

Dom stökar och bråkar och kastar sten

*Iscensättning och hybridisering av dominerande
diskurser i Backa Teaters uppsättningar Lille kung Mattias,
Gangs of Gothenburg och 5boys.com*

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Abstract *Ph.D. dissertation at University of Gothenburg, Sweden, 2020*

TITLE: Dom stökar och bråkar och kastar sten. Iscensättning och hybridisering av dominerande diskurser i Backa Teaters uppsättningar *Lille kung Mattias*, *Gangs of Gothenburg* och *5boys.com*.

ENGLISH TITLE: They mess around and scuffle and throw stones. The Staging and Hybridization of Dominant Discourses in Backa Theatre's Productions *Lille kung Mattias*, *Gangs of Gothenburg* and *5boys.com*.

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The aim of this dissertation is to examine whether or not, and, if so, how Backa Theatre's stage art contributes to the questioning of norms concerning children and young people by subversive representation of the young. The study investigates the dominant discourses of "children as citizens", "the young gang member" and "boys and masculinity" that are staged and hybridized in the productions of *Lille kung Mattias* (Little King Matt) and *Gangs of Gothenburg*, directed by Mattias Andersson and *5boys.com*, directed by Anja Suša at Backa Theatre between 2009 and 2012. By analyzing how ideas concerning sex/gender, sexuality, race and age appear intersectionally in the selected productions, and how the discourses are structured artistically through casting, dramaturgy, directing and scenography/the use of space, the dissertation examines the artistic composition of the discourses themselves.

Theoretically and methodologically, the dissertation is based on a combination of semiotic performance analysis and critical discourse analysis. Concepts from Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis such as activities, schemata, frames and scripts are used to uncover the performances' foundations and relationships to the surrounding society, and to understand how the discourses are artistically formed and composed in the selected performances. In *Lille kung Mattias* "the becoming discourse" is staged and hybridized. According to sociologists Jens Qvortrup and James Lee the dominant view of children as being in a state of becoming adults has the consequence that children are granted neither significant private nor public space in the present tense nor are they taken seriously. In *Lille kung Mattias* the children in the audience are encouraged to conduct political discussions and democratically vote on Sweden's national budget. Thus, they practice what religious scholar John Wall calls childism. In this, the becoming discourse is challenged, since the children's current priorities and views on society are focused. *Gangs of Gothenburg* stages and hybridizes "the marginalized gang member discourse" found in the contemporary media debate. In *Gangs of Gothenburg* the medial process of generating meaning is staged and challenged. By using Sara Ahmed's concept of phenomenology of whiteness, the racialization of the young gang member is discussed and problematized. The adult, white viewer position/ gaze is staged when the white middle-class couple watch and comment on the documentary interview of a young gang member. *5boys.com* captures and stages "the patriarchal masculinity discourse" that, according to gender scholar David Buchbinder, is based on the practice of misogyny and homophobia, a strategy to distance masculinity from femininity. The discourse is hybridized by letting the actresses themselves choose their costumes, by incorporating metafictional elements in which the actors discuss each other and the play, by the use of passionate movements and dancing to music, and by the literal deconstruction of the scenography. Thus, by capturing the patriarchal masculinity discourse and combining it with other contexts, the very embodiment of sexism, misogyny and homophobia is problematized.

This dissertation thus situates Backa Theatre's productions in an intersection of political, philosophical and artistic ideas and practices where children's and young people's realities encompass existential issues, socio-economic conditions, the pronouncements of adults, and not leastwise, power structures. In Backa Theatre's performing arts, the worlds of children and adults are presented as co-operative and existing in a conditional relationship.

KEYWORDS: Backa Theatre, theatre for children and young people, hybridization, Mattias Andersson, *Lille kung Mattias* (Little king Matt), *Gangs of Gothenburg*, *5boys.com*, performance analysis, critical discourse analysis, intersectionality, adultism, childism, racialization, misogyny, homophobia, masculinity