

# TRAUMAGICAL REALISM AND THE RE-CREATION PROCESS

subversive commun(e)ication of  
*the traumatic* in theatre and performance

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L O N D O N

## Abstract

This thesis approaches 'trauma' in theatre and performance from the perspective of communication studies. Since 'trauma' is an unspeakable and unrepresentable inner state, I thus conceptualize the term '*the traumatic/spectrum*' to refer to layers of reality, meaning and experience that can be expressed, represented and/or spoken about in relation to a traumatizing encounter. Through practice-led research, I propose a multi-sensorial devising tool for theatre & performance makers primarily, and artists of all disciplines, to facilitate a performance process for individuals who have walked through a traumatic or post-traumatic journey ('journeyers'), and have a desire, need or purpose to communicate to an audience. Based on a syncretism in journalism, ethnography, psychology, and art therapy techniques, this methodology draws out the form and the content through which individuals desire to communicate about their experiences.

Conceptualized here as the **re-creation process**, this methodology tackles different types of communication predicaments or 'distance' between audiences and 'journeyers' when addressing *the traumatic*, including: disbelief, voyeurism or sensationalism, and the tendency to habituate, fatigue, de-sensitize, avoid, avert and/or alienate from *the traumatic* and those who journey with this reality. In response, I endorse the interrelation of two aesthetic manifestations that can 'bridge' different types of psychological, emotional, socio-cultural and physical 'distance': one is a realm of theatre & performance which renders semantic and somatic forms of expression indivisible, and the other is Magical Realism. These aesthetics are applied as channels and strategies to engage participants in a meaningful, empowering, and pleasurable 'shared' experience beyond the therapeutic. Finally, I propose the term **traumagical realism** to further identify and explore the parallels between Magical Realism and *the traumatic*. Traumagical Realism is a liminal territory that can offer a deeper understanding of *the traumatic*, and catalyze a social, aesthetic and affective force of engagement or 'commun(e)ication' between 'journeyers' and all participants involved in the devising process and culmination of a performance.

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To *Nahom*  
& *Dina*

This research is dedicated to every journeyer with the desire to share about  
the *strange* reality they suddenly walked into.

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and light, man feels like a stranger.

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942)

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- 4:** Composition videos for Nahom’s somantic artwork
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- 6:** Compositions through journ(art)ist body: video documentation

### **Case Study B (CSB)**

- 7:** Composition videos for Dina’s somantic artwork
- 8:** Audio of Dina’s somantic artwork
- 9:** Compositions through journ(art)ist body: video documentation

### **Commun(e)ication Events**

- CSA: 10:** Nahom’s somantic artwork: video documentation (work-in-progress)
- CSB: 11:** Dina’s somantic artwork: video documentation (work-in-progress)

## Introduction

History has been described as the ‘true realm of past events’ (Ritter 1986: 157). Historian Karl Marx argues, however, that the recording of history is not always ‘truthful’, since it is ‘written by its victors’ (Olsen 2012: 237). In actuality, history is written by people who have the agency and means to record it (MacCannell 2011: 171). Moreover, historicity is intrinsically valued in terms of facts, events, and a claimed objectivity (Ritter 1986: 157). Such value inevitably discounts other experiential and subjective layers of reality that are equally ‘truthful’ and meaningful to an individual and the history of humankind. This research was originally driven by the intention to return agency to people who have a desire to write their own history but do not have the means to do so. This aim involves not only writing the past, but ‘sharing’ meaning and experience in the present, beyond the facts of events. More particularly, the subject of this study focuses on ‘writing’ a reality that originates from traumatizing experiences, as it is often the case that people who undertake a *traumatic reality* are the history-makers that lack the power to write it. This interest in *the traumatic* as subject emerged from my proximity to journalism as a career, where the confrontation with the world’s main informant of *the traumatic*, the mass media, and the ‘shorthand’ and saturated coverage of people’s traumatizing events, is a controversial discussion and concern.

From an early age I developed a personal interest in interviewing people of extraordinary feats. I was convinced that when such outstanding stories were heard and acknowledged, both storytellers and society were mutually strengthened and enriched from the intimate lessons shared. Since then, I have interviewed many people, and many who have overcome traumatic realities. The conversations I had with these brave individuals confirmed to me that interviewees have deep desires to communicate on an intimate level, beyond the facts of the traumatizing events. Since then I have questioned the formats in which mass media and the ‘hard news’ of journalistic agendas inevitably limit the content and form of interviewees’ communication experience. Conclusively, I arrived at certain observations. Firstly, the agenda behind the interview is a major determinant over the content and the form in which interviewees can express themselves. Secondly, journalists’ interviewing intent carries a dominant and active agency over the interviewees, who rather hold a passive role. Thirdly, a continual informative agenda risks approaching interviewees as vehicles and means to ‘the truth’, giving more importance to the facts of the event over what interviewees desire or need to communicate about it. Uncontestedly, mass media and journalism have the intrinsic purpose to inform on events, ultimately bound to an agenda of facts as an

uncompromisable priority. Such agenda inevitably subordinates a substantial freedom of communication, and particularly in the case of *traumatic realities*, this is a matter worth questioning since this subject is heavily inclined towards a domain of subjectivity and affect, of personal introspect and retrospect, and of non-verbal forms of expression, which tend to be limited in an interviewing process. Moreover, the business of selling news in commercial journalistic spheres often dictates journalists' work (Ross, 2003). By no means do these observations intend to underestimate the significant and valuable role that journalists play in covering news and providing channels of communication for victims of events. In fact, such informative and denunciatory agendas are what can mobilize a social response from audiences. These observations simply underline the need to consider alternative public platforms that allow people a free exploration of communication into the dimensions of *traumatic realities* that are often overlooked by the centralized value of giving testimony to the facts of traumatizing events. In addition, the need to explore communication aside of linguistic articulation is especially important to consider when communicating on this particular subject.

Since mass media and the entertainment industries are the main communicators on the subject of 'trauma' or *the traumatic* on a worldwide scale, it is important to give attention to the extent to which these industries select and shape the image that a global society constructs of *traumatic realities* and the countless people living through them (van der Kolk 1996: 42; Arva 2008: 62). Mass media and the entertainment industries have the agency to re-construct an image of *the traumatic* that influences the knowledge and impression that communities create of 'victims' or 'survivors', their identity, and their daily reality. This re-construction eventually shapes and impacts the world's approach to the subject and the kind of relationships and dynamics established or de-established between communities dealing with such realities. Moreover, a central argument in this thesis discusses how the agencies that record history, in this case journalism and mass media, monopolize the notion of what is 'veracious', 'truthful', or valuable to record. One concern, for example, resides in how the paradigmatic agenda of 'telling the truth of events' tends to centralise the communication act by subordinating meaningful introspect and retrospect of experience and other desires and possibilities of communication. The understanding of 'trauma' or *the traumatic* has been centralized.

The motivation of this thesis was therefore conceived from the disquieting realisation that people behind the coverage of traumatising events lack an important extent of agency about **what** is communicated about their experiences (content), **how** or in what

ways this is expressed (form), or **if** they want to communicate at all. This thesis presents theory and praxis elaborated towards the search for an alternative platform that can be offered to people with a desire and need to communicate publicly about their *traumatic realities*. The aim of this research is to find an alternative platform of particular qualities: where people's voices are not limited or shaped by particular agendas; where audiences can draw closer to the people behind the stories or the account or events; where the interview and devising process is an intimate and free 'sharing' of experience; where people can elicit and elucidate their own 'truths', beyond the 'truth of events'; where people 'share' their experiences in protection of their emotional and mental wellbeing; where verbal coherence and linguistic articulation are not a centralized priority in the communication act. My search for this kind of platform initiated with journalistic proposals that already challenged 'cold', 'hard' and 'express' forms of reporting and transgressed to subjective, artistic, and affective realms, commonly identified in art documentaries, photojournalism, creative non-fiction writing, and documentary theatre (Jonsson 2004: 37). Such shared dimension between the reportorial and the artistic has enriched and expanded the possibilities of telling true stories and enhancing reality in both journalistic and artistic outlets. A relevant endorsement in this matter is proposed by curator and artist Alfredo Cramerotti, who proposes the term 'aesthetic journalism' to refer to the investigation and production of information via artistic contexts and channels as a new 'aesthetic regime', which challenges what is valued as 'truth' in traditional journalistic regimes (Cramerotti 2009: 21-22). However, the search for an 'alternative platform' in this thesis goes beyond an 'aesthetic journalism', to trespass further into artistic realms. While an 'aesthetic journalism' continues to revolve around an investigation and information of events, even if subjectively, the arts can freely submerge into people's desires and needs through introspect and retrospect.

The arts, referring to every artistic discipline and manifestation, have been a significant instrument of agency that writes history beyond the demarcation of 'winners' or 'losers'. Artists depict the struggles and joys of humankind, the subjective and affective qualities of experience, and often speak on behalf of the powerless and oppressed (Rawson 2005: 51). In this sense, the arts not only write the past but that which is latent in the present. Artists have an important agency to share experience, meaning, thought, and emotion without subordination to a claimed 'objectivity' and facticity of events.<sup>1</sup> Such agency, however, concurrently contrasts with people who are not considered 'artists' and do not have artistic means to express desires, needs, and personal meaning in freedom of form and content. Although much artistic work considers the voice and the cause of other

people, it is artists who ultimately lead the creative processes and agendas of their artworks. Literature professor Elaine Scarry argues, for example, that while many artists have the means to communicate their own experiences of pain and suffering, few 'survivors' have the artistic and political, channels to account for their own 'trauma' (Scarry 1985:11). Scarry notes that artists are often seen as the 'authentic class of survivors', because they can 'so successfully express suffering' (11). Therefore, she also argues that the attention to artists and their suffering can deviate attention from other survivors 'in radical need of assistance', urging artists to tell stories on behalf of those survivors 'bereft of the resources of speech' (Scarry 1985: 6).

Differing somewhat from Scarry, I do not argue that artists arbitrarily deviate attention from people who are not 'artists'. The emphasis here is that artists could and should give greater attention and effort to facilitate artistic platforms to those 'bereft' of such aesthetic 'resource' and who have a desire or need for it. In contrast to the popular dictum that urges to 'give a voice to the voiceless', this approach stresses that people already have a voice, but what they lack is the agency to speak for themselves. A platform agency of communication and the act 'writing' history should not be limited to artists, journalists, historians, intellectuals, or 'victors'. Such illimitation can ignite a social 'redispotion of forces', where power-less individuals are empowered to explore personal desires, needs and purposes, as a form of intervention and action in their immediate communities and wider worlds (Ziarek 2004: 26).

Guided by a criteria based on communication and semiotic principles, this doctoral research initiates the search for an alternative artistic platform in the realm of theatre and performance. This art form engages all participants in a communication event, where a connection is created through liveness, physicality, and a 'face-to-face' experience (Kress 2001: 66; Machon 2003: 25). More particularly, the search for an alternative platform focuses on genres that welcome multimodal elements of signification and realisation, and which acknowledge both verbal/non-verbal, sensorial/intellectual, somatic/semantic forms of expression, conceptualized in this thesis a 'somantic continuum' of communication. Semiotician Gunther Kress (2001) posits that every physical and non-physical sign or mode of signification carries a different meaning potential that communicates directly, which explains the impossibility to describe all modes in linguistic form (Kress 2001: 66, 108). Modes do not 'fail' to communicate but each communicates in different ways (Kress, 2001: 38). Kress thus refers to a multimedial communication as the face-to-face interaction addresses speech,

non-verbal communication and all the senses (Kress 2001: 67). In theatre discourse, this kind of communication space is identified as a 'total artwork' or 'total theatre' form, which originally referred to the theatrical space where all the arts meet and intersect (Kirby 1969: xiii, xxv). Such communication dynamics are often identified in physical forms of theatre, dance theatre, and other forms of contemporary and immersive performance styles that welcome the dialogue of various multi-sensorial art forms. From a communication perspective, I therefore considered 'total artworks' as a potential alternative platform. After thorough observation and research into contemporary theatre and performance platforms, I realized that 'trauma' was a central and controversial topic of discussion in Drama Studies (Duggan 2007; Forsyth 2009; Jennings 2009). A plethora of discourse across disciplines has exhaustively discussed the extent to which trauma pervades society and how it may be 'acted out' in order to 'work through' it. Scholars in Drama Studies along with trauma theorists have particularly addressed this matter, proposing theatre and performance as spaces where traumatized individuals and communities can 'tell their stories', express their 'traumas', and heal through this process (van der Kolk 1996:42; Ross 2003: vii, 1; La Capra 2004: 134; Ross 2003: 1; La Capra, 2004: 134; Duggan & Wallis 2011: 4; Carll, 2007: xi).

Differently from these aims, this research firstly presents the alternative point of view that 'trauma' is an inner state that cannot be exteriorized; secondly, it does not approach theatre and performance as an antidote to heal traumatic or post-traumatic stress conditions. In contrast, the aim of this alternative platform, as mentioned earlier, is to offer people a devising agency through performance-making, so that they communicate what they desire to about their traumatising experiences in an engaging and intentional experience with their communities. An important theoretical discussion in the thesis presents a particular view of the reality that individuals encounter after undergoing a traumatising experience. In this scenario, a *traumatic reality* forcefully 'clashes' with individual's previous *ordinary reality*, and a new journey begins. Individuals who undertake this journey are referred here as 'journeyers'. This term is not limited to a state of traumatic or post-traumatic stress condition. Instead, 'journeyer' is one who continues to travel the unexpected and foreign reality that emerges from the traumatising experience: '*anew*' reality. The search for journeyers' alternative platforms in both aesthetic and social forms of theatre led to the conclusion that no existing platform fully intersected with the criterion considered for a 'somatic' platform where artists would offer an agenda-less process and reverse agency of content and form.<sup>2</sup> The research therefore took greater momentum when considering the creation of an

additional and alternative devising methodology to the existing theatre and performance proposals. This methodology would further engage social and aesthetic domains where artists offer artistic platforms in a reversed agency, and where the social theatre makers acknowledges the importance of artistic, subjective and somatic qualities (Thompson 2011: 175). This dual socio-aesthetic purpose can transform people's experiences into aesthetic manifestations that serve as social 'somantic' tools to communicate people's desires, needs and purposes in an intentional engagement and participation with audiences. It is in this symbiotic location of the social and aesthetic where this platform is grounded.

Studies in psychology and sociology explain that humans have natural tendencies of desensitisation, avoidance, intimidation, un-relatability and voyeurism towards traumatic realities (Roeckelein, 1984). These tendencies discourage both journeyers and audiences to engage in communication events that regard *the traumatic*. A central aspect of this thesis discusses the arts as an instrument that can subvert this *Catch-22 predicament* and 'bridge' a communication *Distance existing* between journeyers and audiences, through a pleasurable and meaningful experience. Psychologist, philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey argues that the major aesthetic intention of pleasure and passion is to create an artwork for it to be perceived; in other words, to 'share' with others (Dewey 1980: 49; 54). In this sense journeyers are involved in the creation of an artwork that carries meaning and experience to be 'shared', in a mutually pleasurable engagement (Dewey 1980: 46). The pleasurable effect of 'sharedness' that occurs in an aesthetic creation, is applied in this research as a subversive force that can confront a *traumatic reality* and transform its experience in an engaging, seductive, and empowering communication event. Aesthetics, in this sense, is a positively subversive force because through it audiences 'enjoy' the act of being challenged, confronted, and engaged, while journeyers can find pleasure in the act of transforming a quality of suffering and oppression into an empowering, pleasing and meaningful shared experience of intervention in society. Moreover, this artistic alternative platform offers the potential to communicate *the traumatic* without perpetuating, exalting or re-enacting a traumatizing reality. This thesis is thus developed from the premise that an artistic platform of communication is a tool that *bridges Distance* between journeyers and their communities, propelling a proximity and intention to engage in a shared communication experience, in spite of its *traumatic* origin.

A subsequent and central point of discussion addressed here is the representation of *the traumatic* within the realm of theatre and performance, which can also become problematic when portraying or re-enacting oppression, violence and pain, or enacting the gruesome and absurd layers of *the traumatic*. Tension can exist, for example, between the aim of conveying a *traumatic/new reality*, and the possibilities of perturbing journeyers and audiences by the re-enactment or remembrance of violent and traumatising experiences. It is generally problematic to stage such experiences in ways that are not intimidating, uncomfortable and disengaging, and even more so when the extremity and absurdity of some traumatizing realities are difficult to relate to and conceive for a large number of audiences. An answer to such this representation problematic initially began through an aesthetics identified in techniques of estrangement. Estrangement in the arts was made popular in literature, with Viktor Shklovsky's use of the word 'ostranenie', meaning making strange through defamiliarization of reality (Jestrovic 2006: 32). Defamiliarization or 'disanciation' of in theatre has served 'as a means of seeing and relating to reality in a new way' (Jestrovic 2006: 93). This aesthetics agrees with a non-naturalistic representational approach, which allows a defamiliarization of events that conveys *the traumatic* in a way that are perceived anew and from un-exhausted and un-intimidating angles of reality (Pavis 1998: 19). I originally considered theatrical genres of defamiliarization and non-mimetic aesthetics, commonly identified under category of the 'anti-theatre' styles, such as Theatres of the Absurd, theatres of estrangement, Brechtian alienation effects, and aesthetics of the uncanny.

Through this practice-led research, however, I concluded that in spite of qualities of non-naturalism, non re-enactment and defamiliarization, certain features of these estrangement approaches were limiting to journeyers' reality, their creative process, and to subversion of the *Catch-22* tendencies earlier mentioned. An essentialist form of estrangement is not always favourable to the attitude and approach in which journeyers could desire or need to communicate their experiences. In addition, estrangement without an anchor in familiarization can provoke alienation in audiences, which distances them from the relational, familiar, and affective aspects that encourage connection, proximity, and intimacy with the artwork. Alternatively, this thesis proposes an aesthetics that has been mainly theorised as a literary genre by the academia, and yet it is applied in this research as an aesthetic tool in theatre and performance: Magical Realism. Based on the analysis of scholars and theatre art critics who discuss this aesthetic movement in literature and in the work of several theatre

directors, Magical Realism is proposed here as a most favourable aesthetics for journeyers' artistic communication platform, due to two main functionalities. One is that it concurrently defamiliarizes the familiar (exhausted) aspects of reality, whilst simultaneously doing the very opposite: familiarizing the unfamiliar (strange) aspects of reality. Another favourable functionality in Magical Realism pertains to the indivisibility of the 'magical' and 'real' realms, considered as equally valid and veracious aspects of reality (Zamora and Faris 1995: 10). Furthermore, such vision and approach to reality result in significant parallelisms and mirroring qualities to journeyers' *traumatic/anew reality*, which can deepen society's further understanding, confrontation, communication, and reconciliation with *the traumatic*. A major argument in this thesis consists of how Magical Realism's aesthetic techniques are favorable in re-presenting *the traumatic* to bridge *Distance* between journeyers and audiences. The various liminal intersections between *the traumatic* and Magical Realism, and the functionalities enabled by such shared dimension, are conceptualized here in the term **traumagical realism**.

A last central aspect of the research is a methodology constructed for theatre and performance artists to facilitate the artistic 'somantic' platform of communication to journeyers. The key to this method consists of a contiguous and recreational collaboration between artists and journeyers, based on empirical knowledge and theoretical frameworks across various disciplines. It integrates an interdisciplinary framework to maintain an ethical contiguity of wellbeing, of 'horizontal' dynamics, and of empathetic and holistic communication between journeyer(s) and artists, integrating knowledge in medical trauma research, psychology, expressive arts therapy, performance ethnography, journalism, intercultural communication, and sensory anthropology. This methodological process allows for the integration of methods of acting, training, movement, and devising by theatre directors and artists involved, as well as their artistic styles and 'signatures'. The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the notion of trauma. Although the somantic artwork is ideated for people who have healed from a traumatised condition, it is important to discuss the overall experience of individuals' journey with a traumatic experience. Furthermore, a central part of this chapter presents a view of communication that argues for the importance of both semantic and somatic forms of expression to communicate experience and meaning. This theory is developed and conceptualised as the *somantic continuum*. Chapter 1 closes with the introduction of the notion of a 'somantic' artwork', which is the term given to the artistic alternative platform proposed. Next, Chapter 2 presents an exploration of theatre and performance

genres in the aim to locate a methodological and aesthetic space where artists can facilitate journeyers' creation and presentation of their somantic artwork. The second part of this chapter develops the notion of **traumagical realism** as a favourable tool towards communication of *the traumatic*. Following, Chapter 3 covers the methodological process of a somantic artwork, proposed to artists and theatre-makers towards the creative collaboration for journeyers' devising process of the somantic artwork. Next, Chapter 4 covers the practice-led fieldwork from two case studies that informed the methodology and research. The final chapter presents further analysis, reflections and conclusions of the case studies and the research overall.

## 1.0 Commun(e)ication of *the traumatic*

### 1.1. Introduction to *the traumatic*

This first section of the chapter provides an introduction to *the traumatic*, which in this context refers to the subject that covers all aspects of a traumatic experience and the reality that follows it. Without delving into an exhaustive discussion, it is important to present the panoramic journey that individuals embark on from such traumatizing experience. An important part of this discussion pertains to the notion of ‘trauma’, its relative condition, and a disambiguation of this overused term. The latter part of the section explains the notion of a ‘traumatic reality’, which is a concept proposed in this thesis. As mentioned in the Introduction, this study focuses on the reality that people must face after they encounter a traumatizing experience. It is a reality that demands a new ‘journey’ to be travelled.

#### 1.1.1 Trauma: A Relative Term and Condition

‘Trauma’ is as a concept used across a wide spectrum of contexts and disciplines, from medical discourses and media headlines to informal conversations (Doctor 2009: vii). Its overuse and trivialisation, nonetheless, renders an imprecise definition and understanding of what trauma is in actuality (Reyes 2008: 657). In order to arrive to a clearer notion of what ‘trauma’ is, it is therefore necessary to address the extent of ambiguity of its conceptualisation. One of the relative qualities of ‘trauma’ as a concept exists in its application to refer to the various conditions resulting from a traumatizing experience. Such multi-dimensional usage problematizes a concise conceptualization (Reyes 2008: 657). Scholar and trauma theorist, Cathy Caruth (1996), as an example, proposes a frequently used reference to ‘trauma’, which depicts the multi-definition of the term:

Trauma seems to be much more than pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available.

Caruth, 1996: viii

Caruth’s description renders the concept of trauma as multi-dimensional: it is a story, an inner cry, and pathology. Furthermore, Caruth defines trauma as ‘an overwhelming **experience** of sudden and catastrophic events’ (Caruth 1996: 11- emphasis mine). Concurrently, clinicians and medical experts commonly define trauma in relation to an overwhelming experience, without necessarily defining what trauma is (van der Kolk 2003: 97). Generally, experts in the subject conceptualize trauma in relation to both the

distressing nature of a particular event and the psycho-physiological repercussions that come from experiencing such event (Levine 1997: 23; Rothschild 2000: 3; Herman 2001: 33;). Psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, for example, refers to trauma as **the result** of an ‘overwhelming’ event, emotionally and intellectually impossible to grasp (Knafo 2004: 53; Elsass 1997: 48). Moreover, another common clinical reference to trauma defines it as **the cause** of ‘a stressful occurrence outside the range of human experience that would be life threatening and markedly distressful to almost anyone’ (Diagnostic Statistics Manual 1993 in Levine 1997: 24). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, defines it as: ‘a direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; the person’s response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). Trauma is thus defined in terms of an event and a response.

Another relative approach of ‘trauma’ consists in its usage to refer to a vast range of experiences. Professor Simon Wessely, Chair of Psychological Medicine at King’s College, London, said in an interview for BBC World Service, that trauma has become a ‘trivialised’ term, applied to innumerable kinds of experiences (PTSD, 2013). Wessely says: ‘there was a stage reached in the earliest part of this decade when on one end of the spectrum, trauma could apply to people who had been in Auschwitz, and on the other end of the spectrum, to people victims of rude language at work’ (PTSD, 2013). In response to such observation, psychologist Doctor M. Ronald (2009) explains that individuals’ traumatising condition is a result to a personal reaction of an event (Doctor 2009: 25). Although experts acknowledge that some events may be ‘potentially more traumatising than others’, the event itself does not ensure a person will be traumatised (295). Doctor asserts that a broad range of experiences can in fact result traumatising, including experiences of loss, neglect, betrayal, and social rejection (295). Consequently, medical experts in trauma propose the term, ‘extreme events’ instead of ‘traumatic events’, in order to avoid the implication that certain events are ‘inevitably’ traumatising to every individual (Doctor 2009: 120). Furthermore, few experts also emphasize that what causes trauma is conditioned to the socio-cultural, political, and personal context experiences of each individual (van der Kolk 1996: 27; Drozdek: 2007: 9). Psychiatrist Boris Drozdek (2007) affirms, for example, that ‘trauma is not a disembodied construct, but a cultural and historical reality’ (9). He states: ‘the context of trauma is shaped and in turn shapes, worldviews, cultural norms, and constructions of society and individuals’ (9). Therefore, trauma is a condition intertwined with culture and thus, with a personal social reality (Drozdek 2007: 8).

Another factor of trauma's relative meaning is due to a universalized usage based on Western definitions and mass media's over usage of the term (PTSD, 2013). Clinical psychologist, Guerda Nicolas, in assisting survivors of Haiti's earthquake in 2010 state that although 'Haitians do not have a word in the Asian Creole language for trauma', they use the word 'trauma' to refer to their experiences. However, Nicolas argues that 'the word itself does not have the same level of meaning, so it is a word that people are using because others have told them that they may have experienced it' (PTSD, 2013). In respect to the ubiquitous usage of the term, BBC presenter Mike Williams, believes this is in part due to 'how mass media has significantly influenced the notion of trauma', particularly or 'at least at least in wealthy industrialised nations' (PTSD, 2013). Following, the word 'trauma' is also used interchangeably with the concept of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), which describes the symptomatology of traumatic stress disorders (PTSD, 2013). The wide reference to PTSD is linked to a specific diagnosis proposed by the Association of American Psychiatrists (AAP), which originally described particular symptoms of Vietnam veterans after returning to the United States in the 1970's (Reyes 2008: 48). This diagnostic has been developed and inscribed in various *Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals of Mental Disorders* (I, II, III, IV, V) and it is now universally applied (Levine 1997: 24). However, this specific notion of PTSD does not cover all possible symptoms and does not in actuality provide a concise definition of trauma (Drozdek 2007: 9). In addition, experts agree that only a minority of people who experience trauma from experiencing an overwhelming event will develop post-traumatic stress disorders (van der Kolk 1987: 243; Wilson 2004: 8). Concludingly, psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk (1987) declares from early definitions of trauma that the concept has been 'poorly' defined even in the clinical field (1987: 97).

### **1.1.2 Trauma: an inner state**

Having briefly illustrated the ambiguous usage of 'trauma', it is necessary to discuss a clearer conceptualization. Psychoanalyst and psychologist Donald Kalsched (1996) suggests a definition of trauma that will be endorsed in this study. Kalsched describes trauma as an inner state of the psyche, created when 'responding *inwardly* to overwhelming life events' (Kalsched 1996: 206). Kalsched believes trauma exists in the 'inner world' of human beings, which is according to Freud, individuals' 'psychic reality' (Kalsched: 1996 69). Trauma is therefore a 'world' and 'presence' that 'cannot be exteriorized' (Kalsched, 1996: 206).<sup>3</sup> To illustrate trauma as an 'inner state', Kalsched compares it to what psychoanalyst and linguist Julia Kristeva (1989) referred as the 'black sun', or the inner state that individuals in depression are trapped in (Kalsched, 1996: 206). Kristeva describes such inner state as an 'inexpressible affect', and a 'light

without representation' (Kristeva 1989 quoted in Kalsched, 1996: 206). The approach to trauma as an inner state reality is therefore instructive to differentiate it from the 'story', 'sequeale', and 'symptomatology' that result out of this inwardly experience.

Furthermore, experts and theorists in the subject have described trauma as an inner state of 'hauntedness' (Kalsched 2006: 13). Kalsched explains that during and after the overwhelming experience, trauma incubates in the inner state, hosting affective and psychical experiences (Kalsched 2006: 5). He refers to Freud's description of these experiences as 'ghosts', which take shape in the form of affective 'complex' states that 'behave autonomously as frightening inner "beings"' (Kalsched 1996: 13). Psychologist and medical biophysicist, Peter A. Levine (1997) explains that these affective complexes are 'primitive responses to painful events' in which individuals with trauma are 'stuck in' (Levine 1997: xii). Van der Kolk describes this 'hauntedness' as the experience of living in a present reality that is 'tainted' by the past (van der Kolk 1996: 279). This primitive inner state therefore results in psychological and physiological responses that continue to 'haunt the inner world' (Kalsched 1996: 13).

### **1.1.3 Internalising trauma**

Following, it is important to address what individuals generally go through from the moment of an overwhelming or 'extreme' event, and the incubation or internalisation of a trauma. As mentioned earlier, experiences and symptoms related to trauma vary on individual and cultural levels, but a universal panorama can still be considered (Drozdek 2007: 9). The next consideration to make, as Kalsched asks, is: 'what happens in the inner world when life in the outer becomes unbearable?' (Kalsched 1996: 1). The immediate inner reaction to the shocking event is a universal defence mechanism referred to as dissociation (Kalsched 1996: 14). Kalsched explains that, 'the psyche's normal reaction to a traumatic experience is a withdrawal from the scene of injury' (14). However, when individuals cannot physically or psychically escape the situation, 'a part of the self must be withdrawn' (Kalsched 1996: 13). Kalsched explains that the 'integrated ego must split into fragments and dissociate' (13). He describes dissociation as a 'trick the psyche plays on itself', which originates as a 'primitive defence' of the inner world from experiencing a 'violent aggression' (Kalsched 1996: 14). Dissociation therefore 'allows external life to go on, but at a great internal cost' (Kalsched 1996: 13). Psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman (1997, 2001) explains dissociation emerges from the impact of the shock, when the mind loses its ability to integrate or 'synthesise' normal functions of cognition and affect (Herman 2001: 35). To refer to this characteristic response, psychoanalyst and psychotherapist, Phil Mollon (2011) cites an early

description of Neurologist and psychologist Josef Breuer (1893), who states: 'trauma creates fright, which inhibits the flow of ideas, and thereby establishes a hypnoid state' (Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud (1895) quoted in Mollon 2011: 12).

Following, the incubation of a trauma usually resists a coherent articulation of the occurrence and experience (Herman 2001: 37-38). Freud states that the traumatising experience 'resists being accounted for in a coherent or meaningful way after the event' (Knafo 2004: 53). This resistance of articulation is due to the impossibility of cognition or rationalisation to meet a sudden and unexpected reality (Reyes 2008: 657). Also, van der Kolk and Caruth argue that individuals are unable to fully remember the overwhelming experience since it cannot be assimilated at the time, and therefore, it cannot be articulated (Caruth 1995: 154; van der Kolk 1996: 42). Herman explains, for example, that intense emotions are experienced without a clear memory of the events (Herman 2001: 34). She refers to the memory of the shocking event as 'traumatic memory', stored as fragmented images and bodily sensations (Herman 2001: 34). Herman asserts that traumatic memory is 'wordless and static', and resists coherent articulation (Herman 1992: 37-38). However, she explains that traumatic memory gradually transforms into a 'narrative memory', and the person is able to coherently speak about it to different extents (Herman 2001: 9, 175).

#### *Normal traumatic disturbance vs. post-traumatic stress*

Following, it is important to address the psychological and physiological conditions that can develop from a trauma. It is critical to differentiate the different stages and conditions that individuals may or may not experience. As briefly mentioned earlier, experiencing a trauma does not equate to undergoing of post-traumatic stress disorder (Wilson 1994: 9). Clinicians explain that there exists a normal 'disturbance' and manifestation of symptoms as a result of a traumatic experience without these being a disorder (9). Psychologist and expert in post-traumatic stress disorders, John P. Wilson (2004) explains that traumatic stress is an expected disturbance during the first month after the traumatising experience (9). If the stress symptoms continue and worsen, individuals pass from a normal condition of traumatic stress to a prolonged stress response syndrome, which then develops onto a post-traumatic stress disorder (Wilson 2004: 8). Symptoms of a normal traumatic stress are similar to those presented in post-traumatic disorders, however, the latter presents a much aggravated and complex symptomatology (Wilson 2004: 10). Wilson maintains that post-traumatic conditions 'cause significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas

of functioning' (10). Therefore, individuals are not fully able to function in a way that allows them to re-integrate and continue onto their normal life (10). Wilson explains that post-traumatic stress can become a chronic condition if individuals continue to manifest symptoms after three months or years from the traumatic experience, and in some cases it becomes a severe disorder (Wilson 2004: 11).<sup>4</sup>

An important awareness in regard to common notions of post-traumatic stress is that its 'whole spectrum' is not observed in the *AAP Diagnostic Manuals* (DSM-IV) (Drozdek 2007: 9). Although *AAP Diagnostic Manuals* are useful as a general guide, they 'do not take into account the social, political, cultural context in which trauma occurs' and limit a traumatic experience to a life-threatening or serious-injury event (Drozdek 2007: 9).<sup>5</sup> Drozdek identifies posttraumatic symptoms that are outside the DSM-IV, such as: 'core belief changes, dissociative moments, rupture in growth and development of personality, depression, and substance abuse (9). In addition, Levine also emphasises that post-traumatic stress can create an inability to cope with future challenges and influence individuals' personality (Levine 1997: 47). Wilson similarly comments that consequences of posttraumatic stress reside in internal changes in individuals, which affect their sense of self, identity, and their interpersonal affiliations (Wilson 2004: 9).

#### *A map of traumatic stress*

Having differentiated a 'normal' traumatic stress from a post-traumatic stress disorder, the following provides a general map of the stress condition and symptoms that can be apparent in both traumatic and post-traumatic manifestations. As stated earlier, although symptoms vary, several characteristics of traumatic stress can be universally identified (Drozdek 2007: 9; Wilson 2004: 10). First of all, it is important to note that a traumatic stress response does not necessarily occur immediately after the shocking experience (Levine 1997: 41). Levine believes, for example, that although an individual undergoes a traumatic experience, she or he may not be immediately symptomatic (41). Wilson also states that symptoms may be delayed for months after the 'stressor' (Wilson 2004: 10). One sign of traumatic stress is what experts call 'intrusions' or re-experiencing (Mollon 2001: 12). An intrusion is a recurrent distressing sensorial and visual recollection, which causes a psychological and physiological stress (12). Mollon describes it as 'intrusive reliving states', when the person may 'lose contact with present reality, affectively experiencing the past, as if it were happening in the present' (Mollon 2011: 12). Herman refers to 'intrusive recollections' as a 'reliving of the trauma' (Herman 2001: 34). These 'intrusions' may be triggered by any internal or external

stimuli that symbolises or resembles an aspect of the traumatic event, and/or relates to the person's traumatic memory, at a conscious or unconscious level (Wilson 2004: 9). Kalsched describes such re-experiencing as 'an explosion of affect' in 'complete invasion of the individual' (Kalsched 1996: 13).

Furthermore, manifestations of traumatic stress consists of hyperarousals, which may involve: irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty falling or staying asleep, nightmares, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle responses, increased sensitivity to smells and noise (Wilson 2004: 9). In addition, another level of traumatic stress consists in avoidance symptoms, which are behavioural reactions to avoid situations, events or physical stimuli that may trigger affective responses from the traumatising experience (Wilson 2004: 10). In posttraumatic stress conditions, these levels of stress aggravate and other symptoms develop (Wilson 2004: 11). Finally, aside from these universal symptoms, Drozdek states that social withdrawal and numbing reactions depend on 'individual or situational differences' (Wilson 2004: 9). The latest 2013 update of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-5), states that PTSD is caused by a 'disturbance, regardless of its trigger', causes clinically significant distress or impairment in the individual's social interactions, capacity to work or other important areas of functioning.

#### **1.1.4 Mourning and resilience**

The final stage to a differentiation of terminology, resides in distinguishing trauma from the affective responses of grief, bereavement, and mourning. While trauma is an inner state that cannot be exteriorised, such affective responses are embodied and exteriorized in mental, physical, and social manifestations (Stets & Turner 2007: 518). Moreover, although mourning, grief and bereavement are terms commonly used interchangeably, they also have different meanings. Bereavement is an affective response from the 'loss of a loved one through death' (Stroebe & Stroebe 1987: 7). Grief involves 'a subjective, emotional response to irretrievable loss, not elicited by a death' (Stets & Turner 2007: 518); it involves both psychological and somatic reactions (Stroebe & Stroebe 1987: 7). In the same way that a traumatic stress can become a chronic post-traumatic condition, there also exist pathological states of grief (Stroebe & Stroebe 1987: 8). Mourning is an 'expressive act of grief and bereavement' conducted by social and cultural values (Stroebe & Stroebe 1987: 7; Stets & Turner 2007: 517). Grief, bereavement, and mourning are manifestations that may be experienced in the aftermath of tragic and overwhelming events, yet these are not signs of traumatisation (Drozdek 2007: 127). Drozdek states that a traumatic experience may result instead in 'traumatic grief, which

is a pathological condition that presents manifestations from chronic states of bereavement (127).

From what has been outlined so far it is significant to underline that once an individual surpasses traumatic stress, the process of resilience continues without it being a pathological journey (van der Kolk 1987: 156). As Drozdek points out, post-traumatic stress is ‘only one phase in a dynamic process of individual adaptation on adversities in life, and not a final diagnostic entity’ (Drozdek 2007: 9). After recovery, for example, individuals may continue to carry bodily or affective sensations from their traumatic experience from encoded memories of past experience (Rothschild 2000: 144). Levine also asserts that factors of resilience help ‘rebound from trauma’ and ‘move through it’, as a gradual restoration from aggression (Levine 1997: 122). Furthermore, Herman states that the impact of traumatic experiences depends on resilient factors carried by each individual (Herman 1997: 58). Drozdek states that resilience is influenced by culture, and how people cope and adapt to consequences from the traumatic experience (Drozdek 2007: 8). Experts agree that resilience is influenced to a great extent by the response from individuals’ immediate communities. Herman states that ‘social support’, ‘assurances of safety and protection’, ‘connection with others’ and a ‘supportive response’ helps ‘mitigate’ the damage from the shocking experience (Herman 1997: 61); in like manner, a negative response from society ‘aggravates damage’ (61). Furthermore, Herman suggests that ‘sharing the traumatic experience’ with others and in community, contributes to ‘the restitution of sense and of a meaningful world’ (Herman 2001: 70). Other specific factors and situations for resilience are dependent on the people and community surrounding the individuals, which may involve: validation, tolerance, empathy, family connection and support (Goldenberg 2012: 8). On another level, coping and resilience depend on personal factors: personality, previous life experiences and challenges, defence mechanisms, positive beliefs about self, faith, and ritual practices (8).

#### **1.1.5 *Traumatic and Anew Reality***

Having discussed terminology and conditions related to trauma, it is necessary to refer back to the relative factors of what causes this inner state condition. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, there is an extent of controversy as to the determinant factor that establishes whether someone will be traumatised or not (Doctor 2009: 25). One explanation suggests that trauma occurs from undergoing ‘extreme’ events outside the range of human experience’ (Diagnostic Statistics Manual, 1993 in Levine 1997: 24). However, other trauma experts reject this claim. Herman, for example, strongly argues that ‘only the fortunate consider events such as rape, domestic violence and battery

outside the range of human experience' (Herman 2001: 33). Levine similarly suggests that countless events that are not usually considered 'outside of normal experience' can often be traumatising, such as accidents, surgeries, and illnesses (Levine 1997: 24). Contrarily, the American Association of Psychiatrists state that trauma occurs when: 'the person experienced, witnessed or was confused with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, provoking "intense fear, helplessness, or horror in the person" (Wilson 2004: 9). However, other experts would argue that a traumatising experience does not necessarily, or in every case, is subject to a life-threatening situation (Levine 1997: 24; Herman 2001: 33; Doctor 2009: 295).

An important observation highlighted in this thesis insists in paying attention to a common denominator implicit in the various explanations of what causes trauma. Van der Kolk asserts that a consistent factor of trauma is that the event is always 'overwhelming' (van der Kolk 1987: 1). As referred to earlier, experts agree that this overwhelming experience results in a reality that cannot be rationalised (Reyes 2008: 657). It may therefore be asserted that the common denominator is a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming experience: a shock. Based on the fact that the existence of trauma is relative to a personal and contextual frame of reference, including an individual's past experiences, and cultural, social, political, religious, and historical values (Drozdek 2007: 9), it is argued here that the nature of what is shocking to an individual or a community, is therefore relative and subjective. In other words, what is 'extreme' or 'outside the range' of normal experience to an individual, to a society, or a culture, may not be 'extreme' or 'outside an expected range of experience' to another (Doctor 2009: 120). What experts do concur in, however, is that shocking experiences that occur at an interpersonal or a 'human against human' level, such as rape, torture, war, violent crime, betrayal, and neglect, generally tend to have a greater traumatising potential than events of impersonal nature, such as natural disasters, accidents, and illnesses (Doctor 2009: 295; Reyes 2008).

#### **1.1.5.1 A 'clash' of realities**

Being the shocking factor the common denominator of what causes trauma, a closer attention to what makes an event 'shocking' for individuals is of particular interest in this research. Wilson explains that a shocking experience forces an individual to abruptly enter into a radically different and overwhelming life-situation, which is foreign, disturbing and surprising to the body and the mind (Wilson 2004: 9). Herman also asserts that a traumatic experience is too overwhelming for the mind to

comprehend (Herman 2001: 33). In simple terms, the experience renders 'unbelievable'. When describing the shocking experience of the 9/11 attacks in the United States, for example, political activist and literary icon, Susan Sontag, points out that witnesses of the event repeatedly said: 'it felt like a dream' (Forsyth 2009: 140). Phrases such as, 'this cannot be real' or 'this cannot be happening', are often used to describe the 'unbelievable' factor of a shocking experience. A shock is thus an impact that interrupts perceptions of what is normal and expected of reality from a personal and collective frame of reference. A useful definition of 'shock' to describe this experience is: 'a feeling of disturbed surprise resulting from a sudden upsetting event' (*Oxford Dictionaries online*). A shock implies an experience that is abrupt and foreign. It is unexpected and upsetting. A shock can therefore be mirrored to the concept of a 'clash', defined as: a 'coming violently into contact or conflict' (*Oxford Dictionaries online*). Trauma experts agree that a shocking impact implies an abrupt and arbitrary change of perception and life situation; it is a disruption impossible to grasp (van der Kolk 1987: xii; Caruth 1995: 154).

Following is a brief explanation of what is understood with a 'clash' in the context of this thesis. Before the shocking event, an individual's reality consists of normal, ordinary and expected life-situations. This reality does not entail a lack of hostility, but such hostility is one that can be a familiar or expected circumstance for an individual. This 'normalized' state of reality is referred here as an *ordinary reality*. This reality is common, expected and logical to an individual's experiential frame of reference, and most likely, to his or her immediate social and cultural context also. An *ordinary reality* 'makes sense'. Therefore, a shock is the abrupt interruption into a different life situation that arbitrarily challenges perceptions of what is normal and ordinary. The shocking experience therefore creates a life-situation referred here as *traumatic reality*. A *traumatic reality* is foreign and remote to ordinary standards and perceptions of experience. It is an illogical and absurd occurrence, which creates a new life situation that 'does not make sense'. A *traumatic reality* 'unmakes sense'. It can also be foreign and remote to the social standards surrounding the individual. Since *ordinary reality* exists prior to the shocking experience, it is an *a priori* reality, from the Latin word 'beforehand' (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). Since *traumatic reality* exists from the impact of the shocking event onwards, it is a *posteriori* reality, from the Latin word 'afterwards' (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). A *traumatic reality* forces a new life situation: a point of no return.

The notion of 'clash' will be used in this thesis to describe the impact of the shocking experience where a *traumatic reality* forcefully clashes and integrates into *the ordinary*

*reality* of an individual. This ‘clash’ implies the collision of opposite or conflicting natures: one being a familiar reality, the other being an unfamiliar one. The ‘clash’ thus creates a new dimension of reality where the acceptable and familiar (or what ‘makes sense’) and the unacceptable and unfamiliar (or what ‘unmakes sense’) merge arbitrarily. The new dimension of reality created from this ‘clash’ is referred here as: *anew reality*. The significance of *anew reality* lies in that it marks the beginning onto a new and unexpected journey for an individual, a new perception of self, of reality, and of the world (Levine 1997: 47). The term ‘*traumatic/anew reality*’ will be used throughout to refer to the new reality that emerges from traumatic experience.

#### **1.1.5.2 The Journey**

When an individual encounters a traumatic experience, ‘anew’ life journey begins. At the beginning of this journey, individuals encounter an utmost personal passage with trauma, resulting in traumatic and/or post-traumatic stress, and the resilient walk to recovery. Van der Kolk suggests it is a passage that is not necessarily linear or resolved in a clear fashion (van der Kolk 1987: 156). This journey is not limited to the presence or absence of trauma in the inner world, or to overcoming a traumatic stress condition. It is a journey onto a new reality that continues after the traumatic stress condition, after recovery and resiliency (156). New perceptions and experiences are integrated onto the new journey and cannot be erased (Roethelein 1984: 41). Moreover, memories of the traumatic experience remain in the body and the mind, and only gradually they are transformed by creating new memories (Rothschild 2000: 44). Also, shocking experiences may present new life circumstance that individuals must endure with for life, such as the absence of a loved one, an indefinite exile, a physical condition, and so forth. The journey carries on. In this manner, the last concept addressed here pertains to the notion of ‘*journeyers*’, as individuals who walk into *anew reality* after the shock.

A common term for *journeyers* that has recently become less popular is that of ‘*victim*’. Although the denotation of ‘*victim*’ is accurate to describe the arbitrary, forceful state of harm, it connotes a negative state of disempowerment and lack of agency for resilience. Therefore, another term more commonly used now is, ‘*survivor*’. Contrarily to ‘*victim*’, this term connotes an empowering condition of resilience. However, it denotes the existence of a life or death situation, which is not always the scenario for a traumatising experience. Therefore, the word ‘*journeyer*’ will be used instead throughout the thesis. A ‘*journeyer*’ denotes a person who endures a ‘*passage from one stage to another*’ (*Oxford Dictionaries online*); it also implies a travelling experience that usually takes a long or indefinite time. ‘*Journeyer*’ is therefore an appropriate concept to imply a continuous

travel with *anew reality*. Moreover, it is an empowering term because it connotes an active and intentional engagement with the road ahead.

In terms of the journey, the scope of this research focuses on individuals who have passed the recovery stage of traumatic stress and are journeying in a place of emotional, mental and social wellbeing. According to experts in psychology, wellbeing is a state of present subjective happiness, of positive affect; it is reflected when individuals are socially integrated and have regained meaning and control over their life (Lopez, 2009). The term ‘journeyers’ refers here onwards to individuals who are in a state of wellbeing. The criteria for not considering journeyers who are under traumatic stress will be addressed in Chapter Three.

## **1.2 Betraying trauma**

Having disambiguated the definition of trauma it is important to address a common discussion across disciplines, which implies that ‘trauma’ can be expressed and communicated. A plethora of discourse amongst theatre practitioners and trauma theorists recurrently question if and to what extent is trauma communicated, transmitted or performed (Duggan & Wallis 2011).

### **1.2.1 Trauma and the ‘unspeakable’**

The following section covers a discussion regarding a popular paradox when it comes to trauma discourse: ‘to speak the unspeakable’ (Wald 2007: 96). A plethora of opinions exist in regards to the ‘unspeakable’ nature of trauma and to the imperative to tell and give testimony of traumatising events (Wald, 2007; Spring, 2008; Diedrich, 2011; Pinchevski and Liebes 2010; Forsyth, 2012). This section disambiguates various references to the ‘unspeakable’ quality of ‘trauma’, and presents a view of trauma not only as unspeakable but as inexpressible, drawing important conclusions and propositions on this matter referenced throughout.

#### *Literal and Social meanings*

A well-known philosophical approach to the unspeakable has been presented by Austrian-British philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), where he posits on the limits of language to express thought (Wittgenstein 2010: 23). Wittgenstein explains that thought is ‘disguised’ by linguistic structure and cannot be translated into its pure form (Wittgenstein 2010: 39). He

therefore concedes that what can be clearly communicated through language should be spoken, whilst remaining silent of what cannot be communicated through speech (Wittgenstein 2010: 90). Another reference of the 'unspeakable' refers to journeyers' impossibility to coherently speak about the shocking event, after it as occurred, whether immediately or at a latter period (Herman 2001: 34). However, Herman clarifies that people experience a passage from inarticulation to the articulation of their 'story' (Herman 2001: 9, 175). Caruth agrees when conceding that 'a belated narrative that could not be articulated can [later] be told' (Caruth 1995: 69). Following, a reference to the unspeakable has been addressed by literature professor, Elaine Scarry, in her book, *The Body in Pain* (1985), to address the unspeakable in relation to pain in the body. Scarry distinguishes 'psychological suffering' (trauma) from physical pain, and claims that while the former has a 'referential content' and can be verbally objectified and depicted in art, physical pain 'destroys and resists objectification in language, because it is a pre-verbal pain' (Scarry 1985: 4-5; 11-12). A problematic with Scarry's view resides in her suggestion that physical pain is pre-verbal and ineffable, whilst implying that psychological suffering is not and can be articulated (Scarry 1985: 11-12). In addition, Scarry concludes that in the course of time, physical pain also find a 'voice' and 'domains' in public discourses that 'record the passage of pain into speech' (Scarry 1985: 6, 9).

Next, a third reference to the 'unspeakable' is a social figurative usage. Herman explains why journeyers do not usually speak about their traumatic experiences. She gives relevant reasons why journeyers are discouraged to speak about their traumatic experiences. She conceptualises this discouragement as a 'central dialectic', referring to the various dilemmas and conflicts journeyers encounter in the intention of to 'tell' their stories (Herman 2001: 8, 70). She posits:

When the victim is already devalued, she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of society's validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable.

Herman 2001: 8

Psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1989) draws attention to this 'central dialectic', referring to the 'loneliness' experienced when 'being unable to communicate the things that seem important to oneself' (Jung 1989: 356). In Herman's words, the 'central dialectic' is: 'the conflict between the will to deny' the shocking event and 'the will to proclaim' it (Herman 2001: 1). One conflict, for example, can be a sense of shame and potentially a sense of guilt from their experiences (Herman 2001: 68-69). Another conflict pertains to

the brutal and gruesome nature of some shocking events. Herman alludes to the word unspeakable arguing that ‘certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud’ (Herman 2001: 1). A third conflict pertains to the uneasiness and discomfort that exists in remembering overwhelming events, especially if journeyers are undergoing traumatic or post-traumatic stress (Herman 2001: 37). The act of remembering may provoke involuntary psychosomatic responses from the time of the traumatic event to the extent of triggering the emotions of the occurrence (McNally 2003: 105). Finally, another conflict resides in journeyers’ apprehension of being discredited or not validated when they share their stories (Herman 2001: 1). Herman argues that since journeyers’ testimonies are usually highly emotional, fragmented, emotional, and somewhat incoherent, their narratives tend to ‘undermine their credibility’ before those they speak to (Herman 2001: 1-2).

### **1.2.2 A inexpressible state**

Referring to Kristeva’s analogy of the ‘black sun’ as an inexpressible state, it argued here that trauma cannot be exteriorised or expressed in any form or language (Kalsched 1996: 206-208). Kristeva’s explains that this ‘inexpressible affect’, which she refers to as ‘The Thing’, is of an untranslatable substance:

The Thing, however, will not be translated in order that it not be betrayed; it shall remain walled up within the crypt of the inexpressible affect, anally harnessed, with no way out.

Kristeva 1989: 53

The attempt to translate trauma into any external form, as Kristeva argues, is a betrayed effort. Contemporary philosopher, Martin Beck Matušík (2008), for example, compares the traumatised heart to ‘a jammed cavern’, which ‘locked within itself, grows lonely’ (Matušík 2008: 206). Caruth also refers to trauma as a cry, which ‘dilutes’ in the attempt of being expressed (Caruth 1996: vii). Psychiatrist Dori Laub declares that Holocaust survivors feel that ‘no amount of telling seems to ever do justice to [their] inner compulsion’ (Laub 1995: 63). Such ‘inner compulsion’ is therefore coherent with Kristeva’s reference to the ‘black sun’: it is untranslatable (Kristeva 1996: 206). Furthermore, in the field of aesthetics, philosopher Garry Hagberg (1998) argues that internal states cannot be translated into their pure forms, and are thus inexpressible (Hagberg 1998: 99). Hagberg argues ‘against creation as translation’ challenging the idea that ‘an inner entity, a particular feeling or emotion, can be manifested in artistic expressions’ (99). Instead of a ‘translation’, for example, Hagberg proposes an artwork as a ‘original’ entity; as ‘the mind’s emotive prototype’ (Hagberg 1998: 108). Therefore, it is possible to express and transmit emotion as new interpretation and manifestation

(Hagberg 1998: 121). As Hagberg concedes, subjective representations through artistic expression can be example of this (121). Conclusively, it is important to remark that trauma is not only unspeakable but also untranslatable and inexpressible.

### 1.2.3 Communication from the *traumatic spectrum*

At this point of the discussion, the question to consider is then, what is it being communicated, when a plethora of discourse suggests or implies that trauma may be expressed or enacted (Duggan 2007; Young 2008; Zarrilli, 2008; Forsyth, 2009; Kuburović 2011). An important proposition in this thesis observes that journeyers' *traumatic/aneu realities* consist of different layers of expressible and communicable qualities, which although related to trauma, they are not the inner state itself. These layers carry meaning and experience created from the *traumatic/aneu* journey, and can be communicated, depicted, and expressed to different extents and forms. Such aspects of a *traumatic/aneu reality* are referred to here as a *traumatic spectrum*.

The *traumatic spectrum* is a term ideated to refer to any aspect of experience and meaning emerging from the 'clash' of realities.<sup>6</sup> These aspects are referred as *layers* of the *traumatic spectrum*. All of these *layers* are intricately connected and intertwined as part of one reality. Firstly, the layer that journeyers are usually expected to communicate is the *narrative of the shocking event*: the 'what happened', referred as 'telling one's story'. This layer regards what journeyers remember about the events. A second layer is the *characters involved* in the event. Furthermore, another layer pertains to journeyers' memory of the *reaction and response* they displayed towards the event. Following, another aspect is the *aftermath* of the event. *Aftermath* in this context refers to the immediate physical impact from the event(s), which can be *tangible* or *intangible*. The former refers to any physical consequence from the occurrence, which includes a material presence. The *intangible aftermath* involves the absence of a material entity that was present before the event, such as a stolen or destroyed object. Next, another layer consists of different types of *wounds* resulting of the experience. One kind of *wound* is the *physical impact* or injuries on the body. Another type of wound pertains to the *traumatic and post-traumatic stress condition*, which is both physiological and psychological stress. Another layer consists of the *practical implications* of how the shocking events affect journeyers' life on a regular and daily basis immediately after or throughout the journey. This may involve, for example, a handicap situation, the change in dynamics with the absence of a loved one, and so forth. The next layer is referred to as the *resilient response* consisting of positive aspects that journeyers acknowledge from their resilience process, which may

involve an experience of forgiveness, achievements, overcoming particular challenges, and so forth. Another layer is referred here as *realizations*, consisting of journeyers' introspective and retrospective dimensions of their experiences. *Realisations* are objective and subjective thoughts, reflections, revelations, perceptions, opinions, perspectives, understandings, lessons, questions, and so on. One last dimension, the *affective layer*, pertains to the sensible and pre-expressive, which consists of feelings and affective experiences that individuals manifest at different instances and phases of their journey.

The *traumatic spectrum*, in the same manner as trauma, is specific and particular to each journeyer. In other words, every journeyer has a personal spectrum that depicts their *traumatic/aneu reality* in a contextual frame. Each mosaic piece is shaped, textured and engrained by a respective cultural, social, political and historical process. Furthermore, because the *traumatic spectrum* depicts *layers* of a reality created from a continuous journey, it is in constant flux. Mosaic pieces are reshaped, added, and removed. Following, a panorama of the *traumatic spectrum* is provided. A list of *layers* here described is only a general reference to the main aspects of experience involved in journeyers' *traumatic/aneu reality*. There may be particular 'clashes' of reality that involve other layers of the spectrum, while not every reality *traumatic/aneu reality* involves all the *layers* here addressed.

A helpful analogy to illustrate the distinctiveness yet cohesion of the *layers* of the *traumatic spectrum* is a three-dimensional, spherical 'mosaic'. One definition of a 'mosaic' is: 'a combination of diverse elements forming a more or less coherent whole' (*Oxford Dictionary online*). The word 'mosaic' comes from the Latin, *Musivum*, meaning: *a portrait*. Its quality is defined as a variegated pattern where its pieces are distinguished from each other and can have different textures and colours. Similarly, the *layers* of the *traumatic spectrum* are different aspects of a reality, which are interconnected and cohesively maintained, together depicting journeyers' *aneu reality*. Each *layer* may be appreciated individually and maintains a domain of its own. However, one of these pieces alone cannot fully depict the complete portrait of journeyers' reality. In this mosaic depiction, individuals' inner world and its inner states inhabit inside this spherical mosaic, where trauma dwells. It is important to note, that the proposition to use the notion of *layers* does not isolate or separate the inner state of trauma from journeyers' *traumatic/aneu reality*. Instead, this mosaic picture illustrates and distinguishes the interconnected *layers* of traumatic experience from the inner state. Moreover, this visualisation is a practical

way to discursively differentiate the various aspects of journeyers' *traumatic/new realities* instead of referring to every *layer* as 'trauma'.

When it comes to question of what can be expressed and communicated about *the traumatic*, the *traumatic spectrum* is useful to illustrate the possibilities. First of all, all the *layers* mentioned, for example, can be linguistically described. As mentioned earlier, the layer of the *narrative of the event*, or the 'story of what happened', is the one most commonly addressed. However, all the other layers are aspects that journeyers may speak about, such as: the *psychological and physiological wounds*, the *resilient response*, the *practical implications*, the *realizations* of journeyers, and even speak and reflect about the *affective experiences*. Second of all, other layers such as the *tangible and intangible aftermaths* can be documented and presented through mediated forms, as it is done in journalism. Some layers could be shown or demonstrated and also documented, such as the *practical implications* or *physical impacts*. Moreover, there are layers that can be enacted and represented, such as: the 'what happened' or the external responses of undergoing traumatic stress. Furthermore, the *layer of realisations* can be expressed in subjective and abstract manifestations, or described in verbal interpretations. Finally, although affective states are untranslatable in their pure inner states, the *affective layer* can be represented and transmitted as new interpretations and manifestations (Hagberg 1998: 121). Conclusively, each *layer* of the spectrum and their interconnections can, to different extents and variegation, be communicated, manifested, represented, demonstrated, or performed. The inner state remains inexpressible.

#### **1.2.4 The 'imperative to tell' and 'respecting silence'**

Having clarified the position in this thesis of the inexpressibility of trauma in contrast to the communication of the *traumatic spectrum*, this section discusses an important problematic created from common assumptions that journeyers 'should' speak about their shocking experiences to bear witness and to heal from their trauma.

##### *Bearing Witness: Recording history through testimony*

The atrocities and crimes of the Holocaust urged a social and historical demand for survivors to bear witness about their traumatic experiences (Laub 1992: 65). Laub and trauma theorist Shoshana Felman proposed the notion of bearing witness as being 'witness to the truth' of brutal events (65). Laub argues for example, that without the 'knowing' of the event, 'impending truths [are] to be forgotten and hence non-existent,

the survivor's identity may be lost, and history never recorded' (Laub 1992: 66, 69). Laub concludes that survivors 'not only needed to survive so that they could tell their stories; they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive' (Laub 1992: 63). He therefore refers to 'bearing witness' as an 'imperative to tell' (63). This argument also underlines that journeyers' telling of their 'story' is a moral obligation or responsibility (Laub and Felman 1992: 15). Felman comments, for example, that the survivor is a 'vehicle' and 'medium of realization of the testimony' (Laub and Felman 1992: 15). She posits that such testimony is: 'a stance of a dimension beyond the survivor' (15). Moreover, Felman insists in the need 'to take responsibility for history and for the truth of an occurrence' (Laub and Felman 1992: 204). Laub suggests that 'the emergence of the narrative which is being listened to – and heard – is therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the "knowing" of the event is given birth to' (Laub and Felman 1992: 25). Therefore, Laub and Felman relevantly address the importance of recording history through testimony. Certainly, the denouncement of injustice, the unveiling of brutality, and the writing of such incidents in history, play a central part in the course of humankind. However, a problematic emerges when the responsibility of 'bearing witness' becomes a centralised demand for journeyers.

One problematic of centralising the notion of the 'imperative to tell' is that it focuses on the factual narratives of brutal acts, which risks defining journeyers in terms of the perpetration performed against them. Also, a focus on the factual narrative can place a higher value on journeyers' position as means of historical and documentary information. To a great extent, such centralisation can overlook journeyers' agency over their own experiences, and an ownership of what they desire to express, or remain silent about. In addition, considering journeyers as 'historical living documents' is to an extent limiting, because their experiences are mainly of subjective quality, and originate from traumatic memory. Consequently, as Herman notes, this may contribute to journeyers' apprehension of losing of credibility of their accounts (Herman 2001: 1-2). Lastly, a centralised importance given to testimony subtracts value to journeyers' traumatic experiences that do not involve a historical event or a hidden 'truth' that needs to be revealed.

#### *'Acting Out' to 'Work Through'*

Following, another notion related to the 'imperative to tell' pertains to a proposal popularised by trauma theorists, referred to as 'acting out' to 'work through' trauma. Laub and Caruth, amongst other trauma theorists, initially endorsed this view as

another form of giving testimony, which involves journeyers' 'reliving' and 'reoccurrence' of the traumatic event (Caruth 1996: 69). This approach to testimony was originally intended as an avenue of overcoming trauma (2008: 9). Literary scholar, Roger Luckhurst (2008), endorses 'acting out' to 'work through' as a healing process (Luckhurst 2008: 7-8). This view has been widely considered in the field of performance studies, most recently discussed by performance researcher and lecturer, Patrick Duggan (2011). Duggan suggests 'acting out' 'as a tool with which we can read, contemplate and reflect on a structure of feeling and potentially thus progress from it, as well as rehearse for or work through our own traumata' (Duggan & Wallis 2011: 15).

Medical experts in trauma, however, argue against a cathartic view of 'acting out' and 'telling one's story' as a universal form of healing (Drozdek 2007: 10). Herman states, for example, that 'acting out' as catharsis has been a misconstrued approach as a method for healing. She posits:

Patients at times insist upon plunging into graphic, detailed descriptions of their traumatic experiences, in the belief that simply pouring out the story will solve all their problems. At the root of this belief is the fantasy of a violent cathartic cure which will get rid of the trauma once and for all. The therapist's role in this reenactment comes uncomfortably close to that of the perpetrator, for she is invited to rescue the patient by inflicting pain. The patient's desire for this kind of quick and magical cure is fuelled by images of early, cathartic treatments of traumatic syndromes which by now pervade popular culture.

Herman 1997: 72

Levine also argues that the concept of catharsis, as the repetition of the traumatic event, 'cannot account for a beneficial effect of purification' in journeyers (Levine 1997: 87). He suggests that the strategy in trauma therapy to repeat a cathartic experience has no real healing result, since: "repetition" repeats itself' (87). Levine explains that 'in remaining external', a re-enactment also remains unchanged' (Levine 1997: 188). Instead, it is rather possible to 'purify trauma through an act of poiesis', which Levine describes as imaginatively seeing through the event by its possibilities, in order to 'repeat it differently' and shape it into another form (Levine 1997: 87). Furthermore, psychotherapist Babette Rothschild (2000) argues in her book, *The Body Remembers*, on the importance of 'brakes' and a 'safe place' in clients' control, - rather than encouraging catharsis or re-enactments (Rothschild 2000: 38). From these experts' assertions, it is clear how problematic and harmful it may be to suggest journeyers to 're-live' or narrate their experiences, and even more so outside experts' supervision (Drozdek 2007: 10). In addition, although 'acting out' to 'work through' can be a personal choice from people who seek a cathartic release from their traumatic experience it should not be a

universalised demand for journeyers. Finally, another view of ‘acting out’ to ‘work through’ encourages journeyers to tell their story through narratives and textual testimonies, aside from healing purposes (LaCapra 1996: 89). Historian Dominick La Capra (2001) suggests that journeyers can attain a ‘critical distance’ of their experiences through ‘acting out’ narratives that ‘bring about processes of working through, not simply therapeutic but of political and ethical solutions’ (La Capra 2001: 143, 153).

### *‘Respecting Silence’*

In contrast to the ‘imperative to tell’ and the ‘acting out’ approaches, professor and practitioner of applied and social theatre, James Thompson (2009) proposes a significant and critical view in relation to centralised notions of ‘bearing witness’ and ‘imperatives to tell’. Thompson observes, for example, that ‘demands for people to “express themselves” with the prescription of “telling one’s story” can become an imperative rather than a self-directed action’ (48). His argument emerges from the relevance and importance of ‘respecting silence’ in journeyers and valuing how silence also speaks (Thompson 2009: 48). Thompson contends that particular Western assumptions towards ‘the imperative to tell’ are culturally specific intentions that can be misleading or problematic if applied universally (48). One assumption revolves around the view that ‘a method and necessary precondition for people’s relief, healing and liberation’ from trauma, is for them to “tell their story” (48). With a culturally aware lens, Thompson observes that trauma and the display of PTSD symptoms ‘vary across cultures’ and therefore demand different treatments, which does not necessarily entail storytelling (Thompson 2009: 50). Drozdek agrees, for example, that verbal narrations of events or ‘verbal therapy’ are not necessarily accurate methods of healing across cultures (Drozdek 2007: 10). Culture defines ‘what should be shared, and what should be a secret’ (Drozdek 2007: 8). Furthermore, Thompson brings into attention the importance to acknowledge the challenge journeyers face in remembering what cannot be changed or ‘redeemed’, which he refers to as the ‘*difficult return*’ (Thompson 2009: 54, 57). In this case, journeyers may prefer to forget instead of remembering (Thompson 2009: 57). Another significant view of ‘respecting silence’ is Thompson’s approach to silence as a valid form of social and cultural resistance (Thompson 2009: 48-49). He critiques that a silent action is commonly perceived as ‘a passive position of failure’ (Thompson 2009: 57). In response, he posits: ‘[silence] is not only the dwelling place of the feeble and deluded but also potentially the tactic of the strong’ (57). Although ‘respecting silence’ does not suggest that telling stories is not adequate or a valid, Thompson emphasises the problematic begins when ‘culturally specific approaches’ such

as storytelling, are universalised (Thompson 2009: 48, 51). He states that the 'rule' or the 'default position' of 'telling one's story' can turn from 'a prescription to a proscription' (Thompson 2009: 55).

It is important to highlight that the discussion here presented shows that testimony and storytelling have become heavily inclined towards journeyers' disclosures of the facts of events. In contrastingly argued here, that a traumatic experience is not primarily objective, even though the shocking experience is rooted in a factual event (Herman 2001: 8). It is therefore necessary to question the default notion suggesting that journeyers' have 'a truth' beyond themselves that they must convey, which is usually a factual or 'objective' truth. Such notions reflect an archetype that gives primary value and importance to facts, events and objectivity, hence giving greater value to such as a truthful and veracious reality. Consequently, journeyers' possibilities of sharing about their experiences have unfortunately been centralized to a claimed 'objective' through event narratives.

### **1.3 Commun(e)ication**

This section presents the central intent of this research, which is to emphasise that perhaps the main concern should regard what journeyers desire to communicate, demonstrate or depict about their experiences. This is important to consider because it is a matter of journeyers' ownership and agency over their personal journey. This next section highlights a different approach, which focuses on whether journeyers have a desire or purpose to communicate or not, what they desire to express (content), and how they prefer to do this (form).

#### **1.3.1 Defining Commun(e)ication**

The basic approach to communication in this context is first of all related to the social need in human beings for interaction (Kress, 1988). Communication is a need of cohabiting and coexisting (Narula 2006: 8). Therefore, it is an approach of communication as an experience. Without delving in different communication models or theories, the approach to communication in this context is rather based on its etymological definition. The etymology of the word 'communication', from the Latin verb, *communicat-*, means '**shared**'; and the noun *communis*, means to '**make common**' (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). The word 'common', rooted in Middle English from the Old French *comuner*, 'to share', refers to the **sharing of intimate thoughts or feelings with someone** (*Oxford dictionary of English online*); in other words, to **communicate**

**intimately** (*Merriam-Webster dictionary online*). In the expanded sense of the word, *communicat* also means: ‘**to impart or pass on**’; to ‘**convey or transmit**’, and to ‘**succeed in conveying one’s ideas or in evoking understanding in others**’ (*Oxford dictionary online*). From these etymological origins, the act of communication demands an attention to its rich potential to create new ‘shared’ meaning and experience. Communication in this research therefore takes a different route from the standard definition of communication as the mere conveying of information. Instead, it approaches this concept as an intimate act of sharing experience.

As mentioned in the brief discussion of the previous section, the position of bearing witness or giving testimony values the ‘sharing’ of experience as conveying information of traumatic events; this position is predominantly objective and intellectual. Contrarily, the other position, ‘acting out’ to ‘work through’, is inclined to see the ‘sharing’ of experience as the expression and transmission of the emotions felt from the traumatic event. While both positions are significant in their particular contexts and agendas, whether a narrative of a shocking event is in actuality a ‘sharing of experience’ and whether it is possible to transmit the emotions from a traumatic experience, are both questionable remarks. For now, it is important to clarify that ‘sharing experience’ in this context is not a literal transmission of someone’s emotions or felt experience, but, as the definitions suggest, it is the sharing of thoughts, feelings, conveying of ideas, and transmitting what journeyers find meaningful or important to impart **about** their experiences. A central remark is that such act of communication is an experience in itself. Communication here thus implies conveying meaning and affect in a live experience shared by perceivers; it is therefore an act of ‘sharedness’. To differentiate this concept of communication, a parenthesis in the ‘e’ will be used, to emphasise the notion of ‘communing’, as the essence of the notion of **commun(e)ication** here addressed.

### **1.3.2 Commun(e)ication Desires and Confidants**

Following, to introduce a second point in this section, it is useful to refer to a basic model in communication theory, which describes communication as an intentional action to convey a message to others (Narula 2006: 15). The words ‘intentional’ and ‘message’ are important considerations for journeyers’ commun(e)ication or ‘sharing’ of experience. First of all, ‘intention’ implies purpose and agency over the commun(e)ication act. This is significant because an intention carries a wish or **desire**. The definition of desire here addressed refers to: expressing, feeling, fulfilling, having, indicating, satisfying, and showing (*Macmillan dictionary online*). In addition, definitions

of the word 'desire' indicate it is commonly accompanied by a feeling of pleasure (*Macmillan dictionary online*). In this sense, journeyers may desire to commun(e)icate, or alternatively, to be silent. In the latter case, silence communicates a desire about their particular situation. A desire for silence may be related to cultural aspects of mourning (Thompson 2009: 58). Also, silence may emerge from the desire to avoid the 'central dialectic', which Herman described as the dilemma between the will and the fear to speak (Herman 2001: 8). This notion is related to the paradox between forgetting and remembering (2009: 57). Therefore, silence not only reflects a socio-cultural and political state, but a psychological and affective stage. A desire to be silent communicates a personal choice in a particular moment of the journey with *anew reality*.

Next and contrarily, journeyers can also carry a desire to commun(e)icate. Referring to the definition of 'desire' used earlier, a desire may involve showing, indicating, expressing, and feeling. In this case, it is an intentional act of communication with purpose, motivation and agency. Therefore, it is important to value what drives journeyers to an act of sharing or communicating in regard to their *traumatic/anew realities*. A panorama of desires can be depicted on several levels. On a social level, there exist desires to feel appreciated, acknowledged, validated, esteemed, engaged (Stets and Turner 2007: 117-118). On a psychological level, communication can meet a desire to be listened to for a mental and affective contentment (Roeckelein 1984: 180). Also, pain can lead to the need 'to communicate the experience' (Thompson 2011: 147). Following, on a retrospective and introspective level, a desire can emerge to discuss, to reflect, and to explore or challenge a particular aspect. On a level of morality and ethics, there is the desire to denounce, to seek justice, or to request a particular motion from society towards social change (Rae 2009). On an identity level, a desire may be to reinforce and affirm qualities of journeyers' persona, and to make a statement in regard to how their experience has reconstructed or influenced perceptions of themselves (Herman 2001: 70). On a phenomenological and spiritual level, a desire could be to express a personal and particular approach to life, or an advice (Roeckelein 1984: 414). On other relational levels, journeyers may desire to 'share' a moment of affective and conceptual experience with others, such as sharing a particular wish, a realisation, a memory, an image, to stir hope, to 'share' a longing (Roeckelein 1984: 381). This level of 'sharing' may reflect a desire for togetherness.

Having presented this panorama of desires, it should be noted that this is not by any means a complete depiction of possible desires. Even more so, this is not a panorama of

specific drives or personal intentions in a particular context or frame of reference, but a general depiction of desires subject to personal, social, cultural, political, religious, and creative motivations. Furthermore, journeyers' 'sharing' of experience may entail challenging and confronting aspects of reality that are not necessarily joyous or pleasing, but that journeyers consider necessary and satisfactory to address. Lastly, what is central to remark is that a desire is born from an interest and agency in journeyers' present realities, not limited to narratives of the past. These desires will be referred to as **commun(e)ication desires**.

Following, it is necessary to address the significance of audiences in a commun(e)ication experience, which is essential in the completion of journeyers' commun(e)ication desires. For audiences, a great significance of a commun(e)ication experience resides in an act of confiding to journeyers' personal desires, needs, and purpose. They experience a message that carries an intent of making of meaning and experience directly from journeyers, and not through a third party's agenda. In this sense, the concept of audience in a commun(e)ication experience is extended to an active 'confiding' role. An audience thus becomes a confidant when they engage with journeyers' commun(e)ication desires and personal message. The confiding role encourages and entails a compromise with what has been 'shared' and experienced directly from journeyers' commun(e)ication desires. Confiding thus exerts an intentional and intimate action to draw closer to journeyers. The word **confidant** will be used in this thesis to refer to audiences engaged with journeyers' commun(e)ication acts. The platform that facilitates this experience will be referred to as a **commun(e)ication event**. Through a commun(e)ication event, a journeyer has a connection with confidants. Depending on the desires, journeyers establish a particular kind of relationship with confidants.

### **1.3.3 The somantic continuum: a *shared dimension***

Turning now from the 'intention' element in the communication, follows the conveying of a 'message' (Narula 2006: 15). From what has been suggested so far, conveying a 'message' is conveying experience. Intention carries a message, not in the sense of information, but of the meaning transmitted from the experience of commun(e)ication. Therefore, the desire to commun(e)icate is completed through the experience of 'sharing'. The message is the content of the 'sharing' experience and how this is conveyed. The message is the content and form of what journeyers commun(e)icate. A message therefore carries meaning and experience from which more meaning and experience is created when 'shared' (Narula 2006: 24).

The following section presents a central view of communication in this research. The significance of this communication theory is that it is grounded in a holistic approach to signification and perception of meaning and experience. This holistic understanding rebates the Cartesian or dualistic view of the body and the mind as separate entities with independent functions. The view of body and mind as indivisible in a communication experience is crucial to support the arguments that will be developed further in this chapter. For now, this section presents theories in communication, psychoanalysis, aesthetics and performance that support the holistic view towards a commun(e)ication experience.

### *The Sensible and Intelligible Domains*

Expert in communication theory, Fernando Poyatos (1983 & 2002) sustains that communication is simultaneously realised in two domains: the semantic, which is the intelligible system of perception, or what is perceived 'through the mind'; and the somatic, the sensible system of perception, or what is perceived 'through the senses' (Poyatos 1983: 27). The senses and the mind are interconnected through a 'net of interbodily platforms', dependent on one another for sensuous and intelligible perception (Poyatos 2002: 31, v.i). Therefore, any communicative event consists of simultaneous sensory and intellectual domains (Poyatos 2002: 342, v. ii). The intelligible system consists of the articulated language of symbol systems (speech and text), also referred to as semantic or verbal communication (Poyatos 2002: 9). The sensible system – known as somatic or nonverbal communication (Poyatos 2002: 9, v.i) – is the somatic system of cognition decoded prior to any intellectual process on an unconscious level (Poyatos 1983: 75). The intelligible system 'depends on exchanges of signs and messages on a somatic level' (Poyatos 2002: 9, 31, v.i), while the signs perceived through the senses 'undergo a process of intellectualization' (Poyatos 2002: 342, vii). Therefore, somatic interaction is not only stored as memory in the body but also in the conscious and unconscious mind (Poyatos 2002: 342, vii). A communication act consists of an 'overlapping' of the two systems (1983: 27) where neither system is able to function separately from the other (Poyatos 2002: 9, 31, v.ii).

Another holistic approach towards the indivisibility of the somatic and semantic realms is presented by psychoanalyst Antonio di Benedetto (2000). According to Benedetto, the somatic realm is the 'pre-verbal insight,' rooted in 'the most obscure area of [our] sensorial experience'; the 'aesthetically and purely' domain, (di Benedetto 2000: 71). The somatic realm anticipates articulation and the intellectual ability to rationalise it, think

it, and verbalise it (di Benedetto 2000: 66). However, di Benedetto also argues that the 'pre-insight' is constituted by suggestive language that involves the imagination, the metaphoric, the metonymic, and the synaesthetic, which implies an interrelation with the mind (di Benedetto 2000: 65). Moreover, di Benedetto further asserts that symbolic and linguistic ability are connected and developed from the 'pre-logical structures' of the somatic realm, which in turn increases and enriches communication faculties (di Benedetto 2000: 71). Therefore, di Benedetto's observance argues for a complementary relationship between the pre-verbal and the linguistic. Following, a holistic argument in the field of aesthetics is proposed by art scholar Andre Lepecki and dance historian and critic Sally Banes (2007). They argue that perception through and of the senses is intertwined in physiological, neurological and somatic processes (Banes & Lepecki 2007: 1). Lepecki and Banes suggest that a cultural acquisition of the sensible system is partly constructed by intellectual processes of experience and perceptions through the mind, which are then stored in the body (Banes & Lepecki 2007: 3). Furthermore, they emphasise the complex interrelation between mind, body, and context:

Language, memory affect, sensation, perception, and historical and cultural forces find themselves in a deep chiasmatic intersubjective relationality, where each element in the relation is continuously crossing and being crossed by all the others.

Banes & Lepecki 2007: 7

Further arguments of the indivisible expression of the mind and the body are proposed by psychologist, philosopher and educational reformer, John Dewey (1980) and artist and psychologist Rudolph Arnheim (1969). Arnheim suggests that there are two kinds of perception: intuitive and intellectual, which exist in conjunction to construct meaning (Arnheim 1969: 233-234). Moreover, Arnheim insists that 'intuitive and intellectual cognition' should not be put into 'conflict' (Arnheim 1969: 235). He argues: 'productive thinking is characterized, in the arts and in the sciences, by the interplay between the free interaction of forces within the field' (235). Similarly, Dewey argues for a holistic experience in communication and perception, stating that 'it is not possible to divide in a vital experience the practical, emotional and intellectual from one another' (Dewey 1934: 55). Dewey observes emotional and intellectual qualities should not be put against each other or one given more value over the other (55). Finally, another reference towards a holistic view is addressed by linguist and metaphysic Hillel A. Schiller (2009), who introduces a conceptualisation of the 'interpenetration' and 'synthesis' of semantic and somatic domains, in the context of education processes of perception (Schiller 2009: 92, 93). Schiller refers to the term 'somantic' as the synthesis of the 'sensorially identifiable entities or processes' and the 'ideational processes and emotions' of a person (Schiller

2009: 92-93). So far, these various approaches that address the semantic/intelligible and somatic/sensuous domains provide a significant argument of their interconnectedness and indivisibility. It may be concluded that the relationship between these two domains of opposite and paradoxical nature creates a complementary dynamics of communication, which includes both signification and realisation of meaning and experience.

### *The Somantic Continuum of Commun(e)ication*

Although Schiller does not further develop the use of the word 'somatic', it will be borrowed here to expand on a conceptualisation towards a 'somatic' approach to communication proposed in this thesis. To further reflect on the notion of **somatic**, it is helpful to discuss each domain first. The denotative definition of **semantic**, for example, is: meaning or cognition in language or logic (*Oxford dictionary of English online*). Contrastingly, the meaning of **somatic** is: 'what is related to the body, especially as distinct from the mind' (*Oxford dictionary of English online*). Based on Poyatos' development of the two systems of perception and signification, the semantic system belongs to the domains of the **intelligible**, while the somatic system belongs to the **sensible** domain. The intelligible pertains to what is 'able to be understood mainly by the **intellect**' (*Collins dictionary online*). The sensible is what is 'understood through the **senses**' (*Collins dictionary online*). The concept of 'somatic' as proposed here, expands the conceptualisation of its two opposite natures, based on their connotative sense. Therefore, if the semantic/intelligible domain involves the intellectual or **noetic**, it subsequently involves **reason, logic, the objective, and the concrete**. Contrastingly, if the somatic/sensible domain involves what is perceived by and through **the body**, it also involves the **instinct, the pre-lingual, the subjective, and the affective**. Based on the approaches of communication presented, the 'somatic' in this context is not an intentional, voluntary, or arbitrary synthesis. It is a shared dimension where the two domains exist in an indivisible state. In the context of this thesis, a *shared dimension* refers to the conceptual interrelation, interdependence and indivisibility of seemingly opposite domains, which are emblematised in the semantic and somatic domains.

Given the 'sharedness' of domains in the concept of somatic, the notion of continuum behaviour is introduced here to refer to the sensible and intelligible realms existing in an interchangeable interplay of predominance, of subordination and blurredness. This dynamic in constant flux is referred here as a state of **somatic continuum**. The word 'continuum' implies that the manifestation of semantic and somatic domains do not

function separately from each other, but are in a constant relationship and ‘sharedness’. The ‘somantic continuum’ is merely a phrase that begins to describe their natural state of continuance. The next step to this conceptualisation clarifies and specifies that although both domains are existent qualities of a communication process, either one may exert **predominance** over the other. In other words, the semantic and somatic ‘shared dimension’ does not always equate to their equivalent presence and manifestation during communication. Each of the semantic and somatic domains can take dominance or subordination over the communicative event, or at certain points of elocution. A semantic/somatic predominance is referred here as **semantic or somatic play**, respectively. Logically, the semantic play involves predominantly an intelligible avenue of signification and perception: through intellect, reason, the objective, and linguistic. Somatic play involves predominance that speaks mainly through instinctive and affective forms of creation and realisation of meaning: the intuitive, the instinctive, the subjective, the affective and pre-linguistic. When a communication process involves both semantic and somatic play, in other words, an alternative predominance of domains, this is referred here as **somantic interplay**. Furthermore, a final aspect of this conceptualisation pertains to the **equal play** of the semantic and somatic in elocution or moment in a communication. This means that both domains are equally sharing creation and realisation of meaning. Such occurrence is referred to here as **somantic blurredness**. In this case, a predominance of the semantic or somatic activity cannot be distinguished, and the experience blurs the two domains.

#### *The somantic continuum of the traumatic spectrum*

The notion of the somantic continuum aims to bring into attention that journeyers’ creation of meaning and experience through their message involves two vast domains of communication: the semantic and the somatic. In this sense, journeyers can convey objective and subjective experience that can be ‘shared’. Objectivity in this context is based on the definition of, ‘the condition of relating to actual and external phenomena as opposed to thoughts and feelings’ (*Collins dictionary online*). It refers to that which is happening and being perceived exteriorly, or the factual. Objectivity in journeyers’ *traumatic spectrum* consists of the *layers* that can be asserted as factual, as events that happened or are happening. In contrast, ‘subjectivity’ is central to personal experience, ‘existing only as perceived and not as a thing in itself; it pertains to ‘a person’s emotions and perceptions’ (*Collins dictionary online*). A *traumatic/anew reality*, as illustrated in journeyers’ *traumatic spectrum*, contains semantic and somatic meaning and experience that can be commun(e)icated through cognition of the intelligible-semantic realm, and

through affect of the sensuous-somatic realm. Therefore, some *layers* of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum* involve intuitive dimensions that cannot be understood with the mind as much as they can be grasped through somatic and affective levels: the abstract, subjective, unconscious and emotional states. In contrast, other *layers* can be better conveyed semantically, through concrete, linguistic and intelligible forms. Therefore, a holistic and *shared dimension* approach to communication resists a continuous predominance of one of the domains, encouraging an interplay and blurredness, in order to explore a holistic 'sharing' of meaning and experience. This dual nature of communication and experience in a *shared dimension* will be further referred to as the objective-intelligible-semantic and subjective-sensible-somatic.

An awareness of the somantic continuum in journeyers' commun(e)ication experience is important for several reasons. First of all, it encourages the rich and vast possibilities that can be explored in 'sharing' a message and commun(e)icating desires: with both reason and affect, with intuition and intellect, with the linguistic and pre-linguistic, in objectivity and subjectivity. Such a holistic potential of commun(e)ication is a basic building block to enrich a 'sharing' and shared experience. This possibility challenges the centralised notion of storytelling and 'bearing witness' as the main possibility for journeyers to 'share' their experiences. Second of all, a somantic approach acknowledges that journeyers' *layers* of the *traumatic spectrum* involve subjective-affective and objective-intelligible aspects that are equally valid in a commun(e)ication experience. Having discussed journeyers' commun(e)ication desires and the somantic possibilities of 'sharing' their experiences, the next section focuses on the notion of agency and ownership of journeyers over their commun(e)ication experience. As mentioned in the Introduction, this is another central aspect in the research.

#### **1.4. A Reversed Agency of Commun(e)ication**

Centralised and universalised notions of content (what) and form (how) of journeyers should address about their experiences, tend to limit their agency and freedom. Although this observation is not claiming that 'bearing witness' or 'telling one's story' is a limited act in itself, it does emphasise the need for alternative notions towards commun(e)ication, where journeyers are free to explore 'sharing' experience and meaning outside these parameters. It is important to indicate that such scenarios do not refer to public services offered to journeyers in private contexts, which involve legal, medical, therapeutic, educational, or social and humanitarian support. Such services provide opportunities for journeyers to address their needs in a specific private scenario.

