Towards a theatre of new multimodal meanings: Applying second generation cognition to directorial devising practice in theatre which responds to trauma

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Abstract

This PhD seeks to develop and articulate a directorial theatre practice which creates new meanings in contexts of trauma, informed by second-generation cognitive science. It is grounded in my own past experience as a physical theatre director devising new productions in context of conflict, and grew from a need to find language through which to articulate the mechanisms of multimodal meaning-making in embodied theatre practice which responds to trauma specifically. The research applies Robin Nelson's Practice as Research methodology, adapted to an enactivist epistemology and augmented by Robert Romanyshyn's approach to researcher-reflexivity. The research design is centred around the development of semantic and experiential knowledge through the creation of two theatre projects: the first a cross-community participatory production in Derry, Northern Ireland which examined personal and collective memories of the Troubles; and the second a professional production exploring cultural identity, created with first- and second-generation migrant theatremakers in London during lockdown. The critical framework structuring the inquiry is grounded in definitions of 'meaning' and 'trauma' which consider schema-based embodied and symbolic process to be constitutive of all perception, and which consider trauma to be a breakdown in schema organisation at the level of self and world. This framework is applied as a lens to dialogue the PaR with two relevant areas of scholarship: trauma and performance studies, and cognitive theatre studies. Overall, the research evidences the ways that new-meaning creation through schema co-updating and transformation is facilitated and achieved in contexts of trauma through multimodal forms of theatre practice, and indicates that more research at this intersection is warranted. The thesis offers recommendations to theatre practitioners through a 'Points of Departure' document which describes key methods and synthesises learning from the inquiry.

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Introduction

The Belly of the Beast

Once upon a time there was a boy named Mahirgwe ("Chance"). As a child he was made to fight, and lost his hands and his arms in the war. When Chance returned to his family, they saw he had no arms, and that he could not work, so his step-mother threw him in the river, where he was swallowed by an enormous fish. When the fish spat him up on the other side of the world, Chance had grown both of his arms back. He met a boss-man who taught him to fly a plane. He returned to his family who saw he was rich and able-bodied. "Chance is Magic!" his family exclaimed. They begged to have him back, but he rejected them, and set off into the world in his airplane.

Chance's story was gifted to me in 2012, on a sheet of crumpled paper by 16-year-old Eric[1] at the Child Rehabilitation Centre in Rwanda. For the past several weeks, I had been working with a group of recently demobilised child soldiers on the creation of a new play. Until Eric's intervention, the stories we had been working with were literal: "How I escaped the militia", "What I remember of home", "What are my dreams for the future." Despite—or perhaps even because of—the deeply personal and specific nature of these stories, the boys had a tendency to underplay them. They would nervously shift between feet, or stand limply to one side of the stage, almost sheepish as they recounted their courageous acts of survival. At some point a

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[1] Not his real name.

colleague suggested we act these stories out physically, but this idea was dismissed by a chorus of nervous giggles.

Chance's journey, on the other hand, captured both body and imagination. The boys sprang into action to embody the cruel step-mother, the cool boss-man, the plane. Everyone loved the fish, a 7-foot puppet constructed out of hundreds of recycled water bottles. It took the full ensemble to navigate Chance's consumption by—and subsequent emergence from—the plastic creature, and Chance's enormous grin was mirrored on the cast's faces when he was lifted out and paraded on their shoulders, his 'regrown' arms spread wide.

Watching the boys play, I realised that despite being a complete fabrication, Eric's story had the power to distil, synthesise, and quickly articulate many aspects of the casts' experiences and ideations in a way the more literal stories could not. Chance's family was right—he *was* magic. Not only because he could regrow lost limbs but also because he could lose them in the first place. A broken heart, a destroyed sense of worth, the fear of being useless or burdensome—all of these meanings could be carried by a limbless boy who arrived unexpectedly and ate too much. Chance could be tossed in the river more easily than Eric could voice his complex fears about abandonment from his own family. Chance could come home with his injuries physically displayed, more clearly than a string of accounts about being enslaved, beaten, drugged, and forced to fight. And Chance could regrow his arms, go to a foreign land and learn to fly a plane with more audacity than Eric could tell his countrymen, "I don't need you to accept me, I can stand on my own two feet. In fact, I can fly."

Our funders from the Rwandan government had a more literal take on the story, and imposed certain conditions before allowing us to perform it. It wasn't right, they said, that the boy be

saved by a gangster. As the boys were being taken in and repatriated by the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission, the saviour figure should be an RDRC commissioner. Also, the fish should be named MUNOC (the acronym for the UN Mission in Rwanda), as that's the true vehicle through which they had been rescued and reborn. The fish should not traverse the world, as it only needed to cross lake Gisenyi to arrive at Rwanda. These changes were easily made; from a movement perspective they were entirely superficial. The fact that the giant fish had a laminated sheet with "MUNOC" awkwardly pinned on its side made no difference to the spectacular puppet choreography. The RDRC commissioner swapped his shades for a pair of spectacles, but maintained his rough fraternal affection and boss-man swagger. And whether Chance was regurgitated in Rwanda or Timbuktu, he still emerged from the fish triumphant, with his arms and smile splayed wide.

Over ten years after this production, I continue to grapple with the question of what 'meaning' was created through the embodiment of Chance's story. What was the value of physically creating the fish, and what meanings did the story gain—if any—in its transposition from a verbal language to an embodied one? How did Chance's story relate to the individual traumas that the boys had experienced? What aspects of the process were transformative, and when was new meaning generated from old experiences? What meanings (if any) changed when we adopted the changes imposed by our funders? Could I have done anything differently to facilitate the ensemble to creating more new meanings through embodied play?

Motivation for Practice-as-Research

As a devising director trained in Lecoq pedagogy, I have developed a practical understanding of the way that meaning[2] is constructed multimodally[3] through theatre. When working in contexts of trauma[4] I have witnessed how transformative the embodied, visual, and symbolic elements of a play can be, for audiences and creators alike. My previous practice has indicated that theatre has the potential to create new meaning in response to trauma, even when non-verbal and fantastical aesthetic forms are emphasised over fidelity to a literal truth or a verbal story. This has led me to wonder about the specific and unique ways that multimodal theatre can be mobilised in these contexts.

The aim of my research is to develop a directorial practice which facilitates the creation of new meaning through theatre in contexts of trauma. This research grew from: A) a need to find language through which to articulate the mechanisms of meaning-making in my practice; and B) a desire to explore how a more precise understanding of these mechanisms could further develop the meaning-making potential of my work. Key to mapping the layers of multimodal meaning-construction in theatre practice is recognising the role that body and environments play in its construction. A multi-mode practice-based approach is best suited to this inquiry, because it facilitates direct engagement with the "practical knowledge" (Nelson, 2013, p. 9) of an embodied directorial practice.

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[2] My definition of 'meaning' is briefly introduced in 'Positioning my Inquiry' on page 5 and defined in full in '1.3.2 Definition of 'Meaning' – A Predictive Processing Model' on page 28.

[3] In theatre, multimodality refers to the various theatrical vocabularies used in the expression and communication of meaning (movement, sound, symbol, text, visual design, etc) in terms of how they relate holistically. This is in keeping with Leigh and Brown's (2021, p.30) definition of multimodality as 'multiple means of making meaning', and Jewitt et al's (2016) assertion that meanings must be considered as a 'multimodal whole'.

[4] My definition of 'trauma' is briefly introduced in Positioning my Inquiry on page 5 and defined in full in '1.3.2 Definition of 'Trauma' - An Enactive Model' on page 31.

The research builds on over 15 years of professional practice creating visual and physical theatre in the wake of social and personal traumas. My practical knowledge in relation to the multimodal creation of meaning is grounded in my training in a Lecoq-based embodied devising pedagogy. This has been developed further through my work as a freelance director, and for my company Theatre Témoin, directing single-author scripted work as well as devised projects in mask, puppetry, physical theatre, and outdoor arts. The practical knowledge that I bring to creating theatre in contexts of trauma includes work with survivors of war and domestic conflict in the UK as well as in Occupied Palestine (Gaza), Israel, Lebanon, Kashmir, Rwanda, France, the USA, and Switzerland. This is further supported by an experiential knowledge of trauma, including secondary trauma experienced through the course of my professional work, and attachment-based trauma in my personal life.

Positioning my Inquiry

To articulate the mechanisms of meaning making in a way that supports my inquiry, my research considers existing discourse at the intersection of cognitive theatre studies (CTS)[5] and trauma and performance studies (TPS)[6]. Dialogue between my practice and these two areas of study is supported by a critical framework which draws on second-generation cognitive science

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[5] Cognitive theatre studies (CTS) researches the intersection of theatre studies and cognitive science. It came into prominence in the early 2000s (Seress, 2014) with the publication of Bruce McConachie's *Doing things with image schemas* (McConachie, 2001) and Mary Crane's Shakespeare's brain: Reading with cognitive theory (Crane, 2010).

[6] Trauma and Performance studies (TPS) researches the intersection of performance studies and trauma studies. Trauma theory began developing an anchor in performance studies in the late 2000s, emerging as a defined area of study in 2011 with the Performance Research volume: "On Trauma" (Duggan & Wallis, 2011), and with Trauma-Tragedy: Symptoms of Contemporary Performance (Duggan, 2018) the first book-length study of theatre/performance and trauma theory which was published the following year.

(SCGS)[7] to define two central elements of my research: 'meaning' and 'trauma'. SGCS evidences the way that embodied processes feed into more abstract symbolic and verbal processes to produce models of self and world, grounded in our embodied experience (Clark, 2017; Johnson, 2008). An SGCS approach to trauma defines trauma as a breakdown in schema organisation at the level of identity, so that "Traumatized individuals are host to more than one conception of who they are and what the world is like" (Nijenhuis, 2017, p. 10). This framework has been particularly important for connecting my own practice to practice and scholarship A) in TPS through a model for 'meaning' which acknowledges multimodality[8]; and B) to CTS through a definition of 'trauma' which is mutually intelligible with existing scholarship in this area. A detailed definition of these terms will be presented in Chapter 1.

Key Shifts in Thinking Emerging from the Practice

As a Practice as Research (PaR) inquiry, practice has been central to this investigation, with the critical framework emerging with and from the developing practice (Haseman & Mafe, 2009). I began my research working with broad definitions of trauma and meaning. The focus of initial explorations in the research were centred around 'grand narratives' and the narrative basis of meaning-construction, drawing on frameworks from psychoanalysis and narrative theory. For my first PaR project, I elected to work with first responders in Northern Ireland due to their shared experience of surviving high-stress occupations during the civil conflict. While creating *First Response,* the research evidenced how traumatic meanings were experienced at

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[7] Second generation cognition acknowledges how bodies and environments contribute to meaning-making and cognition. Characterised by the idea that cognition is embodied, embedded (distributed), enacted, and extended (Kukkonen & Caracciolo, 2014). For a summary of review of concepts, see Appendix C.

[8] The multimodality of meaning implicit in SGCS, so the phrase "multimodal meaning" is technically a redundancy within this framework. However, multimodality is a relevant and perhaps under-theorised aspect of meaning-making in some branches of trauma theory, so I have explicitly included this term in my thesis title.

an embodied level. This shifted[9] the inquiry towards a definition for 'meaning' grounded in SGCS which engaged more robustly with the multimodality of meaning-making.

The second PaR project, *Amaterasu*, was a piece exploring Japanese mythology and migrant family relationships, in the context of Covid-19 and lockdown. The production used my positioning as a devising director and trauma sufferer to understand multimodal meaning-making in a project dealing with themes that were closer to my own lived experience. Creating *First Response* had evidenced the importance of iterative interactivity between different multimodal forms in my practice. Pursuing this connectivity (which I term 'multimodal integration') in my second project evidenced disorganisation in my own schema-system, especially in relation to the mobilisation of different expressive modes. The research further evidenced the way that this disorganisation manifested in both the dramaturgical structure of *Amaterasu* and the overall framing of this research[10]. This clarified the need for an approach to defining 'trauma' which identified schema disorganisation as its defining feature. These discoveries in *Amaterasu* also brought the research full-circle to the question of 'grand narratives' which it initially sought to explore, now grounded in an SGCS approach to meaning and trauma.

Research Questions

My thesis asks:

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[9] The practice which led to this shift is discussed in more detail in '3.3 Mapping the Shift to a Second-Generation Cognitive Science Approach' on page 79.

[10] The practice that led to this shift is in '4.3 Mapping the Shift to an Enactive Approach to Trauma' on page 99, and is further discussed in '5.3.5 Juxtaposition' on page 135.

How can a second-generation cognitive science approach to 'meaning' and 'trauma' inform a devising theatre practice which seeks to create new meanings in contexts of trauma?

There are four sub-questions to this research, which will be presented in four layers through my thesis:

- Layer 1 (Critical Context and Critical Framework): What are the key aspects of meaning-making in the context of trauma? How can a critical framework grounded in second-generation cognitive science help to articulate these?

- Layer 2 (Literature Review): What are specific theatrical methods that are most useful for influencing these key aspects of meaning-making in the context of trauma? How can existing discourse in trauma and performance studies and cognitive theatre studies help to articulate these?

- Layer 3 (*First Response*): How do these specific methods help to inform a devising practice, from the perceptive of a director-facilitator working with trauma-affected participants?

- Layer 4 (*Amaterasu*): How do these specific methods help to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-devisor working with colleagues on personally traumatic themes?

- Layer 5 (Findings): What are the key findings which emerge through a consideration of layers 3 and 4—and their associated Practice as Research projects and outcomes—in dialogue with one another? What might this offer theatre practice beyond my own?

Thesis Outline

My research questions are addressed through the rehearsal and staging of two theatre productions, and the presentation of a 40,000-word written thesis. The written component of my research is presented over six chapters; an outline of each is provided below.

Chapter 1 addresses the first and second layers of research sub-questions, and is presented in three parts. The first section outlines the research context, beginning with an introduction to the specific practice which will be revisited in the critical framework and literature review. It goes on to examine how 'meaning' and 'trauma' are defined and discussed in TPS and CTS, identifying the strengths of each area of scholarship, and gaps in knowledge between them. The second section proposes the application of a critical framework to address these gaps, defining 'meaning' and 'trauma' through an SGCS lens, and applying this lens to identify four key aspects of creating new meaning in the context of trauma. The third section is a focused literature review that considers these four key aspects of meaning-making through relevant practice and scholarship at the intersection of TPS and CTS. Through this discussion, four correlated theatre techniques are identified as methods for the inquiry.

Chapter 2 presents the methodological framework. A rationale for the methodological approach is presented, along with a brief description of the two practical projects, the different methods of data collection and critical reflection, and an overall strategy for analysis of this material.

The rationale for the PaR is explained as well as the nature of the trauma that informed the practice, which included both the specific trauma of the cast and the social context of trauma more broadly. This chapter ends by presenting further practice context, including performance of trauma addressing the same themes or in the same geographical region, and pre-existing artistic practice which contextualizes the methodology.

Chapter 3 addresses the third layer of research, presenting my first PaR project: a participatory production in Derry, Northern Ireland working with frontline first responders who served during the Troubles. This chapter addresses the ways in which this trauma manifested in the creative work, offers analysis of how the response to this trauma through rehearsals led to the redefinition of the critical framework for the research, and presents initial discoveries in relation to the four methods of meaning-making.

Chapter 4 addresses the fourth layer of research, presenting my second iteration of practice-as-research: a professional production devised with a mixed cast of native British and migrant artists around the Shinto myth of *Amaterasu and the Cave*. I apply learning from the previous project while examining a creative process from the perspective of someone close to the themes of the piece, offering new learning that is especially relevant to theatre practitioners.

Chapter 5 is the findings chapter and addresses the fifth and final layer of research. It considers both projects in juxtaposition, presenting learning from Chapters 3 and 4 in dialogue with one another to find synergies and emergent meanings between them. The chapter highlights a wider pattern of polarised meaning schemas obstructing multimodal integration in both theatremaking and psychic trauma, and shares the theatrical techniques I used to in order to augment and reform them. The chapter additionally synthesises recommendations for

practitioners into a 'Points of Departure' document comprised of a description of key methods and a creation map for their suggested use.

In my conclusion I summarise my contributions to knowledge, outline the limitations of the study, and point towards areas of further inquiry.

Chapter 1: Critical Framework and Literature Review

1.1 Chapter Outline

This chapter offers a focused literature review that positions my PaR in relation to practice and discourse addressing meaning-making in theatre which responds to trauma, at the intersection of theatre and performance studies and cognitive theatre studies.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the practice and research context. I will introduce key practice which has influenced my research, explaining that it will be revisited throughout the critical context and literature review. This is followed by an overview of the critical context, which examines two areas of research: TPS, which addresses performance which responds to trauma; and CTS, which addresses multimodal meaning-making through theatre. I will focus on two elements of my research question—'meaning' and 'trauma'—exploring how these have been articulated in these two areas of study, and identifying key concepts across them which have informed my practice. I will also highlight the incongruencies across these two areas, and the gaps in knowledge around meaning and trauma that my research seeks to address.

The second section is my critical framework. It considers how an interdisciplinary approach can address the gaps identified, presenting my rationale for using a second-generation cognitive science approach to meaning and trauma as the frame to structure my thesis. I argue that this frame bridges the two research areas of CTS and TPS to generate a shared vocabulary and create new knowledge. I consider how the definitions of these elements—and the assumptions that underlie them—delimitate and inform my inquiry. In my summary I will present four key aspects of new meaning-formation in response to trauma arising from my critical framework,

laying the ground for my literature review to investigate the ways that theatre practice explicitly interacts with these aspects to create new meaning.

In the third and final section, this framework is applied to a review of literature and practice at the intersection of CTS and TPS which is most relevant to my research. I will a focus my review on techniques in both areas of study which influence the four aspects of meaning-making in response to trauma as indicated by this frame, placing curated examples of practice from TPS into dialogue with CTS. In my conclusion to this section, I will identify considerations to take forward into my research methodology and project design, including four specific research methods for working with the aspects of meaning-making identified through the literature review.

1.2 Practice and Research Context

1.2.1 Practice Context

As an interdisciplinary PaR project working to translate across and connect disparate areas of study and practice, this thesis does not offer a separate comprehensive 'practice review', and instead interweaves curated and specific examples of practice and theory to investigate ideas that are most relevant to my research questions. While there are limited examples of theatre practice which explicitly investigate meaning making in response to trauma through an SGCS lens, there are several practitioners whose work has been important in informing my research. The following offers a brief introduction to the key pieces of practice that will be analysed in more detail in my critical context and literature review.

One area of investigation in my research is the use of non-rational, sensate staging in the response to the extreme experience and aporia of trauma. Specific practice in this area that has influenced my thinking includes George Tabori's (1978) *Shylock Improvisations*, which responds to the Holocaust in post-war Germany; Philip Ridley's (2013) *Mercury Fur* which follows children who enact the brutal sexual fantasies of adults in order to survive; and Version 1.0's (2011) *The Disappearances Project*, a production employing emotionally dissociating techniques to present verbatim text from friends and family members of missing persons in Australia. This work stands in contrast to pieces which present stories or testimony of trauma within dramaturgical frameworks with a sense of completion or catharsis, like Jericho House's (2011) *Katrina: A Play of New Orleans* which takes audiences through an immersive experience of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath, ending in a rousing jazz funeral.

A related area is testimonial theatre, which centres personal histories and meaning-structures like narrative, metaphor, and poetry to present a subjective experience of trauma. Practice I will examine includes Teya Sepinuk's (2013) "Theatre of Witness" projects, a series of participatory productions created in Northern Ireland in response to the Troubles; and Farber's (2008) *He left Quietly*, in which Duma Kumalo performs a piece about his own wrongful arrest and sentencing to death, interweaving his fears and reflections with memories from childhood and life on death row. This work is distinct from verbatim approaches which seek to present a factual or objective view of traumatic experience like Jessica Blank's and Erik Jensen's (2006) *The Exonerated* which also deals with wrongful sentence and death row, but is constructed through transcribed interviews and other factual material; and Robin Soan's (2012) *Talking to Terrorists* which collages interviews with ex-members of terrorist groups, politicians, military officials, and victims of terrorism.

A third relevant area is practice which creates meaning primarily through and at the site of the body. This includes the durational and physical performance art of Kiera O'Reilly: *Untitled (Syncope)* (2007)*,* in which the artist moves towards the audience backwards, and completes a series of actions, including cutting her own skin; and *Sta(i)r Falling* (2009), in which she tumbles nude down a stairwell in slow motion over the course of several hours. Dance is also an important medium for embodied response to trauma, and a piece of practice which informs my research is Susana Tambutti's (1992) *La Puñalada* (the stab) in which the artist uses her body to present grotesque tragicomic and violent movements to portray state and gender violence in Argentina. Embodied practice also extends to scripted plays which stage visceral encounters with the body, including Ariel Dorfman's (1991) *Death and the Maiden* in which a victim of rape and torture captures and interrogates the man she believes has abused her; and Sarah Kane's (2001) *Cleansed* which explores love in the context of sadism.

A final area of practice which influences my research is participatory work which inspires imagination, creativity, and embodied action in social contexts of trauma. I will focus my discussion on Ellen Kaplan's practice creating theatre with inmates serving life sentences or on death row (Kaplan, 2019), and with cross-community groups of Israelis and Palestinians (Kaplan, 2005). Her work has been particularly important for considering how new schematic meanings are constructed through play.

The practice listed above will be revisited and analysed in the Literature Review in section 1.4 of this chapter. Some of this practice will also be discussed in the Critical Context in 1.2.2, and/or revisited in my Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 in connection to my research results. As I have stated, there is limited practice which applies SGCS to an examination of trauma, so in my

literature review I will primarily work to bridge theory from CTS as well as practice from my own Lecoq training to the TPS practice outlined in this section.

In Chapter 2, I will introduce further practice which positions my PaR in relation to: A) performance of trauma specifically in Northern Ireland, B) intercultural migration performance as trauma, and C) 'The Wounded Researcher'[11] methodology in theatre and performance practice. These are presented to augment my methodological frame and further contextualise my PaR in relation to the specific conditions of the two practical project designs; as such, they will be included with the Methodology instead of the Literature Review.

1.2.2 Critical Context

'Meaning' and 'Trauma' in Trauma and Performance Studies

In the Performance Research special edition, *On Trauma*, Patrick Duggan and Mick Wallis draw on cognitive models presented by van der Kolk and van der Hart (1991) to point to the way that imaginative symbolisation can transform trauma through re-visioning, for example imagining "flowers, empowerment or that the corpses were clothed" (Wallis & Duggan, 2011, p. 6). The editors trace conversations in phenomenology, psychology, and psychoanalysis, and the way that these pave avenues for thinking about the non-rational ways we construct meanings around self and world. In relation to constructions of selfhood in particular, they note how Thomas Ogden "conceives of the self as an evolving assemblage of different organizational orders" (p. 10), and how Lafrance articulates selfhood as a multimodal

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[11] This is a methodology proposed by Romanyshyn (2010) for reflexive research; I will discuss this in '2.3.2 Addressing 'Trauma': The Wounded Researcher' on page 61.

construct: "completely psychic, utterly somatic, essentially, intercorporeal and intersubjective, constantly changing … and fundamentally located in space and time" (Lafrance, 2009). Through this discussion they highlight the way in which "theatre and performance – … as a place and space of iterative re-revisioning as well as active narration – might have a particular purchase on trauma" (Wallis & Duggan, 2011, p. 6).

TPS scholars highlight the unique meaning-potential of non-rational expressive modes. Amanda Stuart Fisher (2011, p. 121) in her analysis of *He Left Quietly* underlines the power of 'poetic' testimonial-style theatre which is grounded in a metaphorical as opposed to factual truth, and its ability to consider "what can be retrieved from an event of trauma." She notes how it is "often precisely at the point where language and explication fail" that a profound existential insight can be gained, not only about the traumatic experience but about "what it means to be in the world" (p. 113). Victoria Fortuna (2011) in her discussion of *La Puñalada* highlights the way that dance, "as a nonverbal and non-textual form, can be understood as a privileged site for fleshing out how (violent) social orders are both historically instilled in and negotiated at the level of the body in motion" (p. 44). Lisa Fitzpatrick (2011) indicates how Jane Moss' term 'theatre of witness' describes theatre which seeks to use "the conventions of performance to address something embodied, intangible and largely inexpressible" (p. 60). Branislava Kuburović (2011) considers Kiera Oreilly's performance *Sta(i)r Falling,* pointing to the artists' ability to address the "materiality and complexity" (p. 99) of embodied human relations, and connecting her work to the psychic zone of structural trauma, or what Ettinger (2004) refers to as the "unthoughtful knowledge on the borderline" (p. 77).

These formulations are often grounded in psychoanalytic trauma theories which at their base see the traumatic as a site of non-symbolisation. As a result, non-rational expressive forms are

presented as privileged ways of accessing experiential truths. In this way, the theorisation of 'meaning'—particularly in relation to multimodal practice—is impacted by the theorisation of 'trauma'. Schönfelder (2013) argues that scholarship in trauma and performance tends to draw heavily on literary trauma theory[12], which—with its particular focus on words and language—is grounded in a verbal / rational view of trauma integration[13]. As Balaev (2008, p.151) writes, the formulations of trauma and memory "based on the abreactive model and informed primarily by Freud[14], have become an important source for the theorization of literary trauma studies…This form of literary trauma theory makes several important claims about trauma, stating that traumatic experience is repetitious, timeless, unspeakable, yet, it is also a literal, contagious, and mummified event". Within this view, the 'unspeakability' of trauma is most often linked to inarticulability, resulting in a connection between integration, sense-making, and the inscription of an event into verbal language. This theoretical foundation results in a schism in the way that meaning-making is theorised across semantic and experiential modes in trauma theory.

This schism has translated to the field of TPS: verbal or articulable meanings are linked to integration and healing on the one hand (Sepinuck, 2013) or to a falsely imposed, inauthentic coherence on the other (e.g. Little, 2015; Schneider, 2001); while somatic and symbolic meanings are linked to pathological rupture on the one hand, or the authenticity of the traumatic

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[12] Literary trauma theory, sometimes called 'trauma studies' within the field of literary theory, came into prominence in the mid-1990s, and applies trauma theory as a method for understanding or decoding literary texts. The 'first wave' of work in this field is epitomised in the work of theorists such as Geoffrey Hartman, and Shoshana Felman, and most prominently, Cathy Caruth. Caruth's work is grounded in the work of Freud and Lacan, supported by contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists, notably Judith Herman and Bessel van der Kolk (Pederson, 2014).

[13] While other areas of literary scholarship—notably cognitive poetics—draw upon second-generation cognition to explore the relationship between embodied cognition, multimodal imagery, and literature (Borkent, 2010), Paola Carmagnani (2022, p. 43) notes that: "the enormous potential of literary multimodal mental imagery in the representation of trauma has not yet resonated much in the field of trauma studies"

[14] For a more detailed description of early trauma theory go to Appendix B.

experience or representation on the other (Duggan, 2012; Stuart Fisher, 2011; Haughton, 2018; Little, 2015). In *Performance in Place of War*, Thompson et al (2009, p.33) define traumatic memory as something that a survivor must "transform into narrative memory", asserting that the implied treatment that emerges from this definition—"speaking about or talking through their past"—can be connected to "a range of cultural practices such as testimonial performance or storytelling." The authors point to the efficacy of non-verbal multimodal performance approaches like "songs, dances, laments and games," using this to critique what they call the "trauma / healing paradigm" as insufficiently broad to include these multimodal expressive forms (p. 34).

Verbal and documentary approaches are conversely critiqued for failing to accurately represent trauma. Suzanne Little (2015, p. 48) in her analysis of *Katrina* argues that "editing and arranging the individual testimonial accounts to fit within a causal linear narrative produces a coherence that belies traumatic experience." Little finds more promise in Version 1.0's dramaturgical approach to representing trauma which reflects the form of traumatic experience itself. This is echoed by Duggan (2018) who argues that - contrary to Peggy Phelan's (2003) assertion that trauma cannot be represented - trauma can be represented through the non-rational form of traumatic expressions themselves. He proposes that "a more accurate reading may be to suggest that trauma is beyond representation outside of the representational trauma-symptoms" (Duggan, 2018, p.27). This leads to Duggan's definition of trauma-tragedy which includes terms that are connected to the specific symptoms of trauma like 'cyclical', 'repetitious', and 'paradoxical'; but also includes terms that are connected to everyday non-traumatic multimodal cognition like 'visceral', 'emotional' and 'kinaesthetic' (p. 174). His definition highlights the association whereby non-rational representational modes are closely

connected to the paradoxical and unresolved expressions of trauma[15]. While this speaks effectively to the examples of practice Duggan examines, such as the work of Keira O'Reilly, in my PaR and research questions, I am driven to look at how non-rational representational modes can move beyond the portrayal of the paradoxical and unresolved expressions of trauma, to generate 'new meanings' in relation to the trauma experienced.

While most scholars in TPS do not explicitly address non-rational new-meaning construction, this area of scholarship has produced research that locates and deconstructs the embodied and symbolic expressions of theatre and the meaning-producing effects these have on the viewer in concrete terms. For example, when discussing Kira O'Reilly's performance *Untitled (Syncope)*, Duggan quotes Lacan to define trauma as "beyond the symbolic" (p. 55). However, he describes the specific kinaesthetic techniques employed by the performer as she moved the audience through the space and repetitively cut her own skin. These techniques, Duggan writes, "kept drawing me to make associations in my memory, it put me in a space where I began to reconnect with past moments of traumatic experience – my first memory of pain, the image of watching a friend's forehead split open on a curb, and the sickening experience of guilt and helplessness when a loved one tried to commit suicide" (p. 56). These observations point towards the embodied and associative symbolisations—or meaning schemas—which are

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[15] It's worth mentioning that Duggan does point towards a need to better understand how multimodal forms contribute to 'narrative' when he writes: "the centrality of personal narrative to trauma must be acknowledged. But narratives organize space as well as time," and suggests that "a re-visioning of the work of narrative might afford greater purchase on the ways in which the theatrical apparatus – a space/ time to rehearse space/time and personhood – can address trauma" (Duggan 2018, p. 15). He states clearly that that trauma-tragedy does not simply re-articulate non-rational traumatic expression, but rather, gives voice to it in a way that allows us to better consider it and potentially resolve it. However, he inscribes metaphorical and poetic theatrical within his definition of trauma-tragedy, which 'does not propose a world view which could be identified as a resolution, or way to achieve resolution, of traumatic schism' (Duggan, 2018, p.174). As these non-rational modes of expression do not offer resolution, in Duggan's model the transformation of trauma can only occur through the critical reflection that an encounter with the poetic facilitates. In this way, even as he argues for a revisioning of the work of narrative, Duggan presents a model for narrative meaning-making which closely mirrors Freud's; valuing embodied, metaphoric, and associative processes for their ability to access trauma, while valuing rational critical process for its ability to reframe and transform it.

evoked and connected through the specific action of the performance. A critical framework which supported the identification and mapping of multimodal meaning-making could help to further elucidate symbolisations occurring in and through this work. I will address this in 1.3.

'Meaning' and 'Trauma' in Cognitive Theatre Studies

In the relatively newer field of CTS, there is a general trend towards triangulating performance studies, cognitive science, and psychology. *The Routledge Companion to Theatre, Performance and Cognitive Science* for example integrates cognitive psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary studies and relevant social sciences through insights from theatre and performance studies, calling this intersection a "rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field" (Kemp & McConachie, 2019). While the intersection of cognitive science and psychology is explored in this volume, particularly in relation to autism and dementia, psychological trauma is not investigated. There is also no explicit mention of psychological trauma in *Theatre and Cognitive Neuroscience* (Falletti, Sofia, & Jacono, 2016), nor in Bruce McConachie's seminal *Theatre and Mind* (2012).

Despite the scarcity of explicit theorisation around trauma, there is some key scholarship in this area which draws on second-generation cognition to analyse meaning-making in performances with traumatic themes. Nicola Shaughnessy (2019) notably draws on affective and embodied cognition to consider how director Katie Mitchell's staging of *Cleansed* affects audiences while employing a what Ratcliffe (2017, p. 198) calls 'clinical empathy' to leave "the creative space for new understanding" (Shaughnessy, p. 130). Mitchell (2004) has conducted practice-based research informed by affective and embodied science to bring more realism to her directing practice. Shaughnessy also discusses the way that real lived experience

is used to generate fictional material in in the practice of Playing ON and then adapted for performance through "physical theatre and non-naturalist techniques" (2019a, p. 201). She identifies that "it is in the interactions between the body, the environment, and the sensing subject that meanings are made" so that the productions present a story that is "wholly truthful" but "not factual" (p. 201).

Outside the context of trauma, there is a robust conversation in CTS around the multimodal construction of meaning, built on frameworks from SGCS[16]. Scholars in this area have adapted ideas around the embedded, embodied, and enacted nature of cognition and meaning-making, evidencing the way these ideas translate to theatre. Seymour (2016, p. 40) refers to Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) theory that abstract concepts are grounded in "embodied metaphors and embodied experience" to consider the dramaturgical significance of kneeling in *Julius Ceasar*. Blair (2010) notes the structural similarity between Stanislavski's and Donnellan's acting methods and Gibson's (1979) cognitive concept of affordances, the idea that objects and environments are understood subjectively through what we can physically do with them. Bruce McConachie (2012) also points to Gibson's theory, saying designers and directors "must be aware of potential affordances when they agree on the setting for a production, its props, and even its costumes. How do the objects on stage … afford or constrain the necessary actions of the play?" (p. 14).

McConachie (2015) further considers the way that distributed cognition is applicable to theatre practice, writing: "all performance events are parts of one or several cultural-cognitive ecosystems" (p. 93). Rick Kemp (2018b, p. 56) draws on Sawyer and DeZutter's (2009) concept of 'distributed creativity', highlighting the way that meaning-making in devising can

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[16] For more detail see 'Appendix C: Multimodal Meaning-Making in Second Generation Cognitive Studies'

be considered a co-creative act involving multiple "agents of meaning." With regards to devising, Kemp (2018b, p. 49) also states that "The embodied nature of the process emphasises the extent to which non-verbal communication carries meaning and thus encourages multi-modal expression, rather than prioritising language as a written script does.". Cook (2007) draws on Tunner and Fauconnier's (1995) notion of 'conceptual blending' to describe how resonant connections and new meanings emerge through multimodal theatre practice.

The pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq features prominently in discussions on multimodal meaning-making in CTS. McConachie (2016) points out that "From a perspective based in contemporary cognitive psychology, Lecoq was much closer to understanding how our bodies and minds actually work" than modernists at the time (p.36). As a result, Lecoq "correctly assumed that human psychology was indivisible and recognized that the actor's embodiment could be the source of action, morality, and knowledge." (p. 37). McConachie (2012, p. 36) traces links between Lecoq's embodied philosophy and the scholarship of Mark Johnson who argues that: "meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment" (Johnson, 2007, p. 25). Maiya Murphy (2018, p. 78) writes that "the way in which Lecoq pedagogy overtly foregrounds movement allows it to directly tap into and make overt the pre-existing constitutive movement-based cognitive foundation". She connects Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) theories of categorisation and metaphorical grounding to discuss how Lecoq works with "basic-level categories" (Murphy, 2018, p. 56) through essentialisation[17].

Rick Kemp (2018a) presents a case study from a Lecoq class in which groups of students from different countries are grouped by their native language and asked to create a simple gesture

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[17] 'Essentialisation' is Lecoq's performance technique for distilling dynamic qualities to their most essential form. (Murphy, 2018, p. 56) I will discuss this technique in more detail in '1.4.3 Salience' on page 46.

that illustrates the phrase 'je prends' ('I take'). The exercise illustrates the cultural specificity of embodiment in relation to text, and the individual specificity at the level of the actors' bodies. Murphy (2018, p. 11) writes that exercises like these don't just reveal embodied identities, but rather, actively create them: "simultaneously forging her own identity as an actor-creator and creating a matrix of meanings for it."

Barbara Dancygier (2016, p. 39) identifies multimodality in theatre as "the source not only of its meaning potential, but also of its complexity," asserting that "in future work we should attempt to untangle the net of various relationships among the modalities." CTS is relevant to my research in its mission to untangle and articulate the specific ways that multimodal methods in theatre—including rational, symbolic, and embodied expressive forms—interact and inform one another to create new meanings. However, cognitive theatre studies does not yet engage in a direct way with the question of traumatic meanings: the consideration of maladaptive meaning frameworks and the specific ways that these function in relation to performance. These ideas are investigated through a SGCS lens in some branches of trauma therapy[18], including dramatherapy[19], but they have not been widely integrated into the study of performance practice. In order to rigorously engage with practice responding to trauma, it will be useful to consider CTS studies in connection with a framework which can speak to the

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[18] A growing body of research and practice investigates the intersection between trauma, psychotherapy, and second-generation cognition including body psychotherapy (Rohricht, Gallagher, Geuter, & Hutto, 2014), neuropsychoanalysis (Berlin, 2011; Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2018), Horowitz's model for self-organisation (M. Horowitz, 2014), sensorimotor approaches to trauma (Ogden, Pain, & Fisher, 2006), and enactive trauma therapy (Nijenhuis, 2017). There is also a small but growing body of scholarship considering trauma through more recent frameworks in 2nd generation cognition including consciousness neuroscience and predictive processing (Edwards, Adams, Brown, Pareés, & Friston, 2012; Kube, Berg, Kleim, & Herzog, 2020; Wilkinson, Dodgson, & Meares, 2017).

[19] Many theatre- and performance-based trauma therapies have adopted second-generation cognition frameworks, and embodied meaning-making is a key feature in current discussions in dramatherapy (Dokter, 2016; Emunah, 2019; P. Jones, 2008). Specific examples of research that connects performance-based therapies to second-generation cognition include the schema- and play-based practice of developmental transformations therapy (Rosen, Pitre, & Johnson, 2016), Scorolli's (2019) analysis of psychodrama through the lens of embodied cognition, and Koch & Fischmann's (2011) work connecting enactive cognition and dance movement therapy.

maladaptive meaning schemas of trauma, and unique ways that these function and are experienced.

1.2.3 Summary: Strengths, Gaps, and Incongruencies

TPS is the most developed field of practice and research which specifically addresses trauma in relation to performance. In relation to my research question, the knowledge in this field is relevant for considering theatre which responds to trauma. It is also valuable for understanding the way that memory and meaning are subjectively experienced through and around this performance. Much of the scholarship in this area draws heavily from literary trauma theory which in turn is grounded in in a psychoanalytic approach to trauma and meaning. This has led to a schism in the way meaning-making is considered across various expressive modalities in TPS, with new narrative meaning-making located most firmly in the verbal and rational modes of expression, and other multimodal cognitive process connected to literal traumatic experience. For this reason, it would be useful to consider this area of scholarship through an approach to trauma and meaning which can help identify the non-rational new meaning-making—like multimodal symbolisation and schema transformation—which occurs through this practice.

CTS is grounded in a SGCS view of meaning construction. This includes the view that meaning is multimodally experienced and constructed, and that meanings are embodied, embedded, and distributed and therefore co-created by embodied people and their environments. It is the most developed field for applying research in cognitive science to an investigation of how 'meaning' is multimodally constructed through theatre practice. The area of study also shares a fundamental theoretical framework—and is therefore mutually intelligible—with SGCS

approaches to trauma. However, theorisations specific to trauma are limited in this research area, and there is very little grounding in trauma-specific practice.

A key epistemological distinction between CTS and TPS is the way 'meaning' is considered, and its formation in relation to experience. TPS scholars tend to follow the psychoanalytic view that meanings are constructed separately from experience, and that trauma is marked by a lack of integration into a symbolic meaning structure. CTS scholars tend to consider meaning to be constitutive of perception, so it is not possible within its theoretical frame for any experience to be beyond symbolisation. At present, there is limited dialogue between these two areas of study and practice.

1.3 Critical Framework: A SGCS Approach to 'Meaning' and 'Trauma'

1.3.1 Rationale

As a Lecoq-trained devising physical theatre artist, I think and construct meanings multimodally through interlinked and iteratively connected rational and non-rational expressive forms. For this reason, Cartesian theories of meaning which divide rational and non-rational cognition do not align with my understanding and experience of my practice. To investigate a directorial practice which creates new meaning in response to trauma, I will need coherent and mutually intelligible definitions for both 'meaning' and 'trauma' which address both the multimodal dimension of meaning-making, and the specific ways that meaning-making is affected by trauma. A framework that is drawn from second-generation cognition, but which also explicitly addresses trauma, would provide this. In my critical context, I identified CTS and TPS as the most relevant areas of performance scholarship for interrogating

my practice in relation to meaning and trauma, respectively. A SGCS approach to trauma can bridge these two areas of study by creating an access point where they can align.

SGCS approaches to trauma are grounded in the same embodied epistemology as CTS. As such, extending CTS to include SGCS approaches to trauma will be straightforward, from a theoretical perspective. Practically, however, the majority of research in theatre which responds to trauma is located in TPS, and creating dialogue between SGCS and TPS will take a greater level of translation. This is because the theoretical framings of these areas are incongruous on some nuanced but important points. Specifically, the psychoanalytic view which considers trauma to be the result of a lack of symbolisation is incongruous with an 2nd generation cognition view of trauma which considers all experience to be constitutively inclusive of meaning-making. However, it is my position that TPS can be fruitfully re-evaluated through a critical framework that considers enactive cognition in relation to trauma. This is because scholarship in trauma and performance addresses and describes associative, metaphorical, and other forms of non-linear cognitive process in connection with both performance and traumatic experience. In this way, even if not explicitly framing traumatic experience as 'meaningful', scholars in this field do tacitly address the various layers of multimodal meaning that surround traumatic experience, as well as performance which responds to or evokes that experience.

My proposed framework would revise the work of narrative through the lens of the latest developments in cognitive science in order to, as Duggan suggested, "afford greater purchase on the ways in which the theatrical apparatus – a space/time to rehearse space/time and personhood – can address trauma" (Duggan 2018, p. 15). Specifically, a definition for meaning that is grounded in multimodal cognitive process would help elucidate how practice from trauma and performance creates new meanings through somatic, symbolic, and other

multimodal theatrical avenues; while a definition for trauma which is coherent with second-generation cognition would expand the theoretical foundation of cognitive theatre studies to include the consideration of dissociative, conflicted, and maladaptive meaning schemas.

In this section, I will propose a critical frame to structure my inquiry, presenting definitions for 'meaning' and 'trauma' which are grounded in SGCS. My critical framework primarily draws on Ellert Nijenhuis' (2017) definition of trauma from an enactivist cognitive perspective, and Andy Clark's (2015) predictive processing model of meaning, supported by Mardi Horowitz's (2014) schema-based model of self-organisation, and therapists working within SGCS approaches to trauma. I will conclude this section by identifying the ways that these theories delimit my research and practice.

