

Freud (1933) described the conscious ego as the structured part of the psyche, developing from the unconscious id, the unorganized primitive part he called ‘a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations’ (p. 106). This image suggests something magically sinister like a witch’s brew or Dante’s inferno of souls suffering uncontrollable urges. It takes us to a dark, frightening place, a place of monsters, demons and ghosts we know we must face if we are to be fully alive and creatively real. In the performance text this is a place visited by all the characters in turn.

As we saw in Chapter two, by developing Freud’s ideas, Klein came to understand that an infant’s mind is made up of unconscious phantasies of relationships with objects. Here, a phantasy is ‘the psychic representative of instinct’ (Isaacs, cited in Hinshelwood 1994, p. 32), and objects can be good or bad, located inside or outside the infant, and first experienced as bodily sensations. Hunger and the breast are typical objects. The following, Kleinian description of the hungry infant could be describing the fictional baby:

*If the desired breast is not forthcoming and the baby’s aggression develops to the limits of its bodily capacities…(the) child is overwhelmed by choking; its eyes are blinded with tears, its ears deafened, its throat*
sore; its bowels gripe, its evacuations burn it. The aggressive anxiety-
reaction is far too strong a weapon in the hands of such a weak ego; it
has become uncontrollable and is threatening to destroy its owner
(Riviere 1936, p. 44).

The bad and good objects are not imaginary for the infant, but are experienced
as real and powerful, as malevolent or benevolent. ‘Their malevolence is the
experience we may (later) call “terror”; their benevolence is the experience we
may (later) call “bliss”’ (Hinshelwood 1994, p. 34). If we believe that the infant’s
unconscious phantasies are ‘the primary experiences from which the rest of life,
mind and development starts’ (Hinshelwood 1994, p. 28), we can understand
the need to give infants a voice; we can also recognize the personal
significance of our own infant experience.

While Winnicott recognized the internal psychic struggle described by Klein, he
preferred to emphasize the mediating role of the infant’s immediate environment
which was usually the mother. Winnicott’s (1971) view is that the mother is
responsible for helping her baby to know what is real. She does this by her
physical presence – initially holding the foetus in utero, and then with her voice,
gaze, and touch – and by her presence of mind. By thinking about her baby and
what baby may need, by being attentive to those needs and, at first, by
responding well enough for the baby to think, for example, that the baby has
created the breast that appears whenever the baby imagines it, the mother
allows an illusion that helps to ward off the monstrous terror that seems to
threaten the baby’s very existence. The mother is not consciously aware that
she is showing her baby that ‘our perceptions are fantasies that coincide with
reality’ (Frith 2007, p. 135).

After a time, in the mother-and-baby’s unconscious time, it is up to the mother
to thoughtfully disillusion her baby, to allow a manageable space between what
the baby imagines and what the mother provides. In this space, the baby comes
to know, and to create, her own reality. If allowed, the baby discovers a ‘not-

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50 An important distinction exists between Freud and Winnicott in their understanding of the
infant’s capacity: Freud suggests that the baby ‘hallucinates’ the breast while Winnicott has the
baby ‘create’ it from the baby’s ‘innate primary creativity’ (Davis & Wallbridge, 1987, p.41).
me’, an object that she uses as a transition between herself and her mother (Winnicott 1951); she also discovers that she is and that mother is, that they are separate beings in a shared communicative space.

While this sounds all very well, every parent, no matter how sensitive, knows that maintaining the illusion can be exhausting, and that then managing the shift from illusion to disillusion can be fraught, involving anxiety and pain for all concerned. The fictional family in the performance text makes this very clear. Each baby-mother dyad must find its own way, and while some families may need assistance, prescriptive directions and training strategies fail to recognize that every family is unique, individual babies develop at their own pace, and each parent was once a crying baby.

The controversial practice of controlled crying – or controlled comforting, as it is sometimes known – teaches parents to leave a baby to cry for precisely timed intervals as a way of training the baby to sleep. Parents are instructed to ‘Set your own intervals of time based on how long you think you can manage’ (Raising Children Network 2012, my emphasis). One could question the research finding that controlled crying does no harm (Price et al. 2012) on scientific grounds, but the Australian cartoonist and poet, Michael Leunig (2012) challenges the research conclusion much more effectively:
Leunig’s cartoon gets to the heart of the matter: controlled crying may block out painful sounds and thus render the adult’s reality more bearable but it does so at the expense of the vulnerable infant; she may indeed learn to be quiet and go to sleep but, at the same time, she may also learn that her reality is one where she has no voice that can be heard, no agency to make things happen, and no safe space to grow her imagination. When faced with the reality of having to ignore her baby’s cries the exhausted fictional mother in the play struggles with the feelings aroused by the counter-intuitive behaviour controlled crying demands. Eventually she is able to identify enough with her baby to protect them both from a training regime that serves to silence authentic communication and stifle discovery of the true self.