The type of spaces addressed in this research refer to situations where journeyers are offered a public occasion in which to address aspects of their *traumatic/anew reality*. These situations will be referred here as **platforms**, to imply a public occurrence. Often, if not consistently, the platforms offered to journeyers carry a pre-established purpose or agenda from those who offer it. In these scenarios, those who approach journeyers commonly carry an agency and means to offer them a particular platform purpose. The interest here is to raise the awareness that a specific agenda may not necessarily meet journeyers' commun(e)ication desires or allow a somantic possibility to 'share' personal meaning and experience. By no means, does this rationale intend to underestimate any platform approach towards journeyers. Moreover, journeyers' commun(e)ication desires may intersect with an existing platform proposition. Alternatively, this awareness aims to underline the need to create additional platforms without a specific agenda in order for journeyers' to explore their commun(e)ication desires.

#### **1.4.1 Journeyers commun(e)ication Agency**

Having established this additional platform direction, it is important to delineate its particular intention and purpose when approaching journeyers without an agenda. In this context, 'purpose' and 'agenda' therefore have different meanings. While the latter implies a problem to be addressed or a situation to be tackled or solved through the platform, the former one refers to the reason or intention for which the platform is created. The purpose here is for journeyers to explore their own purpose for their platform. This implies a situation where journeyers actually desire to commun(e)icate. Contrarily, it is crucial to remark that if a journeyer desires to be silent, hence, has no commun(e)ication desire, no platform should be offered. The purpose is to offer a platform where journeyers exert a personal agency and purpose over the platform. Thompson (2011) presents a relevant approach in the context of social and applied theatre disciplines, which is closely linked to this platform intent. He proposes to consider a 'utility of the lack of utility' in applied theatre, to suggest that 'there should perhaps be an acceptance of "pointlessness" so that purpose can emerge' (Thompson 2011: 127). The 'utility of the lack of utility' in this case is a central aspect of this kind of additional platform. Thompson's view is supportive in endorsing an 'agenda-less' platform, so that journeyers can find their individual or collective purpose in communing and commun(e)icating with their communities and beyond. In this sense, journeyers' commun(e)ication desire relates to journeyers' purpose.

### *Reversed Agency*

The proposition is then to offer platforms that empower journeyers to taking ownership of their commun(e)ication experience, which entails journeyers leading their purpose, desire and personal agenda. This proposition encourages those who hold agency and means to offer platforms, to 'reverse agency' to journeyers, which involves offering an agenda-less purpose. A reversed agency specifically consists in facilitating journeyers a freedom of content, form, and intent of their commun(e)ication experience. Firstly, a freedom of content consists in journeyers' agency to decide what *layers* or layer of their traumatic spectrum they desire to explore. Secondly, a freedom of form consists in journeyers' agency to decide the somantic modalities in which they desire to 'share' meaning and experience (which can be semantic play, somatic play, somantic interplay and somantic blur). Thirdly, a freedom of intent consists in journeyers' agency to explore or reaffirm their purpose or commun(e)ication desire. With these considerations, it is clear that a reversed agency implies a lack of pre-established topics and agendas that give predominance or value to certain kind of *layer* or somantic modality over another. A reversed agency of **content-form-intent** therefore gives journeyers freedom to explore the shared dimension of their traumatic/anew realities. This 'shared dimension' is only a 'potential' type of readiness for a commun(e)ication. It is not bound to any predominance of content-form. As a result, journeyers are not led or bound to maintain a specific objective-intelligible-semantic or subjective-sensible-somatic predominance of commun(e)ication. A shared dimension gives possibilities for a wider spectrum of a *traumatic/anew reality* in content-form and intent. This allows journeyers to create and 'share' meaning and experience that is meaningful and important to them, and that channel their purpose and desire for the platform.

### *Ownership*

A reversed agency is therefore related to an issue of journeyers' ownership over their *traumatic/anew reality*. It is important to consider how a dominant and consistent lack of journeyer-agency in platforms offers, can negatively influence journeyers in various ways. There are several elements that are important to consider. First of all, if journeyers' commun(e)ication desires are constantly subordinated to platform agendas, there is a risk that journeyers may feel 'used' as vehicles for others' interests, even when these are noble and favourable to journeyers. For instance, continuously prioritising the 'hidden truth' of the traumatic event, gives more value to what journeyers can reveal, inform, or disclose about a perpetration done onto them, over offering value and

recognition for who they are as individuals. Furthermore, journeyers may have to endure an extent of mental and affective ‘stretch’ when asked to remember or talk about painful aspects of their experience, even if and when they have not overcome their traumatic stress. Therefore, rigid agendas that demand remembering, may risk disregarding awareness over journeyers’ mental and emotional response during the disclosing process. Second of all, a content-form-intent agency over journeyers’ platforms can play a significant role in the image that is constructed around journeyers by the public. This is referred here as a ‘partial’ or stereotypically biased image of journeyers. If the agency and agenda exerted over the journeyer is constantly and predominantly the same content-forms-substance, audiences construct an image of journeyers from that predominant notion. This is not to say that a particular aspect of their reality and image is more important than another, but journeyers should decide such intent. A centralised fact-event and storytelling of the shocking event, for example, limits journeyers’ image and reality to one layer and to a semantic modality. In this sense, audiences are limited from relating to other aspects and somantic modalities of journeyers’ realities. Over time, the organisms and entities who have agency and means over what society perceives about journeyers’ *traumatic/anew realities* gradually and eventually exert a significant influence in shaping the notion of what society perceives as ‘trauma’ or *the traumatic*. An example is how mass media influences public’s concept and approach to *the traumatic*.

So far, the discussion in this thesis has referred to scenarios where journeyers are approached with a platform offer. In contrast, the discussion has not addressed journeyers who create their own platforms; in other words, journeyers who have a commun(e)ication desire but also have the means and agency to ‘share’ it. This differentiation of scenarios is crucial in this research. Although the ideal scenario is for every journeyer with a commun(e)ication desire to have the means to a personal platform, this is not always the case. Therefore, this research particularly addresses a scenario of journeyers that do not have means to a platform.

#### **1.4.2 Journeyer-Confidant Commun(e)ication *Distance***

Considering the emphasis given in this research to journeyers’ desires to commun(e)icate, and the importance in offering a commun(e)ication platform, it is crucial to address a predicament encountered in respect to ‘sharing’ about their experiences. The predicament is referred here as a *Catch-22 affair*, because, to a great extent, it is inevitable. Both journeyers and audiences face dilemmas when conveying

and beholding *the traumatic*, which discourage them from the act of 'sharing'. As a result, different levels of 'distance' are created between them.

To begin the discussion of the *Catch-22 affair*, it is necessary to illustrate a phenomenon of journeyer-confidant dynamics, which results in the discouragement of social engagement when the subject matter is *the traumatic*. Audiences' discouragement to confide is the result of a complex network of mental, social and affective implications in reaction to *the traumatic*. These will be covered here in four distinct categories, which are interconnected: **natural avoidance tendencies** and defence mechanisms towards the traumatic, a dilemma of emotional, mental and physical 'distance', and an avoidance of responsibility. Journeyers' discouragement to 'share' also involves a series of factors that pertain to their own perceptions towards their experience in their social context, but also to confidants' reactions about them. These factors are categorized here as: journeyers' 'central dialectic', the paradox of remember-forget, the dilemma of 'distance', a limited agency, and a sense of betrayal. In addition to these social 'natural tendencies', it is critical to bring into attention an element that has been considered to play a role in both bridging or distancing confidants from journeyers' traumatic experiences: the mass media. Van der Kolk comments, for example, that the mass media is the main informant of the traumatic in the world (van der Kolk 1996: 42). Psychologists, journalists, and experts across disciplines, have assessed the 'distancing' effects that the media can exert in audiences in relation to the topic of trauma and journeyers' experiences (Cohen 2001; Ross 2003). Mass media is criticised for the saturation of information and the exploitative 'shorthand' manner in which news of traumatic events are delivered (Forsyth 2009: 140). The relationship that audiences have with the traumatic through the media, is of importance to consider in the aim to bridge journeyer-confidant distance by platforms of commun(e)ication.

#### *Discouragement to 'confide'*

Journeyers' natural tendencies of discouragement are, first of all, explained through psychological and sociological lenses. One factor of discouragement pertains to a natural tendency in human beings to avoid pain and suffering (Roeckelein 1998: 40). This **aversion** is a normal behavioural response from an intimidation to brutal and gruesome aspects of reality, and the fear of being affected mentally and psychologically (40). Following, another factor involves normal behavioural responses that humans experience when constantly being exposed to *the traumatic*, which are: **habituation**, **desensitisation**, and a **mental and emotional fatigue** (Roeckelein 1998: 226). Firstly,

habituation is a 'negative adaptation' and a 'change in the mental psychological set'; it is a 'reduction in response' by 'continuous exposure' and 'repeated presentation of a stimulus' (Roedelein, 1998: 12; 225). Secondly, a result of habituation is desensitisation, defined as the gradual indifference and insensibility to 'shock, distress or scenes of cruelty and suffering from an overexposure' of information or images related to these subjects (*Oxford dictionary online*). A third response is fatigue, which is the 'weariness' and 'lessening in one's response to, or enthusiasm for something, caused by overexposure' (*Oxford dictionary online*). Since the last decade, the habituation and desensitisation phenomenon to the tragic has been referred in media discourse as 'compassion fatigue' and 'compassion avoidance' (Moeller 1999; Cohen 2001). Journalist David Campbell (2012) contests Moeller's notion of 'compassion fatigue', suggesting that the subjective and personal state of compassion is not ultimately influenced by mass media's coverage of the traumatic. Contrarily, he argues that mass media coverage contributes to encourage compassion in audiences who are interested in assisting people in need. In agreement with Campbell's argument, 'fatigue' and 'avoidance' here do not implying a relation to a compassionate response (Campbell 2012).

'Fatigue' is then defined as the desensitisation or anaesthetisation to the suffering and pain of others (Moeller 1999: 2,14), and 'avoidance' is the 'survival mechanism' that audiences develop out of helplessness, fear, or indifference towards traumatic realities (Cohen 2001: 52). First of all, avoidance arises from the effect media has on 'emotionally anaesthetizing' and fatiguing society to *the traumatic* (Ross 2003: 1). Moeller underlines that such fatigue is in great part due to the saturation of information on the subject, and how this is presented: in repetitive moulds (Moeller 1999: 53). Moeller suggests that mass media reduces survivors' testimonies to look and sound the same and lose their 'personal face' (Moeller 1999: 13, 43). Moreover, Moeller argues that 'threatening and painful images' result in audiences' aversion to *the traumatic*, as their natural 'survival mechanism'; they detach or even deny it (Moeller 1999:53). Furthermore, psychologist Stan Cohen points out that the problem behind people being disengaged from harsh realities in the world is not because they are 'unaware' of the truth, but are in fact, 'tired of the truth' (Cohen 2001:187).

Another element, yet more discussed than 'fatigue', is the different levels of distance established between confidants and journeyers, which contribute to an avoidance response from a mental, emotional, physical, and historical distance. One initial level of distance pertains to audiences' feeling of **helplessness** and lack of agency towards

journeyers' experiences, which discourages audiences from listening when they cannot directly engage in the situation (Cohen 2001: 52). Moreover, Thompson also points out that a sense of 'powerlessness' can contribute to a disengagement from journeyers' realities, when 'our response is doomed to be experienced as forever inadequate' (Thompson 2011: 169). Following, a central level of distance is the **un-relatable** nature towards journeyers' traumatic realities. As was pointed in the beginning of the chapter, often journeyers' experiences are too 'alien' and 'unconceivable' for others. Assessing western audiences' point of view, Cohen asserts, for example, that testimonies of journeyers stress a mental distance in the public when the reality of the story is alien to the audience's reality, and thus difficult to relate to (Cohen 2001: 194). Another 'avoidance' factor is the emotional, geographical and historical distance between the audience and the journeyers interviewed (194). Sontag comments, for example, that 'if the suffering of a neighbour, relative or friend, does not engage the person in the pain of the victim, so much less the engagement with a person whose language, context and culture are different and whose country is alien to them' (Sontag 2003: 99). Next, another factor of discouragement is an **avoidance of responsibility** that comes when confiding to others' traumatic realities (Sontag 2003: 100). Thompson identifies the ethical demand as: a "crush' of felt responsibility' (Thompson 2011: 165). He observes that society's 'autonomy is challenged and limited, as we are confronted with an individual ethical appeal that is transformed into a universal demand as it made' (165).

#### *Discouragement to 'share'*

The factors in journeyers' discouragement to 'share' have in most part been referred to throughout this chapter. In contrast to peoples' aversion to pain and suffering, one factor is a certain sensationalist and entertaining curiosity or pleasure in learning about the tragedy of others, which referred here as **the voyeuristic gaze** (Sontag 2003). Professor of Media and Communications, Lilie Chouliaraki, addresses the concept of audiences as voyeurs, referring to the 'high-adrenaline spectacle' that people encounter when gazing at the tragic, 'freed from the moral obligation to act' (Chouliaraki 2006: 145). Chouliaraki states that there is a 'moral deficit' of such voyeuristic position (145). Moreover, it is argued here that a voyeur interest towards journeyers' experiences is a factor that devalues the 'sharing' act. Next, a second factor is the 'central dialectic' (Herman 2001: 1). This dialectic is the general dilemma that involves journeyers' fear of **lack of validation and credibility** when sharing 'share' their experiences, accompanied by shame and guilt (Herman 2001: 68-69). Moreover, journeyers also tend to be discouraged by the **taboo** nature given to terrible and brutal occurrences related to *the*

*traumatic* (Herman 2001: 8). Journeymen are aware that their experiences may be too **'alien' and un-relatable** for people to grasp, which can discourage an intention to 'share'. Another factor is the paradox that journeymen encounter between wanting to forget and needing to remember (Thompson 2009: 54). Remembering and 'sharing' about a traumatic reality involves facing aspects that cannot be changed or 'redeemed', which is a challenging and burdensome situation that journeymen face (54).

Following, a possible factor of discouragement may be related to platform offers that **limit agency of journeymen** to 'share', or enforce a cultural perspective, intention, and agenda that is not their own (Thompson 2009: 48). Another possible factor of discouragement is when journeymen are expected to **'re-live'** and **'re-enact'** their traumatic experiences and memories of the shocking event, particularly outside of a clinical and professional environments (LaCapra 2001: 24; Caruth 1996: 69). Finally, journeymen may also face a 'sense of betrayal' from 'sharing'. In this case, betrayal is deemed from unrealistic expectations that are socially constructed in regard to what is expected from journeymen's testimonies. The assumption that trauma can be expressed creates a sense of betrayal when failing to do so, for which journeymen commonly express that 'words do not do justice' to their experience (Laub 1995: 63; Caruth 1996: vii). The 'betrayal' in journeymen therefore refers to their disappointment from the attempt to translate their inner state, as Kristeva mentioned, it should 'not be translated in order that it not be betrayed' (Kristeva 1989: 53).

### *Bridging Distance*

A central aim of this research is to encourage both journeymen to 'share' and communities to 'confide'. The predicament here described underlines the significant extent to which journeymen and potential confidants can *Distance* themselves from commun(e)ication experiences that relate to *traumatic/new realities*, what is referred here as a *journeyer-confidant Distance*. Any kind of platform offered to journeymen, encounters the important challenge of such *Distance* tendency. Although many of the factors mentioned are of normal and natural tendencies, not every aspect is inevitable, and could be or should be addressed and counterattacked. This research encourages the possibility to *bridge Distance* between journeymen and potential confidants, which can be propelled by addressing the predicaments for *both ends of the bridge*. The 'bridge' analogy is a useful reference to visualise journeymen and confidants being encouraged to meet at a middle point of a common bridge, and connect them through the sharing of meaning and experience. A central proposition of this study is that a commun(e)ication

experience of traumatic/anew realities must not necessarily entail pain and suffering in the process. Perhaps it is possible to subvert the *Catch-22 affair*.

Bridging *Distance* is therefore a matter of respecting and protecting both journeyers' and audiences' 'ends of the bridge'. From journeyers' side, they could be encouraged to 'share', if they have freedom and agency over the platform, if they are freed from re-enactments, from 'living through', or other forms of perpetuating the shocking experience. Moreover, journeyers can be encouraged to 'share' in the absence of a voyeuristic gaze or aversion from audiences. From audiences' side, they could be encouraged to confide if they are not intimidated or averted by an explicit perpetuation of violence; if journeyers' messages are conveyed in forms that are not fatiguing or that contribute to a desensitisation from *the traumatic* as subject; if they can engage with journeyers' desires beyond the facts of a traumatic event. Bridging *journeyer-confidant distance* therefore encourages a coming together through the commun(e)ication event in an intimate moment of 'sharedness'. This event in turn encourages an approximation to hear about traumatic/anew realities as an engaging and enriching experience. Possibilities of bridging *Distance* are therefore crucial in order to encourage responsibility and 'sharedness' towards issues around *the traumatic*, which pertain and involve society as a whole.

The panoramic and problematic scenario of the last two sections has been set to emphasise the need for alternative communicative spaces where journeyers can commun(e)icate to confidants about their traumatic realities. By audiences being habituated or fatigued of the subject, they also tend to distance themselves from the people behind the subject. The alternative platform this research pursues is one that values journeyers' agenda over the events they go through. Cohen insists on the importance to draw closer to journeyers, by 'learning more about their stories' (Cohen 2001: 231). However, the aim is to question what journeyers desire to share about their stories, and how they desire to do so.

### **1.5 'Bridging *Distance*': the somantic artwork**

The central tool proposed in this study to bridge *Distance* and subvert the *Catch 22-affair* is found in the realm of aesthetics. An important point of departure for the approach given to aesthetics in the commun(e)ication event are John Dewey's propositions in his book *Art as Experience* (1934). Dewey suggests aesthetics is a language of experience in

the 'production, perception and appreciation as enjoyment to sustain each other' (Dewey 1980: 47). He emphasized that the major aesthetic intention of pleasure and passion is to create an artwork for it to be perceived; in other words, to 'share' with others (Dewey 1980: 49; 54). The potential therefore of an 'aesthetic' commun(e)ication platform is that journeyers and confidants engage in a 'sharedness' that is pleasing for both 'ends of the bridge'. Therefore, aesthetics offers the potential for journeyers to 'share' and confidants to 'confide' about *traumatic/new realities*, and commun(e)icate about pain and suffering, without perpetuating a *Catch-22 affair*. There are two main dynamics of creational and receptive experience in aesthetics that are favourable towards bridging *journeyer-confidant Distance*: its language of 're-presentation' and its languages in somantic continuum.

### 1.5.1 Aesthetics: a commun(e)ication bridge

Aesthetics in the context of journeyers' commun(e)ication platform is not bound to the expression of a particular craft or skill, but centres in what Theatre professor Sarah-Bay Cheng (2010) concedes as an 'aesthetic utterance', which is firstly, 'an articulation of needs and desires' and secondly, that which 'requires constitutive apprehension in the act of experience' (Bay Cheng 2010: 32). Therefore, aesthetics in this context continues to emphasise journeyers desire to 'share' meaning and experience with others. Dewey introduces an anti-elitist approach to aesthetics, suggesting that: 'to be artistic, one must be "loving", care deeply for the subject matter upon which skill is exercised' (Dewey 1980: 48).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Dewey asserts, that 'art denotes a process of doing or making' (Dewey 1980: 47). From Dewey's propositions, it is possible to assert that an intersection of aesthetics with the commun(e)ication platform resides in journeyers' desire (element of 'passion') to 'share' (element of 'caring') and create ('process of doing or making') a message (meaning and experience). In this sense journeyers are involved in the creation of a message that carries meaning and experience to be 'shared', in a mutually pleasurable experience (Dewey 1980: 46).

Moreover, a crucial element to call attention to is the potential of people's engagement to journeyers through the artwork. Dewey emphasises, for example, that the act of 'receptivity is not passivity, but recognition' (Dewey 1980: 52). Philosopher, critic, and theorist Louis Marin (2001) comments about the relation between confiding and the 'pleasure of recognition' (Marin 2001: 167). She posits: 'hearer or viewer experiences a pleasure that comes from presentation or re-presentation, the pleasure that grows out of encountering the agency of enunciation itself described in discourse or image (Marin 2001: 168). Furthermore, the act of making and perceiving is therefore as, Dewey

remarks, a 'unity of doing and undergoing', of 'outgoing and incoming energy' (Dewey 1980: 48). Dewey identifies the 'sharedness' and connectedness of audiences with confidants, in that, 'to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience, and [this] creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent (Dewey 1980: 54). A significant point, therefore, is that a bridge of commonality and relation can be created through the 'sharing' act of an aesthetic work. The somantic artwork, as any aesthetic creation, can bridge journeyers and confidants.

In regards to the 'pleasing' experience involved in the somantic artwork, the 'pleasurable' factor does not imply a position of 'entertainment' for entertainment's sake. Contrarily, this research insists on the innate force of aesthetics to confront reality and transform experience. Aesthetics, in this sense, is a subversive force because through it, audiences enjoy the act of being challenged, confronted, engaged, while journeyers can find pleasure in the act of transforming a quality of pain and suffering into an event of pleasing and meaningful shared experience. One crucial importance of aesthetics in the commun(e)ication event is that journeyers are offered this subversive force to commun(e)icate in reversed agency what they desire, without being expected or obliged to shape their commun(e)ication by another agenda. Professor of comparative literature, Krzysztof Ziarek (2004) presents a significant view of art as a social and subversive force. The particular notion highlighted here is Ziarek's view of poetics in aesthetics, as the action of creation and making of art as a social force (Ziarek 2004: 34). He states: 'the force of art is the poietic momentum into which the artwork transforms the force relations it has brought into its field (34). Ziarek agrees that poietic action of aesthetics 'is not an escape, but a transformation' (Ziarek 2004: 94). He posits: 'it does not mean that art becomes blind to the "real" world, or that it ends up in an escapist, aesthetic limbo, but rather that it instantiates the 'same' (and the only world) "otherwise" (Ziarek 2004: 42). In this sense, offering aesthetic commun(e)ication platforms to journeyers, in a reversed agency of purpose and desire, also offers a social and subversive force to journeyers, resulting in what Ziarek would refer as an 'artistic redistribution of forces' (Ziarek 2004: 26).

### **1.5.2 Poietics in *traumatic/anew reality***

As earlier stated, a plethora of discourse implies possibilities of presenting, performing and representing trauma as a 'shared' experience. However, it shall be clarified here, first of all, that what is in fact claimed to be presented or represented, is not trauma, but the *layers* of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum* and their *traumatic/anew reality*. The *traumatic spectrum* observes a variegated potential of meaning and experience that may be

presented and represented to different extents. Second of all, it is crucial to delineate the particular approach to representation given in this research, which pertains to the notion of poiesis (creation of new), different from mimesis (recreation of old). German painter, Franz Roh, significantly illustrates the poietic approach in experiencing art: 'to feel the reality of the object and of space, not like copies of nature but like another creation' (Roh 1995: 123). The poietic approach of the somantic artwork is to offer journeyers an opportunity of re-creation and transformation of their experiences, contrarily to their recreation and mimesis. Therefore, this platform diverges from the platforms offered to journeyers where the narrative and enactment of the shocking event are centralised. The purpose of the commun(e)ication platform is to encourage journeyers to create an artwork that carries their personal introspective and retrospective interpretation of their experiences, for the sake of their commun(e)ication desires, diverging thus from the mimetic approach of 'acting out' or giving testimony for bearing witness or healing from trauma.

Poiesis in journeyers' commun(e)ication entails a **re-presentation** of a *traumatic/new reality*, different from imitation (representation) or the attempt of literally showing (presentation) *the traumatic*. In a commun(e)ication event, journeyers' conveyance of their reality involves a **new creation** filtered by their perspectives. Such is not an imitation or representation or reality, because journeyers' subjective interpretation is involved in presenting and sharing with confidants an artwork carrying personal meaning and experience. Cheng's notion of presentation, for example, is useful to emphasise a process of a new creation from experience over a literal demonstration of a past traumatic reality. Cheng suggests that 'aesthetic articulations are presentations rather than representations' (Bay-Cheng 2010: 32). Subsequently, she observes: 'presentation articulates an experience by expressing its qualities in such a way that they can be perceived and experienced within an internal context of reference' (32). In the context of this thesis, the word 're-presentation' will be used instead of 'presentation', firstly, to distinguish it from the notion of a literal demonstration or showing of *the traumatic*, and secondly, to emphasise the prefix, 're', as a synonym for 'new', hence, a new creation; a poietic act. Commun(e)ication of a *traumatic/new reality* is therefore a poietic act experienced by journeyers and confidants, from a reality that cannot be literally showed or demonstrated, and that would be reduced if only represented mimetically. The beauty of a poietic approach to the somantic artwork, as Ziarek suggests, is that it 'enhances what cannot be (re)produced'; it is an 'enhancement' that 'extends beyond oneself' (Ziarek 2004: 44, 45).

Having defined re-presentation, its potential may be discussed in regard to bridging journeyer-confident *Distance*. Poiesis offers journeyers a language of suggestion, re-creation and non-mimetic expression that escapes a central problematic from the *Catch-22 affair*. Poiesis escapes the mimetic notion of re-enactment and re-telling. This 'escape' in itself addresses various issues for both journeyers and confidants. From journeyers' 'side of the bridge', they can from escape undesired forms of re-enactments and of factual narratives 'acted out' through the body. This, on one hand, can avoid audiences' voyeuristic gaze or 'ill curiosity'. On the other hand, it saves journeyers from the demand of an objective testimony and remembrance of events as they happened. Moreover, a re-creation of their reality can promise a resilient vision, because it avoids the demand to continuously remember what cannot be changed, and encourages transformation instead. Finally, re-creation saves journeyers from the demand to expose or show affective states that existed in the past but not so in the present. From confidants' 'side of the bridge', the lack of unnecessary re-enactment and re-telling of the shocking event tackles their natural and normal tendencies to avert from the gruesome content and forms, while also escaping the repetitive presentation of events that can result in a habituation, de-sensitisation and fatigue. Poiesis in this context thus escapes a search for objective references (re-enactment and re-telling) and the claim to present on stage (show and demonstrate) what cannot be brought from the past.

### **1.5.3. Somantic artwork in somantic continuum**

Aesthetics is an epitomical expression of the 'shared dimension' of the somantic continuum, referring to the interplay and blurredness of the subjective-sensible-somatic and semantic-intelligible-objective domains of signification and perception of meaning and experience. Aesthetics is a language that communicates both cognitive meaning and emotive meaning (Hagberg 1998: 3). Hagberg endorses a 'shared dimension' approach to aesthetics, suggesting that 'artworks can in fact excite ideas and stimulate emotions' (3). From this outlook, a somantic artwork offers journeyers a meaning-making experience where the semantic, linguistic and objective are not at the centre or predominance of expression, and yet their unique qualities are engaged. Therefore, it reverses agency to journeyers to re-present their *traumatic spectrum* mosaic in freedom of both semantic and somatic contents and forms. As a result, journeyers' commun(e)ication desires are transmitted on both affective and cognitive intent, engaging audiences to journeyers on both levels of reality. In terms of a 'shared dimension' quality, aesthetics bridges journeyer-confidant *Distance* by connecting them on a somantic language that enriches their 'sharedness', and meaning-and-experience making. Two features of the somantic

artwork are identified as favourable to encourage journeyers and confidants 'both ends of the bridge': its unique semiotic variations and variegation, and its synaesthetic nature.

### *Multimedality*

A semiotic variation refers to the multiple signification possibilities from the variegation of expressions across its expressive forms (Kress 2001: 67). The significance of this semiotic variegation resides in the possibility to communicate in modes of expression that speak unique languages, in addition to linguistic forms. Semiotician Gunther Kress (2001) posits that every physical and non-physical sign or mode of signification carries a different potential meaning that communicates directly to a receptor, whence the inability to describe all modes in a linguistic form (Kress, 2001: 66, 108). Kress thus defines multimedial communication as a face-to-face interaction that is both multimodal (addresses speech and non-verbal communication) and multimedial (addresses the eye and the ear, touch, smell and taste) (2001: 67). Kress emphasises that modes themselves do not 'fail' to communicate but each communicate in different ways (Kress, 2001: 38). He asserts, for example, that although linguistic articulation may be a more efficient medium to communicate in certain circumstances, visual images or the moving body may speak better in other situations (38). Subsequently, Kress argues that a communicative event where all possible and different channels of communication are involved happens during a 'face to face interaction', one where the semantic and somatic are addressed through all the senses (Kress 2001: 67). This multi-channel awareness of re-presentation, or multimodal form, is an approach that bridges confidants and journeyers in a commun(e)ication experience on several levels. Firstly, on journeyers' 'side of the bridge', a multimodal form of communication can reverse agency of both form and content of expression. This means that journeyers are not only unbound to a predominant modality of semantic or somatic forms, but can create meaning in somantic interplay and blurredness. This offers journeyers to 'share' both subjective and objective meaning in both sensible (affective/sensorial) and intelligible (linguistic/reasoning) forms. Subsequently, on confidants' 'side of the bridge', this multimodal and multimedial language allows them to perceive and signify meaning and experience that connects them to journeyers' desires and message on both levels of semantic and somatic experience.

### *Synaesthetic Correspondences*

Metaphor and synaesthetic language are qualities that favours journeyers and confidants commun(e)ication experience through somantic interplay, blurredness, and the universal

capacity to 'somantically' communicate through conceptual and sensorial imagination. Psychologist Raymond W. Gibbs (2008) states that metaphors involve the engagement of imagination, thought, and the senses (Gibbs 2008: 167; 429). Gibbs explains that conceptual metaphors are the structure of human understanding (429). The connection of metaphor to synaesthetic languages consists in how linguistic and visual metaphoric images can be a correspondence to sensorial experiences (429). This interrelation between the mind, imagination, and senses is significant for communication in somantic continuum. Synaesthesia, for example, is realised through the 'free movement' of sensory analogies occurring in the body and the mind (Marks 1978: 7; Kress 1997: 108).<sup>8</sup> As an aesthetic language, synaesthesia was originally conceptualised as a 'transposition of sensory images or sensory attributes from one modality to another' (Marks 1978: 8). In semiotic terms, it is defined as 'the criss-crossed travelling between semiotic modes' (Kress 2001: 66). Therefore, a synaesthetic artwork encompasses correspondences between the mind and sensory experiences, hence, appealing and eliciting both cognitive and emotive levels (Gibbs 2008: 429; Marks 1978: 8). In his theories of non-verbal communication, Poyatos also insists that the interaction between sensory exchanges and intellectualized interpretations of those exchanges 'rely heavily on synaesthesia' (Poyatos 2002: 59). Furthermore, Poyatos agrees that synaesthesia is crucial to derive poetic and sensorial capacities in communication (59). In this sense, synaesthetic languages carry significant somantic potential for journeyers to create their message in blurredness of domains of experience and meaning-making capacity.

Synaesthetic correspondences are therefore an essential language for in the interplay of the semantic and somatic. This analogical connection between the body and the mind allows journeyers to explore signification from one mode to another, and in this sense, elicit meanings that engage audiences on both sensorial and intelligible levels; thus, manifesting conceptual and affective shared level of experiences that can connect journeyers and confidants on both semantic and somatic domains of re-presentation of the *traumatic spectrum*. Furthermore, it is important to mention the universal and cultural-specific relevance of metaphors and synaesthesia for the communication (Howes 1991). Kress asserts, on one hand, that 'synaesthiesal' associations depend on every individual's interest, subjective and previous experiences, memory and culture (Kress 1997: 37, 93). On the other hand, synaesthetic language also offers a universal capacity of communication that transcends linguistic language (Poyatos 2002: 57). Metaphoric and synaesthetic languages promise the possibility to challenge the un-relatable and 'alien' nature of traumatic/anew realities, by appealing to confidants through sensorial

and conceptual correspondences they can identify with. Moreover, the imaginative and qualities in synaesthetic languages inhabits forms and mental states that can only be reached through the imagination of both journeyers and confidants, and at this imaginary level, they can both meet.

#### *In search for the somantic artwork location*

Aesthetics is a domain of expression and communication where the dimension of pain finds a way of meaning through beauty, not to devalue the painful nature of an experience, or simplify it, but to expand an interpretation and a re-presentation of it. Aesthetics is therefore a tool, an instrument and medium that permits the commun(e)ication event to bridge journeyers and confidants. The next step towards a somantic artwork entails a search for an aesthetic platform of commun(e)ication that facilitates journeyers in the creation of their aesthetic message, in a way that agency is reversed to them. To set this direction towards the next chapter, it is useful to refer to Scarry's invitation to artists to embark in this responsibility and mission. Scarry insists that whilst many artists have the means to communicate their own experiences of pain and suffering, few 'survivors' have the artistic or political channels to account for their own traumatic realities (Scarry 1985: 11). Scarry notes that artists are often seen as the 'authentic class of survivors' because they can 'so successfully express suffering' (Scarry 1985: 11). Furthermore, Scarry argues that the attention to artists and their suffering deviates attention from other survivors 'in radical need of assistance', for which she emphasises the need for people to tell the stories on behalf of survivors who are 'bereft of the resources of speech' (Scarry 1985: 6). Somewhat differently from Scarry, this thesis does not suggest that artists obtrusively deviate attention of traumatic realities from other journeyers. The emphasis is that platforms in reversed agency should be offered to journeyers with a desire to commun(e)ication, who are 'bereft of the resources' for a platform. To conclude this section and chapter, it is useful to refer back to Kress and Poyatos, who suggest that a holistic, synaesthetic type of communication can take place in aesthetic contexts where there is a space of a 'face-to-face interaction' (Kress 2001: 66). This notion of 'face-to-face' communication introduces the search for the somantic artwork in theatre and performance.

### **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the foundation towards the proposed aesthetic commun(e)ication platform alternatively offered to journeyers. Commun(e)ication as addressed here is the act of 'sharing' meaning-and-experience. A commun(e)ication event is a moment in space

and time, where journeyers 'make common' and convey not their trauma or a betrayed translation of their pure affective states, but a somantic artwork that carries their affective and intelligible meaning and experience, created from their interpretation and desires towards their *traumatic/aneu reality*. The first consideration towards journeyers' commun(e)ication of their *traumatic/aneu realities* was to make a distinction between journeyers who undergo a normal traumatic stress from those who continue onto a post-traumatic stress disorder. Therefore, it is important to reaffirm, that this platform is not offered to journeyers who are under traumatic stress or in a recovery process towards wellbeing. The focus is what journeyers desire to commun(e)icate after their recovery. Furthermore, it was emphasised that individuals' 'journey' beginning from the 'clash' of realities, is a 'new reality' that continues after trauma and a resilient recovery from traumatic stress. The second consideration was to differentiate the *traumatic spectrum* from trauma as the 'black sun', borrowing Kristeva's analogy. The third consideration was the notion of journeyers commun(e)ication desires, referring to their personal purpose the commun(e)ication event, either impending or about to be discovered.

Since the platform of commun(e)ication proposed in this research, is ideated for journeyers who desire to commun(e)icate and address their communities, but have no means or agency to do so, the purpose of the platform, first of all, is to offer journeyers a reversed agency of agenda, content and form of commun(e)ication. Second of all, the aim is to facilitate a commun(e)ication event where the *Catch-22 affair* does not counteract the 'sharing' experience, and where journeyer-confidant *Distance* is bridged. In the context of this research, the somantic continuum is emphasised as a 'shared dimension' approach towards journeyers' commun(e)ication of their desires, experiences, and interpretations of their *traumatic/aneu realities*. Therefore, the proposition of the somantic continuum is for journeyers to have the holistic options to explore their own agenda and desires in semantic and somatic freedom. This freedom acknowledges all *layers* of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum* and their preferred modalities through which to create their message. It is important to remark that the concept of somantic continuum refers to the holistic **potential** to explore any somantic possibility, and not a demand.

The next chapter begins the search for the somantic artwork in the domain of theatre and performance, presenting specific criteria of why this consideration has been made, and offering, in brief, an analysis of the particular genres relevant to the re-presentation of the traumatic.

## **2.0 Traumagical Realism: a favourable commun(e)ication**

### **2.1. Theatre & Performance: a search for commun(e)ication events**

This chapter introduces theatre and performance as a favourable platform for journeyers' commun(e)ication event of their *traumatic/new reality*.<sup>9</sup> The chapter is divided in two main parts. The first part is a discussion of highlighted features and genres in theatre and performance (Th &P), considered for the location of the somantic artwork. The second part proposes the aesthetics of Magical Realism as a potential subversive lens for the *Catch-22 affair*. This first part of this chapter, first of all, addresses the characteristics in Th &P that were considered in this research for the commun(e)ication event. Secondly, it endorses the somantic artwork as a re-presentation of *the traumatic*, outside mimetic and presentational approaches offered in Th &P. Thirdly, it highlights genres across the social and aesthetic forms of Th &P, which have been relevant to consider for the location of the somantic artwork.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, in reference to bridging *Distance* between journeyers and confidants, as it was earlier emphasised in the previous chapter, the location of the somantic artwork is firstly found in a re-presentation of the traumatic, as opposed to mimesis or presentation. Secondly, the somantic artwork can be located in Th &P spaces that offer possibilities to communicate in somantic continuum. Therefore, this chapter locates a space for the somantic artwork in particular features across genres. The main features addressed pertain firstly to the style of representation; secondly, to an acknowledgement of a shared or blurred fusion of the semantic (objective and intelligible) and somatic (subjective and sensible) domains of reality and communication. Moreover, the underlying current of these genres considered, resides in their intention to engage audiences beyond mere entertainment, and re-sensitise them to the reality of social, political, cultural and historical situations that society encounters.

#### **2.1.1 Quintessential context for commun(e)ication**

This section highlights the features in Th &P that have been initially considered for the commun(e)ication event and the somantic artwork, or performance. Th &P spaces can offer journeyers possibilities of somantic commun(e)ication contained in three major features: *liveness, physicality, and multimodality*.

### *Liveness*

Liveness relates to a moment of established presence and awareness of observation and action amongst people. Liveness in theatre is described by theatre director Augusto Boal, as the event where the human being, in being observed, discovers that it can observe itself (Boal 2007: 32). It is this moment, as Boal suggests, when 'theatre is born' (32). Furthermore, the type of liveness addressed also refers to the non-traditional Th &P spaces that break the fourth wall to allow a closer, physical interaction with audiences (Allain and Harvie 2006: 168). Professors of Theatre and Performance, Paul Allain and Jen Harvie (2006) thus refer to liveness as a 'sense of presence' and 'social process' (Allain and Harvie 2006: 168-169). This intimate approach to liveness establishes physical bridge of kinaesthetic communication between performers and audiences (Hollidge and Tompkins 2000: 145). Professors in Drama Julie Hollidge and Joanne Tompkins (2003) significantly discuss the engagement of body in performance, whose presence is not only being seen or observed, but sensed and felt by audiences (Hollidge and Tompkins 2000: 135). Hollidge and Tompkins refer to performer and theatre maker Pol Pelletier, to describe this communication bridge as a 'carnal-psycho link' (Pol Pelletier quoted in Hollidge and Tompkins 2000: 145). Liveness therefore creates a sense of 'immediacy', in the interaction and exchange of audiences and the somatic artwork (Machon 2003: 25). Writer and practitioner in contemporary performance, Josephine Machon (2001, 2003, 2009) agrees that the immediacy of corporeal presence facilitates a 'real exchange' of pre-verbal and sentient 'knowledge and energy' between people (Machon 2003: 38). This exchange, catalyzed from a corporeal presence, refers to Kress and Poyatos' observation that 'face-to-face' communication events can incorporate all the possibilities of meaning realised and perceived through the senses and levels of cognition; a holistic and synaesthetic interaction (Kress 2011: 67; Poyatos 2002: 36).

Liveness in Th &P is a relevant form of commun(e)ication for the somatic artwork, because it embodies both somatic-sensible-affective and semantic-objective-intelligible meaning and forms of conveying meaning and experience. In this sense, physical immediacy engages journeyers and audiences in a somatic experience of making and perceiving the somatic artwork. This live act of 'coming together' significantly intersects with the notion of 'communing' in a moment of 'sharedness', proposed in the commun(e)ication event. Liveness is therefore an intentional act, where potential confidants can establish presence in confluence with the artwork, to bridge with journeyers' desires and message.

### *Physicality*

A second feature considered for the somantic artwork emerges from the notion of liveness, which is the approach to the body as presence, meaning, and experience beyond mimesis and representation. Anthropologist Lorna Marshall (2001) states, for example, that the body is a channel of communication for ideas and desires (Marshall 2001: xi). Theatre researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann (2006) suggests that the body in Th &P is not only 'physicality', but it is also 'semantics' (Lehmann 2006: 96). Moreover, physicality in Th &P is appreciated as a form of 'engaging with the real', as opposed to imitating it (Keefe & Murray 2007: 76). In this 'real' sense, Auslander highlights the reality of the body in Th &P, alluding to Boal's attention to the body in theatre as carrier of 'ideological inscriptions and oppressions' that can be addressed (Auslander 1994: 124, 128). Other theorists and practitioners in performance have significantly addressed the body as a social, cultural, historical and sexual living text (Broadhurst 1999: 178; Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 144). Furthermore, the approach to the body in this research also embraces the view of corporeality as an intertextual and heterogeneous signifier and expression in its potential to embody multiple modes of signification and meaning (Broadhurst 1999: 45). The body in movement and dance expression, for example, is also appreciated as a kinaesthetic form of communication (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 135). It is also considered a 'canvas' of flesh, in its visual potential of communication, as metaphor, and object, as literalisation of metaphor (Gibbs 2008: 167). In addition, the body is perceived as a channel for somatic exchanges, releasing 'energy, traces, and emotions' of performers sensed by audiences (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 142). Furthermore, the signification potential of the body is not limited to its live presence, but multiplies its meaning through its mediated presence in multimedial and technological channels or expression (Birringer 2002: 84). It is therefore important to acknowledge the body, not only as a tangible potential for communion and confluence, but also as a multimodal channel of expression for the somantic artwork. It is important to clarify, however, that the body is not presented here as a predominant channel over others, but it is an initiator and medium that establishes dialogues among the different channels of expression.

### *Multimediality*

A third feature in Th &P is identified here as a 'total artwork' (Kirby 1969: xiii). The 'total artwork' is traced back to the original reference of a 'total theatre', a term coined to describe a theatrical space where all the arts can meet and intersect (Kirby 1969: xxv).

An early conceptualisation of 'total artwork' was also suggested by German composer Richard Wagner as a form of expression in theatre where all artistic forms of expressions are staged, which he thus referred as the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, (Wagner 1993: 183). Wagner's view of the 'total work of art' intersects with the intention of communication in somantic continuum because it acknowledges a holistic intention of expression across many modes (Wagner 1993: 97). Referring to the previous chapter, Wagner's notion of a 'total artwork' echoes the acknowledgement of a unique expressive potential in each form of communication, whilst being complementary of each other. Wagner observes:

Every faculty [art form] springs from its special sense, and therefore each single faculty must find its bounds in the confines of its correlated sense. But the boundaries of the separate senses are also their joint meeting-points, those points at which they melt into one another and each agrees with each: and exactly so do the faculties that are derived from them touch one another and agree.

Wagner 1993: 97

Theatre director and artist Antonin Artaud (1958) crystallised the concept of a 'total theatre' with his proposition in using 'all the means of expression utilizable on stage': 'music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesticulation, intonation, architecture, lighting, and scenery' (Artaud 1958: 39). Artaud also claimed that every physical object present on stage is able to speak uniquely (Artaud 1958: 69). He believed that these art forms 'transform, affect and activate each other' (Artaud 1958: 39). Artaud's approach to a 'total theatre' intersects with the somantic intent to create meaning and experience, but only to certain extent. Artaud presents an essentialist view of a 'total theatre' that rejects the semantic and rational domain of expression (Artaud 1958: 41). He maintained that spoken language should be replaced with a poetic language of all the senses, where theatre would be 'independent' of it (Artaud 1958: 37; 41). Therefore, Artaud proposes a 'total theatre of movement and word', without the semantic articulation of language, claiming that 'dialogue, a thing written and spoken', does not belong specifically to the stage, but 'belongs to books' (Artaud 1958: 11, 37, 46). In this sense, Artaud's view of 'total theatre' diverges from the somantic intention, where the semantic and somatic interplay and blur in a holistic meaning-making experience. His observations nonetheless are useful to emphasise the importance of a semantic domain for journeyers' commun(e)ication, which can communicate that which cannot be expressed solely through the somatic domain:

I am well aware that the language of gestures and postures, dance and music, is less capable of analysing a character, revealing a man's thoughts, or elucidating states of consciousness clearly and precisely than verbal language.

Artaud 1958: 41

A 'total' form of expression in Th &P that better intersects with a holistic approach is captured in contemporary notions of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, developed firstly by the Bauhaus movement, describing a 'total artwork' as a 'conjoining of different artistic media' (Davies 2011: 208). Contemporary performance discourse describes a 'total artwork' as a 'total mise en scène' that involves multidisciplinary staging of multimedia, scenography, lighting and sound, costumes, and organisation of time and space (Allain and Harvie 2006: 171). Multimedia styles are known to 'extend and enhance performance by exploring the full range of expressive media available' (Allan & Harvie 2006: 174). Therefore, the significance of the 'total mise en scène' for the somantic artwork, lies in its view that, 'each mode, [and] each form of expression [is in] itself a language' useful to 'create stages and perspectives from one language to the other' (Davies 2011: 208). In this sense, 'total artworks' permit journeyers to choose from one or various forms of expression or channels, in order to explore possibilities of conveying their message and desires according to their somantic intention. In a potential freedom to be semantic or somatic, journeyers can explore their traumatic spectrum in somatic-subjective-affective and semantic-objective-intelligible levels of expression and reality. It is not implied here, however, that journeyers must consider all forms of expression for their commun(e)ication, as this would challenge their reversed agency. However, the significance of 'total artworks' resides in their **holistic potential** for journeyers' commun(e)ication.

### **2.1.2 Commun(e)ication of *the traumatic*: a re-presentation approach**

Turning now to the feature of re-presentation mentioned in Chapter One, it is necessary to expand on the outlook towards a most appropriate and favourable type of representation of *the traumatic* in Th &P. Following, it is important to identify the main styles of representation, and locate the somantic artwork in one of these forms, addresses here as: representational, presentational, and re-presentational forms of conveying *the traumatic*.

### *Representation*

The term 'representation' in the context of this research refers to the traditional forms of representation in theatre, based on the Platonic notion of art as mimesis, or imitation of the real (Johnson 2007: 210). Representational Th &P genres therefore centre on naturalism, modelled in a Stanislavskian acting-role interpretation, which uses devices of 'believable characters, narrative action and plot' (Allain and Harvie 2006:179). It is important to consider here that a representational style of journeyers' experiences carries intrinsic implications that may disrespect journeyers and confidants' 'ends of the bridge'. First of all, journeyers may not desire to represent violent and painful *layers* of their traumatic reality in mimetic and naturalistic forms. Secondly, re-enactments can be counterproductive for bridging *Distance*. Thirdly, a mimetic scenario can risk pretentious recreations on stage that may 'belittle' the magnitude that the traumatic event has for journeyers (Graver 1995: 48). Furthermore, mimetic staging of what is 'shocking' and traumatic one on hand, risks perpetuation of violence and intimidation in journeyers, and on the other, intimidates and discourages confidants' engagement. Moreover, confidants' *mise-en-scène* perceptibility of naturalistic representations of traumatic events can also distract their engagement (Graver 1995: 46). Therefore, while a representational style does not meet or represent the magnitude of journeyers' traumatic event, it can also disrespect both journeyers and confidants' ends of the bridge, which, as explained in the previous chapter, discourages the 'sharing' and commun(e)ication. Therefore, this style is placed in a subordinate location for the somantic artwork.

### *Presentation*

A second approach in conveying reality is presentation. Presentation in this thesis refers to the approach of Th &P genres that literally show or display reality. Presentational styles manifest literal and conceptual forms of presenting *the traumatic*. To a great extent, the approach of presenting *the traumatic*, girds towards the intention to evoke and provoke a shocking effect on audiences, more so than conveying meaning about journeyers' traumatic/new realities and experiences. One example is the Expressionist movement of the 1930s, which was known for its disturbance spectacles through the staging of violent parody and imagery portrayals (Graver 1995: 65). A pioneer of Expressionism, Oskar Kokoschka, introduced graphic sexual imagery and violent portrayals to create a 'traumatic effect' on audiences (Graver 1995: 71). Another example can be identified in Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, which aimed to 'enact' disturbance rather than 'display' it (Graver 1995: 218). Artaud's concept of 'cruelty' emphasised an

aggressive awakening to a 'psychologically threatening' reality (Graver 1995: 216). He aimed to 'awaken the senses, to shock them, and to heighten aesthetically disturbing aspects of performance' (Graver 1995: 216, 218). Although these approaches are significant and exciting in the particular aim to awaken audiences through disturbance and 'shock', this very purpose can easily defeat the intention to bridge journeyer-confidant *Distance*. It is important to consider that some journeyers may desire to take this presentational direction towards their commun(e)ication event, but the platform offer cannot be limited to this form of relationship with confidants.

Furthermore, a contemporary view of presentation and *the traumatic* is proposed in live art or performance art (Jones 2009). Performance art offers an interesting angle towards staging *the traumatic* through a literal traumatising of the body, which is accomplished by the objectification and literalisation, of the body (Goldberg 1979: 7; Jones 2009: 46). The approach in this research, however, marks a distinction between psychological trauma and 'trauma' as a literal and intentional traumatising of the body. Performance art and trauma art explore a literal self-infliction that can produce a certain relief and pleasure from such cathartic moment, which is made public in order to be fully accomplished (Jones 2009: 45). Performance art's approach to 'shock' and 'trauma' diverges from the concept of 'shocking' and 'traumatic' reality, which is not an intentional and staged traumatising; contrastingly, it is an unexpected 'clash' to individuals' ordinary reality. This observation, however, does not disregard that journeyers may be interested in an intentional and literal traumatising of their body as a way to explore their traumatic reality on a conceptual level. What is crucial to point out, however, is that the nature of this discipline is a 'personal search in the process of finding ways to say something' (Goldberg 1979: 6). Therefore, such type of platform could not be ethically 'offered' to journeyers, since it emerges from a personal and self-exploratory intention to 'materialize' ideas in cathartic ways that involve the body's traumatising (Goldberg 1979: 7). In addition, presentational styles of *the traumatic* may not be the most favourable artwork to bridge *Distance* if the aim is to escape intimidation, disturbance or aversion from a shocking display.<sup>11</sup>

### *Re-presentation*

The third approach to representation emerges from the view of aesthetics as experience and process of creation (Dewey 1980: 47). In the context of this research, the somantic artwork is a new or 're' presentation of experience and meaning from a *traumatic/aneu reality*. It does not aim to imitate or to show *the traumatic*. The term 're-presentation'

emerges therefore, to refer to a 'new' presentation of journeyers' experiences. From an aesthetic point of view, the creation of the somantic artwork is a presentation of journeyers' experience of making and constructing a message to be also experienced by potential confidants (Bay-Cheng 2010: 32). Aesthetic utterances articulate experience, 'expressing its qualities in such a way that they can be perceived and experienced within an internal context of reference' (Bay-Cheng 2010: 32). In this sense aesthetic articulations are presentations (32). From this notion of a 'new presentation' it is important to refer back to the concept of poiesis. The reference to poiesis here is not from a technical view that refers to the act of *production* of text and performance (Pavis 1998: 16). In the context of Th &P, this notion of 'another creation' alludes in fact to Artaud's insistence in allowing theatre to 'speak the language that belongs to it'; to produce its own and concrete creation (Artaud 1958: 37). From a different approach to theatre, Boal also considers art to have the capacity to 're-create the creative principle of things created' (Boal 1979: 1). Moreover, in the realm of performance, cultural anthropologist Victor Turner has also proposed the notion of poiesis, as a process of "making not faking", to challenge 'antitheatrical prejudices' that perceive Th &P as 'fakery and falsehood' (Turner 1982: 93 in Conquergood 2013: 27). Every theatrical and performative form that is not a mimetic attempt of reality, or a literal attempt to present a traumatising or shocking experience, is referred here as re-presentational.

### **2.1.3 Theatres of Trauma**

Having discussed the main Th &P features relevant to journeyers' commun(e)ication events, this section examines theatrical and performative styles that specifically address the staging of traumatic/anew realities. The consideration of these styles has been necessary to assess the ideal location of the somantic artwork.

One representational style of traumatic realities is known as Theatre of Trauma, proposed as a modernist theatrical movement in the United States during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where directors staged fictional stories that addressed psychological aspects of trauma (Cotsell 2005: 5). Theatre of Trauma was characterised by a naturalistic and 'salon drama' style, which incorporated psychological depth and the shocking and absurd forms of modernist drama (Cotsell 2005: 11). A relevant characteristic of this style in respect to journeyers' somantic artwork is its attention to the psychological dimension of the traumatic spectrum, escaping the centralisation of the shocking event itself. For reasons exhausted in previous sections, however, the

representation of *the traumatic* in naturalistic and shocking styles is problematic when the aim is to tackle confidants' natural tendencies of habituation, aversion, and their discouragement in confiding journeyers' experiences. When the stories are fictional accounts, as in *Theatres of Trauma*, this problematic is not a central issue. Following, another style that links performance and *the traumatic* is captured in the conceptualisation of Trauma Drama. Professor in Literature and Cultural Studies, Christina Wald (2007) coins this term to describe theatrical and performative works that 'explore trauma as performative malady in the everyday lives of the traumatised protagonists' (Wald 2007: 92). Wald considers a range of styles, from documentary theatre to multimedia performances. Wald believes these works 'manage to render the traumatisations of their protagonists, made intelligible and palpable for audiences' (92). Trauma Drama however, is a proposal based on trauma theory, that considers 'mimetic' and 'diegetic' forms in theatre and performance to help journeyers 'act out' and 'work through' trauma (Wald 2007: 98-99).

Next, a more recent proposal that links trauma to performance is 'trauma-tragedy', a concept presented by performance maker and writer Patrick Duggan, to encourage 'a dialectical braiding of the structures, paradoxes and nuances of trauma with the repetitious, paradoxical rotations of performance' (Duggan & Wallace 2011: 15). In his words, Duggan proposes 'trauma-tragedy' as a 'tool with which we can read, contemplate and reflect on a structure of feeling and potentially thus progress from it, as well as rehearse for or work through our own traumata' (Duggan & Wallace 2011: 15). He proposes a post-dramatic style of performance as a parallel context to explore narrative and re-enactments as a form of 'acting out' and 'work through' individual and collective trauma (Duggan & Wallace 2011: 15). In reference to the arguments presented in the previous chapter, Trauma Drama and 'trauma-tragedy' are proposals that do not intersect with the aims of a commun(e)ication platform, since 'acting out' and 'working through' is contested by clinical experts in the context of journeyers' acts of disclosures (Herman 1997: 72; Levine 1998: 87).

## **2.2. An 'anti-theatre' direction**

Having assessed Th & P styles that address *the traumatic*, but do not intersect with the somantic artwork, it is necessary to examine genres that have been further considered in this research as potential locations for the somantic artwork. To introduce the next section, it is useful to highlight the underlying current of the genres assessed, which is referred here as an 'anti-theatre' style. The notion of 'anti-theatres' was born as an

'attitude' that was critical of naturalistic forms of expressing reality (Pavis 1998: 26). In its early references, 'anti-theatre' was a term in theatre that referred to a 'tiredness' of 'psychology, subtle dialogues, and well-constructed plots' (Pavis 1998: 26; Steinman 1986: 105). 'Anti-theatre' styles are traced in genres that welcoming unconventional approaches to 'question the social function of art and its forms' (Allain and Harvie 2006:179). Allain and Harvie observe that 'anti-theatres' are characterised by presentational (or re-presentational) aesthetics of performance, which range from theatre director Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre to performance art (Allain and Harvie 2006:179). Theatre and drama scholars Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson, Katie Normington (2007) refer to a spectrum of 'anti-theatres' traced across social and aesthetic forms of devising theatre and performance covering: avant-garde movements, post-dramatic theatre styles, performance art, and physical/dance theatres, to documentary theatres, performance ethnography, and the umbrella of social and applied theatre practices (Nicholson 2007). The next section presents the main criterion considered to assess particular 'anti-theatres' as potential platforms for journeyers' commun(e)ication events.

### **2.2.1 Social Theatres: an agency intent**

This section introduces social theatres as potential commun(e)ication platforms. A differentiation between 'social' and 'aesthetic' in this thesis does not imply that aesthetic forms are not social, or that social theatres cannot be aesthetic (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 11). The distinction refers to social theatres having a specific social agenda (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 12). Although this 'anti-theatre' social approach involves also a broad categorization of genres, it is possible to identify quintessential features that characterise them, and locate how these intersect with the intention of the commun(e)ication event.

Professor of performance studies Richard Schechner in collaboration with James Thompson (2004) provide an ample and concrete description of characteristics that encompass social theatre practices. As mentioned previously, one characteristic of social theatres is a delineated social agenda (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 12). In the case of a commun(e)ication event the proposal is an agenda-less platform, but it does imply the social purpose to empower journeyers to take agency of a public platform where they can address their impending desires and purpose. In this sense, the somantic artwork is a social tool. A second characteristic of social theatres is the central role of participants in the collaboration and engagement of the devising process (12). Similarly, the commun(e)ication event seeks to offer journeyers a platform where they are at the centre

of the creative process, not only in that the agency and purpose of the event is reversed to them, but the aim is for them to explore and lead the direction of the devising process. A third feature of social theatres is the role of 'facilitators' (12). Similarly, a central view for the commun(e)ication event is for artists to become facilitators of journeyers' commun(e)ication, and encourage them to take agency and ownership of their commun(e)ication experience. Another characteristic of social theatres resides in their goal to support the 'vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized communities' (12). Social theatres are interested in 'individuals who have lost touch with a sense of community, who are internally as well as externally displaced and homeless' (12). Such intention is agreeable with the commun(e)ication event's interest, offering platforms to individuals without an agency of intervention in society, commonly positioned in social and cultural alienation. Another feature that characterises social theatres is the involvement of people who are not artists or performers (12). In like manner, the commun(e)ication event is ideated for journeyers who do not necessarily have an artistic skill, but nonetheless are interested in an aesthetic platform of communication. Another feature is that performances take place in 'non-theatre' locations, often related to the social context of participants (12). In like manner, the somantic artwork considers site-specificity as a socio-cultural, historical and immersive form of signification for the commun(e)ication event. Following, the anti-commercial purpose that social theatres establish is also shared by commun(e)ication events, which are not considered commercial tools (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 11). However, an aspect where social theatres may diverge with the somantic artwork is that the propelling force of social theatre does not entail aesthetics as 'the ruling objective' of the theatrical process (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 11). Contrarily, aesthetics in the somantic artwork is valued as an inherent social instrument, central for the 'shared' experience that can bridge and re-sensitise journeyers and confidants to each other.

Having established the intersection of a social theatre approach with journeyers' commun(e)ication events, it is important to address the specific platforms that were assessed, according to various considerations in relation to a reversed agency and somantic intention. The first consideration is the nature of the **purpose and agenda** of the platform; secondly, the extent of **somantic freedom of content and forms** offered to journeyers. This specifically refers to journeyers' **reversed agency** to address the *layers* of their *traumatic spectrum* and the forms in which they can convey them. Another feature is the extent of agency journeyers have in the in the **creative and devising process**. Another consideration is the presence and **liveness** that journeyers can

establish during the performance. Following, attention was given to the **level of engagement**, interaction, and intended response from audiences, and if such intention is journeyers' choice or not. The last feature is the extent of **aesthetic engagement** of the performance. Following is a brief assessment of the social genres considered.

### *Documentary Theatre*

Documentary theatre is an 'anti-theatre' style pioneered by Erwin Piscator (Innes 1993: 212). Piscator 'replaces the notion of the stage as a fictional world, with the notion of truthful document' (Jestrovic 2006: 97). This style was therefore recognized as a 'living newspaper' (Banham 1995: 213). Its initial consideration for a commun(e)ication event resided in its staging of real-life situations about social and political issues (Paget 2009: 229). A second consideration was for its use of 'non-theatrical' objects and technological artefacts, such as film, projections and recordings from documentary reports (Innes 1993: 108). Documentary theatre has played a significant role in poignantly channelling the voices of survivors who testify on their traumatic events (Gibson 2011: 4). In addition, it also aims to elicit social change and transformation (Forsyth 2009: 145). Moreover, this genre originated as, and still is, a theatre of denunciation, alleging about relevant issues that in some respects can involve traumatic realities (Banham 1995: 214). Documentary theatre as a form has diversified into various sub-genres, including verbatim and tribunal theatre (Reinelt 2009: 230). Nonetheless, various of its characteristics do not intersect with the criteria of the commun(e)ication event. The first diversion lies in its agenda and purpose, which is predominantly informative, placing a central importance on 'facticity' (Reinelt 2009: 10). In this sense, its purpose intersects with journalistic predominant forms of information and intellectual engagement (Martin 2006: 9). In addition, its informative nature girds towards the centralisation of the storytelling of the traumatic event (Fisher 2011: 122). Furthermore, it can often reflect directors' and playwrights' social and political agenda, as opposed to conveying journeyers' personal and particular desires regarding their traumatic/new realities (Gibson 2011: 8). Another divergence resides in its styles of representation, commonly a 'political mimesis' (Reinelt 2009: 12). This representational style tends to adopt naturalistic styles that can gradually habituate and de-sensitise audiences to. Also, documentary theatre's technique commonly involves actors speaking on behalf of journeyers through verbatim interviews, as opposed to journeyers' representing themselves and addressing audiences directly (Fisher 2011: 116).

Such assessment by no means aims to criticise or diminish documentary theatres as a significant social and ‘anti-theatre’ genre. Moreover, it is important to highlight documentary theatres that transgress informative and didactic boundaries, and forms of mimetic representation. The work of Anne Deavere Smith, for example, has pioneered a cross-representational style of documentary theatre, which addresses in verbatim formats the introspective and retrospective opinions from marginalised groups in regard to issues of race, ethnicity and gender (Kondo 2000). Smith challenges media’s reporting presenting ‘a *preferred version of a truth* of the event’, and encouraging audiences to react and elicit their own responses’ (Forsyth 2009:142). Although a documentary agenda is relevant as a social tool, it does not meet the main features of the somantic artwork.

### *Ethnodrama & Performance Ethnography*

Ethnodrama and performance ethnography are genres characterised for converging ethnographic practice with Th &P (Denzin 2003; Saldaña 2005; Conquergood 2013). Although the subjects addressed are not particularly about *the traumatic*, these styles were considered for their devising dynamics, which involve a closer relationship between participants and researchers in an ethical and cultural awareness (Conquergood 2013: 93). Moreover, more recent forms of ethnodrama and performance ethnography are trespassing to aesthetic forms that aim to engage audiences (Saldaña 2005: 33). Professor of Theatre Johnny Saldaña is clear about this aesthetic influence when he encourages ethnographers to ‘stop thinking like a social scientist and start thinking like an artist’ (Saldaña 2005: 33). Ethnodrama, first of all, has been defined as method of investigation that culminates in live performance events of research participants’ experiences (Saldaña 2005: x). It is a theatrical interrelation between ‘critical pedagogy and performance praxis’ (x). The significance of an ethnodrama in this research is that it uses performances as way of ‘collaboratively engaging the meanings of experience’ (x). Saldaña describes that it ‘privileges the primacy of experience, and the concept of voice’ (x). A point of divergence with ethnodrama, however, resides in the analytical and informative approach to the devising process (Saldaña 2005: ix-x). Saldaña refers to ethnodrama as the ‘dramatizing of data’ (Saldaña 2005: 2). It is important to note that the devising process is based on the research of participants and other documentary sources, conducted through an analytical point of view (Saldaña 2005: x, 2).

Contrastingly, the commun(e)ication event does not aim to analyse journeyers’ desires or disclosures. Furthermore, ethnodrama carries an educative interest towards audiences (Denzin 2003: 83). In contrast, the commun(e)ication event does not aim to shape

journeyers' messages for a didactic purpose. Certainly, ethnodramas are significant platforms that aim to elicit 'democratic public discourse' and discussion (Saldaña 2005: x). However, in its informative, analytical and didactic intent towards audiences, it may not always intersect with journeyers' reversed agency to explore their commun(e)ication desires and do so beyond the spoken word (Saldaña 2005: 2). Following, performance ethnography is a creative practice where 'text, performers, and audiences come together to participate in shared reflexive performances' (Denzin 2003: 37). It is a space 'drawn to participatory action' and to 'collaboratory project' (Denzin 2003: 17). However, this genre was disregarded because it involves researchers' lens experiences within a culture (Denzin 2003: 14). Ethnographer and professor of Communication, Norman K. Denzin observes how an ethnographic lens inevitably draws researchers to conflict with their 'ability to recognize and understand what defines other individuals' worlds' (Denzin 2003: 54). The commun(e)ication event does not aim to be a platform where artists or facilitators approach journeyers from an interpretative angle or as a method of further understanding a cultural phenomena (Denzin 2003: 33). Furthermore, it was observed that the central manifestation of this genre is an auto-performative or auto-ethnographic approach (33). Denzin finds resemblances, between such auto-ethnographical performances and practices of performance art (Denzin 2003: 34). In this sense, performance ethnography is a personal platform of self-exploration, which escapes the dynamics of offering a platform.

### *Applied Theatre*

Applied theatre is an 'anti-theatre' genre that resists categorisation because it covers a wide spectrum of social theatre practices, including social, educational, therapeutic, and activist purposes (Prentki and Preston 2009: 12, 13). An early reference to applied theatre can be traced back to Boal's theatre strategies (Saxton 2009: 69; Prentki and Preston 2009: 130). Boal's view of theatre as a tool for the disempowered is a central intent of applied theatres:

I believe that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it.

Augusto Boal 1979 quoted in Prentki and Preston 2009: 130

Although it is problematic to discuss specific points of intersection or divergence of applied theatres with the commun(e)ication event due to its wide range of agendas and expressions, general observations can be considered. First of all, in addition to the offering of agency and empowerment to participants, applied theatre was considered as a

significant platform because it aims to favour participants' engagement through various forms of collaboration (Saxton 2009: 10). Subsequently, liveness is given a central importance (10). Another point of intersection is the aim to 'engage' people and their communities to reflect on issues that are important to them (Prentki and Preston 2009: 14). In this sense, there is an important sense of agency given to individuals. In addition, it aims to be 'responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities' (Prentki & Preston 2009: 9). A general point of divergence, however, pertains to applied theatres' specific pre-established agenda to directly intervene and transform participants' social and political reality, tackling specific issues, with educational, psychological and emotional health purposes (Saxton 2009: 12). This agenda may not welcome the commun(e)ication event, since it revolves around desires and 'sharedness', without necessarily intervening directly or practically in journeyers' lives (Thompson 2011: 117). A 'dominant' characteristic of applied theatres drive is to 'focus on purpose, effect, or utility' (117). Although the commun(e)ication event is driven by the purpose to offer journeyers a platform in reversed agency, and bridge their *Distance* with potential confidants, it does not offer a pre-established utility agenda for journeyers. In addition, applied theatres engage the aesthetic, limiting its use as 'means to the end' (Thompson 2011: 118). In this case, the importance given to the somantic artwork in the commun(e)ication would not intersect with this view. In relation to this point, a applied theatres often dispense from 'audience' role, because audiences are active participants (Saxton 2009: 10). Differently, audiences in a commun(e)ication event engage in the somantic artwork from a role of confidants, and not necessarily as active performers.

Next, it is important to further consider the challenges that applied theatres can encounter when offering agency and platform to journeyers in regards to traumatic realities. Drama therapist Eva Leveton (2010) discusses dilemmas of applied theatres (Leveton 2010: 73). Leveton concedes that therapeutic collaborations with journeyers are positive in various ways but do not, in actuality, bring healing to participants (Leveton 2010: 72). Leveton's questions the difficulty to 'adequately show traumatic experience, or to tell a story that fits with expected pathways of recovery' (Leveton 2010: 73). She states that the 'central function' of applied theatres and drama therapy has been to offer journeyers the possibility of testimony, allowing 'unheard voices to speak, untold stories to be told, traumatic events to be documented' (Leveton 2010: 61). In this sense, this kind of approach assimilates centralised notions of bearing witness, which is an aim from which the somantic artwork diverges. However, as Leveton emphasises, applied theatres' social confrontation of traumatic events before audiences, continues to

be an important feature that was considered for the commun(e)ication event (Leveton 2010: 79). She gives importance to the continuous challenge of confronting ‘the hidden perpetrators’ outside of the theatre space. She states: ‘we leave the theatre solaced by victims’ resilience and satisfied with our attention to these issues, as the conditions and people that give rise to the horrors swirl around us, unabated’ (Leveton 2010: 79).

From the ‘anti-theatre’ genres addressed in the social domain, it was concluded that while the aims of the commun(e)ication event could be located in the spectrum of applied theatres, the importance given to the aesthetic force of somantic artwork, and the lack of agenda and utility of the platform, displaces the commun(e)ication event from this umbrella genre. The next section considers the aesthetic domain of ‘anti-theatres’, in further search to locate the somantic artwork.

### **2.2.2 Total works of art: a somantic intent**

This section outlines significant characteristics of aesthetic approaches that offer an aesthetic context and tool for a somantic commun(e)ication experience. An aesthetic assessment mainly provided the potential to offer journeyers holistic potential of commun(e)ication in a *shared dimension*. Briefly referring to Chapter One, the initial direction of the commun(e)ication event follows a reversed agency that aims to offer journeyers the possibilities for somantic and semantic domains of creating meaning and experience to convey their commun(e)ication desires and messages. This holistic intention therefore locates the somantic artwork in approaches of Th &P in accordance to a ‘total’ work of art form.

#### *‘Total artworks’ in performance: a somantic intent*

A significant theorisation of a performance style relevant to the ‘shared dimension’ of a somantic artwork is proposed by performance theorist, writer and practitioner Josephine Machon (2009). Machon presents a central argument of the synthesis of the sensible and intelligible realms in performance, in her conceptualization of the ‘(syn)aesthetic’ performance styles, characterised for a syncretism of ‘artistic principles, forms and techniques’, with ‘diversity of performance languages’ and the ‘cultural blurring of boundaries between the arts’ (Machon 2009: 29). Machon describes (syn)aesthetic performance as one that ‘establishes a double-edge rendering of making-sense/sense-making and foregrounds its fused somatic/semantic nature’ (Machon 2009: 14). Machon’s description of the ‘fusing of sense (semantic ‘meaning making’) with sense

(feeling, both sensation and emotion)', is an approach that intersects with the somantic intention of a commun(e)ication event (14). Machon describes it as: 'the "fusion" of the "felt" and the "understood" (Machon 2009: 21); a fusion and connection of the body and the mind in a 'holistic entirety – physiological, intellectual, emotional' (Machon 2009: 14). A slight point of divergence from the somantic artwork, however, is Machon's proposition of the predominance of the body over the mind as the 'sentient conduit' and 'primary locus of reception and consequent interpretation', where knowledge is secondary to experience (Machon 2003: 5). Somewhat differently, the somantic artwork aims to explore a continuum of somantic interplay, where the predominance of the body and the mind continuously interweave, manifesting semantic or somatic predominance according to journeyers' preference of communication. Nonetheless, Machon's theorisation of an 'interdisciplinary, intercultural and (syn)aesthetic hybrid' is a relevant approach that endorses a somatic and semantic interrelation of realms.

Furthermore, another earlier theorisation of a 'shared dimension' in 'total artworks' is proposed by writer and practitioner in the creative arts, Susan Broadhurst (1999). Broadhurst proposes a hybrid form of performance that expands the notion of 'total artworks' to 'liminal' forms of performance, which she describes as styles that exist in 'the edge of the possible', 'the experimental and the marginalized' in the arts (Broadhurst 1999: 12). Also, Broadhurst's notion of 'liminal' suggests a 'quest for the almost primordial' without disregarding the importance of 'non-linguistic modes of signification' (Broadhurst 1999: 12, 168). A 'liminal' performance style therefore places an emphasis on the visceral, the pre-verbal and an 'intersemiotic significatory practice', which 'includes but also goes beyond language' (Broadhurst 1999: 13; 37). This 'liminal' approach is a significant aesthetic context for the somantic artwork.

#### *Favourable Qualities for the Somantic Artwork*

Having identified an aesthetic context in which the somantic artwork can be located, it is important to highlight quintessential qualities of 'total artworks' that intersect with the somantic artwork's intention for journeyers' commun(e)ication event. One level of intersection is the somantic potential of total artworks to engage journeyers and audiences on both somatic and semantic levels, acknowledging both the body and the mind in unity of expression and perception (Steinman 1986: 2). A second level of intersection involves the attention to metaphor and imagination, which results in synaesthetic correspondences that expand communication to somantic blurredness. As mentioned in Chapter One, these elements are significant for the aesthetic 'sharedness'

and engagement between journeyers and confidants' as universal, somantic languages. The third level pertains to the semiotic variations and possibilities of multiple forms of signification and perception that 'total artworks' offer, which, as Kress emphasises, allows each form to speak in its own language and meaning-making potential (Kress 2011: 38). A fourth level of intersection is the manifestation of poiesis and representation style 'total artworks'. They are characterised for departing from an imitation of reality and exploring the unique forms that the performative space offer (Callery 2001: 3).

On the whole, these are qualities that allow a holistic potential of commun(e)ication, connecting journeyers and confidants on various levels of meaning-making and experience. Contrarily, there are potentially two diverging points between the somantic artwork and 'total artworks'. First of all, 'total artworks' place a fixed predominance on the body, the somatic, and the visceral, over an intellectual engagement or response (Machon 2009: 89). Differently, the somantic artwork is not characterized by predominance in either somatic or semantic realms. Secondly, another point of divergence is the confrontational inclination of 'total artworks' to discomfort and shock audiences (Roose-Evans 1989: 152). Broadhurst posits that liminal performances tend to 'confront, offend and unsettle' (Broadhurst 1999: 168). Contrarily, as it has been established, the somantic artwork aims to engage and bridge journeyers and confidants in a pleasing and pleasurable experience, that although possibly disquieting, it does not firstly aim to disturb or unsettle.

Following, considering the wide range of genres and variations included in 'total artworks', it is thus important to focus and underline relevant qualities that do intersect with the qualities of the somantic artwork: **multimodality, hybridity, synaesthetic language, physicality, the imaginary, the non-mimetic, site-specificity/immersiveness and audience engagement**. These qualities are present across a broad spectrum of liminal forms and (syn)aesthetic styles that can be traced physical and dance theatre practices, contemporary theatre styles, contemporary devised multimedia performances, post-dramatic theatre styles, and performance art (Nicholson 2003: 13). The first quality, multimodality, or the use of various modes of expression, begins with the interrelated use of movement and word, speech and mime, exemplified in physical theatres (Callery 2001: 11). Contemporary displays of multimodality across physically based genres involve 'powerful combinations of design, text, dance, dance and acting' (Sánchez-Colberg 2007: 25). Moreover, (syn)aesthetic proposals emphasise, as

Machon puts it, a 'symbiotic relationship between all the performance elements' (Machon 2009: 1). Machon underlines the sensorial heightening of these genres, which 'fuse' the 'haptic, tactile, oral, olfactory, visual, and aural' (Machon 2009: 2). Also, technology can play an important part in offering multimodal possibilities, which these genres consider through 'blending live action, film, TV, and computer-generated imagery' (Nicholson 2007: 173). This multimedial feature in the somatic artwork offer possibilities to commun(e)icate different layers of the traumatic spectrum through unique forms of language.

Following, the notion of multimodality as referred here, expands to an ideological, cultural and political level of these styles of performance, characterised for its hybridity of forms and approaches, in the 'blending of high and low culture' (Machon 2009: 100). Performance theorist and media choreographer, Johannes Birringer, describes hybridity as a 'necessary' blurring of boundaries between aesthetics and popular culture, art and everyday cultural commodity production' (Biringinger 2002: 22). Hybridity is identified in the 'intersection of diverse genres and the collapse of paradigmatic modernist configurations in the West- high, popular, and mass culture (Biringinger 2002: 68). Nicholson addresses hybridity in these genres 'experimental questioning of boundaries in performance practice and opening new possibilities for staging and reception' (Nicholson 2007: 173). A hybrid approach to the commun(e)ication event equals journeyers' freedom to integrate and explore the convergence of aesthetic and performative forms that emerge from their specific socio-cultural, political or personal ideological context or other spheres they are interested in or located at. Furthermore, the hybridity of these genres welcomes intercultural and multicultural awareness and convergence. Hybridity creates a cultural consciousness, because it acknowledges that the body 'speaks in its own native language' (Steinman 1986: 2). Moreover, hybridity creates a cultural a convergence through the 'mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas' (Pavis 2007: 252).

Multimodality, hybridity, and interculturality therefore imply an importance in the presence of the body as conduit and sentient of meaning and experiencing the world (Nicholson 2007: 159). An attention to physicality opens significant possibilities of somatic communication. This opens possibilities to explore commun(e)ication of desires, experiences, and interpretations of their *traumatic/anew reality*, that cannot be equally explored in an objectively, intelligibly or semantically. Drama scholar and performer Dymphna Callery (2001) describes the visceral connection established in physical theatres: 'the two-way current between stage and spectator does not operate merely at

the level of suspense and empathy but embrace the visual and visceral' (Callery 2001: 5). Also, Machon insists on the visceral body as an experience that 'leaves its traces on the perceivers via the immediacy of corporeal memory' (Machon 2009: 99). Moreover, the body also creates an intelligible and conceptual experience in that 'ideas can be inscribed into bodies' (Nicholson 2007: 168). Another relevant quality is the non-mimetic approach of 'total artworks'. Callery contends, for example, that physical performance styles reject the 'literal translation of an event' (Callery 2001: 5). Physical theatres are a reaction against text-based theatre and the Stanislavskian notion of interpreting a role (Callery 2001: 3). Furthermore, an attention to the body and poiesis also relates to another potential quality of these genres, which is the synaesthetic and metaphoric language, through which 'watching becomes a sensory experience' (Callery 2001: 5).

Birringer suggests, for example, that 'we must learn- before it is too late- to adopt a new sensuous, physical way of seeing (with our ears and bodies)' (Birringer 1991: 166). Furthermore, the metaphoric qualities of 'liminal artworks are underlined by Broadhurst, who discusses 'jarring' metaphors as producers of synaesthetic correspondences, accomplished by 'the interplay of various mental sense-impressions' (Broadhurst 1999: 175). The last quality addressed here pertains to the site-specificity, spatial engagement and immersion of audiences that many of these 'total artwork' styles explore, as 'experimental ways of working' in 'creative freedom and spontaneity of both performers and spectators', hence, disregarding the proscenium arch and traditional theatre buildings (Nicholson 2007: 6,8) This gives journeyers opportunity to explore the significance of using public or private spaces as forms of signification and of closer interaction with their confidants, hence, enhancing their commun(e)ication experience (Machon 2009: 5). The specificity of the space is a mode of signification that can engage audiences in an immersive meaning-making experience that involves body and mind. The locations that journeyers may select for their commun(e)ication event become the 'skin' that can contextualise journeyers' messages. The space is not only a scenic, aesthetic backdrop, but may be used to enhance social, political, historical, geographical and cultural meanings.

So far this section has proposed the liminal and (syn)aesthetic total artworks as a potential aesthetic context and tool for journeyers' somantic agency towards their commun(e)ication event, in their fusion and dialogue of diverse channels of representation, which can produce a blurredness and interplay of the semantic and somatic. However, it is critical to address the social potential that these artworks have

presented, in relation to *the traumatic*. Over the last few decades, for example, and particularly since 9/11, ‘total artworks’ in the West have significantly girded a devising attention to the topic of traumatic realities (Forsyth 2009: 140). Media coverage on the subject of trauma has increasingly inspired artists across physical and dance theatre genres and contemporary performance, to devise work based on traumatic events (Forsyth 2009: 141). However, what has been observed is that ‘total artworks’ have not foregrounded a social dynamics and methodology to engage in an intimate collaboration, where journeyers are offered reversed devising agency to express their commun(e)ication desires. ‘Total artworks’ are rather characterised for a devising process emerging of artists’ personal experiences, their views on subjects of socio-cultural and political relevance and personal significance, or their inspiration from interactions with journeyers (Nicholson 2003: 7). Therefore, aesthetic performances are usually the product of an internal exploration and the desire to present a personal statement (7). Although the creative and devising process may be inspired in a true event or in a testimonial account from journeyers, an intimate collaboration with journeyers during a creative and devising process, or the presence of journeyers on stage is rather uncommon. Consequently, a further proposition for these aesthetic ‘anti-theatres’ is therefore the consideration to devise a somantic artwork where artists offer and facilitate journeyers’ process of commun(e)icating their message and desires in a closer engaged dynamics. The proposal is therefore for aesthetic forms to transgress further into a social sphere of Th &P.

### **2.2.3 Socio-aesthetic location: a *shared dimension***

From the general observations about the social and aesthetic genres in the previous sections, two important conclusions are proposed here, which suggest that the location of the somantic artwork and journeyers’ commun(e)ication event can be located in the shared or liminal dimension between these two domains. The first conclusion addresses aesthetic styles of Th &P, and underlines the observation that these genres do not foreground a devising relationship and method of collaboration where artists reverse platform agency to journeyers. Instead, aesthetic devising processes reflect artists’ personal commun(e)ication processes. The second conclusion pertains to social genres in Th &P, observing that these platforms offer journeyers a specific pre-established agenda, and tend to place a predominant value on the semantic-objective-intelligible domain of journeyers’ realities. Therefore, it has been concluded that the somantic artwork and its commun(e)ication event can be located where these two domains explore their ‘shared dimension’: where the aesthetic domain regards the importance of offering journeyers

platforms in reversed agency, and where the social domain acknowledges the importance of aesthetics in a subjective-sensible-somatic domain.

### *Socio-Aesthetic Liminality*

Having identified this need for a *shared dimension*, it is important to refer to a liminal approach proposed in applied theatre. In his book *Performance Affects: applied theatre and the end of effect* (2011), Thompson presents a quintessential approach in the domain of social theatre, which argues for a greater convergence between applied theatres with aesthetics and affect. Thompson contends for the consideration of affect as a social and political force of engagement (Thompson 2011: 175). This view is a liminal approach towards the 'shared dimension' between the social and aesthetic domains. In Thompson's words, 'a sole concentration on social utility is in danger of abandoning the terrain of sensation: of the aesthetic concerns for beauty, joy, pleasure, awe, astonishment (Thompson 2011: 117). Moreover, there are several intersecting points where *performance affects* and the somatic artwork intersect. One is offering journeyers a 'neutral' and 'agenda-less' platform of commun(e)ication that allows them to discover or engage in their own agenda and desires. Thompson discusses the 'utility of the lack of utility' in applied theatre, suggesting that 'there should perhaps be an acceptance of "pointlessness" so that purpose can emerge' (Thompson 2011: 127). He comments that 'apparent pointlessness can be one of art's most powerful points' (127). Thompson's view is supportive of the validity in offering journeyers an 'agenda-less' platform of commun(e)ication. As stressed in the previous chapter, a 'neutral' or 'apparently pointless' public platform is a central point for journeyers' reversed agency. Another intersecting point pertains to the emphasis on aesthetics as a form of experience and meaning-making that incites a pleasurable commun(e)ication (Dewey 1980: 34). Thompson strongly argues for an attention to 'beauty' which compels an 'energetic commitment' for 'the feeling of responsibility' towards others (Thompson 2011: 171). Moreover, he proceeds to expand on the notion of 'beauty', referring to 'pleasure or celebration' as being a 'protective' from suffering and the burden of pain (171). In this manner, he endorses 'delight, beauty, or joy' as qualities in applied theatre that can 'awaken individuals to each other's needs and perspectives' (Thompson 2011: 170).

Thompson's call for beauty and celebration is a significant point of consideration for the commun(e)ication event on two specific aspects. Firstly, it maintains that commun(e)ication of *the traumatic* does not need to revolve around the traumatic events or *layers* of the *traumatic spectrum* that bring journeyers a sense of pain or sorrow. It can

be the case, for example, that journeyers desire to focus on *anew reality* that promises and allows joy and celebration. Secondly, it emphasises the necessity to bridge confidants to journeyers by means of pleasure and communion. Finally, another point of intersection is Thompson's assertion on the need for affect in applied theatre as the agent that 'blurs the distinctions between entertainment and efficacy or pleasure and instruction' (Thompson 2011: 130). In this sense, by referring to 'a negotiation between *affect* and *effect*', Thompson outlines a central emphasis in this research, which is, to view the social and the aesthetics as two forces in 'shared dimension' and somantic continuum for journeyers' commun(e)ication events (Thompson 2011: 175).

#### *Commun(e)ication as socio-aesthetic platform*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the commun(e)ication event aims to open venues of experience and meaning-making where the subjective-affective and the objective-intellectual may blur. Thompson observes, for example, that performance studies places predominance on a 'communicative model of theatre', where 'communication of information is often valorised above the shared sensation of affect' (Thompson 2011: 130). This observation echoes the view emphasised here, which argues that a majority of public platforms demand journeyers to communicate in an objective-intelligible-semantic realm of expression. Contrarily, a somantic interplay in commun(e)ication refers to the indistinctiveness of knowledge and experience, so that both journeyers and confidants create meaning that propels affective and effective experience. In this manner, the somantic artwork transforms journeyers' experiences into art, which bridges their *Distance* with confidants. It is in this symbiotic location of the social and aesthetic, where the somantic artwork and its commun(e)ication event are found. The focus of the commun(e)ication event is, thus, **commun(e)ication as performance**. Such approach acknowledges communion between confidants and journeyers' commun(e)ication desires as an experience that is performed. In this sense, commun(e)ication is the staging of the 'sharedness' between journeyers and confidants, in the re-presentation of traumatic/anew realities. The socio-aesthetic significance of journeyers' commun(e)ication therefore resides in their personal retrospective and introspective meaning about their own experiences, spoken through the unique language of Th & P. This social-aesthetic relationship in the commun(e)ication event consists in using aesthetics as a somantic tool of expression and engagement of journeyers' commun(e)ication desires in relation to their traumatic/anew realities.