1.3.2 Definition of 'Meaning' – A Predictive Processing Model

My definition of meaning is grounded in the predictive processing (PP) framework as presented by Andy Clark (2015). PP is a schema-based formulation for meaning which sits within SGCS, and embraces the embodied, embedded, and distributed nature of cognition and meaning-making. I have chosen this definition to delineate my research because, as I indicated in my introduction, it emerged through a key shift in thinking through my practice creating *First Response*. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3[20]. A PP definition of 'meaning' is consistent with an enactive approach to trauma therapy, but brings additional useful theory

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[20] See '3.3 Mapping the Shift to a Second-Generation Cognitive Science Approach' on page 79.

about how meaning schemas operate and can be modified, particularly in relation to salience[21].

I will expand on this in 1.3.2[22]

PP proposes that the brain is organized in dynamic and hierarchically structured networks, each involved in predictively (generatively) representing models of ourselves and our environments at different levels of specificity across space and time in order to shape perception and drive action. Prior experience shapes our latent predictive models, or 'priors', and these are updated by our environment each time they are predictively accessed and generated (Clark, 2015; AK Seth, 2014; Anil Seth, 2021)[23]. As Clark (2016, p. 3) posits, this framework: "delivers a firm and intuitive grip upon the nature and possibility of meaning itself. For to be able to predict the play of sensory data at multiple spatial and temporal scales just is…to encounter the world as a locus of meaning."

Meaning-making within the PP framework—as in all embodied cognitive frameworks—is not limited to the rational sphere. It is a constantly occurring predictive and creative process which draws on multimodal models, or schemas, that are grounded in and iteratively connected to our embodied process. As such, our embodied experience and symbolic schemas inform our so-called rational narratives and meaning structures, just as our rational thoughts help form our metaphorical associations and embodied experience.

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[21] In cognitive science, salience is the term used to describe the quality of standing out, and salience bias states that the brain prefers to pay attention to salient elements of an experience (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982).

[22] See 'Fourth Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Salience' on page 37.

[23] This idea is not entirely new; as early as 1867 Hermann von Helmholtz, a German physician and physicist studying optics, suggested that "unconscious inferences" were an important aspect of visual perception (Helmholtz, 1867). Von Helmholz's ideas weren't brought back into the discussion until over a century later when cognitive psychologists and neurologists were willing to entertain the idea of "unconscious" mental process, which up until then had been the remit of psychoanalysts and analytical psychologists.

A major distinction between first- and second-generation cognitive science is how perception and the flow of information are theorised in these fields. First-generation cognitive theory proposes 'box-and-arrow' models of the brain, in which information is received through low-level processors at the sensory level. This input informs the creation of more abstract representations generated further up the cognitive chain (Kukkonen & Caracciolo, 2014). Recent research in SGCS contradicts this theory, and has evidenced a great deal of top-down[24] and lateral processing involved at the very initial levels of perception. This—combined with advances in prediction-based coding systems in AI and computing—has led consciousness researchers to develop a new framework which can better account for this top-down and lateral information flow. In the PP framework, our own internally generated prediction models create the majority of our experience, with sensory information from the world re-shaping these models through prediction-errors only in the event that they don't match our internally generated schemas. These errors go on to update our schemas, which "include a wealth of multimodal associations and…a complex mix of motoric and affective predictions" (Clark, 2015, p. 14).

From my perspective as a theatremaker, PP provides an elegant framework that intuitively and functionally maps to the way that I create theatre. The framework articulates the dynamic, lateral, and nested relationship between modally diverse meaning structures employed in theatre practice, cohering them into a single definition. Theatre making can be thought of as the generation of multiple "nested and laterally connected models" at different spacio-temporal

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[24] Not to be confused with the term 'top-down' as it is often used in trauma theory, to express the higher and lower levels of abstraction, (with 'top down' connected to verbal / rational therapeutic approaches and 'bottom-up' referring to somatic and mindfulness based approaches). I've deliberately avoided using the term in this way to disambiguate from the PP definition of the term which refers to the flow of information between perceived information and internally generated schemas (Clark, 2015).

scales that help to map the environment (world), predict events and outcomes (plot), understand people (character), and drive behaviours (action).

One particularly important feature of meaning in the PP model in relation to trauma is the notion that a large degree of our cognitive experience is coming from self-generated models rather than sensory input. Sensory experience only reaches us in the forms of 'prediction errors' when it is incongruous with our generative models, and sensory input that does match the generative model is effectively 'explained away' (Clark, 2015, p. 35) by our sensory systems as it's not needed. In this sense, our experience of reality is more of a "controlled hallucination" (Seth, 2021, p. 15) than a 1-1 representation of the world. Furthermore, every perceptive experience comes with some degree of cognitive noise, which means that all perception—whether maladaptive or not—has to allow for a tolerable degree of discrepancy between its predictive models and sensory input, so that a "lowly weighted prediction error is relatively ignored as expected noise" (Hohwy, 2017).

This means that unconscious information suppression is the default response for all information that matches our models, as well as some information which doesn't. Prediction errors only penetrate our awareness and update our models to the extent that they are highly-weighted, or regarded as salient. This is significant because in psychoanalytic trauma theory, unconscious suppression of information is characterised as internal conflict, and is identified as a function of the trauma itself. The PP model proposes that the unconscious selective suppression of sensory information is a normal and healthy part of all perceptive process. Traumatic pathology within this framework, then, is not located in the suppressive function, but rather, in problems around schema organisation (including self-organisation), and the way this affects the

weighting or salience given to various sensory inputs, or prediction errors. I will discuss the implications that this has on my research in section 1.3.4[25].

1.3.2 Definition of 'Trauma' - An Enactive Model

My definition of trauma is rooted in Ellert Nijenhuis' (2017) enactive trauma theory, which sits within SGCS, supported by additional frameworks from SGCS including Andy Clark's PP model and Mardi Horowitz's (2014) schema-based model for self-organisation. I will present this definition under subheadings which highlight trauma's core feature, and four key aspects of new meaning-making in relation to the maladaptive meaning schemas of trauma.

Trauma's Core Feature: A Problem of Self-Organisation

In an enactivist perspective, trauma cannot be isolated to an individual, as subject-object separation is impossible. Therefore, trauma is considered a feature of an organism-environment system:

> Traumatized individuals are host to more than one conception of who they are and what the world is like, and how they relate to this experienced and conceived world. Confronted with a violating reality, their personality as a whole organism-environment system has become divided into two or more dissociative organism-environment subsystems or parts.
>
> [Nijenhuis, 2017, p. 10]

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[25] See '1.3.4 SGCS as a Bridge: Connectivity with Other Areas of Study' on page 38.

In this perspective, all forms of symbolisation (not just verbal forms) contain intricate meanings, and new knowledge is primarily gained through goal-oriented sensorimotor and affect-laden actions. These actions are driven by pre-existing meaning schemas—analogous with Clark's (2015) "priors"—based on past experience which are concurrently modelled and updated in relation to the environment and one's goals (Nijenhuis, 2017). Identity and selfhood is itself a modelling process, with the 'self' constructed moment-to-moment through self-schemas (Horowitz, 2014) or action systems (Nijenhuis, 2017), which can be associated or dissociated through 'supra-ordinate configurations' that group some self-schemas together while keeping others apart (M. Horowitz, 2014). These schemas are accessed at situationally-appropriate times and combined with other schemas that organise the world and self-world relationships to guide appropriate action. This shifting between self-states can occur in an integrated way, for example one might shift between roles of self-as-mother, self-as-teacher, and self-as-friend depending on her context, but be consciously aware of the possibility of all of these roles at any given time. Normally, a person is able to flexibly move between conflicting longings while maintaining an integrated awareness of how each self-state and associated set of roles and schemas are 'theirs'. They can even experience multiple schemas and their associated longings in parallel (Nijenhuis, 2017).

In some cases the longings of varying self-states can be so incongruous that they are incompatible, and in this instance a dissociative schism may develop between them (Nijenhuis, 2017). At the most extreme end of this spectrum is dissociative identity disorder, or DID (Spiegel, 1984). The condition—which is frequently linked to repeated trauma in early childhood—is marked by the existence of multiple 'selves' with their own separate memories, world-views, and self-concepts. This condition results from the compartmentalisation of abuse memories as a survival tactic to navigate different life functions, as in the case of having a

caregiver who vacillates between being nurturing and being abusive (Spiegel, 1984; Ross, 1989; Ellason, Ross and Fuchs, 1996; Bremner and Brett, 1997; Putnam, 1997). In this way, siloes of 'narrative coherence' are maintained in the face of wildly incoherent parental behaviours and external conditions, and context-appropriate 'self-states' can be activated to respond in the best way to a given moment (Horowitz, 2015). These states are connected to 'apperceptive centres' (Braude, 1995) that are "self-conscious to a greater or lesser degree and believe that a range of mental states are their own, while other states are not" (Van der Hart et al., 2004, p. 909).

PP provides additional insight into cognitive dissociation and our peculiar ability to "flip" between meaning schemas. In particular, it demonstrates the way that meaning schemas are accessed through a dynamic process that involves selectively ignoring and augmenting different sets of data, and that in the presence of simultaneous conflicting data sets, very small amounts of new information or attentional adjustment can result in hugely different 'pictures'[26]. Considered in the context of hyperprecise priors, this model helps to explain how completely different schema-systems—including complex self-schemas like Braude's (1995) "apperceptive centres"—can be activated by very small environmental cues. I will discuss the way that small physical triggers caused hyperarousal in my rehearsal process in Chapter 3[27].

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[26] This is best evidenced through binocular rivalry studies, which will typically show two competing images to each of a participant's eyes. Instead of seeing a combined image, participants' visual experiences will flip-flop between two complete pictures, filling in the image as needed and blocking out the sensory data that contradicts it for a few seconds at a time. This flipping occurs despite the visual sensory input remaining unchanged, suggesting that two incongruent top-down predictive images are alternately presented and confirmed and then (due to the error signals coming from the other image) updated and corrected by the other predictive visual model (Clark, 2015). This is a simpler version of the more complex 'flipping' between self-schemas that is proposed to occur in DID.

[27] See '3.5.1 Salience, Arousal, and Aesthetic Limitations' on page 91.

While DID is an extreme example, most trauma is defined by a breakdown at the level of self-organisation with some degree of crossover or awareness between apperceptive centres. In most cases of trauma, a person will maintain an awareness of dissociated self-states but will struggle to contain or understand them together. Enactive trauma theory points to the existence of prototypical dissociative subsystems or 'parts' which operate in parallel and serve competing functions and aims. These were first defined by Charles Samuel Myers (2012) in his 1940 book on Shell Shock, in which he identified the existence of an 'emotional personality' (EP) which strives to protect the organism from perceived threat through hyperarousal, or 'passion', and an 'apparently normal personality' (ANP) which must navigate the tasks of daily life, and therefore works to delimit the emotion of the EPs.

While the terminology varies slightly, other parts-based models of trauma are consistent with the enactive view. In Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy for example, a person is seen as a collection of parts which all operate according to their own longings and logics (Schwartz & Sweezy, 2019). The most dissociated and repressed parts within this system are the exiles, who, like the fragile EP, project maladaptive levels of existential threat and pain onto present external causes. These exiles exist in polarised opposition to other parts called managers who, like the ANP, are tasked with carrying on with 'normal' life.

First Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Dual Awareness

Key to IFS is the idea of the capital-S 'Self' that is capable of serving as a containing frame of compassion and acceptance for self-parts that are locked in extreme polarised attitudes in relation to other parts. Janina Fisher, (2017, p. 85) calls this attentional space of compassionate observation 'dual awareness'. Nijenhuis, (2017, p. 34) frames this space as consciousness that

is raised to a level of "communication and cooperation" between self-parts. All of these therapists frame healing in terms of pairing compassion with distance to generate new meanings through cooperation, dialogue, and mutual awareness between conflicted and dissociative self-parts.

Nijenhuis points out a major paradox of enactive therapy, which is that "higher levels of consciousness and relatedness" imply deeper access to extreme passions which are "precisely the experiences that the ignoring and controlling parts of the personality fear, detest, and preferably avoid" (p. 34). Therefore, healing trauma demands high negative affect-tolerance, which can only be achieved through "affects that are opposite to, and indeed stronger than, the traumatic passions" like "an affect-laden understanding that flows from love of God or Nature" (p. 84).

Second Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Multimodal Symbolisation

Fisher (2017, p. 85) emphasises the importance of "multi-modal interventions" in engaging with conflicted self-parts through a space of dual awareness to transform them. She gives the example of using somatic language, gesture, and imagery to ask a client to take their emotional self-part "under their wing" instead of using the more conceptually complex language of having "compassion" for this part. This detail is important, as it demonstrates that for some fragile parts, an image-based symbolisation process is more useful than more conceptual language for transforming meanings. Nijenhuis (2017, p. 78) also focuses on the body's role in achieving higher awareness, stating: "consciousness is primarily affect-laden body awareness" (2017, p. 150). Nijenhuis highlights the primacy of non-verbal symbolisation in creating new meaning through action when he writes, "Important actions include putting the past in symbols such as

drawings, paintings, or music, and subsequently in words, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters." This suggests that non-verbal parts must first work symbolically in non-rational multimodal forms before progressing to the more abstract symbolisations of language. This offers a window into why and how non-verbal multimodal practices like 'songs, dances, laments and games' have such efficacy in working with traumatised cohorts, and provides a counterpoint to Thompson et al's (2009, p. 34) view that a "trauma / healing paradigm" is not sufficiently broad to include these performance forms.

Third Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Embodied Action

Nijenhuis (2017, p. 84) writes that "Trauma entails reducing an individual's power of action. In full contrast, enactive repair is about finding new meaning in life. This healing is about developing new mental and behavioural actions that increase injured individuals' power of action in viable and creative ways." This is achieved when the wider Self is able to foster communication between the conflicted self-systems to drive action by 'own causes' which benefit the whole system. With increasing integration, EPs can stop being maladaptively and passionately affected by external causes in the world, and ANPs can stop dissociatively sublimating them to survive. In this way, "enactive trauma therapy is the progression from passions to actions – or the evolution from being strongly affected by external causes to becoming an agent whose life is guided more by own causes" (p. 78). Nijenhuis highlights the social and co-created aspect of meaning-making through action, when describing the "participatory sense-making" between therapist and client, stating: "any human sense-making is basically an interpersonal action" (p. 84).

Fourth Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Salience

SGCS approaches highlight the inherent symbolisation and creativity involved in all schema generation, even the maladaptive schemas of trauma. Nijenhuis writes: "enactivism contains the idea that creativity is an inherent feature of life. Traumatized individuals, however, recurrently engage in actions and passions that are overly rigid" (p. 84). This idea is congruent with PP which posits that our priors—the latent generative schemas which help us to navigate and predict the world—are more rigid and less adaptive to cues from our environment when developed under traumatic circumstances. This is because existing schemas are updated in relation to how reliable and salient an environmental cue is (Clark, 2015). Existentially threatening events are highly salient, and information that is perceived in parallel with high attentional focus is highly reliable. As a result, the high salience and heightened focus of traumatic experiences lead to the over-weighting of the traumatic input, which leads to 'hyper-precise priors' (Kube et al., 2020) or "a general skewing of priors toward negative hypotheses" (Wilkinson et al., 2017).

These negative-hypotheses schemas are accessed and applied to situations with a maladaptive degree of certainly and frequency, and are difficult to update or transform. In other words, trauma leads to catastrophising and rigid meaning-schemas which are difficult to update, or make 'new'. In the same way that heightened focus during a traumatic moment can cause a prior to be hyperprecise, actively ascribing reliability and salience to a present corrective experience through attentional focus can help to rewire a maladaptive prior. By actively paying attention to new sensory information, and allowing this information to drive behaviour, skewed schemas can be changed through new input deemed reliable enough to update them.

1.3.4 SGCS as a Bridge: Connectivity with Other Areas of Study

Both PP and enactive trauma theory are coherent with cognitive schema theories of environments, roles, people (including self), objects, and events that provide more nuanced frameworks for specific kinds of generative models (e.g. Piaget, 2003; McVee, Dunsmore and Gavelek, 2005; Horowitz, 2015; Vorbeck, 2021), and are therefore compatible with the CTS scholarship which engages with these schema theories (e.g. McConachie, 2001; Falletti, Sofia and Jacono, 2016; Kemp, 2018).

In a similar way, PP and enactive trauma theory can critically engage with theories of meaning-making and trauma integration across verbal, expressive, and embodied therapeutic systems. They can dialogue with—and incorporate aspects of—literary, psychoanalytic, and psychological approaches to meaning-construction (e.g. Breuer & Freud, 2009; Bruner, 1990; Freud, 1912; Janet & Raymond, 1898; Libbrecht & Quackelbeen, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1988; Wong, 2012), without losing sight of the multimodal connectivity and complexity of meaning, and the embodied basis of verbal narratives. This is particularly important for dialoguing with scholarship from TPS, and the wealth of practical research in verbal and narrative meaning-making in this area.

PP and enactive trauma theory, taken together, can also re-frame the accessing and integration of trauma as the employment and updating of hyperprecise prior meaning schemas operating at symbolic and somatic levels, and in this way can also dialogue with somatic and creative therapeutic approaches (e.g. Ferenczi, 1995; Jung, 1958; Kalsched, 2014; Levine, 2010; Peláez, 2009; Terr, 1981). This is also useful for drawing relevant learning around multimodality and meaning from TPS, as well as creating a bridge between my practice and Romanyshyn's (2010)

'Wounded Researcher' methodology. Romanyshyn's methods are grounded in Jungian psychology, and I employ these as a tool for multimodal researcher-reflexivity in relation to trauma. I will discuss this further in Chapter 2[28].

1.3.5 Summary: Implications of the Framework for Practice and Research

An enactive, schema-based approach to trauma proposes that the core feature of trauma is a disruption to self-organisation. Supported by PP and schema theories of self-organisation, this framework demonstrates how meanings are made multimodally in a way that is mutually intelligible with cognitive theatre studies, and can also reframe and dialogue with other approaches to trauma and meaning, including Freudian and Jungian approaches. This facilitates a deeper engagement with CTS and TPS, as well as Romanyshyn's (2010) Wounded Researcher methodology.

In relation to my research question, the critical framework provides a more precise definition of what it means to "create new meaning in response to trauma". "Meaning" refers to a system of multimodal cognitive schemas used to predict futures and drive action. "Creating new meanings" involves accessing and update these meaning schemas through embodied action. "Trauma" refers to a breakdown at the level of self-organisation and worldview, leading to a non-communicative divide in their organism-environment system. Some divided parts have 'hyper-precise' priors which contain negative hypothesis and are maladaptively rigid and resistant to updating.

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[28] I will discuss The Wounded Researcher in '2.3.2 Addressing 'Trauma': The Wounded Researcher' on page 61. Background on Jungian theory and its relationship to multimodality can be found in Appendix B.

This critical framework also demonstrates that the creation of new meaning in the context of trauma is facilitated through four key aspects of meaning-making which are: dual awareness, multimodal symbolisation, embodied action, and salience. This has four correlated implications in relation to my practice as a director working in contexts of trauma to create new meaning. First, it asks my practice to facilitate a type of awareness that is compassionate and communicative, while not over-identified with rigid passions; second, it asks my practice to attend to multimodal symbolisation, as non-verbal symbolisation may access dissociated parts that are not immediately accessible through language; third: it asks for new symbolisation to occur through embodied action, in response to real-world causes from the environment-organism system; and fourth: it ask that my practice attend to salience—both the extreme salience of hyper-precise traumatic schemas, and the high salience of new information that is needed to update these. In this chapter's final section, Literature Review, I will carefully select and analyse practice and scholarship at the intersection of TPS and CTS to identify specific theatre techniques which can attend to the conditions of these four aspects of meaning-making.

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Translating the Model: New Meaning as Co-Occurrence and Co-Updating

In her analysis of *Shylock Improvisations,* Antje Diedrich (2011, p. 145) asserts that the remembrance of trauma needs to be "first and foremost a sensuous process, a physical practice," citing Tabori's (1981, p. 202) position that "Non-sensuous remembrance becomes story-telling, whereby the past remains the past and at a great distance." Weaver & Colleran, (2011, p. 35) point out the danger that this distance brings, discussing how Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden* depicts the way that "language enables violence, rationalization and denial." The

authors point to Elaine Scarry's (1985 p. 35) observation that while the physical effects of torture bring revulsion, when "the focus of attention shifts to the verbal aspect of torture, those lines have begun to waver and change their shape in the direction of accommodating and crediting the torturers." This idea contrasts with practice which aims to inscribe traumatic experience in verbal story to be shared, like Teya Sepinuck's (2013, p. 230) Theatre of Witness, which "strives to bear witness both to personal story and to collective narrative."

What's useful about the SGCS frame is that by disconnecting trauma integration from abreaction on the one hand, or verbal inscription on the other, it supports disparate positions within TPS regarding the dangers and opportunities of non-verbal vs. verbal representational modes. When considered through enactive trauma theory, it's possible to consider how all of these positions are valid in relation to creating new meaning, or the co-updating of maladaptively hyper precise and dissociated schemas. As Diedrich asserts, maladaptive schemas need to be accessed in the modal languages that speak to the self-parts that employ them; and as Weaver and Colleran propose, the engagement of a more verbal self-part is likely to create a dissociative distance so that the latent EP cannot be accessed or transformed. But as Sepinuck points out, until their meanings are held in dual awareness and formed into an integrated story, they will remain dissociated, unable to update according the knowledge held within the system of schemas contained by the other self-part.

As an artist-practitioner working in contexts of trauma, I am interested in creating new meaning in order to move from what Benegas (2011) describes as the pole 'repetition' to the pole of 'narrativization'. In enactive trauma theory, movement along this pole is determined by the degree to which multimodal meaning schemas are able to co-update within the shared attentional frame of a dually-aware self. An aim of my research is to identify the specific

aspects of meaning making that are likely to facilitate this co-updating taking place, and to interrogate the way these aspects can be manipulated through specific techniques of theatre practice. In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider the 4 key aspects of meaning-making in relation to trauma identified in 1.3; reviewing relevant literature at the intersection of TPS and CTS which addresses how to work with these practically. This will lead me to identify 4 correlated theatre-making techniques which will serve as research methods in both PaR projects.

1.4.2 Multimodal Symbolisation

A central question of my thesis is how theatre can create new meanings in contexts of trauma. As such, I'm particularly interested in the ways that as artists we abstract and associate across schemas[29] in order to build theatrical narratives capable of creating meaning across different modalities. Teya Sepinuck (2013) describes the importance of "finding the gold" to bring "heightened meaning" to a story. Gold "can be found as a non-verbal symbol, movement, sound, or interaction" which "then becomes the seed that flowers into a central idea" (p. 234). From an enactive view, Sepinuck's process weaves multimodal meaning systems into stories, so that they can be experienced as salient across rational, symbolic, and embodied cognitive process. In this way, her Theatre of Witness aims towards the same things I aim for in my own practice: neither sensuous remembrance nor distanced story-telling, but rather, the pursuit of a multimodal form of sensuous new story-making.

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[29] SGCS posits that both immanent and explicit meanings from one cognitive modality can translate and map to other modes through 'cross-modal abstraction' and 'cross-modal association', the cognitive processes that operate at the base of metaphor and schema formation (Ramachandran, 2012). For a more extensive review, See appendix C.

As symbols, objects carry complex meanings both onstage and off. Barbara Dancygier (2016, p. 30) extends Hutchins' (2005) idea of conceptual 'anchors[30]' to consider the way that objects onstage can take on meaning beyond the functional: "When their material role stops being the central one, they cease to be simple props, and become what I will refer to as dramatic anchors." Dramatic anchors have a "dual function", as they "materially participate in the performance, but they also guide the viewer in constructing the meaning of the play" (p. 32). In this way, "the very nature of the objects interacts with the emergence of the story" (p. 30). Hutchins choice of the word "anchor" indicates that, as Dancygier (2007, p. 140) writes, "they are capable of 'holding' conceptual elements 'in place.'"

Michael Levan's (2011) deconstruction of Alfredo Jaar's object intervention – a folded box containing a photograph from Rwanda and a donation appeal – demonstrates the way that the material meanings of objects can evoke further conceptual meanings through lateral, associative cognition. The box's shape is that of a camera, and the picture it contains "multiplies a metaphor of exposure", so that "Refolding exposes the images inside the box and also the genocide in Rwanda…In addition, the long exposure of colonialism and globalization is also implied" (p. 90) Levan's quote reveals the way that physical objects (the camera-box) can operate as material or dramatic anchors themselves, but they can also create additional associations with concepts (like 'exposure') which evoke further associations in an expansive process of lateral thought.

Materials can also symbolise human psyches and bodies. Installation artist Paul McCarthy (in Stiles, 1996, p. 14) states: "The object becomes the body … I use objects to represent thoughts

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[30] Hutchins (2005) draws on Turner & Fauconnier's (1995) concept of conceptual blending to consider the way that material objects become anchors for conceptual blends containing multiple layers of information. He describes the way we can offload layers of complex conceptual structure onto an object, using it as a mental shortcut.

and feelings." Werner (2011, p. 161) discusses the way that this manifests in McCarthy's architectural installations containing inaccessible spaces, quoting Stiles who notes that this idea is a classic symbol of trauma. McCarthy's structures "evoke the human psyche, with its own structurally latent, architectural secret (the repressed and unapproachable memories that stamp affected individuals)."

Dancygier (2016) notes that "another kind of a dramatic anchor in a play is the body" (p. 32). Traumatic events often occur at the site body, and as such, bodies can be particularly salient and multi-faceted anchors in contexts of trauma. In their discussion of *Death and the Maiden*, Weaver and Colleran (2011, p. 40) write: "Bodies in this play are a site of profound remembering." Kuburović (2011) points to O'Reilly's use of her own naked body as the central symbol in *Sta(i)r Falling*, and discusses how this works both as a critique of high-class culture and a visceral reminder of the materiality of the physical body in trauma. Embodied cognition locates the body as the primary site of meaning, with all further meanings grounded[31] in and constructed from primary somatic and sensory experience. As such, the body is unique in its ability to engage meaning structures at or very close to their primary experiential level.

At the same time, each unique body offers a wealth of associations in relation to the position it holds in relation to society. Weaver and Colleran point to the body's potential to confront resistances to embodied remembering, both in the case of internal cognitive dissociation, and in the context of external political tendencies towards "rationalisation and denial" (p. 35).

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[31] Cognitive scaffolding is SGCS principle grounded in the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999) who argue that all conceptualisations are scaffolded from embodied modal experiences like 'up', 'give', 'take', 'far' which are used as scaffolding to construct increasingly complex ideas. Using the embodied understanding of 'run' and 'race' as scaffolding for example, one can build the idea of a 'presidential race'. This modal ('race') already comes with a set of embedded ideas that can then be applied to the concept of an election, including the idea of winning and losing, reaching a finish line, pacing oneself so as not to burn out, and so on (Shapiro and Spaulding, 2021).

Fortuna (2011, p.45) discusses how the dancer's body in *La Puñalada* serves multiple functions, referring to the site of violence, but also the people who have lived it and the systems which perpetuate it: "Tambutti's dance illuminates the fundamentally choreographic nature of the management of bodies by the Argentine nation state." In this way, the body confronts and dialogues with the rational function, connecting visceral and primal meaning schemas to more complex conceptual structures around political and social context.

In my own Lecoq-based training, the body is the primary medium for the expression of metaphor. As Murphy (2017, p. 114) writes, in Lecoq practice, "embodied knowledge is the prerequisite for creation," and information gleaned from embodied identification with gestures and materials are used as a basis to build more complex characters and situations. This process, called 'transposition', involves the mapping of qualities from one embodied schema to another, and is a foundation element of Lecoq training. In this way, symbolic transpositions in Lecoq practice begin at what Weaver and Colleran (2011, p. 84) identify as a site of 'profound remembering', privileged for accessing trauma. At the same time, transposition can also work at the level of materials and other elements of design. Taking the example of embodying fire, Murphy writes: "these discoveries could be transposed into spatial, sonic, or visual choices (p. 51).

Transposition is a foundational technique in my practice which can be used to create dramatic anchors through objects and spaces in line with the practice explored in this section. The literature reveals how carefully selected transpositions—including dramatic anchors—can create multifaceted meanings both viscerally and rationally, through objects, spaces, and especially bodies. Bodies in theatre which responds to trauma are powerful tools which can

simultaneously express meaning at the level of their visceral specificity as well as the way the individual is uniquely positioned in the wider society.

1.4.3 Salience

In the critical framework[32] I discussed the way that the heightened salience of a traumatic situation can lead to the formation of hyper-precise priors, and that these could be transformed by new experiences with high reliability through attentional focus, and high salience (Kube, Berg, Kleim, & Herzog, 2020). The ability to direct focus and modulate salience are therefore key skills required of a theatremaker working to update hyperprecise priors to create new meaning. As a temporal and embodied art form, theatre has techniques for directing audience focus, and manipulating the salience of objects, gestures, sounds, words, and images.

Hayler (2016, p.167) discusses the way performance transforms perception through a process that involves amplification and reduction. He notes that Peter-Paul Verbeek's definition of 'mediation' grounded in Ihde's post-phenomenology is a useful way of considering the various theatrical grammars used in performance practice: 'The transformation of perception has, according to Ihde, a definite structure involving amplification and reduction. Mediation always strengthens specific aspects of the reality perceived and weakens others' (Verbeek, 2005, p. 131). Mediation by this definition is locatable in Lecoq practice. Leabhart (1989) identifies how "simplification and amplification" are foundational concepts in Lecoq's work and the teachings of his mask teacher, Jean Dasté (p. 89). Murphy (2018) describes the way that attending to salience guides the process of distilling movement in Lecoq practice to construct

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[32] In 'Fourth Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Salience' on page 38.

highly salient and universally recognised, or 'essentialised' (p. 51), representational forms, and how these are modulated using 'dosage' (p. 114).

As traumatic experiences are highly sensory and salient, theatremakers who respond to trauma have developed multimodal techniques to reflect these unique experiences. In her vivid description of *Mercury Fur*, Anna Harpin (2011) identifies the "corrupted" language and "amplified sensate staging" used to "translate extreme experience into the materiality of the theatre and performance practice." She describes ticking clock sound effects that are "oppressive," a score that is "fractured," a pace that is "urgent" and a space that is "disjointed" (p. 107). Her description highlights the way that mediation in theatre can be used to amplify the experience of overwhelm, fragmentation, and disorientation that trauma sufferers experience. Little (2015) in her analysis of *The Disappearances Project* describes how the piece evokes a different set of trauma's qualities—dissociation and lack of resolution—through a monotone approach which removes emotion. This numbness is combined with repetition, "presenting testimony as part of a fractured, yet repetitious, loop of sounds and images that seem to echo the action of the recurring trauma flashback" (p. 44).

Nordstrom (1997, p. 171), on the other hand, describes how grotesque character stylization is mobilised in war-torn Mozambique to defeat terror by "laughing in its face", caricaturizing the "destructive forces in their lives" as "larger-than-life figures with larger-than-life comic features and foibles." Nordstrom's example illustrates the way that mediation can also be intentionally applied to minimise aspects of trauma which are the most distressing while augmenting aspects that are humorous, interesting, evocative, sensual, and so on. In this way, the techniques of essentialisation and dosage can work to regulate and modulate the extreme emotion of traumatic themes.

These examples show how mediation is used as a technique by trauma and performance practitioners to selectively amplify and mute different aspects of traumatic experience in their staging. As the dissociation of self-parts with different modal access points is a hallmark of trauma, an important question in mediating salience through theatre becomes: 'salient to which self-part(s)?' Recalling Elaine Scarry's (1985 p. 35) observation that our response to torture can shift considerably when attention shifts "to the verbal aspect," theatrical choices can theoretically be read as salient by some self-parts but also completely alienating and meaningless for others. In order to facilitate the co-occurrence and coherence of schemas, it would be useful to understand how practitioners work to engage disparate action systems in a single attentional frame. I will consider this further in the next section.

1.4.4 Dual Awareness

Central to an enactive view of trauma is the concept of a single stimulus provoking "contrary longings" (Nijenhuis, 2017, p. 345), or deep ambivalence. Enactive trauma therapy underlines the importance of being able to contain and accept internal ambivalence from place of "dual awareness" (Fisher, 2017, p. 85) or "higher consciousness" which is marked by "communication and cooporation" between self-systems, high negative-affect tolerance, and affects that are opposite to and stronger than the passions of trauma (Nijenhuis, 2017, p. 34).

Shaughnessy (2019), on her experience of Katie Mitchell's production of *Cleansed,* describes her empathetic perceptual response to the detailed and realistic violence of the play, and how this facilitated an awareness of her own spectatorship. She connects spectatorship to Ratcliffe's (2017, p. 198) perspective as a clinician, when he writes: "empathy is not a matter of replicating

other people's experiences so much as situating those experiences in a wider context of meanings." She then points to aspects of the production's design as the wider context for this clinical empathy which facilitates her encounter with the piece's contradicting passions:

> I couldn't even decide if my response was positive or negative. I wasn't sure whether I felt 'cleansed' or contaminated as it seemed to be a paradoxical mixture of both…I had a profound sense of myself as cognizer, a maker of meaning.
>
> [p. 84]

Love and pain feature side-by-side in this production: "In the action of the play, the cleansing fails because of the power of love – even the torturer falls victim to the power of love" (p. 129). Shaughnessy's scholarship on *Cleansed* resonates with Nijenhuis' (2017, p. 34) assertion that higher levels of consciousness bring higher levels of pain, as well his reference to the need for an affect that is opposite to and stronger than this pain to create the tolerance to face it.

This visceral engagement contrasts with Little's (2015) experience of attending *Katrina: A Play of New Orleans.* Little describes how the piece uses a documentary style which "creates the safe distance of 'entertainment', and through a cathartic jazz-funeral ending, produces an emotional release and a closure that suggests the 'real' trauma has been dealt with, thereby relegating it to history" (p. 48). Amanda Stuart Fisher (2011, p. 117) presents a similar critique of *The Exonerated,* noting, "dramaturgically the play draws on a classical structure of beginning, middle and end" with a factual verbal narrative which fails to communicate the depth and specificity of the trauma.

Little presents *Disappearances* as a counter to *Katrina*, noting that techniques of numbness, fragmentation and repetition create distance and "a profound desire to make sense of the testimony and find closure" resulting in "ongoing engagement." This is similar to what Wallis and Duggan (2011, p. 8) propose when they argue that: "theatre/performance might legitimately stage acting out and working over within the ultimate frame of working through – which must perforce take the action beyond the theatrical frame." Harpin (2011, p. 107) locates the transformative potential of *Mercury Fur* in its simultaneous closeness and distance: using "heightened performance strategies" to create sensory intimacy, but paying "careful attention to make strange this intimacy" so that the production "both absorbs and alienates."

Instead of focusing on alienation, Amanda Stuart Fisher (2011, p. 117) identifies the deeper engagement afforded by non-rational forms of meaning, asking how traumatised individuals can "ever hope to account authentically" for their experience "without access to a non-literal mode of expression such as metaphor or poetry" (p. 117). She presents Duma Kamalo's *He Left Quietly* as a counter to *The Exonerated,* noting how Kamalo's theatre of testimony style "uses poetry and metaphor to open up the possibility for an authentic reflection on how the resonance of trauma has transformed the life of the individual who has lived through it." (p. 119). This combination of 'authentic' and 'reflection' implies an engagement with both the experiential and semantic aspects of the traumatic experience.

While "trauma tragedy" (Duggan, 2018) includes a broad range of practice which can alienate or engage, through the lens of SGCS, the meaning-potential of theatre lies in its ability to move beyond alienation to a place of dual-engagement, best exemplified by Stuart Fisher's description of *He Left Quietly,* and Shaughnessy's description of *Cleansed*. CTS scholars (Blair, 2009; McConachie, 2012) have drawn on Fauconnier & Turner's (2008) idea of 'conceptual

blending[33]' to point towards theatre's ability act as a framework for actively engaging multiple and sometimes contradictory schemas, allowing novel new meanings to emerge from their combination. As Kaplan (2005, p. 182) asserts, "Theatre juxtaposes voices and engages us in symbolic conflict, in order to allow something new to flourish."

1.4.5 Embodied Action

Nijenhuis' (2017) trauma model centres action and agency in the creation of new meaning to become "an agent" more guided by "own causes" (p. 78). Kaplan (2005), in discussing her cross-community work in Jerusalem, underlines how the embodiment and present-tense agency of the actor is critical in transforming past experience, or prior meaning schemas: "The performer, acting as if the experience is in the present, takes charge and acts upon the content of the performance, transmuting what was "there and then" to "here and now" (p. 172). Amy Cook similarly writes: "The performance of the action does not signify, it creates. Something comes into being at the moment of performance and continues to scaffold our understanding long after the curtain has fallen" (Cook, 2010 p. 135).

Kaplan (2005) describes how "collaborative playmaking" allows space to "distil and reimagine" stories, and to "move beyond simple reiteration to creative agency". This agency is defined by "playful interventions that counter the reification of experience" so that "The frozen moment of trauma, in particular, can become unstuck" (p. 171). Through play, the participants can "act upon the painful experience…to create the healing fictions that transmute it" (p. 181). In relation to her theatre work with prisoners serving life sentences or facing execution, Kaplan

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[33] Through 'conceptual blending' (Fauconnier & Turner, 2008) words, images, and ideas combine to make new emergent meanings through the juxtaposition of existing conceptual structures.

(Kaplan, 2019, p. 144) states that 'playfulness' has a 'vital' role in addressing trauma, describing how she uses "visceral imagery and elaboration of fantasy" as a core feature of her practice.

This connects to Murphy's (2018, p. 11) proposal[34] that Lecoq's embodied play-based exercises simultaneously forge identity while creating matrices of meaning for it. For Lecoq, meaning is made through the body at a metaphorical or poetic level directly through the technique of embodied play, or 'le jeu' (Lecoq, 2000). As Mark Evans writes in his introduction to *The Moving Body*: "The idea of the poetic body and the idea of play are deeply entwined…Play is strongly related to the body's potential for transposition and for transformation, to the role of the body in our ability to understand and to make sense of the world around us" (Lecoq, 2000, p.xviii-xix).

Gibson's (1977) principle of 'affordances'[35] theoretically grounds the idea that play is creative, by illustrating the way that explorative physical play can lead to both meaning production and knowledge acquisition. If our understanding of an object or environment is grounded in what we can physically do with it, then the way to change or increase our knowledge of it is to explore it in an embodied way. When combined with Lakoff & Johnson's (2008) ideas around metaphorical grounding[36], this suggests that new meaning at more abstract levels of cognition can also be generated through the technique of embodied play.

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[34] See page 24.
[35] See page 22.
[36] See page 22.

1.5 Key Takeaways: Methods for my Inquiry

In this chapter, I have argued that a SGCS approach translates existing practice and scholarship in TPS and CTS, so that it can dialogue with and inform my practice. I have presented a critical framework built around SGCS definitions of 'trauma' and 'meaning,' and have used this framework to delimit my review of the literature to 4 aspects of meaning-making in context of trauma identified through the frame. A review focusing on these aspects has led me to identify four correlated theatre techniques or creating new meaning in contexts of trauma. These techniques are best suited for my PaR research as they sit at the intersection of my own past practice, and the work of other practitioners working specifically in response to trauma. They are:

- Transposition: a technique which facilitates multimodal symbolisation. Drawn from Lecoq pedagogy, the technique involves mapping of one modal schema onto another, specifically expressed in theatre through objects, bodies, scenic design, movement vocabularies, sound, and characters. This is closely connected to the concept of working with dramatic anchors, which themselves are a form of transposition.

- Mediation: a technique which modulates salience in relation to specific meaning schemas and cognitive modalities. Applied through the selective amplification and simplification of meanings, elements, and aspects of a character, event, or environment. Achieved in my practice specifically through Lecoq's techniques of essentialisation and dosage.

- Juxtaposition: a technique for facilitating dual awareness. The layering of multiple and sometimes-contrasting multimodal meanings in the form of words, sounds, images,

movements, and objects; using the frame of the theatre to contain contradiction and incoherence, and facilitate complex conceptual blends.

- Play: a technique for creating new meaning through embodied action. Grounded in Lecoq's *le jeu*, it includes both the embodied improvisation of games and rehearsal, and the play which happens in the space of performance.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss how I will repurpose these techniques, employing them as methods in my research. I will also outline additional methods which I will employ to facilitate researcher-reflexivity which specifically addresses self-schism. These are in keeping with an enactivist research paradigm, and is further indicated by the critical framework which identifies dissociation at the level of the self as a core feature of trauma.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Chapter Outline

This chapter presents an overview of my methodology, research methods, and project design. In the first section I highlight the complexity of using language which seeks to differentiate between modes of meaning-production within a multimodal perspective, and the limitations which come with research in this area, including my own research.

In the second section, I outline my methodology, narrowly targeted to address the specific considerations raised by a second-generation cognitive science approach to meaning and trauma, and based on Robin-Nelson's approach to Practice as Research. I outline specific principles from Haseman and Mafe's conditions for practice-led research and Romanyshyn's 'Wounded Researcher' approach to researcher-reflexivity that have helped shape my methodology. I then present my methodological framework, which is an adapted version of Robin Nelson's multi-mode model, informed by the limitations, tools and principles presented in the first part of the chapter.

In the third section I present my research design, outlining the specific methods I will use in my PaR which are drawn from my literature review. In the final section I provide additional practice context for my PaR case studies, including practice in performance responding to trauma in Northern Ireland, practice exploring intercultural migration performance as trauma, and artistic practice which implements the Wounded Researcher methodology.

2.2 Limitation of Research: Integrated Cognition and The Problem of Differentiation

A difficulty in investigating meaning and trauma through a second-generation cognitive science lens is that it is impossible to realistically consider different features of multimodal brain processes in isolation. Sense-making cannot be broken down in terms of 'rational', 'symbolic', or 'somatic' thought in a literal sense, as these are iterative and emergent processes that are scaffolded across all types of meaning. Similarly, traditional divisions of 'cognition' and 'affect' are disappearing in cognitive science, as "complex cognitive-emotional behaviours have their basis in dynamic coalitions of networks of brain areas, none of which should be conceptualized as specifically affective or cognitive" (Pessoa, 2008, p. 148).

In her call to adapt arts scholarship to in light of second-generation cognitive science, Cook (2018) points to this difficulty, stating: "The problem is partially language…We have to stop talking about embodied cognition if there is no such thing as disembodied cognition" (p. 890). The same could be said of 'multimodal' cognition; as Kress (2000) points out, different elements of meaning making cannot be considered in isolation, but must be considered as a 'multimodal whole,' so its multimodality should be implicit. The prevalence of this term in the arts is a reaction to the Cartesian position that delimits cognition to the narrow frame of conscious verbal process. In attempting to invert the binary, however, the use of terms like 'embodied' and 'multimodal' may instead serve to perpetuate it.