The baby starts ‘to be’ in her own mind when she starts to relate to another. Bollas (2009) supports this view and, like Winnicott (1971), gives the mother the main role, noting that she ‘encodes in her thousands of ministrations an implicit theory of being and relating that constitutes part of … “the unthought known”’ (Bollas, 2009, p. 86), that is, of accepted experience.

**Knowing**

Do we only know things through bodily experience? A *Body of Knowledge – The Anatomy Lesson* (The Ian Potter Museum of Art 2012) highlights how, throughout history, both anatomists and artists have been interested in exploring the body to reveal life below the surface, to ‘see’ what could not be seen. To help us know *what* we are, anatomists peel back skin and dissect flesh but to help us know *who* we are, artists remove scales from eyes, pierce hearts, bemuse brains, make blood run cold, and send shivers up our spines.

Neuroscientists, like the anatomists, work on the basis that the body is the key to knowledge. Kandel (2012a) believes that ‘by encouraging a focus on one mental process at a time, reductionism can expand our vision and give us new insights into the nature and creation of art’ (p. xvii). As we saw in chapter two, his well-meaning but doubtful scientific quest attempts to reduce creativity to simply another, presumably measurable, function of the brain. By offering
explanations of art in scientific terms he sees the brain as a computer, ‘a creativity machine’ (p. 301) that will, in time, be able to crack the enigma of the art code. We must ask ourselves what happens then? Will art continue to be a form of unconscious communication between artist and beholder or will it become a computer-generated, contrived and manipulated arouser of emotions? Risking the ‘blinded by “romantic illusion”’ (Kandel 2012a, p. 452) label reserved for neuroscience sceptics, I suggest that infinite intelligence cannot, by itself, make art for human beings; rather, it is the human capacity for error, for imperfect but genuine engagement between living things, that makes art. The British psychoanalyst, Hanna Segal (1991), continuing a theme that runs through the artefact, draws on ancient Greece to emphasize this point, noting that the flawed proportions of classical Greek art ‘are essential to make the work feel alive’ (p. 93). Art risks the imaginary in the midst of uncertainty; can science prove that?

**What does the baby know?**

Baby’s dependence on mother continues long after birth. Primary maternal preoccupation (Winnicott 1956) allows the mother and baby to be in a shared feeling space, where they can be together and dream together. The umbilical cord may be cut but the physical and emotional connection continues. By maintaining an illusion the mother lets her baby experience the feeling of creating something good. For the baby there is perhaps no difference at first between being and dreaming; it may be more about being held together or falling apart, of having a sense of existing or not existing. In the beginning the baby’s existence is confirmed by the relationship with her mother and the relationship between her senses and the objects she meets. In the performance text we see the fictional baby falling, struggling to create something good as her mother’s infant experience threatens to take over. The fictional baby finds her fist, the light, her soft blanket, and her moving body for herself. Her father helps her find solid ground, something to hold on to, through touch – as she grasps his finger and when he strokes her cheek – and through imitative play.

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51 In fact, the brain was used as a model for constructing the digital computer (Shepherd 2010, p. 218).
The baby brings with her an evolutionary and phylogenetic inheritance, knowledge gathered from the experience of her ancestors that is not conscious knowledge (Freud 1913, pp. 157-161); it is there to be used nevertheless. Freud (Hoffer 1992) noted that neuroses and psychoses belonged to this inheritance; like the infant, this is something of which the fictional characters in the artefact are quite unaware, and yet the mother knows that she is searching for something, with her plaintive ‘I need to know’ in the first scene and repeated throughout the performance text. The audience too is connected, through identification with the characters and by the feelings they arouse. Like the baby, the theatre audience is in the present, having an experience; thinking, and knowing what they think, may come later and indirectly. Being open to the experience allows thoughts to arrive. Bollas (2009) suggests that ‘experiencing the object is a form of thinking’ and Bion (1983a), speaking of the adult analysand, proposes that the psyche is forced to think when it is confronted with a thought. Where, for Bion (1983a), K signifies the process involved in getting to know something, ultimate reality is O, a thing

...that can be ‘become’ but it cannot be ‘known’. It is darkness and formlessness but it enters the domain K when it has evolved to a point where it can be known through knowledge gained by experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically [sic] (Bion 1983a, p. 26).