The commun(e)ication event has the potential to create meaning and experience, which can be transformed into a social force. Turner (1986) shares the view of aesthetics as social engagement, conceding for example, that ‘aesthetics, in complex structures, are pervaded by reflexivity’ (Turner, 1986: 87). Turner observes that ‘audiences compare the creation on stage or a piece of literature to their real life, for reflection of its meaning’ (87). Furthermore, Schechner also explains the socio-aesthetic flux as a ‘performance’ where the social domain (‘social drama’), aiming to incite transformation in participants, meets the aesthetic domain (‘aesthetic drama’) that equally aims to incite transformation in audiences (Schechner 1988: 171). At this point, it is useful to locate the somantic artwork as a socio-aesthetic platform, different to other specific presentational approaches given to performance. For the past two decades, the function and notion of performance expanded to manifestations of culture, as proposed by Turner; to behaviour as performance, as proposed by sociologist Ervin Goffman; and to language as performance, as proposed by philosopher John Austin (Carlson 2004: 61). This ‘performative turn’ developed an interest in social and behavioural performance, exploring culture and language in its daily interactions, through its reflection of belief, rituals, and *modus vivendi*. In this manner, a plethora of contemporary performative work stages a vast variation of ethnographical and anthropological explorations of self and Other (Conquergood 2013). It is therefore necessary to distinguish the essential intent of the somantic artwork, which is not primarily focused on exploring performative aspects of journeyers’ behaviour, culture, social interactions, language, or Turner’s observation of performance as ‘the world as a stage’ (Turner 1986: 75). Although such cultural expressions are implicit in the commun(e)ication event, and may be an intrinsic layer that journeyers may desire to explore in their somantic artwork, the focus of the commun(e)ication event rather locates its approach in the act of ‘sharedness’ of commun(e)ication desires as performance.

The approach of commun(e)ication in performance is the acknowledgement of the experience of ‘communion’ between confidants and journeyers’ commun(e)ication desires as a performative, intentional action. Commun(e)ication is then the staging of experience and meaning, not a pretentious imitation or representation of the traumatic, neither an impossible presentation of it, but a ‘re-presentation’; a new picture. The socio-aesthetic significance of journeyers’ commun(e)ication therefore resides in that re-presentation carries journeyers’ personal retrospective and introspective meaning about their own experiences, spoken through the language of theatre, which, speaks in unique ways that cannot be conveyed in real life. The commun(e)ication event has the potential to create

meaning and experience that may be transformed into a social force. In the realm of social theatre, Schechner and Thompson also propose a form of social theatre from which 'horrific experiences can be transmuted into more "universal" or "aesthetic" kinds of expression (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 15). Schechner and Thompson significantly observe that an aesthetic domain of expression can become a form of social theatre, where experience can be transformed into art (Schechner & Thompson 2004: 15).

Having established the location of the somantic artwork in an aesthetic and social *shared dimension*, the next step is to identify a poietic, 'anti-theatre' aesthetic that can bridge journeyer-confidant *Distance*. This second part of the chapter presents an aesthetic theorisation for the somantic artwork, which emerged from empirical and theoretical analysis of the case studies.

### **2.3 Magical Realism: a subversive commun(e)ication of *the traumatic***

As briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, the aesthetic theorisation for the subversion of the *Catch-22 affair* and the journeyer-confidant *Distance* was originally researched in theatres of the absurd, estrangement, the uncanny, and distanciation effects endorsed by dramatist Bertolt Brecht.<sup>12</sup> The analysis of the case studies informed, however, that although these theories were an insightful beginning towards the subversion of the *Catch-22 affair*, they presented certain limitations that will be addressed here. The aesthetics of Magical Realism emerged as a natural direction towards a favourable poietic subversion of the *Catch-22 affair* that can confront reality without distancing confidants from journeyers. Although Magical Realism has been mainly recognised as a literary force across the academia, the arts, and popular culture, it is proposed in this research as an aesthetic attitude towards reality in Th &P. Art critic Wieland Schmeid writes about Magical Realism as 'a vision of reality and the world' (Schmeid 1969 in Menton 1998: 412). More particularly, although Magical Realism has not been formally theorised as a defined style in Th &P, it is applied here as an aesthetic tool in Th &P, based on its aesthetic philosophy and characteristics proposed by academics and art critics who write about Magical Realism in literature. In addition, the latter part of the chapter refers to theatrical work where elements of Magical Realism are identified.

The proposition of Magical Realism as a favourable aesthetic for the somantic artwork follows particular rationale. First of all, Magical Realism is an aesthetic of representation, characterised for its 'successful manifestation' of poiesis over mimesis (Chanady 1995: 126). Second of all, it is an aesthetic of liminal and *shared dimension*, since

it is birthed from an acknowledgement of the 'magical' and the 'real' as indivisible manifestations of reality. In this sense, it is an aesthetics that validates the objective and subjective experience as equally veracious. Thirdly, the aesthetic intent of Magical Realism offers tools to bridge *Distance* between journeyers and confidants in the commun(e)ication experience. This intent re-sensitises what has been exhausted of reality, and familiarises what is alien and unrelatable through a paradoxical technique, which makes *the familiar unfamiliar*, and *the unfamiliar, familiar*. From this rationale, a significant parallelism has been observed between *traumatic/anew reality* and Magical Realism, which is highlighted in this research as a *shared dimension* between the 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' of both realities; the 'alien' and 'magical' realms. In this sense, Magical Realism has informed a deeper understanding of the 'clash' of realities. The propositions to consider Magical Realism as a subversive aesthetic tool for the commun(e)ication event, and the parallelism with a 'clash' of realities, are conceptualised in this research as **traumagical realism**, where the 'clash of realities' and the 'magical real' mirror each other. The following section presents a brief introduction to the aesthetics of Magical Realism, followed by the development of this proposed term.

### *Origin*

Magical Realism as an aesthetic form was proposed throughout the early 1920's, by German art critic Franz Roh, who coined and conceptualised the term to describe a new movement in painting (Menton 1998: 211). Roh identified Magical Realism as an aesthetics that reacted against 'exhausted' Expressionism and its abstract and 'remote' style (1995: 15). In his essay, 'Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism' (1925), Roh posits:

It seems to us that this fantastic dreamscape [Expressionism] has completely vanished and that our real world re-emerges before our eyes, bathed in the clarity of a new day. We recognize this world, although now- not only because we have emerged from a dream- we look at it with new eyes.

Roh 1995: 17

Magical Realism was then characterised by the desire to make familiar and relatable art, which Roh depicts as 'elemental happiness of seeing again, of recognizing things' (Roh 1995: 18). However, more than a 'return' to reality, as Roh emphasised, this was 'New Realism' (Roh 1995: 19). Magical Realism therefore emerges from the intent to draw the beholder closer to 'a real world', distinguished from Surrealism, in that it maintained an objective element of reality (Bowers 2004: 23). Roh described Magical Realism as the synthesis of expressionist painting and its antithesis, German naturalism (Imbert 1976: 7-9). The apparent paradox that characterises Magical Realism is the synthesis of its

antithetical components: the 'magical' and the 'real' (Imbert 1976: 9). This synthesis of the 'veracious' and 'the supernatural' produces the 'strange', which is the world of magical realism (Imbert 1976: 1; translation mine). From the German post expressionist movement, Magical Realism had an artistic peak in literature in the mid 1950's, and was made popular by Latin-American writers, for which the term was frequently used to describe Latin-American narrative written after WWII (Menton 1998: 15). In Magical Realist literature, the fusion of the two opposite worlds as an indivisible reality, 'promoted' the integration of rational and irrational worlds (Zamora and Faris 1995: 10). Latin Americans are the 'prime movers' in developing the concept of Magical Realism (Zamora and Faris 1995: 2). However, it is not a literary movement contained in a time frame, neither is it particular to Latin America (Menton 1998: 10). Writer and literary critic Luis Leal (1995) describes Magical Realism as 'an attitude towards reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structures'; therefore it is not 'dominated by a refined style' (Leal 1995: 121). The aesthetics of Magical Realism is a universal tendency not only in world literature but also across the arts (Weisgerber 1987: 215).

The renewed interest of Magical Realism driven by its literary expression, sparked disagreement and debate amongst theorists and art critics, in regards to the nature of the shared dimension of its opposite 'magical' and 'realism' realms (Aldea 2011: 149). One view describes the synthesis as 'coexistence on equal terms of the empirical world of reason and logic and the supernatural world of unreason' (Erickson 1995: 248 or 428?). An opposing view, emphasised by art theorist Eva Aldea (2011), argues that Magical Realism should be 'free from the yoke' of a deliberate or arbitrary fusion of two opposites (Aldea 2011: 149). Aldea argues that although the real and magical are opposite realms, these are 'two faces of the same coin' of reality (Aldea 2011: 149). Literature professor Wendy B. Faris (1995) and Professor in English, History and Art, Louis Parkinson Zamora, concur that despite the extent of disagreement about the nature of the synthesis of opposites, what is agreed is that Magical Realism 'facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction. (Zamora and Faris 1995: 5). Faris compares Magical Realism to a 'double-sided mirror': 'the magical realism vision thus exists at the intersection of two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions' (Faris 1995: 21). Writer and literary critic Seymour Menton (1998) asserts that the co-existence of irreconcilable worlds is the essential nature of Magical Realism, which even more so than an aesthetic technique, is emphasised here as

an 'attitude towards life' (Menton 1998: 16). Menton asserts that this attitude acknowledges that 'reality is stranger than fiction' that 'things occur unexpectedly', and that 'absolute truth or reality is impossible for mortal man to grasp' (Menton 1998: 416).

### **2.3.1 Magical Realism and *the traumatic***

The blurredness between the 'realism' and the 'magical' of reality parallels the notion of journeyers' 'clash' of realities described in Chapter One. It is important to clarify that these parallelisms contextualise and incite reflection about journeyers' *anew reality*, and do not attempt to make claims about the inner state of trauma.

#### *The 'real' and 'magical' realms*

One parallelism, as already suggested, consists in the perception and validation of two seemingly opposite worlds or realities. In Magical Realism, the notion of 'real' refers to 'what is knowable, predictable, and controllable', while the magical is 'beyond our complete understanding and control' (Stewart 1995: 477). Writer and literary critic, Enrique Anderson Imbert, locates the 'real' in the realm of the 'veracious' or 'natural', while the magical pertains to the 'fantastical' and 'supernatural' elements of reality (Imbert 1976: 1). The 'real' describes the familiar, ordinary and trivial aspects of reality (Bravo 1988: 232); the 'magical' highlights the 'mysteriously enchanting' side of reality (Menton 1982: 862). The 'magical' appreciates the world and reality to have a dream-like quality (Menton 1982: 412). This 'dream-like' quality is a quintessential perception of reality proposed in Magical Realism, which 'projects a mesmerizing uncertainty suggesting that ordinary life may also be the scene of the extraordinary' (Mikics 1995: 372). Referring briefly to Chapter One, the two worlds that journeyers encounter are similarly of paradoxical nature as the 'real' and the 'magical' in Magical Realism. The 'real' in journeyers' reality is the 'ordinary' and 'familiar' realm, what is rational and logical to an individual, or what 'makes sense'. Contrarily, the 'magical' world pertains to the 'abnormal' or 'unfamiliar' realms, referring to what is absurd and unreasonable for an individual, or what 'unmakes sense'. In Magical Realist terms, an 'unfamiliar' reality is the 'extraordinary' and 'unbelievable' side of life. However, a central point proposed in this research sustains that the notion of 'extraordinary' or 'unbelievable' is not limited to a positive perception of the 'magical' and 'extraordinary'. Alternatively, these notions of reality can refer to a negative quality, which in this case, translates to what journeyers speak of the 'unbelievable' of the shocking experience of: 'this cannot be true' and 'this

cannot be happening'. Magical realist writer Gabriel García Márquez, for example, speaks of Magical Realism through a positive lens of the 'extraordinary':

I believe if one knows how to look at ordinary life events, they can become extraordinary. Our daily reality is magical, but people have lost their naivety and stopped paying attention. I find incredible correlations at the turn of every corner.

Márquez 1969 in Menton 1998: 20; translation mine

Alternatively, a reference to illustrate the negative side of the 'magical' realm is Professor Irene Gunther's reference to Austrian artist Alfred Kubin (Guenther 1995: 57). Kubin described "**the other side**" of the visible world' as **'the corruption, the evil, the rot, as well as the power and mystery'** (Kubin 1909 quoted in Guenther 1995: 57; emphasis mine). This notion of 'the other side of the visible world' is referred here as a 'dark side' of the magical real, or **'dark magic'**, while Márquez' positive emphasis on the 'extraordinary' is referred in this thesis as the 'bright side' of the magical real, or **'bright magic'**. As described in Chapter One, journeyers' traumatic reality emerges from the 'clash' or shock of an alien, foreign, abnormal, and illogical reality, with what was ordinary, familiar, normal, and logical in their world. This 'clash' renders a reality constituted from what used to 'make sense' and what suddenly 'unmakes sense'. In this sense, journeyers' 'traumatic reality' can be paralleled with the 'dark side' of the 'magical', or its 'dark magic'. It is a reality that renders otherworldly, foreign, and 'unbelievable', in the 'dark side' and sense of the word.

#### *An (e)merging validation*

A second parallelism pertains to the convergence of the 'real' and the 'magical' realms. The synthesis of the 'real' (a thesis) and 'magical' (its antithesis), renders these realms 'apparently indiscernible yet radically different' (Aldea 2011: 149). Faris and Zamora illustrate this synthesis:

'Mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female: these are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts.

Zamora and Faris 1995: 6

This indistinctiveness of realms produces a shared dimension of the 'real and 'magical' where 'the supernatural is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence' (Zamora and Faris 1995:3); 'where a scenery that is common and familiar, is nevertheless, a magical one' (Bravo, 1988:14). This thesis maintains the argument that the realms in the context

of Magical Realism do not exist separately in order to be fused arbitrarily, but are in fact dialectically indivisible. In other words, the 'real' and 'magical' are a 'unified double vision' (Guenther 1995: 57). Consequently, objectivity and certainty can exist in illogical and strange backdrops, blurring subjective and objective realities (Bravo 1988: 172). Roh also described this synthesis as a liminal substance being situated in-between the 'extreme' domains of 'vague sensuality and highly structured schematics' (Roh 1995: 23). This blurring of 'extremes' is a quintessential double lens to journeyers' 'clash' and the gradual 'reconciliation' of extreme realities. Firstly, it is a lens that captures journeyers' arbitrary convergence of the 'ordinary' and 'traumatic', which produces *anew reality*. English Professor Jon Thiem describes Magical Realism as 'the wondrous passage from one world to another, the interpenetration of irreconcilable world' (Thiem 1995: 237). He describes this passage as a phenomena that seems incredible' (237). In the same way, the undergoing of a traumatic experience in journeyers' lives render an 'incredible' or 'unbelievable' passage onto a new reality, where trauma becomes a new and unwanted guest in the inner world (Kalsched 1996: 13).

#### *A 'strange' effect*

A third parallelism is how the co-existence of 'realism' and 'magic' produces a **strange** realm (Imbert 1976: 1). Art critic, David Mikics refers to the 'strange' in Magical Realism as a 'transgression' that presents itself as a neighbouring of, or intimacy, between fantasy and empirical sobriety (Mikics 1995: 372). Similarly to how the blurredness of 'realism' and 'magic' render a 'strange' perception of reality, the 'clash' of journeyers' 'ordinary' with 'traumatic' realities produces *anew reality* which is, at first strange to the individual, located between 'fantasy', 'myth', and real experience (Kalsched 1996: 5). The most common characteristics of the 'strange' in Magical Realism are identified here as: foreign element, the oneiric, the ghostly, the metamorphic, and a stratification of reality. The characteristics are not necessarily 'dark magic' if seen under a positive lens; however, they are addressed here from the 'dark side of the magical'.

The **foreign element** trait recognises a world where 'the most implausible, incredible, and unexpected things may happen' (Menton 1998: 424). It is identified by an unexpectedness that creates a 'strange effect' (Menton 1998: 416). Theatre scholars refer to this occurrence as 'the improbable fact', because it is a happening which, although not impossible it is rather unbelievable (Garay 2007: 119). As Menton notes, this 'improbable fact' renders 'reality stranger than fiction' (Menton 1998: 416). The foreign

element in Magical Realism mirrors the absurd and the 'this cannot be happening' experience, which is foreign to an individual's *ordinary reality* (van der Kolk 1996: 42). The shocking event is a foreign element for which it renders unimaginable, improbable and unexpected (Reyes 2008: 657). Following, the second feature is the '**oneiric**' or 'dreamlike quality' attributed to reality (Thiem 1995: 237). As Menton refers, Magical Realism appreciates 'the world and reality to have a dream-like quality' (Menton 1982: 412). This 'dreamlike' quality, however, is different from Surrealism's approach to the oneiric; while the latter is an 'unrestrained imagination, groundless, impossible, not real or not based on reality', Magical Realism's dreamlike elements, maintain an objective, relatable, and realistic element (Schmeid 1969 in Menton 1982: 214). Moreover, Magical Realism is not rooted on a 'dream motif', and does not 'distort reality or create imaginary worlds' (Leal 1995: 121). The oneiric realm is one that continuously converges with realism (Roh 1995: 17). Art critic Victor Bravo (1984) describes the purpose of the dreamlike in Magical Realism:

Dreams are the symbiotic stimulant between objective reality and a magical one, nightmares are the fuel of the absurd, and delirium takes us to the far reaches of an unimaginable reality.  
Bravo 1984: 32; translation mine

Bravo's description of the 'oneiric' mirrors a traumatic reality's the absurd, nightmarish, and unimaginable traits of how a shocking experience renders to journeyers' psychic reality (Kalsched 1996: 6). Kalsched explains 'the psyche' is in a state of 'unconscious fantasy, as illustrated in dreams, transference, and mythology' (6). Psychology speaking, a traumatic experience involves a dissociation where individuals think that 'what is happening seems unreal, dreamlike, and movie-like' (Wilson 2004: 161). However, the dream-like of *the traumatic* is of a dark nature, a nightmare, what 'unmakes sense'. The third feature is the metaphor of the **ghostly**. In a magical reality, ghosts are both literal and metaphorical beings. Following, Faris and Zamora describe the ghostly as scenes and events that render 'hallucinatory', 'fantastic and phantasmagoric' (Zamora & Faris 1995: 6). In this sense, they suggest that ghosts can represent the political and cultural perversions of society (6). Theatre scholar Josefina Garay Torillo (2007) refers to the ghostly as alternative views to reality, suggesting that this quality can be used to describe 'other levels of reality, which from the traditional lens, are non-existing, ghostly realities' (Garay 2007: 116). Garay emphasises the magical real lens as capable to 'believe, seek, explore and play' with these other realities (Garay 2007: 116). In this sense, the ghostly is the quality that connects the 'real' with the 'magical', the 'ordinary' with the 'alien'. Zamora describes this ghostly quality as 'liminal, metamorphic,

intermediary', which 'exists in/between/on modernity's boundaries of physical and spiritual, magical and real, and challenge the lines of demarcation' (Zamora 1995: 498). *Traumatic/anew reality* mirrors the ghostly of Magical Realism on various levels. Firstly, it intersects with the perpetrations, corruptions, and perversions of shocking experiences. Zamora's description of the ghostly is useful to depict this:

Ghosts are 'bearers of cultural and historical burdens, for they represent the dangers, anxieties, and passional forces that civilization banishes. They may signal primal and primordial experience, the return to the repressed, the externalisation of internalised terrors.

Zamora 1995: 497

Secondly, the ghostly can refer to the boundaries between ordinary and traumatic, the 'before and after' the shock, the longing of the ordinary past and the hauntedness of the present (van der Kolk 1996: 279). From a clinical view, ghosts can be the intrusions experienced during traumatic stress (Kalsched 1996: 16). As Kalsched puts it, affective 'complex' states of psychic reality 'tend to behave autonomously as frightening inner "beings" (13). The ghostly quality of traumatic stress is also present in re-experiencing sensations and intrusive thoughts (Drozdek 2007: 9; La Capra 2001: 46).

A third feature of the strange in Magical Realism is the **metamorphic**. Zamora and Faris explain that the 'plurality of worlds' accepted in the magical real is a 'liminal territory' where 'transformation, metamorphosis, and dissolution are common' (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6). Academic and writer Anne C. Hegerfeldt identifies the metamorphic in the collision of worlds, of invisible forces, the transformation and change of people and places (Hegerfeldt 2005: 52). In *traumatic/anew reality*, the metamorphic can be manifested both in transformations and changes of the external and internal worlds of journeyers. Clinicians observe internal changes when journeyers undergo changes in their beliefs, in their personality, and those caused by substance abuse (Drozdek 2007: 9; Wilson 2004: 9). Herman highlights journeyers' sense of self and trust in others shatters (Herman 2001: 52). Levine and Wilson observe journeyers may go through alterations of self-perception and perception of others (Wilson 2004: 9). In this sense, the alterations and changes that journeyers experience from the clash or shock or reality undergoes a metamorphic state. Finally, the last trait is **stratification**. Menton's approach to this quality is based on 'a simultaneity of past, present and future' (Menton 1998: 419). Hegerfeldt identifies it as fragmentation, which can refer to time, space or self (Hegerfeldt 2005: 185). Furthermore, Zamora and Faris refer to stratification in Magical Realism as, 'deconstruction of traditional dichotomies such as: abstract/concrete, word/thing, past/present (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6). Stratification

in a *traumatic/anew reality* can refer to what van der Kolk describes as an experience of living in a present reality that is ‘tainted’ by the past (Van der Kolk 1996: 279). Stratification also alludes to the fragmentation of traumatic and narrative memory in journeyers (Herman 2001: 177). In addition, stratification appears in the fragmentation of cognition and affect during dissociative experiences (Mollon 2011: 12).

### *An uncanny commingling*

Having discussed the mirroring features of the ‘strange’ between Magical Realism and traumatic/anew realities, it is necessary to introduce a state that is closely related to the ‘strange’, which has been identified in this study as a central mirroring point between the magical real and the traumatic: **the uncanny**. Although the uncanny as a central feature has not been comprehensively theorised as a central characteristic of Magical Realism, the theoretical and praxis research conducted here identifies it as an intrinsic element (Mikics 1995: 372). The uncanny has been explored in various disciplines, including the arts, the political sphere, and the field of psychoanalysis (Royle 2003: 96). Its usage as concept is traced back to a piece of poetic works written in the early 1770s, which imply the existence of the supernatural in the arts (Royle 2003: 11). Novelist and writer Nicholas Royle (2003) describes the uncanny as a human feeling of ‘commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar’; the mysterious and strange (Royle 2003: 1):

The uncanny is ghostly. It is concerned with the strange, weird, and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural. The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of what is being experienced.

Royle 2003: 1

Guenther mentions the uncanny in Magical Realism, observing that the magical real lens reveals ‘with surgical probing, a deeper layer – the magic and the *unheimlich* (uncanny) behind the real’ (Guenther 1995: 53). Guenther suggests that Magical Realism unveils the ‘monstrous and marvellous Uncanniness within human beings’ (Guenther 1995: 36). The essence of the uncanny resides in the ‘commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar’ (Royle 2003: 1). One aspect of the uncanny is therefore the defamiliarization of the familiar. Guenther explains, for example, that the uncanny presents the familiar as ‘over-exposed, isolated, rendered from an uncustomary angle’, for which it becomes ‘unusual, endowed with an *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness), which elicits fear and wonder’ (Guenther 1995: 36). The other aspect is the familiarisation of the unfamiliar. Mikics describes, for example, that the uncanny presents ‘what seems most strange’ as something that seems ‘secretly familiar’ (Mikics 1995: 373).

Following, the notion of the uncanny has also been discussed in the field of psychoanalysis, originally identified by Psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch (1906). Jentsch describes the uncanny as an effect of disquieting strangeness, *unheimlich*, which translated from German means ‘untranslatable’ and ‘un-homely’ (Jentsch 1906: 2). According to Jentsch, uncanniness takes place when familiarization is taken away and a feeling of uncertainty and disorientation presents itself from ‘new/foreign/hostile’ qualities (Jentsch 1906: 4). Jentsch suggests that this disorientation can result in a stirring effect that produces bafflement and uneasiness (Jentsch 1906: 7). Interestingly, Jentsch’s mentions trauma to exemplify this uncanny stirring. The connection of this uncanny effect with Magical Realism can be identified in what Faris describes, the ‘unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events’ (Faris 1995: 7). An important observation Jentsch makes about the uncanny, which further mirrors it with the trauma effect, is that the extent of what makes a moment uncanny (foreign and disquieting), depends on the individual, and not the moment itself (Jentsch 1906: 3). Similarly, what is shocking or traumatising to one individual is not for the other (Doctor 2012: 295). Finally, Jentsch suggests that the uncanny is also present in art, but only with exclusively artistic means and artistic intention (Jentsch 1906: 10).

### **2.3.2 Traumagical Realism**

The parallelisms so far addressed between Magical Realism and *traumatic/new reality* are an introduction to the rationale of the magical real aesthetics as favourable for journeyers’ commun(e)ication experience. This section closes with a brief introduction of a term coined in this study, to refer to the parallelisms between the magical real and *traumatic/new reality*, and propose it as a favourable aesthetics for the somantic artwork: **traumagical realism**.

**Traumagical realism** is a concept that incites reflection about journeyers’ ‘clash’ of realities, thus offering an aesthetic and conceptual context and attitude for the somantic artwork. The mirroring points of *traumatic/new reality* and the magical real create a favourable context for journeyers on three levels. Firstly, the acknowledgement of the ‘magical’ and the ‘real’ as equally veracious, validates both objective-intelligible-semantic and subjective-sensible-somatic manifestations of journeyers’ *traumatic/new reality*. The importance of this somantic intention is, as Aldea describes, ‘the effect of proliferating meaning’ created by a ‘disjunctive synthesis’ that ‘causes the convergent series to diverge and communicate with each other in new ways’ (Aldea 2011: 49). Another aspect is the indistinctive relationship between the ‘magical’ and the ‘real,

which illustrates and contextualises journeyers' convergence of the normal and abnormal aspects of their *anew reality*, encouraging a reconciliation of the ordinary and alien. Zamora and Faris depict this reconciliatory proposal when stating that: 'Magical Realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction. (Zamora and Faris 1995: 5). The third aspect refers to Magical Realism's uncanny and strange effects produced from the blurring of the 'magical' and 'real' (Guenther 1995: 53). These effects are a contextualisation of journeyers' stated that they initially encounter from the 'clash' of their ordinary and traumatic realities. The uncanny and strange are also effects that audiences may experience in confiding with journeyers' experiences. Magical Realism's attitude towards reality embraces the strange as part of a mystery and irrational side of experience, without disproving it or divorcing it from a veracious reality (Leal 1995: 123). The equally veracious and truthful value given to the 'magical' and the 'real' offers validation to journeyers' absurd, irrational and foreign experiences birthed from trauma, and also to the subjective-sensible-somatic layers of their traumatic spectrum. Mikics observes, for example, that 'Magical Realism is part of a twentieth-century preoccupation with how our ways of being in the world resist capture by the traditional logic of the waking mind's reason' (Mikics 1995: 372).

#### *A 'traumatic imagination'*

Following, it is necessary to give attention to a relevant theorisation that epitomizes the correlation between Magical Realism and trauma in the context of postmodernist and postcolonial literature, endorsed in recent years.<sup>13</sup> Scholar Eugene Arva (2008, 2011) coins the term 'traumatic imagination' as an aesthetic tool for writers to 'represent the unrepresentable' and 'unspeakable' of trauma (Arva 2008: 69). Arva underlines that Magical Realism can convey the extreme reality of traumatizing events in a retransmission and reconstruction of what is difficult to remember but also forget (Arva 2008: 74). The traumatic imagination thus renders 'real' what 'seems unreal' about traumatic experiences not through recreation but through a re-creation (Arva 2008: 80). Moreover, Arva captures the subversive essence of Magical Realism by suggesting it can re-present a *traumatic reality* through an 'imaginative reconstitution', instead of a mimetic representation, revealing deeper layers of trauma and reality that can be 'felt', 're-experienced' and 'translated' beyond what the intellect and the written word can express (2008: 61).

Arva's correlation between Magical Realism and the traumatic thus share points of intersection with **traumagical realism**, but each responds to different aims and focus and diverges at various points. Although both a 'traumatic imagination' and **traumagical realism** propose to use the magical real lens as an aesthetic tool to communicate *the traumatic*, the aims are somewhat different. The traumagical real lens does not aim or claim to present or represent trauma for it to be re-experienced, re-transmitted or translated. Instead, it seeks to construct new meaning and experience by poetically presenting *anew reality* from journeyers' present introspect and retrospect. Secondly, **traumagical realism** is not directly intended to be a medium through which to 'act out' or 'work through' trauma, as the traumatic imagination is suggested to do (Arva 2008: 67). Instead, it aims to elucidate journeyers' desires and needs that emerge out of a traumatizing and *anew reality*, whilst confronting and enhancing a deeper understanding of their reality that can be shared with audiences. More particularly, **traumagical realism** applies techniques that specifically aim to counteract the journeyer-confidant *Distance* predicament. Thirdly, **traumagical realism** does not recur to a fictionalization of fantastical layers of reality, which is a technique considered in the 'traumatic imagination' (2008: 78). Instead, the traumagical real lens identifies the 'magical' objective and subjective aspects of journeyers' reality that may appear fantastical, and yet happened in actuality.

### 2.3.2.1 A favourable attitude

Continuing with the intersection between Magical Realism and *the traumatic*, this section presents the main characteristics of magical real aesthetics as a favourable attitude for journeyers' commun(e)ication events.

#### *Confrontation of Reality*

Magical Realism is an aesthetics that confronts reality, in subversive ways. Leal states, for example, that the magical realist 'doesn't create imaginary worlds in which we can hide from everyday reality', but 'confronts reality and tries to untangle it (Leal 1995: 121). This intention is favourable for journeyers because it encourages them to deal with aspects from their traumatic spectrum that they believe need to be confronted, dissected, questioned and addressed with their confidants. Also, a confrontation of reality allows journeyers to reflect on aspects of their *traumatic/anew reality* to which society needs to respond to. Roh concedes that 'in making what was formerly accepted as obvious into a "problem" for the first time, we enter a much deeper realm' (Roh 1995: 20).

### *Mystery respected*

Another intention that is favourable for journeyers is that the magical real lens does not aim to justify the mysterious of reality, (Leal 1995: 123). Leal suggests, for example, that 'the magical realist tries to 'seize the mystery that breathes behind things' (123). In contrast to realists, Leal states that the magical realist does not try to copy the surrounding reality (as realists do) or to wound it (as Surrealists do) but to capture its mystery (123). This lens that recognises the mysterious aspects of life provides a context for journeyers to explore those aspects of their traumatic experience that they cannot make sense of, but that form part of their life. This quality is relevant for journeyers, because they can explore a view of *traumatic/new reality* that also involves the mysterious and irrational experiences with a attributed credibility and value. Furthermore, Leal also asserts that the magical realist does not try to find reasons for the psychological actions of characters, or their inability to express themselves (Leal 1995: 121). Central events in Magical Realism have no logical or psychological explanation (Leal 1995: 123). This lack of logic legitimises journeyers by not having to justify the traumatic aspects of their reality for which they do not have explanation or logic. This attitude embraces what journeyers cannot understand without questioning or doubting disregarding its truthful and significant value (Leal 1995: 121).

### *The objective anchor*

Another favourable characteristic of the magical real is its anchor with 'realism' (Leal 1995: 121). Its aesthetics maintains a realist anchor, giving importance to 'historical and objective facts', presenting 'always truthful and reliable' events, and not compromising these over fantastic and supernatural aspects (Faris 1995: 174). One significance of the objective anchor is that it encourages confidants to believe in journeyers' disclosures and informs them about important true events in a contextual manner. Secondly, this anchor acknowledges journeyers' desires to address aspects that pertain to the objective-intelligible-semantic dimension of their *traumatic/new reality*. Thirdly, a close and sustained relationship with the objective and realistic dimension offers confidants a point of reference that they can relate to and connect through with journeyers.

### *'Matter-of-factness'*

The 'matter-of-fact' characteristic is the lack of justification of the 'magical' in order to recognize the 'magical' as a true and real dimension of reality (Faris 1995: 177). 'Matter-of-factness' is a central and essential attitude of Magical Realism towards reality that affirms the synthesis of the two realms (Hart & Ouyeng 2005: 4). Professor of Hispanic

studies, Stephen M. Hart, and professor of comparative literature, Wen-Chin Ouyang (2005) identify 'matter-of-factness' as 'the realism of the real permeated by magic, just as the world of the magical is underpinned by the real' (4). This is achieved, as Aldea suggests, when, 'the unreal has an objective, ontological presence' (Aldea 2011: 3). Therefore, all the qualities of the 'magical', the extraordinary, the supernatural, incredible, and foreign, are 'ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence' (Zamora and Faris 1995:3). 'Matter-of-factness' poignantly reduces the shocking factor by reducing the contrast between the ordinary and the extraordinary in a subtle perceptibility that enhances the extreme and brutal of an event, without re-enacting it. 'Matter-of-factness' is a significant aesthetic attitude for journeyers and their *traumatic/anew reality*. First of all, because journeyers' shocking event and 'alien' reality is presented in a manner that does not avert, shock or alienate audiences. Second of all, the 'matter of fact' demeanour seduces confidants to believe, engage and confront the reality that otherwise would be unbelievable or avoided. Also, a 'matter-of-factness' attitude discourages audiences from questioning what they do not understand or relate with. Finally, this attitude allows journeyers to unveil realities that are usually taboo, without perpetuating such 'unmentionable' quality.

### *Plasticity*

Plasticity in this context is both an intention and a description of Magical Realism as an aesthetic movement that is rich and varied in its expressions, encompassing many variants (Bowers 2004: 20). Zamora and Faris describe Magical Realism as a 'space for interactions of diversity' (Zamora and Faris 1995: 3). Moreover, Zamora and Faris agree that the 'capacities of magical realism express a variety of cultural and historical conditions' (Zamora and Faris 1995: 4). Guenther comments on Magical Realism as an aesthetic that 'does not even embody one coherent style, but instead comprises numerous characteristics, new ways of seeing and depicting the familiar, the everyday' (Guenther 1995: 33). Such plasticity is highlighted as favourable characteristic because it meets journeyers at their personal socio-cultural, political, religious values and systems. Moreover, such plasticity gives space for journeyers' unique view and interpretation of the 'magical' and 'real' in own traumatic/anew realities. In addition, it they can personalize the aesthetic decisions taken towards the somantic artwork. An important remark, however, is that 'plasticity' does not refer to a disregard of Magical Realism's essential features and attitudes towards reality. Menton argues, for example, that a plasticity that escapes magical real artistic ethos becomes too broad, too elastic, loses its validity (Menton 1998: 11). Alternatively, plasticity is rather an essence which, as

Zamora and Faris suggest, is 'suited to exploring – and transgressing- boundaries, whether ontological, political, geographical, or generic' (Zamora and Faris 1995: 5). Such transgression of boundaries favours and expands journeyers' commun(e)ication possibilities.

#### *A Subversive and Social Aesthetics*

A final and most relevant characteristic of Magical Realism is its subversive and social force. An aesthetic movement, it is inspired from 'issues of dominant powers in conflict with the powerless' (Bowers 2004: 68). Social criticism, political engagement, and protest are inherent in the essence of Magical Realism (Schmied 1969: 31 in Menton 1998: 18). Moreover, Magical Realism as a literary form has extensively been a language of post-colonial discourse, of the struggle between power structures (Aldea 2011:3). Zamora and Faris underline a 'subversive' spirit in Magical Realism, which is found in its 'in-betweenness, all-at-oneness, which encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6). In Aldea's words, Magical Realism is a genre that 'subverts realism' (Aldea 2011: 149). This social and subversive intention prioritises and empowers journeyers' commun(e)ication desires before their communities of confidants. The result of what journeyers commun(e)icate is intrinsically a social, political cultural perspective that, as shared with confidants, it becomes a disclosure of social relevance and compromise for both journeyers and audiences.

#### **2.3.2.2 Bridging *Distance* in 3 Movements: a traumagical realism technique**

This section illustrates tools that can subvert the *Catch-22 affair* and bridge *Distance* between journeyers and confidants during the commun(e)ication event. Before proceeding to examine these techniques, it is necessary to address the notion of subversion in this particular context. As was mentioned in Chapter One, both journeyers and confidants face predicaments, dilemmas, and 'natural tendencies' that respectively discourage them to 'share' and to 'confide' in respect to *the traumatic*. The subversion of Magical Realism challenges journeyer-confidant *Distance* predicaments through its 'strange' and 'matter-of-fact' attitude towards the 'alien' of reality. The equal validation given to the 'normal' and 'abnormal', or what 'makes sense' and 'unmakes sense' is a double vision that implicitly respects and protects 'both ends of the bridge', which will be illustrated in this section. This thesis presents a classification of Magical Realism's aesthetic tools into 3 *Movements* of technique for the *mise-en-scène*, which particularly address different aspects of the *Catch-22 affair*. Each 'movement' addresses a specific technique that can bridge journeyers and confidants. The 1<sup>st</sup> *Movement* offers an aesthetic approach to explore the 'strange' and uncanny context of traumatic/anew

realities. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Movement* presents tools that can reconcile, re-sensitise and relate confidants to journeyers and their experiences. The 3<sup>rd</sup> *Movement* involves techniques that aim to blur distinctions between the ‘real’ and ‘magical’ realms of journeyers, immersing confidants into an ‘otherworldly’ experience that validates both realms as veracious and real. The idea of ‘movements’ does not pertain to particular order of execution, but an orchestration of techniques onto three different functions.

Before proceeding to the 3 *Movements*, it is important to note a few considerations. First of all, that the characteristics approached here as technique for the *mise-en-scène*, are based on the qualities of the aesthetic as discussed in its literary form, which is the main art form in which Magical Realism has been extensively theorised. Second of all, although the techniques are essential qualities of Magical Realism, these do not directly address all the aesthetic variations. Any variation can be addressed by journeyers according to their *traumatic spectrum* and desires. However, the main features selected are foundational magical realist elements. Thirdly, the classification of the 3 *Movements* does not aim to suggest a rigorous or strict differentiation of magical realist qualities and uses, since these all interrelate and overlap under one aesthetic. However, the differentiations are used to address particular aspects of the bridging journeyer-confidant *Distance*. Finally, it is crucial to emphasise that the ‘strange’ and the uncanny effects permeates throughout the 3 *Movements*, as a result of the disquieting and unsettling experiences that each *Movement* produces. Following, the illustration will begin with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> *Movements* and conclude with the 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> *Movement***

### *(Re)conciliation and re-sensitisation technique*

This *Movement* aims to reconcile confidants to journeyers’ experiences in the commun(e)ication event in two main techniques: by making the exhausted re-engaging (or the desensitised, re-sensitised), and by making the un-relatable of journeyers’ realities, relatable to confidants. The general technique is therefore the commingling of two techniques: the *familiar made unfamiliar*, and the *unfamiliar made familiar*. This *Movement* is divided into two strategies, which in their commingling produce an uncanny and ‘strange’ effect. The significance of the uncanny for the re-sensitisation of confidants consists in what Guenther describes as, a disquieting and unusual appearance that ‘elicits both fear and wonder’ (Guenther 1995: 36). A fear, in this case, provokes a disquieting sensation that reminds audiences about the gruesome nature of a traumatic event, while the wonder maintains audiences engaged, instead of averting them.

Audiences are presented with what Guenther refers to as a “monstrous” objectivity’ (Guenther 1995: 59). Therefore, the effect of the uncanny consists in subtracting intimidation, aversion and fear and increasing engagement. Roh describes a commingling of objectivity and magic as a technique to ‘represent the object clearly with all its ‘wondrous meaning’ (Roh 1995: 12).

The first strategy is the *familiar made unfamiliar*, which responds to what Roh described as ‘an antidote to existing and exhausted forms of expression’ (Zamora and Faris 1995: 7). The *familiar made unfamiliar* consists of different forms of de-familiarisation. Chanady points out that the defamiliarization approach in Russian Formalism is a ‘relevant’ piece of this aesthetics (Chanaday 1995: 128). Defamiliarization consists in highlighting the ‘magical realm’, as Simpkins describes: ‘Magic realists present familiar things in unusual ways to stress their innately magical properties’ (Simpkins 1995: 150). The central effect of defamiliarization is that it re-sensitizes audiences to what has been exhausted or habituated to. Defamiliarization encourages audiences to see anew. It is accomplished through techniques, which include: the non-mimetic, repetition, literalisation of metaphor (Hegerfeldt 2005: 56-59); juxtaposition and contrast of incompatible elements and forces (Maufort 2003: 29); surprise, hyperbole or excess (Zamora and Faris 1995:1; Guenther 1995: 36); estrangement of language or ‘verbal magic’ (Hegerfeldt 2005: 125); distanciation or alienation effects also used in theatres of estrangement, such as metatheatre and double-signification (Aldea 2011: 8). The *familiar made unfamiliar* subverts the *Catch-22 affair* in several aspects. First of all, from confidants’ ‘side of the bridge’, this technique targets their ‘natural tendencies’ of fatigue, habituation, and desensitisation, by re-presenting reality from angles that are non-exhaustive or not exhausted. Secondly, it can diverge from naturalistic enactments that escape representations, which may provoke intimidation, aversion, or fear. From journeyers’ ‘side of the bridge’, defamiliarization protects them from naturalistic enactments, voyeuristic curiosity in audiences, and encourages them to ‘share’ confidants in the absence of a desensitised, aversive, fearful or intimidated responses from audiences.

The second facet of this *Movement* is its anti-thesis: familiarisation. The familiar in Magical Realism is the ordinary, the common, trivial aspects of life (Roh 1995: 17). Familiarisation thus consists in maintaining familiarity for the perceiver (Bravo 1988: 232). A key characteristic of familiarisation is its anchor to realism, where an objective anchor is never abandoned (Cassanova 1997: 56). Leal describes it as a ‘solid attachment with the real’ (Leal 1995: 121). The *unfamiliar made familiar* is a technique that

addresses the predicament of audiences' un-relatable approach to the 'foreign' aspects of *the traumatic*. The unfamiliar is what audiences cannot relate to according to their personal frames of reference. The unfamiliar here refers to aspects that are too foreign or brutal for some audiences to relate to, especially for those who have not experienced them or have drawn close to an indirect fashion. Moreover, some experiences and events are too brutal and gruesome for logic or reason to conceive and accept. The subversion of this 2<sup>nd</sup> *Movement* consists firstly in presenting audiences with familiar aspects of journeyers' experiences and realities that they can relate to. Secondly, the 'aliennes' of journeyers' traumatic spectrum or commun(e)ication desires is 'camouflaged' with familiar elements that maintain audiences' identification and engagement. In addition, the objective and realistic elements provide familiar aspects that encourage audiences to identify with journeyers. Faris explains, for example, that 'whilst Magical Realism explores reality's mysterious dimension, it maintains logic estranged in a way that is credible' (Faris 1995: 174). The most common techniques of familiarisation are: objectivity and ultraprecision (Menton 1998: 418); 'brusque, every-day unrheterical style' (Menton 1998: 422); historical and reportorial exactness; simple and clear style; realistic accents (Menton 1998: 423); naturalisation of the magical, the alien and the supernatural (Garay 2007: 121).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Dis-alienation

*Validation of worlds*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> *Movement* is a direct exploration of the synthesis of the 'real' (ordinary) and the 'magical' (alien) sides of reality. Therefore, the strange is made ordinary. The effect of this synthesis is 'magic [being] no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing (Hart and Ouyeng 2005: 3). The 3<sup>rd</sup> *Movement* consists of techniques that specifically blur a distinction between the 'real' and the 'magical' before confidants in 'matter-of-factness'. As referred in previous sections, this fusion of opposites creates a world with its own laws; it establishes a new reality (Garay 2007: 120). Garay argues that in such new reality, where there is no separation between the ordinary and extraordinary, everything is possible (Garay 2007: 120). A key characteristic of this *Movement*, is the certainty and belief that the 'magical' world is, in actuality, real and realistic (Faris 1995: 7). Faris claims, for example, that the 'magical' realm is 'accepted, believed and not pretended' (Faris 1995: 94). Consequently, a technique consists in a lack of contrast between realism and magic. Mikics states, for example, that magical realists narrate magical events 'not merely alongside real ones, but as if they were real'

(Mikics 1995: 372). As mentioned previously, the quality of 'matter-of-factness' is central to this technique, which consists of a lack of justification or explanation of the 'magical' (Imbert 1976: 10).

The problematic that is subverted in this *Movement*, pertains to journeyers' discouragement to 'share' about their traumatic/awful experiences when these are 'alien', brutal, and taboo, not only to themselves, but to their immediate communities or society in general. As mentioned in Chapter One, journeyers' discouragement to commun(e)icate in this context can result from confidants' 'natural tendencies' or reactions towards their experiences. Also, discouragement may result from shame or guilt about the nature of certain aspects of their traumatic spectrum. Furthermore, journeyers' may avoid commun(e)icating their desires due to the taboo nature of their traumatic experience in their communities (Herman 2001: 1). The subversion of the *Catch-22* consists, firstly, in journeyers' possibility to escape the established laws of what is accepted or not, what is validated or not, what is considered as objective, real, and 'truthful' or not, by established norms of society. Therefore, any aspect of the traumatic/awful that journeyers desire to explore, including the subjective and illusory, become objective, real, and significant. Secondly, the 'dark side' of *traumatic/awful reality* is subverted in a 'matter-of-factness' tone that encourages audiences to believe in 'magic', in the unbelievable, and the extraordinary, without being averted. Therefore, instead of provoking audiences to display a discouraging response or reaction before journeyers through judgement, disbelief, or shock, journeyers' experiences are perceived and approached outside society's established predicaments and taboos.

The main techniques of this movement are related to 'matter-of-factness'. The 'matter-of-factness' techniques consist of: a child-like naivety, a lack of emotionalism or 'coldness', and effacement of perceptibility (Menton 1998: 420). First of all, a child-like naivety refers to a genuine naïveté and child-like lens that makes the 'magical' believable, and the 'real' perceived from a sense of wonder. Childlike naivety permits an illogical relationship with reality. (420). Following, 'coldness' is an unemotional, undramatic and static, reaction to the 'magical' (420). In addition, this technique consists of 'an almost algebraic rigor', 'aridity', a 'low-key' demeanour, 'terseness', and 'cynicism'. Menton refers to Brechtian distancing theory of 'keeping an emotional distance between the action of the play and the audience' as a reference to this unemotional technique (Menton 1998: 420). Next, an effacement of perceptibility, as described by Menton, is a technique that 'conceals the painting process on the canvas' (Menton 1998:

28); which in the context of the *mise-en-scène*, this translates to avoiding audiences' 'perceptibility' of the performing actions, in a concealment of montage that 'prevents readers [or audiences] from distraction or hesitation' (Aldea 2011: 7).

### **1st Movement**

#### *A 'strange' effect*

The 1<sup>st</sup> *Movement* consist of general 'strange'-rendering features, which as described in Section 2.3.2, which overlap with 'alien' aspects of a *traumatic reality/new reality*: the foreign element, the oneiric, the ghostly, the metamorphic, and stratification of reality. These qualities in a *traumatic/new reality* begin to depict the 'dark side' of the 'magical' realm. Therefore, this *Movement* gives an aesthetic context shaped according to how journeyers interpret their *traumatic/new reality* and through which 'strange' effects they desire to convey it to their confidants. It is important to clarify that this *Movement*, in contrast to the other two, does not necessarily tackle a specific *Distance* predicament per say, but serves as an immersive and atmospheric backdrop that enhances and enriches journeyers and confidants' meaning-and-experience making. Following is a brief description of these qualities in relation to the *mise-en-scène*. The first quality, a 'foreign element', is described by Faris as what 'cannot be explained according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically base discourse, the familiar, the logical' (Faris 1995: 168). Therefore, it is referred to as the 'irreducible element' of magic (168). Menton observes that it is realised through its 'belated identification' (Menton 1998: 420). The 'primitive and rustic' as a quality of the foreign element is also considered (Menton 1998: 416).

Following, the oneiric, or 'dream-like', is a quality that is maintained, according to Menton, by stoic and poetic dialogue in the text (Menton 1998: 419). In addition, Thiem suggests, for example, that the dream-like emerges from the 'literalisation of a common metaphor' (Thiem 1995: 237). Next, the ghostly quality is exemplified in the hallucinatory and phantasmagoric, which, as Zamora and Faris observe, it is a quality that can be used to 'indict cultural perversions' (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6). Furthermore, Zamora suggests that the notion of ghosts is 'deeply metaphoric', and can address the burdens of memories and reflections of the present, for example: 'links to lost families and communities, or reminders of communal crimes, crisis, cruelties', and also, can refer to 'displacement and alienation or, alternatively, reunion and communion' (Zamora 1995: 497). Also, Zamora notes the importance of the ghostly in that 'ghosts make absence present', hence, addressing a basic concern of the magical real: 'the nature

and limits of the knowable' (Zamora 1995: 498). The next quality is the metamorphic, which can relate to literal and metaphoric aspects of reality, involving abrupt changes and transformations of individuals' personality, behaviours, perceptions, and identity (Walker 1995: 362). The metamorphic is also displayed in literalisation of metaphor, as humans take shape of animals and mythological figures (Walker 1995: 351). Finally, stratification contextualises the non-linear, the fragmented, the relativity of time and space (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6). It involves stratification of reality, time, history, of meanings, and the existence of two worlds (Aldea 2011: 7). Stratification appears in 'metathetare, intertextuality, deconstruction' of "traditional dichotomies": abstract/concrete, word/thing, past/present, 'shift of tone' tonal frequency modality, which renders being in between two worlds (Zamora and Faris 1995: 6; Aldea 2011: 7).

So far this section has addressed the techniques that were analysed in relation to journeyers' commun(e)ication events and bridging *Distance* with confidants. As mentioned previously, this analysis was developed from the conclusions of the case studies. Subsequently, the creation of the *3 Movements* led to an investigation of Magical Realism in theatre. The next section addresses the findings of this search, and discusses the limitations that were encountered by using techniques from Theatre of the Absurd and Brechtian alienation techniques.

### **2.3.3 Magical Realism in the mise-en-scène**

Although Magical Realism aesthetics have not been formally theorised as Th &P genre, art critics and scholars have made references of the magical real lens in the work of various playwrights. One aspect that was observed from such references was that the plays were identified as 'magical realists' based on the characteristics of Magical Realism as a literary genre. Moreover, certain features that are not formally addressed in academic discussions of Magical Realism as a literary genre are identified in the plays as magical real, particularly a dark and cynical humour (Garay 2007: 123; Al-Shamma 2011: 60). This observation reflects what Hegerfeldt identifies as the elastic and hybrid aesthetics of Magical Realism, 'which continue to resist a canon' (Hegerfeldt 2005: 70). In addition, this also brings into attention that, in the context of journeyers' commun(e)ication events, variations of features are favourable to adapt to journeyers' interpretation of reality as they wish to convey it. Following, the second part of this section calls to attention the presence of magical realist aesthetics in 'total artworks', notwithstanding, this has not been discussed or theorised in the Academia, and demands further exploration. Nonetheless, because the somantic artwork has been located in the

somantic intention of the liminal and (syn)aesthetic domains of ‘total artworks’, it has been important to consider and identify qualities of *shared dimension* in ‘total artworks’, which overlap and enrich aesthetics of Magical Realism.

### **2.3.3.1 References in Theatre**

There are several references of Magical Realism in theatre, as mentioned by art critics and academics. The earliest reference is traced in the works of Mexican writers and playwrights Rodolfo Usigli (1905-1979) and Elena Garro (1920-1998) (Schmidhuber 2000). Usigli has been considered as a pioneer of Magical Realism in theatre, particularly for his clear differentiation of Magical Realism from Realism (Schmidhuber 2000: 217-218). Theatre scholar and critic Guillermo Schmidhuber de la Mora identifies Usigli’s work as ‘magical’ identified in qualities of the characters and their everyday language, which subordinate the plot as the only ‘realistic’ element (Schmidhuber 2000: 118). In addition, Usigli’s acknowledgement of Magical Realism is identified in his vision of the human being aspiring ‘to establish a new reality’ (169). Usigli’s play, *El Gesticulador* (The Impostor) (1938), is particularly modelled as an epitome of Magical Realism in theatre (Schmidhuber 2000: 118). *El Gesticulador* is a political critique of the government where the protagonist disappears three times from earth (Schmidhuber 2000: 118). In this work, Schmidhuber identifies techniques of metatheatre, stratification of reality, self-conscious role-playing, and the supernatural, without compromising the sense of realism (118). Following, writer and playwright, Elena Garro is considered as the major exponent of Magical Realism in Latin-American theatre, particularly for her most famous play, *Un Hogar Sólido* (A Solid Home) (1958), which depicts a family reunion of spirits, in their tombs. (Schmidhuber 2000: 72). Garay provides an in-depth analysis of Garro’s relationship with the Magical Realism. Garay observes, for example, that ‘Garro’s magic emanates from her own sense of wonder about how everything has a “reverse” to it; a dark, mysterious, different side’ (Garay 2007: 115; translation mine). Garay identifies key features of Magical Realism in several of Garro’s plays. One feature, for example, is the juxtaposition of realistic and ‘ultraprecise’ environments with elements of surprise, which produce a strange effect (Garay 2007: 116).

Another feature is the ‘naturalisation of the unreal’, exemplified in the ‘everyday language’ of characters (Garay 2007: 115-116). Moreover, Garro’s characters are from different epochs, and play with ‘other levels of reality that would seem non-existent and “ghostly” if seen through a traditional optic’ (Garay 2007: 116; translation mine). In *Un Hogar Sólido*, death is trivialised and approached with ‘matter-of-factness’ (Garay 2007:

120). In addition, Garro applies naturalisation of the 'foreign element', where audiences are 'obliged to accept the absurd, the abnormal, and a world with its own laws' (120). A foreign element is particularly observed in Garro's familiarisation of ghosts (Garay 2007: 119). Furthermore, Garay identifies several other key features: 'the fantastic appears under the camouflage of the everyday' (Garay 2007: 121); a 'deep sense of wonder' (121); poetic images are made literal (Garay 2007: 130); the literalisation and materiality of memories (Garay 2007: 126); humour and dark humour (Garay 2007: 123); a sense of enigma and curiosity (Garay 2007: 122); the questioning of prejudices (Garay 2007: 121-122); and 'a space of metamorphosis and delirium' (Garay 2007: 132).

Magical Realism has further been identified in the theatrical work of American playwrights. Theatre critic James Al-Shamma (2011), for example, provides an analysis of Sarah Ruhl's plays based on academic discourse of Magical Realism in literature. Al-Shamma identifies a magical real lens in Ruhl's shift between the real and the seemingly unreal (Al-Shamma 2011: 40). He analyses key features and techniques of Magical Realism in Ruhl's plays, which include: 'matter-of-factness', literalisation of metaphor, stratification, ghosts, humour, and childlike naivety (Al-Shamma 2011: 49-64). In addition, he highlights Ruhl's 'reclaiming of rejected forms of knowledge' as a social and postcolonial characteristic of Magical Realism (Al-Shamma 2011: 39). Next, another reference is given to Sam Shepard's play *Buried Child* (1978). Author Milly S. Barranger (2005) highlights Shepard's use of the 'macabre and fantastical elements to portray the dark aspects of a family' (Barranger 2005: 192). Barranger describes Shepard's plays as 'seemingly realistic' with elements of strange and the unreal (Barranger 2005: 192). Following, theatre professor James Fisher (2006) makes reference to Magical Realism in Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* (1993). Fisher describes *Gay Fantasia* as: 'a kind of magic realism that uses fantastic (and sometimes seemingly absurd) elements to highlight the bitter realities that might (and would) have seemed too realistically harsh to portray straight-up without the levity of fantasy' (Fisher 2006: 70). Fisher identifies a magical real lens in the 'married illusion and reality paradigm' (Fisher 2006: 66; 70). Furthermore, Fisher makes mention of Kushner's reference to Brecht as an inspiration to deliver and instruct a political and social message in the context of the 'magic': 'theatre, like dialectical materialist analysis, examines the magic of perception and the political, ideological employment to which the magic is put' (Kushner, *Notes About Political Theatre*, 27 quoted in Fisher 2006: 70).

Following, another significant reference is proposed by Professor of English Marc Maufort (2003), who analyses magical realist features in the plays of Canadian playwright Judith Thompson, particularly in the play *White Biting Dog* (1985) (Maufort 2003: 32). Maufort observes that Thompson's plays depict 'oppositions between reality and fantasy', and the 'possibility of the union of opposites' (Maufort 2003: 31, 37). Particular aesthetic features identified are: juxtaposition of incompatible elements, non-linear and fragmented monologues, ghosts, the oneiric and a 'extended use of realism' to criticise Western rational thought and perception (Maufort 2003: 29,154). In addition, Thompson introduces a supernatural feature through her characters' abilities to mediate between the real and the supernatural (Maufort 2003: 30). Lastly, Maufort identifies grotesque and uncanny elements as magic real features of Thompson's work (Maufort 2003: 30, 36). Finally, a last reference is the work of Taiwanese theatre director, Chung Chiao, which theatre scholar Ron Smith highlights as a unique approach and fusion of Magical Realism with Theatre of the Oppressed, through which Chiao 'raises a community's critical social consciousness regarding issues of oppression' in Taiwan (Smith 2005: 109). Smith's identification of Magical Realism in Chiao's work features the 'overlapping world of realities that take place in a liminal space and time' (Smith 2005: 1). Chiao explains his style is inspired by the Magical Realism in Latin American literature, most particularly the approach of myths as the 'fantastical and beyond realistic of society', which are then used to 'connect to reality' (Chiao 2003 in Smith 2005: 1). Moreover, Chiao comments that Magical Realism is an aesthetics that "facilitates the fusion and co-existence of possible worlds' (Chiao 2003 in Smith 2005: 8).

### **2.3.3.2 A convergence with 'total artworks'**

Turning now to the second part, the end of this chapter calls to attention the consideration of the mutually enriching intersection between the aesthetics of Magical Realism and 'liminal'-'total'-(syn)aesthetic artworks<sup>14</sup>. It is relevant to acknowledge the overlap that exists between these two aesthetics, which naturally resides in their similar blurred or 'shared dimensions' approaches. This proposition is made, first of all, since the somantic artwork proposed in this research is located in these two aesthetic domains. Until now, however, critics' references of Magical Realism in theatre have overlooked 'total artworks', only considering theatrical styles and plays that give predominance to semantic and linguist, as opposed to physical and dance theatres or contemporary performance styles. As mentioned earlier, although an in-depth study between the intersection of 'total artworks' and Magical Realism escapes the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to underline the extent of compatibility between these two

aesthetics, in context of how their convergence can favour journeyers' commun(e)ication events. This research thus underlines qualities of 'total artworks' that enhance, expand, and materialise Magical Realism aesthetics, through sensorial, somantic, and immersive meaning-and-experience making. However, in this context, 'total artwork' styles should not obliterate objectivity, realism, and semantic play, which is a feature not always present or constant in some of these styles.

Three particular qualities of total artworks intersect with the magical real, which were not addressed in the section that described 'total artworks' somantic aesthetics. The first quality is 'in-betweenness' and transgression of boundaries and opposites, which characterises the liminal and hybrid nature of 'total artworks'. These styles are inclined towards states of 'in-betweenness' and transgression, as Machon puts it: between 'logic and illogic, madness and sanity, femininity and masculinity, the tangible and intangible, the unnatural of something natural' (Machon 2009: 57). The second feature pertains to the 'in-betweenness' of reality and dream (Machon 2009: 18; Callery 2001: 6). Machon describes this in-betweenness' in what 'fuses notions of the real and the imagined, past and present, the live and pre-recorded' (Machon: 2009 106). Callery also observes, for example, that 'the magical and illusory qualities are paramount' in the experience of physical forms of Th & P (Callery 2001: 5). Furthermore, Nicholson identifies this 'in-betweenness' as the 'fusing of truth and fiction'; the place between secrets and lies, between imagination and authenticity' (Nicholson 2007: 56).

The third feature pertains to stratification of reality, apparent in both aesthetics. Transgressions and hybridity in Magical Realism are qualities identified in 'total artworks', such as stratification of reality, fragmentation, non-linearity, and hybridity (Broadhurst 1999: 168). Broadhurst refers to the liminal as a space of 'heterogeneity, indeterminacy, eclecticism, and fragmentation' (168). Also, one feature of post-dramatic theatrical signs, for example, are the 'dream thoughts', which Lehmann describes as a form texture that resembles collage, montage, and fragment, rather than a logically structured course of events (Lehmann 2006: 83). Following, a fourth intersection is estrangement and defamiliarization. Broadhurst addresses the importance of defamiliarization in the 'liminal' styles, exemplified through the juxtaposition of 'the epic and the experimental, the engaging and the detaching, the familiar and the unfamiliar' (Broadhurst 1999: 14). Echoing Magical Realism's strange and the uncanny, Broadhurst observes that juxtapositions create an effect of defamiliarization that provoke a sense of discomfort and awe (Broadhurst 1999: 13, 71). Moreover, Machon

also theorises a defamiliarizing effect in the (syn)aesthetic styles, through the notion of ‘disturbance’, which is the ‘(re)perceiving and ‘(re)awakening of both cerebral and corporeal memory as if for the first time’ (Machon 2001 26). (Syn)aesthetic performances carry defamiliarization in their ‘unusual manipulation of combination of performance elements, to procure an exciting, fused experience that affects a fused perception – cerebral, corporeal, and emotional’, which Machon particularly identifies in the estrangement of language (Machon 2003: 27). On the whole, these hybrid styles welcome the freedom to blur the poetic with the literal, the symbolic and the metaphoric, the affective and the intellectual levels of reality; in other words, these are potential platforms that allow the meaning-making experience of both expressions of reality: the objective-intelligible-semantic and the subjective-affective-somatic realms, and thus, the *shared dimension* of the ‘magical’ and the ‘real’.

### **2.3.3.3. From alienation and the absurd to the magical real**

Without delving into an in-depth discussion of the styles that were explored prior to Magical Realism, it is relevant to address them as the artistic manifestations and attitudes that paved the way to this research’s realisation of Magical Realism as a more favourable aesthetic context for journeyers. Before proceeding, it is important to specify that the uncanny was an initial approach that was not disregarded as the others, and since it was addressed in previous sections, it will not be covered here.

The qualities for which theatres of estrangement were initially considered for the commun(e)ication event, consisted in their defamiliarization qualities, ‘anti-theatre’ nature, and social intent to criticise oppressive faults of reality (Cody 2007: 6; Robinson 2008: ix). The significance of these aesthetic approaches consisted in a defamiliarization of reality and of exhausted forms, which aimed to confront reality by presenting it from a distanced point of view (Pavis 1998: 19). Estrangement in the arts is traced back to the Russian formalism of the 1920s and early 1930s, which reacted against the bourgeoisie theatre in its entertaining, emotionally charged, and conventional forms of the time (Jestrovic 2006: 5). Estrangement was made popular in literature with Viktor Shklovsky’s use of the word ‘*ostraneinè*’, meaning ‘defamiliarization, distancing, and estrangement’ (Jestrovic 2006: 32). In theatre, Brecht used estrangement strategies ‘as a means of seeing and relating to reality in a new way’ (Jestrovic 2006: 93). The essence of estrangement in theatre, therefore, emerges from the urge to awaken audiences from complacent, passive and indifferent attitudes towards the harshness of reality (Cody 2007: 5). Brecht, for example, aimed to challenge a society that he described, was ‘always

aimed at smoothing over contradictions, at creating false harmony, at idealization' (Wright 1989: 37). Brecht's estrangement technique arose from the intention to use the stage as a tool for 'ideological disorientation' (Pavis, 1998: 19). Theatres of estrangement were therefore initially considered as a relevant approach to address journeyers-confidant distance.

Next, theatres of the absurd were also considered significant estrangement aesthetics in this research. First of all, because they challenge the de-humanisation and silence of society to the crimes and dark absurdities of the world, aiming to it (Cody 2007: 5; Robinson 2008: ix). Second of all, theatres of the absurd highlight the survival of individuals in a 'brutal violence of the world' (Cody 2007: 6). A major consideration for the absurd was inspired by the view of philosopher Albert Camus (1913-1960), who wrote in disillusion of a world that 'ceased to make sense' during the totalitarian nationalism and progressivism leading to World War II (Esslin 1980: 23). Camus described that world was in a state of 'absurdity', referring to need to confront human need, contrasted by 'the unreasonable silence of the world' (Esslin 1980: 23). Furthermore, Camus view of the world as absurd was significant in this research because he draws near to describing the 'strangeness' and foreignness, created from brutal and traumatic events in the world (23). He emphasises, for example, the alien-ness of a world that does not make sense, while criticising the silent response of society amidst unreasonable and brutal acts (23). Furthermore, dramatist Luigi Pirandello's 'sentiment of the contrary', stressed that reality became more poignant when unmasked and mocked, provoking a much deeper reflection than emotionalism (Bloom 2003: 57-58). Absurdist playwrights Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Eugene Ionesco, for example, took a critical stance about different facets of reality and its society, through fictionalisation and defamiliarization of reality (Esslin 1980: 52, 290; Kennedy 1975: 162-167).

Having described the aesthetic relevance of these estrangement approaches, it is necessary to address the degrees of diversion that were later presented towards the somantic artwork. This discussion will thus emphasise the relevance of Magical Realism underlined in this research. The first degree pertains to Brechtian alienation effects, which were initially considered to search for anti-mimetic forms or re-presentation, to emphasise a distancing from pretentious emotionalisms and representations of *traumatic/new realities*, and to directly address or interact with audiences. Brecht's defamiliarization approach, known as alienation effect (A-effect), refers to techniques

that emotionally distanciate audiences, in order to incite an intellectual engagement over 'vane emotionalism' (Banham 1995: 213, 214). In this sense, Brecht's semantic predominant approach tends to negate the somatic realm and its engaging quality. Furthermore, common alienation techniques had been considered for the somatic artwork: *gestus* and double-signification. In the book *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-presentation* (1989), scholar Elizabeth Wright describes *gestus* as the 'feeling of co-creation or participation with audience through exaggerated ideological gestures' (Wright 1989: 20). Following, double-signification consists in 'consciously revealing the fictional of the dramatic/stage action through the authorial voice, but seen as no different from the protagonist's voice' (Wright, 1989: 42). The arrived conclusion about these Brechtian alienation effects, was that they increase the awareness of a separation or alienation between journeyers' reality on stage, and audiences' reality. This continuous intent of perceptibility can elicit a counterproductive effect for journeyers' commun(e)ication event, because it can increase the gap between journeyers' 'alien' reality and audiences' 'normal' reality. In this sense, it is the anti-thesis of the 'matter-of-factness' technique of Magical Realism, which immerse audiences in an indivisible and reconciled approach of journeyers' 'alien-ness' to audiences 'normal' reality.

The second degree of diversion pertains to theatres of the absurd and their relationship between the 'ordinary' and the unreasonable and absurd. An absurdist aesthetic was originally considered as a form to confront and challenge audiences about journeyers' *traumatic/new realities* (Cody 2007: 5). However, it has been concluded that absurdist theatres, in their humour and cynicism, tend to emphasise the distance between the absurd and the reasonable sides of reality, which further alienates journeyers from confidants (Alessio 1992: 38). Furthermore, theatres of the absurd are inclined towards devaluating reality, through its 'non-responsive universe of solitude, violence, and insignificance', while stressing the 'despair' of the modern world (Cody 2007: 5). This approach is commonly re-presented in meaningless and cyclic events (Collins 2008: 131, 132); in a 'devaluation' of language, and an emphasis on its 'inadequacy' (Hegerfeldt 2005: 176). Pirandello, for example, culminated his absurdist work by opting for disorientation of reality through confusion and chaos (Caesar 1998: 93). Moreover, a latter absurdist approach, popularised by playwright Fernando Arrabal, is characterised by a mixture of innocence and surprise, with cruelty, shock, and chaos, and a combination of fantasy and abstract elements, which sought to eliminate any human content or reality on stage (Esslin 1980: 250, 254; Cody 2007: 663). From these considerations, it was concluded that although absurdist techniques are an effective

approach to confront reality, they limit journeyers to a cynical and fatalistic view of their traumatic experiences, and can increase *Distance* between journeyers and confidants by exalting the brutal and absurd. Contrarily, while the absurdist attitude towards reality emphasises a hopelessness of society, Magical Realism visualises a reality with hope (Hegerfeldt 2005: 175).

The observations here presented do not aim to disregard or subtract importance to absurdist and Brechtian techniques of estrangement as efficient and poignant techniques to re-present reality. The aim has been to illustrate that where these particular estrangement aesthetics were limited, Magical Realism's techniques of matter-of-factness, reconciliation or worlds, and immersion of audiences promise a more favourable attitude for journeyers and confidants' commun(e)ication experience and bridging of *Distance*.

#### **2.4 An encounter of *shared dimensions***

This final section of the chapter conjoins under one concept the 'shared dimensions' in which the somantic artwork and the commun(e)ication event have been located. The first *shared dimension* is the somantic intention of 'total artworks', which, as Machon puts it, are artworks that fuse the 'sense', meaning, the 'semantic "meaning making", with 'sense' referring to 'feeling, both sensation and emotion' (Machon 2009: 14). These 'total artworks', as Broadhurst describes, are found in the liminal and 'in-between' spaces that explore both the pre-verbal and linguistic. The somantic potential of these aesthetic styles offers journeyers the freedom and reversed agency to 'share' meaning and experience with confidants through their preferred somantic modalities of expression and signification. The second *shared dimension* pertains to Magical Realism's blurredness of opposite worlds and realities, which, in turn mirrors journeyers' traumatic/anew realities. This parallelism, conceptualised here as **traumagical realism**, proposes the subversion of the *Catch-22 affair* and the bridging of journeyer-confidant *Distance*, through Magical Realism's validation of all levels of journeyers' realities: subjective and objective, ordinary and traumatic, familiar and alien. Moreover, **traumagical realism** provides a parallelism between Magical Realism and journeyers' traumatic realities, useful to further illustrate, reflect upon, and reconcile the 'clash' and merging of their extreme realities. The final *shared dimension* of the somantic artwork culminates in an intimate dynamics between the social and aesthetic domains. The primordial exploration of this socio-aesthetic dimension resides in the possibility for

artists to facilitate journeyers' commun(e)ication event out of an intimate and engaged relationship that reverses agency and ownership to journeyers' desire to commun(e)icate. This 'shared dimension' has been identified in the liminal approach proposed by Thompson, as the 'negotiate of affect and effect', that approaches aesthetics as a significant social force in society (Thompson 2011: 175).

In order to include the three *shared dimensions* under one notion, and to also refer to the entire process of the creation of the somantic artwork and the 'sharedness' in the commun(e)ication event, the term of an *all realities theatre (aRTheatre)* is proposed in this thesis, as a temporary concept to develop. The notion of *all realities* embraces the 'shared dimensions' of the objective-intelligible-semantic and subjective-sensible-somatic expressions of reality. In relation to journeyers' experiences, *aRTheatre* refers, firstly, to the acknowledgement of an ordinary reality, a traumatic reality that converge into *anew reality*. Secondly, it refers to the objective and subjective layers of reality appreciated in journeyers' *traumatic spectrum*. Thirdly, it implies the validation of the 'magical' and 'real' sides of reality, and the 'bright' and 'dark' sides of the magical. Following, the notion of *all realities* refers to the semantic and somatic interplay and blurredness in (syn)aesthetic and liminal artworks. Centrally, an *aRTheatre* style appreciates social and aesthetic realities as complementary and symbiotic. Finally, the word 'theatre' in the context of *all realities*, refers to the entire socio-aesthetic and somantic process that culminates in the commun(e)ication event.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has described quintessential aesthetic locations in Th &P for the somantic artwork, which coincide in approaches of convergence and synthesis of seemingly opposite domains of reality, meaning, purpose and perception. These are the 'shared dimensions', the spaces in-between, where different natures meet, merge and blur. In this manner, the somantic artwork intersects with spaces that offer a somantic potential. In the context of journeyers' commun(e)ication desires, Magical Realism has been proposed as the favourable and subversive aesthetic to facilitate journeyers' commun(e)ication experience with confidants, through the subversion of the *Catch-22 affair*. Furthermore, the *3 Movements* of **traumagical realism** are therefore a central consideration in this research. This chapter has also proposed liminal, 'total', and (syn)aesthetic spaces as potential aesthetics for journeyers' holistic exploration of meaning and experience. In their performative constitution, their heterogeneous and hybrid forms conjoin essential qualities that serve as tools and context for

commun(e)ication events in somantic continuum. However, total artworks do not explicitly propose or commonly consider offering platforms to journeyers through an intimate process of collaboration that may bridge audiences to their experiences. The third proposition has therefore considered the domain of social theatre as a model that addresses journeyers directly, by facilitating and offering a diversity of agendas.

The somantic artwork is therefore located in the liminal space between the social and the aesthetic domains. In this space, the commun(e)ication event can fulfil its purpose to offer and facilitate journeyers an aesthetic platform through which they can commun(e)icate their desires and messages to confidants. The commun(e)ication event, in contrast to social platforms with pre-established agendas, aims to reverse agency to journeyers so they may find the purpose they desire. This free and holistic commun(e)ication process that bridges journeyers and confidants, can therefore be facilitated through an *aRTheatre* style of performance. The next chapter describes the process of facilitation proposed in this research, for journeyers' commun(e)ication experience. Having established the aim of the commun(e)ication event, this process proposes a methodology of how artists can offer a platform in reversed agency to journeyers, while also bridging *journeyer-confidant Distance*.

### 3.0 The Re-Creation Process

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the created practice-led methodology proposed here for artists and theatre makers to facilitate journeyers' devising process towards their commun(e)ication event. The method is conceptualised under the term 're-creation' with a double-meaning *entendre*. First of all, based on the approach to poiesis in Th &P previously emphasised as re-creation and re-presentation of *traumatic/anew* experience, this process is driven by the poietic approach of journeyers' devising process as a re-creation. Different from a mimetic intent to recreate, simulate or imitate reality, 're-creation' implies the process of a new creation, using Th &P as a medium to create meaning and experience that speaks its own language. Moreover, Chapter One emphasised that journeyers' commun(e)ication involves introspective and retrospective exploration of their *traumatic spectrum*, from which they create meaning and experience through the construction of the somantic artwork. In this sense, the re-creation process intends for journeyers to re-create experiences as they interpret them, and not to relive them or remember them. Following, the second meaning for the concept of **re-creation** pertains to the 'recreational' nature and intent of the process. The process is recreational because it is intended to be a pleasing, satisfactory, and meaningful experience towards the sharing of commun(e)ication desires. It is conducted in a reversed agency that gives journeyers a freedom to explore purpose and desire as a recreational experience through aesthetics, in collaboration with artists.

##### 3.1.1. (Re)conciliation

Before proceeding to outline the re-creation method, it is important to introduce three concepts that frame the re-creation process towards the culmination of the commun(e)ication event: conciliation, (re)conciliation, and *Canvas of Desire*. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the commun(e)ication event is the 'happening' where confidants, participants and journeyers establish 'presence' for the same purpose: commun(e)ication and communion. The word 'conciliation' will be referred here to the intentional occurrence of assembling for the event. The word 'conciliation' is derived from the word 'conciliate', which from its Latin origin, *conciliatus*: to assemble, unite, (*Etymology Dictionary Online*); to bring together, to attract (*Latin dictionary*); to gain, to engage (*Smith's English Dictionary Online*). Journeyers' desires to commun(e)icate, thereupon make them initiators of a conciliation, while confidants are the finishers of the event through their engagement and 'sharedness' with journeyers' somantic artwork. Secondly, the term '(re)conciliation' refers to the bridging of *Distance* between

journeyers and confidants by counteracting the *Catch-22 affair*. Therefore, (re)conciliation occurs when both ‘ends of the bridge’ have been respected and protected, so that journeyers are encouraged to ‘share’ their desires and purpose, while audiences are encouraged to confide and engage. Finally, the notion of ‘desire’ is essential for this process. As was mentioned, journeyers’ free exploration of their commun(e)ication desires is a fundamental feature of their agency. The re-creation process revolves around the range of desires that journeyers may have in respect to their ‘journey’ into *anew reality*. These will be referred here as their *Canvas of Desire*. This term alludes to a colour palette, which consists of a variegation of colour tonalities, similar to the variation and tonalities of desires that can emanate from journeying with a *traumatic/anew reality*.

### **3.1.2 A General Depiction**

The following section introduces the method for the re-creation process. It has been constructed from theoretical frameworks, empirical knowledge, and the two case studies that significantly informed the entire research. An important remark is that the re-creation method can be integrated to existing theatrical methods of acting, training, directing, and producing. This method concentrates firstly, on reversing agency and ownership of purpose, desires, and message to journeyers. Therefore, the process is structured to adapt to journeyers’ needs, demands, circumstances and desires. The principal element that this research contributes with towards the re-creation process is the initial phase of the process, where journeyers explore, shape, and construct purpose, desires and mosaic pieces from their *traumatic spectrum*. More specifically, journeyers holistically explore a natural course of the elicitation of their desires and purpose in freedom to communicate in their preferred somantic communication modalities. Following, another central aspect of the re-creation is the intimate dynamic of collaboration between journeyers and facilitators. Also, a central feature is the prioritization of participants’ wellbeing and recreational experience in the process. Furthermore, the method incorporates aesthetics of Magical Realism to subvert the *Catch-22 affair* in the somantic artwork. Key techniques are provided in the method, so that facilitators are equipped in offering journeyers not only a re-creational experience, but to ensure their enjoyment throughout the process. The method was initially constructed from a one-to-one dynamics: journeyer and facilitator. This judgement was made first of all, in order to firstly focus on the process of working with the commun(e)ication desires of one journeyer. Second of all, it was considered more appropriate for this study to maintain the process on a small scale, since only one researcher conducts it. Nonetheless, as it will be further explained, the process may involve more participants and collaborations to support the latter phases of the process.

### 3.1.2.2 Re-creation Phases

The re-creation phases allude to a process of creating an artwork or mosaic. The first phase is the foundation and preparation of the re-creative process, called **Grounding Phase**. It consists of the initial encounters between journeyer and facilitator, when they agree on the purpose and outcome of the re-creation. The Grounding Phase begins once an artist with a platform meets a journeyer with a commun(e)ication desire or vice versa. This initial encounter consists also in addressing the logistics of the process according to the ethos of wellbeing and reversed agency. The following phase is called the **Sketching Phase**, because it is the formalized beginning of the devising process, where journeyers' elicit their desires, purpose, and shape the content and form of their message in a variety of somantic modalities. The different creations and elocutions are the 'sketches' used to develop a script and construct the somantic artwork. The third phase is a close continuation of the Sketching Phase, called **Composition & Assemblage Phase**, which consists in the aesthetic arrangement of journeyers' sketches. This phase is the beginning of artists' aesthetic collaboration. Journeyers select the somantic communication modalities or re-presentation '**channels**' of preference through which to continue composing the somantic artwork, while artists' input consist in identifying and proposing aesthetic qualities of Magical Realism from what journeyers have already sketched. The final piece in the process is the **Ensemble Phase**, which consists in attuning the final details to finish the construction and production of the somantic artwork. It involves the montage of the *mise-en-scène*, the invitation of confidants, and the technicalities of the production. The re-creation process finalises with the presentation of the artwork in the commun(e)ication event.

### 3.1.2.3. Participants Involved

#### *Journeyers*

There is not a specific journeyer 'profile' for the re-creation; however, it is delineated under a particular scenario. As it was specified in Chapter One, the re-creation is not ideated for journeyers who are undergoing a traumatic or post-traumatic stress condition. Therefore, the stage of the 'journey' in which individuals should be at, is that of recovery and wellbeing. Furthermore, journeyers participating in the re-creation should have an interest to commun(e)icate to an audience about their *traumatic/anew reality*. Furthermore, these are journeyers who do not have the access or means to a commun(e)ication platform. Finally, journeyers should have a minimum interest in

exploring their commun(e)ication desires through aesthetics forms of expression, without necessarily having artistic skills of artistic experience.

### *Journ(art)ists*

The facilitating role in the re-creation is conceptualised in the term 'journ(art)ist', which converges three meanings: artistic function, the journey of the re-creation process alongside journeyers, and a journalist's role in its purest meaning, which is to provide a channel or platform for journeyers (Berry 2008: 127). A journ(art)ist is a facilitator with an interest in Th &P, who may be a professional or amateur artist or theatre director. While journ(art)ists do not need to be theatre directors, they should have the possibility to find directorial support if and when needed. The number of journ(art)ists involved will depend on the particular dynamics with the journeyer, and if they are working with one journeyer or a group. Because the facilitating role entails working closely and intimately with journeyers, it is probably impractical for more than two or three journ(art)ists to participate in one re-creation. Next, the nature of the somantic artwork proposed here infers journ(art)ists' interest in non-naturalistic, non-mimetic, and 'anti-theatre' approaches to Th &P. Moreover, their interest in facilitating this kind of platform for journeyers implies that they are driven by the liminal approach to converge social and aesthetic domains of Th &P. Finally and most importantly, journ(art)ists hold an ethical and creative compromise before journeyers. The facilitating role of the journ(art)ist firstly consists in mediating and providing the journeyer with what is needed in each phase of the re-creation, and secondly, it implies the organisation and facilitation of the commun(e)ication event, which is the presentation of the artwork before confidants. Furthermore, expectations of this role are, first of all, to respect and protect an emotional and mental comfort of both parties involved. Second of all, to maintain an ethical relationship of equality, which will be addressed further in this section. Thirdly, to ensure the journeyer has agency and ownership over each phase of the re-creation, the somantic artwork, and the commun(e)ication event. Moreover, journ(art)ists are expected to have an understanding and knowledge on the subject of trauma, journeyers' *traumatic spectrum* and the 'clash' of realities. Furthermore, journ(art)ists' adequate and appropriate listening skills and reactions attitudes towards journeyers disclosures are crucial for their ethical facilitating role and the positive course of the collaboration. These and other aspects are addressed in the chapter.

### *Collabor(art)ists and Participants*

The re-creation process is flexible to incorporate the support of collaborators and participants, if agreed by journeyers and when needed. Collabor(art)ists are people who have a particular skill with which they can contribute for the latter phases towards the somantic artwork. Participants are individuals that are involved in the process for any kind of support needed during any of the phases. These may be people whom journeyers may like to invite for a particular involvement during any stage of the process. The participation and collaboration of other people in the re-creation is ultimately subject to journeyers' preference, to the nature and demands of the composition of the somantic artwork, and the scale of the performance, in consideration with the skills and abilities that journ(art)ists can offer to the process. Therefore, collaboration and participation depend on specific scenarios that emerge from each re-creation process.

### *Confidants*

Audiences in a commun(e)ication event become confidants in the active intention to conciliate in the commun(e)ication event, and engage with journeyers' somantic artwork. The importance of confidants' role is that their presence and confidentiality completes journeyers' desires. It is important to further address that confidants' engagement with the somantic artwork is active approach to a reality that is being re-presented. Philosopher Jacques Rancière (2009) argues, for example, that in audiences' experience of viewing (2009: 13): 'the spectator also acts. She observes, selects, compares, interprets' (13). Rancière explains that a performance space allows a mutual engagement of creator and spectator: a 'shared power of the equality of intelligence links individuals, makes them exchange their intellectual adventures, in so far as it keeps them separate from one another, equally capable of using the power everyone has to plot her own path' (Rancière 2009: 17). In this sense, confidants participate in act of 'sharedness' with journeyers. Furthermore, it is important to stress that audiences' confidentiality of journeyers' desires and experiences is approached here as an engagement beyond an empathetic response. A common notion of empathy is described as the 'consequence of imaginatively entering others' world of thinking, feeling and acting', and 'sense their world as if it was our own' (Denzin 1997: 39). Differing from this view, which claims it is possible to feel and understand others' reality from a personal point of view, the approach towards an audience's role, as LaCapra suggests, is that although a 'full identification' is 'not possible', 'it is possible to respond' in a practical form of social engagement, which he calls 'empathic unsettlement' (LaCapra 2001: 78).

An important consideration to address is that journeyers' desires may involve different types of confidant groups or diverse forms of engagement and participation, since the desire to commun(e)icate to a community can imply a direct invitation to a particular audience or group of people, or a specific petition or request to the audience. In this case, confidants invited should be previously informed about journeyers' desires and purpose for their presence in the event. However, journeyers may also want to have a commun(e)ication event without a specific intent towards confidants. This desire also gives opportunity to ignite new possibilities of circumstances and purposes that can arise from the commun(e)ication experience.

### **3.1.3 Journeyer-Journ(art)ist Relationship**

The re-creation process is based on an ethical relationship between journeyer and journ(art)ist, particularly an ethical approach of journ(art)ists' approximation to journeyers and their *traumatic/anew reality*. The ethical dynamics of the re-creation will be delineated throughout this chapter, however, it is important to mention here the main considerations. There are basic and practical ethos principles journ(art)ists should take into account: reversed agency and agenda, respecting a natural course, dynamics of equality, and the protection of a pleasing process for the parties involved. Thompson (2011) proposes an optimal ethical perspective in the context of Th &P that intersects with the re-creation's ethos.