While I agree that language is where much of the complexity sits, I believe it would be simplification to consider the problem to be primarily semantic. Murphy (2023, p. 17) suggests: "My counter to binaries and their problems is not to invert them, but to leave them altogether

as theoretical lenses and turn my focus to mapping dynamism." This may be possible when what is being mapped are holistic experiences of sense-making in relation to objects and environments. Where it becomes more difficult to map dynamism without falling back on problematic conceptual frameworks is in dealing with the complexities of intrasubjective experience. This is because our linguistic conceptions not only co-create our subjective experiences, but in so doing they also come to define the techniques that we have developed to work with and transform them.

This is evidenced in the way that Rhonda Blair, (2010, p. 11) critiques the mind / body binary while at the same time acknowledging that it serves a pragmatic function. She challenges the "false, fragmented" self-image that the binary engenders, while also admitting the functional utility of phrases which acknowledge our ability to be more or less 'in' our bodies. She later introduces a binary of her own—'semantic' as opposed to 'experiential' when she states that too much discussion-based table work can mean the "language remains insufficiently embodied" so that "The actor can stay stuck in the text's semantic realm and fail to move fully into the experiential" (ibid., p. 14).

Arguably, Blair has simply repositioned the binary instead of truly addressing it. Her 'insufficiently embodied', much like, 'being in your head', is a phrase that perpetuates a false schism but is frequently used in theatre; there is a tacit, and generally shared understanding among practitioners of what these terms mean. Given that visualisation is frequently used as a tool to get 'into the body,' it is reasonable to speculate that these exercises work to increase the sensory modality of a given text, and that 'embodiment' as it is tacitly understood in theatre practice correlates to some degree with increased visual and sensorimotor activation in the brain. Similarly, working in the 'semantic realm' implies rational or verbal dominance, with

more activity taking place in the brain's language networks. But as evidenced by a growing body of research in second-generation cognition, these brain processes do not work in isolation, so attempts to consider them separately must be done heuristically.

This same dilemma extends to the 'rational / emotional' divide which appears in much of trauma theory, including an enactive approach to trauma. Nijenhuis (2017) maintains the enactive perspective that affect is a form of cognition, and that self-schemas are complex multimodal constructs which engage across a variety of cognitive processes. At the same time, however, he outlines the existence of prototypal 'emotional' and 'apparently normal' self-parts. These are constructs which trauma therapists have been able to loosely identify and build a therapeutic practice around. While theoretically it's understood that a self-part cannot be operating in a purely emotional or rational mode, it is pragmatically useful to acknowledge that there are some parts of the traumatised identity which seem to be operating from an affectively dominant or rationally dominant place. It is only in identifying and naming these that therapists can articulate the techniques with which to work with them.

The aim of my research is, as Murphy suggested, to map the dynamism of the various aspects of meaning-making through theatre in relation to one another; to map these, it is necessary for me to differentiate between them. To do this I draw upon language that may be philosophically inconsistent or scientifically simplistic in relation to the latest cognitive science, but is heuristically and pragmatically useful insofar as it has emerged from the specific practices that are considered in my research. In my methodological framework, I will work to explicitly address this complexity by structuring my inquiry according to semantically and experientially 'dominant' forms of thinking, creating practically useful distinctions while acknowledging complexity and interdependence of these forms of thought.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Addressing 'Meaning': Haseman and Mafe's Conditions for Practice-Led Research

I draw on Haseman and Mafe (2009) to address the question of how knowledge is produced within a research project which embraces an enactivist view of 'meaning'. Enactivism as outlined by Di Paolo & Thompson (2014, p. 76) asserts that a body is an "adaptively autonomous and therefore sense-making system" and that "The link between the body and cognition is…constitutive and not merely causal," as meaning is an emergent property co-created by organisms and their environments.

Haseman and Mafe's framework aligns with this epistemology and underlines how, in a practice-led approach, the researcher operates within dynamic systems of complexity and emergence, (p. 214) so that she is "challenged at every turn to employ researcher-reflexivity to deal with emergence in the research process" (p. 213). Unlike traditional approaches to research, fundamental questions including the research problem, critical context, and methodology are likely to emerge during or after the completion of the practice itself, for "practice can only lead research when the researcher is genuinely immersed in and attentive to the possibilities generated through creative practice" (p. 222). This is reflected in the way my thesis is structured, with key shifts in thinking which contributed to my critical framework throughout the PaR signposted in my Introduction and Chapters 3 and 4[37].

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[37] See 'Key Shifts in Thinking Emerging from the Practice' on page 6; '3.3 Mapping the Shift to a Second-Generation Cognitive Science Approach' on page 79; and '4.3 Mapping the Shift to an Enactive Approach to Trauma' on page 99.

A key distinguishing feature of the enactivist position in relation to traditional approaches is its "commitment understanding cognition…as knowing how" as opposed to "knowing that" (Hutto, 2005, p. 389). Haseman and Mafe discuss how traditional research methods, "even those arising from the qualitative tradition which are designed to research practice, do not serve the creative researcher's purposes well," citing Gray to assert that practitioner/researchers need to "take the terms and the technique of their practice and repurpose them into the language and methods of research" (ibid., p. 215). For this reason, I have focused my literature review on identifying theatre techniques which can also be repurposed as research methods for this inquiry. These are discussed in detail in the Literature Review[38] and revisited in this chapter.

2.3.2 Addressing 'Trauma': The Wounded Researcher

I draw on Romanyshyn's Wounded Researcher methodology to nuance 'researcher-reflexivity' and specifically address trauma from an enactivist perspective, where trauma is defined by schism and disorganisation at the level of self. As a devising director and creative lead, my own motivations and self-organisation will significantly frame and impact both the creative process and the resulting research outputs. Romanyshyn's (2010) approach "begins with acknowledging that research is a vocation in which a work claims a researcher through his or her complex unconscious ties to the work as much as he or she consciously chooses it" (p. 275). Romanyshyn proposes that this complex subjectivity of the researcher will inform their outputs, and presents a method of engaging with a ritual practice of 'transference dialogues' with archetypal others to bring deeper awareness to non-rational symbolic meanings underlying the

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[38] See '1.4 Literature Review' on page 41.

work[39]. This is supplemented with "alchemical hermeneutics" (p. 250) in which one's own research is considered through the lens of biases and complexes; and a structured approach to "writing down the soul" (p. 309) which encourages the inclusion of metaphor and feeling in research writing. Romanyshyn's alchemical hermeneutic method is aligned with Reid and Mgombelo's postion that (2015) "enactivism asks questions about observers and the worlds they observe" (p. 179) which they trace back to Maturana's (1978, p. 30) concept of "using cognition to analyse cognition." I adapted this approach to deal specifically with traumatic self-disorganisation, reading my draft research for evidence of disagreement or schism. I also engaged in transference dialogues with archetypal 'othered' self-parts, alongside wider archetypal others which reflected these. I engaged in further lyrical writing exercises to identify feelings and metaphors underpinning my research. Findings from these methods are discussed further in chapters 4 and 5, and a selection of transference dialogues, lyrical writings, and critical readings can be found in the appendix[40].

2.3.3 Repurposing Practice: Adapting Robin Nelson's Model for Practice-as-Research

For my methodology, Nelson's (2013) multi-mode dialogic model provides a strong foundation for a reflexive and multimodal approach to PaR. There are, however, complications that I have encountered in applying this frame, particularly with regards to defining 'insider' and 'outsider' knowing[41]. I have adapted the frame using Blair's (2010) terminology to reframe these as

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[39] Romanyshyn's framework is based in a Jungian approach to the psyche. In 'Appendix B: Multimodal Meaning-Making in Early Trauma Theories' I present a brief review of early trauma theory which connects Jungian theory, and especially his formulation of the 'unconscious', to multimodal brain process.

[40] See 'Appendix D: Examples of Wounded Researcher Reflexivity'

[41] Nelson (2013, pp. 37-28) connects the 'explicit' knowledge of the 'outsider' as value-free, representable by laws, numbers, diagrams, and the passive voice. By negation he connects 'insider' or 'tacit' knowing to more experiential forms of cognition, citing embodied cognition as an example. Nelson also cites Leonard and Sensiper (1998) to connect tacit knowledge to unconscious or subconscious knowledge, replicating some of the complexity I have outlined in chapter 1 in the way that embodied and affective cognition are treated in much of literary trauma theory.

'experientially' and 'semantically' dominant cognition, centring their definitions around their multimodal function. I use 'cognition' to ground this in the enactive idea that knowing is doing. The addition of 'dominant' is intended to address some of the complexity raised in 2.2. Specifically, it challenges binarism, acknowledging that cognitive process is multimodally integrated and cannot occur in a purely semantic or experiential mode[42]. At the third point, in lieu of 'critical reflection' I use 'researcher-reflexivity', which highlights the awareness of observer dependence which is central to an enactivist research paradigm, including the Wounded Researcher methods outlined in 2.3.2.

Figure 2.1
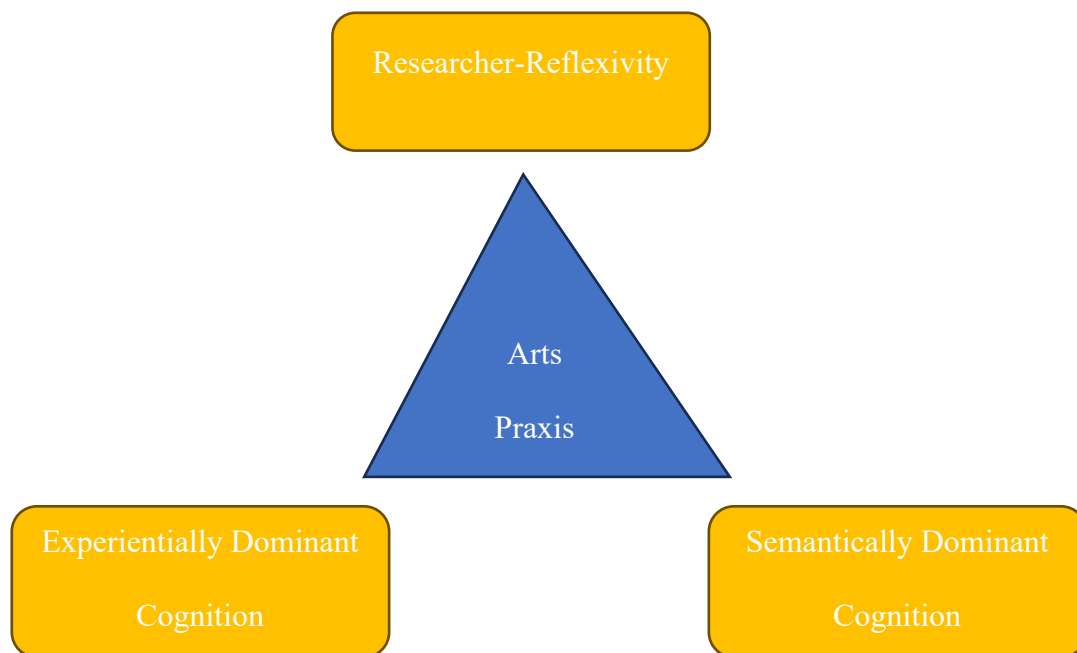
Robin Nelson's Multi-Mode Dialogic PaR Model, Adapted

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[42] Nelson himself raises this issue, acknowledging that a model that is prismatic rather than triangular may do a better job of reflecting the complexity of the multidimensional P-a-R process, but argues that a triangular model is functionally easier to apprehend and use (Nelson, 2013, p. 39). I would agree with this; I am using these binaries in the same way that I am using them throughout the thesis: pragmatically, as a tool for marking out broad territories, while acknowledging that in a literal sense, it is problematic to divide the complexity of brain function in this very primitive way.

Nelson proposes a dual-output model with a creative component and written exegesis to support the creative work. At the centre of my adapted model, the 'theory imbricated within practice,' are two theatrical productions which are both organised around themes of identity and difficult experience. To engage deeply with both semantic and experiential knowledge of meaning-making in relation to trauma, I have chosen contrasting projects to gain knowledge of working with subject matter that is farther from and closer to my own lived experiences. The themes of both productions correspond with Nijenhuis' framework[43], which considers the defining feature of trauma to be a breakdown at the level of self-organisation:

- As a cross-community post-conflict piece working with first responders in Northern Ireland, *First Response* interrogates questions of personal and collective identities within a wider framework of social conflict. The project works with a unique cohort of individuals who survived a civil conflict, and regularly dealt with existentially disturbing events as a matter of course through their line of work. This cohort is statistically more likely than others to experience disturbances in self-organisation, including peritraumatic distress and dissociation (Marx & Sloan, 2005; Shakir, Ahsan, & Riaz, 2021).

- As a cross-artform piece working with British East Asian artists around themes of identity, *Amaterasu* explores themes of primary family attachments and bicultural identity within a wider framework of xenophobia and social crisis. First- and second-generation East Asian migrants to Western nations have been identified as vulnerable to disturbances in identity including cultural conflict and cultural distance (Stroink &

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[43] See '1.3.2 Definition of 'Trauma' - An Enactive Model' on page 32.

Lalonde, 2009), where "Cultural conflict is defined as feeling torn between one's two cultural identities (vs. feeling that they are compatible), and cultural distance is the perception that one's two cultural identities are separate and dissociated (vs. fused)" (Ferrari, Rosnati, Manzi, & Benet-Martínez, 2015, p. 78). As Phinney & Baldelomar (2011, p. 27) underline, with the increase in identities that are formed across multiple cultural contexts, ''increasing numbers of people find that the conflicts are not between different groups but between different cultural values, attitudes, and expectations within themselves.''

Through the first production, I aim to gain a deeper semantic understanding of the ways that new meaning is created in relation to trauma in a devising process. By subsequently engaging in a production with more personally relevant themes, my aim is to engage with the question of meaning-making more experientially, and to uncover any breakdown in self-organisation in this process through researcher-reflexivity. This will allow focus of my investigation to be "the correlational structure" of my "subjectivity and the appearance or disclosure of the world" Thompson's (2010, p. 18), in line with the enactivist research paradigm. My hope is that these two projects will work together to form a more complex emergent set of findings than either production would on its own.

My **experientially dominant cognition** through theatre practice draws on 15 years of working as a devising director, directing over 30 productions across multiple cultural contexts including professional touring productions addressing trauma and mental illness in the UK, USA, and Norway; participatory productions with ex-combatants and survivors of conflict in Lebanon, Israel, Rwanda, Gaza, Kashmir; and productions with refugees and military veterans in the UK, USA, and Sweden. It also includes my training in Lecoq-based methodology coupled with

Thomas Prattki's symbolic approach to artist development. My experientially dominant cognition in relation to trauma and identity-organisation includes my subjective experiences during my years of work with survivors of war and conflict; attachment trauma in my primary relationships; dual-heritage identity, including a cross-cultural household with migration in my immediate family; and my own experience of migration to the USA (at age 3) and UK (at age 21). At the deepest level, my experientially dominant cognition in relation to meaning consists of my felt experience of my own inter- and intrasubjective process, and an awareness of the various ways that I reflect and construct meaning through my creative work.

My **semantically dominant cognition** included aspects of the practice listed above, which is a critical distinction to make from Nelson's standard model where all practice would be categorised as 'insider' knowing. Devised directing requires a broad range of semantically dominant cognition, from the very practical process of applying for funding, through to the rigorous structuring of a piece's text through the application of a specific dramaturgical frame. This cognition dialogues with practice and research in TPS, principally the work of Patrick Duggan, Teya Sepinuck, Ellen Kaplan, Kiera O'Reilly, Amanda Stuart Fisher, and Anna Harpin; in CTS, principally the work of Maia Murphy, Rick Kemp, Barbara Dancygier, Nicola Shaughnessy, and Bruce McConachie; and in SGCS, most firmly rooted in Ellert Nijenhuis' definition of 'trauma' and Andy Clark's definition of 'meaning,' and supported by the parts-based psychological models put forth by Mardi Horowitz, Janina Fisher, and Richard Schwartz. My specific focus is at the intersection between these areas that relate to multimodal meaning making in contexts of trauma.

Throughout my research I engage a critical subjectivity, or **researcher-reflexivity** which acknowledges what Reid and Mgombelo (2015) called "observer dependence" (p. 180). I do

this through the reflective methods which are an inherent part of the process of developing and delivering a devised theatre PaR, augmented by further methods drawn from the Wounded Researcher methodology outlined in 2.3.2.

2.4 Research Design

2.4.1 Research Process

For my research, I led groups in the creation of two stage plays exploring conflicted identity and difficult experience: the first a participatory production working with a cross-community group of First Responders who worked through the Northern Irish Troubles, and the second a professional production working with first- and second-generation migrant artists during lockdown. The specific research process for each was as follows:

1. *First Response* – Created during a six-month residency in the first year of my PhD. in the first two months of my residency I conducted approx. 30 one-to-one interviews with First Responders (which I defined very broadly in order to be able to include media and mental health frontline workers like journalists, therapists, and youth workers), and a further 20 meetings with artists, academics, historians, and activists. In the second and third months of the residency I held 10 creative workshop sessions with 18 First Responders, 20 University of Ulster drama students, and 3 artists exploring various theatrical languages and emergent themes. From these workshops, I recruited 8 First Responders, 2 artists, and 9 Drama Students to devise the 75-minute piece over 18 days of rehearsal between Dec 2019 and Feb 2020.

2. *Amaterasu* - the piece was developed in London with a team of 9 professional artists over two ten-day periods of research and development funded by Arts Council England in 2020 and 2021. In the first stage of R&D we explored emergent themes as a devising ensemble and produced a 3-minute digital collage. In the second R&D we held 5 scripting days and 5 devising rehearsal days to produce a 48-minute production.

2.4.2 Primary Research Methods

Haseman and Mafe (2009) highlight the importance of repurposing the methods of creative practice to serve a practice-led inquiry. Through my critical framework I identified four key aspects of meaning-making for updating maladaptive meaning schemas: multimodal symbolisation, salience, dual awareness, and embodied action**.** In my literature review I examined the way the theatre practitioners considered in CTS and TPS worked with these aspects in practical terms. Through this discussion I identified four theatre methods which could be used to influence meaning making in contexts of trauma. These methods served as my primary research tools in both projects as I conducted my investigation:

- Transposition: the technique of mapping of one modal schema onto another, specifically expressed in theatre through objects, scenic design, movement vocabularies, sound, and characters.

- Mediation: The selective amplification and simplification of meanings, elements, and aspects of a character, event, or environment. Achieved in my practice specifically through Lecoq's techniques of essentialisation and dosage.

- Juxtaposition: The layering of multiple and sometimes-contrasting multimodal meanings in the form of words, sounds, images, movements, and objects. An allowance

for complex conceptual blends, and an ability for the theatre space to contain contradiction and incoherence.

- Play: Embodied improvisation used during rehearsal to generate new meanings through action, including the construction of new performance scores. Also enacted during performance to further nuance meanings created by the existing performance score.

'Meaning' is co-created in an enactive view, so my experience of meaning will necessarily be informed by colleagues, audiences, and society. Tobin Nellhaus (2006) argues that performance strategies for artists are grounded in the selection and organisation of meanings— through image schemas—to produce successful and intelligible work. As my PaR project investigates directorial practice, I will measure meaning primarily through how I subjectively experience and organise it through my directing work. This includes a variety of "principles of composition" (Nelson, 2013, p. 52) and subjective measures of quality which guide my practice, including dramaturgical clarity, evocation, and coherence[44].

My primary strategy for measuring my research will be to attend to the way that transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play interact with and through my practice to transform the way it produces new meaning in relation to trauma. I will also map how the PaR shifts my thinking around these four methods and their use.

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[44] It is not an aim of my research to define these objectively, but rather, to present recommendations for creating 'new meaning' which are translatable to other directorial practices with other subjectively-organised performance strategies.

2.4.3 Additional Methods for Researcher-Reflexivity

In addition to these methods I have employed three further methods for researcher-reflexivity adapted from the Wounded Researcher methodology, particularly in approaching *Amaterasu.* These are:

- Alchemical Hermeneutics: awareness of and reading for underlying complexes and schisms in my research writing, including ongoing engagement with and analysis of past exegesis drafts.

- Lyrical Writing: adapted from 'Writing Down the Soul', employs storytelling, poetry, and journaling in reworking my research practice through literary forms of writing, allowing this to influence research outputs.

- Transference Dialogues: A ritualised approach to engaging with the othered self in my work, through vocal and written dialogues in conversation with archetypal characters.

2.4.4 Further Methods Repurposed from Practice

I have also repurposed existing methods of my practice for my research, including:

- Project documentation: archive videos; rehearsal journals and voice notes; rehearsal, performance, and post-show feedback videos; script drafts; emails and other creative and production related correspondence.

- Project research: informal meetings and formal participant interviews;

- Project communication: pitching documents; 30-minute professional documentary video; funding applications; press.

- Project Evaluation: funder reports, internal and external evaluation reports.

2.5 Additional Practice and Research Context Specific to my Projects

2.5.1 First Response: Trauma-Responsive Practice in Northern Ireland

Derry is a small town with a vibrant arts community on the border of Northern Ireland and Ireland. It was the sight of several notable incidents during the recent 30-year civil conflict, including the Battle of the Bogside (widely regarded as the beginning of 'the Troubles') and Bloody Sunday. Approaches to truth and reconciliation in Northern Ireland have focussed on coming to terms with the past through storytelling (see Berry et al., 2009; Coupe, 2017; Dawson, 2014; Simpson, 2013). As Coupe (2017) highlights, these approaches "rely heavily on audio recording and transcription and therefore tend to privilege language over physical expression (pp 106-107). National focus on Derry in the past four decades have including two formal inquiries into Bloody Sunday: the 1972 Widgery Inquiry which was labelled 'whitewash', and the 1998 Saville Inquiry which sought to rectify it. These have contributed to the dominance of verbal expression within the local context, and additionally placed heightened importance of veracity and verifiability in presenting personal testimony in the public sphere.

Outside of—and often seen as an impediment to—the peace process, Northern Ireland has a history of ritualised remembrance practices including parading and effigy burning, which use past trauma and collective wounding to support current ethnonationalist claims. Coupe (p. 110) discusses the way that these physical manifestations have resonance with Freudian ideas of traumatic "acting out" (Freud, 1900), leading to a "pseudo-psychoanalytic discourse" in which

"problematic bodies, especially in public spaces, are to be managed in order that the peace and its attendant democratic institutions be maintained." This is a further reason that "the embodied aspect of remembrance has been overlooked in favour of the abstraction of language," which has been connected to Freudian ideas of the talking cure, or "working through" (Freud, 1900). Simpson (2013, p. 101) has noted that this pseudo-psychoanalytic discourse is often wielded by dominant political groups seeking to stifle complex debate through overly simplistic notions of engaging in rational dialogue in order to move on.

Within this context, Sepinuk's 'Theatre of Witness' has been identified by Coupe (p. 120) as a rare and important space where the individual and specific losses of the Troubles can enter the cultural dialogue through embodied materiality, as "the body is represented as a repository of traumatic memories that are silenced within dominant regimes of remembrance." Sepinuk's methodology is to interview participants and then craft their stories into monologues for them to deliver, providing theatricality, poetry, and aesthetic distance while maintaining a sense of real people telling their own real experiences onstage. This work has been critiqued by some for sensationalising trauma; playwright Tim Loane (in Grant & Jennings, 2013, p. 317) states: "In this process of distillation for 'performance' it is nigh impossible to resist sentimentalizing and celebrating victimhood." Coupe (2013, p. 121) counters that Theatre of Witness draws attention to the "intrusive materiality and alterity of the body," eliciting an "ethical form of witnessing that never allows the audience to complacently incorporate trauma."

Five Theatre of Witness productions took place in Derry under PEACE III funding in the years before the Theatre and Peacebuilding Academy, the PEACE IV programme which funded *First Response*. While the remit for our own work under PEACE IV was ostensibly quite broad, Sepinuk's specific form of testimonial theatre served as a strong reference point for

stakeholders, shaping the tacit expectations of funders, Playhouse staff, participants, and audiences who engaged with my production. In 2018, two additional productions were presented as part of the Academy directly before my own, *The Crack in Everything* directed by Jo Egan, and *Blood Red Lines* directed by Robert Rae. Egan's piece employed 3 professional actors to perform alongside participants, and Rae's production was critiqued for excluding protestant participants and their perspectives. This context affected the unspoken expectations and concerns guiding funders and Playhouse staff, and had direct implications for my own practice, which I will discuss in Chapter 3[45].

2.5.2 Amaterasu: The Wounded Researcher, and Intercultural Performance as Trauma

Artistic practice in performance which uses the Wounded Researcher as a methodology includes Ellen Foyn Bruun's (2018) PaR exploration of Fitzmaurice Voicework, in which she employed Romanyshyn's (2010, p. 275) transference field to explore her vocal technique through the imagery which surfaced from her embodied vocalisations. Bruun's (2018, p. 65) performative outcome was eventually built on nine image-based units arising from this work. Her work examples the way that the transference field can be used to move from phenomenology to imagery, which is then folded back into the creative practice. Researcher Kelli Nigh (2013, p. 651) works in the other direction—from images to phenomenology—in order to gain additional insight from interviews, and from the reflective writing of drama students interrogating their experience of mind/body in performance: "I searched for reoccurring patterns in the data, such as symbols and themes and attempted to feel the significance of these patterns, bodily."

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[45] See '3.2 Project Overview and Archive' on page 77.

While performance-as-research scholars have focused on the bodily and phenomenological aspects of the transference field, Romanyshyn (p. 137) highlights the spoken and written aspects of his transference 'dialogues.' These dialogues are particularly relevant in the context of trauma and the divided self because they "open one not only to the 'others' in the work, but also to their landscape of the imaginal world" (p. 185). Romanyshyn explains that this can help mediate between conflicting internal voices when creative and scholarly approaches may be competing for validity and space. Outside of the practice itself, these dialogues have been the primary tool through which I have engaged with conflicted and disorganised self-parts throughout my research.

Another area of research relevant to this project is the work of scholars who explore intercultural and migration performance as trauma. This is a broad area of study, from which I will present insights from selected practice and scholarship which dovetails with my critical framework as a way of augmenting my methodological lens[46]. I focus my discussion on work exploring identity and dislocation among first- and second-generation migrant artists and communities. While not always explicitly framed as an exploration of trauma, this work offers insights because it considers self-organisation and the way that migrant identities are dislocated or fractured in relation to the wider social context.

In *Performing Asian Transnationalisms*, Amanda Rogers (2014, p. 210) concludes that her scholarship highlights "how theatre allows different identities to be expressed, reinforced, explored and reconfigured," and frames transnational theatre as a site of identity negotiation. Wakholi & Wright (2012, p. 1) use arts-based approaches with African-descendent youth in

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[46] I will exclude the significant research in this area relating to survivors of war and the renegotiation of identity in new countries after forced migration (see for example Balfour, 2012; Jeffers, 2012; Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008; Wise, 2004), as *Amaterasu* explored dual-heritage identity outside of the context of war and forced migration.

Australia "as a way of understanding challenges to their bicultural socialization and means to developing their bicultural competence." The authors point to the political dimension of identity, demonstrating how culturally-rooted performance can redress imbalances between dominant and subordinate cultures in the emergent identity formation of the artists (p. 12). Bayley (2014) conducted PaR with a group of drama students, working with verbatim theatre techniques to explore their experience of 'otherness' through verbatim theatre. A key finding was that the students wanted to work with another form of representation alongside the verbatim form "in order to be able to capture the dual-heritage experience of existing between languages" (p. 213), as "the experience of existing in neither one culture / language or another could not be represented by articulating it through verbatim theatre practice alone" (p. 214). Bayley considers the extent that multiculturalism is experienced as two or more cultural voices competing for 'airtime' within a single person, anecdotally pointing to a typographical error in a flyer her student made for a support group for dual heritage people: "instead of 'dual heritage' it read 'duel heritage'" (p. 218).

This work has been important to consider in understanding the wider social and cultural factors which affect both identity and multimodal expression. While ultimately my research led me back to cognitive frameworks for trauma which focus on the psyche of the individual, this additional context helped me to consider how my self-organisation and creative expression as a bicultural artist is shaped by social factors, including migration and contexts of cultural subordination and dominance. I will discuss this further in Chapters 4 and 6.

Chapter 3: *First Response*

3.1 Chapter Outline

My thesis asks, "how can a second-generation cognitive science approach to meaning and trauma inform a devising theatre practice which seeks to create new meanings in contexts of trauma?" In chapter 1, I outlined a critical framework and identified 4 key aspects of meaning-making in performance which responds to trauma: multimodal symbolisation, salience, dual awareness, and embodied action. Through a further review of practice and literature I identified four correlated methods capable of influencing these variables: transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play.

This chapter presents learning from the process of creating *First Response*, and addresses the third layer of my research:

> *How do these specific methods [transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play] help to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-facilitator working with trauma-affected participants and audiences?*

In section 3.2 I present a link to my project archive, and highlight how language was privileged within the Northern Irish peacebuilding context, as well as the specific pressures that I encountered in relation to Playhouse projects which preceded my own. This is followed in 3.3 by the presentation of a key shift in thinking which contributed to the critical frame, notably grounding my research in a schema-based approach to meaning and trauma drawn from SGCS.

In 3.4 I present four examples of practice which are illustrative of the ways that I employed the methods of transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play in my research. I will discuss how I worked with these methods to create new meaning, highlighting the specific opportunities and obstacles that I encountered through their use. Then in 3.5 I will present some of the findings that emerged through researcher-reflexivity, considering obstacles in the process and drawing learning from these. Finally, in 3.6 I will discuss the way that my thinking developed through *First Response*, pointing towards the areas for further exploration which I carried into my subsequent project, *Amaterasu.*

3.2 Project Overview and Archive

First Response[47] was a theatre project devised during a 6-month residency in Derry, Northern Ireland as part of a 2-year 'Theatre and Peacebuilding Academy' commissioned by the Derry Playhouse and funded by PEACE IV, an EU programme designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region. This project followed directly on from a 5-year programme of 'Theatre of Witness' productions delivered by Teya Sepunick under PEACE III funding at the Playhouse between 2009 and 2014. My role was to direct a cross-community play with a retired group of first responders—frontline workers like police, firefighters, nurses, and paramedics—who had worked through the period of civil conflict.

Through an interview, workshop, and rehearsal process[48] we created an 80-minute devised piece grounded in short personal anecdotes and stories. The production engaged 800+ audience over 6 performances in Derry and Coleraine. A post-show panel was held at each performance.

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[47] A video link for production and video link for post-show conversation are included on in this section. The script is available in 'Appendix E: First Response Script'.

[48] This process is detailed on page 67.

A video of the production can be viewed here:[49]

https://vimeo.com/810948124

A post-show discussion capturing cast and audience response can be viewed here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/k0wwecitxby17sh/FR_post-show.mov?dl=0

In Chapter 2, I discussed the PEACE III- and PEACE IV-funded Playhouse projects which immediately preceded mine, and the tacit expectations formed by Sepinuck's Theatre of Witness model, and the way that the subsequent projects diverged from this[50]. As a direct result, the focus of Playhouse staff and funders from the outset of my project was on the inclusion of non-professional performers ('real people telling real stories') as well as the importance of a balanced cohort, with 'balance' pertaining to the religious and national identity of the participants, the atrocities that they experienced, and the parties culpable for that violence.

As a theatre director seeking to employ multimodality for "reimagining but not reiterating trauma" (Kaplan, 2019, p. 144)[51], the local culture of presenting a kind of 'truth' which was verbal and factual presented me with unique challenges in light of my research questions. In addition, my embodied play-based methodology was often at odds with the existing model: as Coupe (2017)[52] has identified, Theatre of Witness presents participants as repositories or vehicles which literally "give witness" to past experiences, whereas my own approach to theatre making is grounded in the performers' capacities as active embodied agents to co-create reality anew.

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[49] Due to ongoing civil tensions, one member of the company wished to be obscured in any publicly distributed digital media, which is why his image is blurred throughout.

[50] See '2.5.1 First Response: Trauma-Responsive Practice in Northern Ireland' on page 71.

[51] See page 52 of Literature Review.

[52] See page 72 of 'Additional Practice and Research Context' in Methodology.

The 6-month residency took place in the first year of my PhD, and the process—both its surprise successes, and its many complications—contributed a great deal to shaping the central questions of my research. Most notably, the project helped me to identify and articulate the importance of multimodality and embodied play in my own creative practice, largely through the ongoing obstacles that I faced to multimodal working because of the context outlined in Chapter 2. It also provided me with a deeper practical understanding of how trauma existed at the intersection of incongruent meanings. This helped me to pivot my focus away from seeking a methodology for constructing integrated grand narratives, and to instead focus on using multimodal theatrical techniques to expand possibilities for play at sites of intersecting incongruent meanings. This was foundational in forming my decision to approach trauma primarily through SGCS as opposed to psychoanalytic trauma theory. I will discuss this further in the next section.

3.3 Mapping the Shift to a Second-Generation Cognitive Science Approach

During my initial recruitment interviews with potential participants, I was struck by the degree to which there was a correlation between images that participants identified as 'most traumatic' and those that felt, to me, to contain the most complexity and theatrical potential. This evidenced a correlation between the images that stood out as salient to participants as survivors of trauma, and the images that stood out as salient to me as a theatremaker. Generally, these images didn't correlate with objective measures of horror (like death toll), but rather, with the degree to which meaning schemas from different territories of self-and-world (like domestic and professional spheres) were juxtaposed to connect personalised or novel meaning to horror. Some examples of these images which we incorporated in the production include: Robin's

description of the polystyrene balls from a bombed furniture shop which covered victims' bodies; Felicity's experience of waking in the middle of the night to find herself sleepwalking and washing non-existent blood of her walls; and Lesley's nightmare, in which her daughter was born with the foot and blue painted toenails described to her in the course of her work.

As a theatremaker, these images were salient to me because of their multiple and paradoxical significations, and because of the many opportunities they afforded for embodied exploration through play. For example, the polystyrene balls were immediately attractive because of their material lightness, which evokes a fragility that contrasts sharply with the brutality of a bomb. The addition of this texture to an otherwise 'normal' bomb brought a novel set of additional meaning schemas to the image, while simultaneously creating a material access point (through the polystyrene itself) where we could begin to physically play. In a similar vein, Lesley's dream image was highly salient from a theatremaking perspective because it carried the powerful double signification of 'carnage' and 'living baby'. Her dream translated the meaning that the original foot contained for her: the painted toenails and the cutesy striped sock evoked not just a 'body', but the body of a young girl, an image that was confronting at a time when Lesley was about to give birth to her first—and only—daughter. In making this tacit meaning explicit, Lesley's dream image also transformed a one-dimensional and potentially gratuitous image (a foot), into an image that was more multidimensional and theatrically interesting (a foot-baby), as well as impossible to assign a simple meaning to.

As we began to explore these images in more depth through the workshops, the reason for my creative fixation on them came into focus. As multiple signifiers of paradoxical passions, the trauma images afforded the full breadth of human emotion, making them hugely compelling objects to explore. They were also inherently unresolvable: you could not complete a single

action in relation to them with any satisfaction. You could not fully embrace the baby without

contending with the foot, nor could you fully reject the foot without giving up the baby. It

became clear that the unsolvable nature of these objects was a significant factor in our ongoing

fixation on them. At the time of these workshops, I was immersed in psychoanalytic and

narrative trauma theories (Crossley, 2000; Freud, 1955) which proposed that traumas had to be

incorporated into grand life narratives in order for them to 'make sense' and be integrated. The

focus of these discussions was the verbal storied self. In my rehearsal room, however, I saw

participants and performers alike grappling to 'make sense' of the traumatic objects in a

visceral and embodied way. The question was not: "how has my encounter with the foot-baby

brought meaning to the larger picture of my life?" but rather, "what do I do—physically,

immediately—with this foot-baby? Do I hug it close or throw it on the ground?"

This is what made me pivot my focus to embodied and schema-based models of cognition,

which had more robust frameworks for explaining the meanings that these objects contained in

relation to physical action and embodiment. The predictive processing[53] model offers insight

into why an image like a foot-baby—which draws on two different meaning schemas but fits

neatly into neither—is so salient, to trauma survivors and theatre-makers alike. In the PP model,

stimuli that are easily categorised are minimally attended to, with our own predictions filling

in most of the perceptive information. Stimuli that don't fit neatly into our pre-existing

categories, however, result in prediction errors, and become the focus of our fixation as we

strive to reduce these discrepancies and predict how they will function (Clark, 2015). The

workshop scenes never made it into the production due to a combination of pressures including

timescale, multi-participant format, and stakeholder expectations. But this work led to a critical

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[53] See '1.3.2 Definition of 'Meaning' – A Predictive Processing Model' on page 28 of the Critical Framework.

shift in my thinking, and served as the foundation for the subsequent theoretical framing of the research.

3.4 Key Moments of Practice

3.4.1 Transposition: Boxes in the Mind, Boxes in the Space

I found the project was more successful in working with aspects of trauma that were shared across the whole group, as we could engage more deeply with objects and images that had meaning for everyone. In early recruitment interviews for *First Response*, several of the cast referred to their own memories—and the felt sense of inhibition which surrounded them—as 'boxed up' or 'shut away'. They expressed a deep ambivalence in their relationship with these 'memory boxes' as they were unsure whether to engage with them ('open them') or stay dissociated (keep them 'boxed up'). As one retired fireman explained, throughout his career the adrenaline of each successive incident allowed him to box up his memories and move on to the next event, but the mound of memories loomed threateningly in his psyche towards the end of his career:

> 'As I approached retirement, I knew those boxes were still going to be there…and I just wanted so much to forget about them, and I couldn't'.

Embracing this transposition, I brought small boxes filled with objects into very early workshops, and later used mediation to increase the dosage of this transposition, working with the set designer to create a stage that was comprised entirely of boxes.

Figure 3.1

A cast member peers into a box, the symbolic space of a memory © 2020 Gav Connolly

By transposing 'memories' into 'boxes' and making them the core visual and physical element on the stage, a central question emerged as to what to do with these boxed-up memories. The physical boxes expanded the multimodality of the abstract box-images, bringing them into a material world, which created a new set of physical affordances in relation to them (Gibson, 1977)[54]. This allowed us to physically play with the boxes - and through them, the more abstract concept of repressed memories - in ways that we could not if working cerebrally. The boxes could of course be opened and closed, but they could also be cast aside, passed around, shared, hidden, stepped on, stepped over, sat upon, wrestled with, and so on. The following entry from my rehearsal journal in 2020 captures one of the most physically engaged moments of the rehearsal period, and a clip showing its incorporation in the subsequent production. This moment caught my attention because of Stephen's commitment to the movement, and playful ferocity:

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[54] See page 22.

The cast's physical relationship to the boxes becomes a vehicle for showing their conflicted relationship with their own memories. Stevie—who has remained silent about his own "demons" throughout this process and yet has alluded to their existence on several occasions—creates one of the most physically interesting moments in the play when he violently wrestles a box away from a young ensemble member, sits on it, and proceeds to silently drink beer for the rest of the scene.

Referring to the video below:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6pi0exrgm1s6emi4b12eg/BoxWrestle.mp4?rlkey=sg2xx5rdrox04n4zw62xltieg&dl=0

The physical action of playing with the boxes gave agency to the first responders vis-à-vis their memories, and allowed an updating of their own metaphorical understanding of their internal landscape via their embodied play. The external evaluators for the Playhouse noted this in their final report:

An example given by one of the participants illustrates the visceral power of this symbolism. How heavily or lightly he set down a box in which a hidden story was held was entirely dependent on his emotional state in that moment of performance.

[Grant & Durrer, 2020, p. 25]

In this way, the relationship between the physical construction of a metaphor and the performers' subsequent playing could be iterative, with the objects affording the performers a way of engaging and relating directly with intangible meaning structures, like the concept of repressed memories. This extends Lakoff and Johnson's (2008) assertion[55] that high-order concepts are grounded in primary embodied metaphor; the research showed how theatrical transposition combined with embodied play allowed the actors to reengage with these primary metaphors to create new meanings. By bringing the high-order concept of 'boxed up memory' into the material embodied world of objects, the cast were afforded the chance to physically play with them, and through this play update their relationship to the concept of 'memory' directly through their bodies. However, on reflection this 'play' was quite limited in scope, without much embodied exploration of the objects leading up to the creation of the performance score. I will discuss this further in 3.5.2[56]. A discussion on more successful 'play' is offered in the next section.

3.4.2 Play: Affordances Inside and Out

Prior to the start of the formal rehearsal process, I delivered 8 play-based workshops to explore the themes of memory and first response work. In one notable session, a retired journalist named Felicity demonstrated how quickly and flexibly 'multimodal play' can generate personal meaning models to put them in dialogue with the situation and environment.

The following is an excerpt from a rehearsal journal this pre-rehearsal workshop in 2019:

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[55] See page 22 of Critical Context.
[56] See '3.5.2 Devising vs. Scripting: Different Process, Norms, and Timescales' on page 92.

Karen has placed various objects in a series of carboard objects. The task is simple: open a random box, 'own' the item inside it, and tell us what it is and how it relates to their past. Felicity begins to dig through her box and obediently starts to talk about the object she is going to find. Karen has mischievously buried the object inside wads of crumpled newspaper, prompting Felicity to deliver an extended and vague improvisation about what the object is going to be, as she struggles to actually find it: "This object is very significant… you will see… it is going to be a very important object…" finally she pulls out a tiny paperweight, and holds it up "it is also going to be a terribly small object!" The group giggles and then waits to have the paperweight explained, but Felicity surprises us by setting the weight down and turning her attention back to the crumpled newsprint. "These are my two *objects. And this is columns and columns of newsprint…." She pauses to inspect the headlines. "Of all different types of stories. This paper is all going to be recycled but these stories are all still alive somewhere." … "This is people's lives; this is people's stories. This is the past. And no matter what happens, out there somewhere are all the news broadcasts. All of the pictures that Chris and everyone else took over the years, it's all the words spoken in my broadcasts. It's all the acres of newsprint. All of the deleted copy that never made it onto a hard drive. So what's in this box really is our past. And the fact that it's got a weight on it suggests to me, that I'm not sure whether it's time to bring it out yet or not."*

Here Felicity made a decision to give new meaning to an object that to most of us had seen as "wrapping" or "wadding," revealing her unique psychological relationship to newsprint. She

has also been given an invitation to make sense of two objects in relationship – a paperweight wrapped inside (cocooned by, hidden in) wads of paper—but she has deliberately repositioned them and changed the physical relationship to give it more relevant meaning: after her own adjustment the weight is on the stories, weighing them down, indicating that it might not be time for the stories to come out. Felicity's action responds directly to the overall feeling of slight inhibition in the room from this group of newly-met participants, negotiating both the social and personal safety of 'bringing out the past'. The playful attribution of meaning to objects that are physically in her control also confers and new power to Felicity, for once 'the past' has been transposed onto the paper and 'bringing it out' is symbolised by the physical act of lifting out of the box, Felicity has total (manual) agency over the action of 'bringing it out,' a level of control that one might not feel if the stories remain abstract and intangible.