The fictional baby reinforces Bion’s idea by giving O a physical dimension. Her orchestral hand gestures and the apparent mimicking of her father’s vowel sounds play with Bion’s concept of reality.

This method of waiting, opening oneself to the possibility of thoughts coming, has been well described by Milner (1950), in Chapter three, and constitutes the very essence of creative writing, of science, of any creative endeavour, including the process of becoming a person. Something similar happens in the theatre where the audience sees, hears and feels something that resonates, that they know but did not know they knew until they recognized the feeling or the sound or the sight of it, on stage.
The deepest kind of recognition...occurs when we say to ourselves: “I know I have never seen that before but I know it is true.”... It occurs when the action onstage taps the dark part of our imaginations and becomes the mirror of our dreams. This is what recognition in the theatre aspires to be: re-cognition – thinking, or imagining, again (Levy 1972, n.p.).

Do we live or do we dream? What is real and what is illusion? In the theatre we do not have to answer the question; we do not even have to ask. Like an eager infant, we go to the theatre to have an experience. Winnicott’s potential space allows for reality and illusion to harmoniously co-exist without being questioned. That is the paradox we live with or must live with if we are to enable thoughts to have a place, to travel, to be dreamed and to be discovered. We might say that thoughts live in potential space and it takes a relationship to make them known and to give them meaning. So, when a philosopher asks: ‘How comes the world to be here at all instead of the nonentity which might be imagined in its place? ... from nothing to being there is no logical bridge’ (James 1916, p. 756), we suggest that, for the baby, her mother is the bridge\(^{52}\). When we are no longer babies, we can go to the theatre. As the American academic and author, Anthony Abbott (1998) explains, the theatre is ‘a vital lie’ (p. xi):

\textit{The audience comes to the theatre in pursuit of the ghost of Dionysus; the audience seeks rebirth through participation in the theatrical event. “The theatre is in reality the genesis of creation”, says Artaud. And what do we create? If the event itself is rich and vital enough, we create ourselves} (Abbott 1989, p. 205).

However, thanks to technology, the theatrical event is changing and our means of participation are changing with it. What sort of lies are we telling and what sort of selves are we creating?

\[^{52}\text{Although for some, the baby is given this role. See, for example, \textit{Imaginäre Brücke} / Imaginary Bridge by the German Dada artist, Hannah Höch (National Gallery of Australia 2013) where the baby is the bridge between the man and woman.}\]
Technology and relationships

When the director, Brook (1972) wrote that ‘the vehicle of drama is flesh and blood…the vehicle and the message cannot be separated’ (p. 20), he could not have anticipated our attachment to technological devices. Yet the physical body continues to be a vital presence in performance, perhaps never more shockingly portrayed than in the art of the Cypriot-Australian performance artist, Stelarc (2011) whose claim that ‘the body is obsolete’ seems ironic given the inventive manner in which he makes use of, experiments with, and, one could argue, abuses his own body. The 2012 performance, pictured here:

(Journal entry March 2012), where he orders his nude body to be pierced with fish hooks and suspended above a large sculpture of his left arm and ear, shares its tender vulnerability with the audience; at the same time it seems to silently scream: ‘Look at me and listen! Feel and share my pain!’

Nevertheless technology, as a constant presence in our daily lives, must inevitably feature in our theatre. The challenge is to avoid getting ‘lost in gadgetry’ (Logan & Gardner 2011, n.p.). This may be as simple as having the young girl, Hedvig – played by Eloise Mignon – glued to her laptop, and a digital clock alerting the audience to the passage of time in the Belvoir Street production of Ibsen’s ‘The Wild Duck’ (Stone 2011). More complex technology
can be equally effective in engaging audiences. In ‘Silent Screen’ (Nederlands Dans Theatre 2011), three large video-screens show changing landscapes containing figures with whom the live dancers appear, at times, to interact. The physical and emotional intensity of the dancers combine with music by Philip Glass to produce a similarly intense feeling in the audience, as we saw in the journal entry in the first chapter.