Thompson proposes a 'horizontal method' when collaborating with journeyers, where facilitators are 'not above, beyond or looking over, but next to and with' the journeyer (Thompson 2011: 134). In this sense, this notion of a 'horizontal relation' as a 'side-by-side' dynamics is favourable to reverse agency to journeyers (Thompson 2011: 173). An important intersecting point of the re-creation with 'horizontal' approach is the development of an intimate process between facilitators and participants (Thompson 2011: 133). Furthermore, another intersection is the ethical understanding that although a 'side-by side' relationship entails a proximity, intimacy, and an affective enterprise, it disregards the view journ(art)ists' are able to 'understand' or 'grasp' the Other (133; 162). Finally, this 'horizontal' method strongly insists for a social and moral responsibility of journ(art)ists towards journeyers (Thompson 2011: 163). The experience of the re-creation process creates a significant 'side-by-side' relationship where the moral and social compromise of journ(art)ists emerges from the confidentiality and collaboration with journeyers. Furthermore, another ethics of approximation and collaboration with journeyers is proposed in an approach of

ethnography as performance by Ethnographer Dwight Conquergood (1985), who argues that a performance text produced between participants and 'researcher' should 'not speak about or for the other', but rather 'speaks to and with' the other (Conquergood 1985: 8-9). Conquergood agrees that a collaborative process should consist of close relationship between journeyers and journ(art)ists. He states:

The power dynamic of the researched situation changes when the ethnographer moves from the gaze of the distanced and detached observer, to the intimate involvement and engagement of 'co-activity' or co-performance with historically situated, named 'unique individuals.

Conquergood 1985: 187-188

Conquergood's contemporary colleague Denzin argues for a responsibility in the approximation to others' lives (Denzin 2003: 53). He believes that a superficially distant attitude from facilitators 'trivializes' the other's story, because in that case, the facilitator 'neither contextualizes nor well understands the experiences of the other' (Denzin, 2003: 55). It is crucial to clarify that the aim of the re-creation process, in contrast with an ethnographic approach, is clearly not to conduct research or analysis of journeyers; nonetheless, Denzin's view is still relevant to emphasise the ethical need to acknowledge, be aware, and respect differences with journeyers (Denzin 2003: 55).

Continuing with the relationship between journeyers and journ(art)ists, it is important to mention the practicalities of reversed agency and the intersubjective dimension implied throughout the process. In this intention to reverse agency and agenda, the relationship should avoid focusing on power dynamics, and instead, approach the facilitation as a cooperative towards a shared goal. The cooperation therefore consists in meeting journeyers' commun(e)ication desires and the interest of journ(art)ists to conciliate and (re)conciliate journeyers and confidants through an aesthetic commun(e)ication event. The journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship differs from 'researcher-subject' scenarios where the purpose is to expand knowledge in a respective field or to provide a particular service. The journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship is not for informative, analytical, educational or activist purposes of journ(art)ists. The somantic artwork therefore carries the reflections, perspectives, and ideas of journeyers, while journ(art)ists do not intervene in their elicitation of meaning and experience. Although the product of the performance is a collective enterprise, the aim of this creative collective is for the journeyer to feel ownership of the process, and the centre of the artwork. Journeyers decide the extent of facilitation that they require and desire from journ(art)ists. Therefore, it is important for the journ(art)ist to facilitate dynamics where

journeyers are encouraged to communicate what they require from journ(art)ists in each stage. Furthermore, the re-creation has different stages where opportunities of reversed agency will emerge.

The 'side-by-side' intimacy and confidentiality relationship between journeyers and journ(art)ists engages them on intersubjective dynamics important to address. Journ(art)ists are both participants and observers (listeners) in the relationship, on two main scopes: the technical, aesthetic, and practical level of the facilitation of the somatic artwork, and the intelligible-affective engagement while accompanying journeyers as they reflect on their *traumatic/new reality*. In this sense, journ(art)ists' involvement makes them the first confidants of the 'sharing' experience. What is necessary for journ(art)ists to consider, is the importance to maintain a connection with journeyers, with self-boundaries. For this consideration, it is helpful to refer to a notion of an empathetic relationship that is endorsed here as a framework for the intersubjective dimension. Art therapist Catherine Moon (2002) defines empathy as the capacity to 'resonate' affectively with journeyers, while 'maintaining an awareness of the differences between self and other' (Moon 2002: 49). In this awareness, it is understood that the process implicitly carries an intersubjective quality, but maintains a separation from journ(art)ists' personal affective and intellectual responses to the process. Psychologists Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger (1996) provide a useful perspective in this matter, when they argue that artists are only to facilitate 'conduits through which words of [journeyers] can be made audible and visible' (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 1996: 20-21). Conclusively, having laid out the central elements of the re-creation process, the next sections lay out each phase of the process in its chronological flow. It is important to mention that this lay out was constructed for the case studies, and it was later readjusted from the practice-led information.

### **3.2. Grounding Phase**

The Grounding Phase, as its name suggest, consists of building the foundation upon which the re-creation process will be construed. This foundation includes journeyers' assessment of wellbeing, a mutual agreement of the aim and expectations of the process, logistics, and journ(art)ists' reflections of the phase to prepare for the next phase. This sections serves as a map that delineates the steps to be considered.

### **3.2.1 Platform meets Desire: an encounter**

The scenarios that initiate a re-creation process involve journeyers finding journ(art)ists who offer a commun(e)ication platform, or journ(art)ists who meet journeyers with a commun(e)ication platform. The former scenario is then called a **Desire-meets-Platform encounter**, while the latter is a **Platform-meets-Desire encounter**. A number of situations may exist and/or be created for these encounters to occur. The latter one may be a more frequent scenario, since those who have the agency of a platform can initiate the links to the encounter. The former type of encounter implies journeyers' drive to find a platform. In this initial encounter, it is important for journ(art)ists to clarify, or explain the reversed agency and aim of the commun(e)ication platform, in order to extract journeyers' desires and purpose (distinguishing it from notions of 'bearing witness' or 'telling one's story' for healing or testimony). Furthermore, a Platform-Desire encounter should carry an awareness of the stage of the 'journey' where journeyers are. In this case, journ(art)ists search for encounters with individuals who underwent a shocking reality 'clash', and have recovered from 'normal' traumatic stress or a post-traumatic stress condition. What is suggested, first of all, is to avoid offering platforms to journeyers with a relatively recent traumatic experience, which will further addressed below. Referring briefly to Chapter One, journ(art)ists should also be aware that the nature of the 'extreme' event itself does not determine whether the person has been traumatised or not, because the notion of 'shock' is relative to the person and the particular socio-cultural context and circumstances encountered (Doctor 2009: 25; Drozdek 2007: 9).

### **3.2.2 Journeyers' wellbeing**

During this initial encounter, it is important to confirm that journeyers are in a journey of wellbeing. Briefly referring to Chapter One, a state of wellbeing is a condition of present, subjective happiness, where individuals are in positive affect; it is reflected when individuals are socially integrated and have regained a sense of meaning and control over their life (Lopez, 2009). In this sense, a state of wellbeing implies the absence of traumatic stress or a disorder. If necessary, it is important that journ(art)ists explain why the platform is not offered if journeyers are in a situation of traumatic stress or absence of wellbeing. The intention of the commun(e)ication platform is to not exclude journeyers in such scenarios that may have commun(e)ication desires, but the re-creation process is not ideally offered in those cases, for specific criteria. In Chapter One, a general 'map of traumatic stress' described the emotional and psychological instability presented in individuals. Experts therefore insist that journeyers' state can worsen and

their recovery can be affected, if people who are not clinicians attempt to tackle and engage with journeyers' traumatic experience and reality (Herman 1997: 72; Drozdek 2007: 9). In this case, journ(art)ists are not prepared to handle a situation that may require an professional clinical intervention if journeyers need it. Moreover, journeyers' state of stress implies a re-creation process can easily contribute to their emotional and psychological stress, and subsequently, place both parties in a situation of discomfort. Having clarified the condition for a re-creation process, it is important for journ(art)ists to assess journeyers' state of wellbeing. Therefore, the first assessment step involves asking journeyers directly if they feel in mental and emotional wellbeing. Moreover, discussing wellbeing involves confirming that they are not in a state of stress in relation to their traumatic experiences, without probing into their past. However, once journeyers have confirmed their wellbeing, further assessment can be made. If considered necessary, journ(art)ists could ask for confirmation of absence of traumatic stress symptoms. This confirmation can be necessary, if the traumatic experiences have been relatively recent, referring to the one or two years, for example. As discussed in Chapter One, although traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress manifestations vary in accordance to each individual's personal history, general symptoms can be identified (Drozdek 2007: 9).<sup>15</sup> A sensible point of departure is to ask journeyers if they have been in absence of symptoms within the last 12 from the platform offered, despite of when the shocking event(s) occurred. This time-lapse consideration responds to specific clinical parameters. If the shocking event was recent, an absence of traumatic stress symptoms in a 12-month period from the platform offer, suggests that the person's confirmed wellbeing indicates they have recovered from 'normal' traumatic stress, and did not continue onto post-traumatic stress (Wilson 2004: 8).

If journeyers' shocking experience is recent (within the past year), an absence of symptoms does not guarantee an ongoing state wellbeing (Wilson 2004: 8). As it was explained in Chapter One, an approximate margin of undergoing 'normal' traumatic stress is approximately one month (8). Nonetheless, this time frame does not disregard journeyers' possibility of continuing onto a post-traumatic stress condition. Although experts suggests that only a minority of people will undergo post-traumatic stress, a one-month period after a shocking experience does not guarantee an ongoing absence of stress, since journeyers may present a delayed traumatic stress response, which means that they will not manifest stress symptoms until several months after the event(s) (Levine 1997: 41; Wilson 2004: 10). Furthermore, if the case is that they suffered from post-traumatic stress, a minimum 12-month time frame in absence of symptoms can also

indicate that individuals have recovered from that stress period (van der Kolk 1987: 156). Therefore, the first situation to assess is the time elapsed from the shocking event, followed by the time frame in absence of stress symptoms. Following, the person's social integration is another sign of wellbeing that could be assessed. On the whole, it is important to be aware, as experts suggest, that a journey with trauma cannot be formulized linearly, and a recovery time frame from traumatic stress depends on each individual's resilience factors and personal situation (Wilson 2004: 7; Herman 2001: 48). What is critical to note for the re-creation, is that journeyers should affirm they are participating from a place of wellbeing, and journ(art)ists can make further assessments to confirm this statement, if they consider necessary and appropriate.

### **3.2.3 The Platform Offer**

There are several circumstances in which journ(art)ists can meet Desires. One is through organisations or charities that journ(art)ists may be involved with, or connected to. Moreover, an encounter with Desires can occur in journ(art)ists' immediate communities and circles of influence, on local and global scales. The search of the journ(art)ist may also be driven from a personal interest to find journeyers who have been victims of particular events. Desire-platform encounters are not necessarily bound to an encounter of people from the same geographical or cultural position. Global migration and a plethora of multicultural settings gives rise for intercultural encounters. Undoubtedly, an intercultural re-creation brings implications to the method, in respect to differences in language and cultural approaches. However, this very difference can produce a significant and enriching re-creation.

Once the Platform-meets-Desire encounters occurs, and the journeyer and journ(art)ist come to an agreement of a wellbeing scenario, the following step is for journ(art)ists to 'formally' offer a platform. The 'formal' platform offer consists is an encounter to establish the 'grounding coat' of the re-creation. This includes reviewing expectations and responsibilities of each party. The core of the expectations and responsibilities revolve around discussing journeyers' agency and the recreational intent of the process. This part of the grounding is important because it emphasises and reverses agency to journeyers over the initial organization of the process. The encounter allows journeyers to ask questions and express desires towards the commun(e)ication event. The 'formal' offer should take place in a context and location where journeyers are comfortable and where rapport can be established. Therefore, journeyers can decide on the location;

however, journ(art)ists should be prepared to offer options as well. The primary point to address is that the suggestions to be made in the 'formal offer' do not entail strict guidelines, but are invitations for exploration. It is crucial to underline that the re-creation process is 'led' by journeyers. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the role of the journ(art)ist as a facilitator and supporter of their performance. The *motto* is: the journeyer leads in natural course. Next, the first aspect to discuss further is what the re-creation entails for both journeyers and journ(art)ists. Therefore, it is helpful for journeyers to know the tentative panorama of the phases. Without necessarily going into details, it is important to make clear that journeyers may change the flow or stop the process at any point of the re-creation. Furthermore, it is important to present journeyers with the facets and aspects that the re-creation process entails, in order to make them aware of what they may or may not consider appropriate in their re-creation. Following a general guideline of what can be addressed by journ(art)ists:

**Re-creational Nature:** Clarify that the most important aspect of the process is to ensure a pleasing experience and avoid situations that may signify their discomfort for either party.

**Canvas of Desire vs. '5Ws +H' emancipation:** It is important not to emphasize an extraction of commun(e)ication desires so as not to predispose their *natural course*. It should be clarified to them that the aim is for them to find their own purpose for the platform, without the expectation of telling 'what happened', or re-enacting it.

**Trauma-Distance Predicament:** Discuss the notions of journeyer and confidant 'ends of the bridge', and journ(art)ists' input in bridging *Distance* between them and potential confidants. Differentiate this aim from expectations not directly considered.

**Implicit-Explicit Presence:** Reassure their options to decide their extent of live participation after the Sketching Phase, if they do not consider otherwise. Explain the modalities of liveness, mediation, (re)presentation as available options of preferred participation.

**Artistic input:** Clarify that the process towards the somantic artwork and the performance, does demand artistic skills from them. Their participation is however supported and enhanced artistically if desired.

**Somantic Freedom:** Broadly discuss the significance of a somantic artwork as a medium through which they can explore different forms of expression and communication, with and without words. Explain the option to present the performance in a site-specific location.

**Confidant Presence:** suggest the concept of 'confidants', explaining these are individuals to whom they would like to 'share' their desires with.

**Traumagical real spectrum:** journeyers are introduced to the concept of **traumagical realism** as a 'clash' and merging of realities and its aesthetic approach through which a

bridging of *Distance* can be accomplished. It should be clarified that this aesthetic is a spectrum of possibilities and not an obliged form.

Re-Creation Stages: briefly explain each stage of the re-creation.

### **3.2.4 Laying the foundation**

The second part of the formal offer is a discussion of general logistics and grounding steps for the re-creation, covering particular aspects for the next phase. This discussion once again reverses agency to journeyers regarding the organisation of the re-creation.

#### *Logistics*

The first point to be covered is the time frames of the process and tentative dates for the commun(e)ication event(s). The duration of the sketching phase and the re-creation towards the commun(e)ication event depends firstly on journeyers, but also on journ(art)ists' estimation of the devising duration. Therefore, journ(art)ists can propose optional time frames for journeyers to select from. Another detail to discuss is the number of sketching sessions, in order to schedule the sessions accordingly. It is important to plan around locations and schedules that are convenient and appropriate for journeyers.

#### *Confidants*

Another grounding step is considering who the confidants will, or may be. Journeyers' desire to commun(e)icate implies the presence of an audience. On one hand, the consideration of the confidants at this point of the process can begin to prepare the journeyer regarding their commun(e)ication desires, and also prepares journ(art)ists to consider the audience that will be 'bridged'. On the other hand, the visualisation of who the confidants could also occur naturally throughout process.

#### *Collabor(art)ists and Participants*

Another point to assess is if journeyers have the desire or interest to include other people in the process. This aspect can also be confirmed further, depending on the natural course of the Sketching Phase. Moreover, journeyers may display a preference to do a solo work, or collaborate only with the journ(art)ists. This is necessary information to assess, in order to begin to plan the facilitation for the composition and assemblage of the performance.

### *Reflections and assessment for next phase: A Re-Creation Map*

The formal platform offer provides substantial information to be considered for the planning of the Sketching Phase. Information and observations gathered are useful for the planning of the re-creation process and the next phase, including activators and encounters according to journeyers' preferred communication modalities and general preferences.

### *Journeyer-Journ(art)ist Rapport*

The two encounters of this phase are important not only for the aspects covered, but for the opportunity to establish rapport between journeyers and journ(art)ists. A solid rapport will encourage journeyers' comfort and initial trust. It is crucial for journ(art)ists to give attention to their own demeanour, friendliness, and to manifest a genuine interest and respect for journeyers' commun(e)ication desires.

After the considerations made in this phase, journ(art)ists are to prepare the sketching encounters that will be facilitated for the following phase, which will be addressed following section.

### **3.3. Sketching Phase**

The Sketching Phase consists of encounters where journeyers discover, elicit, elucidate and reaffirm their commun(e)ication desires. The role of a journ(art)ist is to provide journeyers with a 'listener' who facilitates their reflection and elicitation in ways that journeyers explore the freedom of communication in somantic continuum. It is important to note that journeyers may already have an impending desire and to communicate, or they may prefer to explore arriving to it/them. This section firstly introduces useful concepts for the facilitation, and defines and expands on the notion of sketching as a somantic method of re-creation through devising; it describes basic somantic tools to conduct the sketching in reversed agency. Also, it presents a theoretical framework for journ(art)ists, based on journalistic and psychological listening techniques, which provide a foundation for journ(art)ists' listening role in this phase. Finally, it proposes general techniques for the facilitation of journeyers' sketches, and the aspects of documentation and preparation for the next phase.

### **3.3.1 *Natural course and reconstruction***

A 'sketch' consists of the journeyers' elicitation and somatic elocutions, which are documented by jour(n)artists' according to their nature and to journeyers' consents. The central feature of the Sketching Phase therefore consists of a dualistic intent: *natural course* and *reconstruction*.

#### ***Natural course***

A process in 'natural course' has been mentioned previously. In this section the term is formalized as an essential characteristic of the method. *Natural course* refers to the process where journeyers sketch under no direction or influence of jour(n)artists. Therefore, journeyers discover, explore and communicate at their own natural pace and spontaneous direction. Sketching in natural course of reconstruction, is journeyers' creative and devising re-creation towards their commun(e)ication event. The significance of the *natural course* intention is its reversed agency. In natural course, journeyers lead a direction of topic, subject, in content and form, while jour(n)artists only propel and catalyse this natural development. Such facilitation challenges and re-interprets the notion and format of an interviewing or elicitation process with a pre-established agenda. A second significance of a natural course is its somatic intent, which encourages journeyers to communicate in both or either objective-intelligible-semantic and subjective-sensible-somatic domains. A natural course intention therefore offers journeyers the scope to stretch to all realities of their traumatic spectrum: affective and intelligible, subjective and objective, somatic and semantic, beyond the facts of 'their story'. It is therefore not a method to elicit information, but to make meaning and create new experience.

#### ***Reconstruction***

Reconstruction describes a re-creative action and a poietic construction of their sketches. Reconstruction entails a process of communication from journeyers' personal, subjective, interpretative elucidations. Therefore, sketches are created from their present reality, in contrast to a process of revisiting the past. In this sense, reconstruction implicitly carries journeyers' agency, desires, and a poietic social force. Education professor Irving Seidman (2006) presents a relevant and significant approach to journeyers' reconstructive process, by distinguishing reconstruction from an act of recalling or remembering. Seidman explains that, 'reconstruction is based partially on memory and partially on what the participant now senses as important about the past event' (Seidman 2006: 74). The notion of reconstruction also aims to reverse agency and

ownership of journeyers' messages because it de-centralises from an objective view of remembering to validate a critical, introspective and subjective realm of how journeyers interpret their experiences. Therefore, reconstruction challenges and re-interprets the notion of 'storytelling' as a way to 'convey an experience under new illumination sparked by critical reflection' (E.G. Mishler 1986 in Seidman 2006: 74). Reconstruction is method that de-centralises predominance on one layer of the traumatic/aneu spectrum: the narrative of 'what happened', and gives value to journeyers' realisations and affective states. If remembering and recalling is an action that depends on memory and revolves around events, reconstruction is a more favourable view of 'sharing' about a *traumatic/aneu reality*, because journeyers communicate what is important to them; thus, restoring agency over their experience. In any case, the traumatic/aneu experience does not revolve around clear memories of what happened in the past (Doctor 2009: 25; Herman 2001: 37). Moreover, through this reconstructive filter, journeyers can sketch desires and mosaic pieces, without emotionally revisiting or reliving an experience. In this context of the re-creation process, reconstruction is more freeing as to what journeyers desire to address, to bring forth, which may be aspects that are not only hiding in the past, but are palpitating in the present. Denzin's ethnographic approach to interviewing is relevant here in identifying reconstruction as a new creation and composition of reality:

[The interview process] is not a mirror of the so-called external world, nor is it a window into the inner life of the person. It is a way of writing the world, of bringing the world into play; a simulacrum, a world in its own right.

Denzin 2003: 80

An interview, according to Denzin, is a space where performance and improvisation are involved (Denzin 2003: 81). Denzin proposes an approach to interviewing beyond a means of 'gathering information', towards the creation of meaning that can be a 'vehicle for producing performance texts' (Denzin 2003: 80). This view stresses the value of a journeyers' reconstruction of their *traumatic/aneu reality* through their understanding and perception, as opposed to a presentation or a mimetic attempt to recreate an event. In this sense, the audience becomes a confidant to an intimate and personal disclosure.

### **3.3.2 An 'intimate' theoretical framework**

Although a great extent of the re-creation method has been consolidated by the case studies, a theoretical framework was previously considered for the Sketching Phase, frames journeyer-journ(art)ist dynamics throughout the entire process. Journ(art)ists'

facilitation during the Sketching Phase is central to the re-creation process. Therefore, the theoretical framework consists of interviewing approaches that provide a foundation to guide encounters in line with reversed agency and an intimate, 'side-by-side' relationship. The framework includes non-traditional methods from a number of disciplines including: journalism, expressive arts therapy, psychology, performance ethnography, and Boalian approaches. The selection criteria to consider these approaches was: a priority on freedom of content; communication in both semantic and somatic forms; an intimate rapport; and a sensitive framework in regards to journ(art)ists' listening role. Before proceeding with the re-creation phases, it is useful to introduce these frameworks.

### *Journalism*

A journalistic framework is useful in the re-creation to channel journeyers' disclosures with an awareness to not alter their sketches (Berry 2008: 136). Although journalistic formats are limited by an informative and semantic agenda, the creative approaches here considered are nonetheless a relevant and helpful insight for the ethos of the Sketching Phase. They are not proposed here as strict models, but addressed for certain specific techniques. Such techniques are non-traditional forms of journalism that appeal to the criteria of journ(art)ists' approach to journeyers. Intimate Journalism and Ethnographic Journalism, for example, propose a rapport of closeness and contiguity between journeyers and journ(art)ists, as well as an attention beyond the facts of an event. Next, the New Journalism style unfolds subjective, affective, and non-linear techniques to channel and write a story. Another journalistic input considered is proposed by the Dart Centre of Journalism & Trauma, consisting of a manual with techniques of how to approach journeyers and victims of shocking events.<sup>16</sup> Following, Intimate Journalism endorses a closer rapport with interviewees and values the importance beyond the facts. Its interested in valuing and eliciting what interviewees value, which is a central view of the re-creation process (Harrington 1997: xx). This view gives priority to other *layers* of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum*, in addition to the narrative of the shocking events, or the story of 'what happened'. Journalist Walter Harrington (1997) proposes an intimate approach by paying attention to:

The stories of everyday life- about the behaviour, motives, feelings, faiths, attitudes, grievances, hopes, fears, and accomplishments of people as they seek meaning and purpose in their lives, stories that are windows on our universal human struggle.

Harrington 1997: xx<sup>17</sup>

Such attention acknowledges the subjective dimension of journeyers' *traumatic/anew reality*. Consequently, such intimate angle of elicitation presents confidants with a more personal and meaningful 'sharing' from journeyers, to which they can connect to and bridge *Distance*. Next, Ethnographic Journalism is considered here for its qualities of immersion and close relationship with interviewees (Fransiscato & Guerra 2006: 87). One particular feature in line with a reversed agency approach is the priority to avoid channelling or materializing the narrative text from the interviewer's perspective (87). Other relevant features are the focus on personal aspects of interviewees covered in an in-depth fashion and capturing what they want to say beyond the facts (Fransiscato & Guerra 2006: 87). Its interviewing guidelines therefore highlight an attention to interviewees' 'inner monologues, as well as their thoughts, dreams, doubts, or worries' (87). This approach gives priority to interviewees' desires, as well as their subjective and affective *layers*. Finally, in particular reference to its ethnographic quality, this form of journalism observes possibilities of 'shadowing', which consist of participating and accompanying journeyers in activities and aspects of their daily lives (87). This technique addresses the *layer of practical implications* and possible *tangible aftermath* that journeyers may desire to include in the re-creation and construction of their sketches. Although such technique may not be particularly required in every re-creation process, it aligns with the close rapport needed between journeyer and journ(art)ist.

Following, New Journalism is a key journalistic discipline that validates subjectivity as an important aspect of reality. It is commonly known today as creative non-fiction writing, which began as a pioneering movement led in the 1960s and 1970s by journalist Tom Wolfe (1979). Its significance to the entire re-creation process is its acknowledgement of a somatic-subjective dimension of reality in addition to the semantic-objective, which Wolf captured by: 'submerging the 'objective' in the 'subjective'; and by excluding his writing 'from the realm of "natural" or ("rational") understanding' in order to explore reality beyond such boundaries (Bloom 2001: 118). In this sense, a New Journalism approach intersects with Magical Realism, because it not only validates both realms of reality, but also blurs apparent schism between them (Muhlmann 2008: 141). New Journalism proposes an 'ambivalent' attitude towards reality in its subjectivist interpretation that maintains an anchor with objectivity (Muhlmann 2008: 141). This approach offers journeyers a holistic freedom to their *traumatic/anew reality*, where they can communicate in both objective and subjective forms. Moreover, it aligns with the somantic continuum's de-centralisation of a

semantic dimension, by the exploration of affective and instinctive forms of writing, which in this context, includes all forms of communication (Wolfe 1979: 37).

### *Expressive Arts Therapy*

Moving on from journalism to the discipline of art therapy, the branch of expressive arts has been considered for the Sketching Phase as a starting point that validates the facilitation of somatic sessions as a technique for journeyers' construction of their sketches. It is important to remark that this theoretical angle is not applied here with a therapeutic intention, but is a form of activating journeyers' expressions in desired semantic or somatic communication modalities. In fact, the relevant singularity of expressive arts is its unpopular and controversial regard as an art therapy discipline, because it is an 'expressionist model', with the sole purpose of eliciting the expression of a person's inner thoughts and states, without a specific therapeutic intervention (Moreno 2010: 4).<sup>18</sup> Therefore it is specifically a form of communication instead of a therapeutic intervention (4). Its significance in the sketching phase lies in its 'multimodal' approach to use various forms of artistic forms as tools of expression: art, music, dance/movement, drama and poetry/writing' (Malchiodi 2012: 131). This technique aligns with a somatic approach that aims to offer journeyers a space to sketch or re-construct their traumatic spectrum in kinaesthetic/sensory, perceptual/affective, the cognitive/symbolic, and creative forms (Malchiodi 2007: 108).

Art therapist Cathy Malchiodi (2007, 2012) emphasises an expressive arts feature that resonates with the re-creation process. As it was emphasised in Chapter One, journeyers need a platform where they are not bound to solely linguistic forms of communicating. In like manner, Malchiodi states that the aim of expressive art therapy is to provide ways to 'communicate thoughts and feelings that are too painful to put into words' (Malchiodi 2012: viii). Although the re-creation does not revolve around expressing the painful layers of a *traumatic/new reality*, it is possible that journeyers may desire to sketch aspects that they prefer to explore beyond words. Finally, Malchiodi posits about another resonating aim of this discipline that resonates with the sketching phase: 'allowing people to explore unknown facets of themselves, communicate nonverbally, and achieve insight' (Malchiodi 2012: 131). This intent echoes journeyers' process of exploring their commun(e)ication desires, where they are facilitated to introspectively and retrospectively obtain an enriching insight into their *Canvas of Desire*.

### *Image Theatre technique*

A method reference that is somewhat similar to the expressive arts approach is the theatrical and performative technique that Boal (1995) applied in Image Theatre, where participants 'show [an] image with [their] own bodies' (Boal 1995: 151). Although the understanding in this research is that journeyers cannot 'translate' an affective or subjective state into an 'image' through the body, as Boal suggests, this method allows journeyers to poetically compose somatic sketches (Boal 1995: 119). As Boal proposes, corporeal 'images' can 'clarify desires, wills, emotions, sensations' (Boal 1995: 150). Journeyers can thus explore re-presenting and re-creating ideas, thoughts, and affective expressions through physical language (Boal 1995: 119).

### *Performance ethnography*

The next discipline of the framework is performance ethnography, which as mentioned in Chapter Two, it is a creative practice where researcher and participants engage in a collaborative process of collective reflection and meaning-making (Denzin 2003: 14). A consideration of performance ethnography is due to its optimal approach to the interviewing process. Performance ethnography does not consider the interview encounter as a 'method of gathering information', but as 'a simulacrum, [and] a world in its own right' (Denzin 2003: 80). This approach is significant to the re-creation because it validates journeyers' poetic re-creation and re-construction of their experiences through personal meaning and interpretation, instead an objective and informative demand. Denzin asserts that the interview is 'an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed', hence 'a fabrication and a construction' of the world in 'its own version of truth and narrative logic' (Denzin 2003: 81). Similarly, the sketching process is a way in which journeyers are 'writing the world' (Denzin 2003: 80). Such frame encourages journeyers to introspectively and retrospectively re-construct their *traumatic/anew reality*.

### **3.3.3 Journ(art)ists' listening role**

This next section discusses the role of journ(art)ists as 'listeners'. The listening role alludes to the traditional task of a journalist, whose goal is not to interpret or analyse interviewees' disclosures, but to facilitate and document their elicitation (Berry 2008: 136). Listening to journeyers in the Sketching Phase is an intimate process that connects them with journeyers on an intersubjective level, which sensitises and informs their aesthetic lens towards journeyers' desires and the *Catch-22* subversion. Based on sources in psychology, art therapy and journalism, this section informs on listening

techniques that provides a continuation of the methodological line that delineates an intimate and somantic rapport between journeyer and journ(art)ist.

### *Empathic Observation*

Journ(art)ists' somantic listening role in the re-creation is based on the notion of a holistic type listening and observation known as empathic observation, proposed by psychologists and therapists. A significance of empathic observation is its attention to a somatic form of listening and expression through the body (Seidman 2006: 91; Moon 2002: 49). Moon states, for example, that empathic observation requires listening with all the senses, and being 'attentive to what is within us, to the inner murmurings, the intuitive responses, the visceral reactions to that which we encounter' (Moon 2002: 49). Moon's suggestion for therapists also applies to journ(art)ists in the re-creation process, when she states that: 'cultivating' artistic sensibilities avoids the default action of 'not noticing', which as she argues 'we must unlearn, and instead give greater attention to sensual and intuitive input (Moon 2002: 50). Seidman agrees, for example, that empathic observation involves being instinctive and attentive to non-verbal cues of both of the interviewee and the interviewer, such as silence and laughter (Seidman 2006: 90-92). Empathic observation also involves paying attention to the 'inner voice' of journeyers, which refers to what they communicate beyond words or their 'outer, public voice' (Seidman 2006: 78). Therefore, empathic observation requires an intentional and active engagement and response (Ivey 2008: 94). Finally, Moon strongly argues that this holistic form of listening requires to 'shift away from the dominant paradigm in Western society that overvalues, verbal, discursive interactions and analytical thinking' (Moon 2002: 50). Moon suggests to challenge the habitual social conventions of Western society that teach people to 'ignore "politely" or disregard much of the nonverbal input' in people's interactions (Moon 2002: 50).

In the context of the re-creation process, listening and observing empathically is favourable for both journeyers and journ(art)ists for several reasons. First of all, journ(art)ists' empathic appreciation plays an important role in encouraging journeyers to communicate in a comfortable and trusting environment (Ivey 2008: 94). Secondly, empathic observation also demonstrates a respect and appreciation for journeyers' disclosures. Moreover, it is an avenue that invites a sensibility that enriches journeyers and journ(art)ists' relationship and the construction of sketches. In addition, empathic observation increases journ(art)ists' awareness to capture responses and cues from journeyers that allows a more sensitive facilitation, such as knowing what to avoid and

what to encourage, how to adapt the sessions, and what changes to make. It is therefore an important source of insight for journ(art)ists as facilitators and supporters.

### *Culturally-sensitive listening*

An awareness of a cultural dimension in the communication between journeyer and journ(art)ist is vital aspect of journ(art)ists' listening role. On the whole, an important attitude towards listening revolves around journ(art)ists' awareness of self and journeyers as carrying different cultural values, norms, beliefs and traditions that are equally valid to their own (Ting-Toomey 2012: 10). The sketching process cannot be taken out of the contexts of the journeyers' cultural ingraining, which carries their social, political, and historical backgrounds (Ting-Toomey 2012: 33). If participants are from different cultures, for example, the scenario of communication is intercultural (Narula 2006: 258). Intercultural scenarios demand an increased awareness of cultural differences in values, forms of interaction, interpretation and communication (Ting-Toomey 2012: 16). In this case, journ(art)ists' sensitive listening consists, first of all, in a 'conscious monitoring of their awareness and their reactions, avoiding judgements and expectations linked to their own cultural mindset (Ting-Toomey 2012: 23). Journ(art)ists should be aware of their personal assumptions, values and biases, in order to avoid a judgemental approach towards journeyers (Ivey 2008: 38). Furthermore, because the sketching process involves a holistic and somantic communication, it is important for journ(art)ists to consider cultural variations that involve different sensorial approaches to aesthetics, to humour, and communication in general (Howes 1991: 264). Unawareness and ignorance to the personal culture of journeyers gives rise to miscommunications in the sketching phase, which may discourage trust, comfort, and respect between journeyer and journ(art)ist, and can be unfavourable for the composition of the somantic artwork.

### *Journalistic listening 'when trauma is the topic'*

A third key feature of listening pertains to a practical journalistic approach to interviewees 'when trauma is the topic' (Hight & Smyth 2003). The Dart Centre for Trauma and Journalism addresses important considerations when interviewing journeyers about their traumatic reality and their shocking experiences. These guidelines provide useful strategies to divert journeyers from taking a negative or harmful direction in their disclosures, to avoid a false empathy, and approximate journeyers with sensitivity. One technique is to avoid asking directly about the shocking event(s) (Hight & Smyth 2003: 4). Another technique is to initiate

conversation with journeyers around topics of positive nature (Hight & Smyth 2003: 4). This is a benevolent strategy that allows journeyers to disclose voluntarily and at ease (4). In the context of a sketching encounter, it also neutralises the direction of the reconstruction, encouraging journeyers' natural course and direction. Another practical technique is to avoid enunciations that imply journ(art)ists can place themselves in journeyers' situation and emotional states (4). Although responses such as, 'I understand' or 'I know what you mean', attempt to relate to journeyers, they can equally subtract a personal value to their experiences and emotions, whilst belittling their personal suffering (4). The third technique is to 'avoid probing' into journeyers' disclosures (Hight & Smyth 2003: 5). An inquisitive attitude results in uneasiness for journeyers (5). In the context of the re-creation, this aligns with respecting journeyers' agency and ownership over their message so they 'disclose' only what they desire. One last technique pertains to an appropriate ethical attitude when listening to journeyers, which demands patience, sensitivity, and non-judgemental listening (5).

#### **3.3.4 Sketching Ethos**

Turning now to the creation of the sketching encounters, this next section provides the groundwork for the construction of the encounters and presents a general description of the type of sketch activators that can be facilitated in different somantic modalities. A sketch activator is a catalyzing cue that encourages journeyers to sketch in freedom. Journ(art)ists should facilitate sketch activators covering various forms of somantic interplay, according to journeyers' **inclination**, **predilection**, or **interest** towards a particular avenue. The role of the journ(art)ist during each sketch activator consists in facilitating the dynamics in a way that journeyers feel comfortable in communicating and expressing themselves. Journeyers' sketches collected during these encounters are then used for the next creative phases towards the composition of the somantic artwork. Since the encounters may propel both sensible and intelligible content and form, the collection of the sketches constructed result in the semantic and somatic interplay of the somantic artwork. As journeyers sketch, they embark in their own interweaving and convergence of sensible and intelligible sketching. As Malchiodi suggests, the strategy to elicit somatic and semantic interplay during each sketch activator is to involve different forms of expression in combination with each other, and moving from one modality and mode or expression to the other (Malchiodi 2003: 106). Following, the elements that journ(art)ists' must consider for the planning of the sketch activators and overall facilitation are addressed.

### *Somantic Freedom*

An initial consideration in the planning and organising of encounters is to apply a somantic continuum in the activators, which entails preparing various propelling techniques from which journeyers can select sketching in semantic predominance/play, somatic predominance/play, somantic interplay or somantic blurredness. Therefore, planning various encounters allows journeyers to explore different sketching modalities. A variety of activators is important first of all, because each individual ultimately has a different expressive style they may prefer (Malchiodi 2007: 108). Second of all, varying the modalities of the encounters can also elicit different colours from their *desire palette* and different layers of their *traumatic spectrum*. As was mentioned in Chapter One, each form of expression evokes and makes meaning in a different way (Kress 2001: 38). Furthermore and very importantly, a discussion with journeyers about sketching activators for following encounters reverses agency and encourages them to elicit ideas for activators that they may desire and be interested in. Moreover, knowing what to expect of each encounter in advance, can avoid certain anxiety or anticipation in journeyers. However, there may be cases when a surprise session is part of the encounters' aim, which should be informed to journeyers.

### *Natural course*

The second consideration involves catalysing sketching sessions in natural course. The essence of the facilitation should be to activate journeyers' communication from their personal neutral position, which first of all, may be accomplished by journ(art)ists' priority in listening whilst limiting an interference only when needed; second of all, journ(art)ists' linguistic and corporeal discourse should 'suggest' and not 'impose' activators. Particularly for encounters involving speech, a natural course entails asking open-ended questions and follow-ups on the subject journeyers are already sketching, whilst preventing direct or leading questions, changing topics, or interrupting them (Seidman 2006: 81-84). Moreover, Seidman observes that questions and intonations carry a negative, positive or neutral intent, for which is important to maintain neutrality and avoid phrases and tone of questions that lead the direction of journeyers' elocutions (Seidman 2006: 84). Finally, a third consideration is to protect and respect survivors' meaning-making process; in other words, omitting the intervention of journ(art)ists' personal meanings whilst facilitating journeyers' exploration of personal meaning, such as their values, vision, and goals (Ivey 2008: 202; Seidman 2006: 88).

### *Wellbeing*

An attention to the protection of wellbeing in the re-creation does not suggest that the process is emotionally threatening for journeyers, but contrarily, it should be a recreational and pleasing experience for both journeyers, journ(art)ists and participants. First of all, the strategies of natural course encourage journeyers to take desired directions towards their sketches, which avoid them from entering a territory that may be painful to them. Second of all, the reconstruction technique allows journeyers to sketch meaningful reflections that bring satisfaction, instead of reliving difficult situations. An important remark is that journeyers may desire to sketch aspects of their *traumatic/new reality* that will not be necessarily 'pleasing', which they nonetheless may find meaningful and satisfactory to sketch. In this case, if journeyers do experience any discomfort, journ(art)ists should intervene by establishing empathy and encouraging journeyers to focus on their present reality (Seidman 2006: 108). Subsequently, journeyers' self-assessment and journ(art)ists' criteria should avoid future discomforts, or alternatively, interrupt the re-creation. Another consideration for journ(art)ists is to protect journeyers from their own initial enthusiasm, which may impulse to a place that may compromise their wellbeing. Journ(art)ists should empathically observe journeyers' reactions and responses to their own willingness to sketch, reminding them there is no obligation to disclose a particular content or detail.

### *Opening and closing sessions*

Techniques for opening and closing the encounters serves the purpose of preparing and reassuring the body, mind and emotions in a pleasurable and relaxing environment, whilst establishing rapport and a mutual openness between journeyers and journ(art)ists.

### *Special needs*

Another aspect of the groundwork consists in a preliminary assessment that journ(art)ists need to be aware of regarding special needs and demands of journeyers for the encounters. These may involve special considerations, for example, if journeyers have a physical disability, if they are minors or elderly people, if there is a need for that a translator, if they have limited time frame, if they need transport facilities to the sessions, and so forth. An important logistics to consider is the location and the context in which the encounters take place, as this play an important role in creating an appropriate environment for journeyers to feel comfortable and at ease.

### *Documentation of Sketches*

Equally important to the planning of encounters and activators is their documentation, with journeyer-consent. Basic sketch documentation involves using digital recorders, video cameras, photographic cameras, and note-pad. Moreover, the construction of a sketch can become a document itself. It is important for journ(art)ists to consider how they can document journeyers' sketches without causing awkwardness during the encounters. In some cases, documentation may not be appropriate or feasible during some activators, or journeyers may prefer not to be recorded during their sketching. Following, one level of documentation is an extent of note taking during or after the encounters to capture reactions, words, and points to follow up on for future sketching encounters. When the nature of some encounters may distract journeyers, or makes them feel awkward, or not be feasible to document, journ(art)ists can write notes as a record of what occurred in the encounter. Furthermore, another level of documentation involves journ(art)ists' recording of observations and reflections from the encounters. These notes can be a helpful *re-creation map* to give feedback to journeyers at the end of the Sketching Phase, when they will reflect and discuss about the sketches and the composition of the performance. Notes can be useful references when facilitating future sketch activators, or to make aesthetic considerations when bridging *Distance* during the Composition Phase. An important observation to record, for example, is the recurrent themes, desires, or *layers* that journeyers evoked, which may be a good feedback indicator. Journeyers can similarly be advised to keep an optional journal of the sketching experiences, as a personal reflection for the next phases of the re-creation.

### **3.3.5 Somantic sketch activators**

The following section is a description of activators that serve as a guide to develop the sketching encounters according to journeyers' *natural course* and preferred somantic modalities. If journeyers are interested in any modality, a varied spectrum of activators can be prepared in advance, so that journeyers explore different sketching directions in each encounter. Other activators may be spontaneous. The modalities are: semantic play, somatic play, somantic interplay, and somantic blurredness.

#### *Semantic Play*

Semantic play consists of encounters that activate semantic sketches. These are ideal to elicit layers of the *traumatic spectrum* that journeyers may prefer to communicate verbally. Somatic play should appeal to both the subjective and objective dimensions of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum*. Basic semantic dynamics revolve around conversation,

activators. Conversing in this case involves expressing, evoking, communing, contemplating, reflecting, and describing experience. The ethos of ‘conversing’ activators refers back to the essential features of New Journalism, Ethnographic Journalism and Intimate Journalism: intimacy, depth, beyond the facts, ‘positive’ content, and subjective reality. These features allow journeyers to explore and sketch *layers* that are subjective, philosophical, psychological and affective.

The following are models of semantic activators:

Friendly Chat- the most common semantic sketch activator is a face-to-face conversation. Journ(art)ists catalyse chats about journeyers’ interests, desires, values, and so forth. This conversing initiator allows journeyers to take a natural direction towards impending desires and topics. It is important to avoid interviewing formats and activate simple friendly chats.

Recreational time- consists in sharing a recreational activity with journeyers that propel ideas and subjects in natural course. A recreational experience can also establish further connection between journeyers and journ(art)ists. Recreational encounters can be specific events that are of interest to journeyers, a hobby, an expressive outlet, a social event, a physical activity, and so forth.

Metaphoric Exchanges- are sessions and activities that guide journeyers to explore analogies and figurative language that can activate conceptual, sensorial, and subjective sketches, or lead to somatic play.

Inspirational Texts- are activators that elicit journeyer talk as an inspiration from any kind of text that has a particular meaning to journeyers, or that they desire to use as an activator, such as: a quotation, a letter, a literary text, film dialogues, and so forth. Alternatively, journeyers may have been written the inspirational text themselves, or they may like to write one as a sketch construction to use further.

### *Somatic Play*

Somatic play consists of sketch activators that predominantly elicit sketches in somatic modalities, allowing communication beyond linguistic articulation. The sketches constructed may or may not become compositions for the somantic artwork, depending

on what journeyers decide in the next phase. The central aim is to find different means of sketching that involve non-verbal and instinctive communication, according to what journeyers accept as comfortable and appealing to them. The role of journ(art)ists here is to prepare a general structure to elicit journeyers' expressive momentum; however, topics and themes around these encounters are selected by the journeyer. These can also be a follow up from semantic play or another sketch. It is important for journ(art)ists to be able to facilitate different form of artistic expression, so that the journeyer can explore one or more expressive styles and decide which form is more comfortable or more efficient for each sketch (Malchiodi 108). Journ(art)ists' facilitation technique depends on their skills and training and they should participate in these somatic sketches if and when needed. Otherwise, an extra participant can join the encounter with journeyer-consent, in order to facilitate or support certain activators.

The following are models of somatic activators:

Say it through the body- this activator guides journeyers to re-create a thought, a feeling, psychological state, or construct a particular scene through their body. The body is not necessarily in motion, but can also adopt a still position. This technique is commonly used in Boal's Image Theatre for example, which permits journeyers to corporeally reflect about their feelings and states of mind (Boal 1995: 119).

Synaesthetic correspondences- this activator consists of sensorial stimuli relevant to journeyers or selected as a modality for a particular sketch. A sensorial stimulus in one modality is corresponded by journeyers' instinctive or analogical response through a different modality, such as: smells eliciting a physical motion, or the phonetics of words eliciting gustatory correspondences.

Expressive Arts- these types of activators allow journeyers to construct non-verbal, subjective, or corporeal sketches through an expressive modality of their preference or interest, such as: painting, dance, music. These activators appeal to journeyers who are or interested and confident in these types of expression.

### *Somantic interplay*

When both semantic and somatic play is alternated in one activator, one sketch, or one encounter, there is somantic interplay. The interplay offers the possibility to follow a *natural course* where a semantic activator or sketch elicits a somatic play, and vice versa.

These kinds of activators allow somatic and semantic expressions to inform and elicit each other during one sketching activity. It is an interplay that is useful when journeyers explore a somatic play and subsequently desire to reflect on it through conversation. In like manner, journeyers may desire to explore a somatic construction out of a semantic activator.

Multimodal correspondence: these activators work from one mode of expression that inspires a sketch in another mode, such as sound eliciting visuals and colours, or smells eliciting words. Crossing of modes can involve conceptual metaphors, where both sensorial and intellectual stimuli are involved.

References to personal creations or historical artefacts: these are sketches propelled from objects, textures, photographs, or any other creative or historical documentation that journeyers can interact with and elicit somatic or semantic meaning.

Allusions from artistic texts: these activators consist in predominantly somatic artistic inputs to elicit semantic meaning. These works could be: paintings, images, music, songs, poetry, literary work, photographs, sculpture, a dance piece, a theatre or performance piece, and so forth.

#### *Somantic blurredness*

Somantic blurredness consists of sketch activators that elicit an indivisibility of semantic and somatic modalities. Somantic activators are a combination of semantic and somatic play in a simultaneous activity. These may be activated by physical location, artistic expression, or interactive engagements that produce both semantic and somatic sketches.

Expressive Arts: these are activators that involve drama, poetry, and any artistic expression, which holistically involves more than one aesthetic expression simultaneously.

‘Shadowing’: This activator occurs if journeyers invite journ(art)ists to observe and participate in particular activity during their day. Shadowing is particularly useful if journeyers desire to sketch or document aspects of their *anew reality*, which are significant to what they want to present in the performance, such as *practical implications*, *tangible aftermath* or other activities of their *anew reality*. Shadowing can be an activator

for a sketch or it could be sketch in itself, if used for documentation or a site for the commun(e)ication event. Furthermore, the immersive effect of shadowing offer journeyers the awareness of being observed, and can elicit new observations and reflections in journeyers, which would not be otherwise created. Finally, shadowing is a way of increasing rapport between journeyers and journ(art)ists, can enrich the re-creation process.

Visiting particular locations- this is an activator that consists in visiting a location that is significant to journeyers and/or that they find relevant to sketch from. This may be a specific place, a neighbourhood, the countryside, and so forth.

### **3.3.6 *Canvas of Desire***

The final encounter of the Sketching Phase, referred here as *Canvas of Desire* encounter, is an opportunity where journeyers reflect on the full picture of their sketches and the *desire palette* these have created. At this point of the process, journeyers most probably can finalise the purpose and desire of the commun(e)ication event. In this encounter, journeyers select the sketches they want to share with their confidants, discuss the themes that were evoked, and decide what sketches and themes will be taken to the next phases. An important discussion is the mood & tone that journeyers visualise for the commun(e)ication event, which entails the 'hue' of the performance in respect to humour, darkness, and/or lightness, of the message; this decision includes whether journeyers prefer to focus on a 'dark' or 'bright' magic of their *traumatic/anew reality*. Furthermore, journeyers may desire to include other creative material that they used for Sketching Phase, such as the artistic allusions and personal references. At this point, the *Canvas of Desire* becomes a **multimodal script** towards the creative and devising phase.

## **3.4. Composition & Assemblage Phase**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

The Composition & Assemblage Phase is a continuation of journeyers' devising process and the beginning of journ(art)ists' aesthetic collaboration with journeyers. In this phase sketches are compose and arranged into final channels of re-presentation for the somantic artwork. A composition is a sketch or collection of sketches channelled into one or more art forms to integrate to the somantic artwork. This composition process involves creative sessions in studio spaces or locations, where various channels or artistic media are explored. An important remark is that this Phase also initiates an awareness of confidants' engagement and techniques to bridge *Distance*. As Dewey

suggested, the creation of an artwork can draw ‘artists to embody in [themselves] the attitude of the perceiver while [they] work (Dewey 1980: 48). As was pointed out in Chapter Two, an aesthetic work connects journeyers with their beholders in a pleasurable experience, and therefore, this phase consists in creating compositions from the sketches that engage confidants and bridge *Distance* between them and journeyers (Dewey 1980: 48). Another important aspect of this phase is the intersubjective relationship between journeyers and journ(art)ists, which was initiated through the intimate dynamics of the Sketching Phase. Journ(art)ists’ aesthetic input is the facilitation towards journeyers’ composition of the somantic artwork, which maintains the ethos of reverse agency, natural course, and somantic freedom. Journ(art)ists propel, suggest, and catalyse, direct, but do not decide or control the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic input of journ(art)ists should emerge from a place of connectedness with journeyers, and the experience of the Composition Phase should be a collaborative process of ‘togetherness’ and ‘side-by-side’.

The Phase consists of two different stages: a composition and an assemblage stage. The former one is the initial stage where journ(art)ists facilitate sessions for journeyers to explore their sketches being composed into various ‘channels’ or media of representation. The latter one is the stage where the compositions are arranged into the somantic artwork. Following, the tools for the composition of the somantic artwork, referred here as *Composition Palette*, consist of various set of different palettes: 1) journeyers’ *desire palette*, 2) the 3 *Movements* of Magical Realism, 3) the aesthetic qualities of ‘total’, (syn)aesthetic, physical/dance theatre and performance, 4) the awareness of semiotic principles of composition, 5) the theatre method input of journ(art)ist or director. It is important to remark that the creative composition methods and activator dynamics depend on journ(art)ists’ knowledge, skills and techniques that they bring into the process. Alternatively, they can also invite other collabo(art)ists to participate in mediating, facilitating and supporting compositions if and when needed, in journeyer-consent. Therefore, what is addressed of this Phase is only a general guide to propose somantic and magical real compositional tools. Moreover, the creative dynamics of this phase will depend on the unique collaboration of journeyers and journ(art)ists.

### **3.4.2 Considerations for Devising**

This next section introduces the features that journ(art)ists and journeyers need to consider as foundational elements for the composition.

### *Journeyers' preferred channels and aesthetic direction*

Although the collaboration process of this phase involves journ(art)ists' aesthetic input, a reversed agency is nonetheless applied. Journ(art)ists' role is to channel and not alter or influence journeyers' desires, purpose, for the somantic artwork, hence protecting the content of their sketches. A reversed agency maintains the aim of facilitating 'conduits' through which journeyer' sketches can be channelled (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 1996: 20-21). Journ(art)ists' task is to activate devising dynamics so journeyers exert agency and expand on journ(art)ists' aesthetic input. As it will be observed in this stage, the facilitation of journ(art)ists is important for journeyers' composition experience as they explore ways to 'speak' to their (imaginary) confidants in aesthetic languages. Journ(art)ists' extent of direct input and participation as channel or live performer depends on the natural course, needs and preferences throughout the devising process. Lastly, it is necessary to establish a collaboration relationship where suggestion, feedback and consent are present throughout this Phase.

### *Journeyer liveness, mediation and (re)presentation*

Journeyers' desire and preference in regards to their liveness and presence in the channels of the somantic artwork and the performance of the commun(e)ication event is a central feature of the composition. Although journeyers' live presence in the somantic artwork should be encouraged, a number of situations or preferences may lead them to decide otherwise. There are therefore two established preferences: explicit presence and implicit (in their live absence). Journeyers' presence dynamics can consist of: explicit presence, which refers to their physical liveness in the performance; mediated presence, which is journeyers' presence, perceptible through another medium, such as video, photography or audio; or (re)presented presence, which is journeyers' presence (re)presented by performers. The prefix '(re)' in the word representation marks a specific approach that will be addressed below. In respect to these forms of journeyer presence, it is central to propose various principles that should be considered for the composition of the artwork/performance, in regard to the poietic approach to re-presentation addressed in Chapter Two. The first principle concerns naturalistic and mimetic representation. Based on a re-creative view of journeyers' sketches, this principle disregards compositions that involve journeyers enacting severe or violent aspects of their sketches, which they had not voluntarily considered or desired enacting. It must be considered, however, that there may be cases when journeyers desire to present a violent enactment, either live or mediated, or have other performers enact it. In this case,

journal(art)ists can propose defamiliarization techniques that escape confidants' aversion, voyeuristic gaze, and perceptibility.

The second principle pertains to an indirect and distanced approach towards (re)presentation of journeyers' presence. An indirect approach consists in escaping mimesis and pretense of representing journeyers' persona in the artwork. However, an indirect form of (re)presentation consists in diverse ways of referring to journeyers' presence in third person, which can be accomplished through estrangement and defamiliarization techniques and conceptual forms of re-presentation. A poietic approach towards liveness and (re)presentation gives awareness to journeyers and performers' 'specificity' and 'reality' of the bodies, which, as Holledge and Tompkins 2000: argues, they cannot 'be cut loose from a materiality of the flesh' (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 136 & 144). In liveness and (re)presentation, the bodies cannot escape their subjective and corporeal materialism, which cannot be detached from their historicity, gender, race, and physicality (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 144). A final aspect to emphasise is that dynamics and decisions of liveness (re)presentation are to be composed conducted in collaboration and discussion between journeyer and journal(art)ist. Journeyer explicit/implicit presence in the somantic artwork and the commun(e)ication event can therefore vary in numerous ways during the performance. The type of presence criterion depends on the nature of the scene and the nature of the sketches, which may decide in what form their explicit/implicit presence, will be staged, mediated or (re)presented.

#### *Intercultural communication*

An awareness of cultural aspects in the creation of the somantic artwork, and the commun(e)ication event with confidants is necessary for a culturally-sensitive and accurate composition approach, particularly if the journeyers and confidants are from different cultures. If this is the case, journal(art)ists should bear in mind that the composition process requires journal(art)ists' awareness of the sketches' cultural-specific or cultural-universal content and form. Culturally-specific refers to qualities that are specific of journeyers' cultures, while culturally-universal qualities that can be communicated across cultures (Ting-Toomey 2012: 276). If the sketches contain cultural-specific content when the community or audience is not from the journeyers' culture, there will be aspects of the sketches that need to be filtered and translated through an intercultural lens of communication, which entail contextualising the compositions for confidants.<sup>19</sup> In addition, journal(art)ists should be aware of journeyers' cultural and personal approach to humour, symbolisms, rituals, etc.

### **3.4.3 Composition Stage**

Turning now to the practical aspects of the Composition Phase, the composition stage entails the main elements of the procedures towards the composition of the somantic artwork. The composition sessions consists of laboratory and brainstorming explorations using the sketches as activators and activators. Journeyers can explore different media to channel each sketch. The outcome of these sessions is the materialization of the multimodal script for the performance and the compositions to be assembled and arranged in the next stage.

#### **3.4.3.1 Composition Considerations**

The following section introduces aesthetic compositional elements through which the sketches can be constructed. These elements consist of signification qualities of multimedial and multimodal channels, a somantic intention, and an awareness of semiotic relativity.

##### *Somantic Intention*

Similarly to the sketching encounters, the composition sessions are conducted and activated in a somantic continuum ethos. Compositions are channelled in three main somantic intents, where a semantic-somatic-somantic interplay and blurredness may occur from one session to another or within one session. This interplay produces compositions that allow journeyers to ‘share’ and engage with confidants on all levels of meaning-and-experience making: semantic play, somatic play and in somantic interplay. A semantic composition is one made from predominantly intelligible and semantic forms. A somatic composition is the sensible drive that involves instinctive, improvisational verbal or non-verbal channels. A composition in somantic interplay consists on semantic and somatic channels that compensate each other. Finally somantic compositions blur distinctions between semantic and somatic predominance and interplay.

##### *Channelling qualities*

Channelling in this context refers to the composition of the sketches composed onto particular media, art forms, and channels or re-presentation. The composition channels are multimodal and multimedial modes of signification that communicate directly in their unique languages (Kress 2001: 38). In brief, channel qualities are the aesthetic, semiotic, and technical characteristics that distinguish their signifying potentials. During the composition sessions, journ(art)ists facilitate journeyers’ exploration of the channels and their qualities for meaning-making and experience-making. Channelling is

broadly distinguished here on two scopes: one scope consists of the various media that form part of a somantic artwork: lighting, sound, music, set, video projections, film, photography, speech, text, the body and its corporeal movement, site-specificity/immersiveness, and other specific sensorial stimuli and natural or artificial objects and materials. Another scope consists in exploring different types of high and low art, and the interplay of conventional and hybrid forms. Each channel has a specific purpose of signification to complement and enhance the message through their unique form of expression. Journeyers may explore one or more channels and art forms per sketch. Following, a reversed agency here consists in journeyers' initial selection of the channel of preference for each sketch. Their criteria can vary depending if they are already familiar with a particular artistic expression, if it attracts them for a particular personal or cultural reason, or if they are curious to explore it. Although the body and corporeal movement is an important initiator, this does not have to be the channel of priority. Finally, channelling can be composed in three general devising directions: one continues using the media in which the sketches are constructed; another direction pertains to journeyers' interest for particular channels and guidance of how they prefer to communicate their sketch; another direction may be journ(art)ist's aesthetic suggestions.

### *Semiotic Relativity*

It is important for journ(art)ists to guide the compositions with an awareness of the semiotic qualities that each mode and art form can offer and facilitate what journeyers desire to signify. A semiotic awareness should not be bound to an essentialist view of its effects on audiences (Marks 1978: 19). Semiologist Andre Helbo stresses, for example, that the semiotic signification 'in their open-endedness and multiplicity are 'never more than proposed meanings', and should be seen and understood 'only in a total content' (Helbo 1991: 163). Also, author and theatre practitioner Les Essif (2001) acknowledges a semiotic relevance in theatre, but urges to give importance to the appreciation of the phenomenological dimension of performance (Essif 2001: 11). Moreover, in respect to audiences, their reading and experiencing of the artwork depends on every individual's interest, subjective and previous experiences, memory and culture (Kress 1997: 37, 93). Therefore, journeyers' composition can be channelled in a general awareness of audience's reading and perception of the artwork, but also their subjective and phenomenological channelling is a central compositional drive (Helbo 1991: 163).

### **3.4.3.2 Somantic Composition Activators**

The following section exemplifies models of composition activators. All the compositions are catalyzed from sketches that have been already constructed. However, a natural course of composition can elicit disclosures or material that was not in the original sketches.

*Sketch Moulds*- sketches that are already constructed in a particular art form, and they are used as compositions to be aestheticized and arranged into the artwork

*Imagination*- these activators consist of imagination exercises elicited from the sketches, which produce visualisations that inspire the exploration of channelling qualities in which the sketches can be composed

#### *Synaesthetic correspondences*

Synaesthetic activators can be used as meaning-making devices to evoke in confidants metaphors and sensorial correspondences. Journeyers can explore any channels as a tool for cross-mode composition. Subsequently, journ(art)ists should be aware that sensorial 'synaesthesia' associations are related to cultural variants according to the meaning and emphasis attached to each association (Kress 1997: 37). Therefore, it is important to be aware of journeyers' and audiences' relationships to these correspondences.

#### *Hands and Body-On Exploration*

This technique is engaged in any form of activity that involves a hands-on and physical creation as activator, such as working with objects and miscellaneous materials, physical spaces, and being engaged in any other physical activity.

#### *Multimodal correspondence*

These activators explore metaphoric compositions across different modes, elicited from the content of the sketches.

#### *Observation and Research*

Consists in contemplating composition ideas for sketches from the observation of other art forms, of natural and artificial sceneries, social interactions, and any other engaging event that journ(art)ist and/or journeyer consider a relevant activator.

Having outlined general dynamics of composition activators, it is now necessary to address the aesthetic collaboration through which journ(art)ists contribute with. This input may be applied throughout the composition phase. The creative exchange between journeyer, journ(art)ist and collabor(art)ist produces an enriching creative exploration.

### **3.4.3.3 Aesthetic Collaboration**

Journ(art)ists' aesthetic input throughout the Composition Phase is referred here as an aesthetic lens. The term 'lens' emphasises a process of 'seeing' and enhancing what is already present in journeyers' sketches, as opposed to fabricating an input from what is not already sketched or composed, or forcing to see what is not apparent. The aesthetic lens should heighten and not alter the desires and meaning of journeyers' sketches and compositions. A central role of journ(art)ists' is to give aesthetic input to bridge *Distance* between journeyers and journ(art)ists by enhancing features of Magical Realism to the creative process. The aesthetic lens is realised in the *3 Movements* of the traumagical real, used throughout both the composition and assemble stages, in accordance to how journeyers' are leading the creative phase, and on the personal criteria of journ(art)ists to propose what they see through their lens. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of **traumagical realism** in Chapter Two proposed that traumatic/new realities carry a magical real dimension and reconciliatory attitude towards reality. Therefore, the aesthetic lens also involves the contextualization of the performance as an indivisible dimension between the 'real' and 'unreal' or 'ordinary' and 'alien' realms that journeyers' have sketched. Journ(art)ists' aesthetic lens requires discussion, feedback and consent from journeyers in collaboration. This strategy prioritises a reversed agency and also encourages creative and meaningful dialogues between journ(art)ists and journeyers.

#### **1st Movement**

##### *A 'strange' effect*

The 1<sup>st</sup> movement highlights the 'magical' and 'extraordinary' aspects of reality, which pertains to the 'strange' and the 'magical' qualities of journeyers' realities. The aesthetic lens in this *Movement* consists in identifying 'strange effects' that have been sketched or composed by journeyers, in order to consider these as aesthetic tools for the composition arrangement of the somantic artwork in the following stage of this phase. The 'strange' qualities revolve around foreign elements, stratification of space and time, the oneiric, the metamorphic, and the ghostly. These effects may be on the 'dark side' of the magical realm or the 'bright side of the magical'. Moreover, not all of these characteristics are to

be present in the sketches, while other type of ‘strange effects’ may be observed and elicited in natural course.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement**

(Re)conciliation technique

### *Re-sensitisation of Confidants*

The aesthetic lens of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement focuses on two particular guides that subvert the *Catch-22 affair* in audiences: *the unfamiliar made familiar* and *the familiar made unfamiliar*. Journ(art)ists’ input consists in identifying existing or potential qualities of defamiliarization and familiarisation in the sketches and compositions, and proposing an aesthetic arrangement to enhance and develop these qualities. The first guide consists in presenting audiences with identifiable, and relatable elements: the objective anchor, realistic and familiar elements, allusion and metaphor, and figurative and poetic language. Journ(art)ists therefore propose aesthetic arrangements that enhance these elements in journeyers’ sketches and compositions. This guide compensates the unrelatable and unbelievable of journeyers’ *traumatic/anew reality*, and bridges journeyers with elements that are relatable and familiar from what journeyers have sketched. Following, the second guide consists in defamiliarization and estrangement techniques. This guide tackles the *Catch-22 affair*, firstly, through a defamiliarization that subtracts gruesome aspects that may provoke intimidation, aversion and fear in confidants, while its non-mimetic trait avoids a voyeuristic gaze and perceptibility. Secondly, it presents confidants with unfamiliar forms of composition that challenge and re-sensitise them from habituated and fatigued forms or representation and presentation of reality. This guide is accomplished by aesthetic arrangements that exalt unfamiliar qualities of journeyers’ sketches through: the non-mimetic, literalisation of metaphor, juxtaposition and contrast, decontextualization, alienation effects, surprise, hyperbole, repetition, and jarring metaphors. The ‘commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar’ in this Movement can result in uncanny effects of the compositions that can produce in audiences a disquieting yet engaging effect.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Dis-alienation

### *Validation of worlds.*

The aesthetic lens of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement focuses on protecting journeyers’ ‘sharing’ experience by protecting confidants’ from disturbing reactions of the ‘dark side of the

magical', and by evoking in them a familiarity with the alien that draws them closer to journeyers. The technique therefore blurs and decreases contrast between the 'magical' and 'real' elements of journeyers' sketches. This not only involves blurring 'dark magic', or the 'alien' and 'foreign' of the sketches, but also the subjective, the illogical, the sensible, the figurative and 'dubious' aspects that are not given value or credit as veracious aspects of reality. This movement offers techniques that blur objectivity with subjectivity, the alien and ordinary elements of journeyers' sketches. On one hand, techniques blurring technique revolve around 'matter-of-factness', a child-like naivety, a lack of emotionalism, and effacement of perceptibility. On another hand, techniques can also revolve around 'strange' and uncanny effects that engage confidants in disquieting and unsettling ways, without averting them. By using particular techniques for the *mise-en-scène*, journ(art)ists can subvert confidants' established notions of what is 'magical' and 'real', or 'alien' and 'ordinary' about journeyers' sketches. The techniques of this movement can be applied during both stages of this phase.

#### **3.4.4 Assemblage Stage**

The transition between the composition and the assemblage stage occurs when a sketch has been composed and it can be assembled or arranged for the somantic artwork. These stages may overlap if some sketches are being produced into their final forms for the performance, while others are still being composed. This last part of the Phase consists of a production and assemblage process, addressed in brief.

##### *Production*

The production of the compositions is a phase that may require the involvement of collabor(art)ists and participants, according to the nature and technical demand of the compositions. The production of some compositions will typically involve a technical element that journeyers and journ(art)ists may be able to conduct and/or most likely require the intervention and support of collabor(art)ists and participants. Collabor(art)ists' participation in this case does not entail a creative and aesthetic manipulation of the compositions, but of creative and technical dialogues that enrich and facilitate the channelling process. Therefore, collaboration and participation dynamics consists of innumerable possibilities. One type of support may be technical: supervision and mentoring in acting, movement, and choreography; or a technical support in photography, film, sound and music composition, and/or in editing of video, film. Another type of support may entail the participation of performers, actors, and

musicians to be part of the live performance. Finally, journ(art)ists and journeyers may require other kind of input, such as translation support or advice on intercultural aspects. A collaboration may encourage favourable, enriching, and lasting dynamics and relationships between journeyers, journ(art)ists and collabor(art)ists. Any participation is dependent on journeyers' personal criteria towards the commun(e)ication event, on the support that may or may not be required from the desired creative and technical scale of each composition.

### *Assemblage Discussion*

Assembling the compositions involves a number of aesthetic tasks are decided throughout the progression of this phase, and should be discussed with journeyers in order to finalise the somantic artwork. One aspect to discuss is the structural flow of the performance. An earlier discussion during the *Canvas of Desire* discussion may have initiated the visualisation towards the flow of the performance, which may be a temporal, a-temporal, linear, non-linear, or fragmented. The flow of the performance is an important meaning-making element that could also signify aspects of journeyers' *traumatic spectrum*. Other important features that are interrelated, are the location where the performance and the commun(e)ication event will take place, and the type of audience interaction. Both features carry important meaning-making potential, and are crucial for the engagement dynamics between journeyer, performers and confidants.

This section has broadly described the creative phase, providing a panorama of the tasks journ(art)ists are responsible for, which in addition to the creative facilitation these involve production and direction roles that may be delegated between the journ(art)ists and/or other participants accordingly. The final two sections of the chapter cover the process towards the finalisation of the performance, the organisation of the commun(e)ication event and conciliation of confidants. These phases are not covered in depth since they are conducted according to the facilitated theatre methods and approaches of both journ(art)ists and theatre directors.

### **3.5 Ensemble & Production Phase**

The Ensemble and Production Phase involves the montage of the space and the mise-en-scène, rehearsals, and the invitation of confidants. The term 'ensemble' refers to the organization of all the aspects of the performance production, the possible support of a directing role and other participants. In addition, the invitation of confidants will be addressed in this phase; nonetheless, it is an aspect that can be conducted in earlier stages of the process. Furthermore, taking into account that the management of this

phase depends on the nature and possibilities of each collaboration, it is not the purpose of this research to focus on the methodological and technical aspects and of this production facet. However, it is relevant to outline relevant aspects that arise during this phase in regards to the reversed agency and dynamics with journeyers: the importance of journeyers' feedback, the ethics of directing journeyers' creative work, logistics of confidants' invitation to the performance.

### *Journeyers' Presence*

The Ensemble and Production Phase offers journeyers the option to be observers and/or participants in this part of the process. Being this phase the final step towards their commun(e)ication event, it provides journeyers with the opportunity to reflect on the complete picture of the performance and their desires for the commun(e)ication event. Journeyers' presence and shadowing during the montage of the mise-en-scène or other miscellaneous production activities is significant, because it allows them to exert both an ownership and agency of their work, while remaining attuned and close to the commun(e)ication event. Furthermore, if the case is that journ(art)ists are not directing this phase, it is crucial for the individual with a directing role to establish rapport and a 'horizontal' relation with journeyers. Additionally, it would be ideal for the directing role to be conducted by an individual who has been already acquainted with journeyers during the re-creation process. A continuous dialogue between director and journeyers also facilitates communication during last minute changes and opinions from the journeyers. Also, an awareness of journeyers' observation and participation should guide the demeanour and attitude towards the creative work. Inappropriate humour and comments towards the performance work, for example, may result displeasing for journeyers. Alternatively, journeyers may prefer not be involved in this phase and limit their participation to rehearsals, if they will perform live. Their voluntary presence or absence and ownership over the somantic artwork are respected.

### *Confidants*

The conciliation of confidants will vary accordingly to whom they will be, and whether the event is opened to the public or by invitation only. Journeyers' commun(e)ication desires can be significantly driven to address a particular group of people, such as family, friends, immediate or distant communities, government authorities, staff from particular charities or organisations, and so forth. In like manner, journeyers may exclude inviting certain people from a decision to maintain anonymity, or even safety and protection.

Furthermore, as it was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, journeyers may have require confidants to have a particular active involvement during the commun(e)ication event. If this is the case, confidants must be informed during the invitation, while other instructions can be given upon their arrival to the event. Finally, the performance space and the audience interaction are decisive elements that decide the number of people that can attend per performance. These aspects entailed may demand an assisting role to cover the logistics of this facet.

### **3.6 Commun(e)ication Event**

So far this chapter has focused on the dynamics of the re-creation method. This final section introduces the commun(e)ication event. As described in the beginning of the chapter, the performance carries an inherent potential of the interrelated dynamics of conciliation, commun(e)ication, and (re)conciliation.

#### *Conciliation*

The significance of the act of conciliation lies in the intentional action to establish presence to confide and engage with journeyers' desires, messages, and interpretation of their experiences. Secondly, conciliation reflects the essential nature of theatre, which is the live and intentional gathering in time and space. The 'kinaesthetic dimension' in Th & P 'that integrates body-to-body awareness', is a conciliatory element to experience the somatic artwork in an act of togetherness and live performance (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 135). Conciliation allows the 'carnal, psycho-physical link' amongst journeyers, confidants, journ(art)ists and participants involved (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 145). Holledge and Tompkins describe this link as a unique interaction where performers and audiences can influence each other on an affective and somatic level in the moment of the performance (145). This intentional and psycho-physical gathering around journeyers' desires is the beginning of what Ziarek refers as an 'artistic redistribution of forces' (Ziarek 2004: 26).

#### *Commun(e)ication*

The significance of a commun(e)ication event in this context lies, first of all, in the agency of journeyers to fulfil their personal purpose for the platform. In this action lies the completion of journeyers' commun(e)ication desires. Second of all, the commun(e)ication event 'shares' journeyers' personal re-creation of mosaic pieces from their *traumatic/anew reality*. The presence of confidants completes journeyers' process towards the completion of their commun(e)ication desires, while confidants' experience

an enriching and mobilizing force from their action of confiding. Although this moment is the culmination of journeyers' re-creation process, it is also the initiation of confidants' experience into a process of engaging and responding to what they confide and somantically experience. In this sense, commun(e)ication is not a one-way transferring of information, but an exchange of experience. Thompson suggests, for example, that the 'formal qualities of the work creates a transaction between artist, artwork, and those encountering it' (Thompson 2011: 131). Rancière maintains that this 'sharedness' is a 'collective power', which 'stems' from 'the power each of them has to translate what she perceives in her own way' (Rancière 2009: 16-17). This view of 'sharedness' between journeyers, confidants, journ(art)ists, participants, is the ultimate 'blurring of boundaries', as Rancière suggests, 'between those who act and those who look; between individuals and members of a collective body' (Rancière 2009: 19). Every participant is therefore involved in the creation of meaning from experience. Denzin's description of the moment of performance also draws close to the notion of 'sharedness', when he explains that, 'in the moment of storytelling, teller and listener, performer and audience, share the goal of participating in an experience that reveals their shared sameness' (Denzin 2003: 80). As was mentioned in Chapter One's discussion of the social force of aesthetics, the somantic artwork as a commun(e)ication platform of reversed agency of purpose and desire to journeyers, becomes an instrument for journeyers to intervene in society, as Ziarek observes, and to open spaces of transformation that remain impossible within the social organisation of force (Ziarek 2004: 40).

### *(Re)conciliation*

In respect to journeyers and confidants 'ends of the bridge', the commun(e)ication event ignites a (re)conciliation of 'sharing' and confiding. In the subversion of the *Catch-22 affair* and the bridging of *journeyer-confidant Distance*, confidants draw near to journeyers through the somantic artwork, to experience an engagement in a challenging and meaningful experience that can have an impact outside the commun(e)ication event, contrarily to a further distanciation and anaesthetisation. Because the commun(e)ication event seeks to bridge *journeyer-confidant Distance*, it blurs social and aesthetic domains. To discuss the (re)conciliating power of aesthetics as an inherent social force, it is instructive to refer to Thompson's approach of affect and beauty in social theatres. His views towards the experience of confidants in a 'side-by-side' or face to face encounter with journeyers, expand the socio-aesthetic potential of a commun(e)ication event. In line with the poietics of aesthetics as a social force, Thompson refers to 'beauty' in performance as a 'means of resisting and critiquing the shape of the world in a way that

maintains our capacity to engage with it' (Thompson 2011: 10). This engagement and shared experience creates what Thompson refers to an 'affective alliance', not only between journeyers and confidants, but amongst the participations and interventions throughout the entire process entailed (Thompson 2011: 172). In light of this 'affective alliance', the bridging of confidants and journeyers *Distance* through the somantic artwork can encourage both journeyers, confidants, journ(art)ists and participants, to continue to seek further engagements with each other and confront *the traumatic* as an opportunity to commune and engage in the issues addressed.

Another relevant aspect of the somantic artwork's social potential, pertains to its appreciation of the somatic, subjective, and 'alien' or 'magical' realms as valid and significant subversive forces for a commun(e)ication experience. Thompson argues, for example, that an affective presence between journeyers and confidants can alone incite an ethical demand and relationship without the need to elicit the hidden 'truth' from journeyers (Thompson 2011: 172). Second of all, in reference to the intention to (re)conciliate confidants to journeyers' desires and experiences through the re-creation process, Thompson proposes: 'the "affect" of co-creating theatre (or other arts) could, therefore, be one means of moving people from an "anaesthetised" reaction to the fact of the other to feeling the demands that those faces make upon them' (Thompson 2011: 168).<sup>20</sup> Thompson therefore takes the view that an affective collaboration could 'maintain' and encourage the ethical and moral demand and responsibility of those who have established such relationship with journeyers (168). He states: 'while *one might approve* of the demand of the other, there needs to be a process for encouraging that approval' (168). In this sense, (re)conciliation could therefore incite a 'co-creation' that encourages journ(art)ists, confidants, and other participants, to continue to engage and converge with the desires and needs of entire communities of journeyers (Thompson 2011: 168).

#### *After-effects*

A final remark of the commun(e)ication event is its potential to positively benefit all the participants beyond the event itself, which are referred here as 'after-effects' or by-products. One after-effect is participants' further engagement with journeyers after the commun(e)ication event, or an engagement with the social aspects involved. Another 'after effect' is that journeyers and all participants can be benefited emotionally and mentally from the re-creation process and the commun(e)ication event (Malchiodi, 2005). For confidants, journ(art)ists and other participants, the after-effects revolve

around the impact of carrying an experience and a disclosure that integrates into their experience and view of the world. Thompson particularly refers to the impact of the affective shared experience as an after-effect of the event, when he states that ‘affect last beyond the event: it lingers’ (Thompson 2011: 157). The ‘lingering’ of affect, says Thompson, ‘does not have to happen at the moment of the performance but can either be sustained beyond it or occur at a different time’ (157). The affective and intellectual impact that the holistic experience has on a personal level can eventually trickle to the daily interactions and social life of participants. Finally, as mentioned in the previous sections, there is an impact on a social level between journeyers and the participants, which may lead to further interactions and projects on this nature.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the re-creation process as one that aims to empower journeyers to take agency of their *traumatic/new reality* being (re)presented in the context of a public platform. It also offers journeyers the possibility to experience a creative and re-creative agency in spite of addressing a difficult aspect of their reality. The devising facilitation towards a somantic artwork provides journeyers an aesthetic medium to engage society in what they desire to commun(e)icate on a level of shared experience and meaning-making. The two primary elements of the re-creation process, the somantic continuum and Magical Realism, aim to offer journeyers a holistic channel to commun(e)icate their *traumagical real* dimension of their *traumatic/new reality*: semantic-objective, somatic-subjective, ‘real’ and ‘unreal’, ‘ordinary’ and ‘alien’. Secondly, the somantic continuum and Magical Realism aim to bridge *Distance* between journeyers and confidants in a heightened re-presentation of journeyers’ experiences. Finally, another outcome of this method is for journeyers to discover or reaffirm their commun(e)ication desires as they naturally progress through the creative sharing of their experiences and *desire palette*.

The re-creation process therefore challenges dynamics of interviewing between facilitator and journeyer to propose a more engaging relationship and a holistic form of elicitation of meaning for a public platform of communication. It also challenges the notion of ‘testimonial storytelling’ and of ‘bearing witness’, as it de-centralises from factual events and a priority of narrative and semantic-objective modalities. The re-creation process begins to depict the merging of social and aesthetic forms of theatre and performance. Features of aesthetic forms are observed in the somantic continuum and magical real procedures, while social forms are observed in a ‘horizontal’

methodology that reverses agency to journeyers, creates performances from interactions in contexts of social justice, and involves the participation of diverse social strata. The next chapter illustrates this outline with an empirical exploration of the re-creation method through two case studies that present one-on-one journ(art)ists-journeyer relationships and their commun(e)ication events.

## 4.0 Case Studies

### 4.1 Introduction to Case Studies

This next chapter illustrates the application of the re-creation process in each case study. The conclusions are addressed and discussed in the next and final chapter. This section is a brief introduction that includes: an introduction to the journeyers who participated, the process of making a 'platform offer', the access to the Platform-meets-Desire event, and a discussion about unexpected changes through both processes and performances.

The search for journeyers with commun(e)ication desires initiated with a specific criteria for this research. The principal reasoning was to offer a platform through a recommendation from charities and organisations in London that provide different kinds of support to individuals who have experienced a traumatic and/or abusive experience. Offering a platform through established organisations disregarded other independent avenues, but a formal liaison was important as it granted a more secure and trusting collaboration-scenario between journeyers and me. Once the contact with the organizations was established, the following step was to be directed to individuals who were in wellbeing and not under traumatic stress or any other vulnerable condition, and who had been recovered from traumatic stress at least within a year.

It is important to note that I decided to search for one-to-one collaborations, instead of a group of journeyers or various journ(art)ists. This judgement was made first of all, on the basis of aiming to explore the method with one set of commun(e)ication desires first. Next, it was considered more appropriate to maintain the research process on a small scale, since the research can only be conducted by one journ(art)ist. This ensured that the experimental methodology was more manageable for one journ(art)ist. The research consists of two case studies that provided material for a comparative analysis and discussion.

#### 4.1.1 Journeyers<sup>21</sup>

##### *Nahom*

Nahom is a multidisciplinary amateur artist from Asmara, Eritrea. After completing the compulsory military service at 18 years of age, he decided to temporarily re-join the military to support the national army during the border-conflict war with Ethiopia, from 1998 to 2000. After this war, Nahom was forced to remain indefinitely in military active duty, becoming victim to a state-sponsored slavery system. Nahom manages to escape

and exile from Eritrea six years later, crossing the desert of Sudan and Libya under human smuggling and trafficking systems. Having reached the Libyan eastern coast, Nahom paid traffickers to embark on a small boat with 25 other Eritreans, including women and children. At sea, Somali pirates dismantle and abandon the boat, while the group is forced to contact the Libyan police for their rescue. The Libyan police imprisoned Nahom for 19 months in seven prisons across Libya. Due to his wife's struggle for his rescue, the United Nations refugee agency orders his freedom in 2006, and Nahom was granted asylum in Rome, Italy, where he was reunited with his wife.

#### *Murdina*

Murdina is from Scotland.<sup>22</sup> She was born to a family who practices Satanism, where she was victim to diverse kinds of abuse and sexual violence in a sect and at home. She moved away from her family at the age of 15, and soon found support with a Christian community. Murdina changed her name to Dina. About ten years later, she moved to Sheffield, UK, to join a residential recovery programme for vulnerable women with different kinds of abuse and life-controlling issues. Murdina concluded the programme and decided to live in Sheffield, where she later married.

#### **4.1.2 Platform-meets-Desire Encounters**

The first step for a 'platform offer' was to contact organisations that I had been involved with, and/or that I knew about, which offered support to refugees, victims of torture and of human trafficking. Eventually, an access to journeyers was established via acquaintances and friends who recommend me to two organizations.

#### *Meeting Nahom*

*VI.TO.* (Victims of Torture) Kairos Project

Rome, Italy

On March 2009, I was invited to present a solo documentary-performance for International Women's Day, in Rome. The piece was about the female genocide in Mexico occurring since 1993 and mostly in the border town, Ciudad Juárez. In the context of this event, I was informed about a project for refugees called *VI.TO. Kairos*, which provides psycho-social support to refugees who have been victims of torture.<sup>23</sup> An acquaintance introduced me to the director of this program, Ms Fiorella Rathaus, to whom I presented the aim of the re-creation process as part of my research with Brunel University, and requested permission to offer a platform to one of her clients. The request included the permission to be accompanied by a female friend and trusted

acquaintance, Ms Kathleen Flores, to support me with translation. Ms Rathaus consented we approached their clients, only after becoming participant-observers in a three-month theatre therapy workshop, which finalised in a public performance. Furthermore, Ms Rathaus confirmed on various individuals participating at the workshop who were in a state of wellbeing and would therefore be appropriate to consider for the platform offer. The weekly workshop involved about fifteen adult asylum seekers and refugees from diverse countries in Africa and the Middle East. Only a few of them had a basic understanding of the Italian language. My integration into the friendly environment within the workshop was an invaluable experience and, very importantly, an ideal context to develop a natural rapport with the group. From the individuals suggested by Ms Rathaus, the eligibility criteria for the 'platform-offer' were broadly shaped by my observation during the workshops. After two and a half months of workshops, I had considered three individuals. Firstly, I considered offering a platform to a lively and outspoken young woman from Nigeria. We quickly established a friendly rapport, in part due to the possibility of conversing in English. Secondly, I considered offering a platform to Nahom. He demonstrated a leadership role in the group, assisted the workshop leaders, displayed significant ease and enjoyment in performing the various exercises and activities, he shows artistic abilities, and could speak basic Italian. Thirdly, I considered approaching a middle-aged man and engineer from Kurdistan, after he requested the workshop leaders the opportunity to publicly share his testimony and have it translated into Italian during the public performance.

Following the consideration of these three individuals, I had a meeting with Ms Rathaus to confirm her approval of my consideration. The next step was to arrange an encounter with each person after the workshops, and assessing the scenario if more than one of them showed interested in the platform offer. When I presented the 'platform offer' to the Nigerian lady, she said she was not interested in 'sharing' her private life publicly. The engineer from Kurdistan expressed interest in the platform offer, and said he would confirm this possibility in the next meetings. During the conversation Ms Flores and I had with him, however, he repeatedly mentioned he was looking for a wife, which I considered a problematic signal that could potentially display a misconstrued interest in the platform offer. In any case, he did not follow up on the platform offer I made.

Before the last rehearsal for the public performance, I approached Nahom with the platform offer. Immediately after the offer Nahom accepted with eagerness. Ms Flores and I further explained that the main purpose of the project was for him to 'share' only

what he desired, and to an audience he would like to communicate to. Through mimicking, Ms Flores and I explained that the style of the 'theatre project' involved non-traditional or non-naturalistic acting, and was also intended to explore any art form that he would prefer or would be interested in exploring. He informed me he had acting experience from doing films in Eritrea, and expressed interest in learning about the type of creative process we had begun to describe to him, adding that most Eritrean forms of theatre were very traditional. He also informed us that the past couple of years he was hired by *V.I.T.O.* to support the theatre workshops. He commented that the workshops and the public performances were an enjoyable experience. However, he was also interested in a theatre platform that would allow him to share his personal story. Furthermore, I clarified I was not a professional theatre-maker or director, and informed him about the experimental nature of the 'project', conducted for university research in the UK. Finally, in a humorous manner, Nahom mentioned that the first few weeks of theatre workshops he had been slightly inquisitive about why Ms Flores and I had joined the group and helped throughout the process. 'Spies!' Nahom said jokingly, and we laughed. Finally, he said Ms Flores and I had become his friends, and he would be glad to be involved in this project. The immediate step after he showed his interest was to broadly address the aspect of his wellbeing, as a form of ensuring an awareness of this issue, which would be asserted further as well. In basic concepts, I asked Nahom if his emotions and his mind were in a 'good' stage, so that the 'project' would be a pleasing experience. Nahom smiled and communicated he was well and could participate without concern.

