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Thesis

Image Theatre as Embodied Meaning-Making: An Analysis of Collaborative Workshops with Faculty Staff

In part fulfilment of the degree of
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Abstract

This thesis explores the meaning-making potential of image theatre - a participatory drama-based group activity - and in particular how we might understand the significance of embodiment as fundamental to this approach. In my role leading and managing colleagues in a University academic department, I have been interested in the potential of image theatre to create a space for colleagues to engage with each other, share views and perceptions of their work, and explore opportunities for change within the workplace.

Through exploring the literature in applied theatre research, I argue that claims for the value and impact of image theatre are often anecdotal or descriptive, and that there is a need for a more precise conceptualisation of embodiment to help develop a more insightful understanding of image theatre as an embodied activity. This thesis outlines the development and application of a methodology for analysing the material generated through image theatre workshops in a way that elucidates the effects of embodied elements and processes. In so doing, it focuses on the image theatre process itself, and the methods used for collating, archiving and analysing the material.

An analysis of the workshops offers insight into how, as an embodied method, image theatre creates distinctive kinds of meaning. In so doing, it offers empirical support for understanding the specific productivity of image theatre workshops. Focusing on the interactive and experimental nature of image theatre, this thesis offers critical perspectives on the ways that meaning is not just produced, but is co-created and re-created dynamically and collaboratively. It outlines stages of experimentation in the workshop process and uses the transcription of embodied elements to explore these processes in more depth, arguing that there is a continuum of meaning production through different types of interpretation and engagement with the images.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Reflective Statement on the EdD as a whole

I embarked on the EdD programme with excitement and enthusiasm, coming at a point in my career where I felt that having accumulated over twenty years of professional experience, I was well placed to reflect on and develop my work through engaging critically with new ideas, writing and discussion. As the head of a university Drama department with a passion for teaching and learning, and an interest in active, participatory learning, my ambition was to enhance my ability to carry out my role more effectively and from a more informed position, and to be able to draw on contemporary education research more knowledgably in my professional role. I decided to undertake an EdD, rather than a PhD in Drama, because I am motivated by ideas and philosophies of higher education whilst at the same time challenged by the realities of contemporary universities. The context of rapid change in my own university and the higher education sector more broadly, the increasing marketisation and managerialism of institutions, and, in my subject area, the development of 'creative industries' as a field, made my role very challenging. I therefore wanted to engage with debates and ideas in education, gain insight into, and experience of, a broad range of research methods, and become more fully immersed in education and sociology scholarship. Simultaneously, my interest and experience in applied drama, and especially drama and theatre in education, meant that my professional practice has been one rooted in collaboration, partnership and interdisciplinarity, with a strong aspiration for empowerment. The EdD experience has been stimulating, challenging and inspiring. It has undoubtedly contributed to my own professional development as discussed below.

The first part of the EdD consisted of a series of four taught courses over a two-year period leading to a portfolio of four 5,000 word essays. Whilst the researching and writing of these essays opened up my thinking to a broad range of ideas, it was the interaction with the diverse group of fellow students and lecturers on the EdD, and the stimulating discussions that took place in seminars, that equally impacted on me in important ways. The interaction and writing on these courses enabled me firstly to develop critical insights through accessing new perspectives and critiquing my experience; secondly, to gain perspective through taking a step back to consider my own role and position within my institution, my underlying assumptions and philosophies, my values, the kind of institution I work in and its place within the

spectrum of higher education provision in the UK; thirdly, to engage with a wide range of literature, including work on epistemology, educational philosophy, research methods, research paradigms, education history, leadership in education, primary, secondary and higher education, internationalisation, widening access, professionalism, and identity; and fourthly, to develop an understanding of the 'language' of education and of educational research allowing me to engage with that research more effectively and articulate my own writing with greater clarity.

For the first of the four courses, **Foundations of Professionalism in Education**, my essay considered notions of professionalism in higher education specifically, focusing on academic identity. From my experience and my reading, I had perceived a sense of ambiguity that seemed to be felt by many academics in terms of their professional lives, specifically within the changing landscape of universities. This was important to me as a leader and manager because I wanted to understand more deeply the experiences of colleagues that I work with. This ambiguity, I argued, was rooted in five key considerations: a) the changing and varied notion of 'professionalism' as an idea and construct; b) the link between academic identity and academic disciplines, sometimes leading to multiple professionalisms; c) the differences between identity and role; d) the impact of policy and structural changes on higher education; and e) philosophical and ontological changes that transform the ways we view the world and society and our place within them, in particular at the time the shift to a more diverse, postmodern and technologically driven context. In undertaking this enquiry, I wanted to explore what opportunities my position as a member of the senior management team of our Faculty offered me to affect our culture, ethos and working practices. Whilst I am subject to processes of corporatisation, many of which are outside of my personal control, I questioned whether I could use my position to encourage and nurture values closer to my professional aspirations – staff that feel valued, an ethos of collegiality, and a sense of trust in the professional judgement of those I work with. This is one strand of my early research that runs through the EdD and that feeds through to my thesis.

Through the second course, **Methods of Enquiry 1**, I had the opportunity to develop my skills in designing research. For me personally, because my research experience has been in arts-based approaches, the opportunity to develop skills and insights into more sociologically based methods was very helpful with the potential to enrich my research

overall. I focused this essay on testing out a research proposal for the work that would ultimately become the basis for both my IFS and Thesis research. The proposal was to use a participatory drama approach to develop critical insight into the thoughts and perceptions of staff that I work with about the creative industries within higher education. This was a proposal for a case study that sought to capture some of the range, diversity and complexity of staff views in our Faculty. At that point in my research journey, the focus was still on the idea of creative industries, in light of the fact that we had at the time recently been restructured from a humanities and social sciences faculty into a creative industries faculty. Most importantly, it introduced me to a range of research methods and ethical considerations. Through testing my research ideas in this proposal, I began to understand the challenges of undertaking the research practically and also gained valuable feedback in terms of research design and evaluation. It gave me the opportunity to consider challenges such as 'insider' research, participatory research approaches, and a range of methods of analysis.

For the third course, I chose a specialist option focusing on **Leadership and Learning**. Whilst much of the course focused on leadership of learning in secondary education, it was incredibly useful in exploring how concepts and ideas could be applied to higher education. This led to an essay entitled "Leading Learning in Higher Education: Perspectives Through the Prism of 'Place and Space'". In this essay I considered two aspects of higher education in the UK in which ideas about place and space are fundamental to learning: the first was the notion of internationalisation, including the recruitment of international students and the broader impact of globalisation on the ways we understand effective learning. The second was a focus on space much more literally, the impact of physical university spaces in influencing students' choice of where to study and in determining student learning experiences. For me, a growing focus on internationalisation in the university, and personal commitment to a global focus in curriculum design, made this an important study in my own professional development. Equally, at the time of writing, we had recently moved into a new campus building in the centre of Cardiff away from the rest of the University situated in the Welsh valleys and I wanted to develop a basis for understanding the impact of this on learning.

The fourth course, and the final essay of my Portfolio, was **Methods of Enquiry 2**. This course allowed me to further hone my research skills. Where Methods of Enquiry 1 focused on the design and writing of a research proposal, Methods of Enquiry 2, required the actual carrying out of a small-scale research project. The title of my study for this course was: "An Investigation of Student Motivations for Pursuing Taught Masters Degrees in Drama". This project sought to gain insight into the reasons that students enrol on taught university Masters programmes in Drama, and utilised an on-line survey of fixed design with students at three HE institutions: a post-92 university, a Russell Group university, and an HE Conservatoire. This essay had a dual focus: reporting the results of the research itself, including the presentation and interpretation of data gathered, and a critical consideration of the research process, including design, methods, and ethical considerations. I utilised a combination of multiple choice, open questions and a Likert scale to gather data. Before distributing the survey, the questionnaire was piloted with three colleagues who were asked to complete it on-line, checking the clarity of questions, and timing how long it took to complete. Whilst I ultimately didn't use this method in the research projects that followed, it was so useful in gaining experience of this kind of method as part of my research training, in paying attention to rigour and detail, and in considering the implications of choices about research methods. The presentation of findings through tables and graphs was an aspect that I was to usefully draw on in my IFS and thesis.

There are common threads that run through the four pieces of work: all of them are concerned with higher education leadership and management in a time of change; a concern with staff engagement and voice underpins and motivates much of the work; and there is a commitment to capturing a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. In reading back over the essays it is clear to me how these threads have carried on through both my IFS and thesis.

My **Institution Focused Study (IFS)** was a 20,000 word research project, entitled "The Creative and Cultural Industries as Knowledge and Practice within Higher Education: Gauging the Views and Perceptions of Academic Staff". This study piloted the use of image theatre to explore the question of how might we understand 'creative and cultural industries' as a way of organising knowledge and practice within higher education, and how, in that light, we might understand staff experiences and perceptions of their work

in the university. Participants, drawn from across different subject areas in the Faculty, took part in practical image theatre workshops and pre-workshop focus groups, and some took part in post-workshop interviews. The primary finding that emerged from this research was that participants did not see the creative and cultural industries as a neatly defined area of work – rather it was understood to be a diverse field of disciplines and practices experienced by them as a series of 'tensions'. These tensions, which are fluid and constantly being negotiated, tend to focus on: a) pedagogy, particularly between creative and critical academic development on the one hand, and skills development for industry on the other; b) staff identity as arts practitioners and as academics; c) physical environment, including the perceived freedom of an art school and the perceived constraint of a creative industries building; and d) disciplinary boundaries, including the need for discipline-based skills education and the demand for cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary collaboration.

Significantly, beyond the thematic findings of the study, the IFS gave me the opportunity to apply this drama-based method in a context I had not used it before (the university workplace) and highlighted the possibilities for using this method in further research. This led me to continue exploring image theatre for my thesis, using the same workshops and data sets, but with a very different focus – an understanding of embodiment in image theatre and the distinctive meaning-making potential of the process.

In terms of my professional development, this EdD research has afforded me the opportunity to significantly develop my practice as a researcher, investigate drama practice in a much more in-depth and nuanced way than I have previously, and carry out my role in the university in a more informed and critically aware way. This has set me up for future practice as a reflection practitioner with the tools to draw on research and scholarship in the field in a more confident and deliberate way.

Impact Statement

This statement focuses on areas in which this research has already begun to have an impact, as well as the longer-term potential impact of my work. I have been able to use insights into staff experience that emerged from the workshops that I facilitated to feed into Faculty Executive and broader University meetings. In this way I have been able to contribute to discussions from a place of greater knowledge and thus impact on decisions being taken. Similarly, at the time I was doing my research essay focusing on aspects of space and place for example, we were in the process of moving to a newly built campus, and so I was able to share current research that I had been drawing on and writing about with managers, as well as take decisions that I had to make with greater clarity. I have also had the opportunity to share my research in research seminars and conferences, both within my institution and nationally and internationally at conferences on applied drama, visual research methods, and theatre and education. Perhaps a key impact has been on my own ability to carry out my role more effectively, with greater confidence and insight, which will have impacted on the experience of those that I line manage and work with.

It was also gratifying to see one of my colleagues who participated in my workshops, take the decision to try out the image theatre process with her students as a way of encouraging a more participatory and active engagement with material. As a lecturer who teaches seminar-based theory modules, and who has no drama training, she ran a number of sessions and reported back that they had changed her approach to teaching. She stated that she would continue to use this new approach and would investigate other participatory techniques.

As far as potential future impact goes, my research has the potential to enrich the understanding and practice of image theatre in the field of applied drama and in broader social areas such as health and wellbeing, business and education. It has particular significance for the work of practitioners, students, teachers, and facilitators, and could lead to enhanced facilitation where those using it might work with greater knowledge and a more nuanced perspective on how image theatre works as an embodied process. In opening up understandings of embodied practice, this could lead to a refinement of facilitation techniques.

There is also potential impact on approaches to leadership in higher education, through applying image theatre quite specifically as a method of staff development and engagement in recognising the significance of staff voice. However, in a more general sense, through sharing my work with other leaders and managers through publication, conference presentation and workshops, there is the opportunity to champion a way of working with colleagues that values and builds on staff perceptions and experiences, that recognises the micro-dynamics of power within an organisation, and that develops communication forms that transcend the jargon and dynamics of the meeting room.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:
INVESTIGATING EMBODIMENT AND THE DISTINCTIVE MEANING-
MAKING POTENTIAL OF IMAGE THEATRE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY
WORK-PLACE

The original impetus for this research has grown from my role in leading and managing colleagues in a University academic department within a Faculty of Creative Industries. Undertaking this research in the context of rapid change in higher education, during which colleagues have often expressed feelings of disempowerment and uncertainty, led me to search for approaches to carrying out my own leadership role in different ways, and, at the same time, to develop a research method to help understand more clearly the potential impact of this practice.

The research for this thesis draws on the same data set as my small-scale Institution Focused Study (IFS), generated through a drama-based method called image theatre. Through this method I sought to create a space for colleagues to engage with each other, share views and perceptions of their work within our university, and explore opportunities for change within the workplace. Image theatre is a gentle drama-based group method in which workshop participants create frozen images using their bodies in response to a given stimulus word or phrase. These images act as a catalyst or springboard for discussion and debate, offering an opportunity to access a diverse range of responses which can be explored without necessarily being bound by the language, jargon, culture and expectations of the university meeting room.

The IFS gave me an opportunity to pilot image theatre to begin to investigate how applying processes of embodied meaning-making and interpretation might lead to insights and perspectives that would differentiate this approach from other more common research methods. However, the limits of the IFS meant that I could only explore a small amount of the material generated and carry out limited analysis focusing primarily on the themes that emerged in the workshops. This thesis works with the same material that was generated through the image theatre workshops, but has a very different research focus, exploring in greater detail the meaning-making potential

of image theatre, and in particular investigating how we might understand the significance of embodiment as fundamental to this approach.

This chapter is thus structured in two main sections: firstly, it highlights the different roles that I have inhabited in undertaking this research – applied drama practitioner, higher education leader and manager, and researcher. In doing so, it teases out some of the tensions and opportunities that these different positions have offered in investigating the nature of embodiment in the image theatre workshops. Secondly, it discusses further the shift in focus from the IFS to the thesis, highlighting questions the former left unanswered about the distinctive productivity of image theatre as a method and how this has led to the questions that form the basis of this work.

1.1. Intersecting Roles:
Applied Drama Practitioner - HE Manager and Leader - Researcher

A consideration of the different roles and positions that I have occupied in carrying out this research highlights resonances and tensions between them. It is a recognition of the gaps and limitations in each that has prompted me to design this specific research project. For example, in line with much applied drama practice, in my role as an applied drama practitioner, I have in the past tended towards accepting the efficacy of image theatre uncritically, or at least based primarily on anecdotal evidence. By recognising this, however, my identity as an EdD researcher has compelled me to interrogate the image theatre method in much more critical detail, asking questions that have led to a more in-depth exploration of the process. Similarly, in my leadership and management role within the university, the pressure to focus on policy and procedure within a neoliberal higher education system has tended to push me towards ignoring or minimising the diverse tensions, emotions and anxieties that colleagues face. It is a recognition of this, and a desire to address this limitation, that has led to this particular research in which such aspects of colleagues' experiences can be foregrounded and acknowledged through carrying my role out in a different way. The following sections examine each of these roles and identities in further detail.

Applied Drama Practitioner

One of the motivating factors for my research, is a commonly expressed intuition amongst applied drama practitioners about the value of our work, alongside a recognition that the evidence for this is often anecdotal, and so there is a real need for research which delves more fully into applied drama processes (see for example, Khutan, 2014; and Reason and Rowe, 2017).[1] In seeking to understand more fully the embodied facets of image theatre, I am drawing on thirty years of experience of applying drama and theatre in various social and community contexts, and of teaching applied drama approaches at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. My interest in applied drama stems from formative experiences in South Africa working with drama in education in schools, contributing to arts education training as part of the country's transition to a post-apartheid society, and leading on an HIV/AIDS education through drama project.[2] In the UK, my practice has continued through working with drama in schools (including a Creative Partnerships project), theatre education programmes focusing on theatre and science, teacher in-service training, and drama and mental health. In all of this work, I have been interested in the efficacy and potential of participatory learning methods, community engagement, ideas of active learning and notions of 'transformative' processes. Applying drama within my own workplace, however, and in the context of higher education has been a new focus for me.

