

It's over a month since I returned from Transit and still I find myself in transition. Often during the festival I found myself questioning where I stood within the generation debate and I found my life in theatre to be the same as I found in daily life - neither one thing nor the other - in the middle - so to speak. As a child my time was spent with adults. As an adult I have spent much time with children, so there is neither one nor the other. I've never quite known where to pitch myself. I entered professional theatre late - at thirty although I had "played" in my imagination all my life.

At Transit I found myself too old to be part of the new wave and too young to be part of the old guard and so I could understand why I didn't share my work on this occasion - precisely due to my middleness.

My question at the beginning of the festival was: "Am I in the middle of the old and the young?" - 10 words! 11 - I cheated! And my answer by the end was: "In the middle" - three words! - accurate and honest at least! I think all in all, that's all I said publicly the entire festival - fourteen words - fourteen ...ah yes I remember. I was paralysed by the experiences at the festival - in an enlightening and positive way.

The most crucial time of my life was when I was fourteen - the time of my life referred to in *My Sister My Angel* - the story of the child who becomes the adult - the adolescent - the one in the middle. Being middle-aged and mid-career is like being an adolescent all over again - the hormones, the moods, the feelings of powerlessness and powerful omnipotence fluctuating all the time

Being in the middle gives you the best of both worlds and the worst of everything.

On returning home I realise that being in the middle is more than just a state of mind - it is my position in England - being in Coventry and at the centre of the country - how many times did I have to say: "no I am not from London, I am from Coventry"

"oh where's that?"

"In the middle -----and (to qualify for fame's sake) - near Stratford - Shakespeare's town."

Then there's also the middleness that comes from not always making the kind of work you want to and the climate in which work is created at the moment. Being in the middle also creates the state of paralysis, a kind of "never never presence" - a reflection or Peter Pan's shadow - a transition - a wardrobe like CS Lewis's - a dream time: a neither this nor that, and of no particular persuasion of no particular place of neither here nor there, neither child nor parent, neither young nor old, neither fertile nor infertile, neither woman nor crone.neither pupil nor master/mistress (for the definition of a female master - it's not a good word because of all its connotations with sex and schools!!!!) But the middle time is also a time of promised change - it never stays where it is - it has to move on.

At the moment I am engaged in middle career discussions and future plans with the people who have funded my work for twelve years. I am sat at the computer most of the time instead of running around the rehearsal space. I am also writing my mum's life story ,not my own and retelling **Tallyman** again! - and I find myself in repetition. I realise that whilst action and life and being young or old are actually in the playing out of a performance or the leading of a workshop, being in the middle involves a lot of administrative duties which often seems like inertia or stasis, and often involves the representation of someone else -ie telling someone else's story or letting them have their say. This is how Transit was for me. I was in repetition and in the middle - not non-committal or on the fence which is entirely different.

For me the task is to how to make being in the middle as active as being on the either side of it.

Lately I have been touring with our **NINA AND FREDERICK - Listen to the Ocean** project. We have been taking the show to homes for elderly people - playing with the aged and the crones - straddling youth (the original sixties duo were perfect, young and precious).

I will remember Transit for its reminder to me of my position and the point in my journey. Thankyou.

Carran Waterfield
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