### *Meeting Dina*

City Hearts

Sheffield, UK

In Spring of 2010, an acquaintance in Sheffield, UK, informed me about a colleague who was volunteering with a programme called City Hearts, which provides various kinds of assistance to women who have suffered from any form of abuse.<sup>24</sup> After doing online research about this programme, I learned that City Hearts is also a major support to women who have been trafficked into the UK, which is a case of particular interest to me. I contacted my friend's colleague, who introduced me to the program's director. I then met with the programme's co-director and Dina's previous mentor, Ms Colleen Brownlee, to whom I presented the aim of the 'platform offer'. I firstly inquired about the possibility to work with a journeyer who they had supported in the past, and would be now possibly interested in a 'platform offer'. Since I expressed my interest on the

issue of human trafficking, they informed me that the women who met the requested criteria and who would perhaps be interested could not yet disclose their situation publicly, due to but court and legal proceedings. Alternatively, they referred me to Dina, and I was briefly informed about her case and her experience growing up. Dina had concluded her rehabilitation programme at City Hearts for over a year, and was still involved with the organisation. They recommended her as an outspoken person who would be particularly interested in an artistic approach to 'share' her experience. Dina was firstly informed about the 'platform offer' through the directors, and once she accepted to meet with me, they arranged a meeting for us at the City Hearts offices.

Dina carried an unforgettable smile when I first met her, accompanied by Ms Brownlee. Dina initiated the meeting by commenting she had previously spoken publicly about her story during City Hearts events, the local media, and at her local church community. However, she expressed that outside these contexts, she had not exposed the situation of SRA that she lived through. Dina mentioned she desired to creating a public awareness about the reality of SRA. She also expressed she was particularly interested in publicly communicating this aspect of her life through artistic forms and not verbally. She commented that at times she would slightly feel limited in sharing her 'testimony' and trying to capture it in words. Therefore, she displayed an immediate disposition and interest in exploring theatre as a different channel to 'share' about her experiences. Furthermore, Dina informed that she was not 'artistically-oriented'. She said, 'I can't sing, I can't act, and I am not a dancer', and clarified she desired to appear only at certain moments of the performance, without having to do anything 'artistic'. I explained the project was ideated so that she could decide what and how she desired to communicate to the public. I explained my role was to facilitate options for her to choose and explore ways of communicating in various creative ways. I emphasised that the process would be led by her preferences, and that we would certainly involve the type of artists she desired to work with. Also, I explained that the purpose was not to interview her, neither to ask her about her past or her 'testimony', but to elicit only what she desired to 'share'. Furthermore, I stressed that she also decided the extent of my direct participation in the performance. Conclusively, Dina commented she had desired such kind of platform. Finally, I addressed the aspect of wellbeing, and asked her if she considered being in a place of emotional and mental wellbeing that would allow her to enjoy the process. She commented that she was 'ready' to get involved in such a 'project', and was in wellbeing to do so. Please refer to **Appendix 1** (p. 308) for the collaboration approval given by *VI.TO.* and City Hearts.

### 4.1.3 Introductory Notes

The second part of this section refers to Nahom and Dina's levels of involvement and engagement throughout the re-creation and other important notifications about this chapter.

The re-creation had been ideated for a continuous involvement from journeyers, which concludes with the journeyers' public performance at their commun(e)ication event. However, unexpected circumstantial factors after the Sketching Phase created variations of journeyers' possibility and extent of involvement. The sketching part of the process was nonetheless developed in both cases. Both commun(e)ication events were presented as works-in-progress. The levels of journeyers' involvement created unexpected yet significant possibilities of study that informed the re-creation process on various levels, addressed in the next chapter. The extent of participation and presence was therefore conceptualised as levels of 'journeyer-presence' (explicit presence) and 'journeyer-absence' (implicit presence), during the re-creation process. In brief, the different outcomes provided insight into possible scenarios where a commun(e)ication desire may still be met in cases where journeyers prefer not to perform live, or have diverse extents of presence at the commun(e)ication event. Also, it informed the dynamics of maintaining reversed agency whilst working with journeyers' 'implicit presence'. Following, the unexpected course of each re-creative process will be briefly explained and further addressed throughout this chapter and the next.

#### *Nahom' journeyer-presence/absence*

Two scenarios in Nahom' case shifted the expected his continuous journeyer-presence. Nahom and I completed the Sketching Phase and composition stages, which covered a period of weekly encounters throughout three months. However, Nahom asked me to lead the creative process during the Assemblage and Ensemble Phases, expressing he preferred not to lead an artistic input but to oversee it. He said he preferred not to take responsibility for the artistic process of the performance, due to other responsibilities he had to focus on at the time. Another scenario that influenced the dynamics of participation during the performance was the worsening of a back injury problem. Nahom had informed me during the Grounding Phase that he suffered from a 'minor' chronic back problem, and no concern was presented throughout the process. In addition, I had to return to the UK after the established migratory period of time, and Nahom and I agreed to postpone the Ensemble Phase and the commun(e)ication event for a few months when I could return to Italy. Advised by my supervisor to proceed

with the second case study, the performance in Rome took place about 8 months later. Nahom informed me throughout this period that his back problem worsened, and thereafter he was obliged to quit his job. When I returned to Italy, he informed me he was physically unable to rehearse and perform, and was physically limited to leaving his residence often. In such scenario, Nahom proposed to be present in the commun(e)ication event and perform the song and the poem that had been scripted for the performance, but he suggested I considered someone to perform the rest of the scenes, in his place.

#### *Dina's journeyer-presence/absence*

Dina's journeyer-presence scenario changed due to two unexpected events. Dina got engaged during the Sketching Phase and began to have conflicts with her family due to her engagement. Details are omitted here for reasons of privacy. I was informed at City Hearts that Dina encountered a destabilising situation. In order to assure she would not continue with the re-creation under any form of stress or duress, I asked Dina on the phone if she desired to continue with the project or preferred to interrupt it. She confirmed that after the conflictive situation, she preferred to temporarily avoid anything related to her past, and needed to focus on her engagement and wedding planning. In respect to the commun(e)ication event, she suggested that I continued devising the performance from the sketches that had been developed, expressing her interest in seeing her 'story' performed. Subsequently, Dina provided material that she wanted me to use as sketches: excerpts of one of her journals, a typed biographical narrative, a newspaper article, and contact details of two people whom she thought could be interested in participating as actors in the performance.

#### *Notifications*

There will be various references in this chapter to documentation that illustrate and show some aspects of the re-creation. This material includes videos, audio, and text. Another important note is that the case studies have specifically informed two aspects of the method that were already integrated into Chapter Three, but were not formally applied in the case studies. These two aspects pertain to discussions with journeyers towards the end of the Sketching Phase and the Composition Phase, referred to as the *Canvas of Desire* conversation and the Assemblage Discussion. These two steps of the process were not formally ideated before the case studies and are not fully developed in this chapter. Furthermore, the various sketch and composition activators applied for the case studies do not necessarily include all the ones delineated in Chapter Three.

## **4.2. Grounding Phase**

As explained in Chapter Three, the purpose of the grounding phase is to prepare the foundation upon which the re-creation process will be construed. The Grounding Phase in the case studies provided useful information that considered for the planning of the Sketching Phase. This section includes: a reflective assessment about journeyers' wellbeing; the planned encounter with the journeyers to further discuss various aspects, which has been referred as the a 'formal platform offer'; and journ(art)ists' considerations of the subsequent preparations for the next phase.

### **4.2.1 Wellbeing confirmed**

Having confirmed with journeyers that they were in a place of wellbeing for the re-creation, I considered seeking further confirmation from their counsellors, since this was an option in both cases and it would bring reassurance to the process. Also, it was possible to inquire about any particular aspect that would require special attention and care, in consideration of their particular scenarios. I made appointments with the psychologist at *VI.TO.* who knew Nahom, and with Ms Brownlee at City Hearts, who had been Dina's counsellor. *VI.TO.* psychologist informed me that Nahom had not displayed emotional or psychological distress during his involvement with the Programme. She informed me that Nahom had joined *VI.TO.* when he arrived to Italy three years earlier, and she had known him since. Once he completed the yearly programme with *VI.TO.* Nahom had been asked to return for two consecutive years to join and support the refugee group in various workshops. Finally, the psychologist mentioned that Nahom had been very private in talking about his experiences in Eritrea and Libya. Following, in Dina's case, Ms Brownlee informed that Dina was in a stable state to participate in the artistic project. She informed me that she had 'told her story' a few times in public at City Hearts events, without a problem or concern. I confirmed to her that the re-creation process Dina would only be encouraged to 'share' what she felt comfortable with. Ms Colleen offered her availability and support to answer further questions or concerns I may have throughout the re-creation.

### **4.2.2 The 'Formal' Offer Encounters**

As explained earlier in Chapter Three, the 'formal offer' is a multipurpose encounter to establish the grounding coat that will align journeyer and journ(art)ist under an agreed purpose and recreational nature for the project. This includes reviewing expectations and responsibilities of each party, and optionally signing a general 'Re-Creation Agreement.' Please refer to **Appendix 2** (p. 309) for the original agreement sample as presented to journeyers.. The core and summary of the expectations and responsibilities

revolve around ensuring journeyers' agency, and the comfort and wellbeing of both parties. Two specific points concerned explaining journeyers that the performances were works-in-progress, and that no financial profit was intended from them.

The 'formal offer' with Nahom took place at a central café that he proposed for a meeting place. I had suggested if he would like to invite his wife to the encounter. On one hand, this invitation was compelled from a sensibility to cultural values of Nahom and his wife. Therefore, I had asked Nahom if our regular encounters would be agreeable with his wife, and if it would not cause any concern. Nahom said there was no issue or problem regarding meeting alone with me, and that his wife had agreed with the project. Nahom mentioned he had told his wife about Ms Flores and me since the beginning of *VI.TO.* theatre workshops, and that he wanted his wife to meet Ms Flores and I. Nahom's wife joined the encounter and Ms Flores was present for translation support. Next, we reviewed the 'Re-Creation Agreement' document, and Nahom kindly agreed and smiled to every point that Ms Flores and I presented to him. He expressed the unnecessary formality to our project and in fact showed surprise when I asked to sign a document. I had foreseen the possibility for this kind of reaction, aware of the culture value where this kind of formality may imply a level of distrust. I explained the formality was due to the nature of the project as research for the University. The encounter ended with a friendly informal chat.

The 'formal offer' to Dina took place towards the end of the Platform-meets-Desire encounter. I was prepared to discuss a 'formal offer', since she had already communicated her interest in the collaboration through Ms Brownlee. Dina confirmed she understood and agreed with the various points discussed. Afterwards, she initiated a conversation regarding her interest on artistic forms as a form of 'sharing' about her experiences. The encounter concluded in a very 'colourful' conversation.

The following logistics are considered the most significant aspects to lay the foundation of the process and prepare for a fluent collaboration in terms of practical issues, such as their preferred and appropriate meeting spaces for the encounters, a tentative meetings calendar, and in Nahom' case, the possibility for English/Spanish-Tigrinya translation, if and when needed.<sup>25</sup> As referred in Chapter Three, giving journeyers the agency over these matters is important to adjust to their convenience and comfort, and adapt to their personal circumstances. Moreover, acknowledging their opinion and preferences in such aspects of the project granted them a form of agency as well. Furthermore, an

important aspect of this meeting was also to ask the journeyers if I needed to be aware of any physical conditions or other circumstances to better facilitate the encounters and plan for the performance accordingly.

#### *Logistics with Nahom*

The consideration to arrange the possibility of an English/Spanish-Tigrinya translator had the aim to facilitate the encounters where semantic and concrete dialogues were needed. However, Nahom immediately refused having a translator, but did not explain his reason(s) to reject this option. Instead, he gladly consented for Ms Flores to support Spanish to Italian translation when needed, as it had been done before. Next, in respect to meeting spaces and time availability, the logistics consisted in finding spaces for the various types of evocative sessions. Ms Flores supported me in locating free and/or hired private locations across Rome. In addition, conversing encounters took place at cafés and parks near Nahom's residence. In regard to a meeting calendar, Nahom set clear that he was able to meet only on Saturday afternoons. Finally, regarding a physical or other special condition to be aware of, Nahom informed me that he had a minor chronic back problem, which mainly restricted him from lifting heavy objects.

#### *Logistics with Dina*

Concerning meeting spaces and time availability, Dina expressed she preferred to meet in familiar places: she suggested a specific park in the city, a coffee house, and also requested to meet in the City Hearts' offices for sessions that required more privacy. When discussing the time frame of collaboration and the regularity of encounters, Dina preferred a flexible time period when we arranged meetings on a weekly basis, and informed me of the possibility of last-minute changes or cancellations.

### **4.2.3 Journ(art)ist's reflections**

After the 'Platform meets Desire' event and the 'formal offer', several aspects were reflected upon, to consider how to organise the somantic modalities of the sketching encounters. In Nahom' case, for example, I had learned from the theatre workshops that he likes to draw, paint, sing and play Eritrean music. I also knew he had done acting for film before. In spite of our limitation to communicate verbally, I observed he enjoys conversation. I therefore considered facilitating conversing sketching sessions interweaved with expressive sessions of movement, song, and drawing. Furthermore, I was told at *VI.TO*. Nahom was a private person in respect to his past, and had been

protective in sharing his artistic creations. This point was useful as a form of awareness. In Dina's case, I considered that her cautious and almost rigid selection of familiar places where to meet,, and the inability to commit to regular encounters could be an indicator of an important sensibility I should be aware of. Furthermore, although she showed eagerness and excitement about the artistic aspects of the performance, she mentioned she was not interested in sketching through artistic means. From these observations, I considered that somatic sketches or artistic expressions during the encounters would take a subordinate position. On the other hand, I observed she enjoyed conversation and liked to express her opinions and views. This information therefore led me to focus on semantic sketches first. Finally, she also reiterated that she liked the outdoors, so I began to ideate the alternation of conversing encounters with walks in the park or other outdoor locations.

### *Rapport*

A good rapport with both journeyers established a solid beginning for the sketching stage. Nahom had called me a 'friend'. We had established a relationship of mutual comfort and trust. In respect to Dina, although we had only met once, the encounter was friendly and we were able to establish a bond. Finally, a consideration to offer a monetary gift for journeyers' participation in these case studies was a decision intended to present a symbolic acknowledgement of gratitude for the time invested, as well as to cover expenses entailed, such as transport. Nahom and Dina gladly welcomed this gift when I explained this reasoning behind it.

### *Glimpses of Desires*

The encounters with journeyers so far manifested their specific desires and interests. In Nahom's case, one desire was initially observed when he expressed his interest in sharing 'his story' from a personal angle. A second desire was a personal interest to observe and learn from a different approach and aesthetic of theatre. This desire was also coalesced with his other desire to take have the role of overseeing, but not directing or compromising to a significant artistic input towards this process. Nahom explained he did not desire to make art during that specific point in his life, or be responsible for the artistic process of the performance. Finally, another colour was directly linked to the friendship we had established. During the Platform-meet-Desire encounter and this phase, Nahom commented that he also desired to collaborate with me to support my project. In Dina's case, she expressed she wanted to 'share' that she had been a victim of SRA. She had only disclosed this specific fact at her church community, and expressed

her desire to expose this to a general public. Another desire pertained to her particular interest to 'share' about her upbringing experiences through artistic means, as opposed to a verbal or written testimony, emphasising that 'words were not enough'. In regard to the performance, she particularly desired to have a limited appearance on stage that would not require an artistic delivery, and suggested participating of dancers and actors instead. These observations were relevant to consider particular aspects of how to 'reverse agency' to journeyers, depending on their suggestions and comments towards the commun(e)ication event.

### **4.3. Sketching Phase**

The Sketching Phase is the beginning of the devising process of the somantic artwork and the *natural course* towards journeyers' commun(e)ication desires, purpose, and their message for the commun(e)ication event. Journeyers may either already have an impending desire, or they may prefer to explore various routes as a natural way of arriving to it/them. The central dynamics of reversed agency encouraged Nahom and Dina's *natural course* of direction in content, subject, layers of their *traumatic spectrum*, and the somantic modalities through which they preferred to construct their sketches. My role was to activate and catalyse this natural development. It is important to highlight that I did not ask them to 'remember' or 'recall' their past, but encouraged them to 'share' desires from their present state. Briefly referring to this notion, as proposed by Seidman, 're-construction' is based partially on memory and partially on what the participant now sense is important about the past event' (Seidman 2006: 74). Hence, Nahom and Dina were propelled to construct sketches through their subjective interpretation, introspect and retrospect, as opposed to remembering and narrating events. This next section presents the highlights of the sketching encounters with Nahom and Dina, including the sketch activators explored, a description of the sketches that were constructed, and the role of the journ(art)ist as the facilitator.

#### **4.3.1 Case Study A**

##### **4.3.1.1 Sketching Encounters**

Following, this first part of the section summarises the first encounters with each of the journeyers. The duration of each encounter was roughly set to be from one hour to one and a half hours, in order to have ample time to develop a sketch activator.

##### **First encounter**

*Somantic Interplay- Conversing Activator*

This first encounter was prepared for a somatic interplay facilitation of both conversing and expressive art encounters. The encounter took place in a private space in case somatic play (through movement and/or music) would be naturally activated. I did not ask Nahom to bring any material to this first session, but I provided drawing utensils and a string instrument. Ms Flores joined this encounter for translation support. Nahom indicated that although he did not have a particular subject to begin sketching with, he did not desire to 'share' about his life as a soldier for the Eritrean government. Nahom manifested through mimicking, body language and fragmented words that his life could be at risk if the Eritrean government learned he had publicly exposed anything against its military. Nahom also explained he was tired of putting his life in danger, and he desired to continue pursuing a new life of peace and safety.

The session began with a conversing technique. Following the strategy as proposed by the Dart Centre for Journalism & Trauma, I opened with a broad question that would direct Nahom towards a positive aspect of his life (Hight & Smyth 2003: 4). I suggested if he would like to share about how he discovered his love for the arts, as well as other interests or activities he enjoyed doing in Rome or when growing up in Eritrea. Nahom carried this conversing activator from the subject of drawing since young and growing up playing traditional Eritrean instruments, to his desire to escape his country in order to become an artist and do this freely. Such activator allowed Nahom to take a direction he consciously or even unconsciously desired, which is referred to here as 'natural selection'. Nahom took paper and pencils to draw the route of his exile journey. The conversation was alternated from speech, to mimicking, to rough sketches on a paper. The facilitation of this semantic play consisted in avoiding asking for details or asking Nahom to expand on aspects that he would expand on his own. The key of this technique was to allow him to exteriorise what was naturally emanating from the activator question. After 45 minutes, I suggested if he desired to play music he enjoyed or any music piece he would like to share. Nahom appreciated the suggestion and the fact that a guitar was already there. However, he said he would prefer to do it on another occasion, and suggested Ms Flores and I to sing something. The encounter was concluded after a moment of sharing songs.

Before parting, I suggested Nahom, if he would like to draw or paint for the next encounter, or consider bringing a creative piece he would like to share. Nahom responded with certain reluctance to this suggestion. From his explanation, I understood that he did not want to engage in a creative process at that period of his life.

He explained that he was very busy working and planning a future with his wife, and preferred to create or display art publicly when he felt more established and with more resources. To this response, I immediately reassured my respect to his view and decision.

### *Following Encounters*

Following the first encounter, Nahom and I met for five weekly sketching encounters throughout a period of six weeks due to a couple of session cancellations. The sketches of each encounter spiralled in somatic interplay. I facilitated various semantic and somatic dynamics that will be briefed below. Nahom quickly displayed a preference to kinaesthetic and phonic modalities, and rapidly demonstrated this openness and enjoyment throughout the encounters. He sketched reconstructions through acting, miming, and guttural sounds. Nahom's preference to corporeal sketching encouraged me to attend a 4-week course in '*Movement and Dance Therapy*', in order to gain further insight about facilitating somatic encounters through corporeal sketching. **Appendix 3** (p. 310) presents the diploma obtained from this course.. The decision to select a therapeutic approach to propelling movement sketches was rooted in the proposed view of expressive art therapy, which endorses movement as a form of expression without a therapeutic intervention (Malchiodi 2003: ix). The therapeutic approach of this course offered techniques to activate expression through movement, and provided knowledge on opening and closing the encounters through exercises and breathing. Furthermore, in regards to planning other modalities for the encounters, the expressive arts were subordinated considering Nahom's hesitancy to sketch through a formal artistic expression. Following is a summary of the sketching encounters. These are listed in chronological order as they happened in the sketching phases.

### *Somatic Play- Corporeal expression, 'say it through the body'*

For the second encounter, I considered alternating the communication modality to somatic catalysers, since the first encounter had revolved around semantic play. I prepared an exercise to explore elements of estrangement to activate an opportunity to discuss the aesthetic technique of estrangement in theatre. I facilitated a mutual improvisation of skits that explored contrasts, irony, hyperbole and strange ways of moving, verbalising and acting. Nahom rapidly grasped the idea of the exercise and enjoyed the idea of estrangement. Afterwards, I suggested if he would like to visualise a movement or a corporeal phrase that he would like us to do together. Through mimicking, he asked me to follow him as we walked to a corner of the room, and he

began constructing various instances that he experienced at the different prisons where he was located, by corporeal phrases and isolated words. He invited me to join him and pretend we were both in the prison.

*Somantic Interplay & Blurredness- Expressive arts, corporeal expression and conversing*

For the third encounter, I considered continuing with somatic constructions, since various opportunities from the previous encounter had been pending. I opened the session with a movement and breathing exercise, then asked Nahom what he desired to do in this space. We sat by a free wall in the room. This encounter did not follow the corporeal expression and mimicking of the previous one. Instead, Nahom took a pencil and began to draw on the wall and converse about the instances where he was able to make drawings on the last prison he was sent to. From drawings, to verbalisations, Nahom proceeded to evoke sounds, to describe smells, and then enacted physical positions from prison. He recurred to linguistic articulation to describe details and 'share' small anecdotes. For the end of the session, I had planned to explore an exercise with smells to close the encounter with a relaxing and fun activity. Ms Flores facilitated this exercise for Nahom and me. We sat on the floor, back to back, with our eyes closed. Taking turns, we each smelled the same olfactory stimuli that Ms Flores placed near our faces. With our eyes closed, we sensed how our bodies reacted equally or differently to the same smell. The encounter finished in laughter. See **Appendix 14-** Disc 1 to see video excerpts of Nahom sketching in somantic interplay: through the body, through drawing, and conversing. Disc 2 contains audio excerpts from our conversing sketches.

*Somantic play: Metaphoric Exchanges & reference to personal creations*

Having explored two encounters of somatic play, I considered activating opportunities to explore semantic play for the following encounter. The aim was to catalyse a conversing encounter and see where Nahom's *natural course* would take us. The encounter took place at an outdoor café near Nahom's residence. Ms Flores joined us for translation support. I opened the conversation by referring back to a figurative phrase Nahom had shared in the previous encounter. The selection of this phrase as an activator had the aim to start the conversation on a subjective level. Nahom hastily demonstrated enjoyment and interest to discuss on this subjective dimension. He referred to a poem he had written years ago, about his philosophy towards life. This conversing encounter revolved around communication modalities of fragmented words that describe certain imagery, non-verbal communication, and drawing. See **Appendix 4** (p. 311). A structure and linear coherence of sentences became unimportant or even

unnecessary for our communication. A technique I spontaneously applied to encourage this sketch to continue was to repeat and re-phrase in my own fragmented words and body language, what I was capturing from his expressions. In order to either assent or better describe his conceptual explanations, Nahom expanded on further imagery and philosophical thoughts, which developed to a poetic and metaphoric sketch. In turn, this also catalysed the construction of a sketch about a part of Nahom's exile, when he was trafficked in a container with other Eritreans. Towards the end of the encounter, Nahom voluntarily showed us three photographs he had saved his mobile. These were three beautiful abstract colour drawings, with feminine expressions in the middle. In marvel, I asked Nahom what these drawings meant to him. He explained these three different female impressions represented three virtues he needed to endure his exile: strength, hope, and love. Nahom manifested excitement when Ms Flores and I were genuinely interested in his subjective conversations about his life, his poems and his drawings. This part of the sketching phase showed a greater openness in Nahom to share more about his art or personal creations.

*Somantic Interplay: References to personal creations & corporeal expression*

Since Nahom had propelled a sketch from the drawings he showed in the previous encounter, I considered suggesting an activator of *references to personal creations or historical artefacts* for the next session. I therefore asked Nahom if he would like to bring a photograph, a poem, a drawing, or any other object at home that he would like to share and discuss for the performance. He liked this idea and agreed to it. The encounter took place at the lounge of the friend's residence, where there was space and privacy for any semantic and somatic play if propelled from the personal creations. Nahom brought a photograph of a prison wall where he had painted a symbolic image. He also brought a small notebook of poems he had written in the same prison, and a colour drawing of an old lady attempting to insert a thread into a needle. The encounter consisted of conversing sketches, interweaved with mimicking through Nahom's explanations of what the drawing, the photograph and one poem he had selected meant to him. We walked together across the room, acting, mimicking. To a great extent, Nahom conveyed most of what he desired to communicate by using his body. A similar technique I applied to encourage his sketching without changing direction, was a spontaneous imitation of his movements, and finding words in Italian that ensure I was understanding what he was conveying. This feedback seemed to motivate him to continue sketching through the dialogue between movement and speech.

### *Somantic Interplay- music and realisations in the park*

For our last sketching encounter, I had considered suggesting a somantic play revolving around Nahom's love of music. During *VI.TO.*'s theatre workshops, Nahom had led the group into singing exercises, and also performed a solo piece during the public performance. Also, he had already commented that he would often sing in prison, because songs would give him encouragement and consolation. On previous encounters, Nahom commented he was able to get a harmonica that in the last prison. I asked Nahom if he would like to plan an encounter with music, and decide if he would like to sing or play during the performance. He liked this idea, however, he said he did not have a harmonica in Rome, and the traditional Eritrean instrument he played had been recently stolen. I suggested I could bring a harmonica and he was excited about this idea. When I asked Nahom where he would like to meet, he suggested a park he usually visited near his residence.

Nahom reacted emotively when he saw the harmonica. We found a bench in the park, and he immediately began to play it. This encounter did not require many words. Nahom played a couple of songs that he played in prison, which I recorded, and his facial expressions hinted that he was at a loss of words. In this same facial language, I suggested he did not have to speak. Nahom continued playing. I listened and imagined the sound of the harmonica in that Libyan prison. Nahom said he had not played a harmonica since he left Libya. He appeared to be overcome by nostalgia. I decided not to break the silence that the moment had brought, and waited for Nahom to lead us to the next step. The encounter continued with conversations in retrospect and concluded with a conversation of his desires to solidify a new life in Europe or the United States, where he could later dedicate to his artistic career.

### **Composition Meeting**

The Composition Meeting took place at the end of the Sketching Phase. This session was ideated to discuss with journeyers the considerations and logistics for the next phases. It was later developed as a *Canvas of Desire* session in Chapter Three. Nahom said he was satisfied with what he had re-created, and said there was nothing more he desired to sketch. Furthermore, I suggested Nahom if he desired Libena, his wife, to play a part in the composition of a couple of the sketches where Nahom had referred to her. However, Nahom said he preferred not to involve Libena in the project, firstly, because it pertained to a past he did not desire for Libena to think about, and secondly, Nahom said Libena was not good in acting. Following, Nahom had brought a CD to the

meeting, which contained photographs from the last prison he was in that he wanted to show me. Unsure of the motive of this gesture, I asked Nahom if he desired to construct a sketch from these photographs, but he said he only wanted to share them with me, personally. On the practical side of the meeting, it was concluded that we would invite collabor(art)ists to assist with the composition of the sketches in the next phase. Moreover, Nahom preferred to compose with a duet performance (Nahom and myself), and not consider other performers. It was at this point of the process when Nahom asked me to direct the creative aspect of the composition stage.

#### **4.3.1.2 Sketches Constructed**

Having summarised the flow of the sketching encounters, it is important to address the content of the constructed sketches that Nahom developed.

##### *Trafficked*

Nahom reconstructed the experience of being transported for days in a metal container with dozens of other Eritrean exiles, trafficked across the Sudan desert. Nahom sketched moments of unbearable heat and asphyxiation. He described bodies drenched in sweat, one next to the other. He sketched himself with his mouth wide opened, gasping for air, and searching for fissures inside the dark container in order to capture a minimum amount of sunlight.

##### *'Try until you die'*

One sketch was developed from a drawing that Nahom displayed during an encounter. The illustration depicted a hunchbacked old woman in rags, making an effort to thread a needle. A text in Tigrinya on the bottom of the image read: 'Try until you die'. Nahom explained he made this drawing inspired from an experience he had near the Eastern Libyan coast, where he was close to dying in a shipwreck. After a life-risking and strenuous journey across Sudan and Libyan deserts, Nahom paid a large sum of money to be embarked with other 25 Eritrean exiles in a boat with space for barely 10 people, in the attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea and seek refuge in Italian territory. The attempt failed after a group of Somali pirates dismantled the boat, taking the motor with them. The group was forced to call the Libyan police in resignation to be imprisoned, rather than dying at sea.

##### *SOS*

Nahom commented the only strategy to seek rescue from Libyan prisons was acquiring smuggled mobile phones and calling cards, in order to contact people from the 'outside

world' who could ask for rescue. Through acting, Nahom sketched moments of stress and tension when hiding from prison guards as he spoke on the phone with an American journalist and a UN's refugee agency officer, who was conducting his rescue. He mimicked the strenuous process involved in constantly searching for phone signal, hanging up at the slightest suspicion of being caught, re-dialing, waiting to be called, and so forth. Nahom explained his wife Libena was crucial in arranging these phone meetings and pressuring human right and refugee agencies for his rescue.

#### *Vessel Woman*

This sketch was propelled from a photograph of the last prison where he was kept. He mentioned this prison allowed some freedoms that other prisons did not. On one of the prison walls, Nahom had painted a sketch of a woman's figure, vertically, with what seemed amputated hands and feet. Her head was shaped in the form of a cracked vessel, from which blood leaked. One of her legs was also 'cracked'. To the left of this image, Nahom painted a masculine arm holding an axe from which blood dripped. Below the figure of the woman was the image of planet Earth with dripping of blood over it. In fragmented sentences, Nahom commented this image represented the longing for his freedom, the longing to experience the beautiful things of the world. He found it difficult to explain this verbally. The image spoke for itself.

#### *Whispering Walls*

The prison walls were a recurring element of Nahom's sketches. Nahom explained that in the last prison to which he was transferred, he could buy chalk, pencils and pens to draw on the walls. The inmates of this prison asked him to draw religious images and icons on the walls, so that they could pray. Also, he described how Eritrean prisoners used walls to write specific advises for inmates who would arrive later to this prison, as well as religious messages of hope and encouragement.

#### *Hell without Libena*

Nahom sketched instances of laughter in prison. One was related to Libena. Once a week Libena called him to his smuggled mobile phone, so he sketched a particularly occasion when Libena did not call for two weeks. He was overcome by worry, anguish, and sadness, presuming either something wrong had happened to her or that she may have decided to abandon him. Libena finally called and explained she had a severe toothache with fever. Nahom had written a poem to her, which he read out to her on the phone, which expressed how much he missed her.

### *Sunrise*

Nahom was once jailed for three months in a cell with no windows or contact with the sky. He described one moment when an inmate accidentally finds a small opening through the prison wall, and they were able to catch a glimpse of sunrise, after not seeing any sunlight for two months. His extent of emotion was such that he began to sob. After being transferred to another prison, he wrote a poem about this experience, and translated it for me.

### *Cigarette Clock*

Nahom sketched an analogy between the passage of time and the cigarettes he would smoke in the last prison where he hoped to be rescued. Nahom counted days and measured time with cigarette butts. He referred to the cigarette ashes as a representation of time being wasted. In prison he gave the cigarette butts an 'artistic' use, by building a small house out of them. This house represented the home that he dreamed of building for Libena, and became the constant remainder of this hope and desire. Nahom constructed a similar cigarette house during one of our encounters.

### *Prison Dog*

Nahom sketched specific instances with the prison guards and other inmates. He described how the guards would line them up on their knees, and beat them on the head and back, one by one. Guards called them, 'hewan', meaning 'dog' in Arabic. Through mimicking and acting, Nahom described situations of prisoners sharing limited space, lying on the floor, very close to each other, where everyone could see, hear and smell the other. He sketched through his own voice the noises and sounds prisoners made.

### *Black Market*

Nahom explained about the 'black market' system that existed in the last prison where he stayed. Inmates paid guards to allow merchandise such as calling cards, medicine, cigarettes, and other 'goods' to be brought into the prison. They exchanged, bought and sold their possessions amongst themselves. A different type of 'exchange' was the few moments of amusement between them. Nahom described instances when they played card games, and on one occasion they simulated an Eritrean wedding with one of the inmates as groom, and an imaginary bride.

### *Poem of the Eyes*

During a philosophical sketch, Nahom shared his ideas regarding a poem he wrote when he was a soldier, and he made an effort to remember. The poem was a metaphor of many eyes opening and closing as exits and entrances that covered the surface of the earth. Nahom explained that those who live free to choose different paths of life could exit and enter through the many eyes strewn across the world. He commented that when he was in the military, the eyes had shut down for him. He could not find an exit.

#### **4.3.1.3 *Desire Palette***

Following is a presentation of the commun(e)ication desires that were that emerged from the sketches. This aspect will be further discussed in the next chapter, but for now, it is important to identify what Nahom had been elicited so far.

The *natural course* that Nahom took in the sketching encounters gradually began to depict colours of his *desire palette*. Desires were identified as journeyers' recurrent themes and commentaries, direct expression of wishes and longings they 'shared' in the sketches. It is important to note here that the observation of journeyers' *desire palette* does not equal to an analysis or interpretation of them. The observation consists of an awareness and an intentional act of listening that aims to encourage journeyers' sketches and facilitate their process of shaping the overall depiction of their message. Therefore, journeyers' commun(e)ication desires behind their message should be a natural elicitation throughout all the re-creation process.

The encounters with Nahom so far displayed various colours from his commun(e)ication desire palette. One recurrent colour was to address his desire towards artistic expression. He 'shared' how his poems, his drawings, his songs, were like 'children' to him. He sketched how he enjoyed doing creative works because this maintained him inspired and encouraged him to think and dream. Another colour that emerged was his desire to 'share' with confidants about his exile and his imprisonment. Every encounter revolved around particular moments he spent during these experiences. He focused solely on this time of his life, which also reflects his desire not to remember or 'share' about his life before the exile, or his current *anew reality* in Rome. Finally, another colour, which had in itself rich tone variations, was his philosophical retrospections he 'shared' through his drawings and poems. It was observed that every anecdote he sketched elicited a philosophical concept he developed and connected to his artistic creations. It was clear that he placed more importance on these sketches, over the

informative and objective aspects of his exile. On the whole, Nahom recurrently 'shared' his desire and longing for a freedom that would permit him to choose the direction of his life and develop his artistic expressions.

#### *Mosaic construction from traumatic spectrum*

Nahom's sketches also referred to various *layers* of his *traumatic spectrum*. Although a further discussion will be addressed in the next chapter, it is important to briefly identify the overall *layers* that Nahom sketched and what was not relevant, applicable or not part of his *spectrum*. Firstly, there were a few *layers* that Nahom did not address, such as any *shocking reaction or response* to his experiences. Also, in his particular case, there was no reference or possibility of presenting the *tangible or intangible aftermath* of his exile and imprisonment. Next, although he did not highlight *practical implications* of his experiences, it is inferred that his back problem has become a significant implication that still plays a part in his life. Moreover, he did not 'share' any particular *reconciliatory aspect* of his experiences- only focusing on a retrospective angle of what he had undergone. The layers that Nahom did re-create revolved around his *realizations*, his *subjective (affective) states*, and the *narrative of the events*. Nahom interweaved narratives, reflections, and subjective states through his body and through speech, where he was the centre of the action and the retrospection. A couple of times he referred to *characters involved*, who were the prison guards as perpetrators and some Eritrean fellows he was trafficked and imprisoned with.

#### **4.3.1.4 Journ(art)ist Tasks**

This last section of Nahom's Sketching Phase addresses further aspects of the tasks involved in my journ(art)ist role, which include the listening dynamics, documentation and research. These aspects will also be further addressed in the following chapter.

#### *Listening*

The language barrier scenario resulted in a demanding yet productive and insightful experience for the re-creation. First of all, the listening dynamics consisted of alternating non-verbal communication, exchanging sentence structures, miming, and a few textual and pencil sketches. In order to communicate beyond articulated speech, it was important to give special attention to what Seidman calls the 'inner voice' of Nahom, referring to his non-verbal cues: tone of voice, his pauses, his accentuations, facial expressions, and laughter (Seidman 2006: 78). These signs, in addition to Nahom's

expressive facial communication, were useful in carrying the encounters in a manner that was sensible to his lead. It is important to note that there were moments when the language barrier limited corroboration on objective aspects or discussions that could mainly be communicated through speech. In addition, an important cultural barrier in the communication was not perceived. Moreover, in respect to empathic observation, it was useful to develop an honest rapport and an affective level of with Nahom, whilst maintaining an emotional awareness and distinction between us (Moon 2002: 49). This created a special connection of confidentiality in a respectful way. On the whole, the listening experience was a continuous interplay of somatic and semantic predominance, in each encounter.

### *Documentation*

The process of documentation was varied. Firstly, although the conversing encounters were audio recorded, this documentation became impractical since most of the conversations could not be clearly transcribed due to their fragmentation; therefore, the recordings were saved as an archive to go back to if and when needed. In addition to recording every conversing encounter, an alternative strategy was also to write down a list of the conversations, topics and highlights that emerged in the encounters, in order to refer back to them in following encounters of next phases. The somatic sketches were documented only to an extent, since not every encounter was adaptable to video recording from a still standpoint, while other encounters took place in public spaces, where Nahom preferred not to document. Secondly, an interesting observation regarded the complexity of how to 'document' sensations, moods, and affective displays, during different types of encounter. It was concluded that these somatic forms of communication, although not 'recordable' were implicit in the texts, videos, audios and sketches. It was therefore important to make notes and observations about the highlights of such moments, as a guide or map for the Composition Phase. Writing notes from the encounters was in fact another form of listening, or re-listening to Nahom. It was enriching and useful to review what had occurred in each encounter and appreciate the full picture of the process towards the next stages.

### *Research*

This facet of the process emerged from my decision to do research for my personal interest, in order to be better informed of the historical, social and political context of Nahom's situation, in respect to his experience in the military, the Libyan prisons, and his asylum state in Rome. This research was not to influence the content of the

performance, but first of all, it allowed me to better contextualise what Nahom had sketched; secondly, I realised it also enriched an intersubjective point of connectedness with him; thirdly, it provided general explanations to some of the dynamics and logistic that had been presented. Finally, what I learned became part of my personal awareness and interest about Eritrea's historical and political situation, and the situations that Eritrean refugees encounter outside their country. One aspect of the research, for example, made me aware that his back problem may have been the result of the torture and treatment he endured in the military, which possibly explained why Nahom did not desire to talk about his back pain. Another aspect of this research informed me on the existence of Eritrean and Italian spies for the Eritrean government in Italy. This possibly explained why Nahom had been strictly reluctant about hiring a translator for our encounters.

## 4.3.2 Case Study B

### 4.3.2.1 Dina's Sketching Encounters

This second part of the section proceeds to describe the Sketching Phase with Dina, equally to how Nahom's sketching process was displayed.

#### First encounter

##### *Semantic Play- Friendly Talk at Dina's favourite coffee shop*

Dina did not express a particular subject from where she wanted to begin the first encounter. I then considered initiating through opened questions about her interests, what she enjoys, and what makes her happy. I particularly planned not address the subject of SRA directly, but allow a natural course to present or to completely avoid it as the encounters progressed. For our first encounter, I suggested we met at her favourite coffee house for a friendly chat session. Having in mind that Dina and I had met only once at City Hearts' offices, I considered necessary to initiate a rather informal encounter where I could establish a peer-to-peer relationship with her and develop a greater rapport. A public, friendly space was premeditated for this first encounter as an alternative to meet at City Hearts' office, in order to avoid a connection of our encounter with sessions she may have had in City Hearts' previously. Dina was pleased with my suggestion. She chose her favourite spot of the coffee house- a big comfortable couch. I started the chat by asking Dina about her interests, and what she enjoyed doing in Sheffield. Dina briefly described what she enjoyed doing, mostly related to being outdoors. She described her satisfaction of having a job where she could talk to young girls at schools and encourage them to overcome life-controlling issues. From this point onwards, Dina naturally progressed to develop opinions of retrospection and introspection about her past, of who she is now, and how she sees herself in the past:

When you hear my story or you're watching my story, you're looking at me, telling you all this, but you're not really seeing me, does that make sense? You're seeing who I am now; you are seeing Dina, who is really strong and articulate and intelligent and all those wonderful things, but that's not the girl that was abused, that's not the girl that was convinced she was filth. So even if I'm saying, "I was abused and I felt like filth", you're seeing me, but you will never be able to fully see the girl I was before.

Most of the encounter revolved around Dina's reflections and realisations. The duration of the encounter was surpassed, but Dina said she did not mind the time, and continued with the conversation. We had a significantly long encounter, which strongly underlined the themes that shaped Dina's commun(e)ication desires. However, there were still sketches she was interested in exploring, and we agreed to give continuation

in the following encounter. See **Appendix 7** (p. 318) for excerpts from a conversing encounter transcription.

### **Following Encounters**

#### *Semantic Play & Smells activity*

Dina suggested meeting at City Hearts' offices for our second encounter. Ms Brownlee facilitated a spacious room with a table and two chairs. To alternate the semantic play of the previous session, I considered adding a slight variation through a dynamic of somatic play. The strategy consisted in inviting and interweaving positive stimuli to her discussion through synaesthetic correspondences. I had asked Dina if she would like to bring textures and/or objects with smells that she found pleasurable, and photographs from images places she particularly liked. She brought photographs of favourite and meaningful places in Scotland and a scarf with her boyfriend's cologne. To catalyse the session in a way that she would choose where to commence, I asked her if she desired to begin by continuing from where she had left the last encounter, or if she would prefer to begin with the exercise. Subsequently, Dina directed the conversation towards the difficulty for people to connect with her story:

One of the things I do see...there are some things that happened in my life, like, to be given as a blood sacrifice, is not something that, you know, the majority of the people in the world can connect with, because some people in the world just don't believe that happens; they just can't fathom that actually happens.

I continued to listen, my body language suggested closeness and engagement. I considered not making eye contact, in order to respect her privacy as she was sharing a moment of intense vulnerability. In reference to empathic observation and listening through the body, I became aware that both of our bodies were gradually becoming slightly tense as she continued to speak.

So I think that actually, showing that kind of thing, people won't fully get, but it's actually quite a severe thing in my life that has to be portrayed; people have to see it, they have to see that it does actually happen, but I don't mean as, "this girl was abused in a ritual" but when I kind of see it in my head, I do actually see it like there's a little girl in a darkened room, and there are people in hoods, you know, kind of like....

At this point, Dina began to loosely refer to the satanic rituals. Her sentences became fragmented, she began to breathe faster and more intensely, and I perceived more tension in her body. I questioned if she was reliving this moment, rather than speaking about it from present retrospection. After a few sentences when she reached a moment to stop, I intervened, with the intention to avoid her from delving deeper into an

evocative image that would discomfort her. In order to respect the topic she had entered into, and not drastically change direction, I asked her how she would like to communicate to an audience about how she feels and thinks **now** about this past. This response was based on Seidman's suggestion that a reconstruction occurs from a state of mind in the present, rather than re-living a moment in the past (Seidman 2006: 74). Also, Seidman advises to re-direct the person to the present, if they manifest a discomfort from a process of remembering (Seidman 2006: 74). My question subsequently directed Dina to talk about the present, and commented that she preferred to suggest 'what happened' to her, rather than show it explicitly in the performance:

People won't get the fact that there's a little girl lying there and somebody is about to cut her arm. You know, they won't get it, they'll be like, "oh, that's crazy that's crazy!" Instead, she said, if people, 'could get the feeling of being alone, the feeling of the suppression, the feeling of fear, you know, the feeling of little attacks coming from nowhere.

At this point Dina was returning to a neutral form of breathing. I considered appropriate to lead the conversation, in order offer reassurance. I mentioned that I certainly believed SRA happened. I also expressed that she was remarkably brave in desiring to share about that part of her life in the performance, and reassured to her that she did not have to continue with that goal, if she did not desire to after all. In addition, I said it was a good idea to suggest these states of loneliness and fear and oppression, rather than focusing on what happens during the rituals. Following, I suggested if she would like to talk about what encouraged her to continue journeying forward, from that time of her life. This opened question propelled the second part of this encounter. She said:

It's been little things...like glimpses or sparkles of light. I always think it's really helpful to see a little bit of light. In life in general, there can be so much darkness, that you forget that light is there; sometimes bringing a little bit of light. Once you've had a little bit of the sunshine you always want more.

Dina commented on moments where she experienced light and beauty. However, she recurrently described the tension and shock she encountered when realising that what had been familiar and normal to her, while growing up, was brutal and alien to the rest of society. Dina's *natural course* led her to reconstruct diverse instances in her past about how she tried coping with her reality. She also reconstructed her psychological and emotional struggles after leaving home, maintaining her present perspective. To finalise this encounter, I suggested using the smell-texture exercise that was originally prepared as an activator for this session. This exercise provided a strategy to inspire pleasing and comforting feelings, as a manner to conclude the encounter. This smell exercise

prompted Dina to inform me that there were smells she disliked and provoked her repulsion, because they reminded her of her father. Subsequently, Dina placed her boyfriend's scarf over her nose, and closes her eyes. She began to giggle. The technique consisted of two actions: first of all, visualising and describing the imagery elicited from the smell; second of all, speaking out individual words that spontaneously came to mind from the touch and smell of the scarf. Dina had a smile on her face when we finished, and seemed to be in a positive state when we concluded.

In view of the depth that the sketching encounter took and thus the need to assess first what direction to take further, I suggested Dina the next encounter should be planned as a 'recreational activity'. She had previously suggested visiting one of her favourite parks, so we agreed to meet in this location. A few days after this encounter, I contacted Ms Brownlee to inform her about my perception of Dina's discomfort at one particular moment of our conversation. Ms Brownlee informed me that Dina had already mentioned to her that she felt uneasy when talking about the ritual, but that feeling did not continue. Ms Brownlee indicated that was part of a normal process of Dina's journey, and it was not an episode to be concerned with.

Although the particular incidence of Dina's memory from the satanic ritual was apparently not a concern, I considered facilitating recreational activities for the following encounters and discussed with Dina that what she had already 'shared' about SRA was enough to develop the desire she had of creating SRA awareness in the performance. In this way, she could decide whether she desired to continue sketching on this subject, or take another direction. I realised I had to be careful to protect her wellbeing in spite of her enthusiasm to sketch about this delicate subject. The next three encounters involved recreational activities. Two of these were spontaneous meetings, while one was a planned encounter in the park.

#### *Somantic Blurredness- Recreational activity and Conversing Encounter*

The next encounter took place in one of Dina's favourite parks in Sheffield. It was significant because of the natural environment, which was a context she enjoyed. Also, I was able to perceive aspects of Dina's personality and sense of humour, which were significant to establish a different type of rapport and connection. We spent an hour walking, sitting on swings, and conversing about diverse topics. I asked her to tell me about a dream she wanted to accomplish, to which she responded promptly: live in Africa. She conversed about desiring to travel and meet people from other countries.

### *Outdoor Lunch*

This spontaneous encounter was prompted when Dina called me to inform me that one of her friends, who is a dancer, was interested in taking part in the performance. I then suggested if we met with her for lunch for a chat. The lunch session consisted in a brief exchange of ideas and explanations about how the Composition Phase could be developed. I perceived this encounter deepened a sense of trust between us.

### *Unplanned hang out time*

A third and last encounter with Dina was also spontaneous. I received a message from her, asking me to meet her at her workplace. At my arrival, Dina showed me an engagement ring on her finger as she giggled, and invited me to her wedding. We sat down, and I asked her to tell me how she was proposed. Following, she wanted to show me a song she was considering walking down the aisle to. Although this brief encounter was not directly relevant or planned to take part in Dina's performance, it served as an opportunity to once again, increase our connectedness and affective relationship, and to be able to 'share' a moment of her *anew reality*. Her gesture in inviting me to her wedding and telling me about her engagement brought reassurance to the process, because it suggested that Dina trusted me and appreciated the relationship we had built during the re-creation.

### *Encounters Interrupted*

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, there was a journeyer-absence established in Dina's case towards the initiation of the Composition Phase. After repetitive phone call attempts, I could not contact Dina. I sent her an e-mail to confirm if she was OK, and contacted Ms Colleen at City Hearts, who informed me about Dina's upsetting incident with her parents. Dina had changed her mobile number and email account. When I contacted her at her new number, she apologised and said she thought she had sent me an email with her new number. I reassured her not to be concerned about the performance, and suggested her not to continue with the encounters if it would signify a source of stress, to which Dina agreed.

### *References to personal, artistic, and documentary creations*

By own initiative, Dina said she would like me to have a few excerpts from one of her journals to consider for the composition of the performance. Dina copied in handwriting a few pages from one of her journals and sent them via post. In addition, she sent a newspaper article, a typed biographical account, and the titles of two songs that she

suggested me to listen to as another activator for the Composition Phase, and contact details of two people whom she thought could be interested in participating as actors in the performance.

### **Composition Meeting**

After Dina had clarified she would not continue participating in the re-creation process, the discussion towards a Composition Phase consisted of a brief conversation via mobile phone, where Dina suggested I would continue directing the process and notify her later when the performance was finished.

#### **4.3.2.2 Sketches Constructed**

The following are the sketches that Dina developed throughout the encounters, and include information from the documentation she provided, and an interview to her fiancée, which is addressed further in this section.

##### *A hole on the face*

Dina stated that the cleft lip and palate deformity that she was born with condemned her life growing up. She referred to her deformity as 'a hole in the face'. Her serious condition at birth was the worst case in Scotland at the time, required intensive surgeries. Dina's situation impeded the family to move to South Africa, as they had anxiously planned and anticipated. She was referred to as 'ugly' in the family. Dina remembered breaking the mirrors at home, as she could not stand her own image.

##### *Cursed 'little girl'*

Dina's parents believed that she had been cursed by Satan because of her cleft and lip palate. Her parents had named her with a name that means 'small' and 'insignificant'. Dina repeatedly referred to herself as a 'little girl' that was never allowed to eat at the family table, but only ate leftovers thrown at her on the floor. She commented her mother threw cutlery and kitchen objects at her, and banged her head 'on anything that was at reach'. She was told by her mother that 'it was better for her not to be alive'. Dina disclosed that her parents' treatment convinced her she was a hindrance to her family's happiness. At the age of seven, she committed a failed suicide attempt.

##### *Abnormal made Normal*

Dina remarked aspects of her childhood that were normal to her, but would be considered terrible to others. She commented that her body was used by her father for

the performance of satanic rituals. Until the age of 13, she was sexually abused by her father and his 'paedophile friends', as she referred to them. Dina explained she would always struggle and hold on to the doorframes that led to the ritual room. She said: 'this was norm to me; this was normal. I was convinced that this was how my life was supposed to be; I didn't even think I was being abused.'

#### *Glimpses of Light*

One recurrent sketch was Dina's description of her sporadic contact with what she referred to as 'glimpses of light'. In Dina's reality, these light glimpses were the moments when she would come across instances of 'normality' that were strange, yet pleasant for her. Dina sketched a few of these 'glimpses of light' she had growing up. One 'glimpse' happened when she was invited to a friend's house for dinner. She remembered a moment when she saw her friend being embraced by her mother. Dina explained this was the first time she saw such display of affection of a mother towards a daughter. Another 'glimpse' she described occurred when this friend asked her to help her feed chickens after dinner. Dina remembered enjoying the smell of the chicken food, and the playing with her friend. Dina retrospectively recalled the constant thought in her mind: 'why does this feel abnormal to me? I don't want this to feel abnormal.'

#### *Back to darkness*

Dina discussed how the 'glimpses of light' she began to encounter became a 'double-edged sword'. On one hand, these encouraged her to have hope for a different reality, but on the other, these moments heightened her realisation of the terrible reality she had considered normal and had lived through all her life. Dina recalled herself thinking: 'I wish I had never tasted this light'.

#### *Escape Attempts*

Dina sketched her struggle with self-abuse as a 'coping mechanism' that helped her escape reality. She expressed: 'nothing could be worse than my reality', and disclosed she was constantly high on LSD drinking heavily throughout her teenage years. Moreover, Dina discussed in retrospect why she recurred to bulimia and self-harm as 'escapes', during the years after she had escaped home.

#### *'No Validation': School and Therapy*

Dina sketched two incidents where she expressed feeling the most impotence and helplessness in her life. She described these moments as screams that were not heard,

when: 'being alive was worse than being dead'. On one occasion, her schoolteacher is forced to take her to the hospital due to the drug and alcohol intoxication in which Dina arrived to class. Afterwards, Dina confided to her teacher about the sexual abuse by her father and his friends. The school's director and teacher informed the police and urged them to visit Dina's home. The police later informed the school staff that Dina had laid. During this sketch, Dina explained that some members of the police knew her father from his high Masonic position, and protected him from being accused. The second incident occurred after Dina had escaped home. Dina visited a psychologist, to whom she disclosed about the sexual abuse from her father and in the sect. Dina disclosed the psychologist asked her, 'to imagine herself in that very dark place, and then imagine a prince charming coming to rescue [her]'. Dina recalls being shocked at the psychologist's instruction: 'a person who is supposedly going to help me'. Dina sketched in retrospect, how she felt in this occasion. She said:

She told me to lie to myself, and if this was the help I hoped for, then what was there beyond? Nothing. No ground below. You want to run away from nothing and you can't, because there's nothing there. It wasn't my conscious decision to die, it was just...nothingness.

#### **4.3.2.3 *Desire Palette***

Dina's sketches had central recurrent themes that reflected desires in addition and in relation to the disclosure of SRA and her upbringing. One theme pertained to the lack of validation she experienced and was concerned about. She emphasised that her traumatic reality was 'too alien':

There are some things that happened in my life, like, to be given as a blood sacrifice, is not something that, you know, the majority of the people in the world can connect with, because some people in the world just don't believe that happens; they just can't fathom that actually happens. Yeah, It's too much for people. It's like watching a fantasy program, it doesn't make sense.

Another colour of her desires was reflected in her sketches on the theme of the familiar and unfamiliar. She emphasised the reversed perspective she grew up with, of what was normal and abnormal. This was another aspect she desired to 'share' with her confidants. What is normal and familiar to average people is strange to her. What had been familiar and normal to her is a reality, the world does not validate as true. Her journey of discovery of beauty, value and care has not only been difficult to grasp and understand, but has become both a blessing and a curse; a blessing in the sense that the strange moments of light and beauty have given her hope to overcome her past; at the

same time, these moments are a constant reminder of how irrevocably damaged her life has been. The more she tasted light, the more apparent darkness became. Another recurring theme is the belief that her past is seen as a story of fiction.

#### *Mosaic construction from traumatic spectrum*

Dina's re-creation of her *traumatic spectrum* also consisted of various *layers*. Much of what she sketched consisted of her traumatic reality. She also briefly referred to certain aspects of her *anew reality*, after her shocking response to the ordinary reality that clashed with her traumatic experiences. She did not develop on her *anew reality*, however, and these were not fully sketched for the Composition Phase but they are briefly mentioned below. Firstly, she focused on particular moments of her upbringing, and the *characters involved*, which included her parents, a teacher and a therapist. Similarly to Nahom, it is interesting to note that these instances were not particularly '*narratives*' of the events told in a storytelling format. Instead, she interweaved these moments as they related to her retrospective and introspective discussions, which pertains to her *realizations* layer. Next, Dina also sketched aspects of her *shocking reaction and response* when she realised that her life was brutal and alien to everyone else; in other words, when an ordinary reality clashed with her traumatic reality. Moreover, she sketched *psychological and physiological wounds* particularly before she left home, which were the 'escape attempts' she referred to. She showed me and referred her *physical wounds*, but this was not considered for Composition Phase. Furthermore, Dina's *anew reality layers* consisted on the *traumatic stress condition* she underwent after she left home, the *mental and somatic memory of the event* (or traces) from her life at home, such as the repulsion to certain smells and actions. Thirdly, she briefly referred later to *implications* of the 'traces' of her traumatic reality, which was not being able to do social events that required eating at dinner tables. Next, Dina referred to *affective states* throughout her conversations, but these were not central or leading aspects of her sketches. Finally, a *reconciliatory aspect* that she mentioned but was also not developed, when I asked her if she thought of taking any action against his parents, was realising she loves her parents and longs for a reconciliation with them.

#### **4.3.2.4 Journ(art)ist's Tasks**

##### *Listening*

The listening experience with Dina consisted in a predominance intelligible and conceptual engagement. Except for the occasion where she began to 'share' about the

rituals, Dina discussed all her affective past experiences with a 'coat' of introspection that did not allow a particular affective moment between us. An empathic observation was challenging, in the sense that I was unsure of how to better display my empathy about what she was 'sharing' in respect to her upbringing. On one hand, I desired to express my indignation and upset, but her calm and contained, articulate demeanour obliged me to maintain this same 'matter-of-factness'. In this sense, our communication was predominantly semantic, significantly deep on a conceptual and trust level, and involving an honest and genuine rapport. An important level of connection was in fact this conceptual and introspective 'sharing' which Dina commented she had not discussed before with others. Dina communicated in a forthright and outspoken manner. Through an awareness of her 'inner voice', I captured moments where her facial expressions showed when she was ready to change direction of the conversation, or contrastingly, when she desired to continue speaking about the same subject or idea, and when she expected me to intervene with a comment or feedback (Seidman 2006: 78). This was important to facilitate the conversing encounters in a way that she led their direction.

#### *Documentation*

The documentation process consisted of audio recordings of our conversing encounters and its transcriptions. This documentation was the principal archive to Dina's sketches. In this sense, it was straightforward and simple. An important additional strategy, however, was the writing a few observations and marking the transcription texts in order to underline the recurrent themes and introspective concepts she developed. This became a more specific guide to refer to for the next phase. Finally, other documentary sources consisted of the journal excerpts, a newspaper article, and typed biographical account that Dina provided during her absence.

#### *Research*

The research I performed in this Phase responded to my personal decision in deepening my knowledge on particular issues that Dina sketched about, in order to increase an intersubjective relationship with her sketches. This research continued onto the Composition Phase, which I considered useful. First of all, I decided to do research on SRA in order to increase my knowledge of on this issue. Even though it would not be necessarily used of the Composition Phase, an increased awareness and information, on one hand, allowed me to connect further to the context of Dina's upbringing. Moreover, the research also reaffirmed Dina's recurrent comments on the lack of validation she has experienced in regards to the satanic context of the systematic sexual abuse she was

victim of. This was a significant influence to better understand many comments she 'shared' on this subject. Another subject of research were the various 'escape attempts' that Dina mentioned she experienced, which were also included in the written documentation: LSD addiction, bulimia, self-harm and alcoholism. I considered important doing research on these topics because probing into these 'escape attempts' would not be appropriate. However, further information of these issues from research could raise my awareness for certain aspects of Dina's traumatic reality that she had sketched. The second part of the research was done in Dina's implicit presence (or journeyer) absence. I therefore considered interviewing Dina's fiancée at the time in order to corroborate details about Dina's surgery and moments at home that she began to 'share' about. The conversation was useful in confirming on objective content important for the sketches and to continue depicting a picture of Dina's reality that connected deeper to her sketches. The other interview consisted of a conversation with Ms Brownlee, about Dina's time at City Hearts. I had considered this interview important in order to contextualise some comments she had made in regards to her recovery. However, I concluded that since Dina had not expanded on such aspect, I did not consider her mentor's comments for the Composition Phase. Nonetheless, this interview informed me that Dina underwent post-traumatic stress in her past, and how she gradually recovered from it.

Once the Sketching Phase was finalised, the next step of the re-creation consisted in making the necessary preparations for the Composition Phase, which is addressed in the next section.

#### **4.4 Composition Phase**

##### **4.4.1 Introduction**

The Composition Phase is a continuation of journeyers' devising process and the beginning of journ(art)ists' aesthetic input in the platform. As mentioned in Chapter Three, this phase consists of two different stages: a composition stage and an assemblage stage. In the composition stage, journeyers explore developing their sketches into compositions through the various 'channels' and forms of re-presentation. The assemblage stage is the process where the compositions are arranged into the performance piece for the commun(e)ication event. Before proceeding to the presentation of each stage, it is necessary to briefly discuss several important points, as a manner of introduction.

The first point refers to the level of explicit presence and implicit presence of Nahom and Dina. In Nahom's case, he established explicit presence through the composition stage and part of the assemblage process. Therefore, we continued the devising process through various workshops, which involved working with two collabo(art)ists. The assemblage stage was a technical and creative process that continued in journeyer-absence. Next, in Dina's case, the entire phase was conducted in her implicit presence. The re-creation method's response to the changes of presence and involvement after the Sketching Phase, consisted in a new concept that stressed an attention to maintain reversed agency of journeyers' during journ(art)ists' creative process. An 'implicitness' firstly refers to journ(art)ists' responsibility to continue devising the performance only from the content that journeyers had sketched. Secondly, it infers that journ(art)ists respect and protect journeyers' *desire palette* so far depicted, focusing on journeyers' desires to drive the creative process. Thirdly, it involves the dynamics of asking for journeyers' consent and feedback throughout the rest of the re-creation process. In this sense, the approach changes from a journeyer-absence to their 'implicit presence', which maintains their desires, purpose, and content of their message. Following, a second point to address pertains to my collaboration as journ(art)ist. As it was indicated in Chapter Three, the technical aspects of devising and directing the re-creative process are facilitated on the techniques, skills and dynamics of journ(art)ists involved. Therefore, it is uniquely developed according to journ(art)ists' professional or amateur backgrounds and collaboration possibilities. In my particular case, I do not have a professional training in theatre. My participation in this phase consisted in using amateur artistic skills to construct and direct the compositions, with a latter assistance from several collabor(art)ists. In addition, my journ(art)ist facilitation also overlapped with a performative role that emerged from this Phase. Since I have had amateur experience in acting and performance, it was possible as a journ(art)ist to engage physically and explore my body as corporeal modality and a channel of expression for both performances.

#### *Aesthetic lens*

A following point to remark involves the original aesthetic lens to bridge journeyer-confidant *Distance* was general techniques of defamiliarization and estrangement, absurdist techniques in theatre, and the approach of the uncanny. It is relevant to clarify the aesthetics of Magical Realism had not been considered during the Composition Phase of the case studies. As a matter of fact, this stage and the commun(e)ication events

propelled the research towards the magical real lens as the favourable aesthetics for journeyers and confidants. However, it is important to highlight that, even when Magical Realism had not been acknowledged as an aesthetic technique at the time, the composition scenes reflect its aesthetic. Therefore, the composition scenes presented in this section identify features of the magical real lens, while a more precise analysis is presented in the next chapter. Next, in respect to the somantic continuum approach and ‘total artworks’ aesthetic context, compositions were propelled in somantic modalities of semantic play, somatic play, somantic interplay and blurredness. These modalities hence explored synaesthetic and multimodal correspondences, metaphor, imagination, improvisation, discussion, hands-on creations, and other variations. In addition, the compositions were channelled into various modes, appealing to both intelligible and sensible meaning and experience. The creative process explored for both case studies explored multi-sensorial elements (optic, kinetic, olfactory, tactile) and various channel qualities of signification available (film, video, photography, corporeal movement, sound and music, lighting, set, site-specific space, natural elements like water and sand).

#### **4.4.2 Considerations for Compositions**

Chapter Three referred to particular considerations for the devising process, which are briefly assessed here. The first point refers to *journeyers’ liveness and (re)presentation*. For Nahom’s performance, the original scenario was Nahom’s self -representation, while my performative role emerged during the workshops conducted in this phase. In accordance to the considerations discussed in Chapter Three, I did not consider it appropriate to suggest Nahom performed physical positions related to the abuse he has suffered, if he had not proposed this himself in *natural course*. Therefore, I contemplated using my body as a distanced, third-person embodiment for the composition scenes of certain sketches. More information on this aspect will be provided further in this section. Following, for Dina’s performance, the second consideration was selecting an appropriate dynamic of (re)presentation in Dina’s absence, which consisted firstly in an indirect (re)presentation of Dina, examining third-person view, defamiliarization, and indirect references to her role. Secondly, it consisted in my awareness of Dina as an observer of the performance, and how this would influence the re-representation of the sexual abuse, paying attention not to perpetuate the event or re-present it through re-enactments. Thirdly, another consideration was Dina’s suggestion not to be explicit about the events she had sketched, which intersected with a re-presentation approach.

Following, the second point refers to *journeyers’ preferred channels and aesthetic direction*. In Nahom’s case, the Sketching Phase’s *natural course* had established preferred

modalities in which Nahom preferred to express through the body, his voice, phonetic sounds, and his drawings. The composition of this phase considered these preferred modalities as initial activators through which to channel the sketches. For Dina's performance, she had particularly raised the point in the Grounding Phase and further, that she preferred the use of artistic forms without an emphasis on linguistic articulation. Moreover, Dina made comments about colours being elements through which she visualises her life and her emotions. Therefore, an important part of the composition for her performance would entail colour lighting. The third point pertains to the *intercultural* angles of the sketches. In Nahom's case, his sketches so far had not presented a culturally-specific issue that needed translation. Moreover, he had not desired to translate his poems into Italian, while any other text or verbal sketches would have to be displayed in Italian for the performance. In Dina's case, there was no particular culturally-specific aspect to address, except for the culture she was raised with at home, which was central for the performance.

#### **4.4.3 Case Study A**

The composition stage consisted of 5 workshops where we devised and channelled the sketches into various composition scenes. Different channels were selected from the *natural course* of the communication modalities that were propelled, and the consideration of the qualities that each channel could offer to each sketch.

##### **4.4.3.1 Composition Activators**

This next section presents the activators developed to channel the sketches into compositions.

#### **Somantic interplay activators**

##### *Sketch Mould: Corporeal improvisation*

The criterion for this activator was to develop movement phrases between Nahom and myself, which had originated from the sketches. The session consisted in improvising from diverse scenarios, taking turns and imitating each other. For one improvisation, Nahom suggested creating movements from the idea of exile and voyage. For another improvisation, Nahom suggested I would take the role of a Libyan prison guard, while he would play himself. For a third improvisation, I suggested playing with the role of the muse that inspired him to sing, draw, and write. Following, I suggested exploring the sketch of the Vessel Woman. On a wall, I imitated the posture of the woman Nahom

had painted on the prison wall, and asked Nahom to interact with me. Nahom wanted to free me from the wall, while I kept pulling myself back to it, as if I was paralysed. At one point, Nahom quits and turns away, in a seemingly resigned countenance. His resignation becomes my strength to attempt freeing myself from the wall. In the attempt I fall to the ground. Nahom realises I'm on the floor, and gently and caringly lifts me, and we walk together away from this wall. Each improvisation elicited numerous movement phrases. Finally, Nahom suggested my role to have the name 'Adyoja', which in the Eritrean language, Tigrinya, means 'strength'. See Disc 2 for video excerpts of Nahom's composition through the body.

#### *Sketch Mould: Miming*

Another activator consisted of asking Nahom to explore a miming action from one of the sketches that he would like to see in the performance. In response, Nahom stood up and began acting with his mobile, afraid of being heard by the guards, and hiding behind other imaginary inmates in the room.

#### *Sketch Mould: Prison sounds*

I suggested Nahom if he would like to do a session of sounds, as a form of continuation from the sketches where he used his voice. Nahom agreed. In a private room, Nahom and I sat back to back, so I would not see him but only hear him and record his voice. Such dynamic would allow more privacy for him. He performed guttural 'stream of consciousness', improvising various noises and sounds without a particular order. He imitated the Libyan prison guards shouting, he reconstructed laughter, laments, heavy breathing, coughing, and nausea. Afterwards, he whistled a song. When he had finished, he began laughing, commenting on how 'funny' these noises sounded to him.

#### *Synaesthetic correspondence: sound and movement*

A third style of composition aimed to explore a synaesthetic connection between Nahom and myself through his improvised singing and my body movement. Originally, this composition was ideated from the sketch where Nahom spoke about the poem he wrote for the sun. I suggested Nahom if we experimented with his improvised verbalisation of his poem in Tigrinya and my somatic response through my body and the thoughts I remembered from his commentaries about his poem. Nahom suggested this dynamic could also be tried out with the harmonica. In a private space, Nahom and I improvised and devised various movement phrases.

### **Imagination activators**

Imagination as an activator technique was applied to devise from various of the sketches. Nahom and I selected a few of these sketches that we considered we could use to explore visual imagery, as opposed to movement and sound.

#### *Film & Cigarettes*

One sketch considered was the cigarette clock house to be a potential material for film. A cigarette in the performance space would be too small to be appreciated by confidants, and the enlargement of it through a projection would allow confidants' attention to its details. This could provide more opportunities to explore the idea of smoking as the metaphor for the passing of time that Nahom had sketched. Nahom had also referred to the ashes of his cigarette to represent the wasting of time. I asked Nahom to visualise himself with a cigarette, and speak out loud what he saw. I wrote down isolated images he visualised, which included the slow motion of the smoke, the cigarette being consumed in slow motion. He also visualised the small cigarette house he built in prison, thinking of Libena.

#### *Projection Sunrise and Live Song*

Another imagination exercise consisted Nahom to visualising the final scene of the performance. He closed his eyes to begin the visualisation. He said he imagined the sunrise that he saw through a small hole in one prison cell. He described the sun filling his eyes, coming into the prison through the small hole that him and his inmate had discovered. I suggested an image of a sunrise could be projected on the walls and ceilings of the space. Finally, Nahom concluded he wanted to sing a song of hope during that final moment of the performance. He said he wanted to end in a hoping direction, because that was his attitude towards life since he was rescued.

#### *Synaesthetic Photography & Trafficking*

The sketch of Nahom's travel inside the container across the desert contained sensorial and visceral descriptions, which I considered could be synaesthetically explored through correspondences of visual imagery. I suggested exploring photography as a medium where sensation could find a correspondence through an image. Photographs could also allow attention to details, allowing a close perception of the tension of the body that Nahom had sketched.

### **Hands-On Activators**

Nahom suggested making a cigarette house to utilise it for the cigarette film. He commented that the cigarette house he made in prison became the constant remainder of the house he dreamed to build for his wife. He emphasised the cigarette house expressed this desire.

### **Semantic Activators**

A third stage in the composition consisted in examining the sketches that had not yet been undertaken for composition. I realised these sketches had a feature in common: they had been sketched in semantic and narrative modalities. These were anecdotal sketches that contained specific information and narrative of events. These sketches were: the shipwreck, his phone calls with Libena, the information about the prison's black market, the texts in Tigrinya wrote on the prison walls by the inmates, his phone conversations with the UN officer and the American journalist, and other information. Nahom asked me to direct these sketches either through acting or voiceovers, or find other creative ways to portray them. This role presented an ideal opportunity to venture into a composition of direct interplay between semantic and somatic content. My role therefore was to interweave these narratives into what we had already composed and asked him for feedback and consent about the arrangements I would make. Therefore, these sketches were developed and added later during the Assemblage stage.

### *Poetic Abstraction*

The last sketch to consider was the Eye poem Nahom had referred as a philosophical concept in his life. He described the central concept of the poem but affirmed it was difficult to do so in Italian, and I was able to grasp only a general sense of it. Since the meaning was diluted from our translation, we left this sketch pending or consider leaving out.

### **4.4.3.2 Assemblage Discussion**

From the sketches and compositions so far made, the next step was to make the required considerations towards the arrangement of all these composition fragments into the performance. This latter process occurred in Nahom's 'implicit presence' (or journeyer-absence), as he had requested. Although there was not an Assemblage Discussion, I later presented my considerations to Nahom for his feedback and consent. He agreed to them enthusiastically.

The first observation was that most of the sketches were about Nahom's exile and his relationship with freedom and art. The arrangement considered in this case was to place the sketches in a general flow that illustrate his exile, followed by his imprisonment and rescue. The second consideration, which was developed with Nahom during the composition phase, was to explore the conceptualisation of his relationship to freedom and art in the feminine character of Adyoja as his muse and his 'strength' during the journey. Therefore, Adyoja's embodiment in the performance could re-present Nahom's constant tangible/intangible companion during his exile. In a philosophical sense, Nahom's freedom, artistic sensibility, and inspiration also endured, suffered and persevered alongside Nahom throughout the journey. Therefore, a further consideration, which is related to the embodiment of Adyoja, is that her character could be used to (re)present the sketches that pertained to the trafficking and beatings in prison. In this way, I could embody these instances instead of Nahom, since I would not consider asking him to re-enact them. Another observation pertained to the possibility of Nahom drawing or painting during the performance to refer to the two images he showed me during the Sketching Phase. I had considered that Nahom's live drawing or painting would create an intimate moment with confidants and connect them further to his love for art and his struggle for freedom. These were not 'new' creations that he had not desired to do, but were personal creations from the past. Since he agreed with this being a good idea, I considered referring to the drawing of the hunchbacked lady and the painting of the vessel woman, as two features to respectively contextualise the shipwreck sketch and the corporeal play improvised.

A following consideration was the semantic sketches that had not yet been used in a composition, which pertained to anecdotal narratives Nahom sketched. I contemplated interweaving this semantic material throughout the scenes in an exploration of somantic play with other scenes. Next, a consideration before beginning the assemblage & production of the scenes was to contemplate a sketch with which to open and close the performance. During the sketching stage, I had considered asking Nahom for a further explanation of the poem about the 'Eyes'. Even if the meaning had not been developed due to language barriers, the image of the opened and closed eyes as a metaphor of freedom versus the inability to choose one's path could be used as a figurative sketch to begin and close the performance. Following, an important remark is that I had considered suggesting Nahom if we could allude to a soldier scene for the performance. I explained it would be significant for confidants to have a reference of his life prior to the exile, without being objective about this part of his life. Nahom agreed on this addition

to the compositions, particularly because the performance would not mention Eritrea or the government. Finally, the last consideration was the type of space where the performance and the commun(e)ication event would be held. I based this consideration on a spatial metaphor that Nahom used during the sketching stage, when inviting me to walk and sit through the space with him as if it was a prison. I decided to look for a space that would allude to this spatial metaphor, where confidants could walk and sit in the space, as if were a prison, like Nahom and I did.

#### **4.4.3.3. Composition Scenes**

The following section narrates the composition of each sketch, arranged into different scenes. The narration makes reference to the magical-real aesthetic lens (MRLens) and the general predominance location of each scene in the somantic continuum (semantic play, somatic play or somantic interplay). It is critical to mention here that in comparison to the scene narration below, it was not possible to present every aspect of the composition in the works-in-progress. Therefore, it is important to consider the following compositions as the primary creative input and process, and the works-in-progress as general ideas made tangible. Details about the works-in-progress will be addressed further in this chapter.

#### **Introduction scene – Eye Dream**

MRLens: strange, surprise, oneiric atmosphere.

Somatic play: subjective. abstract visuals and atmospheric music

This scene was composed as the initial invitation to immerse and submerge the confidants into the space. The aim was to bewilder confidants by creating a strange, oneiric atmosphere, contrasting the world that the confidants left outside as they entered the dark space. This ‘other world’ represents the poetic and subjective sketches that Nahom had shared through his poems, imagery and philosophical insight. The space, a church crypt simulating a prison, is in absolute darkness, and as confidants walk into the space, abstract and soothing music plays and fills the space. From the dark, a bright image projection of a moving white eye appears above the confidants and floats in the space, projected on the walls, still in the dark. The blinking eye moves towards the location where the next scene will take place. Its eyelids slowly begin to shut, and disappear. Disc 4, Clip 1 contains the video ‘Eye of Sand’. The music selected for this scene can be accessed in **Appendix 14-** Disc 5, Track 1. **See Appendix 6** (p. 317) for details of each track.

**Act 1 Scene 1- Adyoja** MRLens: figurative language, child-like naivety, chimerical atmosphere, metaphor

Somatic play: corporeal movements, abstract music

As the projection of the eye dissipates, this scene illuminates in orange, pink, and purple lights, to enhance colour and playfulness to the atmosphere and add a sense of mystery. The song from the initial scene continues to play and evoke a chimerical atmosphere. This scene is the development of the playful and childlike movement phrases composed between Nahom and I. A corporeal play between Nahom and Adyoja firstly aims to allude figuratively to Nahom's sketches of his longing relationship with freedom and the discovery of his artistic abilities. Secondly, a metaphor of the passage of time is added by a continuous flowing of sand in between Nahom and Adyoja. The sand is coloured in various tonalities, as an allegory to Nahom's love for colour drawing and painting. Nahom and Adyoja play to catch the coloured sand, which becomes a metaphor of the intent to capture time and freedom. Their play is suddenly interrupted when Nahom is pulled away by an invisible force, while Adyoja makes efforts to hold on to him, and fails.

### **Act 1 Scene 2- The artist**

MRLens: contrast, juxtaposition, stratification,

Somantic interplay: Nahom's voiceover, corporeal narrative

This scene interrupts Nahom and Adyoja's play. The warm lighting is contrasted with a dim yellow floor light. An empty sound contrasts the music from the previous scene, suggesting a change in Nahom's reality, as if being awakened from a dream to reality. The aim is to present a stratification and juxtaposition of two planes of realities that Nahom sketched about his life. The aim in this scene is to create somantic interplay between Nahom's speech and his body, each representing a different plane of reality. The first plane is Nahom's introspection of his love to draw and paint; another plane is Nahom's oppressive life-situations that contend against his desires. The first plane is represented in this scene through a voiceover of Nahom, expressing thoughts he had shared before during the sketching phase. His voice addresses the confidants in a calm, pleasant, and quiet manner. The lines translated from Italian are:

I am one who draws... I don't know why I love to draw and paint. Maybe because I like the feeling of the pencil and the brush, moving on surfaces. I always imagine figures on walls and on pieces of paper. Sometimes, I feel that words, music, and painting are my children. I don't know why I feel this, maybe because I love to feel my mind in motion.

Presented simultaneously, the second plane consists of physical phrases performed by Nahom. He adopts different body positions that he constructed during the sketching phase. His physicality suggests depictions of immovability and oppression. He stops a final still frame and position throughout the following scene. See Disc 5, Track 2 for the audio recording.

### **Act 1 Scene 3 - Soldier**

MRLens /absurd: satire; uncanny and eeriness

Somantic blurredness: miming

This scene is a satiric corporeal allusion to Nahom as a soldier. A physical vocabulary was designed to give a vague reference to his life-situation before his exile. The composition is interpreted through Adyoja's body, in dialogue with an original music composition that aimed to create a playful, yet eerie mood. The body mimics soldiers' activities in sudden fluctuations between playful yet strange and grotesque figures. The scene seeks to explore an uncanny atmosphere through the music and the body. At a certain point, Adyoja approaches confidants in a swift and eerie motion, drawing close to them. Towards the end, the music displays sound effects of war, while Adyoja mimics and simulates shooting and being shot, until she falls to the ground. Nahom wakes from the still frame, and arrives hurriedly to the scene, in worry for Adyoja. He helps Adyoja lift herself from the ground. The music fades out, and a distant whistling of Nahom gradually becomes louder. It is Nahom whistling, tuning a song. Nahom and Adyoja hold each other as they walk and limp away from this scene. A voiceover of Nahom's sketched whistling accompanies their walk. Listen to CD 5, Track 3 for the music composition developed by Nahom, myself and collabor(art)ist. Track 4 contains an excerpt of the whistling Nahom sketched often.

### **Act 1 Scene 5- 'Try until you die'**

MRLens: stratification; metaphor

Somantic interplay: poetic prose; movement; song; text

This scene is derived from Nahom's narration of the shipwreck, which inspired him to make the drawing of a hunchbacked old woman, threading a needle. We recorded the main phrases he had shared about this incident, which Nahom composed very poetically. The aim was to work on somantic interplay, by contextualising it with

somatic-subjective play. The scene is therefore a multi-layered composition, which lends itself to a stratification of meanings and images. The first layer consists of Nahom's narration of the shipwreck through poetic prose introspection, in voiceover. The second layer consists of Nahom's live painting of a human-scale drawing of the old woman, on a transparent plastic. Nahom prints the text that he also wrote on the original drawing: 'Try until you die', and underneath it, he marks the number of kilometres he travelled during his exile. This layer is an opportunity to give confidants a point of information that was relevant to Nahom. The third layer presents Adyoja's body, positioned behind the transparent plastic through which she can be seen. This layer aimed to explore improvised movement responses to allude to the narration, through motions of being on a boat, swirled by the waves; but also, to respond to Nahom's motions drawing the image, and interacting with the transparent plastic. After the semantic poetic narration, the final layer that concludes the scene is a recording of Nahom singing an Eritrean song. Nahom, singing in his mother tongue, is a moment that communicates with confidants on a more subjective and intimate level. Through the stratification and interweaving of various channels, this scene aimed to conjoin different stimuli under one somantic interplay. **Appendix 14-** Listen to CD 5, Track 5 for Nahom's narration and singing. See **Appendix 5** (p. 312) for the translation.

### **Act 1 Scene 6 - Exile sculptures**

MRLens: defamiliarization/estrangement; allegory

Somantic blurredness: physicalisation of imagery; abstract sound

This scene was composed from a movement workshop where Nahom and myself explored abstract body positions related to the idea of exile. The aim of this scene was to explore the defamiliarization and estrangement of walking across the desert. Once again, Nahom and Adyoja would undertake this part of the journey together. The intention to defamiliarize movement inspired a figurative approach to the body positions that had been composed, by construing them to simulate images from paintings, or sketches from drawings, alluding again to Nahom's artistic skills. The corporeal vocabulary was arranged in various still frames. The arrangement of the scene consisted in illuminating each of these still frames in the space, leaving moments of complete darkness while Nahom and Adyoja changed from one frame to the next. Dim lighting composition was utilised to create shadows and different fades over their bodies, in order to subtract a sharp attention from facial expressions, and delineate a closer view of the bodies. The fade in and fade outs between each still frame aimed to be a metaphoric

suggestion of the passing of the days and nights during the exile. Finally, a sound composition provided a minimal narrative context to the still frames. It consisted of abstract sounds layered with recordings of numerous Eritrean voices talking, which aimed to vaguely suggest the presence of many people. Listen to Disc 5, Track 6.

### **Act 1 Scene 7 – Trafficked**

MRLens: defamiliarization; decontextualisation; uncanny

Somantic blurredness: synaesthetic correspondence

This scene is composed from Nahom's sketch referring to sensations of suffocation, intense heat, the constant need to gasp for air, bodies drenched in sweat and the search for light inside the dark container. The intention here was to suggest Nahom's sensations through the use of photographic images, but do so from a de-familiarised angle that confidants could not identify with, and feel compelled to 'look again'. The photographic composition aimed to capture the body in detail, isolate body parts through close up, and de-contextualise the body from any narrative references or settings. Secondly, the defamiliarization explored a distancing from emotional meaning. A somatic play aimed to emphasise synaesthetic correspondences of literal tension and suffocation in the body. In addition, lighting was explored and then implemented during the photo shoot, to create an uncanny effect particularly in the images of the face. The photographer and I explored strange angles, and foreign elements of the face. The photographs were selected to appear on a video projection in a specific order. Originally, the video would be displayed in silence, in order to emphasise the energy of the images of the opened mouth and the tensions of the hands. Nevertheless, the silence rather provoked a long and empty space that in turn could subtract strength to its effect and disengage confidants. Once again, sound was implemented to give a vague context to the abstract images. The sound composition consisted of more layers of recorded Eritrean voices. The recordings of the voices were layered and edited so that they would lose their structure and semantic. These voices were interweaved with metallic sounds, first to refer to the metallic material of the container and secondly in the aim to evoke a slight atmosphere of suspense. An additional plane of meaning was added to the video, after the photograph display. This layer was the brief appearance of an animation video that depicted the sketch of a bird safely landing on a pair of hands. This variation to the photographs had the purpose of creating a narrative thread, from the image of a bird experiencing a moment of freedom and flight, to its capture in the following scene. *Please refer to Disc 4, Clip 2 for video.*

## **Act 2 Scene 1- Captured**

MRLens: uncanny

Somatic play: visceral enactment

This scene is composed from the sketches when Nahom was seized by Libyan police, and taken from prison to prison. The scene aims to present a visceral, corporeal expression, which explores without words a more direct somatic communication with the bodies of confidants. This composition sought an opportunity to examine the possibility to present jour(n)artists' intersubjective view of a sketch, through the art form or channel in which the jour(n)artist wishes to communicate. As the jour(n)artist in this case, I considered exploring through my body the subjective and conceptual experience I absorbed from visualising Nahom imprisoned and this aspect of his reality. The (re)presentation of this sketch, in line with Composition guidelines, is from a third-person view. The role of my performing body in this scene is still the character of 'Adyoja' the conceptualisation of Nahom's freedom, search and art, which indirectly undergoes and undertakes Nahom's challenges. Therefore, I address an aspect of Nahom's reality from Adyoja's view. In this case, the feminine notion that Adyoja represents does correspond to my body's gender also. Furthermore, a second opportunity of examination in this scene was exploring performers' possibilities to embody journeyers' sketches, which are visceral in nature and journeyers desire to explore such expressions, but not through their own bodies. The scene presents Adyoja walking from the darkness onto a dim obscure centre of the space, drawing near to confidants. Adyoja's body travels across the space with sacks of rocks attached to her ankles and wrists. Her face and head are covered with a dark see-through material. The movement vocabulary is a routine of repetitive phrases that explore resignation and fight. These estranged motions are interwoven with familiar movements that depict walking with a heavy burden.