What is so strong about the way that Felicity plays here is that there is an iterative and dynamic relationship between her manipulation of the objects, and the meanings that she connects to them. When she can change the objects to better fit existing meanings, she physically manipulates them to change their relationship to one another, but equally, she is able to draw new meanings and new inspiration from the objects and the world around her. As an artist, Felicity is keeping two sets of affordances alive: one is the set of physical affordances of the objects themselves in relation to her body (what she can manually do with them), but the second, critically, is the set of affordances[57] around how she can interpret them—how she can internally 'play' by selecting the meaning structures that she actively chooses to project and connect.

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[57] This is not strictly in keeping with Gibson's (1977) original definition which focused on the physical interplay between bodies and environments, but I deliberately use the term here to highlight the fact that meanings, like objects, are semi-fixed structures that come with their own rules and limitations. A performer, as someone who conveys meaning to others, must work within the rules of the various meaning structures available to them, and to the structures they perceive to be available to their audiences. These internal meaning structures—along with the external physical environment—combine to set the boundaries of the theatrical play space of meaning-making.

This flexibility relies on a certain fluency of meanings—an understanding of which generative models are most likely to make sense to others—as well as the ability to hold one's own meanings lightly, changing them if a more compelling opportunity presents itself in the environment. Trauma, on the other hand, is defined by a fixity of meanings-schemas, with hyper-precise priors connected to traumatic meanings that are difficult to update or shift with new input. In the same exercise, Lesley—the participant with the foot-baby dream—opens her box to discover a dress for a baby girl. She gasps, and then weeps gently. After a while she speaks. "This is my little girl. Who despite my fears, because of another little girl, was perfect." It is notable how the 'other little girl' of the trauma image is quickly connected to this image, giving rise to the emotion associated with it.

Lesley is not physically 'playing' as dynamically as Felicity did, insofar as she is not lightly shifting between meanings or rapidly assigning new meanings to the object while manipulating it. The meaning to her is singular, and clear, and she is processing a high level of emotion in association with the schemas that are connected to it. Throughout the project there was a strong correlation between hyper-arousal in connection with traumatic memories, and a resulting rigidity which served as an obstacle to play. I will discuss the relationship between these further in 3.5.1[58].

3.4.2 Juxtaposition: Old Stories, Young Bodies

In the Literature Review[59] I discuss bodies as an important site of meanings in theatre which responds to trauma. The meaning-potential of juxtaposing young and old bodies onstage was

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particularly relevant in the context of an older generation unpacking traumas which had happened to them while they were young. The dual awareness facilitated by the juxtaposition and dual signification of the young people 'playing' the First Responders is particularly significant because this kind of conceptual blending is made possible by the unique conditions of theatre, where roles are flexible and one person can be portrayed by another. While the juxtaposition of old and young bodies was an intentional starting point, many of the significations which resulted were unanticipated.

For narrative reasons, I was interested to include the story of today's young people in Northern Ireland, to ground the production in the lasting effects of The Troubles, and bring the thrust of the action to the present moment. I also had an aesthetic desire for the embodied and visceral immediacy that young, mobile actors could bring to the stories that were shared. This is what led me to collaborate with students from the University of Ulster Drama Department. As multiple signifiers, their bodies did bring meanings which brought a physical dimension to the First Responders' stories[60]. They also presented a clear embodiment of Northern Ireland's affected next generation, and as collaborators they brought a fresh perspective into the rehearsal process, gently challenging the centrality of the 'war stories' in the production and, by extension, in Northern Irish society as a whole[61]. This challenge was supported by the transposed boxes, as seeing the young people surrounded by the older generations' memories made it viscerally clear how much space these stories take up, affecting all generations of Northern Irish society.

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[60] An example of this can be seen in this excerpt: https://vimeo.com/811115744
[61] A scene illustrating this challenge can be seen in the following excerpt:
https://vimeo.com/811110760/a01aa10914

Some of the most interesting meanings, however, emerged not from the young people 'being' themselves or 'being' the first responders, but from their simultaneous ability to inhabit a conceptually blended space between the two. It was in this ambiguous space of complex and colliding schemas that some of the most affecting and interesting new meanings were able to unfold. In this blended space, we saw the older generation imagining their own histories played out in these young lives, or seeing themselves in their memories as the extremely young people that they were at the time. There was a more subtle form of interrogation, investigation and reflection that took place as the young performers marched awkwardly in oversized police hats and fumbled to pull on a fire-suit or fold a sheet, or as the now-retired nurse gazed into the 20-year-old eyes of the actor playing the soldier she had once confronted. In the end, it was this complex interplay between older and younger generation was identified as the most meaningful aspect of the production by cast and audience alike (Grant & Durrer, 2020).

3.4.4 Mediation: Trauma and Healing Through Multimodal Amplification

Towards the end of the production, one of the students asks: "Can we not just open all the boxes?" This leads to an "unleashing" of the various experiences of trauma that the First Responders have survived.

A video of this sequence can be found here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/ldjkm1hj7veflsy/Opentheboxes.mp4?dl=0

We had many discussions about how we would represent the experience of trauma onstage. We agreed that there should be something highly sensory about this moment, which is in keeping with the examples of practice in Chapter 1 [62] in which mediation and sensory amplification has been used to communicate the subjective experience of trauma. In light of SGCS scholarship on the importance of multimodality in engaging EPs[63], it was important to me to use this same language of sensory amplification to move beyond trauma into resolution.

For this reason, I asked the sound designer to create a soundscape which transitioned from cacophony to ethereal calm, marrying this with an interview in which a first responder suffering from trauma finds a poetic resolution that 'makes sense' for him in terms of his religion and lived experience. This is in keeping with the way that Nijenhuis (2017, p. 84) describes the need for an opposite and stronger affect in the face of the passions of trauma, like "an affect-laden understanding that flows from love of God or Nature." We also drew on past discussions around how participants had managed their trauma to superimpose the view from Chris' helicopter—his 'happy place'—onto the set. This sequence ends with Felicity closing the box which had 'unleashed' the sensory barrage, as she narrates to us in plain words that she once was haunted by bloody walls, but now she is able to sleep. The box is closed after the sequence has been resolved; the resolution itself has happened earlier as the sound of pipes and drums crossfaded to the sound of a helicopter and then to silence. Our representation of the trauma's transformation to something more manageable happens in the same amplified sensory language as the trauma itself, as opposed to the rational space of naturalistic lighting and narrative storytelling.

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[62] See '1.4.3 Salience' on page 47 of the Literature Review.
[63] See 'Second Aspect of Meaning-Making in Relation to Trauma: Multimodal Symbolisation' on page 36.

3.5 Researcher-Reflexivity: Learning through Obstacles

3.5.1 Salience, Arousal, and Aesthetic Limitations

There were several transpositions from the workshop process that never made it into the production, in some part because of the external pressures around aesthetic expectation and process indicated in 3.2, but also in large part due to the timescale and multi-participant format that we were working in. The increased sensorimotor activation of multimodally engaging with highly salient images brought with it the potential to cause physiological arousal and distress, meaning that more time was needed to work with these images in way that was sensitive and ethical.

This complexity shaped many aspects of the rehearsal process, and ultimately impacted the aesthetics of the production. In one rehearsal, a participant told the story of a shooting without exhibiting any distress, but when asked to embody the physicality of the event, he froze and responded that he couldn't. In another rehearsal, I worked with the idea of 'lists' with the hopes of creating a multi-layered and poetic vocal soundscape. The exercise led to a heated disagreement around a list of fallen police officers and the verifiability of their cause of death. The same incidents had been previously discussed without conflict, but when amplified through the repetitive onslaught of a list, passions were aroused. This event led to a major disagreement between two cast members which split the group and took several days to resolve. These examples illustrate the complications of working multimodally in contexts of trauma. They further demonstrate how using mediation to increase the salience of text or images can be volatile in a post-conflict setting, especially when working with cross-community groups who

are likely to have upsetting, personally significant, and conflicting meaning structures connected to these words and images.

3.5.2 Devising vs. Scripting: Different Process, Norms, and Timescales

As discussed in 3.4.1, the set design allowed us to refer to the many hundreds of unopened boxes –and unshared stories—that the cast contained between them. Through these boxes, I felt that we had managed to pose a significant question—"what should be done with these memories?"—using the technique of transposition. However, the fact that the boxes remained in the same fixed position throughout the piece—and hadn't transformed by the end of it—indicated that we hadn't managed to make use of this same technique to answer the question that we had posed.

While we had played extensively with smaller boxes throughout the workshop process, these boxes were small and were not structurally reinforced, so the physical actions that they afforded us were different from the larger boxes which formed the final set design. In the workshops, we were making some discoveries with the boxes (projecting memories into them, building walls with them, playing with weight and the boxes getting heavier and lighter), but these had not been formed into concrete images or a performance score by the time we started rehearsal. At that point, responding to anxieties about 'balance' caused by the scripting incident described in 3.5.1, the Playhouse leadership asked me to produce a full performance 'script' by the end of the first rehearsal week[64]. For this reason the script had been finalised by the time that the

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[64] This request was unexpected, and directly contradicted our earlier agreement about my embodied devising approach, but given the anxieties around 'balance' that had existed from the beginning and had been compounded by the scripting incident which had upset several participants, I changed approach and presented a script as requested.

larger boxes for the set arrived, meaning that we could not physically play with them to create a dramaturgically significant ending. On reflection, it would have been useful to have started the process with a room full of reinforced boxes on the first day of rehearsal, allowing the company to physically play and engage with the dramatic question of how to transform the final image.

3.6 Discussion

This research highlighted the iterative relationship between abstract concepts and embodied experience, and demonstrated how the techniques of transposition and embodied play can be used in combination to generate new multimodal meanings through theatre. Our work with the boxes demonstrated how transposition can be used to map complex concepts onto objects; and to play with these in a direct embodied way. Some of the clearest examples of this kind of iterative semantic and embodied play took place in the workshop process but did not make it into production score. Several of these moments of play took place in improvisations around objects and themes that were personally meaningful without being highly upsetting, as in the example of Felicity and the newspaper. When working with objects and images which evoked specific memories of trauma, I observed that participants were more likely to singularly connect these difficult memories to the objects, and this semantic connection was accompanied by high levels of emotion and a lower degree of semantic and manual flexibility and play.

I faced a similar difficulty using certain theatrical techniques like poetic repetition and embodiment which were designed to mediate the stories and/or increase sensorimotor engagement and affective arousal. The resulting emotion took more time to work with sensitively, meaning that logistical constraints including limited time and large cohort size

privileged the less emotionally arousing aesthetic forms—like storytelling—over other forms like poetic repetition and working with transposed movement and images. I suggest that the fact that confidently-spoken stories had the potential to cause distress when explored through an embodied or symbolic approach supports an enactive understanding of trauma in which 'integration' is a multimodal process, and therefore not easily connected to the simple ability to form a coherent verbal story. The participants in *First Response* showed an ability to keep the somatosensory activation and hyperarousal connected to the meanings of their words at bay, as long as they were not asked to increase this activation through transposition, mediation, and embodied play. As a practitioner, my learning was to approach each new expressive modality with attention and care, without assuming a participant's calm approaching a topic in one expressive modality would necessarily translate to calm when working in another mode.

The research also showed how when using juxtaposition, some of the most interesting meanings emerged from the complex relational space of blended schemas, where different perspectives and meaning structures could dialogue with and inform one another in nuanced ways. The new meanings evoked by the young people playing the First Responders demonstrated theatre's unique ability to use the blend of 'performer' and 'role' in metatheatrical ways that intentionally highlight the meanings that exist in the juxtaposition of the two.

Finally, where trauma was represented conceptually onstage, we used techniques of amplification and mediation to heighten the sensory aspects of the trauma, but also used these same techniques to translate the experience of resolution or healing of trauma. This was exemplified in the way we resolved the initially traumatic cacophony through sensate sounds and images drawn from participants' own experiences of healing or moving forward.

Maintaining an awareness of Tim Loane's critique (in Coupe, 2017) that the technique of essentialisation risked sensationalising trauma, my response was not to avoid the sensation of theatrical mediation when representing trauma, but to apply it equally to all aspects surrounding traumatic experience—both the experience of suffering and the experience of healing. By placing former journalist Chris atop the boxes, his hand on a mimed control yoke to steer his helicopter off the ground, we reframe his body so it is no longer simply a "repository of traumatic memories" (Coupe, 2017, p. 120), but rather, an active agent physically participating in rising above his lived experience.

Reflecting on the process of creating *First Response*, the most exciting new-meaning potential seemed to be located in the iterative dialogue between different expressive modalities which presented frameworks which the actors could use for embodied expression, exploration, and play. Through play, the performers could use their bodies in relationship with dramatic anchors like words and objects to enact complex new meanings which could not be achieved in any one expressive modality alone. However, the nature of trauma—as well as the expectations and norms of the context—sometimes limited the way that participants responded to different theatrical modes, and the various action-systems that these engaged. While *First Response* employed many theatrical languages including naturalistic dialogue, narrative first-person storytelling, and mediation through symbolic imagery and heightened soundscapes, it was often the case that these different theatrical languages were showcased side-by-side instead of working iteratively together. In other words, while achieving some degree of multimodal complexity, the production did not, to my mind, achieve much multimodal integration. This felt like a failing to achieve Nijenhuis' (2017, p. 34) consciousness of "communication and cooperation[65]." This developed my thinking around multimodality, shifting my focus from

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[65] See page 22 of the Critical Framework.

multimodal symbolisation to multimodal connectivity and agreement. Moving forward into the next production, I decided to explore the idea of deepening the connectivity, iterative dialogue, and agreement between different expressive modalities. I also aimed to better understand—this time from a first-person perspective—the way that breakdowns and disruptions at the level of self-organisation and action systems would influence this multimodal integration and new meaning creation.

Chapter 4: Amaterasu – Out of the Cave

4.1 Chapter Outline

In Chapter 3, I discussed how the specific methods outlined in Chapter 1 helped to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-facilitator working with trauma-affected participants and audiences. In this chapter I will address the 4th sub-question to my research:

> *How do these specific methods [transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play] help to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-devisor working with colleagues on personally traumatic themes?*

As stated in Chapter 3[66], I emerged from First Response with a clearer understanding of specific ways to increase multimodal complexity and generate new meanings through theatre. However, I also struggled to achieve multimodal integration through the production. These discoveries shaped the direction of the second project. I began my work on *Amaterasu: Out of the Cave* with a heightened focus on how I could employ my methods to 'make sense' in a way that was coherent and aligned across different modalities. I also adopted self-reflexive tools from Romanyshyn's (2010) Wounded Researcher methodology, to respond to the evidence that different expressive modalities had provoked different responses in the participants of *First Response*[67]. This was coupled with a heightened sensitivity to how fracture may manifest in myself and my colleagues when working with material that was personally affecting.

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[66] See '3.6 Discussion' on page 94.
[67] I will discuss this more in '4.3 Mapping the Shift to an Enactive Approach to Trauma' on page 100 and '4.5.1 Precise, Hyperprecise, and Nonexistent Priors in Devising' on page 109.

In section 4.2 I outline the creation process and present a link to my project archive, and then in 4.3 I present a key shift in thinking which contributed to the further articulation of my critical frame, specifically the way that self-organisation came into focus through this project. I follow this in 4.4 with key moments of practice which highlight new findings in relation to transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play, with a focus on how these methods were used in relation to multimodal integration. Then in 4.5 I critically reflect on the obstacles and difficulties arising from the project, and the learning drawn from these. Finally, in 4.6 I will outline my initial findings and discuss the way that my thinking developed through *Amaterasu*, pointing to some of the ways that thinking from this project brought new perspective to ideas which I explored earlier through *First Response.* These ideas served as the grounding for my research findings, which I will discuss in chapter 5.

4.2 Project Process and Archive Link

Amaterasu: Out of the Cave was developed in London[68] by a cast of 1st- and 2nd-generation migrants with East Asian heritage, and was constructed around the story of Amaterasu, the Japanese Goddess of the Sun, and her retreat from society into a cave in response to the destructiveness of her brother Susanoo, God of the Sea (and in some versions, also God of Disease). In the original myth, the wider community of gods come together to 'trick' Amaterasu out of the cave by blinding her with her own reflection in a mirror. Susanoo is banished, and later returns with a gift to apologise.

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[68] This development process is described in the Methodology chapter on page 68. It was presented as an R&D and is therefore incomplete, but a working script is included in 'Appendix F: Amaterasu Working Script'.

The R&Ds took place in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with some rehearsals held over zoom, during unanticipated lockdowns. In our play, we presented the original story in parallel to a contemporary plotline which drew inspiration from the myth. We also focused primarily on the image of the 'cave', and despite titling the piece *Amaterasu: Out of the Cave*, our production finished the moment when Amaterasu goes into it.

In the first stage of R&D we explored emergent themes and produced a 3-minute digital collage which can be viewed here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/77v901yyul48n8i/Amaterasu_FirstRandD.mp4?dl=0

In the second R&D we created a 48-minute production which can be viewed here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/nfsgkgc3ashwkgh/Amaterasu_SecondRandD.mp4?dl=0

The production toured to two festivals at the Arcola and Applecart Arts, playing to over 250 people over 3 performances. Both festivals were held in outdoor tents. The Applecart Arts performance took place in a park and was free to attend, reaching a large number of first-time theatregoers, many of whom were also first- and second-generation migrants.

4.3 Mapping the Shift to an Enactive Approach to Trauma

Building on learning from *First Response,* I approached *Amaterasu* with a focus on creating meanings which 'made sense' in a multimodally integrated way. While I remained fixated on this question throughout *Amaterasu*'s development, I was not aware of the ways that this

fixation in my practice was connected to my own schema organisation. Through rehearsals, however, I came to understand that I had specific feelings and assumptions about the cultural location of the different expressive modalities, with movement and symbolism connected to 'Eastern' expression, and narrative dramaturgy as well as cause-and-effect structures like character background, motivation, and plot connected to 'Western' expression. These assumptions were shared by several of my dual-heritage collaborators, and we regularly used 'Eastern' and 'Western' as shorthand to describe different theatrical approaches throughout rehearsal.

At the same time, my work on mediation and salience[69] was evidencing the way that as bicultural artists, our trauma was often connected to our difficulties navigating different self-aspects in the face of conflicting judgements and expectations from our societies and families. This was especially true in cases where primary attachment figures actively couched their rejection of us in cultural identity terms (e.g. "you're so Western"). The process of creating *Amaterasu* evidenced a degree of independence between semantic and experiential internal action systems[70]. This schism was further evidenced through a close reading of early exegesis drafts, in which my conclusions differed significantly depending upon which expressive theatrical 'mode' I was interrogating, and therefore primed to process my ideas through[71].

Through alchemical hermeneutic reading, script analysis, lyrical writing, and transference dialogues[72] I identified the way that primal dualities like Mother/Child and Self/World were

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[69] I will revisit this in '4.4.3 Mediation: Navigating Conflicted Action Systems and Dramaturgical Stuck Points' on page 106.

[70] I will discuss this in more detail throughout section 4.4

[71] A more detailed description of this finding is available in 'D.3 Alchemical Heuristics: Reading for Schism' on page D-16.

[72] Examples of these wounded researcher methods located in 'Appendix D: Examples of Wounded Researcher Reflexivity'

cross-modally associated with other binaries in my psyche including Eastern/Western, and how these in turn informed binaries specific to theatre practice like Embodied/Verbal, and Symbolism/Naturalism. This helped reveal how interpersonal conflict in childhood was affecting the way that I was approaching these binaries in my research and practice, bringing some clarity to my difficulty with—and fixation on—bringing different expressive modalities together to 'make sense' harmoniously. It also supported the emergence of an enactive critical framework that defined trauma as a breakdown at the level of self-organisation (Nijenhuis, 2017).

4.4 Key Moments of Practice

4.4.2 Transposition: Archetypes and Prototypes

Responding to the obstacles to multimodality encountered in *First Response*, I chose a mythological story as the starting for my second project. Contrary to *First Response* where we mediated real lived experiences through theatrical techniques, in *Amaterasu* we worked to generate imagined material around existing myth, informed by lived experiences. Richard Kemp (2018, p. 56) highlights the distributed cognition[73] that takes place in the devising process, and the way that multiple 'agents of meaning' interact to link "embodied and material phenomena with imagined circumstances" in order to collectively generate emergent multimodal meanings. In the process of creating *Amaterasu*, I found these 'agents of meaning' were both internal and external, as different modally-dominant cognitive parts worked to create experiential and semantic sense together. This is in keeping with Nijenhuis' (2017) description

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[73] See 'Meaning' and 'Trauma' in Cognitive Theatre Studies' on page 21.

of action systems, and how we can be ambivalently motivated by these as they function in parallel[74].

Throughout our process, there was a variability to the agreement and coherence across the meanings of the many theatrical elements and cognitive styles that we were transposing across in our work. In my research I found that this multimodal agreement and coherence—which I'll call multimodal integration—happened most easily at intersections that were united by a shared archetype or metaphor. This finding is aligned with Lakoff and Johnson's (1999, p. 45) assertion that metaphor "allows conventional mental imagery from sensorimotor domains to be used for domains of subjective experience", and was also consistent with the utility of metaphorical objects in First Response[75]. The work that took place in shared points of multimodal sense were marked with ease. For example the threshold argument[76] was a verbal fight, which made it easy to weave into a physical quarterstaff fight. Because they shared the same underlying dynamic, it was technically straightforward to combine them. The most useful metaphors were those that evoked shared, complex networks of multimodal associations that we could collectively draw inspiration from, like 'storm' which could be played emotionally, musically, physically, and through lighting design, with very specific textures in each modal language[77].

The contemporary lived experiences which were connected to these archetypes shifted and concretised as we explored them. At the project outset, I transposed Amaterasu's retreat to the

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[74] See page 33 in Critical Framework.
[75] See '3.4.1 Transposition: Boxes in the Mind, Boxes in the Space' on page 82
[76] This can be watched here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/59qetfd1829xb55/Threshold_Fight.mp4?dl=0
[77] The same was true of 'sea', and it was through this cross-modal intersection of meanings that we were able to build the Susanoo, finding his instrument (thunder drum), his mood (stormy), his movement quality (fluid). Through Amaterasu's organising metaphor of 'sun' we found her colour (red) her sound (alternatively pounding, and shimmering), her stature (regal).

cave by connecting this with our current experience of lockdown. As our work on the piece deepened this changed, and Amaterasu and Susanoo came to represent our own complicated and intimate family relationships. Amaterasu's retreat to the cave—in response to Susanoo's tantrum—took on a different meaning, coming to symbolise the emotional withdrawal of a family member after a conflict. The contemporary characters began to take prototypal forms which mirrored their multifaceted archetypes. Aya was stormy, irrational, messy, antagonistic; Emi was bright, rigid, terse, arrogant, withholding. These contemporary character prototypes functioned in many ways like the archetypes. Through them we could construct scenes with a multimodal character framework which organised a range of expressive choices from embodied qualities like movement vocabulary and vocal tone, to more abstract ideas like psychology and motivation.

Figure 4.1

The sea and sun archetypes, Susanoo and Amaterasu. © 2021 Alexander Newton

4.4.1 Play: Action, Curation, and Projection

Multimodal integration also happened relatively seamlessly in sections of the rehearsal where the role of each "agent of meaning" (Kemp, 2018b)[78] was clear. In the first R&D we engaged in a great deal of music-, movement- and image-based exploration and play[79], generating a plethora of images and moments without over-focusing on how they dramaturgically fit into the myth. This is similar to the iterative way that objects and meanings were combined and manipulated in *First Response,* with a key difference being that the performers were using their bodies to create images to evoke meanings, instead of manipulating objects to do the same. In parallel, I was working with the project dramaturgs to break the story of Amaterasu and Susanoo into playable story beats[80]. Towards the end of the first R&D period we began to shape our images into a structure, and the devised theatrical moments generally survived to the next iteration to the extent that we could easily connect them to the beats within this frame.

In a rehearsal diary from 2020 I detail the way that an improvisation was written into the production score:

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[78] See page 23 in the Critical Context for Kemp's (2018b) discussion on distributed creation in devising.

[79] I had assembled three artists with very different theatrical vocabularies, so much of this initial exploration was dedicated to letting them teach one another the different movement and music forms that they brought (stage combat, wushu, karate, taiko) as a starting framework, and then playing with the images and ideas we could build by combining and recombining these.

[80] In my devising practice, the terms 'story beats' or 'plot beats' are often used to define key events or turning points throughout the story that drive the plot forward. These are the large building blocks that make up the total story. Amaterasu, for example, had 7 key moments that we identified as plot beats. Scenes are then built around these story events. This is different from the way 'beats' is often used in script analysis, referring to smaller moments of relational change within a single scene. In a script analysis context, scenes are already set, whereas devisors need to decide which scenes to create, requiring a more zoomed-out dissection of the story arc at the initial stages of creation.

Nao plays a bit of shakuhachi and walks, with so much sorrow and grace. None of us know what her name is or her motivation. We know her condition, the solitary female traveller, the walk of shame, the funeral march, the journey to the underworld. We all know there is power in the archetype. The hairs on the back of our neck go up. We know she is stronger than time so we do not pity her. But we feel the weight of her impossible journey.

I connect it to the only logical place in our storyline:, the only place where Amaterasu travels anywhere with that much weight and gravitas "It's her walk to the cave". And so a story beat is added, the moment after the wounding, before the enclosure. The journey to the cave.

My reference to the 'hairs on the back of our neck' and use of the term 'archetype'[81] indicates the embodied and affective salience that this moment has for my experientially-dominant action system. In the second paragraph I describe how my semantically-dominant action system in turn honours the moment's power by adding a story beat in order to be able to include it. However, this is only possible because there is a dramaturgically satisfying way to connect this moment to the story. For every image like the one described here, there were several experimental images that were less easily connected to the storyline, and most of these were never used. While the dramaturgical 'play' of devising a storyline is more complex than the object-play outlined in Chapter 3[82], I found its underlying dynamic to be the same. Both

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[81] Jung emphasised that despite their symbolic nature, archetypes originate in feeling. Donald Kalsched (Kalsched, 2014), a Jungian trauma theorist, describes how Jung identified the ability of archetypes to inscribe "feeling toned complexes" that are both "archaic" and "typical" (therefore: "archetypal") in coherent and meaningful image-based forms. These archetypal images transform suffering by bringing together "affect and image to create meaning, which in turn makes further suffering possible – this time meaningful suffering. Suffering that can be incorporated into the deep narrative history of an individual's life" (ibid., p. 62).

[82] See '3.4.2 Play: Affordances Inside and Out' on page 85.

exercises work with material and semantic affordances, in other words, both combine the manipulation of material space with the curation and connection of associated meaning-schemas onto this space. Devising *Amaterasu* revealed the complexity of playing with 'meanings', as these included embodied meanings, symbolic meanings, and semantic meanings, and the many ways that these could be connected and combined.

4.4.3 Mediation: Navigating Conflicted Action Systems and Dramaturgical Stuck Points

The practice required me to take a split or compartmentalised approach to my own creative instincts in cases where I felt a moment was experientially significant, but did not fit the story semantically, or vice versa. This required me to use mediation as a devising tool—selectively amplifying or muting specific expressive modalities in order to navigate the discord between them. As an example, both the composer Nao Masuda and I were drawn to the Hannya Shingyo, or Buddhist Heart Sutra, and our creative instinct was to make this a foundational musical element in our production. This made sense to us experientially, as placing it into a play about Amaterasu mirrors the way that Buddhism and Shintoism coexist in Japan[83]. From a semantic perspective, however, the Buddhist principle of 'no-form' articulated by the Heart Sutra contrasted with the very specific 'forms' of the deities presented in the Shinto Kojiki. This contradiction was a further point of fixation because it resonated with the wider question that I was grappling with through the work, namely the fixity vs. mutability of schemas, including the schemas of myth and story.

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[83] Japan's ceremonies and traditions draw from both Shinto and Buddhist rites, and most traditional Japanese houses—including my grandparents'—have both a butsudan, or Buddhist family altar, to honour family ancestors alongside a kamidana or 'god shelf' to honour the Shinto gods.

This didn't pose a problem in the first R&D, when the Buddhist sutra had existed in the piece as a purely musical texture, but in the second R&D, we focused on the semantics of its philosophy, wrestling its core philosophy into the narrative structure of the piece. We connected the Goddess archetype to Emiko's dilemma around the 'form' of her own unchosen identity as a sister and carer, bringing the Hanya Shingyo in at the end to highlight the freedom she experienced in arriving at 'no form'[84]. This complex idea was brought into the rehearsal through the writing at a point where we had very little time left to explore the idea physically. This is something a dance company might dedicate several weeks to exploring, perhaps by inventing and honing an entire physical language of 'dissolving' and 'becoming shapes'. Had we played with this idea in an embodied way from the beginning, we may have found a way to weave it through the visual and physical language of the whole piece, so that it made visceral 'sense' by the time we introduced it in the final scene. But in this iteration, we presented an abstract semantic idea in the text that was not fully integrated with the embodied language of the piece, muddying the dramaturgy through this failed attempt at multimodal integration.

As a counter to overly-semantic and under-embodied 'form / no-form' example, the 'wound' moment was fully embodied and clear from the very first rehearsal, when Nao pulled her bow across her cymbal while Haruka let out a deep wail[85]. The wounding was so viscerally powerful that we struggled to imagine a narrative plot point in the contemporary world of the sisters that could justify its depth. This moment was clearly articulated from an embodied and experiential perspective, but we struggled to connect it to the rest of our story through the semantic and causal meaning models of our scripting and plot.

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[84] This final scene can be viewed here:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/rc7wpjl36x5j730/Form_No_Form.mp4?dl=0

[85] This moment can be viewed from the first R&D here:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/ih7rjfqu5akidmf/Wail.mp4?dl=0, and a version transposed to drums in the second R&D here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/yfdqav7j7wzwn09/Wail_Transposed.mp4?dl=0.

My observation in hindsight is that I sometimes dedicated a large amount of effort to working for integration at these points of disagreement, sometimes in a single modality (like trying to 'write' the plot), without always achieving clear dramatic clarity. On reflection, I felt there was a need for a more balanced approach to working with diverse expressive modes, so that salient schemas could be identified and combined across the different modalities. While my research helped to identify the conditions which led to multimodal incoherence in the work—namely a theme or image evoking a different degree of salience for different modally-dominant action systems—more time was needed, I felt, to identify and explore specific theatrical techniques to overcome these stuck points in practical ways.

4.4.4 Juxtaposition: Between Two Storylines

As my practice sought deeper multimodal integration, the central juxtaposition in Amaterasu was the layering of two different worlds, each one dominant in a distinct expressive modality: the symbolic world of the original myth, and the naturalistic world of a contemporary new story which drew inspiration from it. Through this transposition, a dialogue emerged around how these worlds related to each other. In rehearsal, these manifested as dramaturgical questions that the practice asked to solve: Did the god world exist as its own independent reality, or was it simply a projection from Emi and Aya's imaginations? Which story was the 'main' story and how did each world engage with and affect the other? In the end the answers to these questions were quite muddy.

This dramaturgical dilemma was a reflection of my ambivalence towards the Gods, which extended beyond the frame of the piece. There was a part of me that worried the archetypal

parallel world could flatten the nuance, complexity, and multiplicity of the human characters. Another part felt that the myth must be able to provide some insight to help transform the sisters and their relationship. This ambivalence meant that I could never answer the question of what the 'story' of the play was, as it wasn't clear whether the god world needed to be rejected, reframed, or simply attended to and understood.

Arguably, the contemporary world and the god world valiantly attempt—but ultimately fail—in fully cohering to tell a single story together. Looking at the metatheatrical context of my research question and my quest for psychic, cultural, and multimodal integration, however, it's also arguable that the struggle itself *is* the story. A story born of the juxtaposition and attempted integration of different worlds, different cultures, different spiritual traditions, different storylines, and different theatrical vocabularies.

4.5 Researcher-Reflexivity

4.5.1 Precise, Hyperprecise, and Nonexistent Priors in Devising

Through the devising process, the emotional salience of shared personal experiences[86] worked to shape the plot of the production. By tethering our own cross-cultural relationships—and conflicts—onto the siblings, we were able to quickly improvise dialogue that we all read as meaningful: "Too Japanese"; "too Western"; "take your shoes off"; "why can't you hug me?; "respect your elders"; "don't be so cold". The text that survived was that which carried complex

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[86] Of the original team of 8 artists that I assembled, 7 were female and non-binary, of which 2 were first generation migrants from Japan, 2 were first generation migrants from other countries (Holland, America) with parents who had immigrated from East Asia, and 3 were 2nd generation Brits, also with parents who had immigrated from East Asia. One contributing playwright was a white British-born man.

and multiply playable meanings that resonated with a majority of the cast in intersecting but different ways. The same was true of multimodal proposals which allowed us to identify emotionally salient physical actions—like removing one's shoes—and the way these carried deeper meanings like respect, inadequacy, and obligation. While the specifics of our own family dynamics were not generally brought into the devising room in an explicit way, our histories were carried with us through our creative instincts, and the text and actions that we all read as emotionally meaningful.

In this way our own experiences of our emotionally fraught family relationships—and the complexity of various experiences of migration within these—combined to steer the way that the central relationship between the siblings was articulated. Shared barometers of salience formed by mutual past experience in this sense were not only helpful, but necessary in order to create a story together. Our process evidenced how devising requires theatremakers to engage imaginal structures formed of real lived experience, and to identify and draw from the most salient shared meaning-schemas to create dramatic action onstage[87]. One could say these shared schemas were 'precise' priors as opposed to 'hyperprecise'. They were more generative than obstructive, and unlike the traumatic images explored in *First Response,* they did not lead to hyperarousal in a way that limited the aesthetic languages available to us.

Application of the Wounded Researcher method helped me to identify how trauma showed up in *Amaterasu* in the fixity of meaning and the tendency to over-associate hyperprecise schemas with other images; this is in line with Lesley's response to the dress in the box exercise in *First Response.* A central part of my reflexive practice in relation to *Amaterasu* was an ongoing

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[87] This is in keeping with Nellhaus's (2006) assertion that schema section organisation is a central performance strategy for the success and intelligibility of performance practice, which informs my methodology (See page 69 of '2.4.2 Primary Research Methods').

engagement with the poetic and non-rational associations brought up by the work through a series transference dialogues and lyrical journaling in relation to the play[88]. Through this work I identified themes which were over-present (like "mother", "isolation", "withdrawal", "burden", and "covid"), but equally, themes that were in the original myth but underexplored in our play (like "sister", "repair", "warmth", and "celebration").

Folding this learning back to reflect on the creative process, I was able to see how as a devising director, I prioritised and over-valued some proposals in the creative process that were linked to my own difficult experience, at times to the detriment of narrative coherence or ease. One of the clearest examples of this is how I projected the mother archetype onto *Amaterasu*—the Japanese Sun who took her warmth away—when in both storylines she is never anything other than a sister[89]. The fact that she never makes it out of the cave in our story could be a reflection of our collective fixation as a cast with the image of being locked in a cave, as we were creating during a pandemic and were under lockdown ourselves. It could also, even more simply, be connected to the fact that some emotional self-part didn't have access to a schema for reconnection and repair, so I didn't connect to this idea, or privilege it in my work.

The idea of a 'missing' or non-existent prior framework is evidenced in the following example from an early zoom rehearsal, in which the cast discuss a scene that Stew has written and we've

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[88] See 'Appendix D: Examples of Wounded Researcher Reflexivity' for examples of Wounded Researcher methods.

[89] Keeping in mind the multiple significations of specific bodies discussed in 1.4.2 (see page 22), it's important to acknowledge that the fact that Amaterasu and Emi were played by the two Japanese-born cast members would also significantly steer me towards connecting them to my experience of 'mother' who is a Japanese-born professional taiko drummer. The fact that I chose this specific story and cast these specific performers— and principally a Japanese taiko drummer—in the first place, however, conversely implies that the relational fixation preceded the piece and is not, therefore, arbitrary.

just read. The scene that we are discussing is an early draft[90] in which Amaterasu is visited by an illusion of Susanoo in the cave, and then comes out to 'face herself' in the mirror.

The clip is here:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/u2jjsqxoucs8dpvs12zew/Repair.mov?rlkey=g9o6dl44mka6iflhb2agr9nw7&dl=0

In this clip, Stew makes two points. The first is arguably the more important one, but—somewhat ironically—in my fixation with blindness I gloss over it. Stew's points are: 1) he wants to explore a restorative ending where Susanoo is involved in the healing instead of having his nails torn out and 2) he sees Amaterasu's confrontation with her mirror-self as a challenge to the myth and an embracing of her own nuance and multiplicity. I reply to Stew's second comment, steering this into a discussion on an area of my own fixation, the contradiction between form and no-form. But 'repair' is not a schema that is salient to me in that moment. Because of this, I don't notice or return to Stew's suggestion of involving Susanoo in relational repair until several months later, when he mentions it again and we script the moment where Aya leaves Emi the tape. This moment is almost a sidebar to the cave, where Emi remains—in the dark—at the end of the play. This example illustrates how our creative outputs are just as affected by the gaps in our schema systems as they are by the excesses of hyperprecision.

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[90] This early script snippet is in 'Appendix G: Amaterasu – Early Scripting'.

4.5.2 Professional Boundaries and Trauma

In 4.4.3 I discuss the way that we struggled as a team to find a wounding moment between Emi and Aya which justified the wail that we had connected to the story beat of the handmaiden and the loom. At one point in this discussion miscarriage was mentioned, and we considered a version of the story where Emi is pregnant, and Aya (unaware of this) lashes out violently, causing a miscarriage. A member of the creative team put down a boundary at this moment, stating they could not work on images of violence toward pregnant women due to their own past experience, and this being a trigger point for them. As a team we dropped the idea immediately [91]. This moment exemplifies a key difference between participatory and professional practice: in professional practice there is a tacit understanding that creatives are responsible for maintaining boundaries to be able to self-regulate around themes that could activate hyperprecise priors. This explains why we never experienced the freeze and emotional overwhelm responses demonstrated in *First Response*, but it also reveals a complexity in working with traumatic themes in professional, non-therapeutic spaces.

4.5.3 Scarcity and Scripting

At the end of our first R&D we found ourselves quite far from a publicly presentable 'story', and with limited financial resource before our first public presentation. Despite making the explicit finding in *First Response* that the early demand for a script collapsed the possibility to find novel new meanings through embodied play, my response to this dilemma was to call

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[91] Perhaps not coincidentally, the 'provoked miscarriage' idea was the one that we felt held the most dramatic potential in terms of being able to 'match' the intensity of the wailing image. In this sense, the fact that this was consciously asserted as a no-go area for a member of the creative team was just as limiting, in relation to working with traumatic content, as the hyperarousal that limited us in *First Response.*

dramaturgical sessions with the playwright, as this was cost-efficient. This replicated many of the same issues I encountered with *First Response*, with naturistic script and heightened movement presented side-by-side more often than they were integrated into new formally innovative scenes. This led me to reflect on the relationship between the aesthetic forms which are dominant in the UK theatre landscape more broadly. In relation to my research, it has been useful to parse how some of the difficulties I encountered in integrating modalities have less to do with the specific challenges of working with trauma, and more to do with pre-existing conditions of the industry.

4.6 Discussion

A central finding of *Amaterasu* has been the discovery of how internal meaning structures directly contribute to the creative process in ways that are both generative and complicating, with the 'precise' schemas of shared meaningful experience contributing to dramaturgical action; while hyperprecise, contradictory, and ambivalent schemas result in multimodal stuck points and dramaturgical muddiness. A related finding was the degree to which leading a devising process required mediation between cognitive domains, knowing when to play semantically vs. experientially to explore a theme. This was exemplified by my successful mediation of verbal and physical approaches in the threshold fight, as well by the frustration caused by our overly semantic approach to solving the form-no/form dilemma in the final scene.

An important technique in achieving mediation was the ability to simultaneously inhabit the roles of experiential artist, semantic artist, and outside eye to the sometimes-conflicting creative impulses in myself and in my team. This is the dually-aware positioning that Nijenhuis' (2019, p. 34) called a consciousness of "cooperation and communication" and what Schwartz

and Sweezy (2019, p. 3) term the "Self" that is "not a part". My review of the literature—which focused on performance outputs and their meaning potential in relation to audiences—connected dual awareness most closely with the dual-engagement of theatrical juxtaposition[92]. Reflecting on our rehearsal process reveals how mediation—specifically the selective muting and amplification of dominant and underused modalities—provided a critical first step towards this dual-engagement. In this way, mediation was an important, and potentially underused, tool for maintaining cooperation and communication between the many internal and external agents of meaning at play.

The creative process evidenced a direct relationship between widely shared and salient meaning schemas and story creation. The was true of culturally shared meaning schemas like archetypes and metaphors, as well as more nuanced and personalised schemas like prototypal characters and shared lived experience as a dual-heritage British East Asian migrant. Archetypes and prototypes as transposing methods were especially useful in achieving multimodal integration because of their multiple associated significations across different expressive modalities. Salience became a stumbling block, however, when images were no-go areas for the creative team and therefore blocked from use, as demonstrated by our inability to explore miscarriage in connection to the wail. Salience was also problematic when schemas were hyperprecise to the point or when they were overassociated with other schemas and therefore overused. This was most clearly evidenced in the way that Amaterasu was connected to the mother archetype, despite this character being a sister in both stories. A recommendation for practice resulting from this experience is to allow a reflective space of interrogation which 'maps' the various connections and associations that are arising in the devising process. I conducted this exercise after the production, through reflexive research and Romanyshyn's

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[92] See '1.4.4 Dual Awareness' on page 49 of the Literature Review.

transference dialogues. Doing this work during the devising process would have highlighted areas of overweighting sooner, allowing more time to interrogate or address them in the rehearsal period.

Another area of complexity, particularly in relation to multimodal integration, were images or ideas which made 'sense' or were experienced as important in one expressive and cognitive modality but were disruptive or incoherent in another (particularly when divided along semantic / experiential lines). Through my research I was able to identify that we moved through these stuck points most gracefully when we had time to experiment and play in both of the competing expressive modalities in order to find shared points of meaning between the two. When limited either by time or our own fixation on making sense in a single expressive modality, however, we remained stuck between incongruent meaning schemas at these points, and failed to find a satisfying synthesis.

I also expanded my understanding initially developed in *First Response* of the way that 'playing' in theatre involved engaging with at least two sets of affordances: the physical affordances offered by the material realities in the space, and the imaginative affordances at the level of meaning. 'Play' as I observed in chapter 3 involved manual manipulation of the physical space of the theatre, coupled with on ongoing process of selecting and curating the meaning-schemas that the materiality of theatre would evoke, engage with, be informed by, and adapt. Applying this basic idea to the way that I played as a devising director in Amaterasu, for example in the creation and curation of content to map on to story beats— brought new awareness of the complexity of the play process in devising.

