Cyberformance and Children's Theatre: a Contextual Examination of the *Janelle and Joella* Paradigm

Emmanuel Tsadu Gana[1*]

[1]Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

Abstract
This article identifies cyberspace as an alternate theatre environment for audiences to see performances. There is no doubt that the internet has had a tremendous influence on human society; the interconnectedness and easy access to information and resources which it enables is a testament to this. Theatre artists have recently tapped into cyberspace to create content for an expanding online audience. This article explores how performance can enhance children's theatre in this digital space. It examines the concept of children's theatre and defines children-centered online content as performance. The article broadens the definition of "liveness" in cyberformance to include not just live events but also pre-recorded content that engages viewers continuously. It analyzes three videos from Janelle and Joella, two sisters addressing children's issues online. This content is positioned within the framework of children-for-adult children's theatre and identified as cyberformance. It highlights the videos' themes and presentation styles as exemplary of children's theatre. Also, the attributes of performance, which are interconnectedness, liveness, and engagement, were established within the Janelle and Joella children's theatre paradigm. The article concludes on the note that cyberformance offers a veritable platform for the continuous exploration of theatre.

Keywords: *cyberformance, janelle and joella, children's theatre, performance.*

Paper type: Research paper

Gana: Cyberformance and Children's
Theatre: A contextual examination of
the Janelle and Joella Paradigm | 571

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has become a constant part of our lives, and theatre practitioners have likewise begun to appropriate digital technology to theatre performances. This is perhaps in a bid to recapture the attention of audiences who inadvertently have become digital in all ramifications. We are continually witnessing a systematic deployment of digital technology through the use of screens for scenography as well as the streaming of live performances for online audiences in order to enrich the audience experience. The ability for a user to engage with and interact with a piece of performance through the comment section, likes, and other digital interactive tabs confers a sense of liveness on that work, whether that user encounters it while it is in progress (live) or after it has been edited and posted. As Charilaos (2016) notes, social media analytics plare crucial in understanding audience engagement within the entertainment sector. Because work on the web never truly dies but instead participates in a constant process of engagements with users who offer comments whenever they come into contact with it online, the stance of this article is that cyberformance embraces any form of theatrical performance made for the web. Furthermore, Madanian (2020) emphasizes that social media has evolved from mere entertainment applications to vital tools for communication during crises, illustrating its transformative potential across various contexts.

In traditional African communities, children's theatre has always been an important form of cultural expression. The art of Children's Theatre has always strived to unequivocally examine the problems of children, from indigenous storytelling presentations at night to modern-day aesthetically well-made children's shows. This is because children are vital to the preservation of society's ideals and memory; therefore, protecting their growth and development is essential. As a result, Children's Theatre navigates children's innovative potential and provides them with a platform to express themselves through the creative processes of theatre. Children are expressive beings who learn and grow via imitation, role play, and repetitive behaviors, all of which are intricately tied to theatre.

Children's Theatre is defined as an intentional involvement in the art and craft of theatre aimed specifically at children, whether performed by children for children or adults, adult practitioners for children, or adults with children as an audience.

Most of the time, the purpose is to entertain and educate the child or adult audience at the same time.

The entire exercise, however, is child-centred, whether it is conducted by an adult for children, children for children, or a combination of both adults and children (Ayegba 2012). As a result, participation remains at the heart of the Children's Theatre philosophy: children participate in the creative processes inherent in theatre in order to express their goals and dreams. The emphasis is thus not just on providing children with an aesthetic experience of theatre but rather on including them in creative processes that expose them to the possibilities of experiential learning, such as role-playing, drama, and song poetry, among other activities. This is why McFarlane and Hamilton (2005) state that 'play provides children with abundant educational opportunities by allowing them to make decisions, learn new skills, solve issues, and make sense of the environment they live in'.

Thus, unwittingly, involvement is a critical aspect in the effort to amplify the voices of children. 'The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice,' according to Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Child Rights Convention (CRC). The use of children's theatre as a vehicle for involving children in the examination of topics that directly affect their well-being is in keeping with and expresses the CRC's principles. As a result, beyond the pedagogical instructional approach to child development, children's theatre moves smoothly into the area of advocacy on topics that affect the child's well-being. This is because:

> Children have the power to make parents listen; this is because parents are always happy to see their children involved in something positive. When children use their imagination to engage in singing songs, reciting poems, and acting in plays that portray and reflect their inner views and opinions concerning issues affecting them, and when parents and adults alike realizing that such views portrayed are true, will reflect on the views expressed by the children and make necessary changes (Gana 2015).

