Analysis of Results: Q. 1

**Q. 1: Which children’s stories stand out most to you today?**

Top 5:

1. Snow White (5 votes out of 86)
2. The Gruffalo (5 votes out of 86)
3. Hansel and Gretel (5 votes out of 86)
4. Cinderella (4 votes out of 86)
5. Little Red Riding Hood (4 votes out of 86)

Not all of the answers received were children’s stories. As part of the initial phase of our research, we wanted to see what people first of all classed as a children’s story but second of all, what the answers that sprung to their mind were on the spot. Had we given choices for people to choose from, we wouldn’t be able to ascertain what they understood by the term “children’s story” but also what they would class as appropriate for the children of today. Interestingly, responses such as *Twilight, Of Mice and Men* and *Lord of the Flies* were included which illustrates that the pinpointing of what constitutes a children’s story is at times hazy (or perhaps the classification of age range for literature is hazy).

The top 5 answers are as above: 4 of the 5 are considered fairy tale stories. A recurrent theme in each of the stories is adventure. 39 of the 86 responses have either been made by the Walt Disney Corporation or have been made with ties to it. Interestingly, people mentioned Grimm Fairy tales as well as loosely terming a massive area of literature “fairy tales”. It is clear that fairy tales are what people relate as a childhood story though they perhaps may not differentiate between the authors of those. The presence of these 4 fairy tales demonstrates that they are widely known (though with only 5 of 86 being the highest response) so fairytales seems like a useful starting block for a performance. Books of the literary world also accumulated to a large number of results. What I mean to say when I say books are iconic authors such as Beatrix Potter, JK Rowling, John Steinbeck, CS Lewis, Roald Dahl and Lewis Carroll. Elements of these novels would constitute as a good starting block for a performance also though perhaps some are more appropriate than others. Some of these stories though, especially Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl have well known messages embedded within them and as such, it has a link with the fairy tale universe in the respect that they often had morale messages embedded within them.

Analysis of Results: Q2

**Q. 2: Which stories from your childhood stand out the most?**

Top 5:

1. Little Red Riding Hood (4 votes out of 82)
2. The Very Hungry Caterpillar (4 votes out of 82)
3. The Tortoise and the Hare (3 votes out of 82)
4. The Ugly Duckling (3 votes out of 82)
5. Winnie the Pooh (3 votes out of 82)

The answers for this question produced a much more varied response. More of the answers we were given from this were from a literary canon or fables instead of fairy tales. While in the previous question they were asked which children’s stories stood out to them today, this question asks them about their childhood in specific. Generational differences become especially prevalent in the responses because we see typical answers (the fairy tales), we see brand new material (*Harry Potter*) and the very old (*Adventure Books for Boys and Girls*). Interestingly, there was a common theme in many of these responses: adventure. Almost all of the responses contain some theme of adventure as well as strong independent characters. What is motivating within this is that most of the responses are children’s literature and not considered adult classics (such as *Of Mice and Men* in the previous question). As such, a performance stemming from this should keep the strong, independent characters that our research has demonstrated is a trend within childhood fiction. As well, we cannot ignore the sense of adventure.

Other messages become clear when we look at the top 5 answers. In this instance, there is one fairy tale, two fables, a children’s story and an iconic series of books. This is much more varied than the response in the answers for q. 1 and it is possible that the shift in answers demonstrates the difference in what children are being introduced to as fiction. Even the answers overall were different to the previous question and this can of course be put down to generational differences. However, as our theatre company deal with children’s stories for adults, it now becomes essential to note that we do not need to focus too heavily on the reading habits of the too recent children because they are not our intended audience. Also notable is that the top 5 answers revolve around titular characters, much like the previous and this implies that while the stories are memorable, the characters are more so. This will be key in our decision for motif, choice of stimulus and characterisation.

Analysis of Results: Q3

**Q. 3: Why do you think you liked or remembered them so much?**

“I guess I like/liked them because they weren't too patronising. There was always something around the corner and it was never just about one person. It was about a party of characters so you always felt that there were plenty of people to get involved with: you never felt lonely. Just everything in them was magical and that everyone was always happy.”