Wakholi & Wright (2011)[93] argue that working with culturally-rooted performance forms can redress both psychic and political imbalances in relation to subordinate and dominant cultural identities. One of the imbalances that became apparent through this process, especially as we began to run out of time and money, was the privileging of a naturalistic and text-based approach to creating and interpreting story. We made the show that we could make quickly and that we thought UK audiences would be able to follow and understand. My own frustration with this outcome—coupled with the amount of time I spent wrestling with the plot to expand its multimodal integration—are resonant of the way that Bayley's (2014) "duel-heritage [sic]" students reframed and wrestled with the verbatim form. In the same way that verbatim felt insufficient to them, a fully scripted process felt insufficient to me. While *Amaterasu* may not have succeeded in harmonising the competing systems of my own schemas or the UK theatre landscape, it did succeed in highlighting some of the incongruencies and imbalances between them.

In the next chapter I will reflect further on the wider patterns that I observed across the two projects, and the concrete tools that I articulated and developed in the creation of new meaning through both of these productions.

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[93] See '2.5.2 Amaterasu: The Wounded Researcher, and Intercultural Performance as Trauma' on page 73.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Chapter Aims and Outline

My thesis set out to understand how a second-generation cognitive science approach to meaning and trauma could inform a devising theatre practice which seeks to create new meanings in contexts of trauma. Through the critical framework I identified 4 key aspects of meaning-making which are important in the context of trauma: multimodal symbolisation, salience, dual awareness, and embodied action. Through a review of practice and literature at the intersection of trauma and performance studies and cognitive theatre studies, I identified 4 correlated theatre methods for influencing these variables to create new meaning: transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play. I then interrogated the way these methods were used through two PaR devising projects, *First Response* and *Amaterasu.* These projects addressed the 3rd and 4th sub-questions to my research which were:

> *Sub-question 3 (First Response): How do these specific methods help to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-facilitator working with trauma-affected participants and audiences?*

> *Sub-question 4 (Amaterasu): How do these specific methods help to inform a devising practice, from the perspective of a director-devisor working with colleagues on personally traumatic themes?*

I have presented initial findings from those projects in chapters 3 and 4. In creating *First Response*, I operated from a semantically dominant perspective in relation to trauma, as the

experiences of trauma that were interrogated in the production were not close to my own. In *Amaterasu*, I operated from an experientially dominant perspective, working directly with themes that were personally affecting. This positioned me to observe first-hand the way that meaning-schemas were affected by traumatic themes, while employing theatre methods to transform them.

In this chapter, I will integrate and analyse learning from *Amaterasu* and *First Response* to address the fifth sub-question of my research:

> *What are the key findings which emerge through a consideration of my 3rd and 4th research sub-questions—and their associated practice-as-research projects and outcomes—in dialogue one another? What may these findings offer to devising theatre practice which responds to or works in contexts of trauma?*

I will consider the projects side-by-side in order to highlight the patterns that emerged across them to produce findings, discussing how I measured my research through the project and how I came to discover these findings.

In 5.2 I will discuss the specific ways that trauma affects a devising process. I will begin by revisiting the theoretical grounding which was most useful in my analysis of the data. I will apply this theory to articulate three effects of trauma that were most evident in my devising room, and which are most relevant to theatremakers and / or impactful to a theatremaking process. Then in 5.3 I will consider and present learning around the four specific methods which I employed across the two projects to navigate the challenges described in 5.2. I will highlight how I have adapted or shifted my understanding and employment of these methods over the course of my research, providing recommendations for devising practice which works in contexts of trauma.

In the final section, 5.4, I will synthesise my findings into points of departure for directors seeking to create new meanings in the context of trauma. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of my findings, but rather, a practical and simplified tool for embedding learning from this PhD into future theatre projects. A summary of these findings, alongside limitations of the study and recommendations for further research is presented in chapter 6: Conclusion.

5.2 How Theatre-making is Affected by Contexts of Trauma

5.2.1 Theoretical Grounding

In Chapter 1[94] I outlined Nijenhuis' (2017) trauma framework, which defines trauma as a breakdown at the level of self-organisation, including the existence of dissociative subsystems or 'parts' which operate in parallel and serve competing functions and aims. At the most extreme end, these subsystems can be completely dissociated from one another, and exist in polarised positions in relation to traumatic stimuli. At this extreme position, it is common to see prototypal self-parts which either exists in a fixated position of trauma (the EP) or are highly avoidant of traumatic stimulus and feelings (the ANP). While the EP and ANP are prototypal self-parts in cases of trauma, there are many other ways that parts can be configured. A distinguishing feature of a traumatised personality is that they have action systems with incompatible longings which have developed dissociative rifts between them.

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[94] See '1.3.2 Definition of 'Trauma' - An Enactive Model' on page 32.

In Chapter 1[95] I also presented Clark's (2015) PP model, which provides a framework for understanding trauma that falls along a spectrum beyond the extreme positions of the EP and ANP. Clark posits that we react to our environment by generating predictive models—or schemas—based on past experience, and that when presented with error signals from a stimulus, we become fixated on the stimulus in order to gain more information. This allows us to either update our model, or to discount the error signals as noise. In the event of encountering information matching two contradictory models, we can remain in a state of ambiguity, flipping between two schemas as error signals come in that insinuate one model or the other. Meaning schemas connected to extremely salient experience can become 'hyperprecise.' Hyperprecise schemas can be associated with and generated by a broader range of stimuli than less precise models, and are more difficult to update or transform. Nijenhuis' and Clark's theories exist in the larger framework of SGCS, which underlines the multimodality of cognition and the differentiation of brain function. This means that the competing action systems or self-parts of the traumatically split self can be organised along—and activated by—different areas of modal dominance.

In this section, I will discuss the ways that the principles that I have outlined here showed up in my devising practice, highlighting three issues that a theatre devisor working in contexts of trauma is likely to face in their practice.

5.2.2 First Issue: Multimodality and Emotion

The clearest example of EP/ANP split as described by Nijenhuis (2017) was evidenced through my work with the first responders. Throughout the process I observed that the same ideas,

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[95] See '1.3.2 Definition of 'Meaning' – A Predictive Processing Model' on page 28.

images, and stories could provoke incredibly different responses in my participants depending on the modality through which we approached them in our work. A story about shooting attack caused no distress in one participant when spoken, but when we explored the same story physically, the participant experienced a freeze response and could not participate in the exercise. Participants also demonstrated increased emotional arousal in response to poetic language and visual and embodied images in relation to fact-based language. The use of repetition as a poetic device caused an explosive fight, when the same stories told in a more narrative way were more easily tolerated. A traumatic story could be told unemotionally using relatively neutral language like "woman" and "foot", but with the addition of more specific visual information like "blue rinse hair" or "blue painted toenails" the participants would become overwhelmed with emotion. In my research, I identified a clear link between emotional overwhelm and non-narrative and non-verbal modes of expression. This link is supported by the critical framework which proposes an emotional / rational (EP/ANP) prototypal split, and posits that different action systems can be activated by engaging different areas of modal dominance. It also makes sense in light the tacit assumptions which underly my professional use of poetic devices as tools used in theatre to increase affect in audiences.

In *Amaterasu,* a project with professional artists, we did not have incidents of emotional distress or overwhelm in rehearsal, but we did employ embodied sounds and images—like Emi's wounded wail accompanied by Amaterasu's drumming—to carry the most 'emotional' moments of the story. The key learning was that transposition and mediation across modalities was critical to working with traumatic themes, but that it was also important to approach each new modality with care. If a participant was able to stay emotionally regulated when talking about a story, this was not an indication that they would be able to maintain the same calm when asked to approach the story through movement, imagery, or poetry.

5.2.2 Second Issue: Incongruent Meaning Schemas and Creative Stuck Points

Clark's description of error signals and fixation were useful for understanding some of the images and moments which caused fixation of attention and posed creative challenges over the course of my research. In both projects, I encountered key moments or images which engaged multiple meaning-structures simultaneously in either the participants or myself or both. The polarised position and incongruence of these structures seemed to lead to repetitive rumination and the creation of a point of fixation and stuck-ness where our attention was drawn to an image or idea, but we struggled to 'make sense' of it, either in an immediate and embodied way, or in a narrative way within the larger context of the piece.

In *First Response* the 'foot-baby' was an image that Lesley and the entire creative team kept returning to, because of the contradiction and emotional salience of the two embodied responses that it contained—'reject' and 'hold close'. It also called upon two action systems that were not generally made to share space, that of Lesley-as-Police and Lesley-as-Mother. In *Amaterasu,* a similar dynamic was seen in the juxtaposition of Shintoism and Buddhism, which was experienced differently by multiple action systems. From the grounded and situational perspective of experiential cognition, the inclusion of both belief systems felt important, as it reflected the embodied experience of living in Japan where physical rituals from both religions are embedded in daily life. From a rational or semantic perspective, the juxtaposition of these philosophies was experienced as 'illogical' and in need of justification through the narrative. The dilemma also activated a wider and more conceptually complex fixation around the materiality vs. mutability of forms and schemas. The simultaneous presence of Shintoism's archetypal forms and Buddhism's formlessness was a theme that I was semantically fixated on

resolving in much the same way that Lesley was physically fixated on resolving the presence of the foot-baby.

I also found that my landscape was divided according to multimodal theatrical languages, with a semantically dominant action system responding to the work in different ways than a symbolic or experientially dominant action system. For example, my experientially dominant part felt it was important to include the moment of Amaterasu's wounding, whereas the semantically-dominant part felt the inclusion if this image should be contingent on it 'making sense' within the wider story. This evidence from *First Response* and *Amaterasu* indicated that stuck points of fixation in our productions occurred when two or more contradictory action systems—and the meaning models they generated—collided through an object, idea, or theme that activated both of them.

At a narrative level, an analysis of both productions reveals the way that this same dynamic can play out across more complex meaning-schemas which vie for narrative dominance in the wider story of the piece. In chapter 4 I discussed the way that my own modal schism is reflected in the dramaturgical structure of *Amaterasu*. In the play, it's never clear if the symbolic and archetypal god world is a flawed imaginal construct of the naturalistic characters, or a useful mythology to help them transform. Folding this learning back to examine my first project helps identify how the dramaturgy of *First Response* vacillates between meaning schemas of individual vs. social healing. It was unclear if the young people were foils to help the first responders unpack their boxes, or if the boxes existed as a provocation to unite the young and old in finding a way to shift them. In the end, the narrative flip-flopped between the two possibilities, and neither story was fully told or resolved. I did not resolve these stuck points

through the practice, and in both projects I had the impulse to revisit them. I will discuss this further in 5.3.2.

5.2.3 Third Issue: Salience, Meaning, and Over-Association

High salience, particularly in connection with difficult lived experience, seemed to have a variable effect in relation to the creative process. In the case of material that was precise enough to be experienced as meaningful, but could still be affectively tolerated, high salience—especially when it was shared—was generative, helping us to quickly construct scenes that were dynamic and made sense to the whole team. This was most immediately apparent in *Amaterasu* in the engagement around intergenerational and intercultural family relationships. On reflection, this same degree of generative meaning was also present in *First Response*, particularly around shared past experiences of difficulty connected to being a first responder during the Troubles, and around the shared experience of meaning encountered through the intergenerational learning occurring between members of the cast. When the arousal was so high as to be volatile and intolerable however, and meaning systems were unintegrated and polarised, we came up against an embodied and affective rigidity which closed down creative and aesthetic possibilities as outlined in 5.2.2.

Between these two extremes, my research evidenced another way in which salience could affect the devising process. When a meaning schema was hyperprecise enough to be associated with a broader range of stimuli, this schema could be over-connected with ideas and images which weren't an easy dramaturgical 'fit', leading to structural muddiness or internal contradiction in the narrative. This was most clearly evidenced in the way that Amaterasu—a sibling, and a character parallel to Emi—was connected to the idea of Aya and Emi's mother,

due to my relational fixation with my own mother. It was also demonstrated in our choice to highlight Susanoo's connection to both the sea and disease in a time of heightened awareness around climate disaster and Covid-19 lockdown. Connecting two major archetypes and their contemporary associations with a single character was a clumsy choice from a devising perspective, as picking a single theme and archetype would likely have made the narrative easier to construct and follow.

Over-association brought the correlated issue of some themes being underused or missed entirely. In chapter 4 I presented a video clip in which I ignored our dramaturg's suggestion around relational repair, as I was fixated on solving the form / no-form dilemma. *First Response* was a collage of stories, so over-association is more difficult to pinpoint in the narrative, but the set design indicates how every story and discussion in the rehearsal process led back to the participants' boxed-up traumatic memories. The 'cave' of relational disconnection and the 'boxes' of locked-up traumatic memory were arguably valid central images for productions which sought to create new meaning around traumatic experience. But the fact that these images remained present and unchanged through the end of each respective piece is an indication that this same trauma kept us fixated on these images; we struggled to find new images of repair, emergence, and transformation.

The tendency to over-associate and overuse hyperprecise schemas was a late finding which I discovered when reflecting on *Amaterasu* after the performance's conclusion, so I did not succeed in researching ways of working with or counteracting this phenomenon during the course of rehearsal. However, the use of Romanyshyn's (2010) transference dialogues, alongside my own system of association-mapping grounded in alchemical heuristics, helped to identify the various transpositions and associations that were running through the work, as well

as highlight areas that were underexplored. This exercise, conducted at a mid-point in the rehearsal process, would be useful in identifying which meaning schemas may be over-associated, and which may be overlooked.

5.3 Tools for Approaching Theatre which Responds to Trauma

5.3.1 Introduction

In the last section I identified three issues connected to working with trauma which affected my devising process specifically. These were:

1. Increased—and at times intolerable—emotional affect connected to non-verbal multimodal explorations of traumatic themes.

2. "Stuck points" at the intersection of competing or incongruent meaning frameworks and action systems. These took a proportionally high degree of our collective attention and were difficult to solve or resolve in terms of action or narrative outcome.

3. The over-association of highly salient images, concepts, or themes with other meaning frameworks throughout our devising process.

In this section, I will discuss how the methods of transposition, mediation, play, and juxtaposition were employed to create new meaning while navigating the patterns and issues outlined in 5.2. I will highlight how I have adapted or shifted my understanding and employment of these methods over the course of my research, and provide recommendations for practitioners in their adaptation and use.

5.3.2 Transposition

In Chapter 1[96] I hypothesised that transposition could create new avenues for exploring complex concepts and themes through embodied play. This was evidenced most clearly in the way we transposed the concept of 'boxed up memory' through the use of physical boxes in *First Response*. Most notable was the way that participants engaged with the boxes through their own bodies, affording new physical possibilities and creating new meanings in terms of their own relationships with their memories. In *Amaterasu,* we began with a mythological and symbolic story as a starting point, so much of the initial transposition worked in the other direction, beginning with a symbolic image and working to connect this image with resonant contemporary lived experience. Through *Amaterasu*, archetypes emerged as powerful tools for creating multimodally complex and integrated meaning schemas, which in turn produced new sets of associations and meanings from which we were able to construct prototypal characters and storylines from contemporary lived experience and culture.

In comparing the two projects, one difference that stands out is the amount of transposition that was occurring in the creation of *Amaterasu*. *First Response* was created largely in a narrative presentational style, whereas *Amaterasu* began with transposition as its starting point, with stylised music and movement entwined in the narrative, and two parallel sibling stories at the centre of the piece, each story a transposition of the other. The story was fictional, meaning that as a devising team, any of our own lived experiences in the production were presented through some form of transposition. This theatrical language presented more opportunities to engage with meaning-making which took place at the level of metaphor and symbol, but it also was more vulnerable to the over-association of hyperprecise schemas described in 5.2.3, due

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[96] See '1.4.2 Multimodal Symbolisation' on page 43.

to the sheer number of transpositions and associations being made over the course of the devising process.

Our most successful transpositions were those which connected shared lived experiences or cultural reference points to clear metaphorical or archetypal objects, images, and characters. For this reason, it is useful to create many opportunities for the full cast to engage in the process of transposing meanings, through exercises which call on individuals to generate symbolic images, or to reflect the meanings that they read in the images proposed by others. It is also important to engage in a reflexive process of some kind to make tacit transpositions happening in the process explicit. In this way, transpositions can be rigorously considered and interrogated before committing to using them as anchors in a devising process. At the same time, reflecting on the endings of both pieces evidenced the importance of balancing this with consideration and care, leaving enough time to play with the transposed object or image to generate new meanings from it. This is especially true in light of the fixity and overweighting of traumatic concepts outlined in 5.2.3.

5.3.3 Play

My understanding of 'play' as a tool and how to apply it in theatre practice deepened significantly through the research. As outlined in Chapter 1, I understand play according to the Lecoq principle of 'le jeu' and "the body's potential for transposition and for transformation" (Lecoq, 2000, p.xviii-xix). I initially analysed this idea through Gibson's (1977) ecological theory of affordances. Gibson's theory highlights the physical possibilities that an environment affords, connecting the meaning that an object carries to what it can physically do. As I developed my thinking, I saw how this theory explicitly addresses the dimension of transformation in play, but only tacitly implies the

dimension of transposition. An analysis of how play was used in our workshop process demonstrated that one of the most important things that objects 'do' in theatre is that they signify through transposition. Therefore, performers who play with materials to create meanings are dealing with two sets of affordances at any given time—the manual or physical affordances of the object in space, and the abstract imaginal meanings that can be connected to these at the same time. These meaning-schemas interact iteratively to create new possibilities through play. This concept was most clearly demonstrated by Felicity during an improvisation in which she connected the abstract schema of 'stories' to newsprint and then manipulated a paperweight to sit atop them, signifying her reluctance to bring these stories into the open.

At its most basic, play revealed itself to be a process of combining and recombining different schemas—both conceptual and material—and then manipulating the material anchors which represented these schemas to create new meanings. Multimodal play was best facilitated by the openness of the early stages of rehearsal, before the pressure of time required us to select specific ideas and work these into a script. This stage of play was generative, but unfocused; it became more focused and useful as the shared meanings of key archetypes and prototypes began to emerge, and it was the play of this middle period that most significantly contributed to the performance scores. Our ability to generate new dramaturgical material through embodied play was curtailed early in both processes however, in *First Response* because of a request from the Playhouse to produce a written script at the start of the rehearsal process, and in *Amaterasu* because of scarce funding, leading to a reduced creative team. While this has more to do with the wider theatre landscape than trauma specifically, it is worth noting that protecting 'play' within dominant systems of creation which deprioritise it will be an ongoing negotiation in my creative practice.

During my research, my interest in play responded to the practice, shifting from how it could be used to generate new meanings generally, to understanding how it can be mobilised to explore the

highly salient images described in 5.2.3, as well as to create new meaning at the 'stuck points' of irresolvable fixation and incongruent schemas identified in 5.2.2. Reflecting on these stuck points and what I wish I had done differently across productions reveals two ways that play could have been better mobilised: 1) by physically exploring central anchoring transpositions early, while there was still time to build new meaning from these explorations into the script; and 2) by approaching solutions to stuck points multimodally instead of unimodally, despite the financial and time pressures to solve these moments through scripting.

The first point can be addressed logistically, by changing the timescales and method of the design process. Both the boxes and the cave were transpositions of concepts that seemed weighty and immovable, and in each process we found it difficult to transform these concepts, either by shifting the physical presence of the boxes, or narratively emerging from the cave. Amaterasu's cave was never given a material form, and the boxes for our set design arrived in the final week of rehearsal after the piece was scripted. It would have been useful to have played with material transpositions of these images much earlier, so we could use our bodies to find meaningful manipulations leading to transformative endings. This would have been better facilitated by constructing the transposed design elements (or cheaper but functional mock-ups) and bringing these into the rehearsal at an earlier stage in the devising process.

The necessity of the second point was exemplified by our fixation on form/no-form and our struggle to work this into the ending through Emi's text. On reflection, the idea should have also been explored physically, through movement and ritual. This could have facilitated by an intentional approach to balancing the time and space taken by various modally-dominant action systems in rehearsal, coupled with active mediation between these systems to create dialogue across them. I will discuss mediation further in the next section.

5.3.4 Mediation

My understanding of mediation also shifted significantly through the research. In my practice review, I presented examples of work which used mediation as a tool to amplify or reduce the multimodal expression and correlated emotions of trauma for an audience, through "amplified sensate staging" (Harpin, 2011, p. 107) or comic caricature (Nordstrom, 1997). Through my research, three additional uses for mediation emerged: 1) to distil and amplify prototypal and archetypal symbols, actions, and images, and characters as they began to emerge; 2) to amplify and bring multimodal expression to the experience of healing and recovery; and 3) to navigate and dialogue across dissociated or disagreeing action systems in individuals and in the wider creative team. I will discuss these three uses here.

The clearest example of distillation and amplification was evidenced in *First Response*, in the way that 'boxed up memories' were made the central visual design element after emerging as a common theme during interviews and workshop discussions. This in turn clarified a point of focus for our production, and brought new multimodal dimensionality to the theme of traumatic memory, expanding the possibility for embodied meaning-making in relation to this theme. The choice to stack boxes as high as the ceiling brought increased significance to the memories through an amplification of their size and the space they took up, which in turn brought increased significance to the debate with the young people about what to do about their existence.

Amplification of the multimodality and extreme experience of trauma was also used, in line with the work of past practitioners who have used amplified sensate staging to represent trauma onstage. In *Amaterasu*, the use of drumming combined with Emi's doubled-over wail is the

clearest example of this. In *First Response,* trauma was presented through discordant and cacophonous soundscapes, images from nightmares, recorded narrative, and a blown-up video projection of a nationalistic crowd. Both productions—importantly—also used these same sensate techniques to represent the protagonists' recovery and healing from trauma. In the final scene of *Amaterasu,* Emi is immersed in Amaterasu's music. Recovery in *First Response* is presented through a collage of projected video from a helicopter, music, and a recorded voice describing his experience of God. This is in keeping with Nijenhuis' premise that an engagement with trauma requires toleration of negative affect, facilitated by an opposite and stronger positive affect.

Within the context of disordered self-systems present in trauma, the use of mediation as a technique to selectively amplify and mute different kinds of multimodal expressions emerged as an important tool for navigating the emotional charge of hyperprecise priors described in 5.2.2 and the stuck point of incongruent schemas described in 5.2.3. I achieved this by approaching the same story, plot point, or theme through different improvisation exercises geared towards different multimodal expressive forms in both projects. This required me to maintaining a position of dual awareness with respect to my own compartmentalisation and internal agents of meaning in *Amaterasu*, which in turn helped to facilitate the dual-engagement of theatrical juxtaposition. This was exemplified by the successfully mediated threshold fight scene. In contrast, the overly-semantic attempt at solving the ending lacked dual awareness, and would have benefitted from a more modally balanced approach. While I was aware of the modally different access points for engaging polarised self-parts like the ANP and EP from the project outset, I was only able to see that this same prototypal split was present at stuck points upon reflection after creating *Amaterasu*. For this reason, I did not consciously employ multimodality in specific relation to these stuck points through my practice. Taking my

learning further, I would recommend a more explicit approach to using mediation to balance the space taken by different theatrical vocabularies in the room, especially at points of incongruence and disagreement between modally dominant action systems. For example, movement and tableau exercises could be used to investigate plot points where we have struggled to make sense through text and language.

5.3.5 Juxtaposition

In Chapter 1 I discussed how theatrical juxtaposition allows contrasting images and ideas to be presented together to emphasise differences, reveal similarities or explore a unique relationship between them. In *First Response*, the most generative juxtaposition was the combination of old and young performers, which brought a plethora of associated themes and ideas around past, present, and the relationship between the two. These included how the first responders saw their past (younger) selves from their present perspective, and how the past was affecting the current generation. In *Amaterasu,* we juxtaposed a mythic story presented through music, movement, and storytelling with a contemporary story told through theatrical naturalism. This embedded deep questions in the practice about how humans relate to story and symbol; how our lives and understandings are shaped by myths and metaphors, and how we come to shape them. These are precisely the questions that I have been grappling through this PhD, brought to me over a decade ago, by Chance in his aeroplane.

While juxtaposition succeeded in presenting new learning and unique relationships between themes, as a theatremaker I was driven to cohere concepts, seeking points in the relationship between juxtaposed themes where each could be transformed by the other. Grounded in Nijenhuis' (2017, p.34) consciousness of 'collaboration and cooperation', my practice didn't

end at exploring contrasting meaning frameworks in parallel, but strove to facilitate dialogue and mutual transformation between them. The productions felt most successful in achieving new meaning when they achieved this. This may be why I identified the juxtaposition of old and young as the most salient use of the technique, and also why this emergent intersection was identified as the 'most meaningful' by funders, cast, audiences, and the external evaluator (Grant & Durrer, 2020). By contrast, I saw the juxtaposed and contrasting storylines of boxes / youth in *First Response,* and human-world / god-world in *Amaterasu* as 'stuck points' which revealed schisms in individual meaning-frameworks, buffered by parallel schisms in the wider social landscape. These stuck points are mirrored in the fabric of this PaR inquiry, and its deeply embedded questions around whether traumatic memory is something that must be unpacked or transformed; and whether the forms of stories and schemas move us forward, or fix us in the past.

As a theatremaker, my aim for both productions was to tell a single coherent story with each; theatrical juxtaposition was intended as a technique to elucidate the eventual expansion or synthesis of two incongruent meaning frameworks into something larger and more nuanced which was capable of holding both. In trauma-tragedy, Duggan (2018) proposes that trauma is best represented by theatrical forms which mirror the fractured structure of traumatic experience. My finding was tangential to his assertion, that even when driven to tell a 'single story,' competing meaning frameworks within my psyche and the wider devising, social, and academic context showed up in the dramaturgy as unresolved dialectics. It may be that intentionally embracing juxtaposition as an end in itself—instead of a means to an end—is to take a position which accepts the schism of trauma, and the limits of a fractured self. In my work, however, it was not necessary to intentionally 'represent' traumatic schism; in fact,

working to resolve and cohere frameworks was one of the clearest paths to elucidating the disagreement between them.

5.3.6 Reflectivity

In 5.3.1 I discussed how transposition was constantly occurring in *Amaterasu*, and that some hyper-precise ideas and themes were over-associated with other meaning frameworks, leading to dramaturgical muddiness in the production. My own awareness of over-association was facilitated by researcher-reflexivity in the form of transference dialogues with the archetypal and prototypal characters in the play, and through lyrical writing exercises. Alchemical heuristics were then applied to these as well as early exegesis drafts to understand the transpositions and associations which were tacitly present within them, and by extension in the underlying framework of the production. These methods applied at an earlier stage in the rehearsal process may have led to earlier mediation, and the creation of a different play entirely. This could be achieved by muting and correcting over-associations in order to facilitate a clearer story, or by consciously and explicitly placing them more centrally in the narrative through amplification to address them.

In 5.3.5 I discussed the way that juxtaposition served the dual purpose of transforming frameworks where possible, but also elucidating stuck points in which meanings were resistant to mutual transformation. Further dramaturgical analysis and rational critical reflection on these stuck points—as that undertaken through this PhD—has helped to identify and articulate areas of internal polarisation. In this way, some 'new meaning' has been facilitated by critical reflection, which can be taken forward into further exploration and action towards integration. This is in line with what Duggan & Wallis (2011, p. 8) propose when they write:

"theatre/performance might legitimately stage acting out and working over within the ultimate frame of working through – which must perforce take the action beyond the theatrical frame." What my thesis has also evidenced, however, is that new meaning is facilitated by the multimodality of theatre. In this way "the theatrical apparatus–a space/time to rehearse space/time and personhood" (ibid., p. 15) is, as Duggan and Wallis suggest, well placed to address trauma in unique ways. For this reason, my position is that reflexivity through dramaturgical analysis and critical reflection forms just one part of 'working through', and that multimodal new-meaning creation is best facilitated by yet another multimodal project, for example, a subsequent theatre production.

5.4 Additional Output: Points of Departure Document for Practitioners

5.4.1: Description of Methods, and Examples for Use

Through my research I have identified and defined 4 key methods for devising theatre in contexts of trauma. My understanding of these tools, alongside practical examples, are presented below. I have also included a description of reflexive methods to support creation.

Transposition: Transposition involves reimagining a meaning-schema so that it is expressed in a new schema, often but not always in a new modality. Transpositions can take the form of symbols, metaphors, archetypes, prototypes; as well as theatrical elements like objects, images, sounds, movements, and phrases. Transpositions are useful tools for accessing and engaging meaning-systems multimodally. This can facilitate work with abstract meanings at the level of root embodied metaphor and vice versa. Examples of transposition include representing the

concept of 'boxed up memories' through physical boxes placed on stage, or representing climate change through an actor who plays a raging sea-god.

Play: Play is the process of combining and recombining different meaning schemas—both conceptual and material—and then physically exploring and manipulating the material components of these combined schemas to create new meanings. Play occurs between actors (including their bodies) and anything in their environment which includes objects, the space, and the bodies of others. Players are working with two sets of affordances at any given time, the affordances of what the environment allows them to do, and the affordances of what the environment allows them to mean. An example of play is transposing the idea of 'piled up traumatic memories' onto a large pile of boxes, and then working with a group to explore how this pile of boxes can be manipulated and transformed to create new meanings. Play can be used generatively in open-ended improvisations to discover new images and associations in connection to a broad theme. It can also be used in a more targeted way to find novel physical solutions to central conceptual questions which underlie a piece, for example, "how should our society address these boxed up memories?"

Mediation: Mediation is the technique of selectively amplifying and muting different aspects of an idea, image, story, or character. Mediation can be used as a dramaturgical technique to highlight specific ideas for an audience. Mediation can also be a powerful rehearsal-room tool in working with traumatic themes, because it can help to access a story from different modalities, which in turn can engage dissociated action systems which experience trauma in extreme and polarised ways. As such, it is important that each new modality is approached with care, even when working with material or stories that have been explored with ease in another modality. Mediation can also be employed at creative stuck points to allow the same idea to be approached from different perspectives. Examples of mediation as a dramaturgical technique include amplifying specific character traits through caricature, or amplifying the extreme

sensory experience of trauma through sensate staging. Examples of multimodal mediation as a rehearsal room tool include asking a participant to show their story through tableau, or approaching a conceptual concept like 'form vs. formlessness' variously through the modes of text and movement.

Juxtaposition: Juxtaposition is the technique of presenting different and even contrasting elements together, in order to emphasise differences, reveal similarities or explore a unique relationship between them. In the context of trauma and schema-transformation, juxtaposition is effective as a tool for bringing contrasting perspectives or schemas into a new transformative relationship which brings new meaning to each. Juxtaposition is also useful for highlighting points of schism and traumatic fixation. It is not necessary to intentionally construct dynamics of fracture in theatre which responds to trauma, as working at points of fixation with the aim or creating new meanings between them will either highlight a unique relationship to facilitate a schema transformation, or reveal authentic fractures where schemas struggle to cohere. Examples of juxtaposition include presenting old and young ensembles side-by-side, and exploring the same relationship or story simultaneously through the styles of myth and naturalism.

In addition to the tools above, trauma-specific reflexivity can be used to support the process. Reflexivity is the process of being aware of how your own meaning schemas are being constructed, construed, projected, transposed and associated throughout your creative process. In the context of trauma, reflexivity includes having awareness around inconsistencies and divisions within your own schema systems, as well as imbalances and overweighting of associations. Examples of exercises in reflexivity include transference dialogues (Romanyshyn, 2010), lyrical writing, and reflective journaling. These can be combined with critical or

alchemical heuristics (Romanyshyn, 2010) to analyse tacit symbolic associations and assumptions that are present in your psyche and reflected in your writing and practice.

5.4.2 Creation Map

Through my research I have identified key features of the methods above in relation to their strengths and utility at different stages in the creative process. This learning has been synthesised in this creation map. The map is presented in a suggested chronology, but the order of the stages (barring the last 2) can be moved to adapt to the shifting needs of your process. Note that this framework is specifically designed around the question of creating new meanings in the face of the incongruent and hyperprecise schemas of trauma. There are other ethical considerations around working with trauma like trust-building and participant safeguarding which are part of my practice but are outside the scope of this research. My thesis also refers to 'dramaturgical clarity,' but does not present value judgments on how this is to be defined as this, too, is bespoke to the methods of each practitioner and outside the scope of my research. As such, this map should not be treated as a standalone creation method, but rather should be used in combination with other methods and processes which take both mental health and devising dramaturgy into account.

Generative Play: A period of expansive multimodal play to start a project. Create improvisation exercises to work in transposition with objects, images, dialogues, and physical tableau to combine and manipulate various meanings which relate to the themes or stories you are exploring. Combine this with discussion to understand how cast are constructing meanings, and which themes are collectively experienced as most salient to pursue. Be generative in this period, creating several images and scene snippets.

Reflectivity – Polarisation and Emotional Charge: During generative play, look out for themes that when approached from different modal angles provoke different responses. Also be attuned to traumatic images or stuck points which create fixation by activating contradicting action systems, and images which cause avoidance or emotional overwhelm. These imply meaning schemas which are dissociated by multimodal action systems; a multimodal approach, like devised embodied theatre, may be a uniquely suited method of facilitating new-meaning creation at these sites. In the case strong triggers, make decisions—ideally collectively—about which of these themes should be avoided altogether, and which themes should be brought into the room in a tolerable way through mediation.

Initial Mediated Play: Where appropriate and wanted, use mediation at points of fixation and/or emotional charge to selectively amplify and mute different aspects of the image, to facilitate multimodal play. Examples of this include amplifying or muting the horrifying or humanising aspects of a traumatic image; or approaching a triggering story variously through music, movement, poetry, tableau, and storytelling.

Curation and Construction: Make decisions about which snippets from the generative play period you would like to incorporate into the performance. Start with points of agreement, building the bones of the piece from the snippets which everyone considers significant. At this stage, central themes and key dramaturgical stuck points will begin to emerge as the focus turns to the overall shape of the wider narrative.

Reflexivity – Hyper-precision and Over-association: Before committing to a central theme or narrative, conduct reflexivity exercises to understand the tacit assumptions and associations which are driving the transpositions which shape your work.

Mediated Dramaturgy: As the imbalances of hyper-precise schemas on the story becomes clear, reflect on whether these imbalances inhibit the story, or if they form part of the story. Also consider what's missing or being overlooked due to these imbalances, and whether there are additional ideas or themes which need to be included in the narrative. Mute or amplify these imbalances in the dramaturgical structure of the piece as needed.

Focused Mediated Play: As the central themes and stuck points in your project take shape, conduct multimodal play that is targeted to explore these. This stage requires investing resource in material and design elements that can be physically instead of abstractly explored. It also requires an investment of time to explore avenues that may feel dramaturgically irrelevant to semantically-dominant stakeholders, or to self-parts that wish to 'solve' the dramaturgy more efficiently through a unimodal approach like scripting. My recommendation is to plan and budget for this stage at the outset of your project.

Consolidation and Rehearsal: Consolidate the piece into a production score and rehearse for presentation. It is useful to resist pressures to consolidate the production score before all previous stages have been undertaken.

Reflexivity – Groundwork for Future Projects: Conduct dramaturgical analysis to reveal any new meanings made, and to identify muddiness and unresolved juxtapositions. This learning can help to facilitate further new-meaning creation in subsequent theatre projects.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Research Summary

This Practice-as-Research inquiry aimed to develop and articulate a directorial theatre practice which creates new meanings in contexts of trauma, informed by a second-generation cognitive science approach to 'meaning' and 'trauma'. The problem that this sought to address was grounded in my own past experience as a multimodal theatre director creating devised theatre productions which respond to traumatic themes. Despite my anecdotal experience of trauma survivors identifying the symbolic, embodied, and metaphorical aspects of my productions as 'transformative' and 'meaningful', I struggled to find clear articulations of how new meaning is constructed multimodally through theatre in specific relation to the 'new meanings' needed to integrate and reframe the fractured and incoherent narratives of trauma. This research sought to address this gap by exploring meaning-making in my own practice through a second-generation cognitive science lens. Drawing on the three-year process of critically developing this practice, I offer recommendations to other devisors in similar roles through a 'Points of Departure' document which describes key methods and provides a suggested creation process and chronology.

The critical framework was built from two definitions drawn from second-generation cognitive science: the first a definition for 'meaning' as defined by Andy Clark (2015) grounded in predictive processing, and the second a definition of 'trauma' as provided by Ellert Nijenhuis' (2017) enactive trauma theory. Through an analysis of the critical framework I arrived at four key variables necessary for transforming meaning schemas to create new meaning in contexts of trauma. These were: multimodal symbolisation, salience, dual awareness, and embodied

action. Through a review of theory and practice at the intersection of cognitive theatre studies and trauma and performance studies, I identified four correlated theatre techniques which were well-placed to influence these variables. These were: transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play.

My methodological approach was grounded in Robin Nelson's (2012) multi-mode dialogic approach supported by methodological frameworks for reflexive research and practice grounded in Haseman and Mafe (2009) and Romanyshyn (2010). Through my methodology I triangulated researcher reflexivity, semantically dominant cognition, and experientially dominant cognition. I achieved this by undertaking two projects: *First Response,* a play with retired first responders who had worked through the Troubles supported by young people from the University of Ulster, which I approached from the semantically dominant perspective as a director-facilitator unaffected by the piece's themes; and *Amaterasu*, a play with professional artists exploring East Asian myths, family relationships, and migrant experience, which I approached from the experientially dominant perspective of devising-director directly affected by the piece's themes. Through both productions I employed—and interrogated—the four methods I identified as tools for meaning making. I additionally employed researcher-reflexivity, primarily through Romanyshyn's Wounded Researcher methodology, to track the tacit transpositions and assumptions taking place in my work.

Contributions to Knowledge

Overall, my research evidences the way that new-meaning creation through schema co-updating and transformation is possible through multimodal forms of theatre practice which respond to trauma. This is original research, which uses SGCS to reframe and build upon

existing practice to elucidate multimodal meaning-making within this area through recent developments in cognitive science. The application of this critical frame also connects existing theory in cognitive theatre studies to research and practice responding to trauma. In this way, my research triangulates with and generates new knowledge across these two important areas of performance scholarship, building from this to develop an informed directorial practice that rigorously considers both 'meaning' and 'trauma'.

My research evidenced three patterns in relation to meaning in contexts of trauma which are particularly relevant to devising theatre practitioners which were: a link between emotion and multimodal explorations of traumatic themes; the existence of 'stuck points' at incongruent meaning frameworks which caused fixation and were difficult to resolve; and the over-association of trauma-related schemas with other meaning frameworks throughout our devising process. These patterns caused shifts in my understanding of trauma throughout the course of my research. I began my research wanting to develop a theatre practice capable of creating 'new narratives' through theatre which created transformative meaning in the wake of the incoherent or fractured narratives of trauma. The connection between multimodality and arousal, alongside the discovery of stuck points between conflicted embodied action systems— both of which occurred during *First* Response—shifted my focus from narrative trauma theory to embodied cognition and a schema-based approach early in my research. Further reflexive practice in *Amaterasu* revealed how these same irresolvable dynamics of fixation manifested in much more conceptually and semantically complex schema-systems. It also demonstrated the way that over-association at the level of specific meaning schemas could cause dramaturgical muddiness in a piece's wider narrative story. These findings in *Amaterasu* brought me full circle to some of my early questions around narrative, bringing an SGCS and

schema-based perspective to understanding the relationship between trauma and narrative incoherence.

My practice has developed through this perspective to be more nuanced and multimodally responsive in its work with both participants and artists in contexts of trauma. It is more dually-aware and dynamic in working with incongruent schema systems across diverse cognitive and expressive modalities. Specific tools that I have identified and articulated through the research are transposition, mediation, juxtaposition, and play. I have developed further learning around reflexive practice from research, and how this can be applied to directorial practice. The new knowledge created around these methods includes the following:

- My research on play shifted my understanding and clarified its function as a method of working with two sets of affordances at the same time—the affordances of what an object could do manually, and what it could mean conceptually.

- Through mediation I demonstrated that sensate and amplified staging could be equally applied to represent experiences of healing as they were used to represent experiences of trauma. At the same time, the utility of mediation through my research shifted from being primarily a tool of representation for audiences, to a rehearsal-room tool which facilitated emotion regulation for members of the creative team, and dialogue between dissociated or competing meaning systems.

- An analysis of the juxtapositions I understood as 'stuck' vs. 'meaningful' revealed a tacit drive to bring two contrasting meaning-systems into a new transformative relationship which fundamentally changed each. While I found that not all juxtapositions succeeded in doing this, attempting to do so was still fruitful because where it did not succeed in creating new meaning, it still helped to identify traumatic schisms which could be addressed in later work.

- An examination of transposition helped me to understand its role in facilitating play. I also experienced first-hand how hyperprecise schemas were over-associated with other schemas through transposition. Given how much transposition occurred as part of a professional devising process in contrast to work with non-professionals, this revealed a unique vulnerability to over-association of traumatic images for professionals working on personally traumatic themes.

- The research further indicates how the reflexivity of Romanyshyn's transference dialogues could be employed, not only as a research tool but also as a devising method. This was most useful for identifying hyperprecise priors and resultant imbalances in the transpositions employed throughout the creative process.

Recommendations for Practice

I have embedded key learning from my research into a pair of practical tools for theatre devisors in the form of a devising toolkit and creation map, which are presented in Chapter 5. The devising toolkit presents the 4 methods listed above, and the creation map outlines key stages in the process of devising theatre that seeks to create new meaning in context of trauma. In the creation map I advise alternating between stages of play, reflexivity, and mediation. I also recommend that practitioners allocate sufficient time, budget, and logistical support to a process of focused mediated play late in the process in which stuck points and central themes are transposed onto physical materials, movement vocabularies, and other design elements to be multimodally explored. My research finds that the critical reflection which occurs "beyond the theatrical frame" (Wallis and Duggan, 2011, p. 8) can help to identify new stuck points to address in future practice, but that it is within contexts of multimodal narrative-building and

embodied action—including subsequent theatre productions—that conflicted multimodal schema systems are most effectively 'worked through'.

Limitations of the Study

A central limitation of the study, outlined in the methodology, is that to map the dynamism of the various types of cognition and expressive modalities used in theatre, it was necessary for me to differentiate between them. To do this I was required to draw upon language that may be inconsistent or simplistic in relation to the latest cognitive science, as this was the language that was pragmatically useful for interrogating the specific practices that are considered in my research.

An additional limitation is that, as a cross-disciplinary, multimodal research project, the inquiry required a broad focus throughout. This limited the time available to pursue specific avenues more deeply, even as opportunities for further exploration became clear. This was especially true in the case of *Amaterasu* when I identified stuck points in the narrative—and their conflicted modally dominant action systems—after the conclusion of the rehearsal process. I therefore did not have an opportunity to explore the way that disagreements in meaning were navigated in the absence of a pre-existing shared metaphor or meaning point.