However, theatre can be a casualty if technology is too intrusive. Brook (2005), the director, described theatre as ‘a machine for climbing and descending the scales of meaning’ (p. 103) but *Ex Machina*’s (2012) production of ‘Goetterdaemmerung’ [sic] at the New York Metropolitan theatre seems to have taken this literally. The stage consisted of twenty four massive planks of wood that were made to move up and down by means of a 45-ton machine. This expensive stage equipment was so unimpressive that, at the final bows, audiences showed their preference for live humans by cheering the long-suffering performers and booing the production team (Silverman 2012).

Theatre is similarly sacrificed to technological indulgence but on a smaller scale, in *Alma Mater* (2012a), where an audience of one, with ear phones and iPad, enters an enclosed, all-white child’s room to engage with a silent narrative on-screen. At the start there is promise of the possibility to at least virtually relate with/to the children on the screen but this quickly evaporates to become the simple process of watching a film. It might be a ‘filmic tour for one’ (*Alma Mater* 2012b) but so is going to the movies. The singular *Alma Mater* audience is left with no sense of relationship, real or virtual. Yet the Australian playwright, Raimondo Cortese53 insists that theatre is all about relationships; what sort of relationships might he mean?

Post-dramatic theatre may simply interpret relationships differently. *Ex Machina* focuses on relationships between the potential theatre-makers: ‘there must be meetings between scientists and playwrights, between set painters and architects, and between artists from Québec and the rest of the world’ (*Ex Machina* 2012, n.p.) to create new artistic forms. The vision is grand and outward looking, global, and driven by technology; intimacy, physicality, and

53 Personal communication.
personal connections with the audience, all struggle to find a place in this grand scheme. The Scottish theatre critic, Mark Fisher, blogs:

As artists give a central role to iPads, Skype, video googles and internet downloads, they are challenging our definition of theatre, if not inventing an artform that is distinct in itself (Fisher 2011, n.p.).

He wonders what we are left with: ‘Film, theatre, art or some hybrid form of the future’ (Fisher 2011, n.p.); he is not alone. Vanderbeeken et al. (2012) note that ‘artistic media seem to be – more than ever – in a permanent condition of mutation’ (p.9) and ask:

...what are the challenges, restrictions and implications of a deep play with old and new media on stage?...Does mutation eventually lead to a contamination or even a disintegration of what we call theatre, or rather to a revaluation and thus to a confirmation thereof in the long run? (Vanderbeeken et al. 2012, p.10).

In this thesis, the challenge for the artefact was to decide what role technology might play, both in the plot and in the presentation of the performance text. Because the baby sounds were considered integral to the work, a form was found to incorporate them; this started the hybridization – or mutation – process. Dance, music and photographs pushed it further as the performance-in-the-mind took shape. An actual performance might well make use of video, although keeping a live baby, mother, and father on stage is fundamental to the work.

Ex Machina’s performance and media artist, Robert Lepage (2012), sounding like a latter-day Artaud, has grand plans for reality:

The survival of the theatre depends on its capacity to reinvent itself by embracing new tools and new languages. In a way, innovators in both arts and sciences walk on parallel paths: they have to keep their minds constantly open to new possibilities as their imagination is the best instrument to expand the limits of their fields (n.p.).

Artaud would probably be delighted to see how the use of technology in the 21st century has dramatically changed the nature of interactivity in the theatre. When physical boundaries become irrelevant, when we can readily construct,
dismantle, re-draw, and traverse virtual borders, there are no limits, no rules and no need for mutuality. The English artists and academics, Alison Oddey and Christine White (2009) have observed that ‘The new mode of spectating is to focus only on what ‘I’ want to see; on my perception of the world as ‘I’ see it’ (p. 8). In virtual reality the number and variety of relationships are infinite, leading some to question the need for live bodily engagement at all:

_How has the spectator become the protagonist, the performer, the writer, the reader and critic rolled into one? Do we need the liveness of the event anymore, and if so, for what purpose? What is liveness offering us? Is it just a different form of engagement, and if so, does the youth of today want/believe/relate to this definition of engagement?_ (Oddey & White 2009, p. 11).

This question brings to mind what the English psychoanalyst, Kate Burrows (2012) describes as the autism / narcissism spectrum where, in order to protect the self, the focus is on doing for and by oneself; there is little capacity or requirement for thinking or feeling in and with the physical presence of another person. The potency of this absence is illustrated in a newspaper report (Bucci & Cooper 2012) of a very young child, found by police after spending several days alone in a house beside his dead mother. The report noted that the child, upon seeing the police officers, wanted to be held by them; he clung tightly and did not want them to let him go. At last he had found someone alive and receptive. If ‘Art reinforces stereotypes of behaviour’ (Oddey & White 2009, p.10) why is it turning its back on live relationships?