As a result, Children's Theatre has immense potential for effectively raising awareness of children's issues. Furthermore, the internet's facilitation of social media has broadened the environment for creative involvement, resulting in a whole

new ecology for theatrical practitioners to engage with audiences through their profession. Maton (2020) highlights how the Nigerian entertainment industry, particularly Nollywood, reflects cultural narratives that resonate with societal issues, thus serving as a platform for awareness and engagement (Maton 2020). Additionally, Murray (2004) discusses the evolution of storytelling in digital formats, emphasizing the importance of user agency and immersive experiences in contemporary narratives (Murray 2004). This shift towards interactive storytelling aligns with the goals of Children's Theatre to foster engagement and awareness among young audiences.

As a result, many practitioners have switched to online platforms, finding them to be far more profitable in terms of reach and engagement. One may argue that interactive media technologies have resulted in a massive artistic and cultural revolution during the last two decades. As a result of the convergence of theatre and new media, this social and cultural activity has been translocated from an auditorium experience to one that also takes place online. According to Kumar, Chaturvedi, and Merhotra (2013), the convergence of theatre and new media does not treat internet technologies as a distribution or "transmission" medium but rather as a performance site and a creative medium. As a result, it's not just about making a stage performance available to an online audience; it's also about experimenting with new ways of creating and presenting theatre, as well as new artist-audience connections in these new theatrical contexts.

This study contends that the extended landscape, a new creative area created online, provides immense potential for children to express themselves through children's theatre. As a result, this study asserts that there is a new type of children's theatre emerging online, one that allows for the exploration of children's issues through the use of online performances delivered via online videos. The Facebook channel Janelle & Joella (J&J) delivers an experience that operationalizes the Children's Theatre method of "children for adult audiences." As a result, in addition to the entertainment values that audiences enjoy on social media platforms, the Janelle and Joella channels provide children-focused content that, more often than not, addresses adults by subtly cautioning them about behaviors that are harmful to children.

However, in the midst of the digital migration to social media platforms, where comic artists and performers have become dominant and popular, this paper, contrary to popular belief, situates Children's Theatre on social media within the discourse of Cyberformance and Intermediality, which has resulted in the transformation of digital technology and the inevitable polarization of theatre as a medium of interactive engagement.

Conceptual framework and review. This paper finds the concept of cyberformance relevant to the conceptualization of Children's Theatre online. According to Dixon (2007), cyberformance is a type of digital performance in which computer technologies play a significant role in method, delivery, and, in some cases, content and aesthetics. It is most often connected with live performances that are made available to audiences via the Internet. As a result, the dichotomy of location between audience and performers is obliterated by cyberformance and its affordances, as performances can take place anywhere in the world and be appropriately engaged by the audience. Describing Cyberformance in more clear terms Jamieson (2008) notes:

> Cyberformance is 'live/ly' as the audiences and performers meet virtually and have real-time communication; it is 'situated in cyberspace', and thus traditional stage is replaced with a cyberstage; it is geographically 'distributed;' it 'has an attitude' due to its treatment of unexpected contemporary problems; it is 'resourceful' in terms of its utilization of free technology; it is 'transparent' since the technologies used are always visible to the performers and audiences; it is 'unfinished' due to its online interactive nature; and finally cyberformance is 'digital'.

It's worth noting that Jamieson uses the term cyberformance rather than cyber-theatre to refer to online performances. Perhaps she wanted to escape the ambiguities that come with the term "theatre," as well as the criticism from theatre experts who consider computer-mediated performances as a threat to the survival of traditionally constituted theatrical performances. Kumar, Chaturvedi, and Merhotra (2013:7), add their voice to this discourse by noting that:

> It is true that virtual reality, illusion and the suspension of disbelief are time-honoured tools of theatre, yet some cyber impresarios would almost have us believe they had invented story-telling itself. Perhaps what is most irksome to theatre practitioners is the lack of acknowledgment or credit: the digital world owes much more to theatre in terms of its language, structure, concepts and content than it wants to admit or perhaps even realises.