A central limitation of *First Response* was the inability to explore individual traumas and traumatic images in great depth, due largely to the cross-community ensemble format and the sensitivities of working with traumatised people who had very different experiences of the conflict. In *Amaterasu,* some potentially fruitful areas of exploration were also shut down, due to boundaries around traumatic triggers, and the professional consensus not to overstep these.

A final limitation in both projects came through external production pressures, which were sometimes obstacles to creating new moments through multimodal play. In *First Response* the ability to physically explore a solution to the pile of boxes was curtailed by stakeholder expectations, and production timescales and norms. In *Amaterasu,* limited funding and the pressure of a public performance saw me self-inflicting many of the same restrictions that I encountered previously, including the imperative to script the piece through a top-down verbally rooted process.

Future Research Directions

In light of the limitations presented above, there are three key areas of study in particular that deserve deeper exploration. The first is exploring how devising theatremakers navigate cross-modal incoherence across cognitive modes during rehearsal. Dissociation between cognitive systems has been considered in CTS literature; recall Blair's (2010, p. 14) assertion that actors in training "can stay stuck in the text's semantic realm and fail to move fully into the experiential." While this overlaps with my own research around accessing and connecting more deeply with less integrated cognitive domains in the multimodal construction of theatre, it does not address the question of what we do as practitioners when our cognitively different networks actively disagree, proposing meanings that are incongruent or conflicting. Future practice-as-research could aim to identify these stuck points (or irresolvable juxtapositions) early, leaving more time to explore techniques for navigating these through transposition, mediation, and play.

The second area is working in a multimodal way with one individual, or a group of professionals supporting one participant or performer, to explore their personally traumatic

images in depth. Future research could interrogate the mutual updating and transformation of meaning schemas with more rigour were it to focus its exploration on one or two specific trauma images and fixations.

The third and final area is working with a group to collectively create new complex conceptual meanings through material action and play at a later stage in the rehearsal process, after the central themes and conflicts had been identified. This could be done through a collective engagement with a transposed object (like the boxes representing boxed-up memory), or movement vocabulary (like flexing/melting representing form/formlessness), working together physically to find an embodied, non-rational solution to a metaphorical problem. In future research, a well-resourced exploration through an embodied play period late in the process could help to elucidate how significant new meaning can be created multimodally in relation to central questions of the piece.

Beyond these three explicit areas, there were also some themes that emerged as interesting avenues for future exploration. These are only cursorily linked to my findings as presented, but they are worth mentioning in light of how heavily they featured in association-mapping exercises, as well as their consideration for inclusion in past PhD drafts. They are:

1) The relationship between individual and collective meaning-making: this was a theme that appeared in various guises through the work. In *First Response* the overall focus of the group often shifted between social education and healing, and personal transformation. In *Amaterasu* I was keenly aware that while my focus was on my own internal schisms and imbalances and how these were contributing to the process, I was also aware of the way that meanings needed to be shared for a production to 'make sense'. I was also aware of the way that ensemble devising helped to correct imbalances

of single-author work because collaborators could point out or redress one another's blind spots. I chose to focus principally on the individual director's perspective to gain a deeper understanding of directorial practice, but I would have liked to have had the time to take a more rigorous approach to the distributed aspect of cognition.

2) The relationship between Western and non-Western approaches to meaning-making, and its connection to theatre aesthetics, particularly in relation to bicultural artists: In early PhD drafts I expended a great deal of energy arguing against Cartesian approaches to meaning, and making the case for a holistic approach to meaning-making in theatre, grounding these arguments in Eastern concepts and philosophies. As I focussed my research through the lens of self-organisation through schemas, I began to focus less on the objective argument for a holistic approach, and instead shifted focus to examine the subjectivity of my experience as a bicultural (and conflicted) Eastern/Western person. This revealed a paradox: while my thesis and arguments drove towards holism, the theatrical languages employed in my work were often bifurcated and fractured along rational/symbolic lines. In my thesis this is only examined in the context of my unique self-organisation as an individual and is not extended further. The anecdotal similarities between my own conflicted modally-dominant schema systems and that of my collaborators bears noting, however. The idea that bicultural identities (and schisms) are borne out in our creative work is also supported by Bayley's (2014) finding around 'duel heritage' artists and their need for a multi-vocal approach to theatre.

3) The relationship between multimodal integration and trauma integration: a link between these is never asserted (or evidenced) in my research, as trauma integration and healing are explicitly outside the scope of my PaR. There is, however, a tacit assumption that this link exists, and that the 'new multimodal meaning' of theatre can bring new embodied and symbolic frameworks to actors and audiences alike which pave avenues

for trauma integration and healing. This assumption has acted as an engine for this exploration since this project's inception. While I am not a dramatherapist, I would welcome a rigorous transposition of this research into the field of multimodal trauma therapy. My hope is that I've provided some useful frameworks upon which theatre practitioners and dramatherapists alike might fruitfully play.

Figure 6.1

Amaterasu: Out of the Cave cast and creative team © 2021 Alexander Newton

In February of this year, I will be taking up the post of Artistic Director of New Earth Theatre, a national touring theatre company that places British East and Southeast Asian artists and communities at the heart of its work. As I look forward, I am most excited by the opportunity to embed the knowledge gained through this inquiry into my own practice; a practice which aims to create multimodally and multiculturally integrated new theatre to transform artists, audiences, and the British theatre landscape. Each project will undoubtedly present new stuck points and stumbling blocks. But as my Rwandan collaborators taught me in 2012, there will always be another Chance to make a new story.

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Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
SGCS	Second Generation Cognitive Science	5
TPS	Trauma and Performance Studies	5
CTS	Cognitive Theatre Studies	5
PaR	Practice as Research	6
PP	Predictive Processing	28
DID	Dissociative Identity Disorder, *formerly multiple personality disorder.*	33

Appendix B: Multimodal Meaning-Making in Early Trauma Theories

Multimodal cognitive process was not a mainstream idea at the time that psychological trauma was originally articulated. While it is now widely accepted that different areas or networks in the brain process information in unique and differentiated ways (Ramachandran, 2012), at the time that trauma was originally theorised, thinking was closely linked with narrative verbal expression. As a result, Freud and his contemporaries connected the somatic and symbolic expressions in the wake of trauma to a subconscious part of the psyche (Freud, 1912). This, they theorised, had to be abreacted or outwardly expressed in order to be integrated into conscious narrative memory, which they considered to be in the remit of the verbal and rational sphere (Breuer & Freud, 1955; 2009). This was true even as it became clear that non-rational cognitive process was often necessary to facilitate trauma integration, and techniques were actively developed to achieve this. As Janet pointed out, traumatic information emerged "sometimes through reasoning or more frequently through association" (Heim & Bu̇hler, 2006, p. 113); and Freud emphasised the importance of free association in abreacting trauma because of its ability to "break across the continuity of a consecutive narrative" (Freud, 1953, p. 251). In other words, Freud valued free association not for its cognitive new-meaning potential, but rather, for its ability to bypass rational meaning structures which he theorised were repressing traumatic memory from coming into awareness.

Some early ideas around differentiated brain process in the construction of new meaning did emerge in this period, however. Jung's work (1915; 2014) was especially foundational in articulating the ways that our brains can construct meaning in multimodal ways, especially through metaphor and symbol. He drew on the thinking of William James (1890, 1994) to

distinguish between "fantasy thinking" and "directed thinking". The former is imagistic and associative, while the later is logical, analytical, and scientific (Jung, 2014). Sandor Ferenczi— another of Freud's proteges—sustained a line of inquiry rooted in the embodied experience and processing of trauma, writing: "When the psychic system fails, the organism begins to think" (Ferenczi, 1995, p.5). A critical difference between Freud and Ferenczi's theory of trauma was that Freud came to believe that traumatic memories were actively repressed, whereas Ferenczi believed that "no memory traces of [traumatic] impressions remain, even in the unconscious, and thus the causes of the trauma cannot be recalled from memory traces" (Ferenczi, 1931 p.240). This led to widely different theories around how to access traumas to reintegrate them later, with Ferenczi emphasising the importance of accessing and transforming traumatic meaning systems through embodied repetition. Ferenczi brought this 'physical thinking' directly into his practice, pioneering a therapeutic methodology which emphasised the need for the therapist to take an empathetic approach to client relationship, physically being the reparative attachment figure instead of just analytically discussing the client's psyche (Mucci, 2017; Rachman, 1997). Ferenczi actively critiqued Freud's "purely intellectual" therapeutic approach, inferring that trauma could not be integrated through a wholly rational approach to understanding and transforming meaning. This idea has been variously articulated by psychoanalysts since, notably Lacan, who found many springheads for his early work in Ferenczi's writings, and noted: "interpreting is an altogether different thing from having the fancy of understanding. One is the opposite of the other. I will even say that it is on the basis of a certain refusal of understanding that we open the door onto psychoanalytic understanding" (Felman, 1988, p. 99).

These nascent articulations of brain process and their cognitively different access points through which to integrate trauma are reflected in the way that approaches to trauma therapy

are broadly divided today, with most approaches falling into rational / verbal, symbolic / metaphorical, and somatic / embodied categories.

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Appendix C: Multimodal Meaning-Making in Second Generation Cognitive Studies

Our understanding of multimodal brain process has progressed rapidly over the last century, and cognitive scientists can now return to and expand upon Jung and Ferenczi's early ideas around 'fantasy thinking' and 'the thinking body' in neurobiological terms. Sperry and Gazzaniga's split-brain experiments in the 1950s evidenced the existence of imagistic cognitive processes that can operate independently of verbal / narrative processes (Gazzaniga, 1995), and further research in affective neuroscience and embodied cognition has evidenced the way that all abstract cognition is grounded in and informed by sensory body-based schemas and emotions (Davidson & Sutton, 1995; Foglia & Wilson, 2013). Conscious non-verbal motor process has also been documented using EEG measures, particularly in high-level athletes (Parr, Gallicchio, & Wood, 2021). The concept of the unconscious is also empirically supported by several experiments which evidence the role of unconscious cognition in learning, analysing, and decision making (Libet, Gleason, Wright, & Pearl, 1993; Ramachandran & Gregory, 1991; Saporta, 2003). However, unconscious cognition has been evidenced across a range of brain processes, including language processing (Wu & Thierry, 2012). Coupled with the evidence of conscious non-verbal process, these findings paint a more complex picture of unconscious and conscious cognition in multimodal brain process. Critically, they challenge early psychoanalytic conceptions which connect verbal narrative cognition to the conscious self, and associative and somatic process with the subconscious.

First generation cognitive science considers the mind to be an abstract processor—like a computer—independent of its specific brain, body, and environment. By contrast, second-

generation cognitive studies foregrounds the embodied, embedded, and distributed nature of cognitive process, and by extension, of meaning-making (Clark, 2017). According to embodied cognition, all methods of constructing and interpreting meanings are constrained by—and grounded in—our bodies and the way they perceive. As Johnson (2008) explains:

> …meaning is not just what is consciously entertained in acts of feeling and thought; instead, meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment. ... At some point, these meanings-in-the-making ("proto-meanings" or "immanent meanings," if you will) can be consciously appropriated, and it is only then that we typically think of something as 'meaningful to us'.
>
> [p. 25]

Both immanent and explicit meanings from one cognitive modality can translate and map to other modes through 'cross-modal abstraction' and 'cross-modal association', the cognitive processes that operate at the base of metaphor and schema formation (Ramachandran, 2012). In this way, all meanings—even abstract meanings formed in language—are sensory insofar as they are experienced in connection with the sensorimotor information that ground our understanding of that language (Barsalou, Niedenthal, Barbey, & Ruppert, 2003; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Objects and environments are also understood through an active physical relationship, as opposed to a purely abstract and conceptual one. Cognition is 'embedded' insofar as our embodied cognitive processes are constrained by—and therefore partly constituted by—the environments that our organisms are embedded in. Objects and environments are understood subjectively through their 'affordances', what we—with our own bodies and its specific limitations—can actively do with them (Gibson, 1979). Finally, cognition is 'distributed' between people as well as external artefacts and cultural systems for

interpreting reality (Hutchins, 1995). All cognitive processes are evolving, nested, and laterally connected through a complex web of meaning-schemas which respond to the environment through the active body (Clark, 2015). Through 'conceptual blending' (Fauconnier & Turner, 2008) words, images, and ideas combine to make new emergent meanings through the juxtaposition of existing conceptual structures.

This centring of the physical body creates new avenues for cognitive science to engage with psychotherapeutic trauma theory, and the question of how traumatic meanings are transformed through non-rational cognitive process. As Claudia Scorolli (2019) notes, affective and embodied cognitive sciences are now "converging on themes that traditionally belonged to psychoanalytical approaches…the bodily self, intersubjectivity, unconscious, and prosodic-affective quality of verbal communication" (p. 2). A growing body of research and practice investigates the intersection between trauma, psychotherapy, and second generation cognition including body psychotherapy (Rohricht, Gallagher, Geuter, & Hutto, 2014), neuropsychoanalysis (Berlin, 2011; Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2018), Horowitz's model for self-organisation (Horowitz, 2014), sensorimotor approaches to trauma (Ogden, Pain, & Fisher, 2006), and enactive trauma therapy (Nijenhuis, 2017). There is also a small but growing body of scholarship considering trauma through more recent frameworks in 2nd generation cognition including consciousness neuroscience and predictive processing (Edwards, Adams, Brown, Pareés, & Friston, 2012; Kube, Berg, Kleim, & Herzog, 2020; Wilkinson, Dodgson, & Meares, 2017).

A key distinction in the way that trauma is articulated in 2nd generation cognitive science is that traumatic experience is seen to result in maladaptive symbolisation which creates dissociation of the personality and conflict between self-parts (Edwards et al., 2012). Enactive

approaches to trauma are built upon neuroscience research which evidences the active role of schema-based processing and conceptualisation in sensory perception. The emphasise that what we conventionally think of a 'subject' and 'object' are co-arising, so that: "Organisms do not passively receive information from their environments, which they then translate into internal representations…They participate in the generation of meanings through their bodies" (Di Paolo, Rohde, & De Jaegher, 2010, p. 39). As such, enactive trauma therapies posit that some form of symbolic process is constitutively embedded in all perceptive experience, and consider trauma to be a site of maladaptive symbolisation. The focus of these therapies is the updating and transformation of these maladaptive meaning schemas through attentional focus and new embodied response (Nijenhuis, 2017). This contrasts with psychoanalytic trauma theory which defines trauma by an absence of symbolisation—or structures of meaning—inscribing the traumatic experience. In this way, 2nd generation cognition eschews any binaries resulting from the idea of a post-traumatic symbolic narrative, contrasted with a primary traumatic experience, or 'truth'.

A related distinction is the way that conscious and subconscious thought are delineated in this field. Whereas psychoanalytic trauma theory connects non-rational process like somatisations and non-verbal symbolic expression to 'the subconscious', in second generation cognitive studies, phenomenological awareness—as opposed to cognitive modality—is the determining factor for differentiating between conscious and subconscious thought. Consciousness neuroscientist Anil Seth draws on phenomenology to define consciousness as "any kind of subjective experience whatsoever" (Seth, 2021, p. 20). In this way, it is considered that non-rational expressions which are phenomenologically experienced are just as 'conscious' as phenomenologically accessible verbal thought.

Approaches to trauma which are founded in somatic and symbolic process have drawn on second generation cognitive theories to become more nuanced, incorporating a deeper understanding of the way that we use cognitive schemas to construct meaning in non-verbal ways. Many theatre- and performance-based trauma therapies have adopted these frameworks, and embodied meaning-making is a key feature in current discussions in dramatherapy (Dokter, 2016; Emunah, 2019; Jones, 2008). Specific examples of research that connects performance-based therapies to second generation cognition include the schema- and play-based practice of developmental transformations therapy (Rosen, Pitre, & Johnson, 2016), Scorolli's (2019) analysis of psychodrama through the lens embodied cognition, and Koch & Fischmann's (2011) work connecting enactive cognition and dance movement therapy.

Ideas around non-rational meaning-making are also being incorporated into trauma therapies more broadly. Therapists working in talking therapy approaches are more aware of how meaning is constructed and conveyed through metaphor, imagery, and embodied action as well as through verbal story. As an example, Philip Barnard and John Teasdale created a multilevel concept of the mind called "Interacting Cognitive Subsystems" which emphasises the importance of "a schematic synthetic level of processing that integrates both propositional meaning and direct sensory contributions" (Barnard & Teasdale, 1991, p. 1). This concept has served as a grounding framework for "third wave" cognitive behavioural therapy approaches, notably mindfulness CBT (Romanowska & Dobroczyński, 2021).

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Appendix D: Examples of Wounded Researcher Reflexivity

D.1 Transference Dialogues: Dialoguing Archetypes

D.1.1 A Conversation Between Amaterasu and Susanoo

The following transference dialogue between Amaterasu (A) and Susanoo (S) was created during the first R&D workshop in 2020:

A: Susanoo, you're embarrassing yourself

S: Oh ho!

A: Ok you're embarrassing me then. Stop.

S: Oh so I should change.

A: No?

S: No one heard my orphan cries

        Too base for regal ears

        Too blunt to pierce

        Your mufflered austerity

        Your regal governance

        Your shiny skies all high and mighty

Look down on me then will you

At my poverty of sunlight

My zero-hours respite

My 9-to-5-to-9-to-5-ing

Stacks of Billowing Rage.

Look down on me and tell me

I was born to be anything different

A: You were born a god

S: Snot God. Half Holy.

A: A God, it's written.

S: Nothing is written.

        You could come out.

        You could re-write all of this.

A: You cannot be my daughter and I cannot be your

        sun-light, burn bright, drown the night

        like your waters breaking prematurely

        on my eroding coastlines

        because my retreat, like your advance

        is as inevitable

        as refugees in lonely caves, mossy walls,

as lichen, life-boats, lockdown

my role, too, is written.

In the Kojiki

In the history of our homeland--

S: —In your mind—

A: —It is written.

S: But in the Shingyo

In our heartbeat—

A: —Not our own—

S: —Our *borrowed* heartbeat

It says everything is borrowed

It says nothing is written

It says Wu-Shu was Shaolin was Shito Ryu

And from *there* came Karate

An empty hand

Reaching across nothing

To grab nothing

To hold nothing

To write nothing.

Gently held by sweet, sweet nothing.

Like an unlucky generation strapped to ventilators

You're strapped to a role that was never written for you

That was never written at all

A ripple in time travel

A flash in the pan-pipes

A story for its time to let it go.

(Ama/Emiko draws herself upright, "in role". Sus/Aya sniggers)

Behold!

The Child Carer!

The martyr mother!

The authentic Asian!

A: Stop it

S: Let it go

A: But then what do I have.

S: I told you. What I've always had

       Nothing. Sweet, eternally forgiving

       Eternally shifting

       Nothing.

As part of reflexive practice, at the time of writing I also noted the stylistic and thematic aspects

of the dialogue that felt relevant for the production:

Epic language –

Lockdown austerity -

Shifting between epic and domestic.

Mix of styles

Text became poetic

Use of repetition. Grounding

An infiltration – A mash up situation when a culture clash.

Doesn't need to be resolved.

Gods can be anything

Humanising Gods.

Paradigms of Human relationships.

D.1.2 Alchemical Heuristics: Association Mapping Exercise

Through Alchemical Heuristics, I revisited this writing in 2023 to map the tacit associations

being made through my practice:

A: Susanoo, you're embarrassing yourself

S: Oh ho!

A: Ok you're embarrassing me then. Stop. ←Susanoo as acting embarrassing.

S: Oh so I should change. ←Susanoo as immutably an embarrassment

A: No?

S: No one heard my orphan cries ← parentless / disconnected from mother

Too base for regal ears ← Base / regal

Too blunt to pierce ←can't penetrate

Your mufflered austerity

Your regal governance ← link to government / rejection from conservative British

culture / class / wealth. A contradiction, only united by cultural rejection schema

Your shiny skies all high and mighty

Look down on me then will you ← Above / below

At my poverty of sunlight ←wealth as both money and connection / warmth.

My zero-hours respite

My 9-to-5-to-9-to-5-ing

Stacks of Billowing Rage. ← industrial / factory work, wage slavery, climate

Look down on me and tell me

I was born to be anything different ← immutable self

A: You were born a god ← suggests completeness

S: Snot God. Half Holy. ←suggests fracture.

A: A God, it's written. ←the materiality of story / form / myth

S: Nothing is written. ← Buddhism / Hanya Shingyo

You could come out. ← connection / repair

You could re-write all of this. ←the mutability of story / form / myth

A: You cannot be my daughter and I cannot be your ←aware of confused role mother/sister

sun-light, burn bright, drown the night ←can't remove his pain.

like your waters breaking prematurely

on my eroding coastlines ← Connects Susanoo to climate catastrophe

because my retreat, like your advance

is as inevitable ← referencing anxious / avoidant attachment dynamics

as refugees in lonely caves, mossy walls,

as lichen, life-boats, lockdown ←connects conflict in human interpersonal dynamics to

conflict in wider social dynamics

my role, too, is written. ← Amaterasu's actions are inscribed in myth

In the Kojiki

In the history of our homeland-- ←external story schemas

S: —In your mind— ←internal schemas

A: —It is written. ←return to the form, to the myth in the Kojiki / Animism. Look there.

S: But in the Shingyo

In our heartbeat— ←escape all form. Go to Shingyo / Buddhism. Look there.

A: —Not our own— ← Acknowledges she is not human. An element, a projection

S: —Our *borrowed* heartbeat ←borrowed / projected from humans

It says everything is borrowed

It says nothing is written

It says Wu-Shu was Shaolin was Shito Ryu ←first Chinese, no cultural purity

And from *there* came Karate ←culture is mutable / shifting

An empty hand ←literally "kara" – empty, "te" - hand

Reaching across nothing

To grab nothing

To hold nothing

To write nothing. ←futility of creative practice

Gently held by sweet, sweet nothing. ←blissful escape from all forms of representation

Like an unlucky generation strapped to ventilators ← covid

You're strapped to a role that was never written for you ← archetype projected onto a

person (mom). Too much significance.

That was never written at all

A ripple in time travel ← insignificant links to momentary pasts

A flash in the pan-pipes ←greek myths / wider myths

A story for its time to let it go. ← let go of impossible roles

(Ama/Emiko draws herself upright, "in role". Sus/Aya sniggers)

Behold!

The Child Carer! ← burdened sibling

The martyr mother! ←burdened mother

The authentic Asian! ← unattainable ideal

A: Stop it

S: Let it go ← let go of schemas

A: But then what do I have. ←who am I without them

S: I told you. What I've always had

Nothing. Sweet, eternally forgiving

Eternally shifting

Nothing. ← Buddhist ideal / enlightenment.

Central Concepts, Associations, and Conflicts

- Human dynamics: anxious / avoidant attachment patterns; scalability of emotion and the way these interpersonal conflicts translate to wider social conflicts.
- Susanoo connected to cultural impurity and dislocation, Amaterasu connected to authentic Asian-ness.
- Humans and Emotions in relation to God / Archetypal Elements: Do we use humans to describe gods, or elements to describe internal dynamics? Covid and Climate Crises connected to interpersonal rage.

- Immutability vs. constructed nature of schemas, story, character. As part of this, immutable self as fundamentally embarrassing vs. constructed self capable of filling prescribed cultural roles / norms.
- Form vs. No-Form, e.g. the Utility and wisdom of myths and archetypes. vs. Prison of myths and archetypes. The contrasting of the Kojiko (Animism) and the Hanya Shingyo (Buddhism). Amaterasu arguing to use the myth to facilitate transformation, Susanoo is advocating letting go of form entirely, Susanoo is desperate to flee the restriction and associations of the archetypal projections and expectations, and the resultant existential pain, in this way closely connected to EP prototype.

Areas of Muddiness:

- Amaterasu as Sun god speaking for the utility and permanence of myth but Amaterasu as attachment archetype trying to shed her role as 'the sun' to Susanoo, (and trying to be freed of 'being' the mother).
- Amatersu as both mother and sibling

D.2 Writing with Soul in Mind: Lyrical Writing Exercise

The following is an example of "writing with soul in mind", in which I allowed associations and metaphors to enter the writing more freely. My original intension was to include sections of this writing in my exegesis to dialogue with the more semantically-oriented style of the rest of the thesis. This proved complicated due to the sheer number of nested and laterally connected associations which were present in both the practice and my freer-form reflection upon it, so in the interest of delimiting my research I excluded these portions of writing, choosing instead to draw relevant learning from them to inform my specific research questions.

My hope going into this PhD was to come out understanding the ways that trauma affected a creative process, and to be able to create more playful and modally integrated rehearsal rooms to build new multimodal theatre narratives in the face of traumatic incoherence.

I have emerged from this process with a couple of very simple tools, a much deeper appreciation for the cross-modal playfulness of metaphor, and a fascination for the fast and messy way that our brains are continually reaching across networks, modules, and domains to cobble together new meanings out of old models. Considering how much effort we put into being coherent and precise, it's hilarious (and a bit terrifying) to consider the fact that our contribution to both art and academia might be grounded in the floorplan of a childhood home, or a lay understanding of fractals, or the shape of a first embrace. My arbitrary tripartite division of talking/symbolising/moving is as crude as id/ego/superego; reptilian/limbic/neocortex; father/son/holy ghost (seriously, what is it with threes?). But to think anything, to say anything, you need to start with these absurdly simplistic shapes and sensations and images and objects. A house with four rooms for conceptual blending. Two wildy different surfaces for transposition. A disfigured mob of nested and cascading Russian dolls for meaning-making.

I have emerged, also, with a deeper confidence in the way that our aesthetic and rational selves can—in most cases—work together and 'pull in the same direction', sometimes finding different pathways to a commonly aspired-to end point. This is enormously liberating. As someone whose play instinct is too often tempered by a sense of obligation to 'do meaningful work' (whatever that means), I've gained a few free passes to just "do a show for the heck of it" through the simple exercise of tracing a playful instinct back to the societal pressures that produced it.

I know the shape of volatile domestic disagreement. Of love-hate-love. Of broken dishes, of slammed-cracked door panes, of suddenly-small humans curled sobbing on the floor. I don't

know the shape of civil conflict. Of hate-hate-hate. Of warplanes, of strewn limbs, of burnt-out cement. These shapes always have been, and hopefully always will be, a mystery to me. So my contribution cannot speak to this devastation. My shapes only become useful when I can imagine the way that a traumatised brain is two people fighting. Two people who can help each other. Two people who just need to learn how to speak in each other's native tongue.

And this is a shape I can see everywhere. I can see it in my childhood and I can see it in my rehearsal rooms and I can see it in the structure of my plays and I can see it in way the British theatre landscape exists in aesthetic and cultural silos.

Reading through my rehearsal notes, an early entry from just after the first R&D jumps out at me:

> *Stew calls me a week later having penned a bit of text, a note of apology in his voice. "I hope I'm not stepping on anyone's toes but I've written and incorporated some of the movement". No, I assure him, I'm elated. Integration is the point. Intercalated text-image-sound-text would be a boring way to deliver the play.*

"Intercalated text-image-sound-text would be a boring way to deliver the play." Somehow knowing this, consciously entering a process where achieving modal integration lay at the heart of my research, I still managed to create a piece that was—with a few notable exceptions—presented in exactly that way.

In Derry, when Playhouse staff asked me to present a script, I was frustrated, feeling that more time to sit with the complexity and allow the script to form from the embodied play would result in a more modally integrated production. But in London, where the budget was in my hands and we had to deliver 2 performances at the Arcola in under 15k, I made the same call that Playhouse leadership did, working with the contributing playwright to create a dramaturgical frame that the rest of the cast could quickly assemble a piece around.

This is not, perhaps, so unexpected. The salient points about integration thus far have been that it takes time, attentional focus, the overlaying of conflicting meanings, conceptual blending, sitting with discomfort, and playing at the intersection, with all of this leading to the gradual updating of old meaning models and fabrication of new ones. But in any professional endeavour, time = money, and in every process there is a balancing act between tension (information) and coherence (organisation). This means the less time there is, the more organisation that will be needed. .

I realised as I moved through this process that I have quite a developed vocabulary for devising physical theatre—a structure for fast 'organisation'—that I share with other Lecoq artists, but this took us two years of shared training to build. What I don't have is a framework for devising across completely different skillsets and artforms. In the first Amaterasu R&D, it felt like we were only just beginning to develop a new shared language. But this language was nascent. We lost a much of this shared vocabulary when we lost half of the performing cast. So in the second rehearsal process leading to a show, I instinctively fell back on that old reliable organisational structure, that old meaning model, that old way of making sense: the script. Like a trauma survivor with hyper precise priors, when I needed to act fast, I wasn't able to break free of my habitual creative bracing patterns.

I came to *Amaterasu* with a whole new conceptual vocabulary developed during *First Response*, but no new method could magically generate the resource that we needed most: time. Time is the context in which everything can be explored, because nothing has to make 'sense' straightaway. In our second R&D we had just 5 days of rehearsal with the actors to build a nearly full-length show essentially from scratch. While I'm enormously proud of what we accomplished in that period, I feel on some level that I've failed in my mission to increase the dimensionality and possibility of *play*. I remember some of the most playful moments being the morning warmups before we got to 'work', while the team gently tumbled and stretched around the room, seeing what their bodies could do, to the meandering soundtrack of Nao's drums clacking and rumbling in the background.

Perhaps this is a failing of the research frame and methodology. Integration was the goal, then a performance shouldn't have been required on such a short timescale. But I wanted to conduct research that would be relevant to artists working in the UK, in 'real world' conditions. I wanted to understand my work in the context in which I practice. And this is the context. This is the reality. We had to compete to receive ACE funding, and our speed of turnaround and concrete audience numbers where what made the bid competitive, viable.

In an interview for a HowlRound article titled "The perpetual crises engulfing British theatre"[1], Migrants in Theatre core member Alex Istudor says:

> *It's weird because students in the UK are exposed to a lot of different acting styles in drama schools, yet all these styles rarely end up being incorporated in the mainstream. In this country no one has challenged or is interested in challenging the dominant acting style, which is a rather simplified and artificial form of naturalism, apart from a few companies like Forced Entertainment or Complicité.*

We need to (re)focus on communicating more with our bodies and movement and physical expressiveness. I am talking about a realistic genre of acting that takes the pressure off the spoken word and invests it in non-verbal communication, in playing the dramatic situation as opposed to playing the text.

If shows employing a rather artificial and simplified naturalistic acting style are happening on the leading stages of the nation, then what expectations can we have from the fringe, especially the non-producing houses—which, let's be honest, due to the fringe's precarity and focus on quantity, doesn't really allow artists to explore their craft properly. If you work with a non-producing house on the fringe, most of your energy goes into the non-artistic side of the work. You rarely get the chance to explore and develop the tools of your trade, so I understand why the fringe has become so word driven. However, places like the National Theatre can afford to rehearse for weeks in proper working conditions! Why are we seeing these simplified and uninteresting acting performances in the very places that can afford to explore that dimension of the theatre craft?

Maybe the issue is that the UK theatrical landscape is a bit stuck. Perhaps because, due to the historical political stability in the UK, theatre hasn't experienced any crises to get to a point where everything is questioned and interrogated, hence a certain status quo has always been preserved and not much has changed in the last fifty to sixty years? Especially in relation to the over-reliance of the spoken word as a way of communicating meaning.

I agree with Alex, that the UK theatrical landscape is 'a bit stuck'. I myself, have been a bit stuck. Even when I set out with the express intention of unsticking myself. Having a couple of friends who run buildings, and thereby some small insight into the way that buildings run, however, I can see how a feeling of 'crisis' is as endemic to that section of our industry as it is to the fringe.

So. Our whole industry is a bit stuck, and there's probably an interesting piece of research to be done on figuring out where it's stuck and how to unstick it. But I'm not one for finger pointing. At the base of it, we all need time. Getting that time in groups is expensive. But here I can employ my lay understanding of fractals: close my eyes, picture my brain, see a shape, the shape of two people fighting. Of love-hate-love. Cross-talking in different languages. If I can get these two to learn how to communicate, to collaborate, maybe even to play… then maybe I can build outwards from there.

[1] https://howlround.com/perpetual-crises-engulfing-british-theatre

D.3 Alchemical Heuristics: Reading for Schism

In Chapter 4 I discuss the way that I became aware of internal schism and the way that modally-oriented self-parts were functioning as partially dissociated action systems. In this section I present the reflexive analysis of early PhD drafts and reflective writing which contributed to this shift, and supported my findings in rehearsal that I was working with internally conflicted self-parts with different areas of modal dominance.

Reflecting on some of my early PhD drafts led me to an unanticipated finding, which was that some pieces of text constructed by my seemingly unified 'self' at different times contradicted one another. Furthermore, the conclusions that I arrived at through these writings were directly correlated with the 'mode' of imaginative activity that I had been engaged in at the time of writing. This finding, combined with the problems with locating a fixed 'self' led me to seek out the parts-based models of psyche outlined in my literature review.

In an early PhD draft, I dedicated a subsection to exploring the 'rational themes' and context that drove the 'irrational impulse' of creating a play with East Asian cultural forms. After reflecting on the grounding context (rational cause-and-event chain) that gave rise to this aesthetic impulse, I arrived at the following conclusion:

> *Hindsight helped me to see that what was originally experienced as an aesthetic impulse was grounded in—or even an expressive response to—the problems and questions that I had been grappling with on a more rational level. While I had anticipated finding an equal degree of 'sense' or meaning in the impulses coming from different cognitive domains, what I didn't anticipate was the degree of*

> *coherence between their fundamental goals. In this case, the value of the original*
>
> *impulse was situated not only in its aesthetic quality, but also in its empowerment of*
>
> *East Asian women and its rootedness in Japanese cultural forms. This finding built*
>
> *something akin to an internal felt sense of trust between self-parts, not only that*
>
> *various cognitive domains are equally meaningful, but that—when integrated—they*
>
> *can also be pulling in the same direction, as it were, seeking to achieve mutual aims,*
>
> *albeit in different ways.*
>
> *[A Conant, early PhD draft, March 2022]*

In the same PhD draft, another section which I wrote after considering more symbolically salient but rationally inaccessible aspects of the creative process concluded in the following paragraph:

> *On reflection, my focus on quickly achieving 'coherence' across cognitive domains resulted*
>
> *in a muddled ending which over-focused on trying to find a rational-level integration of the*
>
> *core ideas, before exploring and elucidating them through movement and visual metaphor.*
>
> *The critical lesson is that harmony exists in an acceptance of cross-modal incoherence and*
>
> *a deeper exploration of multimodality: the embodied meanings of the [Shinto and Buddhist]*
>
> *rituals are what can coexist, and where our starting point for exploration may have been*
>
> *most fruitful, even if the narrative meanings of their primary texts are logically incongruent.*
>
> *[A Conant, early PhD draft, March 2022]*

Both paragraphs were written with conviction, and both are aligned in their argument for trusting embodied and aesthetic approaches, but they contradict one another insofar as they 'speak from' a very different place. In the first excerpt I value the creative impulse through its

grounding in rational problems, saying this builds an 'internal felt sense of trust between self-parts'[97]. In the second excerpt, I am arguing against coherence, claiming that the rational interpreter got in the way, or at the very least got involved too soon. The difference in these conclusions is easier to understand if you consider them coming 'from' different self-parts. The 'rational interpreter' part is relieved to find that different aspects of the psyche can be: "pulling in the same direction…seeking to achieve mutual aims, albeit in different ways," while the experiential part resists being shoe-horned into a rational agenda, insisting "the critical lesson is that harmony exists in an acceptance of cross-modal incoherence and a deeper exploration of multimodality."

At the time of writing, both parts were engaged in the linguistically and rationally intricate cognitive task of reflecting on the practice-as-research and writing this into a PhD chapter. So the 'parts' that we are talking about are not restricted to a single cognitive domain or modality, even if they do seem to speak for—and be activated by—modally-specific cognitive process. In this way they resemble Horowitz's (2014) 'self-schemas' which can be adaptively activated to respond to specific environmental demands: "each individual has a latent repertoire which has multiple self-schemas. Different ones of these may be currently activated or left latent. The result is a variety of possible self-states" (p. 7).

Parts based therapeutic approaches posit that the selective employment of different parts or self-schemas is something that all do, for the most part unconsciously (J. Fisher, 2017; M. J. Horowitz, 2015; Schwartz & Sweezy, 2019). Our use of these schemas are guided by both internal meaning structures and "social contexts of immediacy" (Horowitz, 2015, p. 5). This is

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[97] This piece of critical reflection is in keeping with the main points I articulated in **Error! Reference source not found.** on page 95, indicating that this may have come from the same 'part' or self-state.

in keeping with articulations of 'self' from consciousness neuroscience. While the narrative self works to create a felt sense of unity to help steer action, Seth (ibid., pp. 197-198) stresses that this is not the same as being unified across time: "We are becoming different people all the time. Our perceptions of self are continually changing – you are a slightly different person now than when you started reading this chapter – but this does not mean that we perceive these changes." Antonio Damasio (2012, p. 9) says a similar thing when he defines the self-as-object as: "a dynamic collection of integrated neural processes, centered on the representation of the living body, that finds expression in a dynamic collection of integrated mental processes." By Damasio's definition, 'integration'—which in this context means a unified experience of selfhood—occurs during each conscious moment, but these moments form part of a 'dynamic collection' which are ever-changing.

Through my practice I became aware of how my modally-oriented self-parts are selectively employed through the rehearsal process as I focus on bringing greater clarity to the work at an embodied level, narrative level, visually symbolic level, and so on. We can think of these parts as self-schemas with different modal areas of focus, which are activated by the shifting needs of the creative context. Considering the conclusions that I arrived at in my early PhD draft also shows the way that these different self-states can also be activated by (and contribute to) critical reflection and written research. The contradiction in the written findings between these self-states indicates my varying need as an artist-researcher to engage rational and embodied forms of thinking to solve different creative problems. It also illustrates the dynamic way that I ascribe a felt sense of integrated selfhood to these modes of thinking moment-to-moment, even when they contradict one another.

Appendix E: First Response Script

Cast

First Responders

Chris

Felicity

Jim

Lesley

Liz

Robert

Stephen

Ursula

UU Drama Students

Aine

Caoilfhinn

Codie

Darcy

Shannon

Shauna

Ruairi

Crew/Creatives

Elaine

Ailin

Orla

Ursula

Georgia

Phil

Ross

Rory

Karen

Kelley

JP

Scene 1: The Boxes

A stage filled with boxes on many levels. As the house lights go down, the boxes light up and there is a sound as if to hint that the boxes have a life of their own. Then sound and lights fade to "natural" / silent and a group of FR are entering and exiting, adding boxes each time they come.

At some point a group of 8 Young People (YP) enter the stage.

A First Responder (FR), Liz is the only one onstage at this moment, with a stack of boxes to add. The YP approach her.

<div align="center">

YP 1
</div>

Are these yours?

<div align="center">

LIZ
</div>

Some of them.

<div align="center">

YP 2
</div>

What's inside?

<div align="center">

LIZ
</div>

Not sure how to explain Uh…

<div align="center">

YP 3
</div>

Can we open them?

<div align="center">

LIZ
</div>

It's probably best to leave it.

Liz puts her boxes down and turns to go.

YP (all)

General murmer "Why not" "What's in them" "Just one?" *etc.*

LIZ considers, then goes back to the boxes and carefully selects one.

LIZ

Here.

Opening the box, YP 4 discovers an old letter on faded paper. Reads aloud. Over the course of the next line, the lights and sound gradually change to a nostalgic world / memory as she "becomes" young Liz. An image of Young Liz is also projected on to part of the set.

YP 4

May 5th, 1981

Dear Mum and Dad,

Decided to write you a letter to show you that Northern Ireland is still alive and kicking. You are probably quite worried about tension and riots, but life up here is going on. Well, Sands has died, and all the media have been warning us for the last fortnight, of what is in store for all of us!

I'm glad I'm not still living in the hospital because seemingly the student nurses there are getting very little sleep because of the riots. Two of the girls on the way into town last week got stuck between the army with rubber bullets and stone throwing youths. This morning, my Northern Bank on The Falls was blown up, so it will now be less handy to get money during working hours. All entrances to the Royal Victoria Hospital from The Falls have been closed and are garrisoned by soldiers.

The good people from the North are carrying out life as normal and just ignoring everything. There's a Folk Festival here this weekend in Belfast, so I'll have to try to get to that. We go back on the wards next week so it will be hard work again.

I'm having a great time up here at the moment and the weather is quite good.

LIZ and YP 4

As they speak this line together, they mirror the other's physicality:

Everyone in our house is in good humour.

Love, Liz.

The spell breaks as Liz takes the letter back. Image fades and lights go back to normal They look at one another for a moment. Then another YP goes for another box, this one at the top of the set.

YP 5

Let's do another!

YP 6

That one up there, look!

LIZ

No that's not mine—

YP 5 climbs on pile and opens the box, Lights / Sound. Pulls out a PA mic. The YP all jump into this monologue one by one taking on the physicality of the scene, and speaking sections of the text chorally.

JIM (RECORDED)

When the warbling high-low harmonics blare from Central fire station's PA system everything stops and everyone strains to listen to the announcement from the speakers.

YP 5

'This is a fire call for Central full attendance to a reported '7/7' and fire in Royal Avenue, Belfast'.

JIM (RECORDED)

A '7/7' is the fire service code for a bomb explosion and before the announcement is finished we're already running towards the Engine Room. Jumping into the rear of the Pump Ladder, slipping off my shoes, feet into my boots and quickly pulling up my leggings. Tunic on and reaching for the breathing apparatus set. Dennis Shannon beside me lifting the heavy cylinder, taking the weight off the shoulder straps to allow me to slip my arms through and pull the straps tight. Then handing me the air hose with the facemask attached over my shoulder to hang around my neck, ready to don quickly if required. Looking ahead to see the Pump Escape racing in front of us with the Emergency Tender and Turntable Ladder trailing behind in a raucous cavalry charge.

Billy Shellard's boot is planted firmly on the accelerator, and we're racing through gaps in traffic before swinging hard around corners. Suddenly the brake lights slam on as he brakes hard to avoid a car in front of him. We glance sideways at each other and laugh.

Jim enters during this section and "takes" the last couple of lines in the same way Liz did.

JIM (RECORDED AND LIVE, CROSSFADE)

The engine roaring down through the gears and then accelerating away as the traffic starts to thin. Pulling down the side window for a blast of cold air in my face. A few seconds to steady my breathing and settle my head. To get ready. What a rush! What a blast! And to think that someone's paying me to do this.

Again, the spell breaks at this section comes to an end; during this section all of the FR have entered, with boxes, and are standing watching the YP, amused.

YP 6

Was it always like that?

URSULA

There were good days, surely.

CHRIS

And bad ones.

ROBERT

Ups and downs.

YP 7

Did you ever see anything like, bad— *trails off, shy*

YP 8

Like a bomb or like…

LESLEY

Of course.