My work as an applied drama practitioner predates the term 'applied drama' itself which came to be commonly used in the early 2000s. Applied drama is an umbrella term covering a range of approaches to using drama in social and community contexts, including, for example, drama and theatre in education, community drama, drama for

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[1] An exception has been the research project known as DICE which was an international EU-supported project that specifically explored the ways that educational drama and theatre impacted on five of the eight Lisbon Key Competences in Education. The key competences refer to the European Commission's recommendations to the European Parliament for lifelong learning, published in 2006. The five competences examined in the DICE research were: 1. Communication in the mother tongue; 2. Learning to learn; 3. Interpersonal, intercultural and social and civic competences; 4. Entrepreneurship; and 5. Cultural Expression. (DICE Consortium, 2010: 13).

[2] See, for example, Carklin 1996, 1999 and 2001 for reports of this work in academic journals. Also, teacher and student focused publications including various articles on classroom drama and arts education in *Artreach*, 1995-2000, an arts education resource newspaper published for teachers in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and chapters in schools textbooks for South African schools, *Arts and Culture Today* and *Creative Arts Today*, Grades 8-10, published by Maskew Miller Longman/Pearson (1998-2014).

health and wellbeing, dramatherapy, and theatre for development. Helen Nicholson points out that these varied practices "describe forms of dramatic activity which primarily exist outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, and which are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies" (Nicholson, 2005: 2). The conception of 'benefit', however, will vary between different projects and different approaches.

Nicholson also points out that included in the "portmanteau of applied drama/theatre practices" are a number of forms which "each has its own theories, debates and highly specialized practices which are rather different from one another" (Nicholson, 2005: 2). We can see this, for example, in the way that say Drama-in-Education as one form is rooted in theories of play, improvisation and roleplay with its own literature, research base and techniques (such as 'teacher in role' and 'mantle of the expert'), alongside a different form, Dramatherapy, which draws on theories of psychotherapy and wellbeing, also with its own literature, research and techniques (such as collaborative storytelling and thought-tracking). There are of course many overlaps between the different forms as techniques get reimagined and applied in different ways from one form to another, and whilst this 'portmanteau' covers a broad range of practices, one thing that they all have in common, is that they are participatory in nature and focus on the importance of 'process' rather than on the creating of artistic 'product'. In this light, embodiment should be a significant consideration across the full spectrum of applied drama practices. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston also point out that applied theatre takes participants and audiences into "the realm of theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities" (Prentki and Preston, 2009: 9). Nicholson further points out that these different forms "draw on research in different branches of philosophy and the social sciences…. In other words, applied drama and theatre are interdisciplinary and hybrid practices" (Nicholson, 2005: 2). This resonates with my own research and practice, and signifies the importance in this thesis, of drawing on different disciplinary perspectives to explore embodied meaning-making in image theatre.

In this context, acknowledging the limitations of my 'applied drama practitioner' identity which might tend towards uncritical acceptance of image theatre as a method, the EdD has offered the opportunity to draw on and contribute to these debates in

thinking about how I apply the method in relation to my other roles as HE leader and doctoral researcher. Thus, as a practitioner who has used image work throughout my career, coming to question the different approaches to applied theatre, their practices and philosophies, enabled me to develop the specific focus of this research. The particular focus of this thesis is the embodied nature of image theatre and its potential impact not just on that applied drama practice, but in making an original contribution to applied drama research. It also has the potential to impact on my professional practice as an academic and manager in the facilitating of interactive workshops with colleagues.

Higher Education Leader and Manager

A significant challenge I have faced in my leadership roles over the past decade has been the increasing 'managerialism' of academic leadership in a fast-changing higher education context. This has brought about increased pressure to focus on the standardized implementation of policies and procedures in a way that risks ignoring, or minimizing, attention to the different ways staff may be feeling, and to the diverse – and sometimes contradictory – range of experiences that colleagues may be facing in their working lives. I have also been aware of the leadership challenges that emerge because of the range of different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds that make up the staff of our faculty, including accommodating and embracing different ideas about what creative industries education means and a diversity of approaches to teaching and learning. Currently, the Faculty is made up of eight Subject Area departments, namely: Animation & Games; Design; Drama, Dance & Performance; Fashion; Film; Music & Sound; Media, Broadcast & Journalism; and Photography & Art. Each of these departments has diverse academic histories and traditions, different relationships with community groups and industry partners, and varied forms of practice and scholarship. In addition, staff across the faculty have a range of experience, for example some have previously been part of an Arts faculty or a Technology faculty, whereas others have come straight into a Creative Industries faculty in their first post; some colleagues have worked for institutions like the BBC, some have had (and in some cases still have) freelance careers in the industry; some are artists, some are engineers, and some work more directly in areas of policy and business. It is partly for this reason that I have

sought an approach in this research that might recognise and take account of the challenges of working in this diverse context.

These tensions have also presented challenges to my identity as an applied drama practitioner which is grounded in person-centered practice. My applied drama experience has given me the tools to approach my management role differently through exploring image theatre as a way to grapple with some of the challenges of leading an academic department. In terms of my own professional development, understanding what it is *about* image theatre that enables a different way of facilitating communication and interaction between colleagues means that I may be better placed to consciously employ different strategies in my management role.

Over the past ten years the faculty that I work in has had five Deans, been restructured four times, and has merged with another university. Through this period, I have taken on a variety of leadership roles, and have found the amount and speed of change to be challenging. Examples of this challenge include: a new vision and structure for the faculty every time a different Dean has taken office; the ongoing need for me to argue afresh each time for the value of our discipline and its place as part of the institution's 'portfolio'; and the keeping up of colleagues' morale, motivation and sense of purpose within this turbulent context. It is perhaps this latter challenge that has most specifically motivated me to undertake this research. In addition to significant ongoing changes within my own institution, a further challenge for me might be understood as a tension between the changing values/culture of the institution and the values and vision for university learning which have underpinned my own passion for education, evident most fully perhaps in the University's move (in line with the sector as a whole) towards a more fully marketised, customer-focused position.

My own experience of these changing priorities and values resonates with the findings of numerous studies on changes in higher education, which include a rapid expansion of the sector, the marketisation of universities, changes in fees and funding, employability, decolonisation, and precarity of jobs including hourly-paid and teaching-only roles (see for example, Knight and Trowler, 2001; Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008; McGettigan, 2013; Barnett, 2016; Pokorny and Warren, 2016; Collini, 2017; Bhambra et al., 2018). Writing from the perspective of teaching in universities, Helen Pokorny and Digby

Warren argue that changes to funding, marketisation, league tables and other performance indicators (including the development of the Teaching Excellence Framework), "reflect a neoliberal agenda with competition at its heart and a substantive switch from public to private funding of education through the student loan system" (Pokorny and Warren, 2016: 3). I have felt the impact of this clearly in the way my own leadership role has shifted from one that initially focused primarily on what and how we taught in the department, to one that is now primarily concerned with marketing, student recruitment and student satisfaction. This has in turn impacted on the way that I have been required to engage with the colleagues I line-manage including the demand from the institution that appraisals now focus more strongly on 'performance management' and alignment to the university's key performance indicators (KPIs). At the very heart of leadership decisions then, are values and priorities which are in tension. It is a grappling with such tension that I was experiencing in my role when I began to think about undertaking the EdD as this was something I needed to personally address in my own professional practice.

The destabilising effect that has resulted from this tension has resonance for me in Peter G. Taylor's writing which, although written two decades ago, perhaps foreshadows an intensification of the subsequent changes. In *Making Sense of Academic Life: Academics, Universities and Change*, Taylor points out that while universities have changed since their origin, what marks the current experience of change is its scale:

> it is discontinuous rather than incremental…. Incremental change involves relatively minor changes, or changes which are limited in their scope. These types of change are manageable, involving relatively predictable outcomes…. Discontinuous change is more systematic – it is broad-based and difficult to manage. It involves simultaneous change in many aspects of the university, with outcomes that are difficult to predict or even foresee… Discontinuity is one of the defining features of the challenges facing academics.
>
> (Taylor, 1999: 2).

Taylor's observation makes a connection between broad, but discontinuous change and a sense of unpredictability and uncertainty, which resonates with my own experience and that which I have become alert to in the experiences of my colleagues

It is significant that two decades later, this same sense of discontinuity, and, what appears to be a continued and growing sense of uncertainty in academic identity (see, for example, Evans and Nixon, 2016; Attebery et al., 2017; Antoniadou and Crowder, 2020), still dominates experience for many staff. As Stefan Collini notes:

> Although all of these changes mean there is lots to talk about, there is widespread uncertainty about the premises and terms of discussion. The pace and scale of change have produced a sense of disorientation, and uneasy feeling that, as a society, we may be losing our once-familiar understanding of the nature and role of universities. (Collini, 2017: 2).

It is this link between the speed of change and the resultant feeling of disorientation or unease amongst many who work in universities that I feel is a significant challenge for leadership and management at department level, yet one that is often ignored or neglected under the guise of needing to put energy into the student experience. It is my own unease and need to address this situation as a department leader and manager that has prompted me to seek different ways of engaging with colleagues, including the application of my drama practice in this research.

In using image theatre in my research as one way to respond to the sense of uncertainty, I am seeking to shift my leadership practices by drawing more directly on my applied drama experience. However, it has also opened questions *about* image theatre that I hadn't previously considered in order to integrate my applied drama knowledge into my leadership role. It raised questions, for example, about the different affordances of a standard HE meeting and an applied theatre workshop, and why I felt the need to incorporate the latter into my leadership practice. In particular, it became clear that I needed to understand more fully how meaning is made, interpreted and re-interpreted through the image theatre process, through understanding in more detail the nature of the interaction. Further, to shift my leadership towards a greater engagement with the varied experiences of colleagues, I needed a research focus through which I could investigate and acknowledge the felt, experienced and thought about aspects of workplace activity – in other words there are cognitive, affective and experiential aspects to this situation. This then raised for me the need to investigate more fully the embodied nature of image theatre in the making of meaning. In part then, the necessity to understand embodiment links to my leadership desire to give colleagues a sense of

agency and voice in a process that values a multiplicity of stories, experiences and perspectives.

Researcher

My third role, as a researcher undertaking this EdD, has thus grown from and responded to the challenges, tensions and limitations of the other two roles. Both the IFS and the Thesis were part of a broader EdD research programme and followed the completion of a portfolio of four essays focusing on professionalism in education and research methods. The full programme and my journey through it are detailed in the Reflective Statement on pages 5-9. The full EdD research programme created a space for me to question both – in relation to applied drama practice, to develop new insights into the distinctive embodied practices of the method, and in relation to my university role, to explore and experiment with new approaches to leadership, in the context of wider changes to the sector. My development as a researcher has included the development of my research skills through the process of this EdD programme itself and through my prior research activity; secondly, the opportunity to explore the significance of 'insider research' through undertaking this investigation within my own place of work; and thirdly, the chance to begin to investigate and contribute to the growing interest in applied theatre *as* research within that area of scholarship.

My own research practice up until this point, including research carried out alongside the EdD, has primarily focused on the impact of various participatory drama projects within their contexts, and whilst image theatre has been part of my artistic and community practice, it has not been the specific focus of my own research investigation. Primarily, my non-doctoral research has explored the efficacy of various interventions based predominantly on observation and anecdotal evidence. This has included research with teachers employing drama teaching methods in their classrooms, and community drama facilitators working with community groups in areas of youth development and health and well-being. Evaluation was based primarily on feedback from participants, collected through questionnaires and interviews. One exception was work carried out in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa which included a collaboration with a psychologist and a health education professional whose evaluation included KAP studies (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) based on more formal

longitudinal evaluations (Carklin, 1996). Whilst, over the past two-and-a-half decades, I have published research and presented at conferences in the field of applied drama, the research for this thesis has enabled me to respond to the challenges of my professional role and to reconsider both my applied drama practice and what it means to carry out research. In doing this I have developed methodological skills rooted in educational and sociological approaches and discourses, and broadened the critical and political scope of my work within the context of higher education.

In considering my role as a researcher as it has developed in relation to my other professional roles, I am struck by the writing of Peter O'Connor and Michael Anderson (2015) who argue for an approach in which the researcher's "personal and political motivation, and their understanding and sensitivity, is the starting point for a critical examination of research" (2015: 4). Writing from the perspective of applied theatre research, they seek to position research as "a collaborative catalyst for change" and argue for models of research which reconnect knowledge generation to processes of critical hope and participatory democracy (2015:4-5). In this sense research is understood as a political activity and a means of confronting, challenging and disturbing the status quo (2015: 6). The positioning of my own research, through understanding in a more nuanced way the impact of an applied drama methodology that includes a focus on embodiment, is certainly such that it is not seeking only to understand experiences within our university workplace environment, but to instigate change and perhaps unsettle habitual practices.

The concept of 'insider research' can be helpful in understanding what it means to develop research as a consciously political tool within one's own practice. This notion, as developed in the research methods literature, provides a tool for exploring the productivities and limitations of this position. Whilst an advantage I had as an insider researcher was that I was able to bring a more nuanced understanding of the context in which respondents operate in their day to day work, I am also fully cognisant of Robson's point that whilst there are many advantages to this type of research, the disadvantages can be substantial, including the potentially limiting impact of power structures and the many ethical considerations that such research raises (Robson, 2002). In my case, this perhaps relates most strongly to the fact that I hold a senior managerial position within the faculty that is the focus of this research, and that, as O'Leary writes,

could lead to "role conflict" in which "managerial responsibilities can be at odds with researcher objectivity and/or confidentiality" (O'Leary, 2005:18), and so a key challenge was finding an appropriate method that would encourage respondents to participate openly rather than simply say what they thought I wanted to hear, and to feel secure that there wouldn't be repercussions if they took a critical stance. Through focusing more critically on my applied drama practice, the opportunity to subvert such challenges has enabled me to understand my role as an insider researcher-facilitator-manager in greater depth.

A further outcome of developing my project in light of my roles as an applied drama practitioner and HE leader through the EdD has been the possibility of bringing together approaches to research from the arts and social sciences. The significance of this is that it has enabled me to frame research questions in a different way and draw on alternative methods to my earlier research. As Jewitt, Xambo and Price suggest, the intersection of the social sciences and the arts can inform and stimulate methodological innovation (Jewitt, Xambo and Price, 2016: 1). For them, social science engagement with the arts through focusing on the digital body has the "potential to open up new spaces, questions and methods" (Jewitt, Xambo and Price, 2016: 2); for me, the live physical body offers similar opportunities. This focus on the live experience in embodiment suggests further implications in terms of my specific researcher role – where in my IFS I drew on the 'visual turn' in social science research, it is a subsequent development in a 'performative turn' that comes to the fore in this thesis. In such research the body is central, and as O'Connor and Anderson argue, this has been highly influential in demystifying and democratising the ways in which performance could be understood and applied within social contexts.

In this sense, performance is not just understood in terms of arts practice, but of a broader notion of performance in everyday life. Performativity offers a way of understanding people's everyday physical, bodily, corporeal engagement with the world, expressed through the roles we play (colleague, daughter, friend, customer etc), actions we undertake (shaking hands, blowing a kiss, high five, etc), speech we use and bodily postures we adopt. We can go back to Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), for example, for the roots of this thinking, progressed significantly by the likes of anthropologist, Victor Turner (1974 and 1986), and

Performance Studies pioneer, Richard Schechner (2013). It is this notion of the performative that, as O'Connor and Anderson write, finds expression in approaches practiced by Augusto Boal, for whom the everyday occurrences within communities become the subject for dramatic explorations by community members (O'Connor and Anderson, 2015: 27-28). As they point out, "The body, how it performs and how it is performed, is central to the making of theatre. Understanding is created both in and through the body of the actor, but it is also understood and felt within the bodies of the audience. The ability of the body to know in ways that are as valid as any other form of knowing is what uniquely positions theatre as a form of research." (O'Connor and Anderson, 2015: 27). In exploring embodiment in image theatre then, within the context of my higher education practice, I have combined arts and social science approaches.