The response of this thesis to Oddey and White is an emphatic: yes, we do need ‘liveness’ in the theatre, just as we need ‘liveness’ in our mother and father, and in our relationships with others; we need real, live, imperfect, good-enough persons who choose to take the risk of something changing in themselves when they interact with us. We see the impact of this on the fictional man and woman in the performance text as they become mother and father; this is not simply a name change but the opportunity for a life change. Whether we call it developmental change, mutation, or evolution, there must be a role for one live human being to engage with another.
Agreeing that technology is ‘simply another tool for playing with imagination and being creative’ (p.11), Oddey and White (2009) call for recognition of ‘the value of observation as an activity’ (p. 10). This begs the question: is there a difference between a real person observing the baby and a web-cam in the nursery? Limited research (Tarasuik et al. 2013), from a sample of 41 parent / child dyads, comes to the conclusion that ‘for children as young as 17 months of age, a video presence by a trusted adult is similar to an actual presence’. In the performance text, we see and feel the significant difference between ‘similar’ and ‘same’ for the very young baby who needs the live presence of someone who can think about her, so she can learn what trust is. As this sort of research is frequently circulated in the popular press – where research details can be over-looked – there is a risk that parents of very young infants may come to believe that it is safe to allow video presence to replace actual presence.

Infant Observation fits Oddey and White’s notion of activity but can it be theatre? If theatre ‘occurs when one or more human beings, isolated in time and / or space, present themselves to another or others’ (Beckerman, c 1979, p. 10), then we can find theatre in the moment of birth, in the reverie\textsuperscript{54} of breast-feeding, and in Infant Observation. Although Infant Observation was originally designed as a training method, the observer’s interested presence, reliably given to the family and, especially to the baby, allows the baby to know that she is seen and heard and, most importantly, that she is being thought about. As we have seen, the observer may be able to be available to the baby in a way that the parents cannot. In the play, this is the role of the audience: to look and listen, to feel and think. Silently interactive, the audience can be thoughtfully open to communication from the baby and a containing presence for the parents. Like the observer in a real-life infant observation, audience members, as observers, may find themselves identifying with the baby and / or one parent or another at different times.

If the changing forms of theatre reflect, preview, or lead our cultural attitudes to relationships, what does this mean for the infant experience? Will infants learn

\textsuperscript{54} Reverie, as we saw in chapter three, is a term used by Bion to describe the particular capacity of the mother to contain the infant’s fears, to take them in and return them to the infant in a safe way. It is a sort of intra-psychic version of mother looking under the bed for monsters and being able to reassure the child that the monsters have been dealt with.
to relate in a virtual or a physical way? Will one feel more meaningful than the other? How will parents and infants know the difference? Does it matter?

Will technology – assisted reproduction, surrogacy, virtual parenting, childcare, and communication – remove the need for physical relationships? Currently, screens can communicate sight and sound; smell, and even taste may be added, but what about touch? Robotics expert, Ishiguro (RMIT 2012), has created the Telenoid, an android with soft, silicon skin, telephone technology, and facial recognition software that allows the person holding the android ‘to see and feel a response from the person they are speaking to’ (n.p.). When Ishiguro admits that he is not sure what constitutes the difference between human and android, we realize that, for some, this is accepted as an evolution already in process. For others, it prompts the question: How can a multi-media puppet replace the ‘message system’ (Brazelton, 1990, p. 61) of physical touch between baby and mother? The Telenoid is ‘not only gender neutral, unthreatening, and baby sized, it is also a blank slate on which the audience can project its imagination’ (RMIT 2012, n.p.). Perhaps this android, or something like it, will come to replace the baby altogether.

Imagine this: a baby conceived by in vitro fertilization (IVF) from donor egg and donor sperm, and born to a surrogate, listens to her mother’s voice via a good quality sound system. At the same time mother and baby look at each other, communicating gestures via high resolution screens. Extremely sensitive robotic arms made of a material that feels like human arms and calibrated to respond to nuances in the mother’s voice, hold the newborn while natural fibre teats provide fluid that has been carefully manufactured to resemble breast milk. The feeding can be programmed to supply the baby with milk either on demand or at regular intervals. The sound of the baby crying automatically activates the screen so that the mother and baby can see and hear each other. This activation can be pre-set to respond to either a period of time of crying or to the intensity (volume) of the cries or both. The mother can delete this function and replace it with the robotic arms and feeding function at any time. Nappy changes, baths, and all other physical care can also be performed by the robotic arms with accompanying soothing / educational music. Reminders can be set to prompt the mother or father to engage with their baby. Flash cards
appear at regular intervals to teach the baby to read. The baby is trained to sneeze to activate the screen to see mother and cough to see father or vice versa. Sophisticated software is available to cover a range of scenarios, providing caregivers with complete confidence.