YP 8

What was that like?

CHRIS

Suddenly you feel like your brain is being sucked right out of your head. Then the pressure comes in the other way, and then you're on the ground. And then you hear the bang. And then you hear the buildings collapse. And the whole thing feels like it takes 5 minutes, it goes into slow motion.

YP 1

Whoa. You actually got bombed?

CHRIS

It wasn't so unusual at the time.

YP 1

Were you a Policeman?

CHRIS

TV Cameraman.

YP 1

Oh.

CHRIS

(Indicating Stephen) He would have been a policeman.

STEPHEN

(Sarcastic) Thanks for that.

Chris gives a cheeky nod.

YP 2

(Indicating a small box Stephen is holding) What's in there? Is that your gun?

Stephen smiles and shakes his head, he opens the box, pulling out a big bunch of inkless pens.

STEPHEN

You see this? This is 30 years of notes and paperwork. Every time I finished using a pen, when the ink ran out, I put it in my locker.

CHRIS

You are weird.

ROBERT

There's a stressful year with the top chewed off it there.

YP 3

30 years? You must have been young when you started.

STEPHEN

Oh yeah, probably your age. It's mad to think of all of the things these pens have written.

YP 5

What like… tickets?

STEPHEN

Tickets sure, incident reports, crime scene sketches… it all got written down.

YP 6

What kind of incidents?

Stephen makes a gesture to indicate, "where do I even begin?"

YP chime in with questions here, one of them something like, "were you ever scared" or "was it dangerous"

YP 6

Yeah what was it like?

Scene 2: Introductions

STEPHEN decides to share with the YP, he opens another box and pulls out a vest of body armour. He sits down and speaks.

STEPHEN

Police training takes two years and involves a number of training courses, on the job experience and various exams. On a residential training course we were getting a security brief regarding local criminal groups etc. prior to going home for the weekend. This brief covers suspicious activity, intelligence reports etc. We were told that one of the Terrorist groups had been paying attention to a particular house and indeed had film of the property. The report described the house and its location. It became apparent it was my parent's home where I lived at that time. I spoke with security branch and I was given a new set of number plates for my car and what we call second chance body armour. Basically a bullet proof vest for under my off - duty clothing. From then on I was to wear this vest when I took the dog for a walk, went to the shop for a pint of milk or indeed any time I went outside. I posed the question, what could I do to reduce any danger to my parents. I was told simply - don't go home so often. From then on I lived in the barracks during the working week and also on days off. I spoke with my parents by phone and only went home occasionally. I did eventually get a house and move out of the barracks, as for the bullet proof vest. I handed that back in to stores four months ago.

YP 2

And you wore it that whole time?

STEPHEN

Nodding. 29 years pretty much.

LESLEY

I was only in the job a couple of months when I was shot at, walking back to the station. I was green. And I mean really green.   (*Hands box to YP, a Police hat comes out, the YP wears it and "becomes" young Lesley. An image of Young Lesley may be projected beside her*). I was 22, didn't really have any kind of dealings with the troubles apart from mum always wanting to know where I was.   I had been out on a foot patrol and remember this

was 1990, skirt, tights, no gun at that stage, women were not allowed to be seen as strong and capable in the RUC. We were just coming up to the wall of the Station, and the next thing I know is that I hear the popping and never thought… I was completely oblivious. And the next thing, Colin's pulling me along the ground, ripping my tights, I'm giving off stink as he trails me through the gates, the gates open, really quickly, and close behind us, and the lads are all like white and chittering and I'm like, what the hell were you playing at? And they literally just look at me as if to say, "she's blonde and thick as bricks." And I was like "wha-?". 'Did you not know?' they said. They were bullets pinging off the bricks. I:

YP 8 and LESLEY together

"I thought that was fireworks!"

LESLEY

Watching YP 8 as her young self.

But I remember being really angry. Because, how dare those bastards.? I had even left my long blonde ponytail out, to say woman. Skirt. Woman. I knew police women had been killed but, yeah, I was green.

YP 8 puts the hat away and fades back to "normal"

ROBERT

I was working in the control room at the Ambulance Service at Altnagelvin, and a call comes in for a fire across the town. (*hands box to YP who pulls out phone*) But all my ambulances at Alnagelvin Limavady, Strabane, they were all busy, so my nearest ambulance was Omagh, nearly an hour away. So, I get it running, hoping one of the others will free up. And then a second call came in saying, same fire, persons reported, which means there's somebody in the house, somebody in the fire. I knew I had to get an ambulance there as quickly as possible. In the control room was a guy, Seamus, who was a training officer, and he says, well listen I'll go in the marked car, and I'll take oxygen and the defibrillator, so if there is someone who needs resuscitating I'll be there. So off he went, and five minutes later, he radioed in, "I'm being stoned, I'm being stoned! Here in

the bog, in the bog, over the flyover". He'd driven into the flyover, past the Bogside Inn, in a white car flashing blue lights… so he was stoned. But he wasn't gonna stop, he says, "look I'll continue on to the call." Two minutes later, the 999-system lit up, I says, "yes, ambulance service can I help you? The guy says:

YP 1 gets on the phone

YP 1 and ROBERT, together
 "Hey mister, hey mister, did an ambulance car go through the bog? With blue lights?"

ROBERT
I says "yes it did", he says

YP 1 and ROBERT, together
 "ay, we threw stones at it, we wanted to say sorry. Is he alright?"

ROBERT
I says "Yes he's fine but you shouldn't have been throwing stones at anyone", and he says *(gestures, matter of factly)*:

YP 1 and ROBERT, together
 "Aye but that's the way it is mister"
Phone goes back in box.

FELICITY
That *was* the way, it was our normal. *(Microphone and press pass come out of box)* One of the first jobs as a broadcaster was a shooting on the falls road and we got there very quickly because at that time there was a lot of tipsters listening in to the taxis and the security forces and the emergency services on the amateur radio bands. And they were constantly ringing the BBC news room with information, misinformation, because if you were the first person in with a tip off, and it got used, you got a fiver. So, myself, camera operator, sound recordist is there within minutes.

A tableau forms, 3 journalists and 3 children (YP 2, 6, 5)

There had been a huge burst of gunfire, no one had been shot. And There's 3 wee girls about 9 or ten standing there, cameras are magnets.

YP 2
 'Miss miss, do you want to know what happened?'

FELICITY
So, we get the camera running and there spieling it all out and they have the terminology. So many military personal so many civilians were in the street 20:27 when there was a sudden burst of rapid gunfire and they identified the type of gun and I'm thinking this is not normal . Then one of them goes

YP 6
'Miss, do you want to know who done it'.

FELICITY
And she said a name and the camera man is switching off and I'm not listening and were packing up to go and then she's tuggin at me arm sayin

YP 6
'Miss miss can I wave to me mammy on the camera'?

Mic and press pass go back in box, tableau melts.

FELICITY
We normalised the abnormal.

YP 7
I don't understand how that could ever be normal. Why weren't those wains scared?

YP 8

Yeah there's something not right about that.

LIZ

I was a 1st year student nurse and it was 3 days after Warrenpoint. I was working nights in the neuro ward.

A green beret comes out of box,

Injured soldiers and an injured IRA bomber were in beds side by side in my bay and two soldiers were on guard facing in. In the small hours I realised something was not right.

YP 3 puts on beret and scans the audience with imaginary rifle

One of the soldiers had his gun up, eyes to the sight aiming at each of my patients in turn as if for target practice. I was to him in a flash " Put that gun down. Don't you know guns can go off by accident'. He was speechless, bewildered, and lowered his gun. Two hours later, his group commander entered and asked for me. He picked up the soldier up by the scruff of the neck.   'This lad has something to say to you'.

LIZ and YP 3

 'I am sorry I should have lowered my rifle . You were right to tell me to put down my gun.'

YP 3 removing beret and melting out of the character to speak the next line, as this text is spoken directly to Liz as she observes, as if learning something about the experience on reflection.

YP 3

He was younger than me. He was shaking and he was crying.

YP 7 and 8 open box and get caps. YP 2 slumps over centre stage.

CHRIS

I was a news cameraman in 1988 and while I was standing at the Culmore checkpoint, a soldier told me that there was a shooting of a prison warden at Magee University. I rushed off in my car and I arrived before the police, and found a person slumped over the wheel of a car who had clearly been shot. I was trying to film the incident without showing the identity of the deceased when two police officers arrived.

YP 7 and 8 march in, as police.

YP 7

How did you get here so quickly?

CHRIS

I'm media, ITN, a soldier informed me of this shooting.

YP 7

(Rudely) It's not safe for you to film here.

CHRIS

I knew I had to have the news pictures on tv within the hour so I went behind the policemen to take more pictures.

YP 8

(Even more severely) You need to put your camera in the car, now or I'll have you arrested!

CHRIS

I did what I was told and as I put my camera in the car a bomb went off and...
CHRIS claps, and YP 7, 8, and 2 melt into an explosion.

The two policemen were blown into the air.

YP 2

The two policemen, and also the prison warden.

CHRIS

(realises it's true). Yeah…you're right.

YP 7

Don't you remember seeing him?

YP 2

Or did he just… vanish?

Beat. CHRIS does not respond. URSULA comes over to comfort him.

URSULA

It's important that they have dignity. The dead. *(A box opens, a pair of shoes comes out, it's placed on the far side of the stage)*

I was on the march on Bloody Sunday. When we got to the level of Rossville Street, I picked up my Aunt Bridie *(grey fur hat comes out of box, we see a tableau of Ursula and Auntie Bridie)* because she had a flat there. I took her out of her house up to near the front of the platform where the speakers sat. As they introduced the first speaker the shooting started and we looked around and the soldiers were all lined up firing away. So, I took auntie Bridie, and we went like this here, over around the back of the apartments and into her apartment.

This next sequence is built as a series of tableau. By the end, all 8 YP are in the image.

Now the shooting had stopped at this stage and some people appeared dead. And I looked across at the multi-story flats and there was two bodies lying at the bottom of them. Totally uncovered, and all I could think about was, how undignified. There was no movement of any people as they were hiding through fear. For some unknown reason, maybe because of my training as a nurse - I took the blankets off me auntie Bridie's bed, and I said to myself I have to go over and see about them and cover them. And I took

auntie Bridie with me because I thought they're not going to shoot an old woman. And I put her in front of me and she never let me forget it until the day she died! When I got over to the bodies, a young lad and an older man who was shot in the head, the young lad was barely living but he was really dying there, and someone had taken his shoes off. I thought this was strange.

The sound of a cast member sobbing

URSULA

Now when I look back across the street, I got courage and stood in front of the soldiers,

YP 4

(*hands up, very stressed*). Why did you do it? Why did you do it??

URSULA

But they never answered. After that I went straight to work to help the injured on the ground then went in one of the ambulances to Altnagelvin, and I worked all night. The injuries to patients' bodies and limbs are most prominent in my memory. The hospital did not recognise the stress to their staff

JIM

Traumatic Stress.

CHRIS

Neither did the media

ROBERT

Or the ambulance Service

STEPHEN

Or the police

URSULA

Aye, no one did. And it was only after the tragedy of Greysteel that they provided counselling; most people of my era had learned to deal with it on their own, and put it in little boxes in their head.

Scene 3: It's Good They Know

YP 1

Why did you do that?

URSULA

Why did I do what?

YP 1

Cover those people, with the blankets.

URSULA

I suppose it was my training.

STEPHEN

To show respect. To preserve their dignity.

YP 2

But if they're already dead, sure what difference would it make to them?

URSULA

Because it's important! You must remember their relatives.

JIM

Why – what would you do – record them on your mobile phone?

YP 2

I didn't say that!

YP 3

(To Ursula) Were you scared when you did it? Like, there'd been shooting. People had been killed.

URSULA

I had to cover them.

YP 6

There's no way I'd do that. No way. Not if I was scared shitless I wouldn't. I don't think any of my mates would do it either.

CHRIS

You really don't know what you'd do. I think it's something that we'd all want to do if we could.

YP 6

…. It's just that it seems to me, no offence, but it seems to me that sometimes your generation were more concerned with preserving the dignity of the dead than valuing the dignity of the living.

A beat. People are uncomfortable, this accusation has gone a bit too far.

YP 4

Come on that's not fair

LIZ

No I think… I understand but I think it's more complicated than that

LESLEY

People have to be remembered. And honoured.

LIZ

Yes but also when you've seen what we have—

JIM

Death, violent death, it's… the worst indignity.

YP 6

I don't understand. Covered, uncovered, *you* have to live. *You're* the life you can still save.

JIM

No. No. Some things, some deaths, are just wrong. They take something from the people.

When you're washing the treads of your boots and… (*he can't finish the sentence*).

YP 5

And what?

JIM

Nothing. Nevermind.

YP 1

We want to know.

STEPHEN

Look. Some people went through terrible things that shouldn't occur in a civilised society,

a second person doesn't need to live through that.

LESLEY

But if you hold that all in, eventually it will come out.

LIZ

Oh yes, but we do not need to inflict trauma on the next generation… we need to take care.

ROBERT

I would agree with you, you dealt with it yourself. But you don't want anybody else to

have to see it.

URSULA

But it's important these young people know what we lived through, and how we dealt with it, and what we learned.

CHRIS

I think so. I would be typical of media in saying if stories aren't told, they may happen again.

FELICITY

I think Chris is right. If you don't acknowledge it, then you're taking that box and burying it under the feet of the next generation and it will out. I don't think you need the gratuitous details, I don't think you need the salacious bits, but I think you have to own it.

JIM

But what if there's no story at all? Just a series of events? You media types, you always look at these things and you see a narrative, with some kind of meaning, but if there isn't one? What if it's just a collection of random, mad incidents?

YP 7

Our parents don't want us to talk about The Troubles. So to us, it *is* all just a collection of random, mad incidents. Not just the past, but everything that happens now. The way people think, the way people talk.

YP 8

Sure it's all just funerals and memorials and retrospectives and testimonials. But no one talks about what it was actually like, like…*daily life*, for the living.

YP all express agreement.

YP lines here expanding the request / explaining the reasons they want to hear.

YP 7

Please?

FR look around at one another

<div align="center">**STEPHEN**</div>

Well if that's what you want… don't know what you'll get from it though.

Scene 4: A Slice of FR Life

STANLEY (RECORDED)

Joined the Belfast fire brigade in 1970. I was a junior Fireman, it was a two-year cadet course that I was on, and we passed out on 21st, Friday the 21st of July 1972. We were getting ready for our passing out Parade, which was our big day we were going to do our drills and have our parents there and everything and everyone was going to think that we were great kids, great guys, joining the fire brigade. And about lunchtime, we were sitting on the floor at Chichester street fire station, and we heard an explosion.

Music, Sound, movement in slow motion / tableau. Sound sequence of 30 seconds to a couple of minutes, during which, plastic bags are brought out of a box by YP until we tune back into…

…and we were handed plastic bags, and told to go to the other side of the fence and see if we could find the remains of anybody. One of the—there were two soldiers missing. One of the soldiers was on this side of the fence, he was quite intact, but obviously dead, the other one had been blown right through the fence, and he was shredded. And we walked around the other side of the fence and we started – no gloves on - started picking (*a section of the text is redacted here, while a FR takes the plastic bags away from the YP and puts them back in the box*). And we handed the bags to policemen and we walked back to the fire station, and after an hour of trying to get our heads together, trying to help people because the engine room in the fire station had been set up as a first aid depot, people were staggerin' in, cuts and bruises and crying, and looking for people and people were looking for their kids and kids were looking for their parents and it was just bedlam. After a while, we went home, David, a friend of mine gave me a lift in his Morris Minor, and he drove me home to my parents house and we sat outside my parents house and we cried. And that was it – that was my first day – not even my first day, my last day in training. I had two weeks holiday, I was posted to Ardoyne fire station, and I turned up for duty two weeks later. And that was me started on my journey as a firefighter.

Image of the ensemble, shoulder to shoulder. The YP begin passing boxes down to the FR, by the end of the section they move like a well-oiled machine as the boxes and stories come faster and faster.

JIM

Probably my first night shift, standing to attention at the rear of the Engine Room, nervous for the night's duties, we're short-handed. Turning to my left I see a 6ft tall mannequin (who'd been recovered from a bombed out shop window and brought back to the station), fully dressed in a fire brigade uniform. Weeks later we get called to a particularly difficult call and on our return to the station I have to wash blood off my fire kit and dump my gloves because they've been… *(an uncomfortable sound to imply what is not said)* contaminated. After replacing my fire kit on the appliance I go upstairs to prepare the evening meal, as I'm rostered to cooking duties. I walk into the Galley and see that someone has put the mannequin's leg into a huge soup pot and sprinkled some tomato ketchup on it.

STEPHEN

As a single bloke I am required to live in the barracks. I have a 10x11 foot room. A sink, chair, chest of drawers, wardrobe and a bed. If I put my ironing board on its lowest setting and sit on the bed it is just the right height for writing on. There is no one else about so I will catch up on some paper work to pass the time. I am writing a statement and I hear a strange whistling sound followed by a really loud thud. What was that? Sounded like a mortar but there was no alarm. The alarm starts sounding. A mortar has come over the wall. The loud thud is it hitting and bouncing off the wall of the accommodation block about 20 feet from where I am sitting. It is lying smouldering in the yard.

YP 1, 2, 3, 4

More paperwork! You'll never get on top of it.

FELICITY

A paramilitary funeral, every time the coffin comes out and the police move in and the coffin's taken back in and it's so surreal, and then suddenly the cameraman grabs me by

the back of the coat and pulls me up a grass bank out of the way. "what you at ?" Then I see a riot's broken out within inches of the coffin, and he'd seen it, I hadn't. He'd rescued me. "Aye but there was a wee woman stood beside me and she was really elderly and frail and she was on crutches so we need to get her out." And I look down and this wee frail woman who is indeed on crutches has her crutch lifted up and she's laying into a police man and then more police arrive, and there's people dragged away, and the coffin goes back into the house, I see the wee woman again later she says to me, "I don't mind the army but I canne stand them police".

YP 5, 6, 7, 8

"Standoff at Paramilitary Funeral Enters its Third Day."

YP 1

What's the latest at the scene?

LESLEY

Louis Robinson had been abducted, tortured, and murdered while on a fishing trip. The only comfort we, as his friends and colleagues had, was the knowledge that he probably had been drunk, for the TV footage of the van had shown an almost empty bottle of Louis' whiskey abandoned on the seat. It's funny how we viewed some disturbing events... One day, not long after Louis' murder, we're standing in the station yard and the next thing is (boom). We're all blown off our feet, "is everybody ok"? And we see Ronny lying on his back—not moving—and we're going, "oh fuck". Chris goes over and he goes Ronnie are you okay? Ronnie opens his eyes, and we think "thank god", you know, at least he's not dead. And Ronnie tries to get up, but he can't, you remember the old turtle shell ballistics? He can't get up. All we see is his legs, and his arms, flailing about. So rather than help him up, don't we all start pissing ourselves laughing at him. And he goes "for fucks sake will somebody help me up"? Yeah, relief makes you see the funny side in things.

YP 2

Do you wanna wee drink?

YP 3

Go on have another one

FELICITY

Three funerals three days in a row, back to back, always pouring rain, always wet. You come in foundered and have to go in again the next day. I have a BBC black suit soaked the first day, still drying out, black dress soaked the second day, and all I have black for the third one is a party dress. "What do I do?" and I'm in this grimy wee flat I'm standing with a hairdryer trying to dry out the wet wool suit, no luck. Ringing my mates, can anyone lend me a black dress, urgent, for tomorrow and get it to me, and we're only 21 / 22 so they're

like "oh do you have something on, is it a big do, is he taking you on a heavy date? I have a wee backless number." No it's for a funeral. So weird.

YP 5

Sure you could wear a wee cardigan over the glittery bit.

LIZ

Its night. An assassin breaks into her home and she jumps between her husband and the gun as the shot is fired. We're alone in the anaesthetic room, me and her. My job is to keep her sitting forward and to keep her awake so that she does not inhale the bleeding from her tongue and throat. I am sat on her bed cradling her and encouraging her to spit and cough into a large metal bowl. Looking at me she curses the assassin and my face, arm, and uniform are splattered in blood I try to calm her. It only has momentary effect. She curses the assassin again and I am getting covered in blood. I'm tiring, I keep cradling her, soothing her, and the pattern repeats for the next 20mins. The blood splatters are joining up. The blood starts drying on my skin. The smell of drying blood and exhaustion are over whelming me. I fear my strength is going and the anaesthetist comes in and takes one look at me, grabs a chair and helps me into it.

YP 1,2,3,4

Carry on caring for the patients.

CHRIS

The UTV news editor phoned at 10 past 4. He told me there was a huge explosion at an army checkpoint in Derry. As I lived beside the Culmore checkpoint I knew it must be the Buncrana road checkpoint. I was the first civilian to arrive at the scene after the ambulances. As I parked my car, a black 6'2 soldier shouted at me to get out of my car. He was pointing a machine gun at me with his hands shaking. " Media media, I shouted" as I showed him my ITV pass. He asked me if I had my mobile phone with me. I replied ' I don't normally give my phone to soldiers'. "Please mate just give me a lend for a minute' he asked pleading. I thought he wanted to ring the army HQ to tell them about the bomb but when he called, he said 'Hello Mum, it's me, tomorrow morning you will see on the news all my mates are dead but I'm still alive.' Love you Mummy'. And cried as he handed back the phone to me.

YP 5, 6, 7, 8

"Human Bomb Kills Six at Border Checkpoint."

STEPHEN

There is a suspect package in the prison that arrived by post. They have x-rayed it and are not happy. We go down, it's a padded jiffy bag. We are not going to get home anytime soon. We need to seal off the area, possibly evacuate part of the prison. As we are near the front, we may need to close the road off as well. This is going to need a lot of people and take hours. Between us we have some 40 years' experience, and should know better. But we discuss the risks and the advantage of moving it. We pick it up very carefully and take it across the road into a training area. It won't cause any disruption, one crew can look after it and most importantly we get to go home on time tonight.

ROBERT

(Throwing Jiffy Bag) Pass the parcel!

YP 6

You coming in for a whisky?

CHRIS

17th of January 1982. I was just sitting down to my wife's birthday when I received a call to cover a news story where eight workmen are traveling home on the road from Omagh to Cookstown when a bomb under a bridge at Tebane blows their bus off the road, killing all of them. When I arrive, the police have cleared the remains. It's a foggy night, not much to see. But I cover five of the eight funerals over the next week. On the last funeral I make the decision enough is enough, and I put my camera down. I quit news soon after that. I don't want to film people's grief anymore.

YP 7

But people have to know!

URSULA

Bloody Sunday in Alnagelvin was total chaos. But by the time it came to the likes of Greysteel, the teamwork was unbelievable. I just had to pick up the phone, "Can you come in?" No bother. And it didn't matter how many hours they had to stay for, as long as you kept the tea and the coffee coming, which was all part of the emergency plan. Open the theatres, theatres are all ready, get the tea and the coffee sorted, and you move the girls about and all, the team moved like clockwork, and in those latter years I never heard a cross word between them.

ROBERT

I'm in the second crew at The Rising Sun bar in Greysteel, there's a girl dead, there's somebody covered, and there's somebody holding someone else's head. So I go over and can smell this metallic smell, and my feet are squelching in water, and the first thing I think is, "has the fire brigade been putting out a fire? Why is there water everywhere?" And then it clicks, a bullet's hit a radiator, and hot water's pumping out in the room, and that's the smell, not blood, it's mostly water. We load three patients for Altnagelvin, one dies in the back of the ambulance.

URSULA

And one dies in my operating theatre.

Music. A sense of the lost lives. A moment of reverence. A feeling of the exhaustion of the repetition of the job, the senseless and repetitious loss of life. This transitions into ETHEL's audio recording.

Scene 5: Stop the Stories

ETHEL (RECORDED)

What you see, you see those images, you see those images, you see those dead people, and you think, this is not natural, this is not the amount of death you should see in your life

Music, movement

You know and our jobs you see more death than you're supposed to see in life. You're supposed to see your grandparents die and some of your elderly aunts and uncles.

Music, movement

You're not supposed to see the dead kids and the dead young folk and the dead teenagers and the traffic collisions the fatalities, the suicides, the – you're not supposed to see all of that I don't believe.

Music, movement, longer this time. During this section, a few of the FR open "difficult" boxes and look into them. Their faces are hit with unnatural light. They decide to box them up without exploring them or going into them.

 I just think, this is why we box them up, and you put them all away, and you keep yourself so busy, that you don't allow yourself time...

The "difficult" boxes are put in a prominent place at back of stage (these are the ones which will "come to life" later). Everyone away from the boxes as the music cuts.

YP 8

What's in that one?

LESLEY

(In a trance, almost to herself) Blue, pink, purple and white striped sock, blue painted toenails.

YP 8

What?

LESLEY

(In her own world, moving away from boxes.) She put the whole thing into the boxes in her mind, along with the Shankill bomb, Louis Robinson and other atrocities, never to be opened again. After all, she hadn't heard the screams, or had to wade through the body parts or blood

FELICITY

Lesley? Are you ok?

LESLEY

(Becomes lucid. Shrugs it off). Yeah. I'm fine.

FELICITY

It's ok if you're not.

LESLEY

No, I'm buzzing. I am absolutely loving life.

Scene 6: A Tentative Peace

FELICITY

(beat). I think of the photo album of my life. Too many gaps. Blank spaces. Little notes tucked into the pockets explaining what's missing. 25th Birthday – First Shoot to Kill. Holiday in France – Maze Escape. 30th Birthday – Cenotaph Enniskillen, Bomb; my husband, a cameraman, gone for 5 days. New baby home – explosion. Coshquinn. The roof lift's off the baby's granny's house. Husband gone for 4 days.

LIZ

But in the dark…light was bubbling, throughout the most awful atrocities. Because when you actually do remember you know, people … you could get smiles, strangers could show huge acts of kindness…

An ever-forwards bumpy ride
But something new at every tide
Painting colours light and dark…

What's a word that rhymes with "dark."
Um…. "Spark?"

CHRIS

(*teasing*) Come on Liz it was quite stark.

JIM

(*joining the game, pointing to Chris*) He almost died in a car park.

ROBERT

(*in a German accent)* Ich bin Prince Otto Van Bismark. (*Bows*)

LIZ

But come on now, there is a reason we are still living in Northern Ireland, or those of us that moved away moved back. And it's not just the music legends that this place has produced, nor its fab Games of Thrones countryside, or the Derry Girls. There were people talking about tolerance, love, mercy, in the bleakest of times. And there is a humanity that is still very alive and well in this place….

There is a rumble from the boxes, the cast turn to look, but decide it's nothing.

CHRIS

Well there's been 21 years of peace, that's something…

LESLEY

For some of us.

YP 5

Why only some of you?

There are challenges here from the YP, who have their own political narrative / ideas.

The FR glance at one another, not quite sure how to answer.

STEPHEN

You see this Theatre? There are 3 exits, and 7 people between me and the nearest one. But that empties into a public corridor, and the one that's two metres further gets me down a back stairwell that you need a code to access, so I if anything happens that's the one I take.

Every time I come to this theatre I take one of 4 different modes of transport, changing the pattern each time. Today I came by train. I walked to the far end of the platform. As the train pulled in I looked at every person on the train. I didn't know them and I don't know what belongings they have but I am happier because I saw every one before I boarded.

Most people got off the train to get the link bus. There was a woman in front of me as we walked to the bus, and she was in front of me again as we left the bus station on foot. She crossed the road where I normally do, so I didn't.

After this, I walked through the shopping centre and a person caught my eye, I don't know why. I walked into an empty shop and looked at the shelves until I saw the person go up a flight of stairs.

And then I come here, don't ask me why I couldn't tell you, and I stand on a stage in front of a hundred and fifty people and I follow the same movements on the same stage for a series of consecutive nights.

ROBERT

(*explaining to the audience*) Right because the blocking—that's what you call the actor's movement on the stage—it can't change, you see, it has to be the same. Stephen keeps trying to change it.

YP 5

(*To Stephen*) And so changing the staging… is that… for safety?

STEPHEN

It's just habit. In my brain I know it's stupid. But my body just does it. (*to Chris*) So I suppose my body hasn't had 21 years of peace.

CHRIS

Well, I still can't be near a parade, or a crowd, to this day, because it brings me back to being stuck filming the riots. So to help me forget about filming the troubles, I took up flying planes and helicopters, so that I could fly away from reality.

ROBERT

My escape was amateur dramatics. I am a thespian. Pretending to be someone else, and being somewhere else. Preferably in a comedy role. Making people laugh.

URSULA

And I've been singing with the lady's choir since it was formed 50 years ago, we've stayed together all these years. And plonk in the middle of the troubles, the Irish government paid for that choir to go to America. So that's a positive thing that came out of it all.

FELICITY

I think what got me through it was a need to report what was really happening and the feeling that one day we would live to see a time when the truth would come out.

LESLEY

Well you know, you say what got me through it... just working more, in this kind of stressful environment. Because it was the only thing I knew and it was the only thing I was really good at.

LIZ

What got you through the horrors of it all
Was simply getting up and pushing through.

LESLEY

(*Raises eyebrow) ...*Right. I ploughed my energy into work to forget....to the detriment of my kids. But I do think— (*turns to YP)* My kids went to an integrated school and their friends are all races, all religions, all abilities... they have learned respect. Because you all haven't been brought up in a society where it's "us and them".

LIZ

Respect's a fragile flower that can't stem
From murky soil defiled by "us" and "them".

LESLEY

Could you please... stop doing that?

LIZ

But there's so much feeling here, so much to *say,* I feel like we could… put it together, into a group poem.

The full cast just stare at Liz, no one responds. Someone clears their throat.

LIZ

Or, you know, we could just keep talking normally like this too.

CHRIS

It's true Lesley what you say, the young ones now, they're safe, they can play,

URSULA

No they're machines. They're just stuck to their phones.

FELICITY

But their minds are clean.

LESLEY

Ha! Clean! You should see some of the texts my daughter sends me!

FELICITY

But I go on drives and every town has a history, every village has scars. Every graveyard has ghosts. Every border road.

URSULA

Now is there a border, is the border back on? That can cause trouble too.

FELICITY

My daughter says, "Your entire geography of Northern Ireland is skewed. You don't see the beauty. You see the dead". She's right. (Turns to YP). But you go out with a clean mind. You don't see wounds everywhere.

YP 3

I think, even when we don't know where or why… we feel them

FELICITY

The ghosts?

YP 3

Well yeah, or like you say, the wounds.

YP 5

Well yeah, and your generation sort of, seems to want to keep them alive. Like, you're kind of….tied to them.

The boxes rumble again, this time more audibly. The whole cast is aware now. One of the FR goes and pushes it away or adjusts the boxes.

JIM

I don't want you thinking we're sitting here talking about what it was like all these years ago, like we're the wise old sages when you're still living it here, with the tragedy of Lyra Mckee just last year…and the powerful ways you all have responded… it's just the fragility of the whole thing, and it's… it would not take that much to just…

STEPHEN

Our world has problems but we're going the right direction. It was really bad, It's now not so bad. And it's to you to take it forward. It can go either way. We've got to the point where you now have an option you can go left or right,
And that's up to you how you deal with that.

FELICITY

I think it's being very very aware of what you could unleash, because you haven't lived it.

LESLEY

Absolutely

YP 8

No one wants to unleash anything. We just want a future. Like, there's so much focus on the past.

URSULA

Me, because of my children's age, I brought them up during the troubles, and they never got involved. To me that's a great achievement.

LIZ

And that was a worry.

CHRIS

And my family don't even ask about it anymore.

JIM

I think from my point of view what I found positive about it and what saw me through was I absolutely loved the job, I absolutely loved what I was doing.

URSULA

Aye, I don't regret it either. I don't regret my profession.

YP 4

Really?

CHRIS

Sure. Media was extraordinary because the day I was filming a serious bomb was probably the same day I was filming the opening of this Playhouse. The whole news wasn't made up of hard stuff, and you always had soft stories in between. And like, I got to meet princess Diana. I even sat on Bertie Ahern's knee by mistake.

ROBERT

Now that's trauma Chris!

FELICITY

During the hunger strike I got to do the late Monsignor Dennis Faul's makeup.

URSULA

I got to sing in the Rotunda of the Russel Building in Washington and sit in Teddy Kennedy's chair.

LESLEY

(Cheekily) Oh ah, and I got to lie in a ditch for 12 hours and have rats crawl all over me.

URSULA

And I never got no medal.

LESLEY

(Playfully) And I never got to sit in Teddy Kennedy's chair. (Beat). But I did love my job.

YP 4

You loved your job?

Lesley nods

YP 4

(*To Stephen*) Did you?

STEPHEN

Well you love it and you hate it.

YP 2

But… knowing everything you know now, would you have done it again, would you have picked the same profession?

Nod and murmured agreement.

YP 2

All of you? Seriously?

FR

"Yep", "Yes", "Me too", "No doubt" *etc, all make it clear they would have.*

YP 1

Wow.

Scene 7: The Falling House of Cards

All of a sudden the trembling boxes take on a life of their own and the whole set is shaking. One huge box in particular is rattling at the back or side of stage (NB: large enough for a YP to crawl in the back of it.) The box lid opens on its own. A light shines out of it. The stage is transformed.

A YP looks into the box while slowly rolling it downstage.

ROBIN (Recorded)

The best example I can give for getting people to understand how the troubles affected ordinary people who were doing the jobs that they were doing, police whatever. So a couple of weeks ago our tumble dryer broke down; we ordered a new one. It was delivered within a couple of days. After a couple of days, on the day that it was delivered my wife comes in and goes, "look, that thing's still wrapped up or whatever we need the tumble dryer"

The YP reaches in and pulls out Polystyrene Beads, and gently drops them down. It is almost magical.

So I go out, and my heart sinks because it's covered in Polystyrene packing. And I can't handle polystyrene packing without thinking back to the Omagh bomb. There was a furniture shop that was blown up in the Omagh bomb, and the bean-bag things that people sit on, that kids sit on, every single body that came into the mortuary was covered in these little tiny white electrostatic polystyrene balls.

The YP observes her hand, and it is covered in the beads.

Soundscape is uncomfortable over this next section of movement, and the boxes in this section have light sticks in them, the atmosphere on stage is non-naturalistic. Another YP brings another box out, and pulls a cloth out of it. Splotches of red appear projected on the wall of boxes and FELICITY sleepwalks over, takes the cloth, and begins to wipe the stains. She continues this slowly over the entire next section.

Another YP, another lit box. Out of it comes a green Beret, The YP offers it to Liz. A moment of decision. LIZ goes offstage. The Beret stays lit.

Another YP, another box. The YP approaches JIM. Before the box can be opened, JIM has firmly indicated "No". Sending the YP away.

Another YP another box. Before it can be opened, STEPHEN takes it, sits on it, and cracks a beer open and drinks.

STANLEY (Recorded)

So my last couple of years in the brigade, I knew retirement was coming, I knew the boxes were still going to be in my head. I knew they were going to be there, and I knew I couldn't forget about them. And I just wanted so much to forget about them. And I couldn't.

Another YP brings a box to LESLEY. It opens. LESLEY looks inside, only she can see what it is. She is entranced.

So I started having dreams, I started seeing things, I started shouting at my wife, I started drinking, which I didn't really do before, I started using language and talk that I'd never used before, or I'd get angry at everything. And it was actually my wife who said: "There's something wrong with you, you need to go and see the doctor". So I went and saw the doctor, I told him, he asked me how I was feeling and I told him. And he said, describe to me the symptoms that you're experiencing and I told him. And he said "you have post traumatic stress." And I laughed and said "no don't be ridiculous. You can't say that to me after all the stuff I've been through and seen. It has never affected me at all." He said, "well it's affecting you now."

LIZ re-enters with an easel, canvass, and brush and sets up behind the beret to begin painting it.

YP 1

(Bringing a box to Jim) A little old lady who looked like everyone's favourite granny with blue rinse…

JIM

(Sends the YP away) No.

YP 3

(To Lesley). You're casualty bureau trained aren't you? Huge bomb in Omagh, multiple fatalities, get to force control and information an hour ago!

YP 5

(Bringing a box to Jim) The smell of burnt…

JIM

(Sends the YP away) No.

LESLEY

She was detailed hospital liaison officer. She got descriptions from guys on the scene of found body parts, she then rang round all the hospitals trying to find a victim who had been brought in minus that part.

YP 7

(Bringing a box to Jim) The Strange Smell of Engine Oil and Blood…

JIM

(Sends the YP away) No.

LESLEY

The names on the huge whiteboard at the front of the room had reached 100's.

YP 8

(Bringing a box to Jim) That wide dead eye that a fish has…

JIM

(Sends the YP away) No.

YP 2

On the Sunday she received a call:

YP (Several)

'foot, wearing blue, pink, purple and white striped sock, blue painted toenails.

YP 5:

As Jim's box finally opens. Torn and Twisted Metal...

JIM

No I think...I'm not sure... I think that's a pork fillet. *He sits with the box, looking inside and quietly considering.*

LESLEY

As her pregnancy continued she readied herself for the arrival of her baby girl but found she was plagued by the same nightmare. Her baby girl was born with an adult sized foot with striped sock.

Soundscape, kicks in, it is uncomfortable.

STANLEY (Recorded)

And I had said, I said to myself, "I don't want to be here anymore". Despite my faith in God, despite my Christian upbringing, despite my dependency on God in my life I still wanted—didn't want to be here. But I didn't want my wife or family to think that I had taken my own life. So I came up with this idea that I would make it look like an accident.

And I had those thoughts for a few more years. Until my wife passed away. Very suddenly, no warning. I was with her, and tried to save her—CPR and all the rest. Couldn't save her. Paramedics couldn't save her. And it was then—that was the thing

that brought me to my senses. Because I saw the turmoil that bereavement brings, in a family. In my family. And I didn't want that to happen.

Robert, Chris, and Ursula have all moved downstage at this point. Robert and Ursula are watching the ensemble. Chris is facing away. Liz is still painting, Stephen is still drinking (the cans are piling up), and Felicity is still wiping the non-existent blood. Another young person comes forward with a box for Chris. She lifts a flute out and band music begins to the play in the soundscape. The projections at this point begin to turn into BBC footage from Felicity and Chris, images of crowds at a parade, images of a riot.   Chris looks back to the stage sharply when he hears the band and crowd sounds. The YP offers the flute to CHRIS, who moves away and climbs up to the top of the set. The soundscape builds to a roar, Lesley opens her mouth and allows a sound to come out, and then this soundscape is joined by the sound of a helicopter starting up as CHRIS, in a spotlight at the top of the stage, takes off in a helicopter.

Finally, blissful silence, Chris is alone in the sky. The stage is either unlit, or barely lit by projections of Chris' helicopter ride footage.

So since that moment of my wife being laid to rest, those thoughts have gone. Was it an answer to my prayer? Five years of praying, "Lord, please take these thoughts out of my head"? I believe it was. I believe it was.

ROBIN (Recorded)

Today I can't handle polystyrene without thinking about it. In years gone past I couldn't have handled polystyrene, period. But I've now got to the stage where I can now get over the thought, that box is open, I know how it works and I know I just have to brace myself and go, "Robin, it's only Polystyrene".

Lights come up on the ensemble and there is a visible shift in the space.

FELICITY

For years I would sleep walk, and wipe up bloodstains that didn't exist. Out of bed, wipe the surfaces. Top to bottom. Then hang up the cloth, back to the bed, duvet over my head, repeat. Keys, contact lenses under the pillow. Now I can sleep.

LESLEY

Every anniversary she posts a simple message on social media.... Even though I never knew your name, whether you survived or what you looked like in your entirety- I'll never forget you, the girl who wore the striped sock and had blue nail varnish on her toes.... I'll always remember you.

And how do I know this? Because SHE is ME.

URSULA comes to LESLEY and offers her comfort.

URSULA

The injuries to patients' faces, necks, and eyes are most prominent in my memory. But it wasn't the same for me, I didn't have the same personal trauma.

LIZ

After that young soldier apologised to me in the hospital, I didn't think any more of it. I'm more interested in it now, because now I'm painting a picture, and I'm a mother now, of ones that has been through those teenage years. I have a son. And it was while I was painting I just became more aware—for the first time I am concerned for this lad. Do you know what I mean? And then I was confronted with "did this really happen"? I literally was shocked, I found myself trembling and shaking, and being quite frightened for my younger self. And then I suddenly had this thought, what was the mindset of that lad, was he just bored at 4 in the morning with nothing to do, or was there something more sinister going on in his head. He looked out of his depth. In lots of ways, we were all out of our depths".

Over Liz's last line the painting has gently faded into focus in the projection, and the end of Liz's line fades out any last "special effects" of sound and light so that we are back in a simple space.

Scene 8: Integration

ROBERT

Did you hear about the guy with 2 wooden legs got caught up in the rioting? Someone threw a petrol bomb at his feet and he was burnt to the ground.

Now he's only bumming about.

URSULA

Robert, I wonder what made it different for us, why we were not affected the same way as others. Operating theatre had trauma and drama before "The Troubles", so changing to another type of trauma only increased our skills, and our pride and satisfaction in our work.

FELICITY

But we were affected. Of course we were.

LESLEY

My kids suffered the fallout of my demons. Anger, bad personal choices, irrational behaviour. But you can live with PTSD, really live! I'm very lucky – as a family we're closer than ever, I'm still here, but many many of my colleagues are not.

FELICITY

When I was in school, 9 of my mates lost a parent to the troubles. In my daughter's school group, the exact same number - 9 - lost a parent to suicide.

URSULA

Aye, it just wasn't like that for me. I was never traumatised that way.

LIZ

"Everyone is so different, and has such different experiences, right back to childhood. I feel it is very brave to explore why somethings affects us the way they do, and why other things do not"

CHRIS

I found it nearly impossible to film Martin McGuiness and the Rev. Ian Paisley together, after spending 10 years interviewing them as arch-enemies.

JIM

For me ...it's about the terrible loss of dignity, it really is.

YP 6

I think... I think I understand what you mean by that word now. I still wouldn't risk my life to cover a body with a blanket, but... It's kind of like, if you see something undignified, it takes your own--

YP 7

It takes your own dignity too. Exactly. And if you hold up the dignity of someone else, especially when it's been taken away from them, then... it's like you're restoring something important, not just for yourself or even for that person, but for everyone.

YP 8

(To Lesley) And that's why you post that message every year.

YP 2

(To Chris and Felicity) And why yous cared so much about what you showed and didn't show on TV.

YP 8

(To Ursula) And why you covered those people.

URSULA

I don't know about all of that. It was just my training.

YP 6

Well it was good training, then. It's class that you did that, that that was your first response.

A shared poem here, which Liz starts, and one by one the FR and YP join in with.

POEM TO BE INSERTED HERE

The FR begin to deconstruct the block structure in the final image, with the help of the young people.

Curtain.