In summary, whilst my interest in applied drama research has been an active part of my career since its beginning, the kinds of questions and methods utilised have changed in undertaking this EdD, through considering my applied drama practitioner identity with my developing and shifting identity as a university leader and manager. We might also understand the tensions between roles – manager, applied drama workshop facilitator and insider researcher – as productive tensions requiring a careful negotiation of identities and skillsets in order to challenge dominant discourses and cultures within the university workplace. In acknowledging the affective and experiential aspects of university workplace engagement, considering embodiment in light of each of these roles offers richer insights into how I might bring further rigour to the field of applied drama, broaden the scope for professional development within a higher education setting, and offer a form of leadership that is rooted in the experiences and values that characterise participatory drama facilitation. In focusing on embodiment in image theatre through the rest of this thesis then, I recognise and acknowledge the dynamic and shifting relationship of these different roles in developing my own professional practice through this EdD.

1.2. Research Using Image Theatre: A Shifting Focus

Both my IFS and this thesis have utilised a data set gathered though image theatre workshops that I facilitated with two groups of participants drawn from a cross section

of academic staff in the faculty that I work in. Thus, whilst there was one process for generating the data, I have used it in two very different research projects, with very different foci and questions. The thesis is thus not a development of the IFS, but uses the same data set to probe a different set of questions. This is partly because the limitations of the IFS meant that there wasn't the space to explore the range of substantive and methodological questions; and partly because of the way my own leadership role was shifting during the time of my research and of the way that my thinking about applied drama was developing. My IFS focused on a substantive question about the views, perceptions, thoughts and feelings of academic staff about the role of the contemporary university; and explored this through a thematic analysis of the ideas they expressed during the workshops. In contrast, this thesis, whilst drawing on the same data set, is concerned with interrogating more fully the distinctive nature of embodied meaning-making in the same image theatre workshops.

I chose to work with image theatre as an active, embodied, collaborative process to encourage the sharing of a diverse range of views and perspectives. Through attempting to subvert usual working practices, I could potentially enable participants to be co-interpreters in the research, and encourage forms of communication and meaning-making rooted in interactive and dialogic experimental practices.

Introducing Image Theatre as Process and Method

Image Theatre is a method that makes use of what is called 'tableaux' work, that is participants working in groups and using their bodies to create frozen pictures or sculptures that communicate a variety of ideas or concerns. As a drama activity it has become particularly widely used in school drama classrooms, community theatre settings and in dramatherapy group sessions. Whilst the image theatre method is fully explained in Chapter 3, it is useful here to briefly introduce what image theatre is. Usually these images are created in response to certain stimulus words, phrases or ideas given by the facilitator. For example, as the facilitator, I might say, "In your small group, create two separate images which communicate your response to: 'the function of a contemporary university'. I'll give you ten minutes to work out these images, and then we'll come back together to see what each group has come up with". The

photographs that follow, show, by way of example, two images created by one of the
groups in the workshops:

Figure 1: Group A presents their first and second images.

Once participants have created their images, there are various ways of working with
them, for example, they will act as a catalyst for discussion among other participants
who offer interpretations of what is being shown by the group – the idea here is not to
guess the 'right' answers, but to build up a range of possible interpretations, some of
which may have been intended by the group showing, and some of which may not have
been intended but which may nonetheless be valid interpretations of the image. The
images can also be 're-sculpted' by viewers, that is literally changing the way a person
is standing, a gesture, a head position and so on, to refine an idea or communicate a
slightly different perspective. This can itself become a catalyst for further discussion. In
addition, images can be 'brought to life', that is, a still image leads into an improvised
role-play, or they can be developed into a series of images based on the idea of one
showing how things are (in the workplace, the community, the family, for example),
and others showing how a situation may be changed.

In the case of my research project, image theatre as a process for encouraging dialogue
and collaboration in the university workplace was an adaptation and application of this
technique which has its roots in the work of theatre practitioner, Augusto Boal.
Working in the repressive context of Brazil in the 1970s, Boal sought to create a theatre
that was empowering for audience members through engaging them actively in the
work. His aim was to change the spectator into a "spect-actor" (Boal, 1979: 125-126).

Boal developed a number of techniques such as forum theatre, simultaneous dramaturgy and image theatre, which all require the audience member to intervene in the action of the drama in different ways.[3] Boal was inspired by the work of Paulo Freire, and Frances Babbage argues that "Boal's work in Argentina and Peru in the 1970s, in which he developed ideas of a theatre of dialogue, saw a crucial engagement with Freire's educational theories which significantly informed his own pedagogy and shaped his early writings" (Babbage, 2018: 16). Indeed, Boal's seminal work, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, echoes Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In particular, Boal was influenced by Freire's method of teaching in the field of literacy which was based on dialogic exchange. This involved literacy trainers working in such a way that ensured they were critically informed of the realities of the lives of those they were working with (Babbage, 2018). This approach was directly experienced by Boal in the early 1970s when he worked on the ALFIN literacy project in Peru (Boal, 1976), and has been of interest to me in this research because of the way this project sought to utilise methods which not only taught language, but gave participants a sense of voice and agency in the critical use of that language through encouraging a consciousness of their lived experience.

In thinking about my application of this method, however, it is worth noting that in the decades following the 1970s, Boal worked in different contexts all over the world, adapting the techniques from their original context. His use of forum theatre and image theatre for therapeutic purposes in the USA and Europe, for example, is well documented in his book, *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (1995). Babbage asserts that Augusto Boal is

> unquestionably one of the most important and influential
> contemporary theatre practitioners... The flexibility and accessibility
> of Boal's methods have encouraged widespread dissemination.
> Theatre of the Oppressed techniques have been applied, adapted and
> reinvented by practitioners all over the world. Directly and
> indirectly, his practice has entered contexts as diverse as political

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[3] In 'Simultaneous Dramaturgy', the audience watches a play, and can shout stop at any time, telling the actors how to change their actions or words to reflect more closely the realities of the audience's own circumstances. In 'Forum Theatre', audience members also shout stop, but in this instance, the member of the audience who has called out will replace one of the actors; the other actors then need to improvise the action in the direction which that person takes it. In both cases, the action can be stopped many times by many different people. The idea is that in seeking ways of dealing with the challenges of their community or social circumstances, theatre can become a type of 'rehearsal' for life, and so different possibilities can be played out in order to judge the implications of different decisions.

protest, education, therapy, prisons, health, management and local government, as well as infiltrating the mainstream theatre establishment – and the list goes on. (Babbage, 2018: 1).

This influence and widespread application highlighted by Babbage is significant in recognising the impact of an approach to theatre which is rooted in a participatory practice and an ethos of empowerment. Inherent in Boal's technique is the idea of image as a catalyst and forum for discussion and debate. It encourages critical engagement with personal and communal circumstances through recognising ideological forces and power relationships. The question for me in this research is *how* it does this; in what ways this approach, as an embodied method, has the potential to enable such engagement.

The Use of Image Theatre Workshops for Two Distinct EdD Projects: The Institution Focused Study and the Thesis

Both my IFS and thesis are based on the same set of image theatre workshops, and the same set of video and interview data emerging from these. However, in each of these projects I took a different approach to data analysis in order to answer different questions. Broadly, the IFS sought to answer a substantive question about the creative and cultural industries in higher education, while the thesis sets out to explore a methodological question about the role of embodiment in image theatre workshops.

The analysis of workshops carried out for my IFS had two key points of focus: firstly, I was interested in gauging how staff in the Faculty understood the idea of 'creative and cultural industries' within higher education, as a relatively recent development within the sector. Secondly, I aimed to explore the diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences of colleagues regarding the function of contemporary higher education, and of their experience of working in a university today. The focus was thus *thematic* in that I was primarily researching themes, ideas and experiences that emerged *from* participation in the image theatre work. In terms of the themes that emerged about the creative and cultural industries specifically, it became evident that participants in this particular setting did not see this as a neatly defined area of work – rather it was understood to be a diverse field of disciplines and practices experienced as a series of 'tensions'. These tensions, which were fluid and constantly being negotiated, tended to be between: a)

pedagogy, particularly between creative and critical academic development on the one hand, and skills development for industry on the other; b) staff identity as arts practitioners and as academics; c) physical environment, including the perceived freedom of an art school and the perceived constraint of a creative industries building; and d) disciplinary boundaries, including the need for discipline-based skills education and the demand for cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary collaboration.

Further, in that study, I was already interested in the work in terms of the growing interest in visual research in the social sciences over the last twenty years, drawing on what Jewitt has described as the 'visual turn' in late modern society which has seen a developing interest in visual research, stimulated in part by the rise of new technologies (Jewitt, 2008: 6). Investigating the growing body of writing related to the visual image (for example, Prosser, 1998; Banks, 2001; Pink, 2006; Stanczak, 2007; Mitchell, 2011; Spencer, 2011; Margolis and Pauwels, 2011; Rose, 2012; Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015), it was evident that whilst none of this literature deals specifically with the use of image in participatory drama work of the type that I have been working with, it was nonetheless very useful in developing my thinking about how to work with visual images *as research* and in conceptualising and articulating image theatre as a method for generating data more fully. It provoked ideas that formed the initial germ of the question I came to formulate for this thesis.

The focus of this thesis, then, is not thematic, but methodological. Rather than determining what participants 'said' through their images, I have been interested in understanding the *way* that image theatre creates and supports dialogue and interaction among those involved. In particular, I was asking a question about the meaning of embodiment, in order to understand how and why engagement in image theatre enables participants to express thoughts, feeling and perspectives that embrace the complexity and ambiguity of individual and collective experiences within the university.

The questions that I have been exploring in this thesis are thus:
    a) How might a greater understanding of embodiment illuminate the methods through which image theatre creates distinct kinds of meaning?
    b) What is it about the nature of the image theatre *process* that enables the dynamic and collaborative co-creation and re-creation of meaning?

Drawing on methods such as multimodality as part of a broader methodological approach, has allowed me to investigate the image theatre process at a more granular level than is usually the case in applied theatre practice and research. In situating this research within my own professional practice within higher education, this thesis, therefore, offers an original contribution to understanding image theatre as an embodied and experimental method.

1.3. The Structure of this Thesis

In light of the specific emphasis of this research on embodiment and the meaning-making potential of image theatre, the next chapter, Chapter 2, focuses on ideas of embodiment. It offers a review of the literature through firstly discussing embodiment in image theatre research before moving on to an exploration of the ways that embodiment is conceptualised in different fields, in particular, sociology, science and the arts. It considers how we might bring conceptions of embodiment into image theatre research.

Drawing on notions of embodiment discussed in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 outlines the development and application of the methodology for generating and analysing embodied meaning-making data in participatory research. It focuses on two key aspects: a) the image theatre workshop process, through which material or data was generated; and b) the methods used for collating, archiving and analysing that material and data.

Chapter 4 develops the analysis of material generated, highlighting how we might understand image theatre as encompassing a range of types of collaborative experimentation, thus producing a range of different kinds of meaningful interactions. It offers a way of noting how, in this study, visual, physical and dialogic modes and elements have contributed to the construction and interpretation of meaning and has enabled me to explore some aspects of the meaning-making process with more precision than might otherwise have been possible.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 5 which offers a theorisation of embodiment in image theatre, highlights the methodological contribution of the study, and considers the implications of the work for academic leadership and professional development.

A Note on Terminology and Conventions

Drama and Theatre: In drama and theatre scholarship, there is sometimes debate on the different uses of these terms. In this research I am taking 'Drama' to include the broad spectrum of activity that includes formal theatre and interactive, community based participatory processes. In this sense then, the method used in this research might be described as 'drama-based'.

Participants, Viewers and Characters: When discussing the image theatre workshops, I am using these terms as follows:

Participants: everyone in the workshop group, whether they are part of an image being shown, or looking at it from the outside;

Viewers: those members of the group who are looking at/interpreting the images from the outside;

Characters: participants in an image who have been identified as representing a *particular* person or type, for example, describing one of the people being shown in an image as 'a student' or 'a parent'. So it might be said, for example, that participant B is representing the character of a student.

Transcription conventions: In quoted transcriptions (as on p.116):

- Specific images are referred to by letter set and number, e.g. "Image B1" (Image sets are in Appendix A).
- Workshop participants who are commenting on what they are seeing in the images performed by others are identified as **V1, V2** etc, that is 'Viewer 1', 'Viewer 2' and so on.
- Workshop participants who are commenting on their collaboration and/or the performance of their images are identified as **P1, P2** etc, that is 'Participant 1', 'Participant 2' and so on.
- Participants in the images have been labelled with letters in associated photographs and diagrams. Where participants are being quoted, I have used the letter of the participant/character they are referring to in square brackets, for example: "I notice that [A] has his hand on [B]'s shoulder". In reality, the viewers would be referring to the participant by name.
- Indication of action and my own commentary is italicised and presented in square brackets.

CHAPTER 2
CONCEPTIONS OF EMBODIMENT IN DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDINGS OF IMAGE THEATRE

This chapter begins by setting out some of the literature in applied theatre research, arguing that claims for the value and impact of image theatre are often anecdotal or descriptive, and that there is a need for a more precise conceptualisation of embodiment to help us to develop a more specific and insightful understanding of image theatre as an embodied activity. In order to elaborate this argument as a context for my own study, the later sections of the chapter explore notions of embodiment, considering their methodological potential for conducting data collection and analysis in image rich and live interactive environments. Given the various ways that embodiment has been investigated and applied in different disciplinary areas, this chapter identifies pertinent issues and key themes as they pertain to my research, including ideas that the body is central to perception, experience and meaning, and that embodiment is always emergent and changing. It considers the ways that we might most usefully understand embodiment within the context of a participatory drama-based workshop, both in terms of intentional physical expression such as image-making, and in terms of workshop participation and collaboration more broadly. In so doing, this chapter situates my work within the range of research and writing on embodiment in order to firstly, understand in greater depth than has thus far been articulated in applied theatre research, how meaning is co-constructed and interpreted; and secondly, to develop an original method for critical reflection on professional practice in higher education.

Embodiment is a wide, varied and multi-disciplinary area of investigation and research, drawing on and contributing to thinking and practice in, for example, theatre and dance, learning and teaching, language and linguistics, games technology and sociology.[4]

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[4] See, for example, **performance and visual arts** (Barbour, 2013; Stern, 2013; Batson and Wilson, 2014; Blair and Cook, 2016), **cognitive science** (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991; Gibbs, 2005; Robbins and Aydede 2008; Clark, 2016), **sociology** (Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Crossley, 2006; Cregan, 2006; Käll, 2015; Fischer and Dolezal, 2018), **learning, teaching and knowing** (Bresler, 2004; Epstein, 2006; Katz, 2013; Green and Hopwood, 2015; Skulmowski and Rey, 2018), **affect theory** (Damasio, 1999; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Shaughnessy, 2013; Massumi, 2015), **language and linguistics** (Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron, 2014; Brenzinger and Kraska-Szlenk, 2014); **human-computer interaction** (Dourish, 2004;

Whilst these different areas consider embodiment in terms of diverse disciplinary traditions and approaches, a common strain running through all of them appears to be a rootedness in phenomenology, in which the body is understood as being central to knowing and perceiving the world - all consciousness and experience is understood as embodied (Husserl, 1931; Arendt, 1958; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Moran, 2000; Van Manen, 2014; Sheets-Johnstone, 2015; Block, 2017). Whilst in a formal sense phenomenology as a philosophy goes back to the early twentieth century, in our own contemporary context embodiment has emerged as a significant area of thought and research practice through what Batson and Wilson point out has been an enormous paradigm shift in the twenty-first century that has brought arts, humanities, science and technology into closer confluence. As they point out, "sociocultural, artistic and scientific ramifications of body and embodiment created a move toward consilience within many fields." (Batson and Wilson, 2014: 8). I would suggest that it is this same shift that has encouraged methodological innovation and that underpins my own research.