## **Act 2 Scene2- SOS**

MRLens: objective anchor; strange effect; immersive atmosphere

Semantic interplay: dialogue in voiceover; sound effects

This composition refers to the SOS sketch. The focus of the scene is to present a semantic play of the information that Nahom disclosed of phone call conversations with the journalist and the UN officer. The reconstruction of the conversations, presented in voiceover, provided an opportunity to provide details on the number of prisons where Nahom had been; they narrate the conditions of the prisons in greater detail; they

explain that Libena had been negotiating with these organisation in order to demand his rescue, and also comment on specific details about the trafficking experience in the container. Such objective anchor aims to add realism and disclosures that strengthen the validity of the material presented in the performance. Moreover, the realistic conversations also offer an object of familiarity for the confidants to connect to. Following, in order to maintain somantic interplay, I considered adding a somatic input to the scene. It consisted, first of all, in manipulating the voiceovers with sound effects and high volumes to add a subjective layer. The recording of the conversations was edited, looped and fragmented in order to accentuate its content. Secondly, the scene would be played in the dark, enhancing attention to the auditory stimuli of the voiceover. A final somatic input aimed to elicit in confidants a sensation of immersion and awareness of their bodies sharing space and affect with Nahom. While the voiceover is playing in the dark, Nahom carries a mobile phone with the screen light on, passing between and close to the confidants, using their bodies to hide from the ‘imaginary’ guards. With their gaze, confidants are able to know where he is by the mobile screen light. Nahom moves the phone in an agitated, frantic manner as he walks in the space, so the light suggests the nervous and fearful state he is in. Towards the end of the voiceover, Nahom switches the screen light off and remains in the dark for a moment. He switches on the ‘flashlight’ mode of the phone, and moves it around in the dark to suggest one of the guards is searching the place. The phone call voice over disconnects. See **Appendix 5** (p. 312) for voiceover text. **Appendix 14**– Disc 5, Track 7 for audio.

#### **Act 2 Scene 4– ‘Hewan’ in Prison**

MRLens: defamiliarization; uncanny; literalisation of metaphor

Somantic blurredness: corporeal movement; prison allusions; guttural and rhythmic sounds in voiceover; live body image projection

This scene derives from the sketches and compositions about Nahom’s instances in prison. Nahom’s voice recordings of prison are used here to create sound compositions throughout the scene. In like manner to the scene ‘Captured’, Adyoja embodies the sketches. She is the physical and conceptual representation of Nahom’s freedom and art under oppression. The scene consists of three different moments that take place in the same space. The aim is first of all, to de-familiarise the common naturalistic representations of prisoners, and through the estrangement of movement, heighten the crudeness of the situation. Second of all, the purpose was to distanciate the (re)presentation from realistic and emotional forms, in order to maintain confidants’

critical gaze of a gruesome enactment. However, the distancing is not planned to produce an effect of perceptibility or double-consciousness that may disengage confidants from an affective connection with the scene. In the first piece of the scene, Adyoja's body motions suggest a physical entrapment inside a metal material that represents the 'prison bars'. Nahom's recordings of heavy his breathing are arranged to create an abstract sound composition for Adyoja's movements. Following, the breathings change to the sounds of prison that Nahom represented through his voice: illness, cold, vomit, bad smells, snoring, heavy breathing and itches. During the playing of the 'prison noises', Adyoja looks for a space to lie down and sleep, giving her back to the confidants. A small digital camera is used to project Adyoja's live movements and body parts that are hidden from the audience. The projection was used to enlarge Adyoja's face, eyes, and elicit in confidants a closer and intimate connection with her.

The second piece (re)presents Nahom's disclosure of prisoners' beatings and the name 'hewan' (dog), that guards used to insult them with. The corporeal enactment of the beatings was taken from Nahom's sketch of the prisoners on their knees being hit on the head and the back. The defamiliarization of the beatings consisted of several layers. One layer was through the design of the set. Firstly, the use of a fabric material was used as a division and panel between confidants and the body of Adyoja. Secondly, through a lighting effect, her body would be perceived as a silhouette or shadow form. This strategy would subtract attention and perceptibility to Adyoja's 'grotesque' motion routine. Another layer of defamiliarization was the sound composition. Nahom's recording of the guards shouting 'hewan' was intercalated and looped in a repetitive fashion with sound effects that alluded to the sound of a beating and of ticking clocks. The repetitive pattern rendered the sounds unrealistic. The third layer was an uncanny reference to the word 'hewan'. Adyoja wore a dog harness on her face that defamiliarised the notion of human body, and familiarised the image to that of a dog. This moment aimed to suggest the literal objectification of Adyoja/Nahom as an insult.

The third and final piece explores the notion of 'hewan' as a literalisation of metaphor, but breaks from the grotesque interpretation to a mimicking technique that addresses Nahom and Adyoja's hope to be rescued. This moment continues to explore uncanniness, de-familiarisation and a strange effect. The 'hewan' piece finalises with a loud shout. Adyoja in simulation of a dog exits from behind the fabric panel, sniffing and searching while approaching confidants. A sound effect of helicopters makes Adyoja-dog to stop and search for the sound of help above her-it. Nahom arrives to the

scene, as if he was looking for the Adyoja-dog, who is in a frozen frame attentive to the sound of the helicopter. Nahom is carrying a headlight on his head. Nahom takes off the dog's mouthpiece from Adyoja and places a headlight on her head also. Her mouth is in a wide-opened frame, as if screaming. Perceiving the sound of helicopters, Nahom kneels down 'on four legs', mimicking and joining Adyoja's 'animalesque' frame. In this still frame, Nahom and Adyoja face upward with their mouths wide-opened, as if searching for the helicopter and shouting for its help. In silence, their heads move in a synchronised left and right slow motion, with the light from the headlights also following the semi-circular trajectory across the space. The image aims to allude to the concept of lighthouses, as a metaphor for finding/seeking rescue. Nahom and Adyoja become 'lighthouses' in the intent to attract the presence of people outside the prison. In this case, however, the 'lighthouses' are the ones needing rescue and direction. **Appendix 14-** Listen to Disc 5, Track 8 for audio. See **Appendix 6** (p. 317) for details of track.

### **Act 2 Scene 3 - Black market**

MRLens: realism; immersive atmosphere

Semantic play: live dialogue and interaction with confidants

This scene enacts inmates' exchange of merchandise that Nahom sketched. The nature of the itinerant space lent itself to interact with confidants as if they were other inmates. The strategy was to hand diverse objects to confidants before they entered the space, which they would use in this scene. In this scene, Nahom approaches confidants to sell, buy, exchange medicine, calling cards, cigarettes and a harmonica. The composition served several purposes. Firstly, it informed confidants on an aspect of prisoners' life: how they accessed diverse 'goods' in the prison. Secondly, it engaged confidants directly and added different dynamics of interaction. The scene is a moment of improvisation where Nahom acts in a naturalistic style. In this particular moment, perceptibility and double-consciousness are absent, in order to avoid confidants from breaking the immersion and realistic illusion of the scene.

### **Act 3 Scene 1- Cigarette Clock**

MRLens: metaphor literalisation; estrangement; familiarity; ultraprecision, metatheatre

Somantic blurredness: conceptual metaphoric imagery; synaesthetic correspondence

This scene is the mediation of Nahom's presence through a film that refers to the cigarette sketches and follows the compositional process discussed with Nahom. The scene consists in the projection of the film onto a wide wall in the darkness of the space. Before the film shows, Nahom and Adyoja are sitting close to a wall in the space, where Nahom is smoking, and Adyoja plays with the cigarette house made for the film. They continue performing these actions throughout the film, displaying a brief meta-theatrical moment. On one hand the film's intent is to present an aspect of Nahom to which the audience can be familiar to. The film depicts Nahom smoking. Such is an image that confidants can generally find relation to and points of connection with. Also, the depiction of 'time passing' and 'time wasting' is a familiar notion that confidants can associate with. The aesthetic technique of estrangement in the film is applied to dis-habituate the exhausted image of the act of smoking, and heighten Nahom's discussion of the slow passage, wasting, and longing of time. Moreover, the film includes Nahom's sketches of the cigarette house, making references to his longing of Libena. Adyoja's conceptual role here expands to represent Libena in one of Nahom's moments of reverie. The estrangement of smoking is appreciated in the repetition, slow motion and close ups of Nahom's movements, of his lips, the cigarette's smoke, the consuming of the cigarette and the ashes. This 'strange' depiction seeks to de-familiarise the action and heighten metaphoric and conceptual angles of the images. Moreover, the filming and editing techniques also aim to elicit a synaesthetic appeal, where confidants could connect the visuals to smells of the cigarette smoke and breath and to sensations in their lips and face. The other scenes in the film are also portrayed from a de-familiarised angle. The images of the construction of the cigarette house are presented in a black background; Nahom's gaze at the camera, and hence at confidants, explore a double-conscious technique; Adyoja's appearance is estranged by the still life that she smells; the display of the cigarette house is estranged by the odd way in which is shown, suspended in a dark space. See film in Disc 4, Clip 3.

### **Act 3 Scene 2- Hell without Libena**

MRLens: realism and familiarity; objective anchor

Somantic interplay: live dialogue; naturalistic/somatic acting

This scene was created from the sketch where Nahom talks about his anguish in prison, when Libena did not call in two weeks. The composition of a live dialogue is also an opportunity to acknowledge the confidants' presence in the space. The sketch is turned into a dialogue between Nahom and Adyoja, who represents Libena again in this scene.

This composition aimed to explore the energy of mimetic acting in the space (as opposed to voiceovers), seeking once again the anchor of realism to which confidants can be familiar and relate to. Nahom and Libena's dialogue aim to call attention to Nahom's relationship with Libena. The dialogue includes the anecdote of Libena's toothache, Nahom's weekly anticipation to hear her voice, the poem he wrote to her when she did not call him, and Nahom's intent for her not to worry about him. Their conversation also discloses objective details that inform confidants on how Libena provides financial support to Nahom while he's in prison. The scene begins with Libena frantically looking for Nahom and shouting out his name, in reference to Nahom's description of her constant worry. Libena looks for Nahom amongst the men in the audience first. The space is illuminated and brightened when she finds him. The scene finalises with a fade out after the end of their conversation. See **Appendix 5** (p. 312) for Nahom's sketch dialogue with Libena.

### **Act 3 Scene 3 - Whispering walls**

MRLens: 'matter-of-factness'; surprise; objective anchor; familiarity

Semantic play: text projected on the wall; ambience music

This scene represents Nahom's sketches of the prison walls. They were significant for Nahom, not only because he was able to use them as canvas in one of the prisons, but because for him and other prisoners, these walls were 'billboards' where to exchange messages of hope, endurance, and practical advice in relation to the particularities of the prison. After Libena disappears, Nahom in sad demeanour looks for a place near a wall where he can sit. Nahom discovers text written on the wall. He begins to read by candlelight. An atmosphere of stillness and meditation is created by an instrumental music piece. The confidants are able to read the text that Nahom is reading, which is enlarged and projected on the ceiling wall above Nahom. The last part of the text is directed from the inmates to Nahom: 'Paint an image of Christ, so that we can pray to him'. When Nahom finishes reading, the projection fades out. He 'takes off' one of the prison walls, made from paper. This action is played out in 'matter-of-factness' tone, where 'tearing down' the wall does not take any effort because Nahom is aware that the wall is in fact a piece of paper, and does not perceive his actions as unrealistic or strange. Instead, his action could simulate an artist tearing down sketches in a studio. A painted image of Christ is unveiled behind the paper wall. Nahom continues in a reflective

demeanour, looking for a space to the draw on this wall. See **Appendix 5** (p. 312) for text. **Appendix 14-** Disc 5, Track 9 for music piece. Details in **Appendix 6** (p. 317).

### **Act 3 Scene 4- Vessel Woman**

MRLens: literalisation of metaphor; surprise; matter-of-factness; child-like naivety; allusion / Somantic blurredness: corporeal narrative

This scene was created from the improvisation that Nahom and I explored from the photograph of the Vessel Woman: Nahom's metaphorical meditation about his freedom, and his nearness to resignation and defeat. In continuation of Adyoja's representation of freedom, strength, and a muse, she embodies the image of the Vessel Woman. The subtle music piece of the previous scene continues, and maintains the meditative and still atmosphere throughout. Nahom quickly delineates in black colour the human-scale figure of the vessel woman with no feet and hands. He kneels on the floor to continue sketching the image. Unexpectedly, a feminine hand and arm gradually pierce through the paper wall, without Nahom noticing. This surprising feature suggests that the drawing is taking life. The hand begins to tease and play with Nahom's hair. Nahom pushes it away, in a 'matter-of-factness' tone. The drawing's arms find complete freedom from the wall, and begin to move in the enjoyment of such freedom. Suddenly, Nahom holds one of her arms and begins to paint over it in black. The scene develops through a child-like play of the Vessel Woman freeing herself from the wall, while Nahom in obliviousness continues to paint from the paper onto her body. Nahom's hopelessness blinds him from perceiving that the Vessel Woman has completely escaped the wall. Her head is in the shape of a vessel with a fissure on one side. Nahom continues to paint over her hands and her feet, and with each brushstroke, her body begins to paralyse again, as when she was embedded to the wall. Nahom still unaware of the situation concludes he has finished his 'sketch', and turns away from it, in a resigned attitude. Meanwhile, Adyoja, unable to move and stand, or speak, stumbles and falls to the ground. Her eyes ask for help. A red liquid begins to leak through her vessel head, as it is shown in the image's photograph (symbolising in blood a metaphor for life). Or as an alternative to this feature: as the Vessel Woman stumbles the coloured sand that Nahom and Adyoja had played with at the beginning of the performance, escapes the vessel and scatters on the ground. Nahom finally reacts from hearing the Vessel Woman fall and seeing her lying on the ground. He hurries to where she is. Her eyes are still wide-opened as if asking for help. Kneeling down, Nahom holds her arms gently and lifts her onto his lap. Instantly the Vessel Woman's eyes close gently as if resting, and her body loses its

tension. Nahom and the Vessel Woman remain in this position for a moment, as in a still frame. Lights and music fade out.

The aim of this composition, through literalisation of metaphor and ‘matter-of-factness’ is to defy an apparently unrealistic scene as a ‘normal’, ‘realistic’ and valid moment in the performance. The literalisation pertains to Nahom’s metaphor of freedom, depicted as a vessel woman on the wall, who takes life and frees herself. The still frame at the end of the scene aims a vague allusion to Michelangelo Buonarroti’s sculpture, *Pietà*. An allusion of a triple-entendre: firstly it alludes to the relationship of a prisoner (Jesus) and his feminine guardian (Mary); secondly, the sculpture as a piece of rock alludes to the literal metaphor of the Vessel Woman being made out of rock from a wall; thirdly, it refers to the performance’s recurrent thematic of Nahom as ‘artist’. Finally, one literalisation of metaphor that is not made obvious to the confidants is the physicalisation of Nahom’s strength in the interpretation of Adyoja. Her representation of freedom and art consummate in this moment as the painting frees herself to re-strengthen Nahom and remind him that his freedom is still alive.

### **Act 3 Scene 5- Sunrise**

MRLens: supernatural event in metaphor; immersive atmosphere

Somatic play: projection of visuals on walls; music and sound

This scene derives from the sketch with which Nahom desired to conclude the performance: the moment when he saw a fragment of the sunrise through a prison wall fissure. Nahom had visualised the image of a sunrise invading the prison. The composition therefore begins with the projected image of a sunrise across the ceiling and walls of the space, accompanied by a recording of Nahom playing the harmonica, which was the instrument he played in prison. During the projection in the dark, Nahom lifts and carries Adyoja to another end of the space where they sit. When the projection finishes and lighting fades in, Nahom plays the kraar live, and recites in Tigrinya the ‘poem to the sun’ he had written. For this scene, Nahom decided to construct a kraar for the performance, which was the Eritrean string instrument that he most enjoyed playing. For video see **Appendix 14-** Disc 5, Clip 4: ‘Sunrise’ for video. **Appendix 5** (p. 312) contains text translation.

### **Final Scene- Eye Awakes**

An unexpected and commanding male voice interrupts the previous scene, informing confidants that all visitors need to leave the prison, as no visits are allowed. As the confidants gather and start walking towards the exit, the image of the eye is again projected. This image, however, is different from the white eye of the initial scene. Its colours are crisp. As a continuation from the previous image, where the eyelids had closed, this new image presents the eyelids beginning to open and blink. The expression of the eye suggests a certain excitement. The eye fades out, and instead a text emerges, announcing confidants about Nahom's rescue. Nahom begins to sing again, and with Adyoja, they leave the space, leaving the confidants inside in the dark. For video see Disc 5, Clip 5: 'Eye of Light' for video. **Appendix 5** contains text translation (p. 312).

#### **4.4.3.4 Assemblage Stage**

The assemblage & production stage in this case study consisted in inviting amateur or professional artists who would be keen to participate in the creation of Nahom's performance. The collabor(art)ists were mostly artists whom Nahom and I already knew. Amongst the seven collabor(art)ists were: a photographer, a filmmaker, one musician, two actors, and two editors. The actors recorded voiceovers with Nahom and myself; the filmmaker collaborated for the scene 'Cigarette Clock House'; the photographer collaborated for the scene 'Trafficked'; the musician collaborated in music and sound composition, editing, and audio recordings; finally two writers edited various dialogues into Italian. Each collabor(art)ist was informed on the intention of the performance, clarified about Nahom's agency over the performance, and briefed on the composition scene each of them would collaborate in. The dynamics consisted of presenting each with a personal script that contained general aesthetic qualities aimed for the composition scenes. See **Appendix 10** (p. 325) for details on the composition collaborations.

#### *Devising through the body*

An important aspect of the assemblage stage was the compositions through the body to develop the role of Adyoja, which consisted in embodying the concept of Nahom's 'strength' and 'muse', enduring and accompanying Nahom in his journey and experiences. The scenes that I had to develop on my own were: 'Captured', 'Hewan in Prison', and explore movements from 'Vessel Woman'. The method for devising movement for these scenes consisted of various sessions where I explored somatic

impulses based on specific visualisations from Nahom's sketches, primarily without any musical stimuli or sound, and subsequently with particular music to explore alternative kinds of movements. I filmed myself during some of the somatic improvisations to extract movement phrases and develop them. From these impulses, I developed corporeal phrases shaped by three approaches: defamiliarization, non-naturalistic enactments and motions that would not provoke aversion or perceptibility in confidants. In addition, I avoided phrasing movements that resembled aesthetic forms or shapes that evoked in audiences a sense of dance structure or dance aesthetic. I considered that if my body resembled an intentional dance pattern, this would create an awareness of the performing body in a particular dance style or discipline and break the illusion or immersion of the scene inside a prison. Moreover, I tried to restrain my body from visceral and disturbing movements that would similarly result in disengagement from the narration and invite a double awareness of the body of the performer over the scene composition. Refer to **Appendix 14-** Disc 6 for clip excerpts from this process.

#### **4.4.4 Case Study B**

The two stages of this phase consisted of a creative process conducted by myself, the in Dina's 'implicit presence'. The process consisted of diverse types of devising sessions and individual workshops, where I experimented with a multimodality of channels and somantic modalities to catalyse compositions needed for each sketch. The process involved similar procedures that were facilitated for the other case study: activators of somantic interplay, and somantic blurredness. One activator involved imagination and visualisation, which played an important role in selecting channels of signification, synaesthetic stimuli, and the aesthetic lens. Another consisted in exploring synaesthetic correspondences between a channel and its sensorial elements. A third devising activator was somatic and somantic improvisation through the body. Finally, I experimented with somantic blurredness for sketches that could be expressed in both semantic and somatic modalities. For each sketch, I applied variations of defamiliarization techniques.

##### **4.4.4.1 Assemble Considerations**

In respect to the sketches, first of all, I considered they could be categorised under four content types that would frame both her desires and the structure of the performance. The first category regarded Dina's retrospective thoughts about her childhood: the cleft and lip palate, her parents' condemnation as a curse from Satan, and the other instances she sketched about her experience as a 'little girl'. The second content type was the unveiling of SRA and Dina's reflective sketches about disbelief to this kind of abuse. The third content type pertained to her encounter with the 'glimpses of light' and how the realisation that of her 'normal' and 'abnormal' reversed perceptions shocked her to a point where she sought destructive 'escapes' from her reality. Finally, the fourth content type was the lack of validity and understanding that she encountered regarding her experience with SRA, particularly from people she had hoped to be supported by. One final sketch outside these themes was her encounter with a spiritual understanding contrary to her satanic upbringing, which later in her life became a central aspect in overcoming the aftermath of her traumatic reality. Since her sketches revolved around her experiences growing up, and the sketch about her spiritual encounter was not developed or given continuation, I considered leaving it pending for a future re-creative encounter with Dina, if the work-in-progress were to be finished. The four themes would therefore be arranged in a semi-linear structure for the performance, from her birth to a few sketches of her teenage years. Following, the second consideration was selecting an appropriate dynamic of (re)presenting Dina in her absence. The (re)presentation of Dina in this case involved examining third-person view,

defamiliarization, and indirect references to her role, without a direct representation of her persona. The awareness of Dina's gaze encouraged a sensitive composition to the enactment of the sexual abuse, her mistreatment at home, and the portrayal of her cleft and lip palate condition. This awareness consists in considering that certain enactments could be distressing for her to a certain extent, which should be avoided. Another aspect to consider was whether to refer to the character of Dina in the performance with the name her parents gave her, which she later changed, or to use her new name. Since the performance covered the first part of her life, I considered using her childhood name. The usage of her new name, Dina, therefore would not be coherent with the differentiation of names she had made. The considerations for the *mise-en-scène* revolved around Dina's connection to colours and the relation she found between colour and her circumstances in life. Therefore, lighting was an important element to consider for the composition of each scene.

#### **4.4.4.2 Composition Scenes**

The following section narrates the composition of each sketch, arranged into different scenes. The narration makes reference to the magical-real aesthetic lens and the general predominance location of each scene in the somantic continuum (semantic play, somatic play or somantic interplay). In addition, having mentioned that lighting was a significant element of Dina's performance, the narrations include the lighting that was composed for each scene. Similarly to Nahom's performance, it was not possible to present every aspect of the compositions in the works-in-progress. Therefore, it is important to consider these compositions as the primary creative input, while the works-in-progress are a secondary demonstration. Details about the works-in-progress will be detailed further in this chapter.

#### **Act 1 Scene 1- A hole on the Face**

MRLens: foreign element, uncanny, absurd, matter-of-factness, child-like naivety

Somantic blurredness: visual and auditory stimuli; movement

Lighting: dim amber light on pedestal display; cross fade to pink and magenta lights

This scene evokes and literalises the metaphor that Dina used to describe her cleft lip and palate condition: as a hole in the face. The composition aims to create an atmosphere of mystery and eeriness, in accord to the uncanny nature of such metaphor. The music element in this scene intends to enhance an uncanny atmosphere and allude to Dina's early life by with sounds of 'baby noises' and a children's music box. The central object in this scene is a three-dimensional head mould, painted abstractly but obviating its

head-shape. The head mould has a hole underneath the nose and across the mouth, painted black. The important uncanny feature of this mould is that it is not ugly or grotesque, but displays an unpretentious beauty and simplicity to attract the gaze of confidants. The head mould stands on a pedestal display, illuminated by dim, amber light, to create an arrangement that alludes to a museum or a gallery type of display. This head mould in display references to Dina's encounter with people's stare when growing up; with the name 'ugly' that her parents called her with; and with the gruesome image she thus created of herself. The display is therefore a cynical confrontation of Dina being exhibited, exposed on a pedestal for the curious stare of society, and not as a proud display. Initially, the head mould is covered. A hand unexpectedly appears from behind the pedestal. The hand has life of its own, and moves in curiosity and wonder to discover what is underneath the veil. Suddenly the rest of the body jumps up behind the pedestal and the onlooker surrounds the display in curiosity. The 'onlooker' finally uncovers the object. A dim light change to cyan and magenta light to create a mysterious atmosphere. She is not scared to see the head mould's hole in the face; instead, she is appalled in indignation at the fact that no one had arrived to attend to the situation of such display. 'Onlooker' caringly lifts the head mould, embracing it and rocking it as if to consoling a baby. Listen to Disc 8, Track 1:1.

### **Act 1 Scene 2 - Surgery**

MRLens: defamiliarization; strange

Somantic blurredness: corporeal narrative; sound and visual stimuli

Lighting: magenta and cyan lights blinking; light change to dim blue

This scene is based on the sketches about Dina's surgery. It is a brief composition that relates confidants to a familiar event. However, it does so in a estranged corporeal manner and strange elements that defamiliarizes the surgery from a common and mimetic re-enactment, in order to heighten the event. The scene opens abruptly with a loud, beeping sound from a hospital monitor. Lights blinking suggest a moment of emergency. The beeping interrupts the Onlooker's tender moment with the head mould. She instantly understands the emergency situation: the head mould needs an operation, immediately. The Onlooker embraces the head mould and frantically looks for help. Two performers dressed in doctors' uniforms receive the head mould at a 'surgical' bed, located at the greatest possible distance from confidants. The head mould is hidden behind their bodies. The onlooker changes onto a doctor's costume. A lights change to dim blue, suggests a serious and mysterious atmosphere. The sound composition also

aims to enhance this effect. The three surgeons perform a movement routine around the head mould with long ‘ice picks’ and imaginary instrumentation. Their movements are slow, exaggerated, and brisk at times. The blue lights dim and a small flashlight are switched on the surgical table, to add to a mysterious atmosphere. Sound and lights fade out. Sound composition in Disc 8, Track 1:2.

### **Act 1 Scene 3 – Surgeons’ Tea Time**

MRLens: realism; objective anchor

Semantic play: live acting with dialogue

Lighting: magenta and amber, focused on the surgeons

This scene aims to unveil the mystery and absurdity of the head mould and the hole on the face, through a dialogue between the surgeons. The composition is an anchor of realism and narrative context that reveals Dina’s cleft lip and palate condition, the severity of her case at birth, and how the required surgeries impeded her parents’ plans to move to South Africa. In spite of the seemingly naturalistic dialogue between the surgeons, the composition aims to de-familiarise it in several ways, to maintain the line of strange effect from previous scenes. The scene shows surgeons in uniform, placed in a de-contextualised location from the hospital: a ‘cozy’ living room, with sofas, tea ware, and a warm illumination in contrast to the hospital scene. In contrast to the distant spatial location of the previous scene, they are sat near to the confidants, to suggest an intimate moment of confidentiality. The surgeons are extremely tired and appalled at the patients’ condition, which renders their speech slightly strange. They are wearing wireless microphones that allow them to whisper and barely project their voices. Lights fade out. See **Appendix 8** (p.320) for the dialogue in text.

### **Act 1 Scene 4 – Cursed ‘little girl’**

MRLens: ultraprecision; child-like naivety

Semantic play: visual narrative through video

Lighting: blackout

This scene is a visual narrative that portrays various sketches of Dina’s childhood, composed in a short video of re-constructed images and short texts. The aim was to convey a glimpse of Dina’s retrospective thoughts regarding her childhood. The video is therefore created from a child-like point of view to express Dina’s convictions of being a curse and a burden to her family. The video portrays Dina as a ‘little girl’, writing in

different colours a short letter addressed to her confidants, where she hints at the gruesome situation in which she lives. Her act of writing alludes to the letter she had written to her family before her failed suicide attempt at 7 years of age. The video is composed of several scenes from Dina's sketches: eating scraps from the floor, the mistreatment by her mother, breaking her house mirrors in aversion to her face, and her suicide attempt. The main reference to this latter sketch is accomplished through a voiceover dialogue between a doctor and a nurse. A calm and meditative music juxtaposes creates a contrasting effect that raise attention to the crudity of the scenes. The video does not yet disclose her parents' beliefs in Satanism. See **Appendix 14-** Disc 7, Clip 1 for video.

### **Act 2 Scene 1- Dinner Revelation**

MRLens: stratification; child-like naivety; dark humour

Semantic play: voiceover commentary, visuals, and live acting

Lighting: green

This scene hints at the existence of satanic families, without directly referencing to Dina or her family. It is rather a 'generic' remark of a fact that suggests confidants about Dina's reality. The composition is a semantic play that explores stratification and dark humour, in the aim to create a piercing effect about a child-view realisation of Satanism. The composition combines various simultaneous and multimodal layers of representation. The first layer is non-naturalistic acting of a family having dinner at home. The second layer is a male voiceover cynically narrating, in suggestive and friendly manner, why a satanic family differs from other 'normal' families. The third channel is a video projection displaying several pencil drawings of satanic ritual settings, based on sketches done by SRA child victims. The scene takes action when 'the girl' arrives to the dining table. I embody and improvise a child-like naivety view of the scene in a cynical perceptibility, representing a little girl from a third-person point of view. See Disc 7, Clip 2 for video of 'Dinner Revelation'.

### **Act 2 Scene 2- Lullaby**

MRLens: eeriness; uncanny; double-signification

Somantic interplay: corporeal and subjective narrative with music

Lighting: cross fade to dim cyan light to create an atmosphere of realism

This scene serves as a transition moment, which shows the manner of ‘normality’ and habitual manner in which ‘the girl’, in her school uniform, is taken from dinnertime to ‘abuse time’. The scene also portrays Dina’s sketch of holding on to the doorframes before entering the ritual room. The composition aims to create an uncanny feeling by juxtaposing the familiarity of a childlike walk of anticipation, with an unfamiliar and eerie lullaby. In addition, the performer explores a moment of double-signification or perceptibility, firstly by *gestus*, and secondly, through the distanciation from a naturalistic walk in the estrangement of her movements. On the arrival at the doorframe, I improvise non-naturalistic movements to suggest a struggle to hold on to the doorframe, contrasting slow and rapid motions. Continuing in double-signification, I enter through the door and sit down to take my school shoes off and begin to undress for the ritual. An unemotional and nonchalant expression aims to distanciate from a pretentious naturalistic representation, with the aim to piercingly provoke instead a critical view of the situation. Listen to Disc 8, Track 2 from **Appendix 14**, for music used in Lullaby. See **Appendix 9** (p. 324) for track guide.

### **Act 2 Scene 3- Ritual**

MRLens: uncanny

Somantic blurredness: text, abstracted sound, and corporeal narrative

Lighting: blackout

The aim of this scene was mainly to disclose sexual abuse as an accepted satanic activity. The link to the habitual doorframe passage in the previous scene intends to suggest the systematic manner in which this event is performed. The purpose of the composition was to re-present the act of sexual abuse from a de-familiarised and suggestive angle, thus avoiding a mimetic re-enactment and a possible voyeuristic gaze. In this manner, the re-presentation explored an unemotional frame, which would nevertheless provoke an affective response. In addition, another intention was avoiding stereotypical and exhausted symbols of Satanism that could relate to confidants’ connotations of satanic rituals as a fabricated urban legend. Although this composition does not make any references to Satanism, the voiceover from the scene, ‘Dinner Revelation’, aimed to obviate such context in this scene. The composition of the physical performance consists in a live video projection of isolated parts of my body, captured in an abstracted manner. This performance therefore takes place behind curtains, which also allude to the concealment of such abuse. Images are captured and projected through a digital camera that enlarges different body parts onto a wall. The location of the performance is

distant from where the confidants are sitting, while the projection creates a simultaneous closeness to the scene. The projection shows close ups of skin and body parts in tension and in jerking motions. One image also shows the feet tied with a rope. Text on the skin, written live, aims to subtract abstraction to the images, which read: 'Don't touch there, Dad!', 'Mum!?!?!', 'I want to die'. The composition included a sound arrangement alluding to a lullaby, which aimed to counterpoise the tension and jerking of the body, created a muting effect to alienate the act from pretentious emotionalism.

**Appendix 14-** Listen to Disc 8, Track 3:1.

### **Act 2 Scene 4- Circus Time**

MRLens: surprise; allusion; dark humour; alienation effect; juxtaposition; contrasts

Semantic play: live dialogue; verbal interaction with confidants; taste-smell-touch

Lighting: abrupt cross fade to red, light change to magenta, to house lights, to magenta

This scene is derived from Dina's introspective reflections and discussions about a general discrediting and disbelief about SRA, also inspired by additional research on the subject. The scene intends to present Dina's opinion through techniques of hyperbole and satire, alluding to the notion of 'circus' to refer to the social image generally constructed about Satanism and SRA. The composition aims to create a bizarre and absurd atmosphere that emphasises this satirical point. The scene is divided in three different parts. The first sub-scene, *Puppet Show*, is inspired by Dina's disclosure of her disgust for Halloween, which was a date when she was always abused during the sect's ritual. This scene abruptly interrupts the seriousness of the previous one with a loud, circus music. A curtain opens on the opposite side of the space, revealing a festive and illuminated puppet house. Two animal puppets address the audience, welcoming them to that evening's Halloween show. The puppets perform a mocking skit, where one of them is being chased in the woods to be captured by the other puppet for a satanic ritual. Sounds effects of owls, crickets augment a folly mood.

The second sub-scene, *Dilemma Popcorn*, explores an alienation technique to discuss with confidants about SRA's lack of substantial evidence being an issue that journalists encounter. This discussion intends to give confidants a perspective that underlines Dina's desire to be validated on her SRA case. When the skit finalises, a performer handling one of the puppets stands behind the puppet house in silence, from where confidants can see her taking off the puppet from the hand. She exits the puppet house and walks towards the confidants. The performer addresses confidants about a general

disbelief of Satanism and SRA, focusing on mass media's discrediting of the matter, and the dilemma of journalists who interview survivors of SRA and cannot show evidence to their testimonies. One performer (A) asks confidants for their opinions and for alternative venues where to publish SRA stories that are not validated by mainstream media sources. This serious interaction is juxtaposed by another performer (B) who hands out popcorn to the confidants, satirizing the conversation as part of the 'show'. A double-entendre of the popcorn is to juxtapose the pleasing stimulation of the sense of taste, touch and smell, with the unpleasant conversation that is taking place. The performer (A) is told that the show needs to continue.

The third sub-scene, *Clown Journalist*, continues to tackle journalists' dilemma of writing about SRA testimonies, as an explanation to the lack of its official validation. The alienation effect is interrupted; nonetheless, the performer (A) does not return backstage. Instead, she stumbles across a table that was placed behind her earlier. Lights turn dimmer. A laptop stands on the table, with personal office items, and a chair to the side. The performer sits and begins to type on the laptop in naturalistic style, ignoring the confidants. A cinematic music piece mockingly creates an atmosphere of suspense. The performer adopts a role of 'journalist' or 'writer', in allusion to the journalists' dilemma exposed earlier. The naturalistic scene is de-familiarised by a sudden fluctuating movements of the performer's right hand, which begin to act 'independently' from the rest of the body in alternation with normal typing motions. The hand moves to the face of the performer in an aggressive intent to impede her from typing. Meanwhile, performer (B), in stealthy and serious expression walks towards the journalist from the back. She places a clown wig and clown nose on the journalist, in a rather friendly manner to satirise the aggressive action of the journalist's silencing right hand. Subsequently, performer B presses the journalist's head into the laptop, where the journalist remains in a still frame. Lights fade out. **Appendix 8** (p. 320) contains the puppets lines. **Appendix 14-** Listen to Disc 8, Track 3:2.

### **Act 3 Scene 1- Glimpses of light**

MRLens: child-like naivety; literalisation of metaphor; defamiliarization; oneiric

Somantic interplay: dialogue; touch and smell stimuli

Lighting: dim to bright fades of cyan, with fade-ins and fade-outs; dim pink light

The composition of this scene aims to create an oneiric atmosphere to refer to the theme of the 'glimpses of light' Dina sketched. She described the moments of normality as

glimpses of light, pleasant yet strange and abnormal for her. The intention of this scene is to immerse the audience in this 'otherworldly' pleasant space, as literal metaphor to Dina's otherworldly 'glimpses of light'. Therefore, the scene is presented from little Dina's point of view. Juxtaposed with the 'circus' ambience, this scene renders waking from absurdity to illusion or dream. The composition re-presents three different 'glimpses of light': feeding chickens, the embrace between a mother and a daughter, and eating treats. Lighting effects and a spatial cinematic music enhance this immerse atmosphere. The voiceovers and sounds in the scene are manipulated with sound effects that suggest they are being heard in a dream.

#### *Feeding chickens*

The scene begins with chickens' sound effects and the voiceover of Dina's friend, inviting her to feed chickens. Two performers, (re)presenting Dina and Friend, arrive in the middle of the space. They are wearing diadems in shape of chicken crests, and each carries a bag with 'chicken food'. The 'chicken food' is represented by potpourri, as a metaphor for Dina's 'glimpse of light', which in this case evokes a pleasant fragrance. The performers throw 'food' at imaginary chickens, and also throw it gently at confidants; they explore 'double-consciousness' in the naturalistic roles they are playing while they draw close to confidants to place the potpourri on their hands and laps.

#### *Embrace*

A second voiceover suggests the arrival of Dina's friend's mother. A third performer (Mother) joins the scene. Mother and Dina's Friend encounter each other in a de-familiarised slow-motion embrace displayed in three different still-frame poses. Lights fade-in and fade-out to provide a brief interval between each pose. Dina awkwardly explores their embrace with her body, to imply this is her first encounter with an embrace. One last fade-out allows Mother and Dina's Friend to exit the scene. Dina finds herself alone, as if the previous events had been a dream. She physically remains in the same place where Mother and Dina's Friend embraced, to rescue the 'trace' of this strange display she saw. Literalising the trace of the embrace as her 'glimpse of light', she smears it over her body and lies down calmly until she falls asleep.

#### *Candy Floss*

The last moment of this composition portrays Dina's encounter with 'treats' as another glimpse of light. It is a continuation of an oneiric and unreal atmosphere that aims to engage confidants further through another interaction with 'food'. Dina wakes up

suddenly from her dream onto another dream. She perceives a ‘strange’ sight where the confidants are located. She looks at what appears to be like a cloud that is descending slowly upon the confidants. Confidants will eventually realise that there is in fact something hanging above their heads: numerous portions of white candyfloss. The candyfloss in this composition is a literal metaphor of sweetness to refer to a ‘glimpses of light’. It could also be a reference to the ‘circus’ reality of the previous scene. The candyfloss is lowered to a level reachable for confidants. The smell and texture invites them to touch and explore the cloud-like objects in front of them. Dina’s curiosity is obvious in her continuous stare. She smiles at the audience in a state of ‘double-consciousness’ and interrupts this perceptibility when she realised another cloud-like object is descending slowly from above her. Dina interacts with it as if it were a strange object, as if she was still in a dream. The aim here is to contrast the different reactions of confidants and Dina towards the candyfloss: familiar for confidants, unfamiliar for Dina. She does not eat the candyfloss but plays with it until she falls asleep again, while confidants probably taste its sweetness. See **Appendix 8** (p. 320) for dialogues. Listen to Disc 8, Track 4 for audio in **Appendix 14**.

### **Act 3 Scene 2 ‘Counter-shock’**

MRLens: strange effect

Somantic blurredness: synaesthetic correspondence, visual narrative through video

Lighting: blackout

This scene is a transition from the oneiric atmosphere, which will be followed by the ‘harsh’ reality that Dina must return to when she wakes from her ‘glimpses of light’. The composition consists of a short video, referred to here as ‘Water Arms’, which begins to play when Dina falls asleep. The video is a subjective portrayal that alludes to the notion of ‘glimpse of light’ based on the sketches where Dina discusses how those ‘glimpses of light’ became counter effect that intensified the ‘darkness’ she was in. The video displays a close up of an arm and a hand moving freely through bright, crystalline water. A calm, soothing song resembling a lullaby plays during the video. A tender song plays in the background. At a certain point, an image of the arm appears with text written on it: ‘Why does this feel so abnormal?’ A masked face appears suddenly through the running water implies the awkwardness that Dina feels with the water, even though she finds it pleasing. The bright image and the song fade out, and instead a text projection fades in, reading: ‘I wish I’d never tasted light’. See video in Disc 7, Clip 3. Listen to Disc 8, Track 5 for music

### **Act 3 Scene 4 - Back to darkness**

MRLens: strange and uncanny eeriness. Somatic play: subjective corporeal expression.

Lighting: from black to dim magenta and reds

This scene is based in excerpts that Dina shared from one of her journals. In them she describes trying to escape the darkness inside her, but aware that she could not, and aware that this was the only reality she knew, she immersed in it even more. The composition is a subjective-somatic interpretation and re-presentation of such feeling, through the body. The performer's body defamiliarizes from its 'natural' human movements and creates strange and eerie form. It aims to communicate to confidants on a sensory, somatic level. A cinematic music piece is used throughout the scene to intensify an uncanny atmosphere. Listen to music in Disc 8, Track 4:3.

### **Act 3 Scene 5 – Escape attempts**

MRLens: uncanny

Somantic play: miming

Lighting: dim orange

This scene explores Dina's sketch of the psycho-physiological harms she experienced in her need to escape her reality: alcoholism, drug addiction, bulimia, and self-harm. Dina had sketched these 'escapes' as her only way to externalise the silenced scream inside her. This scene aims to re-present Dina caught in the middle of two destructive situations: her reality at home and her 'escape attempts'. The scene explores figurative and conceptual forms that confidants may connect to and find points of reference to. However, notwithstanding the searches for familiar angles that confidants can relate to, it avoids presenting exhausted or habituated depictions. The composition explores miming motions that are commonly used for comic relief, but are made serious and eerie and slightly grotesque in this context. The three concepts that are figuratively represented by three mime characters in the scene are: a brutal and gruesome reality (Dina's parents); the escape attempts that offer an emotional and mental relief at a high cost of harm (self-abuse); and the destructive tension of the being caught in the middle (Dina). The mime act develops each of the escape attempts from being relieving to destructive. The mime act begins to conclude when Dina attempts to scream but her own self-abuse literally silences her. It finishes when Dina's father and her self-abuse encase her and paralyse her. The scene is contextualised by sound effects, while the lighting is dim to create a somber mood. It is a mime that explores familiar figurative

concepts scene that would presumably intended for comic relief, but are presented in an eerie and grotesque fashion that render it uncanny. This is achieved through absence of music and odd sound effects, the serious and unemotional interpretation of two characters, and the use of suggestive props (toilet seat, knives, rope).

### **Act 5 Scene 1- No Validation**

Magical Real lens: realism and objective anchor; strange effect

Somantic interplay: Speech and miming

Lighting: brighter green

This scene explores Dina's sketch of the occasion when she discloses her reality at home to her teacher. The composition aims to re-present a semantic, realistic narrative in a de-familiarised form through the performers' bodies, in order to heighten the reality of the narrative. The scene begins with Dina on the floor, where she was left on the previous scene. A voiceover of Dina's teacher informs the school director about her student's disclosure and their decision to call the police. Meanwhile, a performer interpreting the teacher's role walks into the scene where Dina is. She leaves Dina and rocks her in an attempt to comfort and console her. This physical enactment and the performers' expression are non-mimetic and strange manner. This rocking motion stops when a second voiceover of the school director informs the teacher that the police confirmed Dina was lying. Subsequently in the following movement phrase, the teacher suddenly lets Dina drop to the floor. Voiceover text in **Appendix 8** (p. 320).

### **Act 5 Scene 2- Boxed**

MRLens: realism; objective anchor; defamiliarization

Semantic play: dialogue

Lighting: green and pink

This scene re-presents the moment Dina visits a psychologist. The dialogue between Dina and the psychologist include details and information from other sketches, which are appropriate to disclose in this scene, such as her mother's mistreatment, and her practice with the occult. It ends with the particular instance Dina had sketched with the psychologist, where she asks her to imagine a 'prince charming'. A situation particular to this scene is that this is the first moment in the performance where the role of Dina involves dialogue, thus implying a more direct re-presentation. The purpose was therefore to find a third-person view in the conversation through a distanciation

technique, which consisted in slightly estranging the dialogue by speaking in fast and slow speed, and pausing between words. Furthermore, a literalisation of metaphor further defamiliarizes the dialogue and heightens its subjective meaning. The scene is located near the confidants, to create an intimate atmosphere with them. The performers wear wireless microphones, so they can whisper and speak softly throughout their conversation. When the scene begins, Dina is kneeling inside a horizontal box on the ground. She begins to exit the box from an uncovered end. The psychologist surprises her from one side of the box. Dina encourages herself to talk and gradually engages with the psychologist in a fluid dialogue. Towards the end of their talk, the psychologist asks Dina to imagine herself in the dark place of the sexual abuse she has had, and visualise a 'prince charming' coming to rescue her. The conversation stops abruptly. The psychologist adopts and holds a still frame. Dina exits the box as if escaping this moment of being downplayed and misunderstood. She stands and faces confidants, yet stares to nowhere, overcome by this moment. A voiceover narrates verbatim the inner thoughts that Dina had sketched. See text from live dialogue in **Appendix 8** (p. 320).

She told me to lie to myself, and if this was the help I hoped for...Then what is there beyond...nothing...no ground below...run away from nothing and you can't, because there's nothing there; it wasn't a conscious decision to die, it was just...nothing.

### **Final Scene- Nothingness**

Magical Real lens: dream or hallucination

Lighting: green and pink

This composition begins with various voices addressing the name 'Dina' in voiceover. The commentaries are questions and reactions that reflect people's response to Dina's 'alien' life-situation when she was young. As the voiceover plays, performers arrive to the scene and surround me. Through physical contact, each one attempts to provoke a reaction from me, but I remain motionless. The performers gently place me inside the box where I had been hiding. The performers exit the scene. Sombre music plays, and knocking inside the box is heard towards the end of the piece. Voiceover text in **Appendix 8** (p. 320).

#### **4.4.4.3 Assemble Stage**

Once a general script of all the sketches had been composed, the next stage involved finding the needed collabor(art)ists to participate as actors, to provide assistance with sound editing, and operate the lighting. This stage took place in Manchester, UK, because I had more connections for collabor(art)ists in this city than in Sheffield. An

acquaintance offered to provide points of contact of artists who would be interested in volunteering. The group of collabor(art)ists consisted of: three actresses, a music producer, a sculptor artist with experience in lighting, and a participant who provided significant assistance in this stage and the next phases. The dynamics consisted in briefing each person with the intention of the work-in-progress, mentioning Dina's absence and agency over the performance, and presenting scripts with their respective scene composition. Various sessions conducted with the collabor(art)ists included: working with the music producer to create and edit sound compositions; a few meetings with the actresses to review the dialogues, record the voiceovers, and devise the miming scene of 'Escape Attempts'; a couple of meetings in the performance space with the artist who provided lights gels and operated the lights. Please see **Appendix 10** (p. 325) for details of the collaborations.

#### *Devising through my body*

This medium involved both instinctive and noetic creativity, to internalise and externalise various phrases from Dina's sketches and her journal excerpts. Similarly to the technique followed in the previous case study, I video documented some of these improvisations, with and without sounds or music, in order to develop a corporeal vocabulary for the performance. Furthermore, semantic modalities were considered for the sketches that would lose their level of objective meaning if composed on a somatic modality. Moreover, I explored somatic modalities for sketches of subjective content that could not be as entirely expressed through words. *See Disc 9 CSA for clip excerpts from this process.* This final stage marks the conclusion of the Composition Phase. The next two sections display the technical and logistic dynamics that occurred in each case study during the Ensemble Phase and the commun(e)ication event.

#### **4.5. Ensemble Phase**

This section describes the ensemble & production events conducted in each case study. The ensemble & production phase in both case studies was completed in journeyers' implicit presence. It is important to clarify the processes in this phase were conducted on a low budget and with limited support. This scenario entailed the impossibility for rehearsals, but it was possible to conduct one run through before the commun(e)ication event took place. Accordingly, these situations may demonstrate re-creative scenarios that may confront similar same circumstances of time, budget and collaboration restraints.

### **Nahom's Performance**

The initial procedure in this case study was meeting the necessary arrangements to meet Nahom's unexpected absence from the performance. The first step was to evaluate a male personality appropriate to represent Nahom's role. I searched for a person with specific traits, in order to maintain a role as close as possible to Nahom's personality and persona. The initial criteria were: a person who possibly shared circumstantial similarities to Nahom: an artist and foreigner in Italy; a sensitive person who would connect with Nahom's story and character; a person that would be comfortable to perform particularly through movement. The criteria were met by an artist friend who was willing to participate and who coincidentally resembled Nahom's physical features. Mr Atehortua and I met on a few occasions to discuss the performance around Nahom's story, and organise some of the corporeal phrases.

The second arrangement involved the invitation of Colombian artist, Natalia Pontón, to prepare the sketches and paintings that Nahom had planned to prepare for the performance. Nahom's back problem restrained him from leaving his residence frequently, and this impeded him from further collaboration for the performance. He considered Ms Pontón's collaboration a favourable addition to the performance. Ms Pontón painted an icon of Jesus' Sacred Heart, the image of the woman threading a needle, and the contours of the Vessel Woman.

### *Space & Montage*

The montage consisted in adapting the *mise-en-scène* to the space in the space. Being the crypt a historical landmark, it was not possible to manipulate the walls or the floor. The first task entailed transforming the crypt into a prison, by building a wall from wood boards and white fabric in order to uniformly cover the tombs that were only located close to the surrounding walls and use the fabric as projection screens. Four thick columns in an outer circle from the centre of the space were used as dividers to set up different scenes in between them. Chairs were located in the inside of the columns. The technical equipment and backstage were strategically hidden onto one corner of the space. The lighting used consisted of the three floor lights in the space and additional lamps. Lastly, the set involved placing diverse surface materials around the space for the paintings and the 'Hewan in Prison' scene. The space invited a free itinerant flow of the audience throughout the space. Alternatively, audiences were able to see various scenes from the centre of the space.

### *Ensemble*

The ensemble was formed by four participants in charge of projections, lights, visuals, sound and set arrangement.

### **Dina's Performance**

#### *Montage*

The montage firstly required dismantling the café's arrangement. The performance's set up consisted in adapting three levels of the space, the biggest one in the centre, and two smaller upper levels on opposite sides from the centre. A wide semi-circular curtain suspended from the ceiling was used to separate the backstage and to conceal the upper levels of the space. Two white fabrics hanged from different sides of the wide curtain, where the videos would be projected. Six colour light gels were installed onto the lighting equipment. The set included a puppet house, a table arrangement covered by curtains, a wooden frame, and extra tables, chairs and stools.

### *Ensemble*

The ensemble was formed by three participants who conducted lighting, video projection and sound. In addition, the performers performed backstage roles.

### **Confidants**

Neither Dina nor Nahom had determined to invite a specific group of confidants, and were glad to open an invitation to a general public. However, Nahom was not keen to invite personalities involved with Eritrean and/or refugee organizations in Rome. I did not question his personal preference or inquire further on this decision. I suggested the participants and collabor(art)ists to personally invite one person each, in order to create an intimate environment of 10 to 20 confidants. The confidants for both commun(e)ication events were invited by word of mouth. The aim was to present the performance in an intimate space with few audiences per performance, and assess the feasibility to organise various commun(e)ication events for each performance. For the case studies, there was only one commun(e)ication event per performance. The audiences were informed about the research nature of the works-in-progress.

#### **4.6 Commun(e)ication events**

This section describes the occurrence of the commun(e)ication events. Each work-in-progress was presented once and documented in video, which will be referred to in the following. In addition, **Appendix 12** (p. 352) displays additional information of the events' location and dates. Also, a guide of the scenes, with its respective translations is included. It should be mentioned that the work-in-progress had few elements missing from the original compositions presented in the Composition Phase of this chapter. The following chapter addresses and discusses the commentaries from journeyers' and confidants, and provides reflections from the commun(e)ication event.

#### **Nahom's commun(e)ication event**

The evening of the event, Nahom and Mr Atehortua met for the first time in the performance space. Being both musicians, Nahom spontaneously gave a brief kraar lesson to Mr Atehortua, following their friendly conversation. The rapport established was important because it created a minimal but significant connection between Nahom and the performer who would be taking his place in the performance.

The audience was conformed of fifteen people from diverse nationalities, professions, and ages. 'Confidants' were gathered outside the crypt's space, where a participant delivered a short introductory speech divided in an informative section about the nature of the work-in-progress, followed by a specific instruction for the performance. First of all, they were briefly informed about Nahom's arrival to Rome, from Libya. It was specified that the performance was devised only from what Nahom desired to 'share' with them, and that every aspect of the performance was devised from his disclosures and a from a creative process initiated by Nahom and completed by the people who collaborated with him. Also, they were informed, with Nahom's consent, that although a current physical limitation would restrict him from performing, he would be present in the space. Finally, the instruction for the performance consisted in offering members of the audience to carry items that would be used at a certain point. The criteria for this introduction consisted in making the audience aware the performance was directly conceived by the journeyer, and to provide an initial objective reference to provide a veracious context to their experience.

In the performance space, confidants walked, stood, or sat closely to the performers. Nahom remained sitting for most of the duration of the piece. In spite of the intimacy and closeness of the space, the darkness and dimness of the space permitted an

individual privacy for confidants and Nahom. An interesting feature important to note here, was the meta-theatrical moments that resulted from Nahom's presence in the space as an observer rather than a performer. Firstly, Nahom represented himself as an observer in the space, and sang and played live amidst the confidants. Also his presence was also mediated in the film and the voiceovers, while he was (re)presented by a performer. Following the conclusion of the performance, the commun(e)ication event continued in spontaneous chats between confidants, Nahom and all the participants.

#### *Guide to Nahom's somantic artwork*

The video documentation of the work-in-progress is available in **Appendix 14**, Disc 10. As mentioned in the Composition Scenes (Section 4.4.3.3), limitations in the work-in-progress unmatched the original scripted scenes. The following guide aims to provide references during the assessment of the video, if needed.

- **Appendix 11** includes a scene rundown of the performance (p. 326)
- **Appendix 5** presents the a textual translation of the live dialogues, voiceovers, and text projected during the performance (p. 312)
- **Appendix 14-** Disc 4 contains original files of videos projected in the work
- **Appendix 14-** Disc 5 contains audio files and guide of musicalization
- **Appendix 13-** Various comments from confidants and journeyers' feedback on the commun(e)ication events will be addressed in the next chapter (p. 353)

#### **Dina's commun(e)ication event**

The audience was conformed of 10 people from diverse nationalities and professional backgrounds. Confidants were welcomed to a lobby were they gathered and spent time chatting before the performance began. At the lobby, a participant introduced the performance by providing a background of the nature of the work-in-progress and addressing several points. Firstly, the audience was introduced to Dina as a young lady who moved from Scotland to Sheffield in the past few years, and desired to address difficult aspects of her upbringing, one particularly that she had not publicly 'shared' before. Also, the audience was informed that the performance was devised only from conversations with Dina that took place in various encounters, and that Dina preferred not to perform. The audience was informed about the technical problems with the lights.

Confidants were led from the lobby to the performance space, where they found a small area with couches, chairs, and cushions on the floor, not far from 'centre stage'. They

were left in the dark throughout most of the duration of the piece, while the rest of the space was illuminated. Performers interacted with confidants at different points throughout the performance. When it was concluded, there were also spontaneous chats amongst the confidants and participants. Since the space had to be reset to a café setting and evacuated at a specific time, everyone helped to dismantle the stage and arrange back all the furniture, clean up, and so forth.

*Guide to Dina's somantic artwork*

The video documentation of the work-in-progress is available in **Appendix 14**, Disc 11. Similarly as in Case Study A, limitations in the work-in-progress unmatched the original scripted scenes. Please refer to Section 4.4.4.2 for the original compositions. The following guide aims to provide references during the assessment of the video, if needed.

- **Appendix 11** includes a scene rundown of the performance (p. 326)
- **Appendix 8** refers to the text transcription of dialogues and voiceovers (p. 320)
- **Appendix 14-** Disc 7 contains original files of videos projected in the work
- **Appendix 14-** Disc 8 contains audio files and guide of work's musicalization
- **Appendix 13** -Various comments from confidants and journeyers' feedback on the commun(e)ication events will be addressed in the next chapter (p. 353)

This marks the end of the case studies. The next chapter covers an analysis and conclusions of this chapter.

## **5.0 Analysis, Reflections, and Conclusions**

This final chapter presents conclusions and reflections for further research, made from analyses of the case studies. The sections are divided by order of subject from the outline of previous chapters, with an additional section discussing further application of the re-creation process.

### **5.1 Commun(e)ication of *traumatic/anew reality***

This section discusses relevant arguments and propositions addressed in Chapter One, which include trauma, commun(e)ication desires, the somantic continuum, and *journeyer-confidant Distance*.

#### **5.1.1 Journeyers' *traumatic/anew reality***

In regards to the trauma element, there are various important reflections to consider from the case studies: the assessment of journeyers' wellbeing, the presence or absence of traumatic stress in Nahom and Dina's realities, and their journey.

##### *Wellbeing*

During the Platform-meets-Desire encounters and the Grounding Phase, I received confirmation of wellbeing from both journeyers. However, I did not enquire further if they had been traumatised or if they had experienced traumatic stress before. One reason for not inquiring was because journ(art)ists are not expected to diagnose individuals under a clinical lens, but only to assess their wellbeing at present. Secondly, because an assessment of journeyers' traumatic history from a non-expert viewpoint may result in a probing situation, where journeyers may not desire to be interrogated. In both case studies, journeyers' confirmed their wellbeing and so did the experts that had worked with them at *VI.TO*. and City Hearts. However, such a straightforward scenario may not be always the case for every platform offer. Moreover, not every journeyer has the benefit of therapy or the possibilities of diagnose. As mentioned in Chapter One and Three, even when solely clinicians can perform a reliable diagnose, it is possible for journ(art)ists to assess journeyers' are not under traumatic stress and that they are in a state of wellbeing. However, if journ(art)ists are unsure of journeyers' wellbeing, it is preferable to avoid the re-creation without a professional supervision.

A conclusion drawn from the case studies suggests that even when journeyers confirm wellbeing and are not under traumatic or post-traumatic stress, it is important to further assess their recent history of wellbeing, in order to be better informed and make

a more knowledgeable assessment about their participation. In Dina's case, the criterion in relation to her uneasiness during a moment of a sketching encounter, and her decision to establish an absence during the live performance, informed that she displayed sensitive 'traces' from her past. Even though these were not signs of a posttraumatic stress disorder, it was still necessary to protect her wellbeing from the minor signs of uneasiness she manifested. Therefore, it should be valid for journ(art)ists to ask journeyers about present and immediate sensitive 'traces' or signs of stress, even when they confirm being in wellbeing. When Dina and Ms Brownlee confirmed wellbeing, for example, I did not consider inquiring further about Dina's past. However, a more sound and knowledgeable assessment could have been done. After researching further about post-traumatic stress, and having received further information from her and from Ms Brownlee when the re-creation process had begun, I conducted further assessment of Dina's past and history of traumatic stress, and I learned that her case had been a complex and severe one. Referring to Chapter One, the chronic childhood abuse she underwent refers to a case of complex trauma (Wilson 2004: 213; Herman 1997: 157).<sup>26</sup> Dina's history of complex trauma, assess the resilience factors presented her after her 'clash' of realities, as her further questions about present distress, and acknowledge that in her scenario of recent recovery of post-traumatic stress, could have signalled that she may still be under a process of recovery and sensitive to 'traces', even in the absence of a traumatic stress.

It was concluded that a 12-month recovery and therapy, in Dina's particular scenario, did not assure that the individual would be exempt from experiencing a possible uneasiness. It is important to clarify, nonetheless, that Dina did not undergo a major discomfort or stress from the sketching encounters. Her decision to interrupt her involvement in the re-creation was to due in great extent to the external factors of her engagement and conflict with parents. It was useful to note, for instance, that Dina reconstructed other difficult aspects of her past without any discomfort. However, her uneasiness during a reconstruction of a ritual memory did signal an important sensitivity. One hypothesis regarding this reaction is that this specific traumatic memory had probably not been translated to narrative memory before (Herman 2001: 9). Another hypothesis is that she had probably not shared this reconstruction with people outside a therapy context, and the re-creation context made her feel uneasy. Furthermore, the sudden uneasiness Dina experienced was possibly a surprise to her as well, since she had desired to sketch about SRA, and ensured she was in wellbeing to do so. This scenario underlines a crucial point, where journeyers are not aware of their

own sensitivity to certain aspects of their traumatic reality, regardless if they have already journeyed through recovery from traumatic stress. Moreover, there may be cases where neither journeyer nor journ(art)ist will be able to foresee a possibility of a certain kind of discomfort or uneasiness. It is therefore necessary for journ(art)ists to be prepared and knowledgeable in how to respond to such situations. In this particular re-creation with Dina, it is worth observing that the experiences and the encounters we had were positive and enjoyable with the only exception of that uncomfortable moment. The scenario with Dina stressed two important points for the re-creation process: the validity for further assessment of wellbeing, and the knowledge of how to respond in a possibility of discomfort. These precautions do not entail that the re-creation process implies a threatening situation for journeyers; it should be a recreational experience.

A proposal for further assessment consists in asking journeyers general questions that can inform on the possibility of a present or recent discomfort, based on traumatic stress symptomatology. Although the PTSD manual is a rigid model, clinicians assert that it can be useful to disregard a general existence of traumatic stress, and in addition, there are other references of symptoms that involve broader cultural and social variations, as mentioned in previous chapters (Drozdek 2007: 9). Secondly, journ(art)ists' role is to be knowledgeable of how to handle situations of uneasiness, and guide journeyers to a place of comfort and wellbeing. In addition, it is important to distinguish a sensitive kind of discomfort from a normal moment of displeasure that may be experienced if journeyers decide to sketch an aspect that is not necessarily 'pleasing'. Therefore, further research on empathic observation should be considered for this process.

Where is the 'trauma'?

Further reflections and discussions on the subject of traumatic/new realities were drawn from each case study. One observation confirms that people's different stages of recovery and resilience are not in their entirety a pathological journey of traumatic stress (van der Kolk 1987: 156; Wilson 2004: 10). In Dina's case, I learned that she had experienced a prolonged or chronic type of post-traumatic stress condition for years. It was not until she finished her internship at City Heart's that she recovered from such post-traumatic stress condition. After this period she was able to work, to live and interact socially, and also engaged in a romantic relationship. The proposal here is, however, is that once the journeyer overcomes a condition of stress and post-traumatic disorder, the journey does not abruptly ends. Resilience and recovery are part of a gradual journey, and journeyers may still carry psychological and somatic 'traces'

marked throughout the journey (Rothschild 2000: 44; Levine 1997: 122). In psychology these ‘traces’ are referred to as ‘affective memories’, which are ‘instinctive feelings’ from unpleasant experiences in the past (Roeckelein 1984: 41). Although Dina was not in a ‘traumatised’ condition when I met her, she commented during our encounters that she had a strong sensitivity to smells, avoiding those that reminded her of her father. She also said she experiences an uneasiness when objects are thrown near her, and a certain awkwardness when eating on a dining table. Also, her husband commented in the interview that they were creating a journal/photo album entitled, ‘Adventures in Normality’, where they documented Dina’s ‘normal’ experiences as a ‘fun’ way of continuous adjustment to a ‘normal’ life.

Dina’s reality suggests a complex traumatic scenario worth discussing as an example of what journ(art)ists should be aware of when offering platforms. In addition, her case illustrates the ‘clash’ or realities discussed in Chapter One. Dina experienced an extreme ‘clash’ of realities, in combination with an absence of important resilience factors. In Dina’s case, her ‘ordinary’ reality was in fact a ‘traumatic’ one. In other words, she was born and raised in a traumatic reality that became ordinary or normal to her. The ‘clash’ of realities in Dina’s life therefore began until she tried to integrate to society’s ‘ordinary reality’, which ‘clashed’ with her traumatic one. In the sketching encounters, Dina mentioned her shock and disturbing surprise when realising that her ‘ordinary’ reality was in actuality terrifying and brutal for everyone else. This scenario suggests that the shock may detonate only until a journeyer departs from a prolonged traumatic reality and ‘clashes’ with an ordinary reality. Furthermore, Dina’s ‘clash’ was of a highly extreme nature; in other words, her reality was extremely ‘alien’. Dina not only presented a case of systematic rape, but it was a sexual abuse in the context of satanic beliefs and rituals, applied and performed for over ten years by her own father and other sect members. In addition, she faced serious mistreatment at home and a misconstrued condemnation for her cleft and lip palate condition. Dina’s traumatic reality is extremely otherworldly and alien to universal values and culture.

Next, referring to the resilient factors mentioned in Chapter One, her resilient factors were limited. Dina did not know anyone else in a similar situation. She mentioned that the degree of her alien reality drove her to isolate herself from society. The factor of community or ‘togetherness’ in her case, was null. Another absent resilience factor pertains to the discrediting she encountered from society in regards to her experience with Satanism. Fortunately, Dina did encounter resilient factors after she left home: the

social support found in Christian communities, and a new faith where she found comfort and encouragement (Goldberg 2012: 8). Other resilience factors included her internship at City Hearts, meeting her boyfriend, and making friends within her church community. However, until present, she does not know other people who underwent her same situation, nor had she disclosed the SRA factor outside her support circles until the commun(e)ication event. Dina's case presented a scenario of complex trauma, extreme 'clash' of realities, history of post-traumatic stress, and absence of resilient factors. Even in this difficult panorama, the re-creation was successful: it was possible to protect Dina's wellbeing, to respect her implicit presence, and meet her commun(e)ication desires in the performance.

Following, observations of Nahom's case also led to important considerations in respect to trauma and traumatic reality. First of all, Nahom did not mention to have had a 'trauma' or to have suffered traumatic stress, while the staff at *VI.TO.* confirmed that he had not displayed any apparent stress or distress since he arrived to Italy, which was the same case during the re-creation process. Nonetheless, such observations cannot ensure whether Nahom encountered trauma and traumatic stress in his past or not. His reluctance to share about his life as a soldier in Eritrea, for example could have been a probable sign of avoiding distress from a traumatic situation (Herman 2001: 1). Contrarily, Nahom's case could reassure that not everyone experiences a trauma and traumatic stress after undergoing an event that is expected to be traumatising (Doctor 2009: 295). Nahom underwent what would be considered as 'extreme events' to many people: slavery and torture in the military, inhumane trafficking conditions across the Sudanese desert, and 18 months of imprisonment in a foreign country. However, it is valid to question the extent to which these events were 'extreme' or 'shocking' for Nahom, or not. The slave soldier system in Eritrea is an 'ordinary' situation in his country. This does not entail that Eritreans are not against it, but it is a reality that many people have lived with. In this case, Nahom's years in service and undergoing torturing treatments was not a shock or unexpected situation in his life. Following, his trafficked experience in the container was an event he was alerted about, since being trafficked to Sudan was the only option to leave Eritrea and was tolerated by many asylum seekers. This experience was not unexpected or alien to the people around him in his exile. The same situation applies for his experience in prison. Nahom knew the risks that embarking on that boat entailed, since many other Eritreans had also taken the same risk before. Many other Eritreans were detained in Libyan prisons at the time. Therefore, Nahom's imprisonment may have not been 'extreme' or 'shocking' for him.

Finally, upon his arrival to Italy, the contrast of that new life circumstance as a refugee from his previous life situations was not 'alien' or 'otherworldly' for Roman society, since many other refugees in Rome are similar circumstances.

In like manner, another scenario could be that Nahom may have found these events to be 'shocking' and 'extreme' for him. Upon his return to Eritrea to rejoin the army in the war with Ethiopia, he may have not expected to be forced to remain indefinitely. Having served the military for 6 more years could have been a shock and an extreme realisation that could have lingered upon his arrival in Italy. Also, the experience in the container could have been traumatising due to the 'otherworldly-ness' of such inhumane situation he underwent for the first time. Likewise, having travelled innumerable kilometres to sail closer to freedom on the Libyan coast, the close-to-death experience of the shipwreck and unexpected indefinite imprisonment could have been 'extreme' and 'shocking' for him. Ten years of slavery, exile and imprisonment could have been considered as complex trauma.

If the case was that such events were traumatic, Nahom's resilience factors throughout his 'extreme' and 'shocking' experiences, however, may explain a prompt recovery from a 'normal' traumatic stress, and his absolution from a post-traumatic stress condition. These factors pertain to the validation, support, togetherness and religious encouragement (Goldberg 2012: 8). Firstly, Nahom's military slavery was experienced in togetherness with other fellow countrymen. Secondly, such situation in Eritrea and the world is credited and condemned as an abuse, which bring validation to his experience. In addition, such acts of human trafficking are also reported as true and condemned as an abuse, which is a validating factor in society. The same resilient scenario took place in the shipwreck and imprisonment. His detainment in Libya was condemned by the UN refugee agency, and the support of his wife enabled his rescue by UN forces. According to Nahom's own statements, his wife's support and his Catholic faith encouraging him significantly throughout his difficult circumstances.

Next, it is worth assessing Nahom's scenario further in order to underline several reflections. Firstly, it can be confirmed that the existence of a trauma is relative to the person and the particular socio-cultural context and circumstances he or she encounters (Drozdek 2007: 9). Nahom is an example that events cannot determine whether someone will be traumatised or not, since the notion of 'extreme' and 'shock' is relative to the person (Doctor 2009: 25). Secondly, it confirms that a person who undergoes traumatic

stress does not necessarily continue onto enduring a post-traumatic stress disorder, but can walk forward to a normal recovery from the stress (Wilson 2007: 8). From this assessment, it is necessary to consider the notion of 'journeyer' and question if Nahom would be considered a 'journeyer', if the case is that he did not encounter a trauma. It was concluded that Nahom's experience was still an 'extra-ordinary' life experience that involves an 'ordinary' and 'anew' reality. His new life in Rome is a return to an 'ordinary' reality that is nonetheless anew, since he spent ten years of oppressive experiences as a slave soldier and an exile. The concept of '*anew reality*' therefore, could expand to signify a change of life circumstance as a result of an 'extra-ordinary' experience. In this sense, instead of a *traumatic/anew reality*, it is an 'extraordinary'/anew. Therefore, a further consideration of the re-creation process could expand to commun(e)icate desires of people who are in journeys that have not been necessarily traumatising, but are a result from an extraordinary event and *anew reality*.

#### *Remarks*

To finalise this section, I address important conclusive remarks regarding the journeys after an encounter with trauma. First of all, people's journey with trauma is of no formulaic certainty, and is dependant upon numerous variants and factors particular to journeyers' socio-cultural and personal circumstances (Drozdek 2007: 9). Although some generalities can be made and supported by research, an absolute certainty of symptoms, time frames, and explanations for particular responses in journeyers is not feasible. Many aspects of trauma are yet a mystery, and the journey is not necessarily a linear path (Wilson 2004: 7; van der Kolk 1987: 156). Finally, journeyers will always walk with a past that cannot be erased, and an *anew reality* that must be faced. Dina's *anew reality*, for example, will mostly likely entail a continued disconnected relationship from her parents, which is a trace of her traumatic reality. Her *anew reality* will demand explanations about her parents' absence in her life and her preferences of not eating at certain social events. Dina therefore will continue to journey with such traces from a traumatic reality. This would be the same case for any other person whose ordinary reality encountered a 'clash' with a traumatic reality, like the death of a loved one. Conclusively, it is emphasised here that the concept of 'journeyer' and 'journeying' in this research, does not imply a constant journey with trauma or a traumatic stress condition but with an *anew reality*. Dina and Nahom exiled their traumatic or 'extraordinary' realities respectively and continue journeying into their new lives.

### 5.1.2 Commun(e)ication Desires

From the initial observation of Dina and Nahom's commun(e)ication desires, which were assessed during the Grounding Phase and towards the end of the Composition Stage, it was concluded that their desires continued to develop and take shape in a natural form, without being influenced by the personal direction of the journ(art)ist. In Nahom's case, for example, although he did not have an initial 'sketching direction', he sketched numerous moments of his exile and imprisonment, which reflected his desire to disclose his experiences after leaving Eritrea. Moreover, another emerging desire was to 'share' with confidants about his relationship with art and his continuous longing for his freedom. His desire palette showed the importance he gave to 'sharing' about his retrospective thoughts through his artistic perspective towards life. In this case, Nahom presented the case where a journeyer initially begins the re-creation with no particular commun(e)ication desire, aside from the platform offer itself. Therefore, the process of reversed agency allowed Nahom to examine and discover his own desires for the platform. Furthermore, Nahom had initially expressed interests and desires regarding the overall shape and making of the performance, and these were also concluded in the commun(e)ication event. Firstly, the commun(e)ication event offered sharing a personal story to an audience, as opposed to a collective story about refugees. Secondly, the re-creation process also contributed to his interest in learning about an alternative theatre style different from traditional naturalistic forms. And lastly, he accomplished his personal mission of supporting my research. Following, another important remark is the 'non desires' that emerged. Nahom did not desire to 'share' about his life as a soldier in Eritrea. He mentioned his desire was to 'stay away of trouble' with the Eritrean government and not want risk his life anymore. Second of all, Nahom had a reluctance to create new art for the performance. Nahom desired to find his own artistic platforms to create new work. In this case, offering platforms to artists entails a distinct type of collaboration and re-creation.

In Dina's case, the commun(e)ication event met her initial desire to 'share' her 'story' through artistic means. Also, she desired to publicly expose the SRA history in her past for the first time. Dina therefore presented a case where journeyers initially have an impending desire and promptly develop a clear sketching direction. Her desires developed into retrospective and introspective sketches about her reversed normal-abnormal life perspective, the hope and frustration she found in the 'glimpses of light', her perception of society's disbelief about SRA, and her desire to be validated. Consequently, the performance reflected to a greater extent these other colours that

developed from her *desire palette*, as opposed to the detailed exposure of her experience with SRA. A significant point raised in Dina's case, in regard to journ(art)ists' extent of respect towards journeyers' commun(e)ication desires, is a scenario where the desire may entail discomfort. Dina had been determined to 'share' about her SRA experience SRA, and yet she was not emotionally ready to do so. In this scenario, the protection of journeyers' wellbeing should not be compromised over their own desires. Journ(art)ists can promptly grasp an idea of the desire, find a negotiating point where the performance conveys it, without leaving the journeyer to continue in discomfort. Therefore, I suggested to her that the SRA sketches were already sufficient to develop the performance. This situation raises a point of attention for journ(art)ists, when in some cases, journeyers' desires may imply a difficult sketching moment. In this case, journeyers should be consciously willing to go through a sketching experience that is not necessarily pleasurable but that would nonetheless meet their own purpose and desire for the commun(e)ication event.

### **5.1.3 Journeyers' *traumatic spectrum***

Nahom and Dina sketched *layers* from their *traumatic spectra* in both objective and subjective layers of meaning. Both journeyers' natural course and reconstruction included subjective, affective and sensible states, as well as objective and intelligible. This variety in meanings and experiences in both semantic and somatic, 'magical' and 'real' expressions of their reality *spectrum*, stresses the importance of reversed agency and natural course of journeyers, which allowed them to construct the mosaic pieces that they want to display for that particular commun(e)ication event. Their mosaic was not shaped by a platform agenda, nor limited to one *layer* or the predominance of a somantic modality. Moreover, although journeyers preferred to 'share' their past, instead of focusing on their present reality, the sketching of their 'stories' was not limited to the 'extreme' events, but explored many other aspects of the rest of their spectra. Finally, the *realizations layer* was the one sketched the most in natural course. This *layer* allowed Nahom and Dina to sketch from an introspective and retrospective place, to elucidate on desires, intentions, reflections and interpretations of their experiences.

### **5.1.4 The Somantic Continuum**

The somantic continuum as a form of holistic commun(e)ication between journeyers and confidants was present throughout re-creation with Nahom and Dina. The sketching and composition stages offered a somantic continuum of activators that offered

journeyers a somatic freedom and preference to communicate during the devising process of their message. Nahom, for example, sketched these events through both somatic and semantic interplay, particularly through his body and his voice. Contrarily, Dina's preferred modality was inclined to a semantic play of conversing encounters. Both case studies presented examples in each of the creative phases where the journ(art)ist aimed to facilitate somatic or semantic play predominance, interplay and blurredness. It was observed that if journ(art)ists do not offer this continuum dynamic, journeyers are inclined to select the common modality by 'default', which the narration of the events. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between a preference, and a 'default' modality, and provide appropriate activators that respect journeyers' preferences and yet avoid a recurring 'default' position. In this sense, it was also concluded that above a structured somatic continuum approach, the most important element of the facilitation is to be sensitive to the preference of journeyers' communication modality. It is important to facilitate an exploration, but if they have identified a particular preference and do not desire to change it, journ(art)ists should not force journeyers to a constant somatic interplay, or their agency would be subtracted. Nahom, for example, displayed comfort and preference sketching in all modalities. However, he had expressed his unwillingness to draw or paint designs. Therefore, no sketch was propelled from this particular somatic form. By his own initiative, he later provided drawings he had already made in prison, which became the activator of 'references to personal creations'.

In Dina's case, she disclosed that she was sensitive to certain smells and touch. If the journeyer has such somatic sensitivity, it may be preferable to facilitate semantic play, as was the case of Dina's sketches. Since the encounters were interrupted, however, there were not many opportunities to explore a form of somatic strategy that Dina would be comfortable with, except for the exercise with pleasant smells and touch that she enjoyed. In the first encounter, she had suggested painting was a relaxing exercise for her; therefore, one sketching activator could have also focused on painting. Conclusively, the observations demonstrated how journ(art)ists can find a creative facilitation that adapts to the personal preferences and requirements of journeyers. Facilitating their preferred modalities was also important to reverse agency and ownership over their message. Moreover, this allowed them to feel comfortable through their chosen modalities as they explored different contents they desired to sketch.

### 5.1.5 Bridging Journeyer-Confidant *Distance*

Positive conclusions were drawn in respect to the *journeyer-confidant Distance* bridged through the commun(e)ication event. Although this matter will be further addressed in the following sections, it is important to highlight now certain aspects. One aspect to regards how the commun(e)ication events were the first instances where Nahom and Dina ‘shared’ aspects of their lives that they had not ‘shared’ before with their communities. Nahom commented that he had not shared about his exile and imprisonment with people in Rome, except for the close Eritrean friends whom he lived with. He made this comment expressing contentment. In Dina’s case, the performance carried desires that she had not expressed publicly before, for which she was also content. The fact that the audiences engaged with Nahom’s and Dina’s personal experiences and desires is one sign that *Distance* was bridged. Audiences’ act of confiding granted them an experience of ‘sharedness’ with journeyers. In addition, an the commun(e)ication event became an experience that surpassed communication in an informative sense. Journeyers ‘shared’ beyond ‘what happened’ to them. They ‘shared’ deeper and personal aspects of their experiences as they interpret them, and also, they ‘shared’ through the lens of their desires. This bridge is therefore a connection beyond information; it is an intimate event where meaning and experience is created and shared.

Another aspect to highlight pertains to the particular types of *Distance* that were bridged in the performances. From journeyers’ ‘end of the bridge’, the re-creation process respected Nahom and Dina by not demanding or expecting their re-enacting, ‘acting out’ or ‘re-living’ a perpetuation of violence. Although Nahom did re-create moments in prison through his body during the Sketching Phase, these sketches were a voluntary and appropriate communication modality, and from his point of view. In addition, the potentially gruesome acts in the performances were defamiliarized, and journeyers were not affected by these re-presentations. Following, from confidants’ ‘side of the bridge’, they were not repulsed or intimidated by the re-presentation of the harrowing layers of the performance, and neither were the performances witnessed as perpetuation of violence. The moments of disquieting effects and affects nonetheless transmitted their appalling reality that Nahom and Dina’s intended to transmit. Furthermore, the defamiliarization techniques used presented compositions in non-habituated, counteracting the de-sensitisation of audiences to images and events of oppression and abuse. Therefore, while journeyers’ sketching process did not demand revisiting or evoking their difficult experiences, at the same time, their re-constructions enabled journeyers to experience affective and intellectual evocations, without being

intimidated or repulsed, and contrarily, being bridged to journeyers' through their own personal response to the commun(e)ication experience. Since both ends of the bridge were respected, they were encouraged to come closer to each other in the commun(e)ication event, and distanced *Distance* is bridged.

A third aspect to highlight is the freedom of disclosure that Nahom and Dina applied to create and 'share' meaning and experience. Journeyers did not disclose what they did not desire to disclose. They silenced what needed to be silenced and concealed what needed to be concealed. This acknowledgement and respect to their *traumatic/anew reality* encouraged Dina and Nahom to commun(e)icate their desires. Journeyers may be more encouraged to commun(e)icate with confidants, when they are not demanded platform agendas that are not theirs. Confidants' freedom, on the other hand, consisted in respecting and acknowledging their power of engagement through the imagination. The performances did not intend to present traumatic realities or traumatising events, and neither to re-present these with the pretentious aim to 'traumatise' confidants or expect them to feel or experience what journeyers must have felt or experienced. Instead, the performances encouraged confidants to evoke and re-construct through their imagination, from the poiesis of Nahom and Dina's experiences. This 'co-creation' can potentially continue to bridge journeyers and confidants together in a commun(e)ication experience, which resides in a process of 'sharedness': while journeyers reconstructed their experiences through the construction of sketches, confidants evoked and created affective and intelligible meaning and experience from these reconstructions and re-creations.

#### **5.1.6 Confidants' Responses**

Continuing with the journeyer-confidant bridge, it is important to make mention that confidants' feedback of both performances have significantly reflected the aim of the commun(e)ication event to various degrees. The scope in this research and this chapter was not ideated to conduct a qualitative analysis of audiences and their reactions. However, at the end of each performance, confidants made several comments, and I asked them to send their reflections via email. Their commentaries illustrate how applying somantic continuum and aesthetic technique can bridge *Distance*, and encourage a somantic engagement of meaning and experience making. In this sense, audiences' comments reflected an intelligible and affective connection with Nahom and Dina beyond the somantic artwork itself. The commentaries have been included in **Appendix 13** (p.353). In brief they suggest audiences' creation of meaning and

experience in the engagement with multi-sensorial and somantic qualities of the somantic artwork. Moreover, the defamiliarization approach of Magical Realism sensitised and re-sensitised confidants to the traumatic without increasing *Distance* with this subject or with journeyers. Various comments underline audiences' connection made with Nahom and Dina through the somantic artwork, beyond the traumatic event. In Nahom's case confidants drew close to his voice, his breathing, his face, his dreams, his frustrations, and his strength, without centralising the traumatic events. In Dina's case, confidants became aware, engaged and confronted with the issue of SRA, and felt connected with Dina, even in her absence. From observations drawn based on confidant's feedback, it may be concluded that the *Catch-22 affair* was subverted.

### **5.1.7 Journeyers' Feedback**

As a matter of feedback of the commun(e)ication events, I asked Nahom and Dina to comment if there were elements of the work-in-progress that they considered should be changed. This point of inquiry was key and necessary because they had not been directly involved in the latter stages of the somantic artwork. Also, this maintained a reversed agency to protect their point of view and desires. Nahom shared his comments after the performance, while Dina preferred to send me a prompt feedback via email after she saw the DVD of the documented performance. Furthermore, I also include bellow a few comments journeyers had about their experience throughout the re-creation process.

#### *Nahom*

In regards to the re-creation experience, Nahom remarked the creative encounters were meaningful and enjoyable, and he missed them once they had concluded. He said he felt as if I had been with him during his journey. Nahom expressed gratitude for the re-creation, for my effort to make the commun(e)ication event possible, and the attentions demonstrated by myself and the collabor(art)ists. He was also very pleased to have created and continued artistic relationships with the collabor(art)ists that were involved. In regards to the critical view of the work-in-progress, Nahom mentioned he was excited about the space where the performance took place, and the proximity this allowed with the audience. He enjoyed how the videos and film appeared at different places of the crypt, and moved along with the audiences. Moreover, he was pleased with the overall outcome of the performance, indicating that it had been an insightful experience to consider for his future artistic projects. In addition, Nahom remarked that being an observer of his own performance alongside other confidants was both an interesting and strange feeling. The intimacy and darkness of the space offered him a

privacy that he enjoyed having amidst the audience. Nahom mentioned being particularly moved by the scene 'Hell without Libena' and 'Vessel Woman'. He commented that for a final performance, he would like to record the voiceovers again, as he was not satisfied with his acting and his singing. Furthermore, he indicated that although he would not change what is already in the performance, the overall mood was lacking liveliness and humour. His comment marked an important point of reflection and discussion, which added a systematic ingredient to the methodology. This will be addressed further in this chapter.

### *Dina*

Dina mentioned that the conversation encounters and the time spent during lunch and at the park were pleasing and enjoyable. She had not previously 'shared' some of the introspective and retrospective thoughts she had conveyed in our meetings with anyone, and this she regarded as a positive aspect of our connection and her trust. Dina expressed her appreciation for my willingness and effort to share with the public about such important matters in her life. Having watched the video of the work-in-progress, Dina sent the following comments:

It was very surreal watching bits and feeling very familiar with quite a few parts of it. I loved how alien it felt. The lighting made it look creepy like a bad dream. The video provoked the most emotion. The kitchen scene where it's like, me walking in and not raising my head, is perfect. The note and talking to Dina in the hospital was emotional. The part where the family is having dinner and the voice over is incredible. The video of you in the bedroom was captured well and seemed full of angst but not being able to read any word was a pity. The puppet bit was cool, but I felt that the seriousness of what was happening wasn't there. Maybe puppets, but a bit of something else? I don't know what, thought it should have short sharp bursts of reality maybe on a video? The smelling potpourri was really cool, and I could relate to the smelling and rubbing then the confusion. At first I had felt vulnerable wondering how you would interpret my life. I could see you put your heart into it and had understood the things we talked about. I wouldn't want to be in it as it's very personal. Only way would be at the end representing myself out of the dream. I think you did an amazing job Elli, and I feel special that you would pay such attention to these details in my life.

Dina's comments were insightful to inform on several aspects of the method. One significant comment pertains to the connection we established during the Sketching Phase, which, as she said, was satisfactorily reflected in how I composed and assembled the performance. Another important factor to note is how she said the performance reflected an 'alien-ness' that she identified with, and appreciated. I was also pleased and relieved that she was satisfied with how the SRA issue had been conveyed in the scenes 'Ritual' and 'Dinner Revelation'. Her comment about the Puppet Show not reflecting the seriousness of the subject has also informed and confirmed the more favourable aesthetic

lens of Magical Realism over the absurdist approach that I had used for that scene. Finally, her comment regarding her decision not to appear live in the performance or attend the commun(e)ication event, refers to the valid and varied possibilities and flexibilities of journeyer explicit/implicit presence in reversed agency. This variation of journeyer presence will be addressed further in this chapter.

### **5.1.8 Commun(e)ication and Communing**

The last discussion of this section pertains to the notion of ‘communion’ and (re)conciliation between journeyers and confidants in the commun(e)ication experience, in the scenario where journeyers’ may be absent during the commun(e)ication event. First of all, the principal condition for commun(e)ication to happen is for journeyers to share their commun(e)ication desires with confidants, notwithstanding that journeyers are not present in the live event. As it was observed in Dina’s case, she commun(e)icated with confidants through the performance, even in her absence during the event. In Nahom’s case, although he was present in the commun(e)ication event and had an extent of participation, he was not able performing before confidants. However, he was mediated exhaustively throughout the performance. Commun(e)ication is therefore accomplished when confidants experience and engage with a performance that has been sketched by journeyers, that carries their *Canvas of Desire* and that was devised in reversed agency.