POEM TEXT (Full Poem still To Be Created)

LIZ

Dignity is the listening presence

That carves the healing door to younger self

Through which we channel through our hopes and dreams

And start to grieve and lay aside our fears

JIM

Of human heart or from a nurse's trade

A wounded soul with dignity reclaimed

From timber cross unto a linen sheet

CHRIS

Death comes like a quickening flash

That glumes the night and chills the mind

A body like a cold stone lying in the road

And the sound of clapping feet

Like a small windmill sail on a windy day

Amaterasu: Out of the Cave

Final R&D Script

Running Order

1. Nothing/Something (Hannya Shingyo)
2. Sunrise (Flute Music)
3. Mukashi, Mukashi 1
4. Packing
5. Threshold
6. At Home 1
7. Mukashi, Mukashi 2
8. Aya and Emiko play The Game
9. At Home 2
10. Susanoo in his own words
11. Norito Rave
12. The Video
13. At Home 3
14. The Moving Drum
15. The Wounding
16. Inside the cave
17. Mukashi, Mukashi 3

Character List

AMATERASU, *deity of the sun, co-ruler of the heavenly realm.*

SUSANOO, *deity of the sea, storms and contagion, reluctant ruler of the earthly realm.*

EMIKO*, *Japanese, late 30s, resident in UK since she was 14 years old. Academic researcher.*

AYAKO (亜矢子), *British-Japanese, 20s, born in Japan, lived in UK since she was 3 years old. Between jobs.*

亜矢子 – Ayako

"The reason why parents might use the character 亜 in their child's name: in the hope that they will be obedient to their parents, elders, or the culture and tradition. This letter is also used in the word Asia (亜細亜大陸), so to hope that the child will be wise and "big" hearted like the land of Asia!"

- - Emiko

(Please complete with a similarly apt offer for the character composition of their name!)

Nothing/Something (Hannya Shingyo)

The audience filters into the space. The stage is dark

Out of emptiness, form: the Hannya Shingyo, chanting complimented by contemporary electronic sounds.

The audience takes their seats, clears their throats, completes their conversations.

A moment of silence. Emptiness.

Sunrise (Flute Music)

Flute music, cutting through the quiet.

AMATERASU enters from the east, playing a bamboo flute - unhurried, poised, self-possessed.

The lights rise onstage as she crosses to assume her seat behind the taiko.

She strikes the taiko: sunrise. Her drumming is the light, heat and gravity of the sun waking life out of the sleepy Earth - warming the ground, stirring the ocean, whipping the air, turning the globe.

SUSANOO enters. He carries the thunder maker. We hear tornados gather momentum, ice shelves collapsing into the sea, wildfires blast the land.

He interrupts the rhythm but AMATERASU carries on, unphased. She circles the perimeter of her land.

Mukashi, Mukashi 1

Early March 2020.

London. The family home: Dad's house. AYAKO's room since childhood.

AYAKO ENTRANCE

Ayako enters in a state of agitation as Susanoo crosses to the corner; she paces angrily and then goes to a shoebox of treasures. She pulls out a cassette player. She sits Downstage Centre. Digs out tape recorder from box/bag of precious things.

STORYTELLER *(V/O)*   昔々あるところに …

The STORYTELLER's English narration fades up as her Japanese narration quietens.

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Long, long ago, there came to be two gods - a brother and a sister. The sister was the eldest and she was the goddess of the Sun.

AMATERASU strikes a regal pose.

Her name was Amaterasu. Her baby brother was called Susanoo and he was the god of the Sea and of Storms and Sickness.

SUSANOO enters and strikes a fighting stance.

Now Susanoo was very sad because their mother lived far away in the Land of the Dead and he missed her very much.

SUSANOO grieves.

So much that he cried and he cried and he cried and he cried: he could not stop crying. His tears melted mountains and boiled the streams. This made their father furious and he banished Susanoo from the heavenly lands.

SUSANOO looks to the heavens.

Susanoo went to visit Amaterasu one last time to say his final goodbyes.

AMATERASU puts on kokoriko armour.

But Amaterasu did not trust Susanoo. She was worried he wanted to take over her kingdom.

AMATERASU meets SUSANOO, armed and unwelcoming.

So she met him at her gates in full armour.

SUSANOO is offended.

Susanoo was hurt. He only wanted to be a good brother to Amaterasu. And he said he could prove it: they would play a game, which he would win. Fate would favour him, because his intentions were good.

SUSANOO offers AMATERASU his thunder drum.

Amaterasu agreed. As a sign of trust, they swapped treasures.

AMATERASU takes the thunder drum, gives SUSANOO her bachi.

Then the Game could begin.

AMATERASU strikes the thunder drum three times.

From Susanoo's sword, Amaterasu created three gentle goddesses.

SUSANOO strikes the taiko five times.

From Amaterasu's necklace, Susanoo gave life to five splendid gods. He was the winner! Or so he thought.

AMATERASU returns the thunder drum to SUSANOO and holds out her hand to receive her bachi.

But Amaterasu claimed the five gods were hers, because they were born of her necklace. She was the winner, not him.

SUSANOO snatches the thunder drum, shakes it, enraged.

This made Susanoo wild with anger.

SUSANOO rages, shaking his thunder drum.

He flooded the fields, swept away villages, made the people sick - all to hurt Amaterasu. But she would not speak to him. She did not trust Susanoo. At last, he threw a giant horse at the house of Amaterasu.

SUSANOO slams the thunder drum into the floor.

Amaterasu's friend was in the house weaving clothes. The horse's body smashed her loom to splinters, stabbing her in the womb. The young woman died.

AMATERASU cradles her dead friend

After this Amaterasu hid herself in a cave, taking her light and warmth away from the world.

AMATERASU retreats from the forestage, goes behind taiko. SUSANOO takes away the drum stand.

YOUNG GIRL *(V/O)* But she can't go, she's the Sun!

AYAKO tenses.

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* That's the story.

GIRL *(V/O)*But what about all the animals? And, and, and the flowers? And all the people? What will happen to them?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* All things become no-thing in time. *("no thing")*

GIRL *(V/O)*Will they die?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)*   Let me finish the story.

GIRL *(V/O)*Did the Sun not care about the people?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Yes, of course. That's why she had to leave.

The STORYTELLER's Japanese narration fades up under her English narration.

GIRL *(V/O)* You love me, don't you?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Of course I love you, E-

AYAKO stops Walkman suddenly. Rewinds cassette.

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Of course I love you -

AYAKO stops Walkman. Rewinds.

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Of course I love you -

AYAKO stops Walkman.

Packing

AYAKO makes the decision to visit mum. She grabs her bag and crosses while Susanoo brings clothes, they both drop these CS at the same time.

SUSANOO creates a whirlwind of clothes around Aya, who snatches clothes from air one by one and stuffs them into the suitcase. Music accompanied by Amaterasu.

AYAKO carefully packs the cassette player last.

AYAKO *to Dad, off.* Dad…

Silence.

Dad!

Silence.

I'm going..

AMATERASU drums AYAKO's journey to the flat.

Threshold

AYAKO stands on the threshold. AMATERASU plays knock on door.

EMIKO *(off)*   Just coming!

*We recognise her voice as the same or similar as the woman in **Mukashi, Mukashi**.*

AYAKO knocks more vigorously. EMIKO rushes in, with mask and looks for wallet.

EMIKO   I'm just tracking down my wallet.

EMIKO gets wallet from crate. AYAKO knocks even more vigorously.

EMIKO   Okay! You're late, not me.

Pulling on her mask.

                 AMATERASU Door opening sound.

Opening door   So I've only got two twenties, do you have change…?

AYAKO   Contactless only please.

EMIKO pulling her mask back off.

EMIKO   Contactless? Very fitting. Hello.

AYAKO   Hello Emi.

Leans in to hug EMIKO. EMIKO complies awkwardly.

EMIKO   You're not my chicken bhuna.

AYAKO   Nope! Still ordering from the same old shitty takeaway?

EMIKO   I like them. They're… reliable.

AYAKO   Not tonight! Should've got Deliveroo, mate.

EMIKO   Why, do you work for them?

AYAKO   And what if I do?

SUSANOO *stirs*

EMIKO   Why the bag?

AYAKO   I'm gonna go find Mummy.

EMIKO *laughs* SUSANOO *looks up and turns*.

EMIKO   Really?

Beat.

        How, Aya?

AYAKO   I booked my flight. It's tomorrow evening.

EMIKO   And what?

AYAKO   I'm going to help her.

EMIKO   Do you realise what's going on in the world?

AYAKO   Exactly - that's why I need to go.

EMIKO   What are you going to do? She's in good care.

AYAKO   No, no care homes are the most dangerous--

EMIKO   You don't even speak Japanese, not good enough anyway.

EMIKO puts wallet away.

               Does Dad know?

AYAKO looks away.

               What, you're not going to tell him? Won't he notice you're not at home?

AYAKO   Not my home.

EMIKO   Aya...

AYAKO   It's fine, it's mutual.

EMIKO   Aya…. What did you do?

Turn out and walk downstage, Susanoo crosses to them in building anger.

Out front   You're so impulsive

                 Irrational

                 Naive

                 Irresponsible.

                 A child!

To AYAKO   What did you do?

They snap in and SUSANOO passes bō to EMIKO.

AYAKO   Nothing, okay, nothing! You know Dad doesn't need a reason to be a prick.

AYAKO attacks EMIKO with bō. They fight.

EMIKO   Can't you just hold your tongue, just once?

AYAKO   Guess not. We can't all be the silent, enigmatic type, Emiko.

They fight.

EMIKO   I'll call him.

AYAKO   Don't! Fuck that. I'm not going back.

They fight. Grand envelopment, AYA's weapon trapped under EMI's.

EMIKO   You have to stay somewhere!

SUSANOO backs off, resigned. Pause. AYAKO looks up cheekily.

EMIKO   No.

EMIKO beats AYA's weapon away, SUSANOO catches it.

AYAKO   It's just a night -

EMIKO   It's never just a night -

AMATERASU holds the bo, the mirror image of EMIKO.

AYAKO   Then tomorrow I'll go find Mummy!

EMIKO   Good luck with that. Try not to flip out on anyone.

AYAKO   I don't Flip Out.

EMIKO   Shall I ask Dad about that?

AYAKO   Fine, sis - fucking forget it. Thought it might be fun, bit of big sister time, reminisce, chat shit, whatever. Doesn't matter. I'll sleep on the street. Enjoy your bhuna.

AYAKO trundles her suitcase away.

EMIKO   Wait.

AYAKO halts.

EMIKO   One night.

AYAKO approaches the threshold.

EMIKO   靴！ちゃんと ぬいで[98]

At Home 1

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[98] *Kutsu! Chanto nuide!* Shoes! Remove them properly!

TRANSITION (NB Mark - this is the longest one) - AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes. SUSANOO stirs the world SL while the living space is set up SR.

AMATERASU drums tick-tock rhythm on the edge of a taiko.

AYAKO sat with feet up on EMIKO's table, scrolling through social media on her phone. EMIKO dislodges her with a glare, sits at the table. EMIKO removes a can of soft drink from table to the floor.

AYAKO lounges on the floor, continues scrolling. Giggles loudly.

AYAKO   What? No way… No way. I can't believe they've done that.

EMIKO glares at AYAKO. Puts in earphones.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

EMIKO bent over laptop at table. AYAKO speaking on phone to airline, pacing up and down room.

AYAKO   But's it's been booked already. I have the itinerary.

                   What do you mean I need a Japanese passport?

Slamming table   I am Japanese, I was born in Japan.

EMIKO is startled. Looks up from laptop. Sees AYAKO's shoes and coke can on the floor.

AYAKO   No, no, I won't hold, I've been on a hold for over an hour.

EMIKO gets up from the table, grabs the shoes and can and holds them up angrily, AYAKO brushes it away.

AYAKO   But I booked through the website. No, it didn't. Well how was I supposed to know that?

EMIKO tidies away AYAKO's shoes and the can. AYA continues speaking to ticket agent until shoes are placed.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

AYAKO is exercising vigorously. EMIKO is sat with her laptop. Emiko turns chair away.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

AYAKO Reaches for beer she hands fresh bottle to EMIKO, as thought to say, 'Stop working.' EMIKO wipes the rim of the bottle with the hem of her top. They clink bottles. EMIKO returns to her laptop. AYAKO frustrated, drinks beer, watching her work.

Mukashi, Mukashi 2

AYAKO, sitting, looks out to audience and has a memory of her Mother's story.

STORYTELLER *(V/O in Japanese)* - **NB Haruka I'm working on getting this translated before Sunday.**

Susanoo went to visit Amaterasu one last time to say his final goodbyes.

AMATERASU puts on kokoriko armour.

But Amaterasu did not trust Susanoo.

AMATERASU meets SUSANOO, armed and unwelcoming.

So she met him at her gates in full armour.

SUSANOO is offended.

Susanoo was hurt. He only wanted to be a good brother to Amaterasu. And he said he could prove it: they would play a game, which he would win.

SUSANOO offers AMATERASU his thunder drum.

Amaterasu agreed. As a sign of trust, they swapped treasures.

AMATERASU takes the thunder drum, gives SUSANOO her bachi.

AMATERASU strikes the thunder drum three times.

From Susanoo's sword, Amaterasu created three gentle goddesses.

SUSANOO strikes the taiko five times.

From Amaterasu's necklace, Susanoo gave life to five splendid gods.

SUSANOO and AMATERASU swap items back

But Amaterasu she was the winner, not him.

SUSANOO snatches the thunder drum, shakes it, enraged.

This made Susanoo wild with anger.

SUSANOO slams the thunder drum into the floor.

And he hurt Amaterasu's friend, who died.

AMATERASU cradles her dead friend

After this Amaterasu hid herself in a cave, taking her light and warmth away from the world.

AMATERASU leaves and SUSANOO watches her go and then also melts away.

Aya and Emiko play The Game

AYAKO sidles up to EMIKO, still bent over her laptop.

AYAKO　　　　　'Wanna play?'

EMIKO *without looking up*　Play what?

AYAKO　　　　　C'mon, you know.

EMIKO　　　　　Nope.

AYAKO　　　　　The Game.

EMIKO　　　　　You're going to have to be more specific, Aya.

AYAKO　　　　　Our game!

EMIKO *looks up at her blankly*.

AYAKO　　　　　Really? C'mon. Like we played any other games!

EMIKO   … err, Badminton?

AYAKO   No! God. Are you doing this on purpose? Are you gaslighting me? Wow.

               Just - wow.

EMIKO sighs.

EMIKO   No, Ayako, I am not gaslighting you. I am asking a genuine question, which

               you seem unable or unwilling to answer.

AYAKO   I can't believe you don't remember.

EMIKO *befuddled*   What, remember what? Why are you being so mysterious?

AYAKO   One thing, I thought we might still have this one thing we once shared.

EMIKO   Is this some cryptic crossword clue?

AYAKO   Back from school, you, me and an empty house. We'd play it for hours. Did

               it really make no impression on you?

EMIKO   Ah! The Game.

AYAKO   Yes!

EMIKO   Why didn't you say so?

AYAKO   I actually, literally just did.

EMIKO   Of course I remember The Game.

AYAKO   Okay, we got there. Finally. So: 'Wanna play?'

EMIKO   errr

Returns to keyboard   no.

AYAKO   Emi!

EMIKO   I'm busy.

AYAKO   Course you are.

EMIKO   You don't seem to understand: I have a chapter deadline!

AYAKO   You can't take a tea break?

EMIKO   For tea, yes. For kids games? Not really.

AYAKO   Indulge me.

EMIKO   oh?

AYAKO   For once.

EMIKO   For once!

AYAKO   Please, Emi-chan.

EMIKO returns to her keyboard. AYAKO walks away.

EMIKO *without looking up*   'What's Mummy doing right now?'

AMATERASU begins to walk.

AYAKO   You're serious?

EMIKO   I won't ask again.

AYAKO   She's…

AMATERASU hits her mark.

AYAKO   She's enjoying her evening glass of beer.

AYAKO puts the beer in AMATERASU's hand.

EMIKO   Alone?

AYAKO   With a friend.

AYA becomes the friend and holds AMATERASU's hand.

EMIKO   A 'friend'. What friend?

AYAKO   An old friend.

EMIKO   So coy! A boyfriend?

AYAKO   They dated at high school.

EMIKO   Didn't Mum and Dad date at high school?

AYAKO   Before Dad. The basketball team captain.

EMIKO   No!

AYAKO   Of course she did. He was tall, very tall, obvs, and athletic - not heavy

               though: lean and sinewy. Nice smile. Big bright eyes. Long lashes, almost

               feminine. Total heartbreaker.

EMIKO   uh-huh. So what does he look like now?

AYAKO   err Still tall. Maybe a little less athletic.

EMIKO pushes AYA out of the way and takes AMATERASU's hand

EMIKO   Bald, overweight, greasy skin.

AYAKO   /No.

EMIKO   A boring old salaryman stretching the waistband of his discount suit.

               Heartbreaker indeed.

AYA pushes EMIKO out of the way and takes AMATERASU's hand

AYAKO   No, no, he's kept in shape. He's still cute, in a silver foxy sort of way.

AYA and EMI jump out, EMI grapbs the beer, and SUSANOO and AMATERASU unfreeze and

begin to move into 'The Meeting at the Threshold' which will end in the "offering to exchange

instruments" position.

EMIKO   Hang on, you have to accept my previous move. That's the rules.

AYAKO   I thought the rule is that there are no rules.

EMIKO   No, the rule is everything said in The Game is true. Any contradictions cost you a point.

AYAKO   Touché. One point to you. But my romantic lead keeps his hair and six pack.

EMIKO   One-Nil. Game on! Where are they then?

SUSANOO and AMATERASU freeze in the "offering to exchange instruments" position. AYA jumps behind the bar to be the host.

AYAKO   A host bar. His. He owns the host bar.

AYAKO leans on SUSANOO.

EMIKO   A superhost!

AYAKO   The host with the most!

EMIKO   And they're drinking beer?

AYAKO   For old time's sake. The Cristal is already chilling for Round Two.

AMATERASU and SUSANOO unfreeze and AMATERASU takes the storm drum and begins to play. They will end looking at one another, upright, with SUSANOO's hands gesturing ("recogntion / humility)

EMIKO   Oh that's nice.

AYAKO   The host with the most and bubbly to toast!

EMIKO   Well played!

AYAKO   Thank you very much. Mummy's living her best life.

EMIKO   But there's a geisha.

               AMATERASU and SUSANOO freeze, AYAKO adopts a geisha pose beside SUSANOO.

AYAKO   Yes, a runaway geisha!

EMIKO   A runaway geisha who is recognised by the host bar owner slash ex-boyfriend slash former high school basketball team captain.

AYAKO *crossing as geisha to AMATERASU*

The geisha glides over to Mummy, a lone swan in a puddle of ducks, and, eyes peeking over the perfect line of her sleeve, she whispers 'Hide me'.

SUSANOO and AMATERASU shift quickly into "SUSANOO about to play the drum". AYA and EMI form Yakuza / Geisha around them.

EMIKO   But just then a pair of yakuza burst into the bar. The host had told them where to find the geisha.

AYAKO   He didn't!

SUSANOO and AMATERASU unfreeze and SUSANOO plays the drum.

EMIKO   Two-Nil.

AYAKO   Okay, he did, but he didn't want to. He did it to protect his customers.

SUSANOO and AMATERASU move to "open fire" and "nunchuks" pose. Freeze.

EMIKO   Too bad. The yakuza open fire.

AYAKO   Lightning fast, Mummy pulls out a pair of nunchuks -

EMIKO   Nunchaku?

AYAKO *snatching bachi from SUSANOO*   - and flings away all the bullets.

EMIKO   The yakuza charge.

AMATERASU and SUSANOO shift quickly into "returning the drum" pose. Freeze.

AYAKO *giving bachi to AMATERASU*   She lobs the champagne bucket at them.

EMIKO   The first yakuza catches the bucket, barely spilling a drop.

SUSANOO and AMATERASU unfreeze - AMATERASU has won, distrusting SUSANOO's intentions,

AYAKO   Impossible!

SUSANOO rages, wounds the handmaiden. They will end in AMATERASU picking up the "maiden" (grief shells).

EMIKO   In a world where nunchaku deflect bullets? C'mon, Aya! Three-Nil.

Freeze in *AMATERASU picks up the "maiden" (grief shells).*

AYAKO   She she she she grabs the geisha's hand, *(AMATERASU stands, AYA keeps holding on to her hand until EMIKO pushes her)* drags her out the door.

AYAKO stands at the outstretched hand, being the "maiden".

EMIKO   But her platform sandals trip the geisha and she pulls them both to the floor.

EMI trips AYA or knocks her down.

AYAKO   err Actually, actually, no, actually they escape into the crowds of Kabukicho.

AMATERASU and SUSANOO unfreeze to go into final image, AMATERASU walks away, SUSANOO is regretful. They freeze whenever they get to the final tableau.

EMIKO   Four-Nil. Where the rest of the gang are waiting for them.

AYAKO   No, enough, stop. Foul.

SUSANOO walks away.

EMIKO   Foul? The Game has no rules, how can I foul?

AYAKO   You always wish the worst for her.

EMIKO   Totally within the non-existent rules.

AYAKO   I'm trying to tell a good story here.

EMIKO   Well, that's not how the story goes.

      AMATERASU and SUSANOO melt away slowly over the next lines.

AYAKO   She would do anything, she would do everything for someone in trouble.

EMIKO   Is that what you remember?

AYAKO   What's that s'posed to mean?

EMIKO   You were three years old!

AYAKO   I have very vivid memories of that time.

EMIKO   I actually saw her. I was there.

AYAKO   I was there!

EMIKO   erm Not really. Otherwise you'd let go of this fantasy.

AYAKO   What are you talking about?

EMIKO   She's Not Coming To Rescue You. Your Mummy Was No Mother.

Short pause.

Why do you so desperately want to see the one who abandoned you?

AYAKO   It wasn't her fault. She wasn't well. She needed help.

EMIKO   Says her! I needed help. I was thirteen.

AYAKO   At least you had her that long. I grew up without a mum.

EMIKO   -

EMIKO turns and walks away, taking the laptop.

AYAKO   Emi? Emi-chan! Come back. The game, it's not finished.

At Home 2

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

AMATERASU drums tick-tock rhythm on the edge of a taiko.

EMIKO brings table to the side. AYAKO brings chair to SR.

EMIKO enters with her laptop. AYAKO is finishing a sharing packet of crisps. EMIKO absently rubs her back and shoulders.

AYAKO sees this, approaches her, tipping the last crisp crumbs into mouth. Places crisp packet on edge of table, wipes hands on legs, starts to massage EMIKO's shoulders: a peace gesture.

EMIKO freezes, shakes her off. AYAKO walks away, leaving crisp packet on table. EMIKO finds crisp packet, brandishes it. AYAKO does not notice. EMIKO folds packet into a diamond, slams it on the table.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

AMATERASU drums tick-tock rhythm on the edge of a taiko, quicker than previously.

EMIKO attends a Zoom meeting on her laptop.
SUSANOO smacks EMIKO back and AYAKO down to new positions.
AYAKO lies down, meditating.

AYAKO   mmm Maaaaaaaaaaa -

EMIKO   Oh. Sorry that's my sister. I'll mute.

EMIKO mutes laptop. AYAKO rolls backwards into a shoulder stand, scissoring legs in different directions.

EMIKO makes a face in apology, mouthing "sorry" and reorientates her laptop so that AYAKO is no longer in view.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around the taiko: a day passes.

AMATERASU drums tick-tock rhythm on the edge of a taiko, even quicker than before.

AYAKO is lounging on her belly, bingeing TV, her feet and shins drifting up and down from the floor. EMIKO is mopping the floor. Approaches AYAKO. Hesitates.

EMIKO *sarcastic* Excuse me.

AYAKO   Five minutes.

EMIKO tuts. Mops around AYAKO's legs and body. Waits for each shin to drift up before mopping underneath them.

AMATERASU scrapes her bachi one revolution around her taiko: a day passes.

AMATERASU drums tick-tock rhythm on the edge of a taiko, quicker still than previously. SUSANOO offers beer to AMATERASU by kneeling. AMATERASU ignores. SUSANOO sits at table.

EMIKO speaking on her phone to her department administrator.

EMIKO   I don't think you understand. I am supposed to be on writing leave. You've

already brought me in for, what, two, three lectures next term. I can't teach

a seminar as well…

SUSANOO passes AYAKO two bottles of beer, sits at EMIKO's table.

AYAKO sidles up to EMIKO, offers her a beer. EMIKO shakes her head, turns away. AYAKO stands, watching her. She walks away, drinking from both bottles. EMIKO looks over her shoulder, sees AYAKO drinking, leaves. AYAKO flops down to sitting on the floor.

Susanoo in his own words

AYAKO is alone, sat on the floor, drinking beer, doom-scrolling.

SUSANOO sits at the table, raises bottle

SUSANOO *to us* Kam-fuckin'-pai.

Swigs from bottle. Sighs.

I. Can't. Win. Everything I do is fucked. My problem: I care too much.

Grieve for my mum? Too much. Love my big sis? Too much. Makes me

some fuckin' freak. Nut job. A threat. Boys Don't Cry, right? Newsflash: I'm

a Fuck You kind of guy. I say shit. Do dumb things. This is me. No games,

no tricks, no bullshit.

Swigs.

But she. It's like, she doesn't - She won't - get me. Can't see me. The real me. Never has.

Shrugs.

Fuck it. All families have shit like this, right?

Raises bottle.

To Family!

Swigs.

NEWS ANCHOR *(V/O)* California's largest wildfire explodes as hot weather threatens new blazes. (OTHER HEADLINE tbc)

SUSANOO *wiping mouth* But I won! Five gods. Five! Five-Three, Five-Three! In your fuckin' face, big sis. I proved it. The best intentions. Sincere. I am A Good Brother.

Tears label off bottle.

It's not fair.

NEWS ANCHOR *(V/O)* Heavy rains trigger landslide, flood warnings.

SUSANOO   Snotty little crybaby. Ground fuckin' Zero. 'Here comes Trouble!' Fuck you.

Swigs.

NEWS ANCHOR *(V/O)* The Novel Coronavirus is spreading at rates far faster than anticipated.

SUSANOO   It's not my fault that if I cry, the rivers burst their banks. It's not my fault

that when I raise my voice, tsunami rear on the horizon. You think I do it on

purpose?

NEWS ANCHOR *(V/O)* Experts warn many root causes of climate change

also increase the risk of pandemics.

SUSANOO   Fuck no. I am the way I am. Clear conscience. No shame here.

NEWS ANCHOR *(V/O)*   *in Japanese / Dutch / German*

SUSANOO   I am a good brother. A good, kind, honest, loving brother. And I will prove

it. Again! My kindness will drown temples. My honesty will flatten cities.

My love will erase civilisations.

Necks rest of beer. Raises bottle.

SUSANOO   You think I'm trouble, Sis?

Flings bottle behind his back. Catches it in one hand.

SUSANOO   I can be trouble. Watch me.

Norito Rave

Techno music fades up **(Question for Nao - do we want live drums to support?)**

SUSANOO and AYAKO abandon themselves to the dance, beers in hand. They start near one another, then AYAKO dances closer to the door so that she's right by EMIKO when EMIKO enters with a mug.

*EMIKO notes that Aya has left the flat but not moved out. Worries, feels disorder taking hold. EMIKO crosses centre. AYAKO and SUSANOO spot one another "across the room" and dance towards one another, coming together just as EMIKO steps away to go sit at her compute*r.

SUSANOO and AYAKO exit in different directions.

Music fades out.

The Video

5am.

EMIKO bent over her laptop. Yawns, rubs eyes. Absently rubs her back and shoulders. Looks at the threshold. Checks her phone. Sighs. Returns to her work.

Quiet taiko strikes: door knocks.

EMIKO goes to unlocks the door.

Rasp of door opening sound

EMIKO *without looking at her*   Shoes.

AYAKO crosses the threshold, carrying her shoes.

EMIKO   You know where they should go. I'm not your servant.

AYAKO crouches, slowly places her shoes neatly by the threshold. EMIKO stands, watching. Task completed, AYAKO remains crouching.

Brief pause.

EMIKO   You stink.

AYAKO   I know.

EMIKO   Booze. Cigarettes. Sweat.

Sniffing   Is that weed?

AYAKO   I'm gonna go have a shower.

EMIKO   Laundry first.

AYAKO   Yeah.

EMIKO   Ever used a washing machine before?

AYAKO   Yeah.

Short pause.

EMIKO   Do you know what time it is?

AYAKO   Late.

EMIKO   Late? Early! The next morning.

AYAKO   Did I wake you?

EMIKO   No, but... That's not the point. I'm not running a Bed and Breakfast here.

               You can't just interrupt my work all the time.

AYAKO   I'm sorry.

EMIKO   Where have you been? No, don't tell me - I don't wanna know.... Actually, I

               do - tell me.

AYAKO   Barking.

EMIKO   Barking. Doing what?

AYAKO   Party.

EMIKO   Well I hope you had fun.

AYAKO breaks down. EMIKO is paralysed. AYAKO continues to cry. EMIKO approaches

AYAKO. Hesitates. Withdraws. AYAKO sees this.

EMIKO   I'll make you some tea.

               AYAKO   No.

               EMIKO   Breakfast, you must be starving.

AYAKO   No!

Short pause.

AYAKO   I was… I was in the queue. Toilet. Loads of girls waiting. One working

               cubicle - fucking typical. Then this man… Total random… Just... attacks me.

EMIKO   Did he hurt you?

AYAKO   Yes.

EMIKO   Where, where did he touch you?

AYAKO   He said, he said these stupid, fucking, horrible things.

EMIKO   Yeah, yeah, but where did he hurt you?

AYAKO   He verbally abused me.

EMIKO   Oh.

AYAKO   'Go home', 'China virus', 'You're responsible.'

               EMIKO   I get the picture.

AYAKO   The C word. You know, the other one.

EMIKO   I know which one you mean.

AYAKO   Then he spat at me.

EMIKO   He wasn't wearing a mask?

AYAKO   No… why?

EMIKO   Why!

AYAKO   And you know what, no-one else said anything. Just watched. Then moved

               up the queue… Fuck!

EMIKO   I'm sorry that this happened to you. But you're here now. It's over.

AYAKO   No, it's not. I'm gonna report him.

EMIKO   (*as though to say "be sensible"*). Ayako. It's his word against yours.

AYAKO takes phone out of pocket

AYAKO   I filmed it. All of it.

AYAKO starts playing video. We hear an angry male voice, distorted so that the words are unintelligible. EMIKO hesitates. AYAKO looks at her. EMIKO watches over her shoulder.

EMIKO   It's disgusting.

AYAKO   I know.

They watch.

          EMIKO   The place is rammed!

          AYAKO   Uh, yeah? It's a rave.

          They watch.

          EMIKO   No-one's wearing a mask!

AYAKO   That's what you're focussing on? He's yelling at me!

They watch it to the end.

          AYAKO   Got him. He's not gonna do that again. I'm gonna post this everywhere. Insta. Tik Tok. All the socials. I need people to share it. Your friend - at the, the BBC. You can send it to her, can't you?

EMIKO   One thing at a time.

Touches AYAKO's arm. AYAKO softens.

    You've had a long night. Go and have your shower. Then we'll talk. I'll make tea.

Takes phone from AYAKO, guides her towards doorway.

AYAKO   Can I have a beer instead?

EMIKO sighs.

EMIKO   Why not?

AYAKO goes off to the bathroom, leaving her phone behind.

EMIKO wipes the screen of AYAKO's phone with her sleeve. Pauses to remember AYAKO's passcode, keys it into the phone. Plays video. We hear the same angry male voice.

AMATERASU begins to strike the taiko.

A range of emotions play across EMIKO's face: [outrage, compassion, Vulnerability, compassion, and misguided protection, as much as authoritarianism, outrage, discipline.]

Drums rising tempo

Discipline, decisiveness. She touches the screen. The video freezes mid-tirade.

EMIKO touches the screen. AMATERASU snaps a sting with the kokoriko: the photo is deleted. EMIKO swipes and presses the screen. AMATERASU snaps a sting with the kokoriko: the photo is permanently erased. EMIKO sighs.

AYAKO returns in fresh clothes, drying her hair.

EMIKO   That was a quick shower.

          AYAKO   Is that my phone?

          EMIKO   Yes. Here.

          Hands phone to AYAKO. AYAKO opens the phone, checks files.

          AYAKO   What the fuck? You deleted the video.

          EMIKO   I had to.

          AYAKO *checking albums* Permanently! Fuck! Why would you do that?

          EMIKO   You can't post videos like this on social media.

AYAKO   It's evidence.

EMIKO   Yeah! Of your misdemeanours. You cannot show the world you've been out at a superspreader event.

AYAKO   I'm not the criminal here! Did you actually hear all the shit he spat at me?

EMIKO   He has a point.

AYAKO   Wow. Like, wow.

EMIKO   I am trying to protect you.

AYAKO   Who asked you to?

EMIKO   You're right. No-one. But who else is looking out for you, Ayako? I never have a choice.

AYAKO   Fuck this. Even Dad's better than this.

AYAKO starts pulling on her shoes.

EMIKO   Ayako! You can't go back to Dad's: he's 74 years old! You've just been to Barking!

AYAKO   Fine. I'll sleep under a bridge.

EMIKO   Stop acting like a child.

AYAKO   Stop cosplaying motherhood! You're not my mum. You'll never be a mother.

Brief pause.

EMIKO   Let's have breakfast.

At Home 3

AMATERASU drums through the transition, SUSANOO enters covered in powder and tormented EMIKO grabs some food from upstage: a day passes.

AYAKO enters.

AMATERASU drags a rubber tortured scrape under a clock rhythm.

AYAKO to returns after a night out, shoes in her hands. EMIKO offers AYAKO a bowl / plate of breakfast. AYAKO dumps shoes on the floor, one upstage and one downstage, and walks past the bowl / plate.

EMIKO collects the shoes. When she picks up the downstage shoe and turns upstage, SUSANOO begins to move again and AMATERASU drums through the transition: a day passes.

AYAKO Shoes on - walks into room, puts shoes on the table, on top of Emiko's laptop. EMIKO pulls her laptop out from under her feet and sits to work on the floor. AYAKO turns the table and chair to face the other direction.

The Moving Drum

AMATERASU travels around her drums. She arrives at her moving drum and plays. SUSANOO approaches and rips the drum from underneath her. She freezes before missing a beat.

AMATERASU decisively hits the drum. SUSANOO pulls it away.

The drum is used to oppress / goad, but AMATERASU is unphased.

AMATERASU manages to dominate SUSANOO and get her drum back.

EMIKO is sat on the floor, bent over her laptop.

As AMATERASU does a final circle, AYAKO enters with a pile of bedsheets. On the final drum accent she drops the sheets on the floor next to EMIKO. Sits at EMIKO's table, watches.

The Wounding

EMIKO goes to bed sheets, gathers them up. Her hand brushes against a used condom. EMIKO yelps and flings the condom away. AYAKO giggles. EMIKO looks at her.

AYAKO   Oops.

Brief pause.

Don't worry, I made him take his shoes off.

Waits briefly for response.

I know: so British of me, needing human touch. How crude!

Waits briefly for response.

Did we wake you? No - sorry, my bad, I forgot: robots don't need sleep.

Waits briefly for response.

Well, chop chop - back to work! Maybe you can write a chapter about us.

Waits briefly for response.

Wow. Speechless? Silent, enigmatic Emiko. Fucking pathetic. Get over yourself.

Waits briefly for response.

Y'know, if you were a sister, we'd laugh about this. Or, if you were my mum, you'd have a right to tell me off. But it doesn't matter, cos you're neither.

Waits briefly for response.

Nothing? No words? Patronising bitch. Fuck your silence, Emiko. Fuck your patience, fuck your tolerance, fuck your suffering, fuck your martyrdom, fuck your disappointment, fuck your self-control.

Beat.

My earliest memories are of your feelings. Your feelings, not my own. Your bad blood. So fucked up. No wonder she went mental.

Waits briefly for response.

I wish I'd been born first: I would have made her stay.

Brief pause.

Well, you weren't enough. You'll never be enough. You're nothing. Empty. A shell.

EMIKO turns away.

AYAKO   Oh yeah, just walk away. Shut me out like you always do.

Howl.

AYAKO   Emi? …. Emi-chan? … Emiko? … I'm sorry.

AMATERASU taiko solo

Screams, roars

Taiko crescendo.

EMIKO sits on the edge of the thrust.

AYAKO knocking on the door

AYAKO slides to the floor, sits with her back against the door. SUSANOO sits / kneels beside her.

AMATERASU leaves, playing flute.

Inside the cave

EMIKO is wounded. AMATERASU plays her rage.

AMATERASU plays her flute music and slowly crosses to exit. EMIKO stands, watches her.

As she travels, AMATERASU breathes lament on the flute. Pauses.

EMIKO You are heat.

You are light.

You are power.

AMATERASU resumes her journey and lament. Pauses.

EMIKO You are full.

You are alone.

You are enough.

AMATERASU resumes her journey and lament. EMIKO follows behind her.

AYAKO You are

EMIKO no-one.

AYAKO You are

EMIKO   weak.

AYAKO   You are

EMIKO   empty.

AMATERASU halts.

          AMATERASU   神々とは形(かた)以外の何者でもなく

SUSANOO   Gods are only forms.

AMATERASU   形とは空に他ならず

          SUSANOO Forms are only emptiness.

AMATERASU   形は空と違わず(たがわず)

SUSANOO   Form is not different from Emptiness.

AMATERASU   空は形と異ならないのです

SUSANOO   Emptiness is not different from Form.

AMATERASU leaves the world.

EMIKO   Only forms. Only emptiness. Only forms. Only emptiness.

Short pause.

       This flat: it's only a form, it's only emptiness.

       Pointing   Those shoes: they're just forms, just emptiness.

       The laptop: just a form, just emptiness!

       Laundry: forms, emptiness.

       Duffle bag: form, emptiness.

       Crisp packet, condom, beer: just emptiness!

       Covid: emptiness.

       Sister: emptiness.

       Me: emptiness.

       Emptiness: emptiness.

       Empty. Empty. Empty. Empty.

AYAKO   Emi?

SUSANOO   Without you, the people will die.

Hannya Shingyo chant (pre-recorded). AYAKO's body begins to wither and drop.

EMIKO *lifting, 'reforming' AYAKO* I am nurturing, you are helpless.

AYAKO   No jokes, not now, Emi.

SUSANOO withers.

EMIKO *lifting, 'reforming' SUSANOO* I am poised, you are chaotic.

SUSANOO   You tricked me!

AYAKO encroaches, withers.

EMIKO '*reforming' AYAKO* I am generous, you are mean.

AYAKO   Five gods! I proved my integrity.

SUSANOO encroaches, withers.

EMIKO *'reforming' SUSANOO* I am empty, you are empty.

SUSANOO   Emi, please, you're scaring me.

EMIKO   I am empty. I am empty.

SUSANOO   Eat something. It's been days. You have to eat something!

SUSANOO encroaches, *withers. EMIKO catches him, struggling under his weight.*

AYAKO   You must come out, the whole world is dying!

AYAKO encroaches, withers. EMIKO catches her, struggles under weight of both adults.

EMIKO: Rage is empty. Fire is empty. I am empty. I am pure energy. I am the end of

                worlds, the birth of worlds. I am light. I am day. I am one. I am the sun.

EMIKO hurls them into her orbit. They circle her.

SUSANOO *attempting to disrupt orbit*   My intentions were pure.

EMIKO   You were banished.

AYAKO *attempting to disrupt orbit*   Oh my god, you're kicking me out?

EMIKO   This is not where you need to be.

SUSANOO *attempting to disrupt of orbit*   You've never seen the real me.

EMIKO   I've seen only what you have shown me.

AYAKO *attempting to disrupt orbit*　　　So you're abandoning me, just like that?

EMIKO　　　I am setting you free.

SUSANOO *attempting to disrupt orbit*　　　Give me one more chance to prove -

EMIKO　　　That's not how the story goes!

SUSANOO breaks orbit and leaves. The orbit freezes.　The sisters alone onstage.

AYAKO　　　But where am I gonna live? Nothing's open!

EMIKO　　　You have your ticket refund. You'll find somewhere.

AYAKO　　　So that's it? Family means nothing to you? Thanks a lot, Emiko.

EMIKO　　　We're sisters, Aya. My world can't revolve around you.

AYAKO realises the truth of this.

AYAKO　　　And what if I fuck it all up like I always do?

EMIKO　　　Then start again.

Pause.

AYAKO   Emi-chan, y'know when, when Susanoo, in the story - Does he actually find

                  his mother?

EMIKO   Yes. But she's still dead.

Brief pause.

AYAKO   Does he ever come back to - Does the Sun ever - ?

EMIKO   He brings her a gift.

AYAKO   So she does leave the cave!

                  AYAKO turns to leave. Hesitates.

AYAKO   When?

EMIKO, half-smiling, exits.

AYAKO takes her bag, leaves the tape, turns it on and goes in the opposite direction.

Mukashi Mukashi 3

Emiko comes out, hears the cassette.

YOUNG GIRL *(V/O)*   But she can't go, she's the Sun!

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* That's the story.

GIRL *(V/O)*But what about all the animals? And, and, and the flowers? And all the people? What will happen to them?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* All things become no-thing in time. *("no thing")*

GIRL *(V/O)*Will they die?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)*   Let me finish the story.

GIRL *(V/O)*Did the Sun not care about the people?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Yes, of course. That's why she had to leave.

The STORYTELLER's Japanese narration fades up under her English narration.

GIRL *(V/O)* You love me, don't you?

STORYTELLER *(V/O)* Of course I love you, Emiko.

Emiko stops the tape. She is emotional, but also calm.

EMIKO: Mother. Form. Empty.

                Daughter. Form. Empty.

                Emiko. Form.

EMIKO turns upstage and listens to AMATERASU playing music.

Lights.

Appendix G: Amaterasu – Early Scripting

Amaterasu confronts her reflection

NM steps out of the music spot, becomes AMATERASU, crosses to face AMATERASU - HK.

They stare at each other.

AMATERASU-HK   Who are you?

AMATERASU-NM   You are… who?

AMATERASU-HK   I am Amaterasu.

AMATERASU-NM   'Amaterasu am I!'

AMATERASU-HK   Yeah, very funny.

AMATERASU-NM   Funny. Very. Yeah.

AMATERASU-HK   I -

AMATERASU-NM   I -

AMATERASU-HK   am -

AMATERASU-NM   am -

AMATERASU-HK   warning -

AMATERASU-NM   warning -

AMATERASU-HK   you!

AMATERASU-NM   you.

AMATERASU-HK   ,
                     arghh!

AMATERASU-HK lunges at AMATERASU-NM, which they anticipate and sidestep easily.

They fight. Neither is stronger than the other. They seem to anticipate each other's blows.

Drum battle.