In a similar vein, Papagianouli (2016) claims that cyberspace theatrical initiatives "should not be considered in isolation from traditional theatre or digital technology." This is due to the fact that cyberformance borrows features from theatre while also incorporating computer technology. 'Cyberperformance is an intermedial work coming from the union of theatre and the internet', Papagianouli says. 'The term intermedial alludes to a space in between, a mash-up of "spaces, mediums, and realities" (Papagiannouli 2016). As a result, cyberformance is based on similar, if not identical, characteristics to traditional theatre, but it is distinct in that it can only be performed on a networked computer.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that cyberformance embodies the benefits of digital convergence. The collapse of the producer-receiver and the artist-spectator dichotomy, fostered by accessible digital tools and the internet as a method of creation, distribution, and consumption, is a defining feature of this convergence. Bruns describes the "transition from individual artists' artistic goods to creativity as an unfinished, evolving, and collaborative process, citing web-based media sharing tools like Flickr and YouTube as examples" (2008). As a result, the dynamics of content creation and sharing have been re-engineered by these web-based sharing platforms. The power to set trends and disseminate media messages is now in the hands of creators and users of these web-based platforms rather than multi-national media organizations (Youtube, Facebook, Instagram). The user-generated web, according to Dixon (2004), is "a site of therapeutic catharsis-overload, and comprises the world's largest theatre, granting everyone 15 gigabytes of fame."

As a result of numerous perspectives on cyberformance, it can be concluded that digital technology, liveness, and interaction are essential factors for the activation of any cyberformance. While two of the three parts, digital technology, and interactivity, cannot be removed from Jamieson's definition of cyberformance, this study argues that Jamieson's concept of liveliness needs to be re-invented. This is because a performance on the internet is neither dead nor alive as a result of the audience interaction interface provided by web-based platforms. As a result, whether a user encounters a piece of performance while it is in progress (live) or after it has been edited and posted, the ability for that user to engage with it and interact with it through the comment section, likes, and other digital interactive tabs confers a sense of liveness on that work. As a result, the position of this paper is that cyberformance encompasses any form of theatrical performance created for the web because, on the web, a work never dies but rather engages in a continuous process of engagement with users who leave feedback whenever they come into contact with it online. This study examines the 'Janelle and Joella' Facebook performances based on this concept.

Cyberforming life in the Janelle and Joella Online content. Janelle and Joella are two Nigerian siblings whose online content has revolutionized the children's cyber sphere. The Janelle and Joella brand has a sizable and increasing following on major social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube. A series of pre-recorded performances are posted online through their designated social media handles in this approach to children's theatre. Unlike other children's social media channels that focus on humor and fun, the Janelle and Joella channels on numerous social media platforms investigate critical issues that affect children. The approach is pedagogically driven, with the goal of instilling values in both parents and children. They address challenges from the perspective of children's needs, often revealing children's underlying goals and aspirations in situations where adults are unresponsive.

As a result, Janelle and Joella's approach to children's theatre elucidates the contextualization of children's theatre as well as the ideological concerns that enable it to function. The approach's potential for communicating and supporting behavioral change is considerable. Although some would claim, as Ayakoroma and Fawei (2021) do, that the Janelle and Joella content follows the current comic skit trends, which is beneficial in knowledge dissemination as well as amusing and enlightening its diverse audiences (Ayakoroma and Fawei 2021). Additionally, Ayakoroma's critical analysis of Nigerian video films highlights the importance of nuanced storytelling in shaping cultural perceptions (Ayakoroma 2008). While there is some merit to the aforementioned position in that the Janelle and Joella approach provides crucial information regarding parents' and adults' sensitivity to children's needs, it most importantly develops awareness about children's sentiments and aspirations as a matter of distinction. Janelle and Joella's didactic component in all of their content makes it a one-of-a-kind online performance with the ability to positively change the way children are treated and regarded. Eluyefa offers a comprehensive definition of children's theatre, which is eerily similar to the way Janelle and Joella's online content is created (Eluyefa 2021):

> The important point is that it does not ignore the interests of children and does not only take the interests of their parents or adult actors into account. Children and adult audience may have different interests. Thus, an understanding of the children's world is vital to producing children's theatre that engages their audience. If we consider children's interest as paramount in children's theatre, we must delve deeper into children's world, to consider how they think, react to things in different situations and circumstances. It may be difficult to sustain the interest of children audience with a performance that does not interest them (Eluyefa 2017).