* This is typical of a children’s story and as such, it is key to take note of things that people noted about these types of stories: ensembles. Many stories work because its about a different group of people so you can often relate to one more than any other and this spreads across a large group. Happiness is what they remember from their childhood but now they’ve lived for a while, they may realise that life is not always happy and there is more to life than simply questing. As such, a potential basis for a performance could be questioning what comes next after the fairy tale has finished.

“They weren’t always 'soft', as in they appealed to kids liking gory stuff. The Underdog won! About time.”

* Some people find a typical underdog story with some gore ideal for them because it shows them that its not always the strong or “perfect” that win. This is something that could take up an entire story or be the basis of merely one action in a character. It could be interesting within a performance to use this as the basis for a character who now knows an underdog can win because they have but what happens now?

“I really liked the complex world-building in books like The Hobbit and the His Dark Materials trilogy, and the way they focused on major themes like good vs. evil, religious fanaticism and self-sacrifice. Roald Dahl's books were really quirky and tended to have an interesting moral dimension, like the weird evil and revenge in The Twits and deception actually paying off in Esio Trot, which made them feel slightly transgressive.”

* The creation of such massive worlds resulted in an in-depth submersion into them and this means that it could be more difficult to capture that world on stage; this would be a large obstacle to avoid. The universal themes such as good vs. evil is easily applied though, as this quote remarks, its weird when evil win. However, the nature of life is that good may not always triumph and it might be interesting to toy with the idea that evil could win. A good use of this could be Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber.* Her characters are established and have their own narratives but they, like so many before, have a lot of happy endings. A potential performance could end with evil winning which would challenge the audience to have to accept the lack of good in the end. It could also embody, if used with a classic fairy-tale as karma like approach for doing some of the naïve and irresponsible things they do within those.

Analysis of Results: Q4

**Q. 4: Which Genres did you prefer as children?**

As is viewable in the above graph, the participants specified that they preferred adventure over anything else. Interestingly, people answered “Fairy Tale” as a genre. Often genres relate to comedy, adventure, fantasy etc. The distinct presence of that and adventure are clearly linked: fairy tales are often linked to adventures and so Fairy Tale is almost an extension of adventure within this data. However, the fact that they were mentioned as well as adventure implies that a good grounding for a performance would be something with fairy tale aspects with an adventure as the underlying basis for the narrative with fantastical elements. Comedy also caught a large part of the vote. Whether we use comedy or not in our performance is still unclear because comedy does indeed come within the notion of spectacle, we are uncertain as to whether we want the performance to be dark or not.

Analysis of Results: Q5

**Q. 5: What Genres stand out to you today?**

The above graph shows the preference of genre now among our participants. As is obvious in the graph, there are a lot more genres listed. This is likely to do with the increasing expansion of television, filmic and literary industries striving for new and innovative material. Interestingly, very little changed the top 3 answers remained the same and this demonstrates that some genres and attitudes are perhaps taken into adult life. The graph can be seen in full on the attached document. horror, action and sci-fi were also mentioned and so it could be beneficial for a performance to attempt to hybrid genres in order to have sway across larger audiences and their interests.

Analysis of Results: Q6

**Q. 6: Do you notice any underlying issues within Children’s Stories?**

Yes: 32

No: 21

It is no surprise that there is an even ruling on this question. There are now more adaptations available that demonstrate the underlying tones in children’s stories. Authors like Paul Jennings, Angela Carter and Gregory Maguire all explore this notion of an underlying message or retelling stories in order to understand it from a more adult standpoint. Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* is perhaps the most famous adaptation of fairytales into new stories whereas Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked* has become a monumental success in both theatre and the literary industry for its clever portrayal of a villain and the things that made her “wicked”. As this is a mixed barrel, the show would have potential to draw in people who were already aware of these issues or perhaps those that were not aware and would like to know what there is that they hadn’t seen before.

Analysis of Results: Q7

**Q. 7: Would you be interested in seeing a performance based on children’s stories for adults?**

Yes: 52

No: 1

This question demonstrates one thing in a short and succinct way: there is a market for children’s stories as adults. Given the current emphasis on the fairy tale genre and the retelling of those into filmic adaptations as well as the creature or unrepresented films/books (to name a few, *Twilight, Wicked,* and *The Vampire Diaries)* there is a mass phenomenon at the moment reaching to these genres and as such, the time is right to stage a show that perhaps did what these books or films done and changed the way in which we see classic tales as well as character or creature archetypes.