Whilst we might conceptualise embodiment in active or enactive terms – for example to embody a character or idea, to position one's self physically in relation to other people, or to take on or express a sense of identity - it is also worth bearing in mind Thomas Csordas's view, highlighted by Liora Bresler, that the distinction between body and embodiment is reminiscent of Barthes' distinction between text and textuality: The former is a material object that occupies space in a bookstore; the latter is a methodological field that is experienced as activity and production (Bresler, 2004:7). Csordas suggests that to work in a 'paradigm of embodiment,' is not necessarily to study anything new or different, "but to address familiar topics – healing, emotion, gender, power, from a different standpoint" (Csordas, 1999:145). In terms of my own research, embodiment provides a very useful lens for reconsidering both research methodology and professional practice in terms of interactivity and collaboration. In this chapter I am bringing this understanding of embodiment into conversation with applied theatre research on image theatre to indicate the space where my research offers a contribution that can bring these two fields closer together.

Broadhurst and Machon, 2012, Marshall and Hornicker, 2013), and **identity** (Burkitt, 1999; Waskul and Vannini, 2006; Gonzalez-Arnal, Jagger and Lennon, 2012; Givskov and Petersen, 2018) .

2.1. Tracing Ideas of Embodiment in the Literature on Image Theatre

A review of the literature on image theatre itself reveals that in addition to the writing by and about Boal himself, which is predominantly explanatory or descriptive (for example, Boal 1979, 1992 and 1995; see also Babbage 2018), there is surprisingly little detailed research on the form. Whilst there are numerous online descriptions of projects, there appear to be no scholarly articles that offer an elaborated account of image theatre as a form of embodiment. Whilst a number of researchers write of image theatre as being 'embodied', they generally do not go into any detail of what is understood by this. Research writing tends to focus on case studies highlighting the application of image theatre in various contexts and with a variety of aims. In commenting on this writing in this section, I give an indication of what research in image theatre currently addresses, and in so doing, I point to questions that are left open about how we might understand image theatre as an embodied, experimental form.

In their article, "Making Power Visible: Doing Theatre-Based Status work with Nursing Students" (2017), Taylor and Taylor write of using image theatre to "increase student awareness of the micro-dynamics of power and the enactment of status in their day to day lives" (Taylor and Taylor, 2017: 1). For them, the exercise is about allowing student participants to "embody power and status" and "understand it in ways they did not after simply completing assigned readings" (Taylor and Taylor, 2017: 2). Contextualising their research within concepts of power and status in nursing, Taylor and Taylor report on their work with two groups of senior undergraduate nursing students in northeastern United States. Importantly for the authors, student reflections on the work "hint at the richness of embodied learning and captured how this meaning could be immediately translated into cognitive knowledge and used to promote self-awareness" (Taylor and Taylor, 2017: 4). In another example, a paper by William P. Ferris reports on the use of image theatre for teambuilding in industry, in his case within a software and business solutions company. Whilst it is highly problematic that Ferris articulates power dynamics in terms of dichotomies (for example, police vs. citizens; men vs. women; managers vs. workers), he does recognise that image theatre has a role to play in becoming cognisant of power relationships in organisations. Ferris reports on using a particular approach to image theatre in which participants create a 'real' image (how things are), an 'ideal' image (how things should or could be), and a

'transitional' image, that is ideas for helping the group move from the real to the ideal (Ferris, 2001: 2-3). This is drawn directly from Boal's approach, although differs from the approach that I use in my work. Both the Taylor and Taylor and the Ferris studies focus predominantly on image theatre as a way of raising consciousness about power dynamics, and both hint at the significance of embodiment, but neither makes clear what is actually meant by embodiment, or what it is specifically about the embodied approach that has an impact. This is not to devalue their work, nor to question the impact of their projects; but it does leave questions about their claims and how the process of consciousness raising can be related specifically to the image theatre method.

Other examples of image theatre research include that of Annika Strauss (2017), J. Adam Perry (2012), and Powell and Serriere (2013), all of whom consider image theatre in relation to teaching and learning. For Strauss, image theatre is used as an experiential teaching method with students in relation to social anthropological fieldwork, to access and give meaning to sensory experiences. Strauss points out that whilst anthropologists use all their senses in the field, preparation and processing of fieldwork relies almost exclusively on written material. She argues that while:

> cognitively produced textual sources and techniques of verbalisation (e.g. presentations) are extensively focused on, the body, emotional and sensory experiences are often overlooked in academic discourse and practices.… [Image theatre as an experiential method] brings into practice a teaching approach that includes the analysis of embodied knowledge and stresses its importance as an ethnographic source. (Strauss, 2017: 1).

What she means by 'embodied knowledge' is not fully specified, but points to the view that bodily experience is a fundamental, and often overlooked, component in knowledge construction. J. Adam Perry, considers image theatre as a more general critical approach in education. He explores image theatre as "a system of decolonisation", arguing that it is "a unique cultural practice that can be used to facilitate counter-discursive stories that are shaped by participants' invitation to play in the space between aesthetic representation and social reality" (Perry, 2012: 103). He roots this 'counter-discursive' approach in a "pedagogy of embodied learning" (Perry, 2012: 103), drawing on the work of Roxana Ng, who, he suggests, argues for an approach to teaching and learning which is holistic, incorporating mind, body, emotion and spirit (Perry, 2012: 105). In her chapter, "Decolonizing Teaching and Learning

Through Embodied Learning: Toward an Integrated Approach", Ng writes of how, in imitating hegemonic ideologies out of habit, people become stuck in fixed patterns of behaviour which can only be changed by stepping back and observing these patterns through a mindful and reflexive practice (Ng, 2012: 361). Using two examples of image theatre work undertaken – one with a class of eight and nine year old children in Toronto, and the second with a group of migrant agricultural workers from Mexico living in Leamington in Canada – Perry suggests that because stories are *shown* rather than told or explained, people are able to write themselves into the stories of others, to see themselves in other people's stories (Perry, 2012: 108). While the political claims made by Perry and Ng are important, the relationship between the method and the claimed effects of image theatre is not fully explained.

In a different example, Kimberly Powell and Stephanie Serriere (2013) write about their experience using image theatre in pre-kindergarten to university education settings in the USA for reimagining social justice. They write of "image-based participatory pedagogies", working with both image theatre and photo elicitation, in which "images are primary to renewed visions of possibility and imaginative action" (Powell and Serriere, 2013: 1). Powell and Serriere's work builds on pedagogical frameworks for social justice in which "connections between personal and social dimensions of experience, attention to social relations in an educational setting, and a 'conscious use of reflection and experience' (Adams, 2007, p.15) are viewed as essential characteristics and practices" (Powell and Serriere, 2013: 2).[5] This has strong resonances with the research I have carried out, suggesting that opportunities for making connections, for reflecting and for transformation are at the core of image-based work of this kind. Drawing on the work of Maxine Greene[6], and in particular her ideas of 'wide-awakeness' in education, Powell and Serriere underscore teaching and research as "open to action, ambiguity and imagination, highlighting the *potentiality* of experience and the ways in which the arts might frame experience for fuller possibilities of awakeness, participation and agency" (Powell and Serriere, 2013: 3). In their paper,

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[5] Reference to Adams in the quotation is to M. Adams (2007), "Pedagogical Frameworks for Social Justice Education". In *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (2nd. ed.). Edited by M. Adams, L. A. Bell and P. Griffin. New York: Routledge. pp.15-34.
Adams is one of the writers in the field of social justice pedagogy that Powell and Serriere draw on in their study.
[6] See, for example, M. Greene (1995), *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, The Arts and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

the authors report specifically on an image theatre project with university students both within classes, and with general public audiences, to explore ideas such as democracy. They write of these experiences as yielding "rich and powerful experiences with embodied understandings and representations of democracy" (Powell and Serriere, 2013: 7), taking on the qualities of interventionist performance art. They note how images representing concepts of democracy were "fluid, unpredictable and open to multiple interpretations" while the "intertextuality of bodies, images, space, media and discourse created opportunities for layered meaning" (Powell and Serriere, 2013: 14-15).

Powell and Serriere also draw on the work of Linds and Vettraino (2008) who write about the connection between storytelling, image and embodiment. In their article, "Collaborative Story Telling Through Image Theatre", written as a dialogue between the author-practitioners in the form of a playtext, Linds and Vettraino position themselves, their participants and their researchers as "performative social science researchers" (Linds and Vettraino, 2008: 1) in order to build communities of practice through reflection on action. The authors argue that a key aspect for them is a consideration of the "ways in which physical dialogue through the body evolves—first as a method of enacting the world, where collective meaning emerges and secondly, as a concept that uses symbolic/metaphoric aesthetic language through what one colleague calls 'body-storming' (like 'brain-storming', but with the emotional and sensory body as a source and language of expression)." (Linds and Vettraino, 2008: 1). Based in Quebec, Canada, and Dundee, Scotland, the academic play-text reports on work with a group of education workers from a charitable organisation. In 'Scene 1 – Elinor's Story' (referring to co-author, Elinor Vettraino), Vettraino writes:

> through observing our own actions and interactions we are placed in an aesthetic space that enables us to play with reality and non-reality, to shift time and focus so that we are engaging with memories in a way that frees us up to mould and re-experience them. By doing this, we learn from and about ourselves in order to change the way in which we then operate within social constructs; potentially among them, our workplaces. (Linds and Vettraino, 2008: 5).

This account offers experiential evidence to support the claim that image theatre opens up distinctive engagements with memories and ideas. It is suggestive of something experimental as well as an embodied practice.

Blair and Fletcher (2010) report on work with staff at the Kigali Memorial Centre to address the 'culture of silence' about the genocide in Rwanda. In this study, image theatre was used as an approach for encouraging dialogue. What is particularly interesting is the way they note the balance between showing, speaking and silence. Blair and Fletcher report that the emphasis on active participation appealed to their workshop participants, and that "because of the reluctance of Rwandans to articulate their experiences, they particularly inclined toward a technique that begins by facilitating nonverbal communication…. [I]t immediately provided a useful way for their participants to translate their nonverbal experiences into a communal discussion." (Blair and Fletcher, 2010: 25). Whilst Blair and Fletcher do not write about embodiment specifically, it is clear that the combination of the verbal and nonverbal was fundamental to addressing communal dialogue in a highly emotive context. This example highlights the political nature of much image theatre work, seeking to shift deep-seated patterns of communication, and whilst the researchers do describe specific methods that they use (such as a way of using image theatre they call 'Museum'), the primary focus of their writing is on the effects of the work. This raises questions about how we might understand showing, speaking and silence as key aspects of an embodied method and how then such a method might be suited to this kind of political work.

Another innovative approach to reporting research which touches on image theatre and embodiment, albeit briefly, is "Postcards from the Edge (of Empire)" by Adjin-Tettey et al (2008). In this article, drawing on feminist and post-colonial methodologies, the eight authors, all working in diverse areas of legal studies in a Faculty of Law in Canada, document their research journey using postcards, meeting minutes, email correspondence and other forms to explore the tensions between ideas of embodiment that connect their diverse work and the rigidity of academic convention. From among their documents, most useful to focus on in terms of my own research is a memo by one of the group members (Maureen Maloney) to the rest of the collective about image theatre, which she also sometimes calls 'Tableau Drama' (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 19), a journal entry by Rebecca Johnson (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 22) and a journal entry by Hester Lessard (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 25). In the memo, Maloney outlines the background to Augusto Boal and Theatre of the Oppressed for her research colleagues and describes an image theatre workshop that she and fellow group member, Hester, attended. She writes of the creating and using of embodied images as being a means of

helping to elicit their emotions around certain areas of discussion, and frames it in terms of the dialogic discourse of feminist theory seeking, in their context of legal academic work, to focus on women's oppression by societal structures often either supported or ignored by law (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 19). What is interesting about this article, is that none of the authors are drama practitioners or experienced in using image theatre; rather, based on the experience of two group members taking part in an image theatre workshop as participants, they have identified the form as one to work with to challenge dominant legal academic frameworks in their writing and research. This suggests the cross and interdisciplinary potential of the method as a way of working with complex emotions.

Later in the article, the reproduction of a page from Rebecca Johnson's journal includes a Valentine's card drawn by her four-year-old son with stick figure drawings. Johnson writes:

> The drawing reminds me that bodies touch in all sorts of complicated boundary breaching ways, and that even pictures about bodies in contact miss something about the visceral experience of bodies actually in contact. Certainly, the hands-on experience of touch that is so much part of child-raising does *not* generally extend to my life in academe…./ It is easy to sit in a room with friends and talk with passion about the importance of embodiment, and the need to subvert mind/body dualisms. It is quite a different thing to spend two hours in a room, being asked to put our bodies into play, our bodies into contact. Lina gives us a series of exercises, designed to ease us into body tableau work. In spite of the fact that these women are my trusted friends, I feel self-conscious, awkward, uncomfortable. I feel a gap between brain and body signals. My brain is simply unable to 'think' my body out of its sense of reluctance and risk. But I stay with the exercises, and as I do, the touching begins to feel less fraught. I begin to feel and see some things differently; the touching teaches me things that the talking does not. This seems to be the case for the other women as well.
>
> (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 22)

Working with image theatre at a Canadian Law and Society Association (CLSA) conference, the authors sought to challenge academic conventions and "illuminate the linkages, not only between law and abstract notions of 'the social', but between law and an insistently embodied conception of the social" (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 25). Writing in her journal, Hester Lessard suggests that foregrounding their bodies rather than texts, they hoped to "render more visible the embodied dimension of knowledge

and, more specifically, of academic practices" (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 25). Lessard points out that despite the presence of academics "live" and "in person", conferences are centred on texts, including the configurations of space for the presentations of papers. The use of image theatre thus became a way of disrupting this in a way that shifted power relations and interactions within that setting. In a different journal entry, Maneesha Deckha writes that

> We centred the body as a terrain for the intricate processes of thought, emotion, and interpretation in order to create, disrupt and communicate knowledge. Our performance imparted integrity to theoretical projects invested in undoing Cartesian binaries and the legal stigmatization of the body, and in particular, certain bodies as legitimate sites of knowledge-making…./ In this and other ways our performance may be seen as subversive.
>
> (Adjin-Tettey et al, 2008: 32).

This gives useful insight into thinking about knowledge and cognition as they exist or emerge beyond text or spoken word, and hints at ways of understanding embodiment in image theatre as a form of subversion of dominant modes of professional practice.

The pieces discussed so far all share a focus on the political potential of image theatre as a way of working in complex political situations and as a way of enabling exploration of aspects of power and emotions that are difficult to put into words. They reference embodiment as key to the approach, and at moments point to specific aspects of the method that can be linked to its political productivity, but they don't offer a conceptualisation of embodiment that fully explains the workings of the method.

One article which stands out in exploring image theatre more critically, and that engages with ideas of embodiment, is David Grant's "Feeling for meaning: the making and understanding of Image Theatre" (2017). Grant points out that in most academic writing about Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal's approach, of which image theatre is a part), image theatre is seen "simply as a means to the end of the more developed techniques such as Forum Theatre or the Rainbow of Desire" (Grant, 2017: 186). Grant's paper begins to address the gap in theatre scholarship in conceptualising image theatre. Referring to his use of image theatre with students in Belfast and Sarajevo, Grant explores the approach as "a shared embodied process in which the distinctions between meaning and feeling, and between the observer and the observed become

blurred" (Grant, 2017: 200). Grant draws on emerging ideas in cognitive science, and on the notion of kinaesthetic empathy, to argue that in image theatre, participants making images, manifest

> intuitive 'unknown knowns' as embodied knowledge through stage images. Those viewing the images can engage not only intellectually and semiotically through the reading of signs but also intuitively and phenomenologically through a process of kinaesthetic empathy. (Grant, 2017: 200).

'Unknown knowns' refers to those things we know, but don't know we know.[7] For Grant, this refers to the potential of image theatre to enable the realisation of meanings beyond those intended by the image-makers. He suggests that "the most remarkable aspect of my own Image Theatre practice has been the many occasions on which the makers of stage images acknowledge the validity (or at least the possibility) of the unexpected meanings others see in them" (Grant, 2017: 193). In his examples, students were asked to create an image of their own city. He writes that the stated intention of the Sarajevo students was to create an image of the Winter Olympics, and that of the Belfast students was to create an image of the Titanic. When other members of the group were invited to interpret the images,

> several reported seeing a sniper in the foreground of the first image; and in the second image, hints of an unresolved peace process… Once presented with these alternative readings, most of the originators of each image were content to accept this as a legitimate parallel reading. What excites me most about the propensity of Image Theatre to generate thought-provoking alternative interpretations to those consciously intended by their creators is the possibility that these alternatives arise from a subliminal embodied thought process in their creators (Grant, 2017: 194).