To summarize, the Janelle and Joella approach to children's theatre is based on the aforementioned concept. The important issue is that their content prioritizes children's

interest in the themes they investigate. As a result, the Jonelle and Joella paradigm emphasizes the positive impact of the concept of child stars, or rather child performers, on children's theatre and societal reform through a dialectical engagement with children's issues. Because of the large number of people that consume online information, the Jonelle and Joella paradigm has a huge potential for social consciousness and transformation. Janelle and Joella's Facebook page, for example, has over one million fans who interact with the stuff they provide. The contents include performances by both Jonelle and Joella, who report on challenges that have been or are now being experienced by youngsters they are familiar with. The performances take the shape of a conversation/discussion between the two sisters concerning the topic under consideration, followed by a solution. They depict the concerns as if they were simply going about their daily lives, a semblance of performance that exemplifies what Goffman (1959) refers to as self-presentation in everyday life. A performance, according to Goffman, is a way of behavior that can characterize any activity; in other words, a performance is a quality that can occur in any setting rather than being limited to a specific genre. Schechner (2005) explains further:

> Simply framing an activity as performance, viewing it as such makes it into a performance. Documentary film and the splicing in of documentary footage into fiction films transforms ordinary behaviour into a performance. So do shows like "Candid camera". However, a performance is an activity done by an individual or a group in the presence of and for another individual or group.

Schechner's position above, therefore, clearly situates the Janelle and Joella platform as a children's theatre performance and sets the impetus for the interrogation of their online content within the framework of cyberformance.

METHODS

This research adopts the discourse analysis approach. The online videos of Janelle and Joella serves as the primary text subjected to analysis using the cyberformance theory. Consequently, the research relies on content analysis to critically analyze the selected online videos of Janelle and Joella and their portrayal of issues that are peculiar to children. The approach to content creation, storylines of the videos as well as issues communicated in the videos are analyzed within the framework of children's theatre. Alongside these, the peculiarities of the medium in terms of reach and engagement (through likes, shares, and views) are also appropriated as data and subjected to analysis to establish the potency of the Janelle and Joella channel as an alternative children's theatre platform.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contextual Analysis of the Janelle and Joella Children's Theatre Cyberformance

As previously said, cyberformance refers to any type of theatrical performance developed for the internet because a work never dies on the internet. This viewpoint, together with Schechner's above-mentioned performance conceptualization, gives a framework for contextualizing the Janelle and Joella children's theatrical materials. Thus, three videos from their Facebook page titled, '*Have you ever said this to your child*,' '*Independence, what we think*' and '*This makes us afraid of school,*' will be analyzed.

Have you ever said this to your child?

In this 2:28-minute video, Janelle and Joella discuss the expectations that parents place on their children by expecting or demanding that they be at the top of their class. Parents most often claim they were top of their class in a bid to motivate their kids to work hard and follow in their footsteps. However, Janelle and Joella question this approach as putting undue pressure on children. The performance is delivered through a dialogic performative technique, which features both sisters discussing as though engaging in a conversation with the viewers, as is typical of the Janelle and Joella videos. Janelle begins the video with a pivotal statement directed at parents:

> Janelle: You can advise your child to read and pass all her exams without saying I got the first position". (0:14/2:14mins)

Janelle's statement set the tone for the conversation concerning the unnecessary demands that children suffer as a result of parents' claims that they always topped their class when they were students. Through what appears to be a synchronous-styled delivery, both sisters go on to say that these assertions are frequently incorrect and merely succeed in making children feel ashamed of themselves and build a sense of inadequacy.

> Joella: you can tell your child to read hard without saying I got first position, you   must not let them know the position you got.
> Janelle: Parents need to stop this their energy that is making us feel useless
> Joella: I am telling you
> Janelle & Joella: Stop it (1:34/2:28mins)

The desire of both performers in this video to reach out to parents on behalf of children who are going through similar ordeals stands out. Janelle and Joella's remark that parents commonly make their children feel useless by telling them they topped their class demonstrated this. Similarly, a Facebook commenter on this video remarks that "some of our parents came in last, but they'll pretend to be the ones who topped their class in school" (Kanu 2022). Janelle and Joella's concern about the situation is exemplified by the above comment, which inadvertently encapsulates the reactions of many of the viewers who left input in the comment section of this post.