If we can imagine it, it can become reality. But should it? The ethics of manufacturing and raising infants as objects must be questioned. If new, technology-driven discoveries run too far ahead of our capacity to fully consider the consequences, we risk losing something that is essentially human – live, physical, real-time relationships. Without this imperfect-but-real experience in infancy, we cannot become feeling, thinking adults who can reproduce and value these relationships with others.

Throughout the exegesis we have used theatre as a metaphor for the infant; does the metaphor still hold? Theatre exists only in the presence of another (there is no such thing as theatre without an audience), it seeks to communicate with others, it discovers what it is capable of only through relationship with others, it is continually having new experiences which help it to develop and grow, it is both feeling and thinking, and it is constantly changing. Its relationship with us is a real, physical, mental, and sometimes virtual illusion! Brecht (1964) understood that ‘Reality alters; to represent it the means of representation must alter too’ (p. 111). However, for the infant, ‘...fantasy is only tolerable at full blast when objective reality is appreciated as well’ (Winnicott 1945, p. 153).

It is uncertain what the future holds for the theatre or for the infant. The increasing use of technology for its own sake is creating a loss of desire to present live relationships in the theatre. The emphasis on individual experience may be symptomatic of a loss of capacity for relationships that engage both body and mind in our daily lives. The American psychologist, Barbara Fredrickson (2013) suggests that electronic communication risks interfering with ‘our biological capacity to connect with other people’ (p.1). Her research shows that each person’s patterns of social connection has physical consequences, and leads her to caution parents, like the artefact’s fictional father, who pay more attention to their phone than to their child. She warns that this behaviour
leaves ‘life-limiting fingerprints on their and their children’s gene expression’ (p. 2).

This chapter has explored concepts of reality and illusion by making connections with dance, neuroscience, performance, and psychoanalysis. We have argued that the lively presence of the body and the mind is necessary for the infant and her parents to relate to each other and to discover their true selves. If theatre is life both magnified and reduced (Brook 1972, p. 110) we suggest that it too is dependent on live engagement. With technology taking an increasingly large role in theatre, it would appear that it is now up to the audience to be alive and present, and to make of theatre what we can. The reader / audience of this thesis is invited to do the same. As Bollas (1992) explains:

> Though we cannot adapt to reality, as in some respects it does not exist, we play with it, bringing our subjectivity to the thingness of the object world and there – in an intermediate space – give reality to our life (pp. 244-245).
CONCLUSION

*It is very difficult to give expression to a wild idea. If people can possibly bear to have a wild idea and allow it to germinate, then they might be able to put it into a form that made it more communicable* – Wilfred Bion

This project started as a ‘wild idea’ (Bion 1977, p. 37) to cross the frontier between ‘the practical and the poetic’ (Heaney, 1995, p. 203) in search of a way to make meaningful connections and share them with others. Several years of gestation allowed the idea to find a form which not only enabled border crossings in both directions but also opened up a space for negotiating other boundaries. That form – the thesis by (poetic) artefact and (practical) exegesis – provided a stage for a metaphorical, representational, and theoretical dance whose partners included poetry, psychoanalysis, and theatre.

The intention was to creatively explore and communicate the emotional world of a baby so that we might acknowledge and better understand the rich inner life that belongs to actual infant experience. Like infant and mother, the two elements of the thesis – the artefact which represents the infant’s world, and the exegesis which describes that world – share a common space, and, despite their different language, tone, and form, they constantly informed each other as the writing progressed. Informal comments by creative writing students can give the impression that, in a thesis by artefact and exegesis, the artefact plays the main role while the exegesis sits in the wings – a mandatory accompanist (Arnold 2005). Here however, the exegesis partners the artefact in a vigorous performance of practice-led research and research-led practice.