It is this idea of 'unknown knowns' that is 'embodied knowledge' for Grant.

In considering the above examples, it is clear that the limited number of articles on image theatre tend to draw on the terminology or discourse of embodiment as a way of documenting projects and activities. It is evident that image theatre is applied for a wide variety of purposes and with a range of intentions, and that it is work with the potential

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[7] This has resonances with the work of Dorothy Heathcote in the field of Drama in Education who talks about "bringing out what children know but don't yet know they know" (see, for example, B.J. Wagner (1976/1999), *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium*¸ Washington DC: National Education Association).

to have real impact in the contexts within which it is applied. Notions of how we might understand embodiment in these examples are generally hinted at, or in some instances, begin to emerge. But how are we to understand in greater depth what it is *about* image theatre as an embodied process that enables a distinctive engagement with meaning and experience? In answering this question, the rest of this chapter offers a review of the literature on embodiment as a basis for my own research.

2.2. The Different Questions that Different Disciplines Ask About Embodiment and the Methods That They Use to Answer Them

In positioning my own work, identifying gaps in research, and determining what is most useful to my own investigations, this section begins by highlighting the ways that different fields – sociology, science and the arts - ask different questions about embodiment and use different methods to answer them. I then move on to addressing three broad overarching ideas that cross all of these fields. I have selected to focus on sociology, cognitive science and arts-based methods as broad areas of research and practice because these are dominant areas in the literature on embodiment. These questions, dominant methods, and gaps are summarised in the following table (Table 1):

	Key questions/ concerns	Dominant methods used	Usefulness for my research	Gaps that my research seeks to address
Sociology	a) In what ways does a focus on embodied interaction in various social contexts (classrooms, family homes, work-places and so on) elucidate our understanding of social processes and practices? b) How do notions of embodiment extend and enrich our understanding of 'identity' – personal, professional, individual and group? c) How might a focus on the body (and ideas of embodiment) inform our understandings of power relationships within institutions and organisations, and by extension, how might this impact on conceptualisations of the body? d) How do notions of embodiment help us to analyse and understand subjective and inter-subjective experience more fully?	- Observation - Discourse analysis - Multimodal analysis - Visual Methods - Questionnaires - Interviews and focus groups - Case studies	- Helps to elucidate the broader social significance of utilising an embodied, participatory method in the way that I do. - In analysing more than the images themselves, helps to analyse the wider workshop interaction. - Useful for helping to analyse institutional working relationships and power structures. - Enriches understanding of personal and professional, and individual and group identities.	- Tends not to analyse or theorise 'deliberate' or 'intentional' embodiment such as using the body for creative expression. - Limited research on 'live' image work in visual research methods. - Does not tend to examine embodiment specifically in relation to professional development and HE leadership.
Cognitive Science	a) What happens in the brain when people are interacting with each other and/or with their surroundings? b) Given that we are embodied beings, how does consciousness and thought happen? How do we become conscious of ourselves and the world? How do we think? c) How do human beings empathise, and what is the role of mirror neurons in empathy? d) What is the place of emotion, feeling and perception in embodied cognition?	- Image scanning techniques - Patient and/or participant observation - Task analyses - Case studies	- Helps to elucidate notions of thought, feeling and perception which is partly what my participatory method seeks to gauge. - The concern of embodied cognition research with affect theory offers useful insights in considering the opportunity my method gives for participants to express emotion and feeling. - Offers insights into ideas of empathy which, I argue, impacts on professional development.	- Although methods are not directly applicable, my research sheds light on the ways that thoughts, feelings and perceptions emerge and are articulated through a physical interactive process.
Arts-Based Research	a) How might expression through the body (dancing, acting, painting, performing music) extend our knowledge and experience? b) How does the application of arts practices in different social contexts enable participation and empowerment? c) In what ways do notions of embodiment enrich our understanding of human relationships in arts experiences? d) In what ways is embodiment impacted upon by *aesthetic* considerations in arts practice?	- Art-making/Arts practice - Practice as Research - 'Theatre laboratory' experimentation - Applied arts case studies - Art-Science collaboration	- Helps to address questions of 'intentional' embodiment. - My own method is rooted in an arts-based approach, drawing on my own experience in arts practice. - Offers insights into collaborative arts processes. - Elucidates epistemological understandings of arts, including the body as 'a way of knowing'.	- Can be limited in drawing out broader sociological perspectives. - Very limited concern with HE (other than in terms of arts education) - Tends not to be applied to professional development in education.

Table 1: Approaches to embodiment research

As highlighted in the table, **sociological** perspectives on embodiment tend to focus on 'everyday life' or embodiment in everyday situations and relationships, such as classroom interactions, family life or workplace activities (eg. Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Crossley, 2006; and Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron, 2014). In my own context, this would include the range of activities and relationships within the university or faculty. Such research appears to be primarily concerned with an interactionist approach, most often drawing on methods such as observation, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, multimodal analysis, discourse analysis, and visual research methods (examples include Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969; Foucault, 1972; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Pink, 2006; Jewitt, 2009; and Rose, 2012). As Nick Crossley argues, embodiment from a sociological perspective is about more than "individual bodies"; rather, the interaction between people in their environments "generates emergent social phenomena, such as norms, body techniques, roles, networks, power relations, social systems, social positions and institutions which are, by definition, irreducible to the particular individuals who embody them at any particular point in time, and which pre-date, 'constrain' and will outlive them." (Crossley, 2006: 4-5). Such approaches are particularly useful to my research in helping to analyse and pay attention to the institutional and policy context of the workshop interaction itself, and to understand its significance in broader socio-political terms. The relationship between individual academics, academic communities, the institution of the university that they work in, higher education policy and broader political positions is particularly pertinent in this light. In addition, understanding academic identities, both professional and personal, as they emerge in different ways in the workshops, can be more fully developed through sociological conceptions of embodiment. There are gaps in these conceptions of embodiment, however, including a lack of concern with 'intentional' embodiment, creative expression, performance arts, or interactions beyond the everyday.

In contrast **embodied cognition** research tends to be rooted in scientific experimentation, most often carried out by neuroscientists, and sometimes utilising methods such as image scanning techniques and patient observation (for example, Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991 and 2017; Damasio, 1999; Kirsch, 2008; Gallese and Sinigaglia, 2011; and Shapiro, 2017). In essence, contemporary cognitive science represents a shift from seeing cognition in terms of *abstract mental processing*, to

understanding cognition as *embodied, situated and interactional*, in other words what takes place between people as embodied beings, and between people and their environment, a view not dissimilar to sociological perspectives on embodiment discussed above. Batson and Wilson point out that representing more than three generations of research within cognitive science, "embodied cognition postulates that thinking arises from – and is shaped by – experience – the enacting body within its context" (Batson and Wilson, 2014: xvi). In *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition,* Robbins and Aydede argue that:

> First, cognition depends not just on the brain but also on the body (the embodiment thesis). Second, cognitive activity routinely exploits structure in the natural and social environments (the embedding thesis). Third, the boundaries of cognition extend beyond the boundaries of individual organisms (the extension thesis). [...] Without the cooperation of the body, there can be no sensory inputs from the environment and no motor inputs from the agent – hence, no sensing or acting. And without sensing and acting to ground it, thought is empty.
>
> (Robbins and Aydede, 2009: 3-4).

I would argue that the significance of this for my own research is that despite the fact that cognitive science research tends to be asking very different questions to the ones that I am asking, there are nonetheless related areas of concern, particularly regarding thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Given that my research is partly concerned with gauging the thoughts, perceptions, and feelings of participants, or allowing an articulation of these to emerge through the image theatre process, research that investigates this potentially helps to elucidate the specific participatory and interactive method that I am using. In addition, the concern of embodied cognition with both affect and empathy has potential to enrich the analysis of the workshop process.

By contrast again, **arts-based** research tends to be interested in embodiment in terms of the creation of arts work, the application of arts in different social or community contexts, and the ways in which expression through the body (dancing, acting, painting, performing music) can be understood as a 'way of knowing' in or about the world, that is in epistemological terms. Dominant methods used for exploring embodiment in arts-based approaches include: art-making which is often rooted in a notion of reflective practice; Practice-as-Research (PAR), 'arts laboratory' experimentation, arts-science

collaboration, and applied arts case studies. Performance-based research offers a variety of lenses through which to consider the embodied experience, for example, Performance Studies is concerned with the entire spectrum of 'performativity' in society (see, for example, Striff, 2002; Schechner, 2013; Biall and Brady, 2015); Applied Drama helps to understand participation through body-centred activities with participants in various community settings (Boal, 2002 ; Saxton and Prendegast, 2013; Nicholson, 2014; Freebody et al, 2018); Theatre studies more broadly offers insight into the body as a signifier, including character and identity (Murray and Keefe, 2007; Conroy, 2009; Leach, 2013); and Dance helps to understand the complexity of physical relationships between performers, and between performers and audience, more fully (Barbour, 2013; Sheets-Johnstone, 2015; Giersdorf, 2019). Perhaps what is common across this diverse array of scholarship is the view that the body is not simply a vehicle for expressing, miming, imitating or playing; rather the body is *a way of knowing*, it opens up the idea of what knowledge is and how we acquire and express it.

My own previous research has primarily been rooted in arts-based practice, so there is clearly significance for me in these approaches, specifically in drawing on my own experience as an arts practitioner and workshop facilitator, and working with a collaborative approach to arts-making. There are limitations, however, in utilising a narrowly arts-focused conception of embodiment, in particular in relation to professional development (beyond as an arts practitioner) and in terms of the broader sociological issues to do with the institutional context.

Whilst there are clearly significant differences in conceptualising embodiment from different disciplinary perspectives, as well as some areas overlap, there are three key overarching ideas that emerge as significant in developing my own embodied method.

2.3. Overarching Ideas: Perception, Dynamism and Relationship

Three key ideas that can help us to conceptualise embodiment with more specificity are:

1) the view that the body is central to perception, experience and meaning, developed significantly in the writing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty who argues

that the lived experience of the 'body-subject' is the existential basis of our being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962);

2) the notion that embodiment is always emergent and changing, suggesting a dynamism or fluidity in personal and professional identity; and

3) the argument that consciousness, thinking, feeling and perception is not simply what happens *within* people, but *between* people (as embodied beings), and between people and their environments.

Each of these has a bearing on the ways we might try to understand and justify claims about embodied methods such as image theatre, i.e. the kinds of questions that were raised in the first section of this chapter, looking at the research in applied theatre. Firstly, in thinking about the significance of Merleau-Ponty's writing, Williams and Bendelow point out that "...[P]erception, for Merleau-Ponty, is first and foremost an embodied experience. Even our 'higher' perceptual experiences cannot escape our primordial embodiment. The theory of the body, in other words, is always 'already a theory of perception'" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 52). As Bresler explains it, for Merleau-Ponty, the body "is not an 'object' in the objective sense to be identified through its spatial properties and its location; neither is the body limited to cause and effect descriptions. Rather, the body is the subject of action.... Thus, the subject is a perceiving body, situated in time, and immersed in the living world" (Bresler, 2004: 18-19).

The perceiving mind, in other words, is an 'incarnate body':

> we are in the world through our body, and... we perceive that
> world within our body... by thus remaking contact with the
> body and with the world, we... also... rediscover ourself, since,
> perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self
> and, as it were, the subject of perception.
> (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 206).

It can perhaps be argued that the embodied method utilised in the image theatre workshops encourages this shift from an objective view of the self as an academic to a more subjective, and often more multi-dimensional positioning. However, what is needed is evidence that enables us to make the link between the embodied activity and the shift to a more open positioning. So one key question this thesis addresses is: How does image theatre *as an embodied method* encourage an articulation and diversity of

perception through physical interaction and collaboration, giving value to personal experience and perspective?

Significantly, as Williams and Bendelow point out, it follows from Merleau-Ponty's view that perception is 'perspectival' – one always observes from somewhere (above, below, left, right, close or at a distance), never from nowhere (i.e. a 'God's eye view'):

> The perspectival nature of perception, in other words, is a primary expression of our embodiment, involving as it does the articulation of both body and world through a 'spontaneous synthesis' of our senses.... It is also, as Merleau-Ponty stresses, rooted in behaviour (i.e. seeing, looking, touching) as a *practical* relationship to and involvement in the world. This, in turn, suggests that perception is an *active* process, one involving a sentient body-subject who points 'outwards' and is directed towards a common world of learnt practical skills and existential understandings.
> (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 52-53; emphasis theirs).

Importantly, this active process means that subject positions constantly change, can be ambiguous and are always in flux, as can be seen in the range of interpretive possibilities that emerge in the image-making workshops.

This leads to the second overarching idea that embodiment is dynamic and emergent. In this regard, it is useful to note Nathan Stern's distinction between "a semiotic and static reading of the body" on the one hand, and "an emergent and relational embodiment" on the other (Stern, 2013: 12):

> between a language- and image-based view of the body as an independent external thing, and an embodiment that is continuously constituted through its ongoing relations. This distinction is heuristic, rather than absolute; neither 'body' can exist without the other. The conception of a continuous embodiment, however, allows us to rethink bodies as formed through how we move in, and relate to, our surroundings. Embodiment, I contend, is not a *pre-formed* thing, but incipient and *per-formed*. (Stern, 2013: 12; italics his).

The view of embodiment as relational and shifting is significant in the context of image theatre; working with groups in a process that is active, interactive and dynamic suggests the potential for participants to investigate, express and reflect on their shared and individual senses of self and place in ways that not only reflect on and express

various subjectivities, but which also give participants the opportunity to 'experiment' with different subject-positions. Embodiment, in this sense, is literally and continuously 'performed', both through intentional expression (image-making) and through constantly shifting physical relationships in the workshop process.

The third overarching idea, that consciousness, thinking, feeling and perception is not simply what happens within people, but *between* people, and between people and their environments, fundamentally underpins theories and practices across sociology, embodied cognition and arts-based research. As will be shown in the next chapter on Methodology, part of the aim of the image theatre workshops is to create spaces, or open up spaces, *between* the range of experiences and ideas in the room. It is in those 'in-between' spaces that meanings and points-of-view can be negotiated, articulated, mulled over, contested, and agreed upon.

From a phenomenological perspective, these overarching ideas are linked not only to the centrality of subjective experience, but to the idea of *intersubjectivity*. For Moran and Mooney, a fundamental characteristic of phenomenology has been its focus on *meaning,* arguing that it has paid particular attention to:

> the *living experience of meaning*, or intending to mean
> (Ricoeur's *vouloir-dire*), and hence to the peculiar nature of the
> human encounter with the 'surrounding world' (*Umwelt*) and
> the kind of objectivities normally encountered there. Indeed,
> phenomenology was the first movement to focus on the
> specific conditions of human embeddedness in an environment,
> and to make visible the phenomenon of the environment itself.
>   (Moran and Mooney, 2002: 5; emphasis theirs).

Drawing on Husserl, Moran and Mooney point out that such an approach pays attention to evidence in terms of the way that objects and situations are *experienced* by subjects (Moran and Mooney, 2002: 1-2). Husserl writes of the study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from a first-person point of view (Husserl, 1931). Subjective experience is thus given value. Stated another way, as Williams and Bendelow point out, phenomenology is the study of consciousness through *reflection on experience*, and this is rooted in the understanding that meaning resides in the body, and the body resides in the world (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 51). The idea of *intersubjectivity* in relation to the lived body stresses that meaning, perception and

emotion happen *between* people rather than exclusively within individuals (Merleau-Ponty, 1963; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). Deleuze and Guattari have argued that intersubjectivity does not only relate to thinking and consciousness, but very directly to feeling and emotion, suggesting that affects are independent of the person, occurring between people, rather than discretely within the individual (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: xvi; also see Gregg and Seigworth, 2010).