Next, (re)conciliation exists when confidants attend and experience the event created to be shared with them, and when they confide and engage with journeyers’ desires and purpose, without being Distanced or perpetuating the *Catch-22 affair*. Considering these factors, (re)conciliation can also take place in journeyers’ absence from the event, although their presence is always the ideal scenario. In terms of a literal ‘communion’ between journeyers and confidant, the panorama must entail the physical level of ‘sharedness’ in space and time between journeyers and confidants.

In Nahom’s case, a level of ‘communion’ was possible because he was present in the commun(e)ication event. Nahom walked the space among the confidants, who were conscious and aware of his presence as an observer. Moreover, he also shared a moment of song with them. In Dina’s case, however, there was not a literal ‘communion’ of confidants with journeyer. However, the outcome of Dina’s performance and her comments regarding her preference not to perform live in her commun(e)ication event has informed that journeyer-absence scenarios carry a valid purpose, and reflect and

inform specific circumstances and desires of journeyers. Moreover, confidants' comments suggested they were able to connect with Dina through the performance, even in her absence. It is important to conclude that the notion of 'commun(e)ication' proposed in Chapter One, as the act of 'sharing' and conveying intimate thoughts and experiences, is therefore a central part of the commun(e)ication event, whilst the communing experience between journeyers and confidants remains as the 'ideal' scenario for a live and face-to-face 'sharedness' of the commun(e)ication experience, but this may not always be the case.

## **5.2. Traumagical Realism in somantic artworks**

This section discusses the aesthetic tools for the commun(e)ication events, including a detailed analysis of the qualities of 'total artworks' that were applied, and the retrospective conclusion of the *3 Movements* of **traumagical realism** as subversion of the *Catch-22 affair*.

### **5.2.1 The somantic artwork**

The performances were somantic artworks because both journeyers and confidants were engaged in a somantic continuum of creating meaning and experience. Since previous sections addressed journeyers' somantic devising, it is important to refer to confidants' somantic engagement. The aim was to intentionally stimulate confidants' experience of 'sharedness' on both intelligible-objective-semantic and sensible/affective-subjective-somatic levels. A brief analysis is presented here, of how Nahom and Dina's somantic devising and performances engaged confidants on various somantic modalities, offering them a holistic, meaning- making and evocative experience with Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication desires.

Following is an analysis on the somantic modalities channelled during the Composition Phase, and how these aimed to bridge confidants to journeyers. As referred in Chapter Three, channelling is the process of composing sketches into modes and channels of representation. Therefore the somantic intention appeals to confidants' somantic meaning and experience making through the performance. One compositional direction was using the channels in which journeyers had produced their sketches. Another direction followed various forms of activators in somantic variations. In addition, a semiotic awareness of semiotic production and signification was considered as a creative input

tool contextualized in the socio-cultural confidants. What is important to underline is that the performances demonstrated different somatic dynamics to explore different combinations and forms of communication that complement and enhance each other to make meaning. The presence of the semantic play fulfilled a signification that the somatic could not: in explicitness, objectivity, narrative, context, and reasonable and intelligible meaning. Somatic play was an immersive, subjective meaning-making invitation that engaged confidants sensibly, sensory, and physically. It spoke in a language that could not be fulfilled by linguistic articulation. Moreover, the scenes of somatic blurredness demonstrated possibilities of a semantic-somatic complementation and oneness that delivered meaning in ways that a semantic or somatic predominance could not equal. It must be clarified that a section on 'somatic interplay' is not included, because this takes place as each scene flows from a semantic play to somatic play throughout the performance. The following paragraphs present the somatic modalities used for Nahom's and Dina's performances.

### **Nahom's Performance**

#### *Semantic play*

In Nahom's performance, the moments of semantic play with confidants pertained to three different channels of re-presentation: voiceovers, live speech and text. Firstly, the sketches that Nahom constructed through semantic narrative in voiceovers were the conversations with the UN officer and the American journalist. A semantic play predominated in these scenes, since the aim was to convey the particular information of the dialogues. These sketches would have been more complicated to convey somatically, and the objectively realised in the semantic play would have been unfeasible to deliver in any other way. However, there was no access to video documentation of the container, the Libyan prisons, the shipwreck incident, and a suggestion through recreated locations would have not been as accurate as Nahom's voiceover description and the affective tone of his voice. Finally, the voiceover in the scene, 'The Artist', narrates Nahom's verbatim (translated) thoughts regarding his love for the arts. This narration could maybe have been conveyed also through visual metaphors, for example, but unique and affective tone of Nahom's voice could not have been conveyed in another way. His narration interweaves with the somatic input of his contrasting corporeal movements. Secondly, the scenes with live speech that emphasised semantic play were 'Hell without Libena' and 'Black Market'. Libena's conversation with Nahom, for example, could have not been conveyed through images in the subjective and objective manner in which this was accomplished through live acting. Non-verbal language would have been subjectively

and somatically appealing, but it could not have expressed the poem that Nahom wrote concretely, or the details about Libena's speaking out pin numbers on the phone so that Nahom could sell these in the prison, or Nahom's intent to convince her that he was well treated in the prison. The scene, 'Black Market', was an ideal semantic play to interact with confidants and also convey the type of merchandise exchange system inside the prison. The semantic play in these scenes was complemented by somatic input, which aimed to heighten the intelligible perception with sensuous stimuli. This interplay was particular of the scene SOS.

Finally, the semantic play of textual channels of re-presentation was used to convey sketches that would not be ideal for Nahom to express through live speech, but through other media. The scene, 'Whispering Walls', for example, was ideal to compose in visual text, since the inmates' messages were written on a prison wall. This scene was enhanced on a sensory level with music and candlelight. The other text in the performance appeared in the final scene, 'Eye Awakens', which informed confidants that Nahom's was rescued by the UN refugee agency, and he was reunited with Libena in Rome. This semantic play was contextualised and enhanced by somatic input of the Eye projection and Nahom's live singing.

#### *Somatic Play*

The scenes of somatic play in the performance had the aim to communicate on a predominantly subjective and sensory level. These were scenes that Nahom sketched in somatic play. The scene, 'Sunrise', for example, was a somatic and affective communication through Nahom's singing and the sunrise imagery. The scene, 'Trafficked', is also considered as somatic play, because it was predominantly subjective and evocative without a specific narrative context. Finally, the scene 'Adyoja Plays', aimed to communicate on a subjective kinaesthetic level. Nahom and Adyoja's movements, in combination with the lighting, the music and the sand aimed to be abstract significations to evoke predominantly somatic and subjective meaning. Finally, the scene 'Captured' is another scene that aimed to communicate on a kinaesthetic and somatic predominance. Although the sacks of rocks in the arms and wrists of the body provided a minimal context, the visceral manifestation of the body intended to be primarily disquieting on a subjective and affective level.

#### *Somantic Blurredness*

The scenes that highlighted somantic blurredness were mostly sketches that predominated on a somatic level, but were contextualised in a narrative form that

provided a conceptual and intellectual and conceptual engagement on the same level. The scene 'Solider', for example, transmitted kinaesthetic and somatic qualities, which were contextualised by military movements, in combination with war sound effects. The scenes 'Leaving' and 'Exile Sculptures' are non-verbal mime scenes that also provide a somatic narrative through the body, so that the intellect is engaged in a visual picture. 'Escape', for example, narrates a moment of departure from the 'war'. 'Exile Sculptures' narrate moments to escape and exile through various still frames. In both scenes, the bodies limping and the sound effects convey an somatic level over a semantic message, but there is nonetheless a specific context that confidants can engage with intelligibly as well. The Scene, 'Hewan in Prison', is a somantic blurredness that aims to simultaneously engage confidants on a visceral and conceptual level. The visceral dimension is captured through the performer's somatic impulses in her body, while the sound effects and artefacts in the set contextualise the body and suggests conceptual phrases of imprisonment and affective evocations personal to each confidant's meaning-making process. 'Vessel Woman' is a scene considered possibly more subjective than 'Hewan in Prison', and less visceral. The interaction between Nahom and the Vessel Woman could be intellectually interpreted on various forms and depths. Its abstractness over concreteness would probably encourage confidants to seek a conceptual resolution and hence create intelligible meaning over a somatic experience. Finally, the last somantic feature is the 'Cigarette Clock'. It is considered somantic blurredness because it operates on two simultaneous levels of signification. Firstly, it provides visual context that engages an intelligible awareness: Nahom smoking, Libena smelling the still life, Nahom missing Libena from a window, and Nahom building a cigarette house. Secondly, the composition and editing of the images through close ups, slow motion, and repetitions, enhances synaesthetic correspondences and somatic-subjective meaning.

Finally, the scene 'Try Until You Die' exemplifies the use of various channels that communicate on both semantic and somatic levels that complement to create both unified and stratified meanings. The scene is first inclined to a subjective-somatic predominance, through the Eritrean song that Nahom sings in voiceover, the movement of Adyoja that suggests subjective meanings. However, the drawing of the woman threading a needle, used as a conceptual metaphor, the text 'try until you die', written on the drawing, the number of kilometres travelled, and finally Nahom's fragmented poetic prose narrating the shipwreck in voiceover, interweave an objective-intelligible narrative that nonetheless evokes subjective and affective states complemented and enhanced by corporeal movement, music and lighting.

## **Dina's Performance**

### *Semantic Play*

The scenes with semantic predominance show different ways where an intelligible engagement expands confidants understanding of a particular sketch. During the composition stage, I considered using semantic play for the sketches that demanded greater understanding and making of meaning through speech and dialogue. The scenes 'Surgeons' Tea Time' and 'Boxed', for example, realise meaning objectively, concisely and concretely, which communicate specific events of Dina's life that other channels could not convey in such concrete form. The scenes 'Dinner Revelation' and 'No Validation' also contain speech as a semantic channel. However, other channels complement the meaning of the scenes, providing a richer intelligible meaning through the signification of various channels simultaneously. In 'Dinner Revelation', the silent acting of the family at the dinner table, for example, complements and contrasts the narrative in voiceover. While the voiceover implies what satanic families may do on an evening, the eating at the table enhances its grotesque meaning. Another channel is the projection of the children's drawings, which is both explicit and implicit meaning that complements and completes what the narrative suggests. The scene 'No Validation', presents the dialogue in voiceover by the teacher and school director's complemented by live corporeal movements that makes explicit and enhances what the dialogue is implicitly conveying. In both scenes, lighting is another channel that augments meaning by adding an atmospheric element. Another semantic play is the *Puppet Show* scene from 'Circus Time', in which the dialogue implies a satire of Satanism, made explicit through the contextualisation of the puppet house, the puppets and circus-style lighting. Finally, the sub-scene, *Dilemma Popcorn*, offers an intelligible engagement with confidants through a semantic dialogue, interweaved by the somatic input of confidants' interaction with popcorn. The complements of smell, taste and touch enhance the satirical meaning of the scene. Finally, the scene composed through video, 'Cursed Little Girl' is first inclined to a semantic engagement through the phrases written by an implicit little girl, the specific visual narratives, and the doctor and nurse's conversation in voiceover. However, the video also engages a sensible reaction, which was stimulated through music and physical enactments in the kitchen and with a mirror.

### *Somatic Play*

Somatic play was composed for the sketches that could be accomplished through a subjective realisation. 'A Hole in the Face' and 'Lullaby', are scenes with somatic predominance, because although they contain minimal narrative motions and music with

lyrics, these predominate on an abstract and subjective signification. The music of 'A Hole in the Face' enhances an atmosphere without providing a specific context, while the absurdity of the head mould is not disambiguated either. Therefore, the performer's motions remain on a subjective and somatic level. The eerie tone of the lullaby in 'Lullaby', for example, predominates over the message of the lyrics, while the body's awkwardness subtracts a concrete meaning that opens to intuitive interpretation. Following, 'Candy Floss' is a scene that also stimulates subjective signification through the body. Music and lighting in this scene enhance an immersive engagement. In addition, the smell, touch and taste of candyfloss aim to augment confidants' experiential making of meaning. These three scenes aim signification through an experience over concrete meaning. Such level of communication conveys Dina's sketches on a subjective level that surpasses what linguistic articulation could convey. Finally, the scene 'Back to Darkness' clearly aims to communicate in a somatic-instinctive predominance through the body. The strange corporeal movements, in dialogue with music and lighting, attempt to stimulate confidants' somatic reception and absorption of the scene. The subjective meaning proposed is one that could not be constructed as accurately through linguistic articulation or visuals, as it is accomplished through body movement.

#### *Somantic Blurredness*

The somatic and semantic begin to blur in the scenes that aimed to explore the indistinctiveness of semantic and somatic predominance. These scenes create an intentional simultaneous interaction of conceptual and sensorial correspondences. The scene, 'Surgery', for example, is a composition that aims to stimulate both sensible and intelligible engagements to an equal extent. It provides objective information that implies a hospital narrative: surgeons' outfits, the performers' motions referencing a surgery event, and sounds simulating a hospital monitor. However, the scene remains ambiguous, the surgeons' motions evoke subjective meaning, the lighting and sound atmosphere aim to stimulate the sensorial meaning, while the presence of the head mould on the surgery table underlines an absurd intent that defies a reasonable engagement. The composition therefore aims to convey meaning through one channel of communication, produced from the interplay of two channels. The sub-scenes of *Feeding Chickens* and *Mother Embrace*, from the scene 'Glimpses of Light', similarly provide intelligible and sensible stimuli as a tool to immerse confidants into the scenes. Both scenes interweave a short dialogue that provides an objective plot, with strong subjective accents and atmospheric music and lighting that enhance a somatic experience. In *Feeding Chickens*, confidants interact with a strong fragrant and odd

texture of potpourri, which adds both conceptual and sensorial meaning. In *Mother Embrace*, the strange mannequin-like embraces from Mother and Dina's Friend in fade-in and fade-out intervals, and Dina's awkward physical interaction with these embraces, aim to create objective and subjective meaning that completes what is not explicit in the voiceover.

The scene 'Nothingness' also interplays semantic and somatic meanings. Confidants hear Dina's introspective thoughts in voiceover, while they see a kinaesthetic message that augments what they hear. The voiceover and corporeal movements provide minimal objective information that is complemented by the subjective meaning of Dina's thoughts and of the performers' movements. Following, the scene 'Ritual' aims to arouse a somatic response and yet hint objective references to give a context for intelligible meaning. The somatic stimuli consisted in showing parts of the body in tension and struggle; the objective references were the phrases written on the skin and even the rope tying the feet. The sound composition maintains an abstract narrative to enhance an attention on the images and on the auditory correspondences these could evoke. Moreover, 'Clown Journalist' is a sub-scene of 'Circus Time' that through non-verbal corporeal narrative describes situation in concrete and intelligible meaning. Nonetheless, the strange and aggressive corporeal interventions interweave an instinctive signification that also appeals on a kinaesthetic, somatic level. The scene 'Escape Attempts' also aims to accomplish this effect, where disquieting corporeal motions occur in the context of a mime narrative. Hence, sensible and intelligible meanings can find a point of 'sharedness'. Finally, the video composition, 'Water Arms', from the scene 'Counter Shock', presents visual imagery without a narrative or context that aims to appeal to the senses and provoke a sensorial correspondence. Nonetheless, the text on the arm that appears towards the end provides a minimal intelligible engagement that adds a layer of meaning to the visuals.

#### *Reflections on qualities of a Somantic Artwork*

The compositions of Nahom and Dina's sketches in somantic continuum allowed confidants' to engage with journeyers' commun(e)ication desires on all levels of meaning-making and experience: semantic-objective play, somatic-subjective play and in somantic blurredness. One main affirmative conclusion is that the possibility of intelligible and sensible engagement of interplay creates a holistic experience that connects confidants closer to journeyers on both intelligible and sensible realities. This holistic approach does not restrain the content and form of journeyers' messages, and it

is not restrictive to one predominant level of perception and engagement for confidants. In this sense, it can address the subjective-affective-somatic and objective-intelligible-semantic of *traumatic/new reality*. The semantic and somatic dimensions blur in a somantic continuum, in a similar fusion as Magical Realism's shared dimension of the 'real'-'ordinary' and 'magical'-'alien'.

Referring back to Chapter Two, it is important to discuss the aesthetic elements and tools used in these somantic performances, which refer to the notion of 'total artworks'. The first feature is **multimodality**, which refers to the various media or channels of communication in a performance: lighting, sound, music, set, video projections, film, speech, text, corporeal movement, sensorial stimuli of touch, smell and taste. In the performances, speech and text offered contextualisation and explicitness; visual projections enhanced somantic interplay and synaesthetic correspondences; music and lighting augmented atmospheric immersion and directed the flow of the scenes; the set allowed for literalisation of metaphors; sensorial stimuli complemented and added personal layers of meaning while engaging the audience in a physical interaction; corporeal movement narrated and evoked both objective and subjective meaning. Each channel had a specific purpose of signification to complement and enhance the message their unique forms of expression. This last channel became a catalyser for both sketches and compositions of the performances, affirming a significance of the **physicality** feature. The body in Th & P is able to be in itself a multi-channel of re-presentation. In Nahom and Dina's performances, the body was an object of visual presentation; it embodied various allusive concepts; its movement offered kinaesthetic communication and developed a narrative language through live mime and mimetic acting; it was also a producer of sounds and a medium of interaction with confidants; finally, it was also mediated in video to be used for storytelling and as conceptual imagery.

The multi-layered signification of the body explored a dialogue with all other channels and served as connector of a dialogue between them. Furthermore, other two features that are related to a spatial approach of signification and interaction with confidants: **site-specificity/immersiveness** and **audience interaction**. In Nahom's commun(e)ication event, site-specificity/immersiveness was another channel of signification and re-presentation, which became a spatial metaphor of a prison. The presence of confidants inside the cold and dark crypt enhanced signification and experience, where even a distinct smell was perceived. Also, the space allowed confidants an interaction with the performers that enhanced somantic interplay and

meaning to their itinerant experience. In Dina's commun(e)ication event, the site-specific space allowed a nearness with performers that broke the 'fourth wall' during various moments of the performance. Also, it allowed performers to interact with the popcorn, the candyfloss and the potpourri.

One last feature, **synaesthetic correspondences**, was intentionally explored in the film, the videos, the photographic display, the sensorial stimuli of the popcorn, potpourri and candyfloss, and a few physical actions. The aim was to compel in confidants from these visual and sensorial stimuli, the finding of metaphoric sensorial correspondences through the imagination. The 'Cigarette Clock' film, for example, aimed to evoke smell and touch correspondences, in the close ups of Nahom smoking. The 'Water Arms' video imagery aimed to evoke correspondences with sound of running water and sensation of sunrays and touch. The photographic display aimed to create metaphoric correspondences to heavy breathing, gasping for air, a tense sense of touch, and the feeling of sweat. The smell, touch and taste of popcorn aimed to create a metaphoric correspondence to visual and auditory entertainment; the smell, touch and taste of candyfloss aimed to enhance a correspondence with visual imagery of childhood, of amusement, of sweetness and innocence; the smell and touch of potpourri aimed to create a correspondence with a fragrant, yet out-of-context visual imagery to the scene, in order to produce a strange effect. In addition, particular actions of the bodies intended to create a correlation from a physical position to specific sounds and visual images. One example is shown in the scene 'Hewan in Prison', when Adyoja and Nahom are wearing headlights and move their heads left and right with their opened mouths. This movement aimed to create correspondence with visuals of lighthouses and sounds of ship horns. Another example appears in the scene, 'Escape Attempts', where the tensed body and opened mouth of the performer aims to correspond with sounds of screaming. These examples demonstrate the potential of tools of engagement and multi-sensorial communication.

With these features, the somantic artwork continues in the intention to submerge confidants into a *shared dimension*, where the seemingly opposing intelligible and sensible meanings blur, and confidants may be engaged in a subjective-objective interplay and blurredness of intellect and affect. However, this does not disregard that confidants may have a preference of semantic or somatic meaning making over the other. Journeyers may also have a preference of communication modalities. What is significant to consider here, is that the re-creation process provides a holistic potential

of communication, and is flexible to prioritise journeyers' preferences as to how they desire to commun(e)icate. In both case studies, journeyers and confidants showed interested in exploring diverse ways of somantic expression, meaning making and reception of the message through the performance. The somantic continuum approach provided an opportunity to further appreciate both forms of play and interplay. As it was emphasised in Chapter One and Two, the somantic intention in a performance becomes a bridge between journeyers and confidants in their commun(e)ication event, through exploring levels of intelligible and sensible connection of meaning and experience.

### **5.2.2 The 3 Movements of the traumagical real: a retrospect**

The following section is first a discussion of the aesthetic technique of Magical Realism as the tool that bridges journeyer-confidant *Distance* and subverts the *Catch-22 affair* in the commun(e)ication event. Secondly, it presents observations about its aesthetic trace in Nahom and Dina's performances. It is important to remember that the magical real lens as an aesthetic tool and attitude in the performances was informed by analysing the presentations of the works-in-progress. Therefore, the magical real approach was to a great extent, a natural course of the composition towards finding an aesthetic to subvert the *Catch-22 affair*. The discussion here identifies specific techniques of Magical Realism, in each of the 3 *Movements*.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement- (Re)conciliation technique**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Movement* consists of two features. One consists in making the un-relatable and unbelievable of journeyers' *traumatic/anew reality*, relatable and believable: *the unfamiliar made familiar*. This is accomplished by the objective/realism anchor, allusion, and figurative and poetic language. This feature tackles the *Catch-22 affair* because it provides confidants a sense of identification and relation with the message. The second feature consists of making the exhausted forms and content journeyers' *traumatic/anew*, made re-engaging: *the familiar made unfamiliar*. This feature is accomplished through defamiliarization and estrangement techniques, which broadly include the non-mimetic, the literalisation of metaphor, juxtaposition and contrast, alienation effects, surprise, hyperbole and repetition. This feature subverts the *Catch-22 affair* because its defamiliarization subtracts gruesome aspects that may provoke intimidation, repulsion and fear in confidants, while its non-mimetic trait avoids a voyeuristic gaze.

Furthermore, this feature can shorten journeyer-confidant *Distance* by re-engaging confidants through a defamiliarization and re-presentation of what has been habituated/de-sensitised/fatigued in journeyers' view. This 2<sup>nd</sup> movement lens is used as a filter in the compositions, when the sketches are channelled into the performance. The following scene descriptions highlight the aesthetics of each feature in Nahom and Dina's performances.

### ***Nahom's 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement***

#### *Unfamiliar made familiar*

This technique presents aspects of familiarity and identification for confidants in the three main features: objectivity, realism, metaphor, allusion and poetic language.

#### Objective/realism anchor

Act 1 Scene 4- 'Leaving': Nahom and Adyoja's limp and walk after she falls in battle, while the sound of a distant whistle provokes a sense of realism and identification

Act1 Scene 7- 'Trafficked': Displays an ultra precise focus of the body, hands, the face, capturing the tension of the body, and the back, which carry a familiar intimacy to the gaze. Such ultra precision aims to achieve points of identification to a strange depiction.

Act2 Scene 2- 'SOS': This scene connects confidants with Nahom's details of his experiences, narrated in the voiceover conversations that he has with the journalist and the UN officer. The phone disconnections and redials are events that add realism and a relatable context.

Act2 Scene 3- 'Black Market': The naturalistic exchange of merchandise that Nahom has with confidants places them in a context of realism.

Act 3 Scene 2- 'Hell without Libena': Nahom's conversation with Libena presents details that create both an objective perception of Nahom's time in prison, and a realism of a relationship his partner, conveyed through realistic dialogue.

Act 3 Scene 3- 'Whispering walls': The text written on the prison wall contains details and objective references of reality, identifiable and imaginable for confidants. Moreover, the image of Christ connects confidants to familiar concepts of faith and religion.

Allusion, metaphor and poetic language

Act 1 Scene 1- 'Eye Asleep': Presents figurative imagery of an eye, which allows confidants to find a relation through their personal metaphoric connections with the image.

Act 1 Scene 2- 'Artist': Nahom in voiceover speaks to his confidants about his love for the arts. A poetic description of the pleasure he finds in drawing, painting, singing, and writing is a relatable point with confidants.

Act 1 Scene 3- 'Soldier': Particular corporeal movements that Adyoja performs allude to the movements from soldiers in battle, serving as an objective and contextual narrative for confidants

Act 1 Scene 5- 'Try until you Die': The image of the old woman threading a needle is a figurative reference that confidants can identify with and make meaning from.

Act 3 Scene 1- 'Cigarette Clock': The cigarette images in the film present metaphoric content of time and allusions to solitude that elicit universal connections for confidants.

Act 3 Scene 5- 'Sunrise': The projection of the sunrise provides another universal metaphor of hope.

### *Familiar made Unfamiliar*

Act 1 Scene 6- 'Exile Sculptures': The hyperbolic still frames performed by Nahom and Adyoja aim to create still frames that heighten a re-presentation of escape and exile.

Act 1 Scene 7- 'Trafficked': The de-contextualised and close-up photographs in combination with the use of light, aimed to suggest subjective states that Nahom described while transported in the container, as opposed to re-presenting refugees through the familiar images of crowded people inside a medium of transportation.

Act 2 Scene 2- 'SOS': The use of hyperbole in this scene aimed to defamiliarize a naturalistic, common interrogatory through the phone. Sound effects and repetition of the speech was edited for the voiceovers. In addition, the exhaustive representation of a prisoner hiding from guards, in this case conversing on the phone, was defamiliarized by

the total darkening of the space, Nahom nervous walk amidst confidants, and the frantic phone screen movement observed in the dark.

Act 2 Scene 4- 'Hewan in Prison': De-familiarisation plays a key role in this scene, which aimed to re-present the exhaustive concept of prisoners behind bars and being mistreated. The techniques included: strange motions and interactions with metallic fabric simulating prison bars; narrative sounds recorded by Nahom, which were also edited in rhythmic patterns; the use of live projection to show close ups of the body itching and scared; and the brusque repetitive movements on the floor, in interaction with rhythmic sound effects. Furthermore, the literalisation of the dog as metaphor for prisoners, and the metaphor for lighthouses, were used to defamiliarize and heighten the notion of mistreatment and of the hope for rescue respectively.

### ***Dina's 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement***

#### *Unfamiliar made Familiar*

Realism/objective anchor

Act 1 Scene 3- 'Surgeons' Tea Time': The conversation between the surgeons created a moment of realism and displayed objective details, recognisable by confidants and complementing the actions from the previous scenes. The conversation creates a familiar, intimate context for a perilous surgery.

Act 1 Scene 4- 'Cursed little girl': this scene suggestively referred to appalling situations about Dina's childhood through a video, in forms that aimed to find a realism that confidants can identify and connect with.

Act 3 Scene 1- 'Glimpses of Light': the brief dialogue in voiceover from Dina's friend and her mother allow a point of realism and information.

Act 3 Scene 2- Objective anchors are conveyed in Dina's verbatim phrases displayed in the video Water Arms, of the 'Counter shock' scene. The phrases, 'Why does this feel so abnormal?' and 'I wish I had never tasted light', provide an objective hint to the subjectivity of the scene and offer that confidants may grasp and relate to.

Act 5 Scene 1- 'No Validation': the objective anchor in this scene consisted of the familiarity of a naturalistic dialogue between Dina's teacher and the school director, in voiceover. This moment of realism suggests appalling events about Dina's childhood.

Act 3 Scene 4- 'Boxed': the dialogue between the psychologist and Dina, inside the box, provides perspective and details about Dina's relationship with her mother and other moments at home and at school, conveyed through both a familiar tone and a defamiliarized angle.

Final Scene- 'Nothingness': Dina's verbatim statement in voiceover in regard to the psychologist's disappointing session, offers introspective thoughts that confidants can find a point of relation with, even if they cannot relate to that moment in Dina's life.

Allusion, metaphor and poetic language

Act 3 Scene 2- 'Counter shock': the *Water Arms* video in this scene is a poetic visual that conveys universal imagery of freedom, pleasure and light.

Act 3 Scene 3- 'Back to darkness': the eerie corporeal movements refer to universal allusions of a perturbed or 'evil' being.

Act 3 Scene 4- 'Escape Attempts' – the mime motions in this scene display a figurative language that connotes different human struggles that confidants can identify.

*Familiar made Unfamiliar*

Act 1 Scene 2- 'Surgery': through a defamiliarized aesthetic of physical movements, this scene conveys the idea of a perilous surgery, while the estrangement aims to heighten and re-sensitise an event that is commonly habituated.

Act 1 Scene 3- 'Surgeons' Tea Time' presents a subtle defamiliarization and de-contextualisation, by locating the surgeons in a different setting and mood to that of a hospital.

Act 2 Scene 2- 'Lullaby': the re-presentation of the character from third-person view, also allows exploring an alienation effect by glancing at audiences and obviating a lack of emotionalism in the motions. This alienation also allows the defamiliarization of an anti-mimetic walk and struggle through the doorframe.

Act 3 Scene -1 'Glimpses of Light': this scene presents various glimpses of defamiliarization of events or images that confidants may be habituated to. When feeding chickens, for instance, the chicken crest diadem prop served as a slight non-naturalistic element, while the handing out of potpourri to confidants allowed a moment of *gestus* that distanced their gaze from a habituated scene of girls playing. The glimpse of the mother's embrace also was defamiliarized by the still frames of Mother and Dina's Friend, the lighting effect, and Dina's awkward interaction with them.

Act 5 Scene 1- 'No Validation' – The non-mimetic and unemotional corporeal interpretation of Dina and her teacher presents a hyperbolic defamiliarized representation, in contrast to the voiceover

Act 5 Scene 2- 'Boxed': aims to defamiliarize a typical verbal event of a client and psychologist conversation, by estranging parts of Dina's speech and placing her inside the box. The box from where Dina hides to speak to the psychologist is a literalisation of metaphor to Dina's alienation from society, and fear, which defamiliarizes the conversation.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Dis-alienation

#### *Reconciliation of worlds*

The aesthetic lens of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement focuses on blurring contrasts and distinctions between the 'magical' and 'real' elements of journeyers' sketches. This movement therefore offers techniques that blur objectivity with subjectivity, and the alien and ordinary elements of journeyers' sketches. This effect decreases contrast between these 'opposite' realities, rendering in confidants a familiarity with the alien that draws them closer to journeyers, as opposed to emphasising the absurdity of the traumatic, which increases a *Distance* between them. The techniques of this *Movement* revolve around: uncanny, 'matter-of-factness', a child-like naivety, a lack of emotionalism, and effacement of perceptibility.

### **Nahom's 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Act 1 Scene 2- 'Artist': this scene presented uncanny movements that allude to enactments of beatings and confinement, done so in calm and slow motions, which rendered disquieting but not brutal, and therefore engaging.

Act 1 Scene 3- 'Soldier': this scene presented movements that could provoke a disturbing effect, and yet were performed through a child-like naivety, which rendered them almost playful, creating an eerie yet ridiculous event.

Act 1 Scene 7- 'Trafficked': the photographs in this scene were created to explore an uncanny defamiliarization that rendered eerie images of the body that are disquieting yet mysterious and engaging

Act 2 Scene 1- 'Captured' – this scene performed in a lack of emotionalism, presented the body in a disquieting action, with sacks of rocks tied to the wrists and ankles, and the face covered, suggesting with uncanny motions subjective states of torture and incarceration, in an aim to present a familiar concept in a disquieting form, without provoking surprise.

Act 2 Scene 4- 'Hewan in Prison'- this scene was performed in lack of emotionalism and 'matter-of-factness'. It aimed to provoke an uncanny atmosphere that engages the stare to a disquieting act that blurs familiar and unfamiliar enactments, thus, engaging without aversion.

Act 3 Scene 4- 'Vessel Woman'- The elements of surprise and the extraordinary occur through the painting taking life and interacting with Nahom. This event creates a literalisation of metaphor that, although unrealistic or impossible under the laws of nature, it is not disregarded as a valid event. Accordingly, a 'matter-of-factness' tone is present through the performers' conscious obliviousness of the 'unrealistic' event.

### ***Dina's 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement***

Act 1 Scene 1- 'A Hole in the Face': the performer observes and interacts with the head mould through a childlike naivety that consequently creates a 'matter-of-factness' tone about the strangeness and questionable significance of the head mould. In addition, it creates an uncanny ambient through the familiarity of the concept of a 'display', which is made strange by the unfamiliarity of the exaggerated hole, and the eerie music.

Act 1 Scene 2- 'Surgery': is an uncanny moment because although the event of the surgery is familiar, several features are added that render it eerie: the head mould on the surgery table, the strange surgeons' unemotional motions, the suspenseful music, and the blue dimness of the lights. Furthermore, the literalisation of Dina's metaphor for her

cleft lip and palate as 'a hole in the face' creates a strange effect that enhances an uncanny angle. The performers display 'matter-of-factness' to this strange situation of doing surgery on a head without its body.

Act 2 Scene 1- 'Dinner Revelation': is a scene that uses a child-like naivety to emphasise the 'matter-of-factness' about SRA. This tone is underlined through the satiric narrative in voiceover. These effects aim to reflect the child-like view of Dina, who perceived the SRA events as ordinary.

Act 2 Scene 3- 'Ritual': is a moment that presents a familiar-unfamiliar commingling, which enables a re-presentation of the sexual abuse from an unfamiliar angle that nonetheless exhibits familiar and relatable elements, for which is not shocking or perturbing. The reference to the sexual abuse, for example, is made unfamiliar by the isolated and abstracted body parts, and the absence of human sound. This unfamiliarity is made familiar by the exposure of the feet tied in a rope, by the ultra precision of the body's muscular tensions, and the written text. In addition, the sound composition creates an abstract, unemotional, and yet intriguing atmosphere. The scene aims to provoke an uncanny situation which continues to engage instead of intimidate, repulse or distract through a perceptibility of the performer's acting.

Act 3 Scene 1- 'Glimpses of Light': is composed through a child-like naivety that emphasises Dina's interpretation of her experiences, through her eyes, rendering what happens in these scenes, believable and valid.

Act 3 Scenes 3- 'Back to Darkness': aims to suggest a sinister effect through the eerie corporeal movements, the suspenseful music and dim dark lighting. The familiarity of the performer's human body and its unfamiliar contortions render an uncanny effect, which does not provoke repulsion, but a disquieting curiosity.

Act 3 Scene 4- 'Escape Attempts': is a mime scene that explores familiar figurative concepts that would presumably be intended for comic relief, but are presented in a eerie and grotesque fashion that render it uncanny. This is achieved through the absence of music, odd sound effects, the serious and unemotional interpretation of two the characters, the use of suggestive props (toilet seat, knives, rope), and dim lighting. The aim was to re-present the gruesome aspects in a disquieting 'matter-of-factness'.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Movement**

#### *A 'strange effect'*

The 1<sup>st</sup> *Movement* contextualises the 'alien' nature of a *traumatic/anew reality*. The features of this *Movement* therefore emphasise particular characteristics of the traumatic: the foreign element, stratification of reality and time, metamorphosis, the ghostly, and the hallucinatory or oneiric. Not all of its characteristics are to be present in the sketches, because this depends on each journeyer's depiction of their traumatic/anew world. In Nahom's case, for instance, he focused his sketches on exile and imprisonment, which developed stratification of various states of experience: captivity, longing, nostalgia, and reflection, pleasure and play through his artistic view of the world. A hallucinatory element pertains to Nahom's visions of exile and prison from a subjective and poetic retrospection that render his experiences as 'dream-like'. Nahom did not sketch ghostly, metamorphic, foreign aspects of his traumatic reality. In Dina's case, her sketches were focused on the stratification between normal and abnormal, light and darkness. Dina did not sketch ghostly or hallucinatory aspects of her reality, which were rather apparent during her traumatic stress condition after she escaped home. Moreover, a metamorphosis comes later in her life as she transforms from the girl who left her home to Dina; but these two elements were not sketched for the performance. The foreign element in this case is the SRA factor. This 'foreign' quality pertains to the alien nature of such reality, which became the central piece of the performance.

#### ***Nahom's 1<sup>st</sup> Movement***

Act 1 Scene 1- 'Adyoja Plays': presented an oneiric atmosphere through the initial presence of the 'Eye Asleep' in the dark space, the illusory music ambient, the physical play of Nahom and Adyoja, the warm lights above their bodies, and the coloured sand continuously flowing in between them.

Act 1 Scene 2- 'Artist': is a moment of stratification that simultaneously displays Nahom's pleasurable relationship with art and the oppressive reality of confinement he lives through for many years. The stratification juxtaposes Nahom's tranquil voice speaking in voiceover with his corporeal positions suggesting incarceration.

Act 1 Scene 7- 'Trafficked': the alluring and bright animation juxtaposed with the photographs aimed to provoke a hallucination effect

Act 1 Scene 5- 'Try until you Die': presents simultaneous layers of movement, image, text and sound, to display various meanings which all at once may render bewildering. Adyoja's motions suggest entrapment, in reference to being 'trapped' in the sea; Nahom's poetic narration depicts the shipwreck event; the music suggests Nahom's nostalgia; the drawing suggests an impossible feat; the text 'try until you die' describes perseverance; the number of kilometres gives a fact that contextualises the meaning of 'trying' until death.

Act 2 Scene 2- 'SOS': juxtaposes two main layers of signification: the voiceover of the phone conversations in loud and intensified effects, and the phone screen and flashlight moving nervously across the dark space. This stratification aims to provoke a disconcerting moment for confidants.

Intro and Final Scenes- 'Eye Asleep' and 'Eye Awakens': the video projections of the eyes had the certain familiarity of the human eye and yet were made strange by projecting them across the walls in the dark and having colour effects which created an oneiric, 'strange' effect.

### ***Dina's 1<sup>st</sup> Movement***

Act 2 Scene 1- 'Dinner Revelation': provides an example of the stratification of realities in Dina's life: one reality is seen through Dina's eyes, while the other represents Dina's view in retrospect. The layer of the male voiceover speaking in a sarcastic child-like naivety implies gruesome events that Dina was habituated to. The second layer is the 'ordinary' family dinnertime that occurs before going to the sect's rituals; this layer represents a habituated reality for 'old Dina', and a morbid reality for the present. Finally, the ritual drawings of the SRA child victims' re-present the child-like view of Dina, while they magnify the horror of what Dina went through. The implicitness of the gruesome and morbid that is being presented through a child-like naivety heightens an 'adult' view, thus an awareness of Dina's view in the present.

Act 2 Scene 4- 'Circus Time': stratification in this scene had been ideated under a estrangement and absurdist lens more so than magical real, because it contains elements of alienation by the direct address of confidants, satire, dark humour, juxtaposition and contrasts between and within scenes, as well as defamiliarization techniques. The strange and absurdist composition is intended to magnify Dina's introspective thoughts regarding her understanding of SRA as an alien and unimaginable topic for an 'ordinary'

society. However, this scene also contained journ(art)ist's input, through the emphasis of SRA being discredited by mainstream media, in order to emphasise Dina's 'lonely' struggle in the attempting to be validated. The scene stratified three layers of the reality of SRA throughout the three different moments of the scene. One layer obviates the notion that Satanism and SRA is a fabrication of society, represented by the puppets and the popcorn as an allusion to a circus show. The second layer magnifies the view that SRA exists but is not validated, since it is difficult to prove; this is conveyed through the performer's direct address to confidants. A third layer suggests that SRA is arbitrarily discredited in spite of evidence, represented by the journalist/writer who is mocked and silenced.

Act 2 Scene 4- *Puppet Show*: is a strange event, a foreign element, beginning with the abrupt and contrasting change of scene from the serious portrayal of 'Ritual'. The familiarity of the 'circus' theme and the puppet show, added to an odd conversation about Halloween and satanic rituals, aims to create a strange and absurd atmosphere in order to distanciate confidants' gaze with a critical view about the subject in matter.

Act 3 Scene 1- 'Glimpses of Light': aims to create an illusory context that re-creates Dina's dream-like sensation when she encounters the 'glimpses of light'. Moreover, the music and lighting aim to create a chimerical atmosphere to enhance the illusory sensation.

### **5.2.3 Reflections on traumagical realism: a favourable context**

From assessing the three general techniques of the magical real as aesthetic tools, several conclusions were made regarding how these tools bridge journeyer-confidant *Distance* and subvert the *Catch-22 affair*. The featured characteristics of Magical Realism in this research, showed to have a significant potential as an aesthetic lens which, through the performance to engages confidants with journeyers' commun(e)ication desires. The acknowledgement of 'shared realities', the 'magical' and the 'real', first of all, avoided the divorcing of Nahom and Dina's 'dark magical' and 'realism' levels of their reality. Therefore, it provides an aesthetic context where the otherworldly and realistic blur, and both render either 'real' or 'magical'. This 'shared dimension' lens of Magical Realism also values objective and subjective reality indistinctively. The following conclusive discussion analyses the role of the aesthetic lens in Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication events.

### *Reconciling 'the other side' of journeyers' reality*

Firstly, both Nahom and Dina's sketches confronted occurrences of a reality, which to others and to themselves, in the present, renders 'alien'. Some of Nahom's sketched occurrences were: not seeing the sun for two months; being left to die at sea with other men, women and children after pirates dismantle their boat; being beaten and mistreated in prison; being drenched in sweat and unable to breathe inside a container for days. Some of Dina's sketched occurrences were: being born with a 'hole on her face' as she put it; only eating scraps from the floor; being beaten by her mother and abused sexually by her father. These are the realities that render 'unreal', alien, and otherworldly, not only to confidants, but to journeyers themselves, once they are integrated into an 'ordinary reality' but to their confidants.

Secondly, Nahom and Dina also reconstructed moments and memories from a subjective perspective. Nahom's sketches depicted his introspective and retrospective thoughts about his past and his philosophy towards life. He reconstructed his past reality through poetic statements, metaphors, and affective and abstract sketches through his singing and drawings. Dina's sketches also conveyed her personal inner thoughts, her subjective interpretation regarding her past. She reconstructed moments in her past that she remembered as dreams (glimpses of light) and nightmares (childhood). This subjective layer of reality is not commonly acknowledged as 'truthful', from an objective lens. In the context of giving testimony or 'bearing witness', for example, Nahom's metaphoric relationship with a painting he made in prison, or Dina's interactions with chickens and sweets are subjective aspects probably not as valued or validated as the objective facts about their shocking events. However, the sketches and commun(e)ication desires demonstrate that Nahom and Dina's level of reality that they mostly sketched was subjective. Journeyers were not directed to re-visit or recall the past in order to objectively articulate 'what happened'; their sketches were not questioned or demanded evidence. Nahom and Dina freely and at will re-constructed moments of the past, and they did so through their personal interpretation and through their imagination. This re-construction therefore (re)presents reality through their eyes, rather than attempting to present a past that cannot be made present. The point to be stressed here is that subjectivity and imagination create sketches that are truthful and significant disclosures of journeyers' reality, and not less important to journeyers' than objectivity and remembrance. Nahom imagined, for example, the light of sunrise entering through a fissure into the prison cell. Dina interpreted herself as a 'dark' being that would never taste light fully. These sketches describe and express unique and inner experiences of

journeyers, which heighten their subjective level of reality, allowing confidants to connect on this level.

The performances show how the shared dimension of the magical real contextualised Nahom and Dina's objective and subjective sketches in the same level of reality; in other words, without distinguishing a 'truthful', or realistic aspect from an 'unreal' one. Magical Realism's defamiliarization approach creates a non-naturalistic, non-mimetic, strange atmosphere, which is yet also familiar, and therefore, it creates an atmosphere where everything can happen, where everything is magical and real. In Nahom's commun(e)ication event, for example, the character of Adyoja is not 'real'; Nahom had no exile companion. Adyoja represents a subjective and philosophical concept, which although not realistic, it was real in Nahom's reality. This subjective aspect was not rendered fictional in the performance, but was accepted in 'matter-of-factness' tone. In Dina's commun(e)ication event, the potpourri, the candyfloss, and the box where Dina hid in, were not realistic representations; however, they were presented as a valid subjective interpretation to events that happened, heightening a reality as perceived through Dina's eyes.

#### *Matter-of-factness*

A central magical real technique that has been proposed, which blurs the 'dark magic' and 'real' levels of journeyers' realities and validates the subjective and the objective, is 'matter-of-factness'. The significance of 'matter-of-factness' resides in its effect to render the 'magical' and the 'real' indistinct. Therefore, it does not contrast the alien from the ordinary. More than a technique, it is the attitude towards reality that Magical Realism suggests. Used as a theatrical technique in the performances, the alien and otherworldly was not contrasted from the 'ordinary' and 'normal' moments. As mentioned in Chapter Two, 'matter-of-factness' respects 'both ends of the bridge'. Firstly, from Nahom and Dina's 'end of the bridge', 'matter-of-factness' did not perpetuate their 'clash' of realities; in other words, it did not heighten the traumatic and otherworldly as alien. From confidants' 'end of the bridge', 'matter-of-factness' thus allowed confidants to perceive and acknowledge what is 'alien' to them, without being alienated from it. In this sense, *Distance* is bridged. In Dina's performance, for example, SRA was approached as 'matter-of-fact', while in Nahom's performance, the lack of emotionalism in gruesome or disquieting scenes was also a 'matter-of-fact' technique. Moreover, the scene 'Vessel Woman' was also presented in a 'matter-of-factness', which accepted and valued of the concept of Nahom's interaction with his painting. In Dina's

performance, the scene, 'Boxed' displayed Dina talking from inside a box, without the psychologist being surprised or estranged. Furthermore, an interesting aspect to underline is how Dina suggested that the scene, 'Puppet Show', did not reflect the seriousness of SRA. This particular scene, for example, had been devised from an absurdist theatrical point of view. My aim during that composition was to heighten the absurd reality of SRA by making a satire of the satanic stereotypes in the media. In this case, the absurdist technique heightened the subject of Satanism by mocking it. Contrarily, the magical realist approach would have validated and accepted Satanism, addressing it in a 'matter-of-factness' tone, as it was done in 'Dinner Revelation'.

#### *Defamiliarization technique*

In their commun(e)ication to confidants, journeyers can heighten an aspect of their reality, while distancing from it. In this sense, defamiliarization is a dual tool: on one hand, journeyers avoid re-enactment and re-living of instances that can perpetuate violence, shame, sadness, or regrets or other states that they want to distance from; on the other hand, the unfamiliar angle distances confidants from encountering representations to which they are already de-sensitised to, or intimidated by, or prefer to avoid. De-familiarisation therefore permits commun(e)ication of a traumatic reality without it being, so to speak, 'traumatising' for both journeyers and confidants. Moreover, defamiliarization offers the favourable paradoxical effect of heightening a reality that is being distanced, without subtracting value and affect to what is represented. In Dina's case, for example, the domestic sexual abuse was defamiliarized. The unfamiliar and distanced angle of this re-presentation avoided confidants from turning away, from being perturbed, and from continuing to be desensitized from exhausted visualisations of rape. Moreover, the distanced angle did not diminish the reality of the abuse, but invited confidants to engage intellectually and affectively. In Nahom's case, the beatings in prison were also defamiliarized. The unfamiliar angle created a disquieting act that heightened the event and engaged confidants affectively, but nonetheless, the unemotional re-presentation maintained an engaging critical view, instead of aversion. In addition, the unfamiliar angle re-sensitized a gaze that may be already habituated to images of violent beatings. The oxymoronic effect of defamiliarization therefore has the potential to re-sensitize and re-engage confidants to journeyers' commun(e)ication desires. In this sense, *Distance* between journeyer and confidant was bridged. Furthermore, another aspect in which the defamiliarization effect tackled the *Catch-22 affair* is in avoiding confidants' distraction from a voyeuristic gaze and from a perceptibility of how the act is being represented. The non-mimetic and non-

naturalistic re-presentation of the sexual abuse and the beatings by the prison guards avoided such distractions. In this sense, *Distance* between journeyer and confidant is bridged again.

#### *Familiarisation technique*

The technique of emphasising the relatable and identifiable aspects of a traumatic reality is another strategy of Magical Realism that bridges journeyer-confidant *Distance* and subverts the *Catch-22 affair*. One issue that has been mentioned as a factor that *Distances* confidants from journeyers is a difficulty to relate to their traumatic event. Both the objective/realism anchor and metaphor that Magical Realism interweaves bridge confidants to relate to journeyers' reality in these two levels: a realistic level and a figurative level that they can understand. Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication events contain an objective/realism anchor that validates the magical aspects of the performance. At the same time, the presence of metaphor, allusions and figurative languages connects confidants on a subjective level that could not be otherwise achieved through a realistic display of journeyers' traumatic events. In Nahom's commun(e)ication event, confidants could find relatable aspects in Nahom's conversation with Libena, his drawings, his poetic statements in voiceover, his conversations on the phone, and his music. In Dina's commun(e)ication event, confidants could find relatable aspects in her conversation with the psychologist, the metaphors of the glimpses of light, the images of the arm in the water, the realism of the images of her childhood shown through video. In this sense, confidants find points of connection with journeyers, and *Distance* is bridged.

#### *The Strange*

The 'strange' effect in Magical Realism is produced from the commingling of the 'real' and 'magical' aspects of reality, the 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary'. In the context of the traumatic reality, the 'extraordinary' or 'magical' is the negative nature of the word: it is the 'dark magic' or the 'other side' of the magical. In Nahom and Dina's traumatic realities, the magical is the alien, the otherworldly, and the abnormal. The commingling of the 'dark magic' with the 'real' or the 'ordinary' in this case, renders an uncanny reality. The uncanny engages confidants to the 'dark magic', to the alien, because it is not presented as such; it also carries familiar qualities that blur with the alien, and produce an unusual reality that attracts instead of repel. This strange or uncanny effect permeates through the *3 Movements* of the magical real lens. It was also a technique to bridge the *Distance* between confidants in Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication events.

In Nahom's case, various scenes aimed to create an uncanny effect: the photographs of the scenes: 'Artist', 'Trafficked', 'Hewan in Prison', and 'Captured'. The aim was to represent these 'dark magical' aspects in an unusual and strange way that engaged confidants. In Dina's case, the scenes 'Hole in the Face', 'Surgery', 'Dinner Revelation', 'Ritual', 'Circus Time', 'Back to Darkness', 'Escape Attempts', and 'No Validation', have uncanny elements that seek to engage confidants by the familiar-unfamiliar commingling. The technique was to defamiliarized the familiar was, and make the unfamiliar relatable. In this sense, journeyer-confidant *Distance* is bridged.

#### *A 'bright magic'*

Both Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication events presented the 'dark magic' of their reality, since their commun(e)ication desires were to share about exile and imprisonment, and SRA respectively. However, I question whether their performances could have had stronger moments of 'bright magic'; in other words, a highlight of 'extraordinary' moments of their reality, in the 'bright' sense of the word. This assessment is made after reflecting that both works-in-progress were inclined towards the eerie quality of the uncanny. In Nahom's commun(e)ication event, for example a stronger moment of 'bright magic' could have been explored in his conversations with Libena, in the interaction with the Vessel Woman, in the exchange of merchandise with the other inmates, in the fact that other prisoners had asked him to paint religious icons for them to pray. In Dina's commun(e)ication event, the glimpses of light could have had a more emphasised 'bright magic', instead of an uncanny eeriness. 'Bright magic' could be more appropriate to create humour and contrast other 'dark' aspects of the performance. The uncanny and strange are qualities of Magical Realism, but I question whether they also have a 'bright' or 'dark side'. The eeriness and mystery in both works-in-progress reflect an inclination to the 'dark side' of the uncanny and strange effects. This observation leads to question if such inclination was a direct input from the journ(art)ist during the composition of journeyers' sketches, or if this uncanny predominance was a natural mood elicited from the sketches themselves.

The hypothesis is that, since the material from the sketches was predominantly 'dark magic', and I composed and assembled the performance in journeyer-absence, my intersubjective inclination led me to compose the performance only in a serious tone. I could not grasp the 'brightness' of Nahom and Dina's disclosures and sketches. Moreover, I did not consider either that I had the agency to 'brighten' Nahom and Dina's disclosures and sketches in their absence. It is hypothesised that if they would

have suggested exploring moments of 'brightness' in the performance, my composition could have firstly explored 'bright' sides of the strange and uncanny, instead of the eerie and mysterious predominance; and secondly, I could have highlighted 'bright' aspects from their sketches, which were listed previously. Such situation leads to various conclusive thoughts of the re-creation process that will be addressed in Section 5.3.

#### **5.2.4 Re-presentation**

To conclude this section, it is important to refer to the notion of re-presentation and *poiesis* proposed in this research. The case studies developed various forms of re-presentation. In Nahom's performance, the character of Adyoja was used as an indirect and conceptual re-presentation of Nahom's subjective states of longing, oppression, strength, struggle, freedom and art. The type of representation that had not been considered or foreseen was the need for another performer to play Nahom's role during the commun(e)ication event, due to Nahom's impossibility to perform. In this scenario, the most important aspect, first of all, is to have journeyer consent of a direct form or representation, where in this case, Nahom had in actuality suggested the idea. The non-naturalistic style of the performance and Nahom's presence in the commun(e)ication event were favourable factors to avoid a naturalistic representation of his persona. In Dina's case, the (re)presentation of Dina was developed through various defamiliarization techniques that allowed a distanced and third-person view of her character from the performer's perspective. The anti-mimetic, non-naturalistic style obviated this indirect (re)presentation. Therefore, it has been concluded that estranged and indirect representation explored in the enactments of both Nahom and Dina's commun(e)ication events, allowed examination of possible dynamics of estrangement that permit a (re)presentation of journeyers from a distanced point of view. Therefore, it has been concluded that the notion of *poiesis* has been favourable to (re)present journeyers in their absence from the performance. The absence of the journeyers in these particular case studies demanded a third-person representation of them, with their consent. Ideally, the aim for journ(art)ists and performers involved in the performance is to stage conceptual, abstract or concrete aspects revolving around the journeyer, not journeyers themselves.

On a general view of re-presentation of traumatic/new realities, exemplified through the aesthetic lens of Magical Realism, it has been concluded that it carries a promising potential to subvert the *Catch-22 affair*. The mimesis over *poiesis* aesthetic of Magical Realism, underlined this research's intention to re-present reality, as opposed to imitate it or aim to present it from a literal view.

### **5.3. Re-creation Process**

This section presents analysis, discussion and conclusions of the highlights throughout the re-creation process. Firstly, it covers main overall aspects and secondly, it addresses important observations from each of the re-creation phases.

#### **5.3.1 Reversed Content-Agency**

As it has been stressed throughout this thesis, journeyers' reversed agency has been a central purpose of exploration in this research. The case studies showed the potential of a collaboration where the platform 'offerer', in this case the journ(art)ist who has the platform, can invert agency and ownership over the platform event, so that the journeyer leads its purpose. The case studies informed various circumstantial elements where journ(art)ist deals with the dynamic of reversed agency, defined in Chapter One. First of all, it was concluded that the platforms were offered without a journ(art)ist's agenda; however, the purpose was to facilitate journeyers' commun(e)ication desires and message to confidants, while subverting the *Catch-22 affair* in the process. In contrast, my desires, or personal agenda, from a journalistic, personal, and moral compromise, would have been to denounce crimes done against Nahom and Dina's rights. In Nahom's case, for example, my agenda would be to denounce and inform about the Eritrean government's torture and slavery crimes against its soldiers, and denounce and inform about the inhumane conditions in which illegal migrants are indefinitely abandoned to Libyan prisons. In Dina's case, my agenda would have been to focus on the disproving of evidence from SRA child victims in official media sources; to denounce, research and inform about Masonic connections to SRA in Dina's hometown. Although this personal agenda is one that continues outside the performance and re-creation contexts, it is important to remark that Nahom and Dina's desires also became my desires towards the commun(e)ication events. This conclusion was a satisfactory realisation: I became their 'ally' or 'accomplice', in the sense that I did not use their experiences to meet my personal goals.

A second point of reversed agency has already been discussed in Section 5.1. under the subject of commun(e)ication desires. In brief, a reversed agency in this case included to respect Nahom and Dina's desires in regard to what they did not desire to do or commun(e)icate in the performance. In Nahom's case, for example, a reversed agency consisted, in not activating any sketch about Nahom's experience as a slave soldier. In Dina's case, one aspect of reversed agency consisted in not inquiring about her parents' present involvement with satanic sects and their presumably connection to Masonic organisations in Dina's hometown. Dina had displayed the desire not to address her

parents' present situation. Finally a point that was not completed about reversed agency was the aesthetic lens and input of journ(art)ists. Working with different levels of journeyer-absence after the Sketching Phases, on one hand, reflect the process adaptation to journeyers' situations and requests. However, this scenario also subtracted from exploring a creative process where journeyers are more involved in the aesthetic input. The aesthetic form in which the message or the performance is presented also becomes part of confidants' meaning-making experience. Therefore, for further applications of the re-creation, it is important to consider a higher level of involvement from journeyers, which can elicit dialogues about what their perceptions of how Magical Realism can subvert their *Catch-22 affair*, from their personal social, cultural and historical lens. This would be an important facet of reversed agency. Alternatively, as a result of journeyers' levels of absence, the concept of 'implicit presence' emerged, and should be developed further.

### **5.3.2 Journeyer-absence: implicit presence**

The scenario of journeyers' absence during some parts of the re-creative process and the performance, informed that the feature of 'absence' is yet another aspect directly related to journeyers' desires, and personal situations. The presented circumstances in Nahom and Dina's life-situations created awareness to the fact that although journeyers may have a commun(e)ication desire, this does not equate to an obliged participation and presence throughout the process or the commun(e)ication event itself. A reversed agency in this case consisted in adapting the re-creation process to journeyers' desires regarding preferences about their absence in the process. One scenario pertained to their absence during the composition and assemblage stages. In Nahom's case, for example, he did not desire to have a substantial input over the artistic elements in the performance. Nahom's request raises a scenario where journeyers prefer to be absent during the final stages of the composition, assemblage and ensemble of the performance, once they have sketched their message and desires. In Dina's case, her absence reflected a specific change of circumstance in her life, but her desire to commun(e)ication did not change, and she wanted the performance to be presented.

The principal condition of 'implicit presence' was to ensure the aesthetic composition of the sketches would not alter their content, and the desires of journeyers. A second condition was to assemble the compositions in a continuous reviewing of documented sketches, notes and verbatim text collected. A third condition was to ask for journeyers'

consent and feedback if an important change or addition in a scene had been considered. Several compositional decisions were made in Nahom's implicit presence. The first decision was to ensure that Nahom's request to include the semantic material that he had sketched was completed. Secondly, I asked for Nahom's consent regarding the addition of the scene 'Soldier'. Thirdly, when the assemblage had been completed, I presented the complete composition of the performance, and asked his feedback. Dina's case presented a more limited scenario of communication, since she was not available for feedback or consent. Since she would be absent from the performance, the first decision in implicit presence pertained to the consideration of structuring the compositions around verbatim text that she disclosed in the encounters, in order to emphasise her direct address to confidants. However, her desire had been to give speech and text a minimum predominance; therefore, the final decision was to disregard speech as the central modality, but include verbatim text and semantic play in order to disambiguate aspects that she had emphasised in her sketches.

The second scenario of implicit presence pertained to Nahom and Dina's different levels of presence/absence during the commun(e)ication event. In Nahom's case, his back problem impeded him from performing. This situation raised an assessment about the level of journeyer-presence that may take place when the journeyer is not performing live, but present in the commun(e)ication event. Firstly, what was observed in Nahom's performance, for example, was a level of presence established through the mediation of his face, his body, his speech, his singing, his voice and sounds he made that were present in the film and in voiceovers. In Nahom's particular case, he was also able to be present in the commun(e)ication event and perform through live music, poetry and song. This informs the re-creation process about the possibility to establish journeyer-presence without their liveness in the performance being central and obliged if they do not desire so. This alternative presence opens different possibilities and dynamics of journeyers' desired involvement in the performance and commun(e)ication event. Dina's case presented a total of absence during the commun(e)ication event. She was not present in the performance, she was not directly mediated in voiceover or video, and she was not present in the commun(e)ication event. A direct extent of mediated presence is the short verbatim texts displayed during the videos and in the dialogue with the psychologist. Dina's decision to be absent raised the question of how this absence became of particular significance for the performance and for confidants. The fact that confidants could not see her or hear her and yet confide on her personal commun(e)ication desire, was in fact a significant dynamics to examine. An interesting

realisation regarding this issue, was remembering how Dina commented in her early sketches that if confidants were to see her and hear her in the present, they would 'never be able to fully see the girl I was before'. With this comment, Dina raised the consideration where a journeyer-absence may in fact heighten the reality of what is being commun(e)icated. Moreover, it was interesting to observe audiences' comments about how they felt connected with Dina even when they did not see her in the performance. It can be suggested that since Dina's message and desires were conveyed through the performance, confidants were able to be aware of her implicit presence.

The case studies therefore informed there may be situations where journeyers may in fact prefer their absence, but this does not necessarily imply the impossibility of conveying journeyers' commun(e)ication desires and message to confidants. It may not always be the case, for example, that journeyers will desire or be able to perform before an audience. Therefore, there are options of mediating their presence. Also, journeyers may be interested in the sketching process, but disinterested or unable to have a continuously engaged involvement during the composition, assemblage and production of the performance. The discussions of the levels of journeyer-absence in the performance raised three important points to be addressed in the following paragraphs: re-presentation, the extent and implication of journ(art)ists' aesthetic input in the performance: Firstly, in a journeyer-presence scenario, the journ(art)ist makes presented suggestions about the magical real lens and somantic continuum, with journeyer leading and making final decisions. Secondly, in journeyer-absence scenario, the journ(art)ist continues creative dialogue by asking for consent and agreement from journeyers. Thirdly, in journeyer-absence scenario, where the journeyer is not accessible for feedback or consent, journeyer should have agreed the continuation of the creative process through journ(art)ists' aesthetic lens, in implicit presence.

### **5.3.3 Journ(art)ist input**

Journ(art)ists' agency during the Sketching Phase is a process of facilitating and assuring journeyers' wellbeing and preferences, without investing personal input or opinions that will alter the sketches. This shows an importance of the Sketching Phase, particularly where the sketches devised become the central script for the performance. However, the composition stage entails a dynamics of aesthetic input. A journeyer-absence scenario during the re-creative process thereupon creates a situation where journ(art)ists have a greater intervention during the composition stage and the aesthetic forms of the performance. As it was previously mentioned, one issue is that journ(art)ists

should protect the content of journeyers' sketches versus an aesthetic input of form. In Nahom's case, for example, all the scene compositions were derived solely from the sketches. Also, both semantic and somatic play elicited during the sketching and composition stages were included in the performance. The aesthetic lens was used as a tool in consideration of the *Catch-22 affair* and *journeyer-confidant Distance*. Therefore, Nahom's sketch content and commun(e)ication desires were respected. Dina's case presented an example of greater input from the journ(art)ist, since she established greater journeyer-absence than during the composition stage. However, the aesthetic lens did not alter the themes that Dina sketched and desired to convey. The case studies raised the question of three types of journ(art)ists' input, which are interrelated and revolve around the aesthetic lens and strategy to bridge *Distance* between journeyers and confidants. It is important to delineate the input that comes from role of a facilitator, as it is also a form of agency that should be a subordinated as a supportive agency, and not an appropriative one.

Three interrelated levels of input include: somantic continuum intention, the magical real lens, and subsequently the subversion of the *Cath-22 affair*. In regards to the somantic continuum, journeyers have the agency during the sketching and composition stages to place predominance over their preferred semantic or somatic play, and somantic blurredness. This predominance may be manifested through the preference to explore certain channels of re-presentation. Therefore, journeyers' presence creates a straightforward dynamics for the journ(art)ist. Secondly, in relation to the magical real lens is the aesthetic input, the observation raised in the case studies was that in order to continue with a 'reversed agency' ethos, an enforced view of Magical Realism should not be demanded upon journeyers' sketches. The term 'lens' has therefore been emphasised to suggest that journ(art)ists may identify elements of **traumagical realism** that are already visible from journeyers' sketches, and not try to identify what is not already there. Therefore, journ(art)ists can explore identifying journeyers' 'dark side of their magical reality', and its 'clash' with their 'ordinary' reality. It has been concluded that Magical realism is approached as aesthetic technique and attitude towards journeyers' traumatic/anew realities, not as the end of the commun(e)ication event. Finally, the *Catch-22* input refers to journ(art)ists' 'subversive' decisions to bridge *journeyer-confidant Distance*. This input, which involves the aesthetic techniques from the *3 Movements* of the magical real, should not change or compromise the content or desires of the commun(e)ication event. What is important to reflect upon is that the magical real lens is one that is present across cultures and aesthetic forms, because it is a general attitude

towards reality. Therefore, the subversion of the *Cath-22* through the magical real lens involves a plasticity that can be identified across journeyers' *traumatic/anew* spectrum.

#### **5.3.4 Journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship**

The relationship between journeyers and journ(art)ists is the central activator of the re-creation and the commun(e)ication event. In the process, journ(art)ists become the first confidants, and an alliance is established. Chapter Three addressed the importance to conduct a 'side-by-side' relationship between facilitators and journeyers (Thompson 2011: 173). The intersubjective experience with Nahom and Dina led to important reflections in respect to a 'horizontal' dynamics of the process, and informed the re-creation on the feasibility and the mutually enriching experience of the journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship. Analysing this approach in the context of the case studies, several points of reflection are presented, which revolve around wellbeing, empathic observation, the rapport established from recreational nature of the process, and reversed agency. Firstly, the awareness of caring and protecting for the wellbeing, not only of journeyers, but of journ(art)ists as well, was an important aspect of the relationship. The case studies demonstrated a priority over their wellbeing. Nahom's case presented no signs of discomfort or stress. In Dina's case, the moment of uneasiness she experienced was a determinant factor to change the sketching strategies, avoid the subject that caused her this unexpected reaction, and ultimately ask her if she wanted to continue with the re-creation. In respect to journ(art)ists' comfort and wellbeing, an important observation was that although the encounters did not cause distress in neither case study, the research I conducted on SRA was a cause of stress and disturbance. Retrospectively, however, I considered such research was ultimately enriching in the sense that it brought me closer to Dina and provided information that I consider necessary knowing regarding the subject of SRA, and certainly compelled me to take address it and respond to this in the near future. What is important to remark is that research is an aspect controlled by the journ(art)ist, and this disturbing experience I underwent could have been avoided to an extent. Moreover, it was not an experience that affected my personal and professional behaviour in any way, but contrarily, it encouraged me in the continuation of the re-creation.

In relation to the consciousness of wellbeing, an empathic observation allowed me to raise consciousness of Nahom and Dina's Otherness, and hence, the awareness that different mental and affective states may present in them and myself, which focused my observation further into their signs comfort, or otherwise, as well as mine. An empathic

connection was significant in establishing trust and a genuine rapport that developed and increased throughout the experience. Furthermore, the recreational approach to the process also contributed to states of wellbeing and to the intimate rapport established. Important to remark is how a stimulating and enjoyable process can occur from a topic that originally revolves around a traumatic reality. These factors maintained a sensitivity to each other, journeyer and journ(art)ist, that accentuated a 'side-by-side' dynamics. Lastly, the fundamental mentality towards a 'horizontal' relationship began with the reversed agency of the relationship. An important factor of reversed agency was that journeyers' desires to speak and desires to be silent were acknowledged and respected. Another factor is the priority over their desires, purpose, and intention over my own agenda. This 'reversed' mentality created a relationship where journeyers perceived a genuine care and attention to their experiences. In this sense, 'the lack of utility' of the platform was purposeful in reversing ownership of their experiences and hence, the commun(e)ication event. The re-creation process is specifically ideated to ignite an alliance of mutual respect and awareness, so that, quoting Thompson, journ(art)ists are not 'above, beyond or looking over, but next to and with' the journeyer (Thompson 2011: 134).

Another conclusive note confirms that the journ(art)ist's re-creation experience was enjoyable, recreational, edifying and invaluable. The notion of the journ(art)ist as the initial confidant of the process was acutely valued. In addition to what both journeyers confided for the commun(e)ication event, they entrusted thoughts and experiences that that were not for the performance, but for deeper confidentiality. This 'complicity', together with their openness to sketch extraordinary experiences and reflections about them, bestows journ(art)ists a great responsibility and compromise not only to ensure a satisfying and pleasant experience for journeyers during the process and commun(e)ication, but to take an active stand in society in respect to what has been confided in the re-creation process. The journ(art)ist-journeyer relationship created within me new layers of understanding, interpreting and approaching the world. The moments shared during the Sketching Phase creates a sense of togetherness. The experiences they imparted and the experience of our relationship continue to influence and shape my persona. Noticeably, the outcome of the journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship will vary in depth, rapport, outcome and value according to journ(art)ists unique connection with journeyers. In this case, it created lasting friendships.

Following is a detailed reflection of the relationship established, which refers to the above factors briefly mentioned. The journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship developed various levels of intersubjective relations important for the re-creation process and significant for the personal role of the journ(art)ist. Each phase of the process elicited an interweaving of dynamics, of responses and realisations towards journeyer and journ(art)ist working together in recreation. General points for both case studies can be made here, and further each case will be addressed. One point is how the reversed agency dynamics quickly established trust and an amiable relation. This dynamics were an enjoyable task during my facilitation, because it did not entail a 'mission' or 'agenda' to pursue. Observing journeyers eliciting their personal desires and sketches created an affable facilitation. Both journeyers and myself developed a sense of appreciation, of trust, wellbeing, and a genuine interest in the desires developed. They both expressed their gratefulness for the re-creation process. From my part, I also experienced appreciation and honour from their trust and confidentiality, and expressed my sense of admiration for their resilience and wisdom from their experiences. One major conclusion from this relationship pertains to how journ(art)ists become the first confidants of journeyers. For example, I had desired for every confidant in the audience to experience the closeness, the emotive, and meaningful moments that I shared with journeyers through the process. However, the commun(e)ication event would not be able to provide this particular relationship. Therefore, journ(art)ists' role is a privileged one, firstly, by being able to establish a relationship of trust and recreation with journeyers, and secondly, because they conciliate and (re)concile journeyers and confidants through the product of the re-creation process, which is the performance.

Another point captured was my poignant awareness that no performance is able to convey the fullness of reality, in this case, of a traumatic reality. Although this was not a new realisation, approaching Nahom and Dina's stories from an intimate facilitation process increased my awareness and reaffirmed not only that 'words do not do justice', as Dina commented, but no re-presentation or presentation can do justice to what Nahom and Dina, or any journeyer, have experienced. Furthermore, since I did not 'share' with anyone about Nahom and Dina's 'stories' during the re-creation process, I experienced certain loneliness in not being able to communicate the experience that I was having and the extraordinary and gruesome realities I was confiding. Moreover, another interesting point to mention is the emotional containment during the sketching encounters that I had to exercise to an extent. Although I expressed my empathy and response to what Nahom and Dina sketched, I realised I could not be genuine to my own

affective reactions, since this would probably have an influence on their own perceptions and affect them in some way. Therefore, the continuation of my personal affective reactions to the oppression and harm caused upon them had to be contemplated and released outside of the re-creation context. Finally, a most important aspect of the journ(art)ist-journeyer dynamics is the relationship of compromise that is built towards journeyers and their desires. In this case, the compromise for Nahom and Dina's desires not only continue after the commun(e)ication event, but become a personal agenda.

### **Journ(art)ist Relationship with Nahom**

Following is a summary of highlights with each other journeyers worth mentioning, to reflect on the aspects that may emerge in these types of collaborations.

Nahom and I quickly developed a sense of mutual respect and care. At numerous instances and in a number of ways, Nahom displayed contentment and confidence by the effort and seriousness I manifested towards the project, saying 'thank you' on numerous occasions. Nahom made a comment of great significance to me, when I presented to him the final assemblage before the performance. He said: 'I feel as if you had been with me in those experiences'. Such identification brought a deeper sense of purpose to the re-creation process. In like manner, the process of confiding Nahom's sketches in the physicality in which he constructed them, and how he invited me physically join him in the 'prison' played a significant role in creating that sense of 'togetherness'. This, in addition to my engaged imagination created vivid recollections in my body and mind, from what Nahom reconstructed. One interesting aspect to our dynamics pertained to various occasions when the nature of Nahom's sketches referred to instances when he underwent suffering and oppression. Nahom kept silent in various instances when he perceived my empathetic response and my acknowledgement of his strength to endure such experiences. These were very moving moments, where, remembering Moon's advise on communicating beyond words, our intentional silence established a deeper communication (Moon 2002: 50). Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that at other instances of the sketches, my responses expressed a contained yet apparent affective empathy and indignation at how Nahom was treated in the prisons. Nahom responded with smiles and facial expressions that communicated, 'do not worry, it is in the past'. The language barrier certainly limited many conversations that may have enriched our rapport and made some parts of the sketches more concrete. However, the obliged non-verbal communication also connected us on a somatic and sensible level that equally enriched the rapport and the sketches. Furthermore, Nahom's gestures and signs of his

trust and appreciation for our relationship became a significant sign to a 'horizontal' approach established. Nahom voluntarily 'shared' photographs of his family in Eritrea, moments in prison, and drawings. He sketched a pen drawing during an encounter and said it was for me to keep. While I was in the UK, Nahom contacted me and invited me to his religious wedding ceremony with Libena, which I certainly attended with other collabor(art)ists. This growing rapport, and the shared moments of insight, reflection, and laughter during the encounters, contributed to a deep sense of 'togetherness' during the performance. Nahom had mentioned before, for example, that I had become like a 'little sister' to him. In retrospect, the re-creation process was more significant to me than the performance itself.

### **Journ(art)ist Relationship with Dina**

The journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship with Dina presented relevant aspects on intersubjective levels. My first aim was to establish a peer rapport, as opposed to the interviewer-interviewee dynamics she had experienced before. Another conscious intent towards our relationship was to show her signs that I would not approach her as being 'different' or 'alien' from me. From the initial encounters, I quickly realised that Dina had an impending desire to voice strong opinions regarding her past. Her sketches of her *realisation layer* established an important connection between us, particularly because she mentioned that she had not discussed certain reflections before. Since she mentioned she had encountered a lack of credibility about her 'story' before, I considered important to establish my validation to her past, by reassuring that I believed her experience were true. This complicity created a sense of alliance early in the re-creation. Furthermore, an important retrospect to address pertains to my internalisation of her experience with SRA. My body and psyche absorbed Dina's abuse perhaps more affectively or differently than Nahom's experiences. Firstly, I have considered that my connection with Dina's past may have reached a deep somatic response due to our same gender, hence my sensitivity to the sexual abuse she endured. Also, the traces of her scars on her body may have accentuated a somatic empathy in my body. It was interesting to note, for example, that I began to unconsciously and consciously reject certain objects and events that Dina had disclosed a rejection to in her *anew reality*. Another aspect to consider in retrospect was how I was connecting to Dina's past and her traumatic reality, whilst she sketched from a present, *anew reality*. Therefore, I developed a desire to mourn with her, to console her, but she was not in that place of torment anymore. I was internalising her past more so than her present. Furthermore, I began to develop the urge to tell people about SRA, and experienced a glimpse of a lack of credibility and validation about this

kind of abuse, which increased both my upset and my connection to Dina. On a lighter note, Dina and I shared many moments of laughter and fun. The recreational activities allowed us to increase a friendly rapport, to the extent that we began making fun and joking with each other.

Similarly as with Nahom, I was honoured to have been invited to her hen party and wedding, which I attended. Furthermore, the strength and resilience she reflected through her liveliness and smiles had a deep impact in my personal life. For further reflection, it was interesting to note that I did not communicate with her about the level of somatic connection that I developed from her experiences. In like manner, I did not inform her that I conducted research about SRA, self-harm, bulimia and LSD addiction. Perhaps no appropriate situation emerged where this matter may have been elicited naturally, without a pretentious implication. In spite of the Dina's absence after the Sketching Phase, the rapport and bond established during this time marked her implicit presence in a significant way. Similarly as with Nahom, I experienced a sense of 'complicity' and togetherness with Dina, during my participation in her commun(e)ication event.

### **5.3.5 My body as intersubjective channel of (re)presentation**

This final aspect of the composition stage pertains to the experience of using the body as channel of signification, re-presentation and (re)presentation in the performance, after having accompanied Nahom and Dina throughout the Sketching Phase. In this scenarios when the journ(art)ist is also involved in the process as a performing body, it was concluded that the experience of facilitating journeyers' reconstructions created a bond that heightened an internalisation of the sketches and hence, of their embodiment. Therefore, the intersubjective relationship established with Nahom and Dina developed through the devising process of the body. I did not lose awareness of the specificity and materialism of my body, involving my gender, my ethnicity, my culture, and the personal historical experience of my body. As Holledge and Tompkins argue, we cannot 'be cut loose from a materiality of the flesh' (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 136, 144). Following, creativity through the body emerged from a combination of imagination, feeling and thought, following impulses in silence or through specific music. I aimed to maintain a relationship between abstract and concrete motions, between subjective and narrative signification, aiming to speak to confidants in somantic modalities that would create both semantic and somatic meanings. It was interesting to realise that the somatic impulses inspired from the sketches carried an affective and visceral energy

from the confiding experience with the journeyers. In this sense, it was therefore not a pleasurable creative process at first because my movements emerged from visualising both Nahom and Dina in oppression. As the movement phrases were developed and improvised for the performance, I began to disconnect from my affective reactions and become a channel of signification rather than interpret feelings in deep emotion.

A critical aspect that facilitated both the devising and the performing experience was the distancing and third-person point of view from which my body created movement. In other words, my interpretations did not aim to represent Nahom and Dina undergoing a specific affective or psychic experience, but to re-present a conceptual embodiment based on their sketches. Another interesting point to mention is the improvisational nature that the movements continued to have, even during the performances. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the aim was not to present a choreographic pattern of dance movements, but to prepare a general structure of movement phrases from which I could continue to improvise before the confidants.

### **5.3.6 Re-creation Phases**

This second part of the section discusses the highlights from each phase of the re-creation.

#### **5.3.6.1 Grounding Phase**

##### *Platform meets Desire*

On a practical level, and outside of the case studies, it is important to address how can Platforms meet Desires, and how may Desires find Platforms. This point in question is a medium to encourage social involvement between journeyers and journ(art)ists in both local and global communities. Desire-meet-Platform meetings involve situations that emerge from engaging with communities or organizations involved in issues of social justice and/or *the traumatic*. These meetings can also emerge from word of mouth recommendations and conversations. The opportunities to meet Dina and Nahom, and the possibility to find collaborative support for the performances was created from an established involvement and connection with organizations and people who seek to support individuals who have undergone abuse, traumatic realities, and who are usually in marginalised situations. However, it must be clarified that journeyers are not only met through institutional venues, family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances.

### *Wellbeing Assessment*

A central issue of the grounding phase is addressing how journ(art)ists can make a sound and knowledgeable assessment about journeyers' wellbeing, and have a sensitive, ethical criteria to decide whether or not it is appropriate to initiate the re-creation. What is important to emphasise here is the possibility to expand research in regard to specific methods of how can journ(art)ists respond to diverse affective situations that may present during the re-creation.

### **5.3.6.2 Sketching Phase**

The case studies informed significant points to consider and develop in this phase.

### *Recreational Nature*

A point to highlight is the recreational nature of the process. The encounters did not centralise on obliged conversations about the traumatic and shocking nature of Nahom and Dina's experiences. Contrarily, the diverse types of encounters involved engaging with music, poetry, reflections, outdoor walks, meeting in cafes, and exploring communication through the body. In this sense, the re-creation became a journey of 'sharedness', where journeyers enjoyed moments where they were the centre of the experience, and where they were listened to in any form they desires to communicate. In addition, the recreational nature of the process was journeyers' rich reconstruction of their experiences from a place of freedom and reversed agency, without a specific agenda to follow. Finally, a pleasing experience may have also been compelled by the adaptability of the encounters to journeyers' needs, demands, preferences and desires.

### *An Intimate Method*

Another point that relates to the recreational nature, is the intimate approach created by the re-creation. In this case, it is important to refer to the various disciplines that informed the method of the Sketching Phase. The Dart Centre technique of opening conversing encounters by asking journeyers to 'share' about themselves and their interests, proved to be a favourable method (Hight & Smyth 2003: 4). This technique allowed journeyers to begin encounters from a personal and comfortable place that led the direction of the encounter. However, this technique does not need to be a set structure. Furthermore, Harrington's approach of 'intimate' interviews endorsed the in-depth attention and development given to journeyers' sketches, without an emphasis on events (Harrington 1997: xx). In like manner, the ethnographic journalism approach was identified in Nahom and Dina's in-depth retrospective and introspective disclosures

(Fransiscato & Guerra 2006: 87). Also, this approach was perceived in the journ(art)ist's close participation during the somantic activators, which involved spending recreational time with journeyers as part of the re-creation, outside a pre-established and structured conversing encounter. In this case, the re-creation method also considered shadowing encounters, but this ethnographic technique did not emerge in the case studies, since the journeyers did not suggest it. Finally, the New Journalistic approach was identified in the appreciation and value given to somatic forms of communication as a valuable expression of reality (Muhlmann 2008: 141). This somatic, affective, and sensible form of reconstruction and composition drew journeyer and confidant closer.

### *Reconstructing over Remembering*

As was emphasised in Chapter Three, the re-creation process focuses on a reconstructive approach that allowed Nahom and Dina to interpret the past from journeyers' present point of view (Seidman 1998: 74). It is significant to remark how I never asked journeyers to 'remember', and particularly not to remember their shocking experiences. This approach to the Sketching Phase produced a more freeing and comforting experience for journeyers and myself. However, this does not mean that if journeyers' natural course is to remember a particular moment, journ(art)ists should interrupt or impede them from recalling. The importance of underlining a reconstructive approach is to respect journeyers' agency over how they construct their sketches, through their subjective interpretation in the present, or by recalling the past. In these case studies, Nahom and Dina's natural sketching direction was to reconstruct their experiences. To a great extent, this empowered them to freely commun(e)icate their desires as they sketched.

### *Catalysing is not demanding*

A third point to highlight, also related to a recreational nature, is journ(art)ists catalysing approach, over an enforced technique. In the case studies, journeyers were not asked or demanded to do particular exercises and the sketch activators were suggested as options. It was observed that unfamiliarity to certain activators could be a reason that discourages them from exploring a certain somantic modality, so it is important to explain clearly what these are. Moreover, journ(art)ists can be more direct by asking journeyers what kinds of communication modalities they would like to explore first, and what others they prefer not to. Furthermore, catalysing also entails a reassurance and encouragement of what journeyers are sketching, without external interventions or opinions. An important observation was that journeyers by own initiative proposed

activators and brought diverse materials to activate sketches from. Nahom brought a drawing he created in prison, a photograph he took of an image he painted on a prison wall, and a journal where he wrote poems during this time as well. Dina shared some pages of a journal and asked me to listen to a couple of songs that she used to listen to during her teenage years. Journeymen's initiative increased a 'horizontal' dynamics.

### *Listening*

One particular point to reflect upon is that listening involved an awareness of both journeymen and journeymen(art)ists' socio-cultural backgrounds, past experiences, and even our personalities. The 'double-awareness', of oneself and the other, was essential to develop an empathic observation (Moon 2002: 49). My role of listening involved not only the situational background of the person, but the semantic and somatic signals to be read from the person's tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. As it was suggested in this research, listening semantically and somatically is an intentional response and skill that should be developed (Ivey 2008: 94). Also, variations in culture, gender, and age played a role in my relationship with Nahom and Dina. I realised that although listening is a personal skill that ultimately depend on the each journeymen(art)ist, it is possible to develop and nurture holistic awareness to listening, as it is with any other discipline. This aspect could be considered for further research to enrich the re-creation process. Another level of listening pertained to the non-verbal, sensorial and intuitive listening (Moon 2002: 50). Both Nahom and Dina were good communicators, in the sense that their verbal and non-verbal signs were clear and direct, reflecting a clear and direct intention, opinion, desire and mood. Moreover, listening to my body language made me more aware that journeymen were also reading my non-verbal communication; this allowed an opportunity to be mindful of my listening responses, and search for demeanours that made them feel comfortable and acknowledged. On the whole, it can be concluded that the approaches applied from empathic observation and listening were a relevant and important starting point.

### *Sketch Overload*

One final discussion about the Sketching Phase consists in the considerable number of sketches that resulted from the various encounters. The various sketching encounters inevitably lead to the creation of numerous and rich sketches. Both case studies presented this scenario. The purpose in both cases was to compose all the sketches that journeymen had created. Particularly in journeyman-absence, I did not consider appropriate to take back agency over deciding what sketches should be composed.

However, some alternations were still considered and completed after asking for journeyers' consent. In Nahom's case, for example, I intended to facilitate the sketching and composition stage for all the sketches that were constructed. Originally, the sketches about Nahom's phone conversation with his partner, with the journalist and UN officer, were channelled into textual scripts. Each dialogue was acted out and recorded by Nahom and a few actors, and lasted about ten minutes. This verbatim inclusion in the performance, however, presented details and information that diverted from the essence and flow of the performance. Such situation raised the questions of whether to prioritise details and information of the anecdotes sketched, and whether the length of these dialogues interrupted the flow of the commun(e)ication event. Subsequently, the dialogues were cut down and edited and for the Scene, 'SOS', leaving only the most important information for the context of the performance. In Dina's case, she sporadically constructed a few sketches from her *anew reality*: a spiritual encounter she experienced with God, how she arrived to City Hearts, and scattered references to the traumatic stress she underwent during therapy and rehab. However, most of the sketches were from her growing up and adolescence. In this case, I decide not to develop the isolated sketches. Alternatively, I envisioned that the performance could have been expanded into two different parts: her life before and after her escape from home. However, the latter part would have entailed the development o many other sketches that Dina did not construct.