This thesis was concerned with the dynamic integration of feeling, thinking, and knowing in the infant, in the process of creative writing, and in the theatre. The artefact and exegesis explored and described the developmental tasks for the baby while, simultaneously, the relationship between baby and mother became a metaphor for the artefact / exegesis and the theatre / audience relationships. We have seen how the baby uses her experience of mother to both create and
discover her own unique self, while mother uses her experience of baby to know herself as a mother. The artefact shows how the father is also involved in this process of creation and discovery. The thesis relied on the experiential relationship between the artefact and the exegesis – that is, the process of writing the two together – to demonstrate the complex interplay between emotions and the intellect, the sort of chemistry that is also evident in theatre that strives to find new ways to connect with its audience. Boundaries were crossed, and connecting pathways carved with words enabled discoveries to be made.

One of the underlying suppositions of this thesis is that the baby’s emotional health is dependent on her being seen and heard, in the context of a relationship, if she is to realize her potential. The artefact and exegesis work together to demonstrate the importance of relationships for the development of the baby and, indeed, of us all. I have argued that, at the beginning, for the infant, this relationship must be reliably alive, as it is only through physical engagement with mother that baby learns about her body – inside and out – and hence about her self. Theatre’s reliance on its relationship with the audience is an extension – or affirmation – of our life-long task: to know who we are through our relationship with others. As these relationships become mediated by technology, physical engagement – face-to-face conversation, play, and even sex – may become obsolete. We have seen that the theatre, embracing technology in the spirit of Artaud (1964), finds new ways to push the limits of what we might call reality but we have also seen that the creative imagining of new realities is only possible if it forms part of our infant experience. We learn to imagine in whatever potential space our parents are able to allow. So, while the theatre, like this thesis, can take risks with reality, the infant may need to be protected from the virtual world until she has had a shared experience of the actual one.

Finding my voice and feeling my words has been a struggle as I used my experience of writing to create and discover my identity as a writer. Like all research, this thesis documents an experiment. The artefact – the performance text – is experimental, and, true to that word’s Latin roots, experiential. The exegesis takes similar risks. Together, like a curious baby wanting to engage
her parents, but with the benefit of experience, artefact and exegesis aspire to engage the reader as both feeling audience and thoughtful critic. However the French-American artist and sculptor, Louise Bourgeois (1954) warns:

> An artist’s words are always to be taken cautiously. The finished work is often a stranger to, and sometimes very much at odds with what the artist felt or wished to express when he began. At best the artist does what he can, rather than what he wants to do. After the battle is over and the damage faced up to, the result may be surprisingly dull – but sometimes it is surprisingly interesting (p. 66).

As I approach the end of this large project, and look back, at what I have written and how it came to be written, I feel a connection with the message on Bourgeois’ (1996) hand-embroidered handkerchief: ‘I HAVE BEEN TO HELL AND BACK AND LET ME TELL YOU IT WAS WONDERFUL’ (1996 n.p). However, like Freud (1938), I realize that ‘the struggle is not yet over’ (n.p.) when my unconscious mind presents me with a simple but disturbing dream. In the dream, I had prepared a big sandwich to share with others but, when I took the sandwich out of the bag there was nothing between the slices of bread!

My immediate association is the fear that my work lacks substance, is empty, not worth sharing. I push that anxiety aside and think. I come to understand that the sandwich in the dream symbolizes potential space. Creating – not filling – a space for play, is what I set out to do. This thesis was made to share. It is the result of my playing with words, feelings and ideas in such a way that the reader / audience can also play and discover something along the way. The central argument is clear: the baby is a subjective being who needs a reliable and live relationship in order to emotionally survive. However, the thesis prefers not to moralize or prescribe. It gives the baby a voice for dialogue, not directives. This thesis is not about mothers’ rights versus babies’ rights or father’s rights, but about what babies and mothers and fathers need for and from each other. By allowing space – in both structure and content – for connections to be made across disciplines, the thesis endeavours to promote new thinking. Neither empty nor full, the sandwich symbolizes the paradox of potential space, a paradox that must remain unsolved if we want to share creative lives.
We live in a time where procreation depends not on relationships but on decision making (Welldon 2006, p. 60). When scientists claim that assisted reproduction is preferable to natural conception (Daily Telegraph 2010; Vajta et al. 2010), when private equity funds buy up fertility clinics to take financial advantage of the growing ‘IVF industry’ (Medew & Baker 2013, p. 21), when surrogacy puts commercial interest before health and safety (Dhillon 2012), and when post-natal depression affects fifteen percent or more of mothers (Parsons et al. 2012) and their babies (Murray & Cooper 1997), a society that still knows how to feel and think must wonder what are the consequences for babies. How do they feel, and what are their dreams? Given that imaginary conversations ‘are often the most real’ (Ogden 2002, p. 3), the play and performance texts provide imaginative responses to these fundamental questions.