In encouraging participants to 'play out' or 'perform' their individual and collective views, thoughts and perceptions physically, and to respond and re-engage with them, image theatre offers opportunities for reflection on experience in a way that is not tied only to spoken or written language, though spoken language is certainly a part of the process.

The different disciplinary perspectives on embodiment, and the three key ideas that emerge from them, suggest questions for my research which I seek to address in this study, namely: is it possible to develop an analysis of image theatre workshops that identifies the effects of embodied elements of the method? And, in what ways do specific concepts related to embodiment (e.g. situatedness, subjectivity, dynamism, relationality) contribute to meaning making in image theatre workshops?

2.4. The Contributions of Drama and Dance to Conceptualisations of Embodiment and the Development of the Workshops

In the participatory drama-based workshops we might initially think practically of embodiment in these specific ways:

- The ways that participants use their bodies to make images – literally an embodying of their ideas. We might think of these as 'embodied representations' which can also be altered and re-presented.
- The general interaction of participants during the workshop. This could include taking part in warm-up activities and other exercises, participating in small group discussions and generally relating to other individuals and the group as a whole.
- The different kinds of identities and/or roles that individuals are aware of or that might emerge through the workshop. For example, participants may initially feel

that they are in the room as part of a group of academics; but other senses of self which come to the fore might include, for example, course leader, lecturer, teacher, parent, woman, writer, artist, old, experienced, early-career, mid-career, single, hearing-impaired and so on. These multiple experiences of identity have the potential to emerge through the kinds of physical interaction that the embodied workshop method involves.

Something that becomes clear in reviewing the literature, and in light of the points above, is what we might call the *paradox* of embodiment: on one hand everything we do is embodied – in the context of work in higher education, for example, this might include attending a meeting, sitting in a lecture, participating in a seminar, or browsing in the library. We cannot escape the fact that we are in bodies (or *are* bodies). On the other hand, from experience, people mostly carry out these day to day activities with a limited, if varied, awareness of their embodiment. Image theatre aims to make participants more conscious of their embodied experiences, and in this approach we are concerned with embodiment as the *intentional* use of the body to give shape to ideas and thoughts, to express, to articulate and to perform.

Let us consider firstly, this idea of intentionality, performance and embodiment in terms of arts practice. Writing as an educationalist, Liora Bresler points out that the arts, unlike most other academic areas, "are an arena in which the body is central to the process of inquiry and constitutes a mode of knowing. This makes dance, drama, music and visual arts education a particularly rich place to explore what embodiment means for education researchers and practitioners" (Bresler, 2004: 9). Further, as Williams and Bendelow have argued, "art, in its manifold forms, is a central medium of communication regarding body/society relationships, including issues of power, surveillance and control within the broader sociocultural order" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 8). They suggest that in addition to expressing the tensions and dilemmas between 'experience' and '(re)presentation', 'aestheticism' and 'eroticism', 'resistance' and 'control', art, alongside "other *praxical* modes of embodied expression" such as dance:

> provides a powerful 'visual narrative' of the embodied biographies of
> artists themselves, expressing fundamental features of the human

condition. In doing so, the boundaries between art and social theory, reproduction and resistance, are (temporarily) destabilised, if not (permanently) effaced. (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 8).

Williams and Bendelow's view is significant to understanding embodiment in my own workshops, specifically the expressing of tensions and dilemmas, the engaging of participant biographies (life experiences/stories), and the destabilising of boundaries between art and social theory. In terms of my own research, this suggests the need for a research method which is able to identify, value and work constructively and creatively between such tensions and dilemmas, to accommodate multiple stories and personal positionings of participants, and to productively criss-cross the borders between broader theoretical perspectives and the participatory workshop activities, thus elucidating the specific effects of embodiment within the work.

It is useful to consider notions of embodiment in theatre and dance to help with further understanding its conceptualisation in terms of the workshops. In theatre, for example, when an actor 'embodies a character' (a phrase that is often used), this does not suggest that they simply adorn the body with a costume and put on a different voice – much more fundamentally, it suggests *understanding* that character, coming to terms with the complexities of their relationships and broader social context . For example, the influential Stanislavski system of acting is based on a method of physical actions as a way of drawing on given circumstances and emotion memory and of deepening understanding of character psychology (Stanislavski, 2013). The director Katie Mitchell works with extremely detailed analysis of context, society and character biography to help actors realise their characters (Mitchell, 2009). At another level though, there is concern with the body as symbol, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche. Performers use the body symbolically and metaphorically to express and communicate a range of ideas and perspectives. For example, actors performing 17th century Salem witch trials in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* comment on mid-20th century McCarthyism through their physical, visual and vocal representations of characters; an actor with some tin foil on his head in the shape of a crown is understood to be a king; an actor with her fist raised signifies the might of mass resistance, and so on. This is partly of course an element of the semiotic conventions of theatre, but more significantly, I would argue, it highlights a complex relationship between representation and sense of self, between

moving-thinking-feeling and expressing. Within this relationship, collaboration and interaction is fundamental to performance, even for a solo theatre actor. Performance-making, performing itself, and the reception of performance (audience) is always interactive to a greater or lesser degree, and always relies, at least partly, on physical, embodied relationships.

The burgeoning field of dance studies offers a different, but very useful, perspective on embodiment, particularly notions of embodied ontology: knowing and thinking through the body, and a sense of the world based on being physically, sensorially, in it. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone introduces her book, *The Primacy of Movement*, by suggesting that it is partly about how "movement is at the root of our sense of agency and how it is the generative source of our notions of space and time. It is about how self-movement structures knowledge of the world – how moving is a way of knowing and how thinking in movement is foundational to the lives of animate forms." (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999: xv). Batson and Wilson argue that:

> embodiment affords the capacity and capability to intuit, infer, empathise, mimic and be at one with others. Embodiment is not *about* the body, but rather about the generative power of movement. From the perspective of neuroscience, intention is an 'action ontology' (Metzinger and Gallese, 2003: 549), the way ideas translate into action. This is a pivotal concept in dance. To be *em*-bodied is to be empowered to act… Becoming more *intentionally* embodied (as dancers do) facilitates artistic communication by rendering the dancing body more transparent.
> (Batson and Wilson, 2014: 75-76; emphasis theirs).

Image theatre activities should also be understood in terms of this "generative power" of movement – they are very directly about translating ideas into action. In this sense, it is not just about representing ideas, but about conceptualising and comprehending through the body. The intentionality of embodiment in this activity has the potential to facilitate communication in a way that gives agency to participants. As dance researcher and choreographer, Karen Barbour states it, it is "through rigorous and reflective practice that theoretical knowledge and lived experiences can be embodied, made meaningful, and thus contribute to the generation of new understandings." (Barbour, 2011: 86). Significantly, Barbour points out that 'embodiment' is different from 'body' experience because it is not simply about the physical body, but encompasses "an

individual person's biological (somatic), intellectual, emotional, social, gendered, artistic and spiritual experience, within their cultural, historical and geographical location.... Embodiment therefore indicates a holistic experiencing individual" (Barbour, 2011: 88).

In addition, it is worth noting Rouhiainen and Hämäläinen's view that the significance of embodiment in dance is not just about ways of thinking, but about the *collaborative process* that participants are involved in. Their study (2013), for example, explores the significance that feelings and emotions can have in a collaborative dance-making process. They show how "creating collaboratively can be an emotionally and personally deeply meaningful process – involving the construction of subjectivities, relationships, ideas and outcomes." (Rouhiainen and Hämäläinen, 2013: 1). Rouhiainen and Hämäläinen's research thus offers a very useful perspective on embodiment for thinking about applying the method within an academic professional context, and its contrast with the objectivity usually associated with academic work.

There are thus further research questions that emerge from this literature: how does embodied intentionality manifest in image theatre? How do the embodied aspects of image theatre affect the ways in which participants perform their identities? In what ways does engagement in image theatre workshops in an academic context produce distinctive emotional and personal meanings? It is these questions that my investigation partly seeks to address.

2.5. Conclusion: Bringing conceptions of embodiment into applied theatre studies of image theatre

This chapter has argued that existing scholarship in applied theatre asks questions about the applications of image theatre in a wide variety of contexts, and about the potential for this approach to make visible political and interpersonal structures and relationships. It also asks questions about how image theatre might be used to counter, subvert or re-imagine dominant modes of working, institutional norms and approaches to learning. Questions about identity are also evident, particularly in terms of the ways that image theatre might facilitate the exploration of multiple intersecting identities of participants.

These studies demonstrate that image theatre is used in a variety of different settings - in the examples considered ranging from participating in a legal studies conference, to work with students on understanding democracy, to business development, to facilitating communication in Rwanda, to the training of nurses – with a focus predominantly on the effects or outcomes of the work. In particular, the work demonstrates the potential of image theatre to make power and status in different contexts visible, what Taylor and Taylor call "the micro-dynamics of power" (Taylor and Taylor, 2017:1). The studies also demonstrate the opportunities that image theatre offers for facilitating a collective exploration of alternative perspectives, for modifying habitual or culturally ingrained communication patterns, and for developing new participatory and reflective pedagogical approaches. However, this scholarship leaves questions about *how* specifically image theatre functions as an embodied activity. Whilst image theatre is consistently described as an embodied approach, questions of how embodiment is understood or in what ways an understanding of embodiment elucidates the distinctiveness of this activity generally remain unexplored.

Theorisations of embodiment give us the resources to begin to think about these questions, particularly through engaging with concepts of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and situatedness, and with ideas of embodiment as dynamic, emergent and relational. Drawing on different disciplinary perspectives on embodiment – in this case sociology, cognitive science and arts-based research – has offered the possibility for identifying key common ideas as well as distinctive insights into how embodiment might be understood and thus applied in this study.

Further helpful conceptualisations of embodiment drawn from studies in theatre, dance and performance help us to formulate questions about the performance of identity and intentionality. These perspectives also highlight epistemological perspectives in terms of knowing and thinking through the body.

Bringing these works together enables me to formulate the key questions to be addressed in my research, namely: How can we analyse image theatre in a way that identifies and illuminates the effects of the embodied elements? How might we understand more explicitly how image theatre functions as an embodied activity? And

in what ways is meaning-making in image theatre impacted on by specific concepts of embodiment discussed above? Building on these cross-disciplinary conceptualisations of embodiment, the next chapter discusses the development of the specific methodology for my research.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In answering the questions posed at the end of Chapter 2, this chapter outlines the development and application of a methodology for generating material (data) through the image theatre workshops, and for analysing it in a way that elucidates the effects of embodied elements and processes. In so doing, it focuses on the image theatre process itself, and the methods used for collating, archiving and analysing the material that was generated.

3.1. Research Design

The research design for this project has comprised two phases: Phase A included a series of methods for engaging with participants, including focus groups, small group interactive image theatre workshops, and individual interviews; Phase B, the main focus of this thesis, has focused on developing the actual methods of analysis, with particular emphasis on the material emerging from the image theatre workshops.

The overall methodology for this research has been interpretative, seeking predominantly qualitative data. This methodological approach was determined directly by the fact that I was initially seeking insight into the thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences of colleagues, which necessitated the need for an approach through which I could capture a range of viewpoints and perspectives. I was also developing a method through which I could simultaneously fulfil my own leadership role in encouraging dialogue and interaction between colleagues as part of their own professional development. A subsequent shift of focus to understanding the embodied nature of image theatre more fully has continued to develop this methodology.

3.1.1. *Sampling*

Staff involved in this project were purposively sampled to ensure an appropriate range in terms of subject discipline, professional experience and gender. This particular purposive sample drew on two key groupings of people:

1.   Course Leaders: a selection of twelve colleagues from across the courses offered by the Faculty who have leadership responsibility for specific degree programmes. This number enabled me to cover a good range of the degrees offered in the faculty; and

2.   A selection of eight staff who do not have any leadership or management responsibility, and who teach across different subject areas within the faculty. Again, this number enabled me cover key subject areas from across all the Divisions.

This made a total of 20 staff drawn from across a range of subject areas and experience. See Appendix B for further detail of distribution of participants by gender, age, level of post and subject discipline.

3.1.2. Methods

Phase A: Interaction with Participants in Three Parts

Part 1: Preliminary Focus Groups

A preliminary focus group meeting was held with each of the two staff participant groups. The aims of this part were firstly, to give the participants a clearer sense of what this research project was about; and secondly, to identify some of the key issues and challenges about their work in the creative industries and higher education that could be probed and developed in Part 2. I audio recorded and transcribed discussion with the permission of respondents, and used this in planning the workshops, and for further analysis after the completion of Phase A.

Part 2: Image Theatre Workshops

A workshop was held separately with each of the two groups, and each workshop lasted three hours. This part aimed to tease out some of the more complex and nuanced issues and perspectives using image theatre as the main method. The integration and development of image work is highlighted in the detailed workshop stages below (pp.65-71). The workshops took place in an open studio that had enough space for participants to move around or to spread out to work in smaller

groups. Post-workshop notes and reflections were written by me straight after the workshops. The workshops were also recorded on video using a free-standing camera at the back of the room, so that the process could be analysed in greater detail.

Part 3: Follow-up Interviews

This part comprised four individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with two participants selected from each of the two groups. The participants were drawn from four different subject disciplines, two were men and two were women. The interviews took place four months after the workshops had taken place, and each lasted about 75 minutes. In addition to probing some of the issues that came out of the workshops further, the interviews were also a way of determining what specifically participants remembered of the image-making processes and of the discussion that had taken place about the images, and by extension, what their thinking or reflections had been in the four months since the workshops. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis.

Phase B: Developing Methods of Analysis

In piloting image theatre for my Institution Focused Study, I drew on two key research areas to develop an initial approach to analysis: visual research methods (for example Pink 2006, Mitchell 2011, and Rose 2012), and multimodality (for example Jewitt 2008 and 2016, Machin 2007, and Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001). A key part of that study was considering the implications of 'reading' images. As Marcus Banks points out:

> 'reading' to some extent implies that the 'message' being read lies
> within the visual image, that it is speaking to us and all we need to do
> is listen. On the contrary, it is human beings who speak to one another,
> literally and metaphorically through their social relations... When we
> read a photograph, a film or an art work, we are tuning in to
> conversations between people, including but not limited to the creator
> of the visual image and his or her audience"
>
> (Banks, 2001: 10).

As I argued in the IFS, these insights are important to understanding the value of image theatre as a methodology because they emphasise the idea that the process of interpreting the images in the workshop is not a straightforward exercise of identifying

fixed meaning, but that it is an active semiosis through which meaning is always to some extent fluid, negotiated, and collaboratively created. They remind us that in applying this methodology, it is those 'conversations between people', those dialogic spaces between the performer and the audience, the image-maker and the viewer, where we might uncover a range of perspectives and ideas. As Banks states it, "Reflexive epistemologies of visual research hold that the meaning of the image resides most significantly in the ways that the participants interpret those images, rather than as some inherent property of the images themselves" (Banks, 2001: 11).

A consideration of the idea of 'reading' as locating meaning in the activity of the reader rather than specifically in the text is useful in understanding this process of interpretation. Such an idea has a long history, including in literary theory and ethnography, where writers such as Rosenblatt (1938), Iser (1972, 1978), and Eagleton (1996) have challenged the idea of reading as the reception of an already-established meaning. In her seminal work, *Literature as Exploration* (1938), for example, Louise Rosenblatt argues that meaning is located in the interplay between text and reader, whilst Wolfgang Iser (1972), takes a phenomenological approach in writing of meaning as a dialogue between text and reader.