It's vital to highlight that they want parents and guardians to quit putting pressure on their children in this way. Thus, Janelle and Joella skillfully exercise their agency to voice their concerns about children in this example of children for adult children's theatre. As a performance, both sisters' complex facial expressions and gesticulations bring their substance to life and endear viewers to the message implicit in the video's topic of inquiry. Janet Thomas, a Facebook user, attests to the sisters' expressive abilities and writing: "Janelle keeps developing in her acting skills; Kudos to you both" (Thomas 2022). It is sufficient to state that the popularity of J&J children's theatre content is partly attributable to both sisters' excellent acting skills since they are able to attract spectators with their act.

Independence, what do we think?

The concept of independence is discussed in this 2:23-minute video. Janelle and Joella begin this video by telling how they forgot it was October 1st and went to school, only to be informed that it was Independence Day, a public holiday, and that school was closed as a result. They then continued to ask their father for clarification on what independence meant:

> Joella: I asked Daddy what independence means, daddy said that independence is when you are grown, matured and can take care of yourself.
> Janelle: It is when you are matured and can take care of yourself; but children are not independent.
> Joella: Yes
> Janelle: That means that Nigeria is now big enough and mature enough to take care of herself. (1:45/2:23mins)

Although their dad's explanation may not properly capture what a country's Independence Day celebration comprises, it does provide some knowledge of the concept of independence. Their understanding of the concept of Nigeria's self-sufficiency demonstrates that they can relate to the concept of independence in their own unique way. Their position simplifies the concept of independence for viewers while also raising questions about Nigeria's ability to manage her own affairs. Joella poses a critical question to the audience: "Are you sure Nigeria can even take care of herself or aid others"? (2:00/2:23mins) To this Simon Peter, a Facebook user who interacted with the content, commented thus:

> Ahhh! Nigeria is an old woman that keeps borrowing money every year to solve her problems, yet the problem is multiplying. That means she is still depending on other countries to feed and solve her problem. Nothing to celebrate because Nigeria has not gotten independence (Peter 2022).

Similarly, Onyebuchi Umuego, another user, observes that: "Funny but true, anyone who at this age still needs someone to feed her has problems, either he or she is seriously ill or mentally handicapped" (Umuego 2022). As such, Janelle and Joella's question and the resultant comment by Simon Peter echoes a common concern expressed by many Nigerians about the issues the country faces even after 62 years of independence. Despite the fact that Nigeria gained independence in 1960, many Nigerians remain dissatisfied with the country's growth throughout the years. Janelle and Joella openly communicate their concerns about the situation of the country while also encouraging children and adults to work together to solve their problems since this is the genuine symbol of independence.

They pretend a lot. Be careful!

In this 2:11-minute video, the danger of leaving kids with house help, or nannies were expertly interrogated by Janelle and Joella. House-helps are domestic workers in Nigeria whose job descriptions can be compared to that of nannies and maids. As the term implies, house-helps help around the household, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, and taking care of their employer's children. Most times, their days are wrought with long hours that start as early as 4am and last till past midnight (Osagie 2019). This is a fairly current issue in Nigerian cities, and it has been on the front burner for quite some time. Parents should be aware of the

misleading tendencies of house helps when they are left alone with youngsters, according to Janelle and Joella:

> Janelle: do you know that when you are around your house, helpers will behave like angels?
> Joella: When you go out, they will behave like Demons, but when you are around, they will behave like angels. People can pretend o!
> Janelle: Even the food kept for the baby, the house-help will take and say see don't tell your mommy otherwise I will kill you. See they have two faces o! One is the face of an angel and the other is that of a demon.
> Joella: The Demon face is that when the parents leave, the house-help will be knocking the child. While the angel face is that, when the parents come back, they will be pretending oh! Sweety, you are such a good child. (0:48/2:11mins)

The mannerisms of both sisters in discussing this matter stand out in this video. They use deep facial expressions and gesticulations to convey their feelings, and they do so fast. The warning raised in this video impacts many Nigerian households, as many working-class families leave their children in the care of house-helps, who frequently mistreat them. The scenario can sometimes escalate from maltreatment of children by house help to kidnapping. The incident of a house-help in Lagos who was hurriedly hired by a family was covered in the Nigerian publication Guardian online in 2018. She absconded with three of their children within the first week of employment and sought a ransom of ₦13 million. The police later captured the house help and her gang, and the children were reunited with their families. (https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/increasing-menace-of-domestic-aides/).