This thesis is underpinned by psychoanalytic theory, specifically object relations theory. The fictional baby and her parents are drawn from behavioural, neuro-scientific, and attachment research, ancient Greek tragedy, and from all the babies and families I have known, yet no one in particular. The borrowed discipline of Infant Observation offers the reader / audience an authentic and thoughtful involvement in the action, poetry gives the baby a voice, and dance gives them all a feeling presence that can engender kinaesthetic empathy in a live audience.

We have seen that there is no such thing as a baby – a baby is part of a relationship. Nevertheless, we have also seen that the baby brings her subjectivity and capacity for communication to that relationship. Furthermore, we can say that there is no such thing as a baby. When a baby arrives each parent is confronted with feelings that arise from her / his own experience as a baby. Until these feelings can be acknowledged and accepted, there are potentially three babies demanding attention. As we see in the play and performance texts, this situation leaves the actual baby, the one the parents have created together, struggling to survive.

The literature search for this thesis uncovered a considerable gap in the arts when it comes to representing the infant as a communicative person in her own right. Images, stories, plays, and poems, where the baby plays an active role would make a welcome and interesting change to the stereotype of the infant as
an object. Baby monologues, baby poetry, baby science fiction, baby dance, baby paintings, sculpture, music, and film: all have the potential to examine and explore the idea of the baby as a person. If poetry can save the city (Aristophanes 405BC) it may well save the babies from objectification. Art which manages to highlight the infant’s subjectivity would also show that it is up to date with the scientific research in the field but knows how to be more inventive in its use of the data. Science itself could look to making its discoveries more accessible by creatively using the arts to show what it wants to tell. Exploring the art / science divide, the thesis found both full of interest and curiosity, but held back by defensive posturing. We have come to appreciate that the frontier can and should be crossed without having to sacrifice their essentially different natures.

This thesis started with the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney (1995) reminding us that there are two ways of knowing and that we are all free to make the crossing between them. What we have discovered for ourselves is that the things that matter happen on the bridge; it is here, in the space between, where all manner of things – real and imagined – become possible. Bion (1991) wrote that the conclusion is just the beginning (p. 264). This conclusion hopes to be the beginning – for the reader – of a new way of thinking; for this writer, it may be the beginning of another wild idea.

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APPENDICES

Human research ethics clearance and statement

I, Christine Ann Hill, hereby submit a copy of emails received by me from the Swinburne University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee as evidence of ethics approval granted for this project. I declare that all conditions pertaining to the clearance have been properly met and that annual and final reports have been submitted.

From: Keith Wilkins [mailto:kwilkins@swin.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 8 February 2013 2:48 PM
To: Christine Hill (hillnewton@iinet.net.au); Dominique Hecq
Cc: RES Ethics; Nadine White
Subject: SUHREC Project 2011/163 Ethics Clearance for Modifications (1)

To: Assoc Prof Dominique Hecq/Ms Christine Hill, FHEL

Dear Dominique and Christine

SUHREC Project 2011/163 Playing and Reality: Representing the Baby
Approved Duration: 05/08/2011 To 01/08/2013 [Modified February 2013]
Assoc Prof Dominique Hecq, FHEL; Ms Christine Hill

I refer to your request to modify the approved protocol as per your email of 2 February 2013 (with attachments) which was put to a SUHREC delegate for consideration.

I am pleased to advise that, as modified to date, the project may continue in line with ethics clearance conditions previously communicated and reprinted below.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. Copies of clearance emails should be kept as part of project record-keeping.

As before, best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely

Keith
Dear Dominique and Christine,

**SUHREC Project 2011/163 Playing and Reality: Representing the Baby**

Approved Duration: 05/08/2011 To 01/08/2013
Assoc Prof Dominique Hecq, FHEL; Ms Christine Hill

Ethical review of the above project protocol was undertaken by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) at its Meeting 06/2011 held 5 August 2011.

I am pleased to advise that the project has approval to proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined. In giving approval, the Committee agreed that the project can include participants beyond immediate family, carefully using the consent procedures submitted, should an alternative participant or a limited number of additional participants be needed.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.
- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. Please retain a copy of this clearance email as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely

Keith Wilkins
Secretary, SUHREC

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