In terms of image theatre, we can use these insights from reading in literature to think about the reading of images and the dynamic process that interpretation involves. This is further explored by, for example, Franks (1996), Goodwin (2003) and Yandell (2008), who expand these ideas about reading through considering the body and the embodied. Writing about students in a drama classroom, Franks writes of the ways that texts are made up of and by the bodies of students who "draw from and combine the resources held within their bodies as individuals, and between them as a social beings" (Franks, 1996: 105). A further helpful perspective on this act of reading is found in John Yandell's "Embodied Readings: Exploring the Multimodal Social Semiotic Resources of the English Classroom" (2008). Yandell argues for a "theoretical synthesis of, as it were, old and new semiotics: to make sense of these English classrooms, we need to use both the multimodal lens of recent social semiotics and Bakhtinian perspectives on language and culture" (Yandell, 2008: 36). Pointing to the multimodal turn in social semiotic theory, and responding to the writing of Terry Eagleton, Yandell highlights one of the students' conceptions of role-play as one which views the body as

"a semiotic and heuristic resource…. With extraordinary economy, [the students] use a wide range of resources – language, gesture, movement, clothing – to inhabit and explore the roles and relationships that they create. These resources are both irreducibly physical and, at the same time, inescapably cultural. The students' meanings are made and mediated intertextually, in and through culture" (Yandell, 2008: 53-54). As was evident in moving from the IFS to the thesis, we can see a similar interplay in the analysis of images in the workshops where meaning was interpreted and made, whilst also situated within, and often critiquing, the culture and language of the university. Both Franks and Yandell point to the way the resources for such critique can be carried in the body, and my analysis attempts to trace very precisely the ways in which embodied elements contribute, as they suggest, to the meaning making process.

Thus, in developing the method of analysis for this thesis, attention has been paid to how the dialogic and interactive nature of the workshops, as part of the collaborative participatory approach, might shed light on the significance of embodiment within image theatre.

3.2. Developing the Research Method

The material that has been available to me to draw on for developing the method of analysis for this thesis includes:

- Audio recordings of two 90-minute focus group sessions (total 3 hours)
- Full typed transcripts of each of the focus group audio recordings
- Video recordings (with sound) of each of the two 3-hour long image theatre workshops (total 6 hours)
- Full typed transcripts of each image theatre workshop describing the video visually and transcribing comments and dialogue.
- Audio recordings of four 1 hour long individual interviews (total 4 hours)
- Full typed transcripts of each individual interview
- Flip chart paper plans created by groups during one activity in the workshop (lists and mind-maps)
- Open written feedback provided anonymously by each participant at the end of the workshops

Practically, developing a detailed method of analysis has meant: determining the most effective ways to work with the recordings and transcriptions, through for example developing appropriate coding mechanisms and descriptive rubrics; testing claims made for the method in my Institution Focused Study by going back to the data to substantiate initial findings; and applying more fully insights and perspectives gained from a critical engagement with the literature on embodiment.

This chapter will now elaborate more fully on the detail of two areas: firstly, the workshop method itself, and then on methods of analysis.

3.3. The Image Theatre Workshop Method

The set of tables below (pp.65-71) both describe and explain the steps of the image theatre workshop as carried out for this project. There are clearly different possibilities for running a workshop like this, and I have structured it in twelve steps. In brief summary these steps cover the following:

- Warm-up and ice-breaker activities, at the start of the workshop (Step 1) and then after the break (Steps 5-8 below);
- Small group sharing of ideas and mind-mapping in response to a given theme (Step 2);
- Work in small groups to prepare physical images in which participants use their bodies in frozen positions to express the ideas discussed (Step 3);
- Showing images to the other groups, responses to images by the other group members, interpreting the images, discussing them and 're-sculpting' them (step 4 - the key focus activity discussed in this thesis);
- Further image-making activities, including spontaneous image responses to words and themes given by the facilitator, both individually and in groups, and 'transformative' images which seek to use image work to explore possibilities for changes in work-place practices (steps 9-11);
- Discussion, reflection and feedback (step 12).

There are different choices to be made. For example, a facilitator would not have to do all the different image activities included here, or might choose to do different 'warm-

up' activities, but the ones described here record the process that I used and give an outline of the full scope of this type of workshop. It should be noted that the analysis for this thesis focuses on <u>steps 3 and 4</u> which is really at the core of the method. However, an outline of the full workshop is given below to understand more fully the context of this activity.
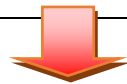
The Participatory Workshop Methodology

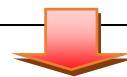| Step 1: Getting ready to participate physically: warm-up and ice-breaker		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
This warm-up activity is called "Fruit bowl": The participants and facilitator all sit in a circle on chairs. There is one less chair than the number of people, so one person stands in the middle of the circle. He or she makes a statement, for example: "Everyone who is wearing blue". In this instance, everyone who is wearing blue has to get up and swap seats with some else. The person in the middle will also try to get a seat. Whoever is left without a seat is in the middle and has to make another statement to get everyone to move. If the person in the middle calls 'fruit bowl', then everybody has to move. Progressively, the rules get harder, for example you can't move to a seat that is directly on either side of your chair. At the end of the activity, each participant in turn tells the group something they noticed about other people in the group based on when they moved or stayed in their seats.	This activity is a gentle introduction to the workshop, and is important in introducing participants to the work actively and physically. It is generally accompanied by laughter and enjoyment as participants get used to 'playing a game'. In this sense, it acts as an ice-breaker for participants who may not have worked closely together before. In addition, participants are also literally being 'warmed up' by dashing across the circle to get a chair. The fact that they have to move *physically* rather than just talk to each other is important in getting ready to using their bodies later in the workshop. As not all the participants know each other, the kinds of statements that are made in the middle can be used to find out things about each other, for example, "Anyone who can speak Welsh" or "Anyone who uses social media in their teaching".	

Step 2: Sharing ideas in small groups		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
Participants are divided into smaller groups, ensuring a mix of different disciplines in each group. Each group is given flip chart paper with the brief to discuss their view of 'The purpose and function of a contemporary university' and to note down their ideas. Groups work in different spaces so that they are not listening in on each other's conversations.	This is a way to record a range of views and perspectives collaboratively, but more importantly, it is laying the groundwork for the next step. At this point, participants do not know that they will be asked to create images; this is simply a mind-mapping discussion. Participants will not report back to the bigger group verbally as they may be more used to doing with this kind of activity.	

Step 3: Expressing ideas through physical images		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
After the groups have had time to discuss their ideas, each group is briefed to create two frozen images using their bodies, to express the ideas that they have written down. The 'rules' of image theatre are explained, for example: • all group members have to be part of the image; • the people in the image have to remain still like frozen statues - there can be no dialogue or movement; and • to bear in mind that a single image can represent a variety of different ideas and viewpoints, and can also be literal, metaphorical, abstract, symbolic. Again, this is done in separate spaces. Groups are encouraged to not just talk about what they are going to show, but to physically get up and create their images.	This step requires participants to 'translate' their ideas into physical images and to think about different ways of communicating their ideas without speech or movement. They are required to literally embody their ideas, using the body as a resource to render meaning. This is a key step in 'subverting' the usual ways that participants may interact with each other. In transforming their thoughts and ideas into images, it is no longer possible to simply stick to corporate jargon or stock phrases. Rather, participants need to find alternative ways of communicating multiple ideas. This step also requires a high level of collaboration and negotiation because they are creating a composite image.	

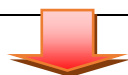| Step 4: Showing and interpreting the physical images		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
After each group has had time to plan their images they are brought together in one space. Some time is spent looking at, and discussing, each group's images one at a time. This activity is carefully facilitated to ensure that opportunity is given to everyone in the group to contribute and to uncover a range of possible interpretations. This is not a game of 'Charades' in which the audience have to guess what the group is showing them; rather it is a detailed exploration both of the overall image, and of smaller details within it. Once a full discussion has been had, the group who created and performed the image is given the opportunity to explain their intention and to respond to the interpretations that they heard given. This often leads to further discussion about issues or ideas that were encompassed in the image.	This is perhaps fundamental to the embodied method – the interpretation, re-interpretation, re-sculpting of physical images. The facilitator has an important role to play here: sometimes asking questions about specific aspects of the image; encouraging the idea of different interpretations; occasionally playing devil's advocate in suggesting what might be going on in the image; making sure everyone has a chance to express views so that discussion is not dominated by one or two people; and generally helping to build depth in the analysis of the images. Importantly, interpretation is not simply about determining a narrative or explaining what the image is about. For example, discussion might be about a specific person's gesture, or facial expression, or positioning within the group. Often, a comment about the image might lead to quite a detailed discussion about other general related issues amongst the participants, for example, the experience of women in academia.	

Step 5: A break		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
After the exercise above, which is a major part of the workshop, participants have a break before coming back to working with images in other ways. Participant may go get a cup of tea or some fresh air, but are asked not to go back to their offices to check e-mails or do other work.	Although this is a break in the workshop, it has been listed here as a separate step because it actually fulfils an important function in the overall workshop. As noted in my observation journals, participants have a chance to talk more informally to each other, to relax, and to reflect on, or share, their experiences so far.	

Step 6: Warming up and getting to know more about each other

Activity Description	Method / Purpose	
Participants walk around the room in any direction, constantly changing direction, interweaving in and out of each other, while music plays. When music stops, each person finds a partner and tells them two things about themselves: • "Tell your partner something they may not know about your professional practice"; and • "Tell you partner what you consider to be the most effective teaching approach you have". When the music starts again, participants carry on walking. When it stops, they find another partner to tell something else about their practice and teaching.	This activity acts both as a warm-up and as an opportunity for participants to get to know each other better. It is important to do another warm-up at this stage because participants have just returned from a break and this helps to get them focused again, and back into the workshop mode. It also has an important professional development role in allowing colleagues to share their practice with each other with potential for this to be followed up outside of the workshop itself.	

Step 7: Telling the group about each other

Activity Description	Method / Purpose	
The whole group stands or sits in a circle. Going around the circle, each person tells the rest of the group who they spoke to in Step 6 and what those people told them about their professional practice and the teaching approaches they consider effective.	Introducing somebody else in the group, and remembering things about each other, helps to build the group dynamic. Importantly, it allows participants to share best practice across different disciplines within the Faculty, with the potential for building further working relationships outside of the workshop.	

Step 8: Building physical collaboration: 'Fainting by Numbers'

Activity Description	Method / Purpose	
This is a game called 'Fainting by Numbers': Each person is given a number from 1-10 (or however many participants there are). Everyone walks around the room in different directions. When the facilitator calls out a number, that person has to throw their arms	This is a useful exercise in getting people to work physically, to develop trust, to make physical contact with each other, and it is usually accompanied by much laughter. Touch and physical contact develops the collaboration and prepares participants for	

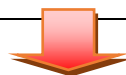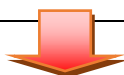|		
into the air and fall to the floor as if fainting. The rest of the group has to try and catch that person before they fall to the floor.	further image work. It also has the potential to build trust within the group as a whole.	

Step 9: Individual spontaneous images

Activity Description	Method / Purpose	
Participants walk around the room again in any direction. When the facilitator calls out a word, participants stop and strike a pose, like a statue. There is no time to think; they simply respond immediately. Everyone looks around to get a sense of how the others have responded. One person's image is chosen by the facilitator that everyone must copy and that is labelled 'Image 1'. They then start walking again. The facilitator calls out a second word, and again participants respond with an image. As before they get a sense of everyone's responses, a second image is chosen for everyone to copy, and that is labelled 'Image 2'. This continues for five different images. The words called out in my workshops were: "learning", "collaboration", "art", "academia", and "community". Once all five images have been determined, participants continue walking around the space. The facilitator calls out a number from 1-5, and everyone has to adopt the pose that was labelled with that number and then carry on walking. Numbers can be called out in any order, and sometimes in quick succession. This is followed by a brief discussion about the different responses people had to the words.	This activity aims to build depth in considering a range of ideas or concepts related broadly to the work that participants are engaged in in higher education. It opens the possibility for a variety of interpretations, some of which might be considered to be more 'obvious' or superficial and others more complex.

The activity requires participants to think very quickly about what words mean and how they might be represented. Having to respond immediately with no real time to think or plan is very useful in sharing ideas through free association. The prompt words chosen are not objects and so are not open to easy literal representation – rather they are ideas or concepts that can be expressed in a number of different ways.

The brief discussion afterwards helps to open further ideas and consider the different kinds of ways that people responded. This usually leads to some discussion about what these words mean in the context of participants' own working lives. |

 |

Step 10: Building spontaneous composite images		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
Everybody stands to one side of room facing the open space of room. The facilitator gives a phrase or word such as "teaching and learning in the creative industries", or "higher education skills", or "creativity" or "industry". Without discussion, one person enters the space and strikes a pose. One at a time each person joins the image and adds to it, creating one unplanned composite image. This is done a number of times using different statements in two groups, so that one group can see what the other group creates.	Here participants move from working individually to creating group images spontaneously. Because each image is being created one person at a time, each person is required to 'read' what the person before them has done in order to add to it meaningfully. They need to think about the relationships between different parts of the image, contributing both individual meaning and to the overall meaning of the image. This requires them to make very quick decisions about elements such as proximity, gesture, and facial expression. This acts as a further catalyst for discussion, as participants talk about their understanding of, and contribution to, the image, and various possibilities for expression are explored, usually in relation to their lived experience of work.	

Step 11: Transformative images		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
In groups of two, participants are asked to identify one aspect of the work of our Faculty that they think if we changed would change things for the better. Create two images: 1. As things are now; and 2. Things as you think they could be. The groups are given a few minutes to prepare. They then watch all the images that have been created. One pair's images are chosen by the group to work with. A discussion is had about how we move from image 1 to image 2, bearing in mind we don't have a magic wand. Participants are given opportunities to 're-sculpt' the images (change people's positions) in order to show different possibilities.	This activity is about exploring possibilities for change and transformation. It gives participants the opportunity to engage professionally as colleagues in considering specific working practices. Rather than a situation in which there is a culture of complaint and corridor whispers, this allows colleagues the opportunity to explore alternative possibilities. Because they are working through images, there is the potential for understanding the complexity of situations, for exploring a range of different solutions, and for 'rehearsing' various alternatives.	

Step 12: Discussion, reflection and feedback		
Activity Description	**Method / Purpose**	
In a circle, a brief discussion is held reflecting on the *themes* of the workshop. This is followed by participants finding a space in the room and writing down individual feedback on their *experience* of the workshop. These are anonymous open comments written on a blank piece of paper.	The discussion draws together the thematic focus of the workshop, and the written feedback gives individuals opportunity to comment on their own experience of the process of the workshop.	

3.4. Methods of Analysis

Reviewing the range of material that emerged from the initial analysis of the workshops activities led to the decision to focus more fully on image theatre as an embodied method through developing a detailed analysis of the ways that the participatory and interactive nature of the form enables a process in which meaning is not just produced, but is co-created and re-created dynamically and collaboratively.

For this specific study then, developing a method of analysis has focused primarily on steps 3 and 4 described above, that is the first image theatre activity. The data has been archived and analysed in various ways, initially using the following as primary approaches:

- Analysis of a variety of moments of interpretation;
- Analysis of modes and other elements evident in the images themselves, drawing on approaches to multimodality;
- Analysis of aspects of group interaction, including speech, sounds, silence and laughter;
- Analysis of the main areas of discussion that emerged;
- Analysis of participant feedback.

I have focused the study on four sets of images created by participants, two sets from each workshop group. Each set is made up of two images, so there is a total of 8 images being analysed (Appendices A and C). I have labelled these Images A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2, and D1, and D2. These form the basis of the analysis discussed in the next Chapter.

3.4.1. *Moments of Interpretation*

Identifying and analysing what I have termed 'moments of interpretation' was an important starting point for me. These 'moments of interpretation' refer to those points at which the images were being interpreted in different ways ranging from references to small physical details, to a consideration of symbol and metaphor, to broader sociological perspectives. In the images below, for example - and as referred to in Chapter 1 - it is possible to identify a variety of types of response and interpretation.