Thus, the importance of this problem cannot be overstated, as it is vital to the well-being of young children who are exposed to house help. Janelle and Joella's intervention here encourages parents to be extra cautious and careful when hiring house help. Consequently, they go further to note that:

> Janelle: "it is better to keep your child in a crèche were there are cameras; be careful who you leave your child with, be careful". (1:50:2:11mins)

However, while the video draws attention to the deeds of house-helps, it is important to note that house-helps also suffer ill treatment from their employers and need to be protected, as Mathias Terseer observes: "Well said girls. However,

house-helps are also human and other people's children and as such, they should be treated nicely by their employers. They also deserve good food, clothes and rest" (Terseer 2022). The above comment by Terseer demonstrates the current nature of the issues addressed by the J&J channel, as well as their unflinching courage in bringing sensitive issues affecting children to the forefront. As a result, the issue of house-helps is two-fold: maltreatment of house-helps and maltreatment of children under their care by house-helps.

What is crucial about the Janelle and Joella content is the constant attempt to provide viewers with some type of alternative behavior that will assist in improving the conditions of children, as seen above. Thus, the Janelle and Joella content's purpose-driven approach is encapsulated above. The fact that they focus on the needs of children is a distinguishing element of their work. Despite the fact that the content contains a lot of exciting exchanges, the message and objective are never overshadowed by the attempt to entertain viewers.

The implication of the Janelle and Joella Children's Theatre Cyberformance

There's no denying that social media has revolutionized the way we do things. The collapse of the bounds of communication and connection clearly places performance expressions outside of the ordinary. As Marvin (1988) points out, one of the key accelerators for the development of communication technology has been the ability to transcend chronological, geographical, and bodily boundaries. Media fulfill dreams of extended experience by releasing the circulation of communications from physical constraints and providing us with access to happenings and people that could not be accessed directly and quickly.

Children's theatre thrives on nurturing the creative potentialities of children to activate their voices and talk about their concerns through theatre as a child-centered theatre practice. Through their internet platforms, the Janelle and Joella experience brings a lot of awareness regarding children's issues. Their performances are narrative in nature, drawing on real-life events and providing dramatic situations, as seen in the above-mentioned internet content. As a result, the expressive, performative manner in which the two sisters voice their concerns gives this act an added edge. Despite being rehearsed, the sisters' exquisite innocence shines through, and this, combined with their harsh faces and gesticulations when presenting the difficulties, makes the performances fascinating to witness.

As is the ideological characteristic of any children's theatre performance, the main objective is for the upliftment of children through the processes of theatre. This is why, according to Eluyefa (2017), "children's theatre tends to emphasize the perspective and thinking of children and dig deep into their world." Children's theatre aims to arouse and maintain the audience's imaginations in order to transport them to a fantastic experience." It's enough to say that the Janelle and Joella channel presented in this study perfectly represents Eluyefa's perspective. This is because the contents examined presented concerns solely from the perspective of children and how they are affected."

On the topicality of the J&J channel's concern, one can assert that they have significant potential for improving children's conditions. The contents of this study, for example, are provided from the perspective of children and how they feel about their parents' continuous references to how they topped their class in school. A review of the comments left by viewers of the videos demonstrates a high degree of grasp and understanding of the concerns addressed by J&J, who serve as a metaphor for children in general. Adults who have watched the videos are more likely to be persuaded by the issues addressed and make necessary adjustments.