On the whole, each of Nahom and Dina's sketches could have in fact been channelled and composed into performances of longer duration. In Dina's case, for example, the issues the validation of SRA, Dina's 'escape attempts', her abusive upbringing, and her introspective realisations about the normal-abnormal reality, are sketches that could have each been developed into a performance. These situations of an overload of sketches led to consider alternative possibilities to the method. One response was to integrate a discussion with journeyers in the composition stage and Assemblage Discussions, about which sketches they prioritise and what others they would consider not composing for the performance. Another alternative is to conduct a fewer number of sketching encounters ensuring that journ(art)ist offers the various somantic possibilities and communication preferences to journeyers. However, an advantage of conducting various encounters is the development of journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship, which is significant for the entire process. Therefore, an alternative to a sketch overload may be to extend the duration of the performance.. If some sketches particularly divert from journeyers' desires and essence of the message, a discussion of their inclusion or

omission can be conducted during the *Canvas of Desire* discussion. This subject is important consideration for further research and will have personal responses according to each journ(art)ist's criteria and particular collaboration with the journeyers.

#### *Practicality: Opening and Closing Sessions*

One technicality raised for further discussion re-creation was the techniques to open and close the encounters. Although these dynamics do not need to be a set part of each encounter, it was observed that opening-closing techniques were helpful to initiate the activators from a place of relaxation and enjoyment. With Nahom, for example, opening techniques also compensated the limited linguistic exchange between journeyer and journ(art)ist. In Dina's case, the closure technique that involved pleasurable smells was significantly positive. These techniques proved to offer a useful recreational edge that offered journeyers a comforting and a pleasing way to begin and end the encounters.

#### **5.3.6.3 Composition Phase**

This section presents points of reflection regarding the composition stage and assemble & production stages. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapters, the conduction and dynamics of the devising process in this phase will depend on the particular theatre methods and knowledge that journ(art)ists integrate to the process. There is a relevant point of reflection and discussion that has not been addressed so far in this matter. As reiterated previously, the case studies informed on the importance to discuss with journeyers about particular aspects of the composition and assemblage process. The case studies make a reference to these discussions in the 'Composition Meeting' that was addressed with journeyers. However, it has been concluded that particular topics should be discussed with journeyers during the *Canvas of Desire* and Assemblage Discussion, which were not addressed throughout the re-creations with Nahom and Dina.

#### *Satire, Humour and 'Bright Side'*

Nahom and Dina's feedbacks of the works-in-progress are a principal aspect for discussion about the composition of the somantic artwork. Nahom mentioned, for example, that the performance was lacking humour or liveliness. This led to reflect on what has been mentioned as the possibility to explore the 'bright side' of the traumagical real dimension. The Sketching Phase with Nahom, for example, did not elicit a particular humoristic sketch; however, a few of the reconstructions may have been developed to lively and even humoristic instances. It was interesting to realise that, although I could have added humour or liveliness during the latter stage of the

assemblage stage. As it was mentioned in the previous section, my aesthetic lens did not seem to capture humour in Nahom's sketches, and I did not consider appropriate to integrate humour if Nahom did not request it during the Composition Phase. Reflecting on this situation, I conclude that I missed acknowledging Nahom's sense of humour during the Sketching Phase, and could have activated 'bright sides' of the sketches without this being a threat to Nahom's reversed agency.

In Dina's case, her sketches were not constructed in any sense of humour or liveliness, as some of Nahom's may have been. However, instances of beauty and lightness could have been developed, such as the scenes related to the glimpses of light. However, I concluded that since Dina's sketches predominantly contained 'dark magic', the scenes were presented in a predominantly serious tone, rather than a light and even humoristic one. The consideration of joy/beauty/pleasure in journeyers' commun(e)ication is one that the journeyer should initiate. However, I was led to consider the validity and appropriateness of paying more attention to the identification of journeyers' bright side of their traumagical reality in their sketches. In addition, the humour or seriousness in which they reconstruct their experiences can also be an important signal from which to continue the facilitation. Moreover, it has been concluded that, although my view of journeyers' *traumatic/anew reality* did not identify a sense of humour, journeyers may in fact interpret some aspects of their *traumatic/anew reality* in light moods. Critically, these reflections suggest that a commun(e)ication of a *traumatic/anew reality* will not necessarily predominate in 'dark magic'.

Further reflection has therefore led to consider the option of discussing the 'mood' or 'atmosphere' that journeyers desire for their commun(e)ication event. 'Atmosphere' in this context refers to the mood of the commun(e)ication event: whether is predominantly serious or predominantly humoristic; whether it carries a dark tone or light mood; whether journeyers consider a cynical, political, playful, pretty, visceral, ugly, or tragic 'atmosphere', and so forth. The hypothesis had been that the mood and atmosphere of the commun(e)ication would be elicited primarily during the Sketching Phase, and through the commun(e)ication desires. In Nahom's case, for example, the sketching stages were inclined toward serious tones, while Dina's evocations and statements were at times with a challenging tone. Although Dina and Nahom did not communicate an issue or a dislike in the atmosphere of the works-in-progress, I question if they would have preferred the atmosphere to take a different direction or variation. Atmosphere can be an important aspect of a commun(e)ication desire. In Dina's case, for

example, she mentioned that she particularly liked the ‘alien-ness’ of the performance. One conclusive response to these questions and reflections is therefore to consider discussing and reviewing journeyers desired inclination of the ‘mood’ and ‘atmosphere’ during the *Desire Palette* discussion, which happens at the end of the Sketching Phase. If a particular inclination has not been identified after the construction of sketches, this is a favourable stage for such discussion. Alternatively, this may be addressed since the beginning of the re-creation process, where journeyers are clarified that the commun(e)ication event does not have to revolve around the ‘dark’ aspects of their *traumatic/anew reality*. This discussion was not addressed in the case studies.

To inquire journeyers about their preferred ‘bright’ and ‘dark’ mood of the performance would be another opportunity for reversed agency that offers journeyers a greater ownership and influence of their commun(e)ication event. Moreover, another alternative to consider during a journeyer-absence after the Sketching Phase is for journeyers to observe the work-in-progress before it is presented to confidants. Even after the *Canvas of Desire* discussion, a final appreciate and feedback of the performance can be completed once it is assembled and rehearsed. At this stage journeyers may be able to reflect upon what their message lacks, and develop final changes. Finally, an attention to the ‘bright side’ of the traumagical real dimension proposes a ‘bright side’ of the uncanny and the strange as subversive techniques, can result in a promising and interesting variant for further research.

#### **5.3.6.4 Assemblage Stage’s After-Effects**

In reference to the ‘after effects’ of the commun(e)ication event addressed in Chapter Three, it is important to highlight the ‘by products’. In Nahom’s case, there were significant relationships between him and collabor(art)ists that developed after the performance. Nahom developed a profitable artistic relationship with the filmmaker, Juan Sebastián Alvarez, and the music composer, Mayneth Espina. From the composition experience, Nahom became interested in doing film. Mr Alvarez provided Nahom with film software and training of various editing programs. Mr Espina organised concerts for Nahom and an Eritrean musician friend, and also provided training and computer software of music editing. After the assemble & production stage, both the photographer, Alessio Castaña asked Nahom and myself for consent to display the photography work respectively at different events, where he would explain to audiences the story behind the artwork. In Dina’s case, a by-product consisted in the interest of two to learn about method of the re-creation and create a commun(e)ication

event about their experiences. One of them particularly discovered a natural talent and interest for theatre. Furthermore, another general after-effect present in the nature of this re-creation method is the awareness and knowledge created in all those who participate along jour(n)artists and journeyers. In both case studies, participants and collabo(art)ists learned about the social issues that Nahom and Dina encountered. Finally, an after-effect of significant potential for further research is the emotional and mental benefit that journeyers and all those involved can access through the re-creation and the commun(e)ication event.

For Nahom and Dina, in this case, the re-creation process and the journeyer-jour(n)artist relationship entailed, were enjoyable experiences that allowed them to approach their *traumatic/anew reality* from a reflective and meaningful position of agency. Furthermore, as it was mentioned earlier, the re-creation process created opportunities for further engagement, exchange and involvement between collabor(art)ists and journeyer. Finally, the exchange of experience that emerges from the commun(e)ication event, as mentioned earlier, is an intelligible and affective experience which continues to influence and revisit confidants.

#### **5.3.6.5 Ensemble & Production Phase**

As mentioned in Chapter Four, this phase consisted in preparing the montage and the mise-en-scène in the space, inviting potential confidants to the event, and conducting a run through of the works-in-progress. In addition, this phase involved the selection of the performer who would take Nahom's place in the performance, and the painter who collaborated in preparing the mise-en-scène. In both case studies I received a small extent of support to conduct this phase, but in general, the production of the works-in-progress was conducted by me. This was certainly a laborious implication of the jour(n)artist's role, when there is no director or co-jour(n)artists to work with. The scenario of this phase depends on the particular director, production team and budget that the jour(n)artists facilitate.

#### **5.3.6.6 Commun(e)ication Event**

The last discussion in this section refers to the commun(e)ication events and the significant aspects of the performance as a proposal for journeyers' socio-aesthetic platform agency. A significance of the performances was how the reversed agency of the platform allowed Nahom and Dina's an intimate imparting of a personal message to

confidants, who evoked a wide spectra of somantic meaning and experience that bridged them to Nahom and Dina. Confidants' commentaries suggested the performance drove them to engage with the journeyers' conveyed reality, to reflect, to confront, to question, to feel, to empathise with Nahom and Dina's in an 'unsettlement' to respond and react (LaCapra 2001: 78). Also, most confidants mentioned they were informed and made aware about SRA case or the first time, as well as the exile struggle that Eritreans must endure to seek asylum. It is interesting to note that this information was not only or necessarily signified intellectually, but it was blurred with the sensible and affective experiences that they were awakened to. It is significant to note that the traumatic events or perpetrators' act were not exalted as central message of the performance, but were rather implicit, whilst Nahom and Dina's desires were heightened. The commun(e)ication events gave Nahom and Dina a socio-aesthetic agency, which resulted in confidants' engagement with their desires. Such agency became an important redistribution of forces and intervention in society.

Next, it was significant to note that the experience of 'sharedness' did not end with the commun(e)ication event. The creative process that journeyers engaged with in constructing their sketches and composing the somantic artwork for their confidants, is a somantic experience that remains in journeyers, confidants and participants. As Thompson suggests, these affective exchanges 'linger' or 'last beyond the event' (Thompson 2011: 157). One comment from a confidant particularly refers to this, when he states: 'there were many, many particular moments that I found interesting and had an effect on me, but there are a few powerful moments that I will mention that have had a very profound impression on me, that I can still visualize, even months after the performance.' Furthermore, the commun(e)ication events became potential tools for a social and ethical compromise in confidants. Thompson agrees in the need to maintain such bridge between confidants and audiences, in order to maintain confidants' ethical demand towards journeyers, and to take a responsibility for these face-to-face encounters with them (Thompson 2011: 176). He therefore emphasises that, 'while *one might approve* of the demand of the other, there needs to be a process for encouraging that approval (Thompson 2011: 168). By questioning how to 'maintain the motivation of those who approve' this responsibility, it is instructive to refer back to Thompson:

The 'affect' of co-creating theatre (or other arts) could, therefore, be one means of moving people from an "anaesthetised" reaction to the fact of the other to feeling the demands that those faces make upon them: it could become the means of creating approval.

Thompson 2011: 168

The re-creation process and the commun(e)ication event can therefore be this potential 'co-creation' that (re)conciles confidants to engage with journeyers' desires, and in this sense, maintain in audiences the approval of the ethical demand that comes with experiencing 'sharedness' with the other. Finally, another significant of the re-creation commun(e)ication events were their potential to produce 'after effects' favourable for every participant.

#### **5.4 Analysis for further application**

This final section of this chapter introduces the possible variations that a re-creation process can entail according to the scenarios given in each collaboration. It is necessary to discuss how the variations in the re-creation process can be discussed for further analysis and application.

##### **5.4.1 Variations to the Re-Creation Process**

###### *Collective commun(e)ication desire*

One variation to consider is a collaboration where a group of journeyers share a commun(e)ication event; in other words, where the approach of one or more commun(e)ication desires is done from a collective angle. The scenario of a collective desire may be given in situations where various journeyers undergo the same 'extreme' event that led to a collective shocking response, a similar experience of 'clash' of realities, or any other link that journeyer find in their experiences. This collective commun(e)ication entails adapting the Sketching and Composition Phases to dynamics of group and individual participation.

###### *Journ(art)ists*

Another variation is to consider the involvement of more than one journ(art)ist to support facilitation of one or more journeyers. A journ(art)ist ensemble would therefore involve a co-directing experience and collaboration. Because of the intimate nature of the Sketching Phase, probably no more than three journ(art)ists would be appropriate in a teamwork of directors. However, these can be different for the Composition Phase and the subsequent stages. Also, if the process involves various journeyers, a journ(art)ist ensemble would be ideal. Another scenario may consist of journ(art)ists who are not 'directors' but can facilitate journeyers' sketching and composition phases, and facilitate a directing role if needed. Finally, there are significant advantages of working in journ(art)ist ensemble: more creative dialogue, different skills involved, delegation of

directorial and production aspects of the process, and mutual support in debriefing about the experience.

#### *Empty space*

The budget and facilities available for each re-creation and commun(e)ication event will determine the low or high scale of mise-en-scène and the equipment and technology used. Nonetheless, the absence of technology or other materials do not have to be a limitation to the re-creation experience or to the creative process of the commun(e)ication event. In this case, journ(art)ists must creatively ideate a somantic continuum facilitation during the Sketching Phase, without the use of particular tools. The Composition Phase can be developed and arranged with art forms and set that do not entail technology or costly equipment.

#### *Culturally specific*

Another variation may entail an intercultural commun(e)ication scenario where journeyers' desires and sketches imply cultural-specific frames of reference in an event where the confidants are from different cultures. Such scenarios describe interactions and communion experiences where journeyers desire to address a culture distinct from their own. In this case, journ(art)ists require a knowledge of both cultures' aesthetic and communicative principles, in order to facilitate a commun(e)ication experience that does not end in miscommunication or loss of journeyers' meaning, desire and message.

### **5.4.2 Practical scenarios from case studies**

Turning now to the scenarios presented in the case studies, it is important to briefly address the advantages or disadvantages that these situations presented, which involved: one journeyer, one journ(art)ist, a small group of confidants, participation from collabor(art)ists, and low-budget performances.

#### *One journ(art)ist*

The dynamic of one journ(art)ist, first of all, allowed an intimate process and rapport between journeyer and journ(art)ist. The challenges, however, pertained to facilitating the Composition Phase while having to address directorial and production roles for the performance. Also, the aesthetic lens in this case was limited on one creative input, as opposed to a creative dialogue, for the exception of the compositions channelled with collabor(art)ists. A dynamics of one, however, does not entail that only the journ(art)ist and journeyer(s) are involved throughout the entire process. In this case study, for

example, the translator, Ms Flores, provided assistance in various levels, while other collabor(art)ists also participated.

#### *One journeyer*

The advantage of a re-creation process with one journeyer naturally resides in a significant level of intimacy and an in-depth focus during the process. In contrast to a collective commun(e)ication desire, these dynamics allow the journeyer to explore personal intentions and impending desires in an in-depth fashion. The limitation of a platform for one journeyer, undoubtedly, is the 'slow' impact in offering platforms to large numbers of journeyers. However, each commun(e)ication event is still a significant intervention in society.

#### *Small group of Confidants*

Both case studies explored commun(e)ication events with a small number of confidants. The criteria behind this decision in this research aimed to explore with audiences' immersion and engagement in a intimate setting of interaction, hence, small spaces and small groups of confidants. However, a collaboration should explore any form of interaction, either small or large audiences, depending on who journeyers desire to commun(e)icate with, the practicality, feasibility, and so forth. Moreover, a small groups of confidants per commun(e)ication experience still has possibilities to reach larger number of audiences if showcased over a period of time.

#### *Universal and intercultural scope*

The nature of both commun(e)ication events in this research consisted of a universal scope of experience. A universal approach to the re-creation and the performance naturally has the significant advantage to be able to reach audiences across cultures. These universal scenarios are particular of social contexts consisting of multicultural communities, where Platform-meet-Desire encounters and meetings occur. A universality in the form of commun(e)ication however, does not entail an absence of cultural factors and differences, but the contrary. The case studies, for example, can be appreciated from an intercultural angle. Firstly, the intercultural dimension begins with a journ(art)ist offering a platform in a country that is not her own. Secondly, the journeyers were from a different culture to that of the journ(art)ist. Thirdly, in Nahom's case, the commun(e)ication event took place in a country which is foreign both to the journeyer and journ(art)ist. Fourthly, the collabor(art)ists and people involved were from different cultures. Next, the groups of confidants were similarly from different

cultures and nationalities. The point to emphasise about such intercultural contexts is the advantage of speaking a universal language of communication through aesthetics, without losing awareness of the specificities of cultures and what these entail in each aspect of the process and the commun(e)ication event. An important note to add here is that a re-creation process is not intended to be applied as a platform offered by journ(art)ists in situations where both journeyers and confidants are from the same culture, but different to that of journ(art)ists. In this case, it is ideal for platform 'offerers' or journ(art)ists to suggest re-creation processes to journeyers that can facilitate commun(e)ication events in their own communities. Finally, it would be enriching to consider intercultural exchanges between journ(art)ists, in regard to different cultural approaches and methods to the re-creation process.

#### *A 'trickle down' effect*

A final consideration consists in the possibility for journeyers to become journ(art)ists. Journeyers who have participated in re-creation processes can further be involved both as participants or journ(art)ists of other journeyers' commun(e)ication events. The condition to be a journ(art)ist, however, is to be able to find the means to facilitate and orchestrate commun(e)ication event in reversed agency. An example emerged during Dina's case study, where one of the participants is a journeyer herself, and even though she had no artistic experience, she displayed natural talent and interest towards the creative aspects of the process. This journeyer informed me that she would desire to create a commun(e)ication event like the one we were organising for Dina. Furthermore, a scenario to further consider is a re-creation process where someone is both the journ(art)ist and journeyer; in other words, an auto re-creation without a listener or facilitator to activate the sketches. This opens the possibility for an artist to be interested in exploring the re-creation process as a form of auto-exploration. In either case, the dynamics of the somantic modalities and magical real lens would be adapted to either solo explorations, or ones with invitation of other collabo(art)ists or participants in the process. It would be insightful to explore a somantic and magical real approach in these situations where journeyers devise alone as journ(art)ists, or with others' participation. However, the journeyer-journ(art)ist relationship and the dynamics created in activating, listening, and composing together remains a unique collaboration that offers a relationship that cannot be experienced otherwise. Moreover, there will always be scenarios where it is possible and necessary to offer a platform to journeyers with lack of agency; in other words: a re-disposition of forces. There will always be possibilities where Platform meets a Desire, where a Desire finds a Platform.

## Conclusion

The re-creation process towards journeyers' commun(e)ication events marks the beginning of deeper exploration. As a matter of concluding and initiating a new stage of the quest that began with the very first interviews I conducted, it is important to highlight several points to reflect upon on the road ahead.

The first point refers to the subversion of *the traumatic* in a commun(e)ication experience. In this thesis, the subversion has been referred to as an action that supersedes a journeyer-confidant *Distance*. In conclusion, a subversive approach has been identified as an underlying action of the commun(e)ication event. One subversive moment pertains to how journeyers could 'share' their experiences de-centralising from the semantic domain, from the objective, the factual, and the event-centred default of 'telling one's story'. And nonetheless, confidants gained knowledge, insight, and information from journeyers' traumatic events implicitly in the somantic artwork. Dismantling the predominance of either semantic or somatic domains, thus allows an indivisible recognition and experience of both, which is the effect of somantic blurredness. Following, another subversive moment relates to the re-presentation of *the traumatic*. In the sketching encounter, Dina had expressed that 'words don't do justice' to what she has experienced and what she felt. Referring also to what Laub commented of Holocaust survivors, these expressed that 'no amount of telling seems to ever do justice to this inner compulsion' (Laub 1995: 63). However, in addition to 'telling', no artistic expression can do justice to the suffering and brutality that people are seized by. Alternatively, the poietic approach of re-presentation does not intent to translate trauma and thus escapes both its betraying force and the perpetuation of what people desire to journey away from. Instead, it plots ways for journeyers to reconstruct and re-create experience from a place of ownership and empowerment over it. Finally, a third subversive moment resides in bridging journeyer-confidant *Distance* by deceiving the *Catch-22 affair* when communicating about *the traumatic*. Such manoeuvre consists in igniting a reengagement with traumatic/anew realities by respecting and protecting journeyers and confidants' 'ends of the bridge'.

A second matter for reflection, in line with this subversive current, is in regard to Magical Realism's attitude towards reality and its *shared dimension* approach to commun(e)ication of *the traumatic*. Several conclusive observations are worth considering. One observation emerges from the *natural course* in which the research

intersected with the magical real lens. This intersection in fact underlines Magical Realism's subversion of established notions of reality. One notion, for example, is that factual events of a story are considered the veracious and truthful qualities of reality and history (Lewis 2004: 128). Magical Realism equals the value of the veracity of objectivity and historicity to the subjective and sensible realm of experience, approaching both as one enhanced perception of reality (Imbert 1976: 1; Aldea 2011: 149). Another observation relates to Magical Realism's commingling with the absurd, the mysterious, the illogical, and the alien as part of normal reality. This commingling does not arise from passivity or resignation to the 'dark side' of the magical, but is a strategy to draw near to the 'dark' in order to engage with it and confront it (Roh 1995: 20; Leal 1995: 121). The magical real is therefore a magnifying lens of reality, exploring its opposite sides to perceive a heightened picture of it. This lens also permits journeyers to confront the foreign elements in their lives, the ghosts of perpetration, the metamorphoses, and the unbelievable experiences. In this sense, Magical Realism communes with and uncovers the taboos established by society. Such attitude invites society to avoid a blind-eye towards traumatic realities, which occur in immediacy and frequently. This attitude also challenges the alienation and 'central dialectic' that journeyers may encounter in their communities. Furthermore, a third observation resides in the 'strange' and uncanny quality of Magical Realism, where the *familiar* is *made unfamiliar*, and the *familiar* is *made unfamiliar*. This commingling provokes on one hand, a wonder and awe that engages, and on the other hand, a disquiet and unsettlement that confronts. This effect allows journeyers' commun(e)ication of the 'dark side' of the magical without threatening the journeyer-confidant bridge.

Following, another point of reflection is the poietic approach to commun(e)ication. For this reflection, it is useful to refer to a proposal that Caruth emphasised more than a decade ago, underlining the 'difficulty of listening and responding to traumatic stories in a way that does not lose their impact, that does not reduce them to clichés or turn them all into versions of the same story' (Caruth, 1995: vii-viii). Caruth argues for the need to 'listen anew' to the traumatic (vii-viii). Expanding from Caruth's suggestion of 'listening anew', there are several aspects that need to be brought into attention, in respect to how the nature of *the traumatic* impels a poietic and anew re-presentation to its commun(e)ication. First of all, by the disinterest of recreation and mimesis of what is perceptible and tangible, a poietic approach encourages journeyers to re-create their experiences from their own introspective and subjective lens. This re-creation, as mentioned earlier, increases journeyers' ownership of their experience, and empowers

them by the reconstruction and confrontation of their traumatic/aneu experience through the lens of their desires and purpose. Second of all, poietics in the re-creation process favours journeyers and confidants through non-exhausted and non-mimetic angles in which re-presentation of *the traumatic* can be explored. Furthermore, another aspect resides in the refusal to capture what cannot be captured validating instead the new affective and intelligible creations that can emerge, and the meaning and experience that can be shared from these.

Following, another point of reflection from what has been addressed so far invites a reconsideration of established notions of 'telling one's story' when it comes to *the traumatic*. First of all, it must be acknowledged that the telling or recording of events and facts is necessary and important to inform, to expose injustice, to denounce it, and to never forget episodes in history that should not be repeated and should be penalized and corrected. Giving testimony or 'telling one's story' therefore challenges the forces that aim to erase the history of oppression that needs to be counteracted (Laub 1992: 69). However, it must be considered that the traumatic/aneu is to a great extent a subjective and affective dimension where objectivity and factual records should not be what is constantly demanded or prioritised from journeyers. Contrastingly, a *shared dimension* approach of commun(e)icating *the traumatic* frees journeyers from the notion that there is an objective 'truth' to disclose, and underlines that what can be written onto history is not centrally or solely the 'truth' of events, but the truth of somatic, sensible, and subjective experience about them as well. In this sense, established notions of storytelling, 'telling one's story', and what is the 'truth' can be challenged or perhaps expanded, so that 'story' is beyond 'what happened' and the 'telling' is not only through mimetic narratives.

The following point of reflection pertains to the re-creation process. The re-creation experience of the case studies has been a blueprint from which to develop various dynamics that were presented. One of these worth highlighting is reconstruction over remembering. Dina and Nahom sketches were constructed from their present interpretation of their experiences; from a new position in reality. This approach to the sketching process is one to be looked upon further. A second dynamics pertains to journeyer-presence (explicit presence) and journeyer-absence (implicit presence) situations. Different collaboration dynamics and scenarios will elicit variations of the re-creation phases and journ(art)ists' aesthetic facilitation towards the production of the performance. Next, another point to highlight pertains to the 'dark' and 'bright' sides of

the magical. So far, the case studies consisted of a predominance of 'dark magic'; however, variations of 'bright magic' can be further contemplated with journeyers who desire to explore it. Finally, another part of the process that can be expanded upon consists of the somantic sketch and composition activators. Developing activators can consist in exploring synaesthetic, somatic and somantic blurredness catalysers that continue to respect a *natural course* of journeyers' sketching and composition. Finally, it is important to mention that the re-creation has also been a proposal for both social and aesthetic domains in theatre and performance to explore their socio-aesthetic and liminal dimensions. The sketching method, for example, can be observed as a blueprint for artists and theatre directors to offer aesthetic platforms to journeyers in an intimate collaboration of reversed agency. At the same time, the sketching method can also encourage social theatre practitioners to facilitate journeyers' commun(e)ication events through the engagement of the somantic artwork as a socio-aesthetic force. Finally, the 'recreational' nature of the process is an invitation for both journeyers and potential journ(art)ists to engage with each other, in a pleasing creative experience.

To begin finalizing with these points of reflection, it is important to focus on the importance in offering journeyers a socio-aesthetic platform in reversed agency. As addressed throughout this thesis, the commun(e)ication event aims to empower journeyers by reversing agency and agenda, while encouraging audiences to engage with their purpose and desires for the platform. Commun(e)ication agency is therefore a matter of ownership over personal experience. A platform agency should not reside only in journalists or scholars, artists or intellectuals, historians or history's 'victors'. In this sense, people should have the possibility to 'write' their own history. As was insisted throughout this research, poietics of art is a significant social force and agency for journeyers. As Ziarek observes poietics 'opens spaces of transformation that remain impossible within the social organisation of force' (Ziarek 2004: 40). Offering socio-aesthetic agency to journeyers is a 'non-violent redistribution of forces' where journeyers' purpose and desires can intervene in their immediate communities, or wider worlds (Ziarek 2004: 26). Therefore, the re-creation experience is a platform proposed to journeyers and artists who believe in this redistribution, and who desire to create opportunities for the commun(e)ication of *the traumatic*. In line with this notion of reversed agency, it is worth highlighting how a somantic continuum approach to *the traumatic* encourages ownership and freedom of commun(e)ication. In the sense that the somantic involves a *shared dimension* of the semantic and somatic domains of communication and experience, it offers journeyers the potential to explore the semantic

and somatic layers of their *traumatic spectrum*, in all the somantic possibilities. Moreover, a somantic *natural course* facilitates both instinctive and noetic introspections of reality, hence a free exploration, manifestation, and interpretation of experience. In this sense, such freedom encourages journeyers to explore their impending desires.

Finally, the promising potential of commun(e)ication events is a last point for reflection. Commun(e)ication is a way of writing and rewriting history, experience, desire, and purpose. It is in an act of ‘togetherness’ that can confront not only the past but also the present. Moreover, it is a significant force of (re)conciliation and bridged *Distance* between journeyers and their communities. The significance of the somantic nature of ‘sharedness’ can provoke, as La Capra puts it, a ‘desirable affective dimension of inquiry’, which is an ‘empathic unsettlement’ that responds to what is being shared (La Capra 2001: 78). Thompson also suggests that ‘coming face to face with others in performance is a moment of shared affect’, which encourages people’s ethical demands for others (Thompson 2011: 172). In this sense, ‘sharedness’ is a potential prelude and catalyser for further social and political engagement with journeyers and the issues that pertain to *the traumatic*. The writing of desires, meaning and experience in the liveness of commun(e)ication, can be as Thompson proposes, ‘a preparation for the real work of political change’ and ‘intervention into our sensible world’ (177).

## **Appendices 1-13**

For **Appendix 14** please refer to the CD-ROMS, as detailed in the Contents Table

## Appendix 1: Finding Desires: Letters from VI.TO. and City Hearts

The letters attached present the approval from VI.TO. and City Hearts' directors, to begin the re-creation process Nahom and Dina respectively., towards the culmination of the commun(e)ication events.



**CIR**

CONSIGLIO ITALIANO  
PER I RIFUGIATI

ONLUS  
ENTE MORALE

*Costituito nel 1990  
con il patrocinio  
dell'Alto Commissariato  
delle Nazioni Unite  
per i Rifugiati*

*Presidente*  
SAVINO PEZZOTTA

*Vice Presidente*  
MARIO LANA

*Direttore*  
CHRISTOPHER HEIN

*Membri del  
Comitato Direttivo*

AGLI  
ARCI

CARITAS ITALIANA  
CENTRO ATELLI

CGIL  
CISL

COMUNITÀ DI S. EGIDIO  
FEDERAZIONE DELLE  
CHIESE EVANGELICHE

FONDAZIONE FRANCO VERGA  
FONDAZIONE MIGRANTES (CEI)

LEGA ITALIANA  
PER I DIRITTI DELL'UOMO

Iti.

UNIONE FORENSE PER LA  
TUTELA DEI DIRITTI DELL'UOMO

MASSIMO GHIRELLI  
MASSIMO SARAZ

CONACyT  
Av. Insurgentes Sur 1582  
Col. Crédito Constructor  
Del. Benito Juárez  
03940, México, D.F.

Dear CONACyT Committee,

We contact you once again, on the case of your sponsored student Elizabeth Macias Gutierrez who participated in our psycho-social rehabilitation theatre workshop, in the Spring of 2009. According with our policy, she had spent three months following our activities before she could begin working with any of the refugees that our organization cares for.

Since then, our client [REDACTED] and Elizabeth have worked independently from CIR, as it is understood that the following specific experience concerns Elizabeth's PhD investigation with Brunel University in London. We have been aware that Elizabeth returned to continue her research in England, for which she had to leave this research case pending. Nevertheless, we have been recently in communication and look forward to see the finalization of the presentation soon. For this, we support her petition on any necessary extension for the successful conclusion of her work.

Please feel free to contact me for any additional information you may deem useful.

Best regards

Fiorella Rathaus

Vi.To Project Manager- Hospitality and Care of Victims of Torture

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(4 linee r.a.)  
Fax +39.06.69200116  
c/c postale n. 48262000  
CF 96150030581  
e-mail: cir@cir-onlus.org  
www.cir-onlus.org



8/04/2010

Dear whom ever it may concern.

I am writing from the project City Hearts to confirm and authorise that Ellie Macais Gutierez is ok to work with [REDACTED] and turn her story into a performance.

We understand this to be a 3-4month duration period that Ellie will be around working with Po. We are really pleased that Ellie has chosen our project and look forward to seeing the performance.

Please let me know if you require any more information.

Kind Regards

*Colleen*

Colleen Brownlee

City Hearts, PO Box 4285, Sheffield, S2 9BE  
Tel: 0114 213 2070 Fax: 0114 276 9248 Email: [info@city-hearts.co.uk](mailto:info@city-hearts.co.uk) [www.city-hearts.co.uk](http://www.city-hearts.co.uk)  
City Hearts is an initiative of Hope City Enterprise, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 5396512) and a registered charity (no. 111 0314)

## Appendix 2: Grounding Phase: Re-Creation Agreement

The following document is the original sample of the 're-creation agreement' sheet. The document of the agreement in Case Study A could not be located in the research's archive.

Brunel University  
Drama Department  
PhD Research  
March 28, 2010

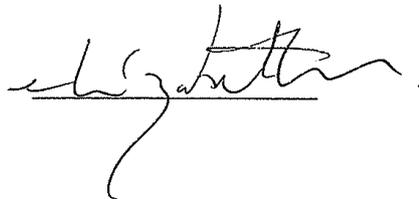
### STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I, [REDACTED] have reviewed with Ellie the aspects involved in this project enlisted below.

1. The main purpose of the research and the expectations from the results
2. The discussion with the staff from City Hearts about the soundness of my project
3. The authorization from City Hearts
4. The authorization from Brunel University
5. My responsibility of her protection and well-being
6. Explanation of what the creative process and collection of data would consist of and what would be expected of them as collaborators and me as and researcher
7. The clarification of asking for consent as on-going throughout the process
8. The certainty of not being asked for consent under duress
9. The aspect of anonymity and off-the-record material
10. The potential discomfort of remembering some aspects of her life story
11. The potential space and times of the meetings and workshops for a period of 3-4 months
12. How the information will be used, and who will potentially learn about it
13. The assurance of not having expectations or demands than the project cannot offer
14. The financial inducement to cover transportation expenses and compensation of time
15. Intellectual property rights

I, [REDACTED] am aware of the project's elements that Ellie made clear in our first meeting, and give consent- not under duress-, to be part of this project.

Signatures,



### Appendix 3: Movement & Dance Therapy Course- diploma

As mentioned in Nahom's Sketching Phase, the *natural course* that he chose to sketch through corporeal movement encouraged me to research techniques to facilitate, open, and close encounters that involve movement.



**CORPISENSIBILI**  
Arte Danza Benessere e Cultura

**ATTESTATO**

Si attesta che **ELIZABETH MACIAS** ha partecipato a

**Corpo cosciente e movimento creativo**  
Laboratorio di crescita personale con tecniche di Danzamentoterapia  
Condotta da Fernando Battista

per un totale di 8 ore.

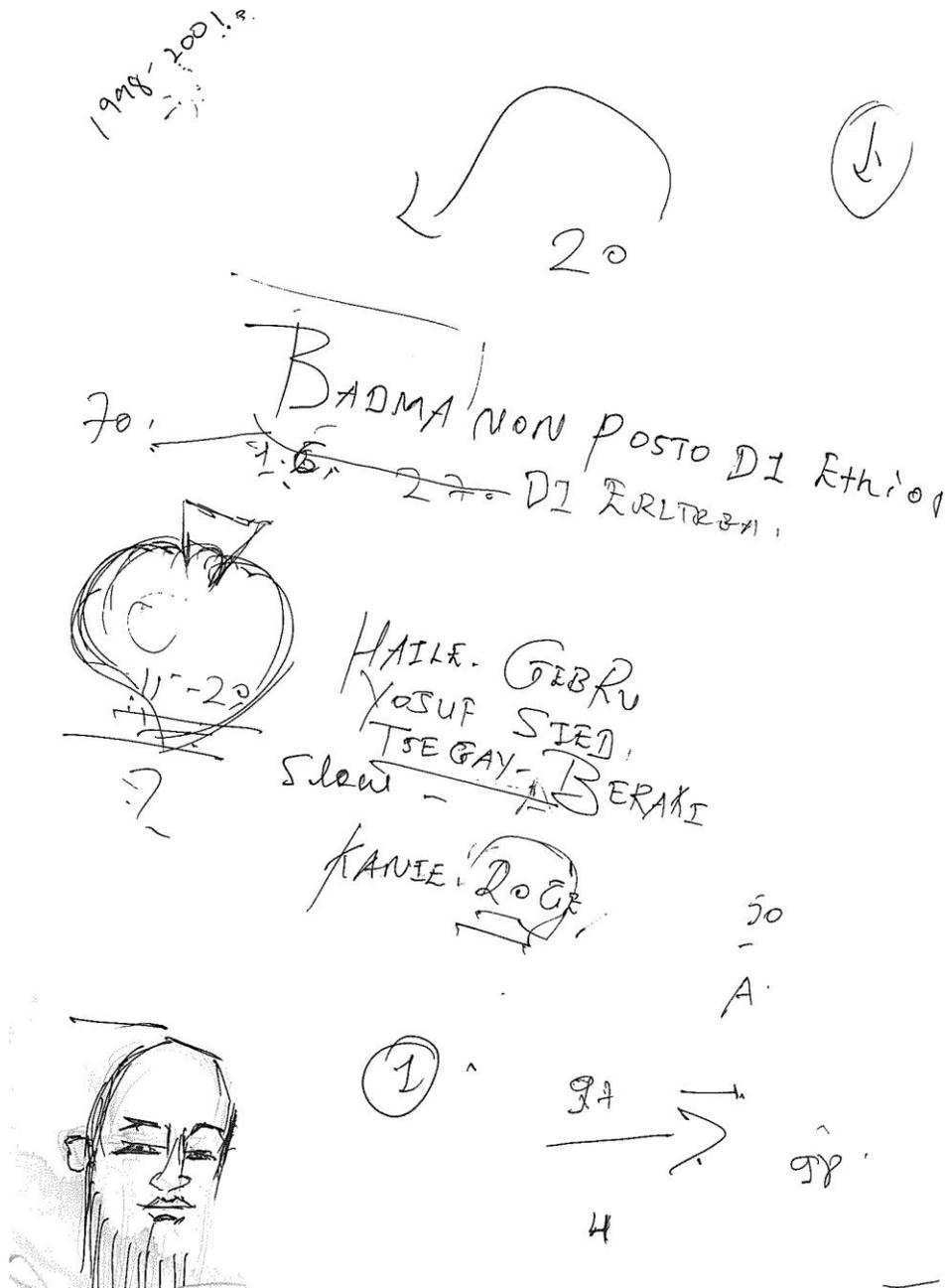
Dott. Fernando Battista  
Danzamentoterapeuta (ARTED) n. 119/1995  
DanceCounselor espressivo (ASPID-OSIDE) n. 119/1995

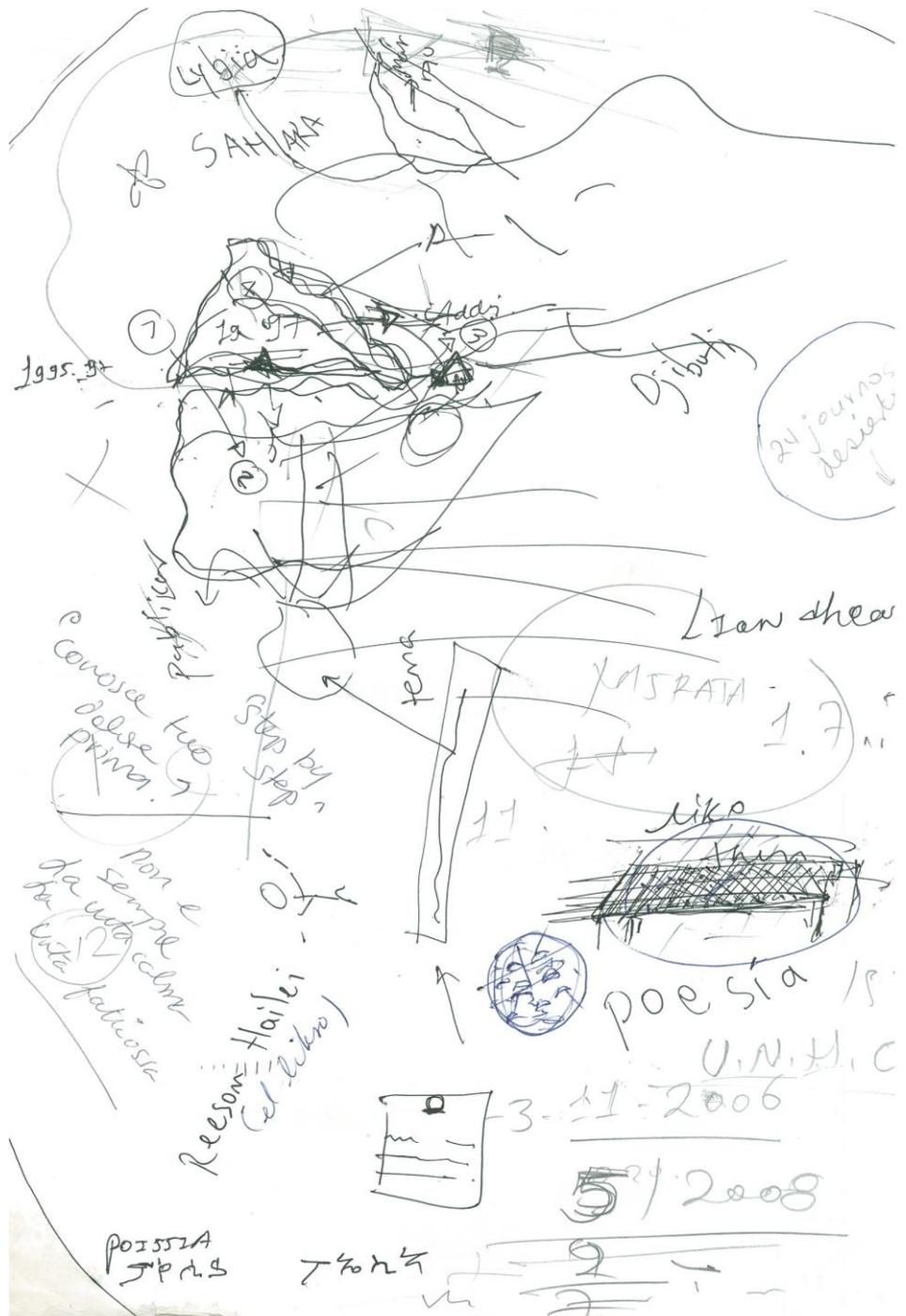
Roma, 19/10/2009



## Appendix 4- CSA: Sketching Phase- conversing and drawing

A sample of Nahom's drawings and writings on paper during conversing encounters.





como pero  
a todos

la fecha de  
falle

- no coma
- 5 min per respirare
- "seppation"

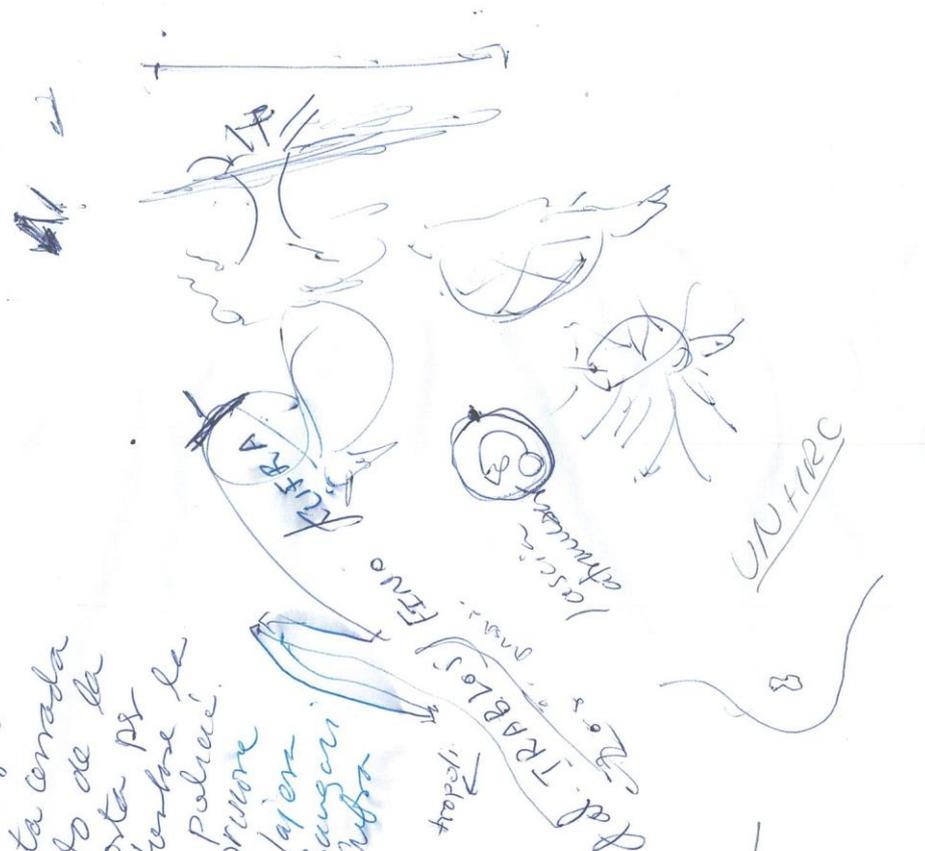
(fama reale >  
eyes rojos  
puerta cerrada  
sonido de la  
porta ps  
disturbare la  
Palraii.  
7 priore  
Islajem  
Bangari  
Aofra

MSTA

METAFORA  
METAPHOR

grande  
expectativa  
mejor  
frustracion  
ero-  
proote)

el nino salio -  
si salido -  
a es mujer -  
quedat  
maximale



## Appendix 5 CSA: Text and speech in the somantic artwork (translated)

The following scene text refers to the semantic sketches and compositions that were assembled in the somantic artwork. These are presented in order of appearance during the commun(e)ication event. This **Appendix** also serves as a guide for the assessment of the somantic artwork's video documentation.

**Act 1 Scene 2-** The Artist.

**Act 1 Scene 5-** 'Try until you die'

**Act 2 Scene 2:** SOS.

**Act 2 Scene 3:** Black Market.

**Act 3 Scene 2-** Hell Without Libena.

**Act 3 Scene 3:** Whispering Walls.

**Final Scene:** Eye Awakens.

**Act 1 Scene 2- *Artist***

(in voiceover)

I am who draws

*Io sono un pittore*

I don't know why I love to draw

*Non so perche amo cosi tanto la corsa*

Maybe because I like the feeling

*Forse mi piaci la sensazione*

I see images on the walls and every piece of paper

*Vedo figure sulla muri o su ogni pezzo de carta*

Sometimes, I feel that words, music, and painting are my children

*A volte, mi sento come si la parole, la musica, il dipinto fossero gli miei figli*

I don't know why I feel this

*Non so perche provo questo*

I just love to feel my brain in motion

*Amo sentire il mio cervello in movimento*

**Act 1 Scene 5- 'Try until you die'**

(voiceover)

My destiny...depends on the sea current

*Il mio destino dipende del mare*

My hope, in a boat that turns over in fear and vomit

*La mia speranza, una barca che se lancia de paura e vomito*

My possibility, to die at sea or be imprisoned

*La mia possibilita, morire al mare o andare en carcere*

I need to sell myself and be bought to advance through the desert

*O bisogno de essere comprato e venduto al deserto per potere andare avanti*

Here inside, it's a never-ending day. Dark  
*Qui dentro a un giorno eterno, nero*

Outside, you can look for different colours, and each day is different  
*Fuori, se poi cercare diversi colori, ogni giorno e diverso*

There are so many varied things  
*Tante cosa diversa*

Here inside, I miss breathing, listening, seeing, moving. I miss my senses.  
*Qui dentro, mi manca il respiro, mi manca ascoltare, mi manca vedere, mi manca il movimento.*  
*Mi manca gli miei sensi*

**Act 2 Scene 2: SOS**

Excerpt: Nahom's phone conversations with officer of United Nations' refugee agency, and American journalist. Translation only.

(voiceover)

**Nahom: Hello?**

Journalist: Mr Nahom?

**Yes, it's me.**

Hi, this is the American journalist from Washington. Are you able to speak now?

**Si, si.**

*(phone interference)*

Mr Nahom?

**Yes, I don't know what happened.**

If this is not a good moment to speak, we can do so another day, if you prefer  
(call disconnected. re dialing. Phone rings)

UN officer: Hello?

**Hi, it's Nahom.**

Hi Nahom, let me call you back.

**Ok.**

*(phone rings)*

Nahom, are you in the prison at Misratah now?

**Yes, I'm in Misratah.**

Could we continue the interview now?

**Yes.**

Because we need some details for the report to the Commission.

**Ok.**

Ok. In how many prisons did you say you've been?

**Seven**

Seven prisons.

**Yes. All in Libya. I don't know why they transferred us from prison to prison. It doesn't make sense to me.**

Yes. They've transported you in a 'container', I imagine?

**Yes, we were about 150 people inside the container, children and woman also.**

Yes.

**We were there like sardines, on top of each other. They would do with us whatever they wanted; we are like animals to them.**

(phone disconnected)

Nahom: Pronto?

Journalist: Can you speak at this moment?

**Yes yes**

(empty sound with effects)

**.....In Sudan, for seven months**

I see.

(empty sound)

**The landlord betrays you, Calls the police and keeps all your money.**

(silence)

Pronto?

(no answer)

**My credit...my credit...my credit**

No problem. I'll call you back.

(conversation changes)

**Nahom: Sorry, but you must be quick now**

UN officer: Nahom we have received a letter from your wife, who's in Rome now. We need to ask you a few questions regarding your wife within the the next few days.

(change of conversation)

Journalist: Yes

**Nahom: This prison has a black market system**

(pause)

**They wanted to steal our small motor (at sea). We could not fight back because if we moved, the boat would turn over.**

I don't understand, were they pirates? They sent you out to die, Mr Nahom.

**Act 2 Scene 3: *Black Market***

(live)

Performer approaches the audience to exchange 'goods'-

I've been told that I could do some exchange with some of you. I need some cigarettes.

I've got a few phone cards here, i can give away ten. Thank you, very kind. Is there one

of you with a armonica? Just to play a bit of music while we're here. I've got only other

ten phone cards, is that OK? Thank you, well, actually, I need some medicine, but...oh, I

don't have many more phone cards. This pain is not going away actually, would

someone maybe take back the armonica for some medicine? Please? Anyone?

**Act 3 Scene 2- *Hell Without Libena***

(live)

Nahom

**Libena, amore**

Nahom

**It's ok. Don't worry**

Nahom, it's so good to hear your voice.

**I could not stop thinking about you, Libena. Two weeks without hearing from you. I've written a poem for you: I ask Friday, if 'it' knew of your wherabouts; I told Saturday, that I cannot live without you; and when Wednesday arrived, I've told 'it' that I would go insane if I did no hear your voice today.**

My darling, I'm so sorry. I had a terrible tooth ache, with fever, and I could not even speak, but tell me, how are you? Can you talk now?

**I'm well.**

No, it's not true

**Yes, I'm ok. Don't worry.**

Listen, I've bought ten phone cards, five for your, and five so you can exchange them. Can I give you the pin numbers now?

**Yes, thank you darling. I'll be a rich man!**

Si. Grazie amore. Sarò un uomo ricco!

Libena?

(call disconnected)

**Act 3 Scene 3: Whispering Walls**

It is better to die for something than live for nothing

All strength comes from God

Pay the women to hide your money; officers don't search them.

For cigarettes or medicine, find officer Farag. Don't offer money to any other officer.

**Final Scene: Eye Awakens**  
(text projection)

Nahom arrives to Rome in 2007, rescued by the United Nations refugee agency. Nahom's wife fought a long fight, and did not see him in 4 years. Now Nahom's art, continues to wait.

## **Appendix 6- CSA: Sound & music guide of somantic artwork**

The following list references the voiceovers, sound & music tracks that were channelled for the somantic artwork. Refer to Disc 3 for audio. See **Appendix 5** for Italian-English translation of dialogues.

**Track 1:** Intro Scene Eye Asleep & Act 1 Scene1- Adyoja plays  
'Snow day for Lhasa' (2012) by Esmerine and Patrick Watson

**Track 2: Act 1 Scene 2- The artist**  
Nahom voiceover.

**Track 3: Act 1 Scene 3- Soldier**  
Instrumental composition

**Track 4: Act 1 Scene 4- Leaving**  
Nahom's whistling in prison

**Track 5: Act 1 Scene 5- Try Until You Die**  
Nahom's voiceover. Nahom sings and plays the kraar.

**Track 6: Act 1 Scene 6- Exile Sculptures**  
Composition mix with voices from Eritrea

**Track 7: Act 2 Scene 2- SOS**  
Sound composition with actors' voiceover

**Track 8: Act 2 Scene 4- 'Hewan' in Prison**  
1- Composition of rhythmic percussion and Nahom's breathing, **0.00-1.33 min**  
2- Nahom's recording of prison voices and sounds, **1.34 – 2.29 min**  
3- Composition of rhythmic patterns and Nahom's voice, **3.00- 4.30 min**  
4- Helicopter effect, **4.31-5.32 min**

**Track 9: Act 3 Scene 3- Whispering Walls & Act 3 Scene 4 Vessel Woman**  
'Fur Alina' (1976) by Arvo Part

## Appendix 7- CSB: Sketching Phase –conversing encounter/transcript

Sample of documentation from a conversing encounter with Dina. Audios not available.

### Sheffield – what do you like about it? Do you have favourite spots?

I love the fact that's on hills. I love the fact that I can go high and look down on the city. I love the fact that I can go out and there's trees. I love the fact that I can go rock climbing here If I want to or...go out to the peaks.

[PERFORMANCE: COULD WE HAVE THE AUDIENCE ON HIGH? MOVING?]

In Liverpool [where her boyfriend lives] I couldn't do that.

I don't like to be trapped in the city life.

[at City Hearts] We didn't get to go out very much, because we had lots of different girls with lots of kinds of issues, so we used to get stuck.

### Do you have a dream that maybe you had since childhood?...

It's something I've always always wanted. Even as a child. Obviously I was clearly abused as a child so I wouldn't have a normal way of thinking, but one thing that I always had as a child ...and I've only even told Nathan this I haven't told anyone else, I would...

[FOLLOW-UP: BREAKING MIRRORS]

The fact that I didn't look in the mirror, because my face was scared, because my family told me I was ugly. So because of the words of someone else, it deformed my view of my image.

[She has a written testimony that lists all the facts. She says sometimes she forgets about all that is written. ]

With the first time I shared I was terrified and I felt like a child again, like I felt right back there again, but now it doesn't seem like it's me.

Every time I share I may tell people how horrendous bits are, but one, I'm not the best with words, though I can keep on talking....

[...referring to the film *The Mermaid*]

The mermaid would put her hands on someone's head so they could experience everything that she's experienced and sometimes I wish I could do that, I could just touch somebody and they would feel it to really know it, because I don't think words do justice, words don't do how I was feeling justice, Words don't do how strong I am now justice.

### Smell Exercise

[breathing into her scarf, that smells like Nathan]

[as she bring the scarf to her nose, she starts a loud giggle]

I'll probably giggle a lot. [-4.45 ]

[she giggles....laughs out loud]

[SENSES: A SMELL THAT MADE HER GIGGLE! ☺]

Let's start with images:

A wild field...It's being free; it's almost like romantic. You know when you go through the field and it's all wild flowers. I guess it's deep, there's nothing like that, but that's what I imagine...being with Nathan, chasing after each other, just like wandering about... with no thought n our head at all, it's just the two of us, just field and the hills and all these wild flowers, but it's more yellowy, like the feel is more yellowy.

Sometimes I feel really strong when I smell it, like he's my knight, like he's just cloaked around me; like when I feel really vulnerable I feel , when I do smell, I feel I've almost got this velvet cloak that comes around me and that nothing can penetrate.

Just him; his chest, like when I rest my head on his chest, that's the safest.

[and she says it's bizarre because she didn't like men touching her]

[the smell takes her back to Nathan's chest. Because that's the position she's on, with her head on his chest, that she smells him]

[I ask if she heard anything, any sounds]

Not really any sounds. I think I just feel peaceful, I just feel the stability of him, that grounded that's there, and it's real.

## Appendix 8 CSB: Text and speech in somantic artwork

The following text pertains to the semantic sketches developed by Dina, which were composed and assembled for the somantic artwork. These are presented in order of the scene appearance during the commun(e)ication event, for which they also serve as reference when watching the video documentation of the somantic artwork.

**Act 1 Scene 3-** Surgeons' Tea Time  
**Act 2 Scene 1-** Dinner Revelation  
**Act 2 Scene 4-** Circus Time, *Puppet Show*  
**Act 3 Scene 1-** Glimpses of Light  
**Act 4 Scene 1-** No Validation  
**Act 4 Scene 2-** Boxed  
**Final Scene-** Nothingness

### Act 1 Scene 3- Surgeons' Tea Time

Well....

**That's the worse one I've seen.**

Yep, it was pretty horrendous....but really Doctor, the 'worst one'!? You've been doing cleft lip and palatte for years!

**Yeah....I know....and the family wasn't happy to hear that we have to keep a close eye on her for some time. They were planning to move to South Africa.**

Really!? Move now!? Oooh. Well that'll have to wait.

**I'll go tell them how it went.**

### Act 2 Scene 1- Dinner Revelation

(male voiceover)

It is not a very pleasant thing to be born in one of those families who are referred to as....'satanic'. Your mum and dad may do things with you... that may hurt you, or make you feel a little dirty. But don't worry, your parents are not bad people. They are normal, like you (!), with normal jobs. You will go to school as normal, like all the other kids, but you will also get to do some strange things with your family... after you're done with your homework. Things that you will never want your friends to know. It is not a very... pleasant thing, to be raised in a satanic family, and it also gets very lonely.....because people don't believe that what your parents and friends do, is even true. That's only for the movies. That happened a long, long time ago.

### Act 2 Scene 4- Circus Time, *Puppet Show*

Laaaaaadies and Gentlemaaaaaan.....Welcome to our weekly night show. Today's episode is on Halloween, since we are getting quite close to the day.

**I don't like scary shows.**

Oh, come on. Don't be a wimp (pats him on the back). Go, go!! Get ready! (pushing him away. Puppet 1 looks at the audience, smiling and nodding as if excited)

(the puppets disappear. A full moon comes out. A tree. Wolf and owl sounds. Puppet 2 appears from one end of the puppet house. He begins to walk slowly, looking back in anticipation of being 'attacked'. Puppet 1 appears right in front of Puppet 2 when it's looking back. He's wearing a black hood. A small but visible knife attached to his claw.)

**'Ahaaaaa! I have found a victim for tonight (macabre laugh).**

(Puppet 2 immediately tries to escape, but Puppet 1 holds him back)

**You are my blood sacrifice!**

(he carries Puppet 2 across the stage to the other side as he chants:

**Um-pa-lam-pa, Um-pa-lam-pa**

(Puppet 2 forces a stop, turns back to Puppet 1)

What are you saying!?! (outside puppet role)

**Ssshhh! That's what they say, don't they?** (outside role).

(he captures Puppet 2 again, begins to chant again)

(shouting) Nooo, noooo! Somebody help meeeee!

Puppet 2's performer, outside role, leaves the puppet house and walks towards audience

**Wait, what are you doing? Where are you going?**

**Act 3 Scene 1- Glimpses of Light**

*Feeding chickens* (in voiceover)

Friend: **Dina, you want to help me feed my dad's chickens after school?**

Mother: (speaking to her daughter) Hi darling, how was your day at school?

Friend: **Fine mum. Dina and I have been feeding chickens for a little while.**

Mother: Oh, I'm glad! Hi Dina! Dinner is ready now girls, come.

**Act 4 Scene1- No Validation**

(in voiceover)

**Director:** Come in!

**Teacher:** Director, Excuse me...

**Director:** Miss Lane, are you OK?

**Teacher:** Yes. It's one of my students, Mrs Hunt... I ...

**Director:** Is this about the same girl, Dina? (accentuating her name)

**Teacher:** Well, yes but....

**Director:** Don't tell me she's not high in class... AGAIN.

**Teacher:** She is, Mrs Hunt, but she finally told me why.

**Director:** We're calling her parents right now.

**Teacher:** No, not yet!

**Director:** Excuse me, Miss Lane!?

**Teacher:** We...we need to talk to the police first.

**Director:** The police!?!

**Teacher:** Mr Hunt, let me explain...

**Director:** Mrs Forest, this is an extremely serious case of lying. The police went to the parents' house for an investigation. What your student has told you...is not true.

#### **Act 4 Scene 2- Boxed**

(live)

**Therapist:** So, you thought you needed to let these people abuse you...[pause]...to make your parents happy?

**Ellie:** Yes. I..... wanted to please mum and dad. I.....did anything I was told by the sect to be 'a good girl', 'a little good girl', a little....

**Therapist:** ...Oh.....I see. And....how are you now, are you still having many flashbacks?

**Therapist:** Eeem... Have you walked through doorframes without having flashbacks?

**Ellie:** I have to close my eyes (long pause) ...when I go through door frames. ...I. can still smell the damp....the dampness.

**Therapist:** I see. Let's not go there right now then, don't worry. (Looks at her notes) What about .....eating at the table...have you tried doing that with anyone yet?

**Ellie:** No. Not yet.

**Therapist:** Mmmmm....Would you prefer to talk about your sleep? Are you sleeping ok?

**Therapist:** What makes you afraid?

**Ellie:** Men.

**Therapist:** Any man?

**Ellie:** Before it was mostly my dad and his friends from the sect, but now he left, and I'm afraid of...any man. Will I ever be able to fancy somebody?

**Therapist:** Yes, yes, you will.

**Ellie:** They call me 'the ice maiden' at school.

**Therapist:** Just be patient. Healing takes time.

**Therapist:** Was your mum nice to you at all when your dad left?

**Ellie:** She was always drunk, at her friend's house, didn't want to pay the bills, so I washed dishes to get money for electricity. She told my brothers and sister how beautiful and smart they were, but always insulted me. Gave my younger brother money to buy food but tells him not to give me anything...He shared some when she was out. The only thing she lets me do is play with the Ouija board.

**Therapist:** So, do you have anyone close that you can talk to? have you shared all this with anyone before?

**Ellie:** Once. A teacher, but my father's a freemason and knows the police, so she didn't believe me.

**Therapist:** Oh, I see...(interrupted by Ellie)

**Ellie:** I still feel so dirty. It feels so fake. If people would know who I really am, they wouldn't come near me.

**Therapist:** Well, no that is not true.., And what your family and the sect made you believe of yourself is not who you really are.

**Ellie:** It's not true. It's not true.... not true.

**Therapist:** Ok. This is what we'll do before you leave. It's a simple exercise to begin overcoming your fears. We must spent some time on that situation of fear, and I will help you feel relaxed in it... So, first,...close your eyes for a moment, and imagine yourself in a dark place. Then, begin to imagine someone that you would like to trust... and this someone is on the way to rescue you, just like.... one of those prince charmings.....

### **Final Scene- Nothingness**

*(Dina's thoughts, in voiceover)*

Someone...who...you trust!?! Prince charming!?!? I can't erase lies with lies.

*(voices of People addressing Dina, in voiceover)*

Dina, I don't know if I want to hear about it, sorry, it's too much.

Dina will you ever be able to tell me everything? I don't think so.

I can't grasp it really.

Dina, I know you feel alone.

Dina, are you ok? (voices)

Dina...?

### **Appendix 9- CSB: Sound & music guide of somantic artwork**

As an audio guide for CD 7, the following list references the voiceovers, sound & music tracks that were included in the somantic artwork.

**Track 1:**

**Act 1 Scene 1- A Hole in the Face ( 0.00 – 2.33 min.)**

1 Music from show *Hilum* (2010) by Les Antliacastes marionette company

**Act 1 Scene 2- Surgery (2.34 – 6.14 min.)**

2 Sound mix composition

**Track 2: Act 2 Scene 2- Lullaby, 2.33 – 6.14 min**

'Hush-A-By Lullaby' (1932) by Paul Robeson

**Track 3: Act 2 Scene 3- Ritual, 0.00-2.31 min**

1 Sound mix composition from Scottish lullaby

**Act 2 Scene 4 – Circus Time, 2.32-5.22 min**

2 'Entry Of the Gladiators' by Julius Fucik (1897)

3 Music excerpts, 'Find My Baby' and 'Hands in Plain Sight' (1996) by Mark

Isham Played during performance. Not in this track.

**Track 4: Act 3 Scene 1- Glimpses of Light**

1 Actors' voiceovers and chicken sounds, **0.00-0.37 sec**

2 'Glass Realms' (2011) by This Will Destroy You, **0.38 sec – 4.43 min**

**Act 3 Scene 2- CounterShock 4.35 – 7.37 min**

3 'There are Many of Us' (2010) by *Aska*, with rain effect

**Act 3 Scene 3- Back to Darkness, 7.38 - 19.22 min**

4 *Uprising* (2006), *The Other Seder* (2008). Music from Hofesh Schechter

**Track 5: Act 3 Scene 2- CounterShock**

3 'There are Many of Us' (2010) by *Aska*

**Track 6 & Track 7: Act 4 Scene 1 No Validation**

Actors in voiceover

**Track 8: Final Scene – Nothingness**

Actors in voiceover

## Appendix 10- CSA & CSB: Collabor(art)ists & Participants

### CSA

#### Re-Creation process

**Cigarette Clock Film:** Juan Sebastian Alvarez, Nahom, and Elizabeth Macias G.  
Music in film, 'Time' by Kroke (2003)

**Trafficked Photography Video:** Alessio Castagna and Elizabeth Macias G.  
Animation excerpt in video by Blind Company and Vanessa Marzaroli (2010)

**Original music & sound:** Mayneth Espina, Nahom and Elizabeth Macias G.

**Voiceovers:** Nahom, Ermanno Manzetti and Kathleen Flores

**'Eye' videos:** Elizabeth Macias G.

**Painting sketches:** Natalia Ponton

#### Commun(e)ication event

**Live music & song composed and performed:** Nahom

**Performing:** Nahom, Alvaro Atehortua, and Elizabeth Macias G.

**Projection:** David Diaz Martin

**Sound:** Leonardo Perez

**Scenography & lighting:** Kathleen Flores

**Work-in-progress video documentation:** Ana Karina Rossi

### CSB:

#### Re-Creation Process

**Water Arms video:** Afsaneh Hagigi, Haleh Halali, and Elizabeth Macias G.

**Voiceovers:** Hannah Thomson, Richard Hodgson, Sara Jones, Elizabeth Macias G.

**Original sound tracks:** Elizabeth Macias G. and Aydee Latty

#### Commun(e)ication event

**Performers:** Afsaneh Hagigi, Haleh Halali, Hannah Thomson, Corinne Belguk, Richard Hodgson, Elizabeth Macias G.

**Lighting:** Steve Mimir and Elizabeth Macias G.

**Sound:** Dan Sterling

**Projection:** Keith Ayling

**Scenography:** Elizabeth Macias

**Work-in-progress video documentation:** Jodie Armiger

## Appendix 11- CSA & CSB: Commun(e)ication Events: scene rundown

### CSA: Nahom's Performance

#### ACT 1

Intro Scene Eye Asleeps

**Scene1-** Adyoja plays

**Scene2-** Artist

**Scene3-** Soldier

**Scene4-** Leaving

**Scene5-** Try until you die

**Scene6-** Exile sculptures

**Scene7-** Trafficked

#### ACT 2

**Scene1-** Captured

**Scene2-** SOS

**Scene3-** Black Market

**Scene4-** 'Hewan' In Prison

#### ACT 3

**Scene1-** Cigarette Clock

**Scene2-** Hell without Libena

**Scene3-** Whispering Walls

**Scene4-** Vessel Woman

**Scene5-** Sunrise

**Final Scene-** Eye Awakens

### CSB: Dina's Performance

#### ACT 1

**Scene 1** Hole on the Face

**Scene 2** Surgery

**Scene 3** Surgeons' Tea Time

**Scene 4** Cursed 'little girl'

#### ACT 2

**Scene 1** Dinner Revelation

**Scene 2** Lullaby

**Scene 3** Ritual

**Scene 4** Circus time

*Puppet Show*

*Dilemma Popcorn*

*Clown Journalist*

#### ACT 3

**Scene 1** Glimpses of Light

*Feeding Chickens*

*Mother Embrace*

*Candy Floss*

**Scene 2** Counter Shock

*Water Arms*

**Scene 3** Back to Darkness

**Scene 4** Escape Attempts

#### ACT 4

**Scene 1** No validation

**Scene 2** Boxed

**Final Scene** – Nothingness

## **Appendix 12- CSA &CSB: Commun(e)ication Events (location and date)**

### **CSA: Nahom's Performance**

**Space:** Basilica dei San Carlo al corso, Roma Italy

**Date:** January 2011

### **CSB: Dina's Performance**

**Space:** Nexus Art Café, Manchester UK

**Date:** October 2011

## Appendix 13- Comments from Confidants

An overall perception and experience of the performance was requested via e-mail confidants, inquiring about particular moments, sensations, and thoughts that were significant for them.

### Case Study A

(translated from Spanish and Italian)

\* Through the performance, I found a person that has had to deal with very hard moments in his life, but this does not make him lose the happiness of being alive, and his love for life.

\* Sensations were varied. The performance immerses you in a deep way. The variety of stages and visual imagery showed me a very personal and varied spectrum of someone's life, which had not been ordinary at all. I felt it was very magical, with sensible aspects, and creativity. It was pleasant to the senses, the mind, the imagination flies.

\* I liked the moment of the video of Nahom smoking, when he stops to think, reflect and be alone with the world. Also, the moment when the person playing Nahom draws the woman on the cave provoked a moment of tenderness, faith, love and a search for light, as well as the moment where the female performer gave him 'wings' and hope. And finally, I thought the actor interacting with the audience created a surprise and tension from the concentration in the rest of the performance.

\* The performance left me thinking about the strength and courage of Nahom, to never let himself be defeated by the harshness of life. The strongest emotions in me developed during the moment at the prison- the terrible feeling of loneliness and the desperate search; a loneliness that Nahom faced, probably rooted in his culture and his personality as well. I thought of the many people that are in similar circumstances with as Nahom.

\*It was special to be inside the crypt, following the actors and being so closed to them. The moment when the performer comes through the wall was quite surprising. The performance made me wonder more about the reason for his exile, that social and political context around him, the way of human injustice?

\*I felt Nahom's interior and subjective feeling. His desperation from the impossibility of communication, and from not knowing of his most loved ones, in this case his wife. His solitude, his impotence. A particular moment that created a special effect in me is at the end, the moment of happiness, the sunrise as romantic backdrop and of total hope.

\*I really was moved and liked the fact that the spectator was made participant, interacting with the performers, with the way they observed life, while I could voluntarily move around the space. I think this type of performance to an extent can involve the spectator more than a simple narrative, or a video. Maybe the spectators could be even more involved and take a character's role. The variety of languages, narratives, images was very attractive, although I prefer it more synthesized. I don't think this kind of performance are ideal to reach the masses.

\*I encountered feelings of anguish and melancholy, but also very moving and exciting feelings. I was very surprised by the woman that comes out of the wall, and the moving phone conversation of Nahom with his girlfriend.

## Case Study B

\*During this production, I became aware that Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) is happening all over the world, but that testimonies like this one very rarely, if ever, get any media attention. As a result, I think it is therefore fair to say that the majority of the global population has no idea of its existence in every-day life, probably thinking that it is something reserved exclusively for the realm of Hollywood movies. I myself, previous to seeing this account, had never really considered the possibility that this could be happening behind closed doors even in the city where I live! It struck me that SRA exists under such a veneer of normality and respectability (highlighted in the very day-to-day event of the family dinner scene in Act 2, Scene 1), that from the outside, it would be very difficult to distinguish between a ritually abusive satanic family and a non-satanic family if, for example, one was a colleague, neighbour or even a friend of the family.

I feel that I also caught a glimpse into how trapped a victim of SRA must feel (especially if they were a child), and how difficult it must be for them to confess their plight and share their experience with someone from outside the satanic circle. It was also an eye opener to the difficulty that a reporter/journalist would have in documenting cases of this nature and be taken seriously, as the content seems to be of an almost incredible nature.

The production itself was a hard-hitting assault on the senses. As the piece unfolded, there was something to engage every single one of my senses - from the taste of the popcorn to the feel and smell of the potpourri. This pulled me, the spectator, more and more into what was happening before my eyes. It became all-consuming – I couldn't escape from it or detach myself from what was happening around me. It was near overwhelming as it felt that I had almost become part of the sickening story. I felt very emotionally drained after the intense experience, but at the same time was very glad that I had been made aware of the horror that others in that little girl's situation go through every day.

I found the experience in general very moving, and something that I won't forget in a hurry. It was a very vivid presentation, drawing the audience into the story and almost forcing them to engage with the theme in a very powerful, emotional and personal way. It helped that the audience was sitting very close to the 'stage' area and on the same level as the actors/dancer were. The use of dance, drama, multimedia and music added to the personalisation of the account of this girl, and by the end of the production I felt that I had actually come to know her as a person and connected with her by even just being a voyeur to her horrific ordeal.

There were many, many particular moments that I found interesting and had an effect on me, but there are a few powerful moments that I will mention that have had a very profound impression on me that I can still visualize, even months after the performance as I write this:

- The use of the video camera and live projection to show the legs and the feet of the girl on the table, writing on her skin. Haunting.
- Performer handing out popcorn as the journalist interacts with the audience. Made me feel sick and guilty, as it was like being at the cinema during an interval – I felt like I had paid to watch what was happening to this poor girl as entertainment.
- The mime act where the girl is struggling back and forth between two bodies. A very creative, clever and distressing portrayal of what the girl was experiencing.
- The girl in a box having a conversation with Therapist. Again, a very powerful visual representation of what had happened and was happening inside her mind.

\*For me, what was different about this form of account is that you couldn't detach yourself from the testimony in the same way that you can while reading an article in the paper or even watching a report on the TV. It was much harder to distance yourself from the reality of what was happening, as all your senses were consumed by it. It has left a lasting impression on me in a way that I have never experienced before.

\*This performance made me think of how unpleasant story can be told in an interesting and creative way. I felt intrigued by all the different methods used to tell the story. I was interested by the use of the space and the use of sound and struck especially by the aggressive and angular dance in the middle when the girl is very distressed. I was moved also by the use of light, shadow and video when some of the physicality of the girl's abuse is portrayed.

\*It was an intense piece, I came away being glad it was over. I am quite sensitive and at some points I felt appalled and sick. There was little 'let up' in the performance - little time for your emotions to settle down again before the next part of the story unfolded.

\*This piece of theatre was moving for several reasons.

The space that was chosen for its presentation was in the basement and had high ceilings, the lighting was often dim and this heightened the drama of the presentation. The audience was small and had some time to get to know one another before the presentation began which led to a sense of camaraderie and companionship amongst the group. This led to a feeling of us and them when watching the story of the girl and her family - as if we were very different from her and that she was somehow outside of our togetherness and our experience. Part of the stage was separate, off to our left where the main performer went part way through the performance, and undressed behind a screen - the use of shadow and privacy was in contrast to the story being portrayed - instead of undressing and nakedness being private and respected, in the story told this young woman is abused and violated. The contrast of the shadows and light use compared to the horror of the truth of her abuse actually helped convey the story. In a similar way in this portion of the piece, a camera gave a live feed of the young woman experiencing some of this abuse - the actor is shown writhing and hurting herself. The video is shown on a screen above, as the audience cannot see her. It gives the feeling of voyeurism - watching something you shouldn't. The portrayal of distress is intense and I felt very uncomfortable. It is sickening to know that this performance is based on a true story. The way that the actor is hidden from the audience, yet we can see her through the video is a reminder of the hidden ness of such abuses; and also of not wanting to see it because it is too upsetting.

The use of school uniform and the struggle the girl has to leave the table - where all appears well, but from the commentary and video, you know it isn't - is powerful. Her struggle to go through the frame and then undress behind the screen was memorable as well as the subsequent portion where she is hidden but is videoed. This shows her initial revulsion, avoidance and fight towards her situation. Which once she is worn down she loses to a certain degree.

Another very poignant part of the performance was the use of props around the time of the girl considering suicide - the use of knives and the toilet seat I thought was good. It makes it all very raw. The light glints of the blades and the toilet seat is hung up high, making the girl's situation seem small and desperate. A toilet seat is something associated with bodily functions - normally private - and if not, there is a sense of revulsion - we are brought to this by watching her and there is a sense of vulgarity here

and therefore a feeling of revulsion. Her desperation is palpable. I even feel my stomach turning slightly as I remember.

The most memorable part for me has been the lone actor dancing in a fractured, aggressive and jagged kind of way to punchy dystonic, incessant music. The emotional and physical distress of the girl's story is captured in this one part of the performance like no other part. It was beautiful and horrifying at the same time.

This piece would in my opinion needs a certificate of 18.

\*I have not seen a true story (like this) retold in this way before. This piece did not seek to embellish the original narrative. Any part of the story shown that was not factually correct did not distract from the main themes but facilitated the story telling. The use of 'hiddenness' in the piece made a point all of its own, how lives of abuse like this are hidden and in some ways it is more comfortable for us to pretend that they are not there, it is not happening. I think presenting the story like this was powerful.

\* During the performance, I was utterly moved, as were the friends I watched with. I learned about Dina's horrendous childhood & the nature of such ritual child abuse. I also gained more of an understanding about how such abuse can be covered up by both the media & people in authoritative positions. This gave me a much greater understanding about difficult this issue is to bring to public attention.

I felt a deep sadness, disgust, anger & sometimes disbelief (even though I know the story to be truly authentic.) I was dramatically moved at story - but also the artistic interpretation with music, visuals & sound. This performance was unique to anything I have ever seen before. In particular the clever use of the different mediums, audience interaction & Ellie's artistic interpretation with potent emotion

The experience was very memorable. The as a member of the audience, I felt very connected to the story because of the way we were in so close proximity to the actors & were addressed by Ellie at different points. The mixture of creative mediums used was particularly helpful & helped with engaging with the whole performance. The creative movement was especially moving - this allowed space for processing the story - not just intellectually, but emotionally & spiritually.

Presenting Dina's story in such a way was excellent, disturbing, moving and challenging. I feel that I have a much greater understanding of ritual abuse & have been stirred & challenged to make the issue more known. The way Ellie presented the testimony & then asked the audience questions, enabled a sense of empowerment amongst us - without leaving us all merely harrowed about such an account. I would love to see it again & join a creative advocacy campaign to see the issue brought more into the public eye.

**Appendix 14-** please refer to the DVD audio & video

**Case Study A (CSA)**

- 1:** Nahom's Sketching Phase- video excerpts
- 2:** Nahom's Sketching Phase- audio of conversations and song
- 3:** Nahom's Composition Phase – video excerpts
- 4:** Composition videos for Nahom's somantic artwork
- 5:** Audio of Nahom's somantic artwork
- 6:** Compositions through journ(art)ist body: video documentation

**Case Study B (CSB)**

- 7:** Composition videos for Dina's somantic artwork
- 8:** Audio of Dina's somantic artwork
- 9:** Compositions through journ(art)ist body: video documentation

**Commun(e)ication Events**

- CSA: 10:** Nahom's somantic artwork: video documentation (work-in-progress)
- CSB: 11:** Dina's somantic artwork: video documentation (work-in-progress)

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The concept of 'artist' in this research is based on the definition of artist as: 'a person who practises or performs any of the creative arts' (*Oxford dictionaries online*). In this thesis 'artist' refers to professional or amateur natures of performance and craftsmanship. The creation and production of an artwork for the commun(e)ication event, journeyers can engage in an artistic process even if they are not artists.

<sup>2</sup> In defining parameters of social theatre, Schechner and Thompson provide a general differentiation between the social and aesthetic domains in Th &P, in respect to purpose, audiences, venues, and production, and values (Schechner and Thompson 2004: 11). However, this separation does not disregard 'the social aspects of aesthetic theatre or the aesthetic aspects of social theatre' (Schechner and Thompson 2004: 12). Social theatres are those with 'specific social agendas', where 'aesthetics is not the ruling objective', and which are located 'outside the realm of commerce', and the cult of the new' or avant-garde (12). Aesthetic theatres include art theatres, experimental theatres, university theatres, regional theatres, and commercial theatres.

<sup>3</sup> The word 'trauma' henceforth specifically refers to the inner state, and not to general and common usage given to this term.

<sup>4</sup> Clinicians also identify other types of traumatic stress situations, referred to as types of 'complex trauma' or complex post-traumatic stress disorder. This disorder results from 'people who have suffered long repeated trauma' (Herman 1997: 157). Wilson also specifies complex as a traumatisation within an interpersonal context (Wilson 2004: 213). Herman exemplifies this in types of 'chronic childhood abuse' (Herman 1997: 126). This disorder is treated differently to other post-traumatic stress disorders (Wilson 2004: 211; Herman 1997: 157).

<sup>5</sup> The DSM-IV-TR list of potentially traumatic events includes: combat, sexual and physical assault, robbery, being kidnapped, being taken hostage, terrorist attacks, torture, disasters, severe automobile accidents, and life-threatening illnesses, as well as witnessing death or serious injury by violent assault, accidents, war, or disaster. Childhood sexual abuse is included even if it does not involve threatened or actual violence or injury. See: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)

<sup>6</sup> The term *traumatic spectrum* is not related or does not allude to Dr Robert C. Scaer's book, *The Trauma Spectrum: hidden wounds and human resiliency* (2005). Dr Scaer conceptualized this term through a neurological understanding of the body and the brain's contiguous reaction to trauma and the possibilities of healing this condition in mind and body connection.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of 'artist' in this research is based on the definition of artist as: 'a person who practises or performs any of the creative arts' (*Oxford dictionaries online*). In the creation and production of an artwork for the commun(e)ication event, journeyers can engage in an artistic process even if they are not artists.

<sup>8</sup> This reference to synaesthesia in this thesis is distinct from the neurological condition that involves an unintentional experience a literal and immediate criss-crossing of sensorial stimulation (Cytowic 2003: 97).

<sup>9</sup> It is important to address the distinction commonly between 'theatre' and 'performance', and define what these two terms will refer as here. Theatre is commonly linked to representational and commercial productions, presented in traditional theatrical buildings, and characterised by 'artificiality and showiness' (Nicholson 2007: 8). Performance is commonly linked to presentational styles that explore 'physicality before textuality', rejecting mimetic representation and the 'authority' of the written script (8). Also, it is characterised by 'experimental ways of working that emphasise the creative freedom and spontaneity of both performers and spectators (8). In the context of this thesis, however, such antithesis is not established between these terms, as there are theatrical practices that

do not fit this common definition of 'theatre' (Keefe, John & Murray: 2007). The term 'Th &P' will be used here to address all disciplines and practices of theatre and performance.

<sup>10</sup> In defining parameters of social theatre, Schechner and Thompson provide a general differentiation between the social and aesthetic domains in Th &P, in respect to purpose, audiences, venues, and production, and values (Schechner and Thompson 2004: 11). However, this separation does not disregard 'the social aspects of aesthetic theatre or the aesthetic aspects of social theatre' (Schechner and Thompson 2004: 12). Social theatres are those with 'specific social agendas', where 'aesthetics is not the ruling objective', and which are located 'outside the realm of commerce', and the cult of the new' or avant-garde (12). Aesthetic theatres include art theatres, experimental theatres, university theatres, regional theatres, and commercial theatres.

<sup>11</sup> A most recent exploration of 'trauma' in live art is proposed in the doctoral thesis: Kuburović, Branislava (2011) *Performance Of Wit(h)nessing: Trauma and Affect in Contemporary Live Art*. Roehampton University

<sup>12</sup> Estrangement in theatre is characterised for its defamiliarization of reality by subverting its realistic illusion on stage (Jestrovic 2006: 32). Theatre of the Absurd is another style of estrangement, influenced by Camus, Brecht, Artaud and the Dadaist and Surrealist movements (Esslin 1980). Theatres of estrangement it has varied widely across a spectrum of styles and approaches, according to different 'concepts in either their devices or in their goals, and sometimes both' (Jestrovic 2006: 21).

<sup>13</sup> Recent publications of insightful references to Arva's narrative view of Traumatic Imagination, are: Langdon, J. 2011, "Magical Realism and Experiences of Extremity", *Current Narratives*, no. 3, pp. 14 – 24; and Mrak, A. 2013, "Trauma and Memory in Magical Realism: Libena Robinson's Monkey Beach as Trauma Narrative", *Politics of Memory*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 60 – 85.

<sup>14</sup> Two quintessential references examined in this research are the work of Polish theatre artist Tadeuz Kantor (1915-1990) and German dance theatre artist Pina Bausch (1940-2009). Current well-known companies that epitomize the 'total artwork' style stressed in this research are: London-based immersive theatre company, *Punchdrunk*, Belgian dance theatre company *Peeping Tom*, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's Belgian dance theatre company *Eastman*, Robert Lepage's Canadian company *Ex-Machina*, Lloyd Newson's company *DV8*, Simon McBurney theatre company *Complicite*, *Jasmin Vardimon Company*, *Akram Khan Company*, *Hofesh Schechter Company*, and *Nederlands Dans Theatre*.

<sup>15</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, universal symptoms include: intrusions, nightmares, re-experiencing traumatic events, hyperarousal, irritability, poor sleep and concentration, avoidance of triggers, and depression (Drozdek 2007: 9). Drozdek states that symptoms of numbing and social withdrawal depend on 'individuals or situational differences' (9).

<sup>16</sup> Dart Center website: <http://dartcenter.org/>

<sup>17</sup> Harrington's view diverges from a realistic intent of commun(e)ication, in that he claims that the intimate journalist can aim to 'understand other people's worlds from inside out, to understand and portray people as they understand themselves (Harrington 1997: xxv). He suggests that it is possible to report in such a way as to 'make readers leave themselves momentarily and feel what it's like to be another person (Harrington 1997: xv). This view of Intimate Journalism diverges from the notion of 'sharedness', with involves a two-way engagement, rather than confidants 'becoming the journeyers'.

<sup>18</sup> Artistic mediation is a relatively new discipline similar to expressive arts therapy but outside a therapeutic approach. It focuses on group communication through artistic forms of expression, where 'both concrete and symbolic aspects can be experienced and perceived' (Delgado 2005: 97). It could be further considered to expand and enrich the re-creation method.

<sup>19</sup> An intercultural lens of communication refers to the awareness that ‘the message producer is a member of one culture and the message receiver is a member of another culture’, differences that can take place in the communication (Narula 2006: 258).

<sup>20</sup> The word ‘anaesthetised’ is cited from Rockhill, G. 2004, p.1 in ‘Translators Introduction’, in J. Rancière (ed.), *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum).

<sup>21</sup> The names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

<sup>22</sup> The city in Scotland where Murdina is from is omitted to protect confidentiality.

<sup>23</sup> *V.I.T.O.* website: <http://www.cir-onlus.org/progettovitoenglish.htm>

<sup>24</sup> City Hearts’ website: <http://www.city-hearts.co.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> Tigrinya is the official language in Eritrea, in addition to Arabic and English

<sup>26</sup> This disorder results within an interpersonal context (Wilson 2004: 213). Herman exemplifies this in types of ‘chronic childhood abuse’ (Herman 1997: 126). This disorder is treated differently to other post-traumatic stress disorders (Wilson 2004: 211; Herman 1997: 157).