As cyberformance, the J&J contents analyzed are exemplary of Jamieson's conceptualization of performance as an online-based performance. The J&J contents exhibit the three vital features of cyberformance, which Jamieson highlights as digital technology, liveness, and interaction. As a result, the J&J platforms are unmistakably the result of the digitalization of expressive communicative objectives. Normally, children's theatrical performances are limited to the stage; however, J&J transforms their work into digital communication with the possibility to reach a wide range of viewers beyond their physical place and location by embracing technology. A fit that is not possible to achieve on stage. When it comes to liveness and engagements, this paper believes that liveness encompasses more than just direct access to relevant events and occurring as they transpire (Lupinacci 2019).

It encapsulates the concept of accessibility as well as the sensation of immediate connection via media. This means that a piece of content is alive as long as it is online and has the ability to elicit responses from individuals who come into contact with it. J&J's content, for example, is still active on the many social media

sites that they use. These platforms provide an interface between the content and the viewers via the platform's comment section for each piece of online content. Suffice it to note that the comment section keeps the video "alive" in the sense that engagement with the video continues and is unending. Whoever comes in contact with the contents is likely to leave a comment and continue the conversation regarding it.

The concept of engagements is inextricably linked to the notion of liveness advanced in this work. This is due to the fact that social media interactions keep material alive. The more engagements a piece of content receives, the longer it stays on the platform. Users who come across content on Facebook, for example, can utilize the 'share' tab to share it with others on Facebook and other social networking platforms. As a result, activating the share tab implies that the material is made available to others and is visible to anyone who comes into touch with it, invariably remaining live within the social media area. The aggregate share of the three J&J contents examined in this study is 2,101,132. This indicates that the content has gained a lot of attention on Facebook and other social media networks, thereby fulfilling the requirements of a cyberformance.

CONCLUSION

The internet's enabling platforms for content creation and performances are critical to the concept of cyberformance. Because of the interactivity and interconnection afforded by internet-based platforms, cyberformance has become an unavoidable reality. It's crucial to remember that technology isn't anathema to theatre; therefore, practitioners shouldn't regard the convergence of theatre and digital technology as a threat to live theatre's survival. As the example of Janelle and Joella shows, cyberformance opens up the sphere for the expansion of the traditional performance sphere. As Zellner (1999) discusses, the integration of digital elements into theatrical performances creates new opportunities for engagement and expression, allowing for innovative storytelling methods (Zellner 1999). As a result, theatre has discovered a new location outside spatial temporalities: cyberspace, which has the ability to reach a wide spectrum of viewers. Reaves (1995) further emphasizes that the merging of theory and practice in a digital context can enhance the audience's experience, making it more interactive and participatory (Reaves 1995). This is especially useful to the practice

of children's theatre because children's issues may now expressly reach a much larger number of adults across territories and borders with a lot more impact. As a result, it is critical for children's theatre practitioners to adopt the Janelle and Joella paradigm as a means of furthering children's concerns. Social media is here to stay, and it has a lot of promise for children's theatre and theatre in general to develop. As a result, theatre artists must take full advantage of the opportunities that cyberformance provides.

Funding Acknowledgement

About the Author

Emmanual Tsadu Gana is a Lecture in Department of Theatre and Performing ArtsZaria in Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria

REFERENCES

Acheaw-Owusu, Michael, and Gifty Agatha Larson. 2015. "Use of Social Media and its Impact on Academic Performance of Tertiary Institution Students: A Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana." *Journal of Education and Practice* 6(6):94-101.

Ayakoroma, Barclays, and Ebifaghe Owei Fawei. 2021. "Deconstructing Social Media Comic Entertainments on Coronavirus: A Study of Selected UAT Bayelsa Theatre Skits."

Ayakoroma, Barclays. 2008. "Nigerian Video Films and the Image Question: A Critical Reading of Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen's *Home in Exile*." In *IJOTA: Ibadan Journal of Theatre Arts*, edited by Hyginus Ekwuazi, No. 2-4 (July).

Bruns, Axel. 2008. *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage.* New York: Peter Lang.

Charilaos, Granis. 2016. "Social Media Analytics in the Entertainment Industry." Master's thesis, International Hellenistic University.

Dixon, S. 2007. *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Dixon, Steve. 2004. "Adventures in Cyber-Theatre (or the Actor's Fear of the Disembodied Audience)." Pp. 99-121 in *Networked Narrative Environments: As Imaginary Spaces of Being*, edited by Andrea Zapp. Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University.

Eluyefa, Dennis. 2017. "Children's Theatre: A Brief Pedagogical Approach." *Arts Praxis* 4(1):79-93.

Gana, Emmanuel Tsadu. 2015. "Children at the Heart of Change: The Community Theatre Approach to Children's Theatre." *The Leajon: An Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 6(2):33-45.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Garden City: Doubleday Anchor.

Jamieson, H. V. 2013. *Cyberformance.* Retrieved January 10, 2014 (http://creativecatalyst.com/cyberformance/).

Jamieson, Helen V. 2008. "Adventures in Cyberformance: Experiments at the Interface of Theatre and the Internet." Unpublished M.A. thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Accessed August 20, 2017. (https://eprints.qut.edu.au/28544/).

Kanu, A. J. 2022. "Some of Our Parents Took Last But They Will Claim to Have Been the Ones Topping Their Class in School." [Comment on J&J: Have You Ever Said This to Your Child? [video]]. Facebook. (https://fb.watch/brRquSgeOc/).

Kershaw, Baz. 2007. *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lupinacci, Ludmila. 2019. "The Closest Thing to Teleportation: The Concept of Liveness in the Age of Connectivity." Pp. 59-70 in *Communication as the*

Intersection of the Old and the New, edited by M.F. Murru, F. Colombo, L. Peja, et al. Bremen: Edition Lumière.

Madanian, Samaneh. 2020. "Social Media: From Entertainment Application to Disaster Management Application."

Maton, Appolos Yosi. 2020. "The Nigerian Entertainment Industry (Nollywood) Culture and Society Being." *Sociology and Anthropology* 6(8):657-664.

McFarlane, J., and N. Hamilton. 2005. "Children Learn Through Play." *Putting Children First*, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). Retrieved (http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Children_Learn_Through_Play_June05.pdf).

Murray, J. 2004. "From Game-Story to Cyberdrama." Pp. 2-11 in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, edited by N. Wardrip-Fruin and P. Harrigan. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Osagie, Isoken. 2019. "How We Live: Life as a Househelp in Lagos, Nigeria." Medium. (https://medium.com/@isokenosagie/how-we-live-life-as-a-househelp-in-lagos-nigeria-b7a0934d2db9).

Papagiannouli, Christina. 2016. *Political Cyberformance: The E-Theatre Project.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peter, Simon. 2022. "Ahhh! Nigeria Is an Old Woman That Keeps Borrowing Money Every Year to Solve Her Problems, Yet the Problem Is Multiplying." [Comment on J&J: Independence What We Think [video]]. Facebook. (https://fb.watch/bu_ez_ogZH/).

Reaves, J. 1995. "Theory and Practice: The Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre." *CyberStage* 1(3).

Salz, D. Z. 2004. "Performing Arts." Pp. 121-131 in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, edited by S. Schreibman, R. G. Siemens, and J. Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Schechner, Richard. 2005. *Performance Theory*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Terseer, Mathias. 2022. "Well Said, Girls. However, House-Helps Are Also Human and Other People's Children and as Such, They Should Be Treated Nicely by Their Employers. They Also Deserve Good Food, Clothes, and Rest." [Comment on J&J: They Pretend a Lot. Be Careful [video]]. Facebook. (https://www.facebook.com/janelleandjoella/videos/761820974514935/?vh =e).

Thomas, Janet. 2022. "Janelle Keeps Developing in Her Acting Skills, Kudos to You Both." [Comment on J&J: Have You Ever Said This to Your Child? [video]]. Facebook. (https://fb.watch/brRquSgeOc/).

Umuego, Onyebuchi. 2022. "Funny but True, Anyone Who at This Age Still Needs Someone to Feed Her Has Problems, Either He or She Is Seriously Ill or Mentally Handicapped." [Comment on J&J: Independence What We Think [video]]. Facebook. (https://fb.watch/bu_ez_ogZH/).

Vinay Kumar, C. M., R. Chaturvedi, and S. Merhotra. 2013. "Art of Theatre on New Media Platform & Audience Viewing Experience." *Global Media Journal-Indian Edition* 4(2):1-20.

Zellner, D. 1999. "Definitions and Directions of the Theatre." Pp. 19-29 in *Theatre in Cyberspace: Issues of Teaching, Acting and Directing*, edited by S. A. Schrum. New York: Peter Lang.