These include: metaphorical interpretations of specific physical elements or body parts (A's hand on B's shoulder seen as reassurance); identifications with/of bodies interpreted as positions within interpersonal relationships (A and C as both academics and parents of children at university); identifications of one element of an image being open to a range of alternative interpretations (is it a student or lecturer being depicted in the middle, or someone else for that matter?); and broader social questions (issues about gender and power raised in considering the placing of men and women in the image).
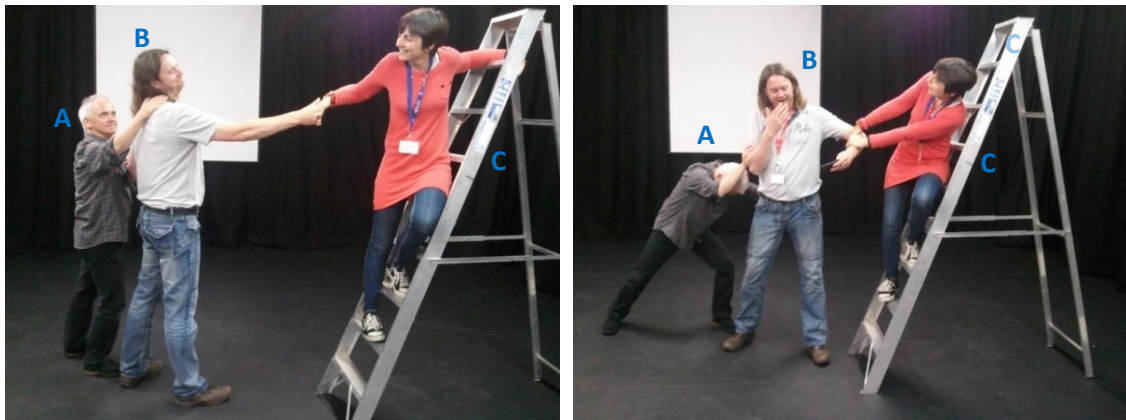
Figure 2: Images A1 (left) and A2 (right).

In developing and implementing the method, a study of the video and transcripts indicated that participants moved between these different types of response throughout the process. It was thus important to me to find ways of documenting and analysing the workshop material which could recognise and capture these varied responses. It also became clear that while one form of interpretation might lead to another – for example, a comment on a specific physical detail might lead to the identifying of a broader metaphor – the process was by no means linear or hierarchical. Rather, there was a constant shifting between these various interpretative moments. For this reason, I termed these 'moments' rather than 'levels' of interpretation. I also described this as a 'telescoping' in and out between these different moments in terms of what we might think of as more micro and macro analysis, which I have illustrated diagrammatically as follows:

Embodiment

Moments of Interpretation

Sociological views of embodiment; consciousness of power relationships expressed; various identity positions: professional and personal, institutional and domestic.

Interpreting multiple perspectives or meanings; substituting different interpretations; reading the body collaboratively; ambiguity in physical expression.

Identification with 'characters' in the image; empathising; relating to personal experience; affective response (often through recognising what a 'character' is feeling); interpreting interpersonal relationships.

Using the body expressively; physical positioning takes on a greater meaning; symbol, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche take expression and interpretation beyond the literal.

Physical action and interaction; specific modes; touch; bodies in relation to each other to express meaning and ideas; positioning in space; constituent parts making up a bigger whole.

Broader social and political issues

Alternative viewpoints/ interpretations

Personal positionings and relationships

Metaphor and symbol

Physical details

This is not a hierarchy of responses – rather, participants are 'telescoping' in and out across these various moments of interpretation throughout the process.

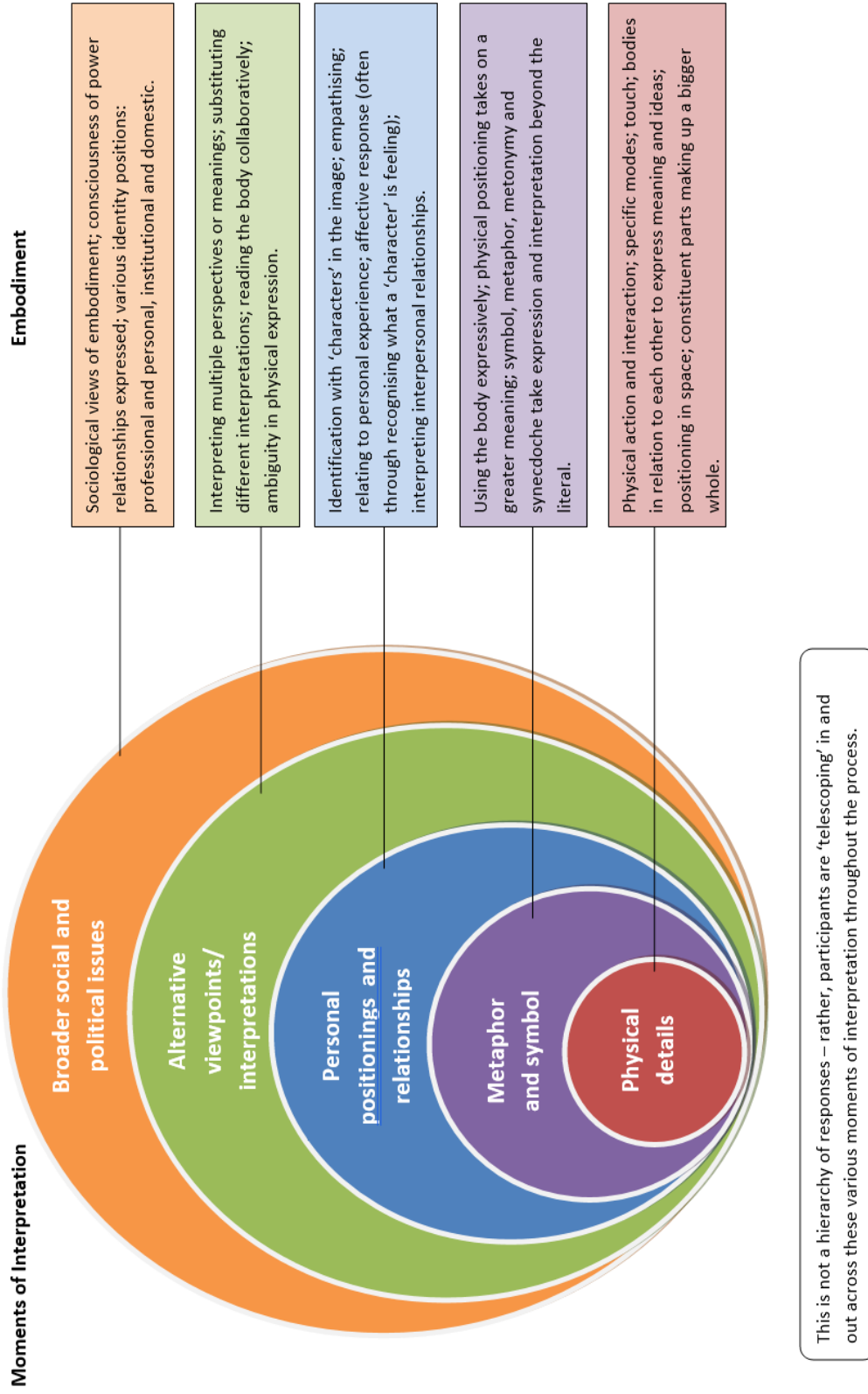**Figure 3:** Moments of Interpretation in the image theatre process

Whilst this proved to be a very useful way of thinking through some of the dynamics of the workshops and for starting to think about how image theatre as an embodied process might open up different kinds of interpretation and positioning, I ultimately moved away from using this directly in favour of utilising tables and diagrams to analyse the specific interactions in more detail. That said, this model did lead to a next step of creating a table of key words for each set of images to capture, at a basic level, observations, comments and interpretations offered by group members. This is an example of a table for Images A1 and A2:

Physical details	hand on shoulder; outstretched arms; holding hands; climbing the ladder; pushing; pulling; looking at each other; looking at phone; yawning; looking at floor.
Metaphor and Symbol	aspiration; guiding; encouraging; leading on to greater things; ivory tower; coercing; pastoral care; achievement.
Personal Positionings and Relationships	academic; parent.
Alternative Viewpoints/ Interpretations	student in the middle; lecturer in the middle. lecturer pushing; parent pushing.
Broader Social and Political Issues	aspiration-raising; student work (need to earn money); mass education; gender in academia (men and women academics); competing demands in terms of skills.

Table 2: Table for recording key words and ideas that emerged from participants at different moments of interpretation for Images A1 and A2

This, then, was one aspect of the methodology, identifying, naming and juxtaposing key moments in what is a dynamic and fluid process of interpretation in the workshop. However, each of the images could be further analysed with more precise description and in greater depth, and to do so, I drew on notions of multimodality to consider these further. The challenge was to capture both visual and verbal data, different kinds of interpretation (for example by viewers of the image, by the group producing the image, and as a process of collectively changing images), and to find a way of analysing these as embodied responses. This can partly be seen in the move from the still shots (which themselves capture moments from the video material) and verbatim transcriptions of discussion, as used in the examples below, to working with transcription in a further

two key ways: through diagrams as in Figure 4 below, and with tables, as in Table 3 below (and in Appendix C).

3.4.2. *Analysis of Modes and other Elements*

Drawing on approaches to multimodality as part of my method (without making this a specifically multimodal study) enabled me to make greater sense of how diverse semiotic modes and elements of meaning-making constitute meaningful interaction and discourse. Modes here are understood as meaning-making resources that people use in different contexts such as, but not limited to, the visual, spoken, written, and three-dimensional (Jewitt, 2009). In the context of embodied physical communication, these include such resources as gaze, gesture and physical position. I also chose to use the word 'elements' in addition to 'modes', because whilst some features of each image could be identified as modes, it became clear that others (such as proximity and feet positioning) were not modes as such but still important constituent parts of the images. Drawing on multimodality as part of a broader methodological approach allowed me to work with both modes and other elements in a productive way.

In drawing on multimodality it is useful to note Carey Jewitt's suggestion that "multimodality asserts that all modes are partial. Each contributes to the production of knowledge in distinct ways and therefore no one mode stands alone in the process of making meaning, rather each plays a discrete role in the whole: hence the need to attend to all" (Jewitt, 2008: 13).

In analysing modes, social semiotic visual analysis offers a useful approach to considering the workshop images in more detail. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt suggest that this

> provides a detailed and explicit method for analysing the meanings
> established by the syntactic relations between the people, places and
> things depicted in the images. These images are described as not only
> representational, but also interactional (images do things to or for the
> viewer), concerned with the modality or perceived truth value of
> images, and compositional (for example, positioning images and
> written text in certain ways).
>
> (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001: 3).

It should be noted that social semiotic visual analysis is different to what the authors describe as "semiotics and iconography" which is concerned much more with denotative and connotative meaning, but does not generally take account of interaction or affective and aesthetic response. The application of a social semiotic analysis is discussed by Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama in relation to a study exploring the visual representation of male heterosexuality in British sexual health materials (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 136). Whilst in this study they are referring to printed materials, there are very clear ways of understanding how this approach could be useful to image theatre. Following Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), Jewitt and Oyama highlight three aspects of social semiotic work which become the focus of analysis: *compositional meaning*, which relates most closely to the method of compositional interpretation discussed above; *representational meaning*, which conveys the people, places or things depicted, and includes narrative and conceptual structures; and *interactive meaning*, which refers to the way images interact with viewers, suggesting the attitudes viewers should take to what is being represented (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 141-153). In the case of the latter, distance, contact and point-of-view are three key factors that play a role in the realisation of these meanings. (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 145).

In the application of this type of analysis, these factors are understood as 'resources'[8]. The resource that Jewitt and Oyama offer as an example, in describing a photograph, is point of view:
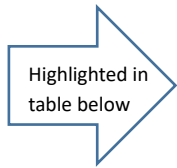
> This resource allows people, places and things to be depicted from above or below (or at eye-level), and from the front, the side or the back. Both these dimensions, the vertical and the horizontal, are graded, a matter of degree. There is, for instance, a range of vertical angles between the 'bird's eye view' and eye-level, and a range of horizontal angles between frontality and the profile. Point of view also creates a meaning potential. This does not mean that it is possible to say what different points of view will mean exactly. But it is possible to describe the kinds of meaning they will allow image producers and viewers to create, in this case, the kinds of symbolic relations between image producers/viewers and the people, places or things in images. (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 134).

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[8] Resources are seen as being fundamentally different to the 'codes' used in the Paris school of semiotics which prescribe sets of rules for connecting signs and meanings. Resources are less prescriptive, and open up a broader range of interpretive possibilities (Jewitt and Oyama, 2011: 134).

This notion of 'meaning potential' is key. Considering the vertical angle, for example, Jewitt and Oyama point out that in looking down on something, you are looking at it from a position of symbolic power, whereas looking up at something, that something has some kind of symbolic power over you. However, as they state, 'power' is not *the* meaning of this angle, it describes a meaning potential which is part of a field of possible meanings (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 134). In addition, they point out that symbolic relations are not real relations, and a photo or image can 'lie': "Photographs can symbolically make us relate as an equal to people who in fact have very considerable power over our lives (for example, politicians), or it can make us look in a detached way at people who we are involved with" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 134).

For me, this has important implications for the analysis of image theatre for two reasons: firstly, the interactive, dynamic and three-dimensional nature of the image work means that the 'meaning potential' of images is enhanced. For example, in the case of a resource like point-of-view, in this process the observer can walk around the image to see it from different points of view; he or she can change their point of view, not only in terms of horizontal, vertical and depth perspectives, but in terms of proximity to the image too. This suggests that the 'field of possible meanings' is widened. Secondly, because the process involves not only reading images, but altering them, or experimenting with different positions or gestures, the potential for generating a range of diverse meanings is there, interpretations which can act as a catalyst for further discussion, debate and visual expression.

In order to document the ways that modes and other elements might be identified in each image, and contribute to the creating of meaning, I created a table for each of the images which lists the following modes and elements: gaze and eye contact; proximity; facial expression; feet positioning; touch or body contact; and gesture (Tables 3 and 4 below). At this stage, focus was only on the created images themselves, not the broader interaction in the group.

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking directly up towards B's face, and B and C are looking directly at each other. Eye contact is direct between the three participants.			
Proximity	A is standing very close to B, slightly behind him. They are both facing towards C at a distance but facing her; B and C are reaching out to each other holding hands.			
Facial expression	A, B and C are all smiling.			
Feet positioning	A and B's feet are both pointing towards C and their inside feet are very close together. C's feet are on the ladder, allowing her body to swivel towards A and B.			
Touch/body contact	A has his right hand on B's right shoulder, and seems to have his left hand on B's left arm. B and C have arms outstretched towards each other and are holding hands.			
Gesture	A is holding on to B as if guiding or supporting. B and C are reaching out to each other.			

Highlighted in table below

Table 3: Table for recording data for each of the images

For each of the modes, there is a description for each image which is my description, and a column for the viewers' interpretations of each mode. It should be noted, that in running the workshop, the facilitation was not specifically structured around identifying and interpreting modes (although sometimes I asked a question like: What do you think eye contact between A and B is telling us?). Rather, this table was used to document any comments that may have been made in relation to individual modes in the course of more wide-ranging discussion. In other words, as the researcher, I have assigned particular comments to the particular modes.

In addition to the interpretation of modes, there is a column for the viewers' interpretation of the overall image, and a column for the explanation of the group who created the image, that is, what their intention was and response to any of the interpretations that they heard put forward. The example above (Table 3) shows the structure of the table with the first column filled in. This relates to Image A1 (as in

Figure 2 on p.73). The table below shows a close up of the first two rows filled in, including part of the last columns, as an example of how the table has been completed.

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking directly up towards B's face, and B and C are looking directly at each other. Eye contact is direct between the three participants.	• They are all looking at each other in a friendly way. • A's direct eye contact with B's head or side of face makes it look like he's encouraging and supportive. • B looks comfortable to be going in the direction that he is being led - his eyes suggest a sense of looking forward, of direction. • C's direct eye contact makes her seem welcoming or supportive. Her eye contact suggests a commitment to B succeeding.	a) B is a student in the middle being guided to greater things and encouraged from behind. b) A and C are lecturers guiding the student. c) A could be the parent of the student trying to encourage him to succeed. d) It may not be any specific person in the middle – more the idea of helping someone to climb the ladder of success. e) In helping someone meet their aspirations there is both guiding and pushing going on at the same time.	After listening to the viewers' comments and interpretations, the group creating the image suggested the following: - We weren't depicting specific people or groups of people (students, lecturers etc). It was a more general image of academia. - We were talking about the fact that the modern university pushes students, but also supports and nurtures. We didn't have specific roles in mind – in our heads it was more abstract. - Someone had said I [A] was a parent, and
Proximity	A is standing very close to B, slightly behind him. They are both facing towards C at a distance but facing her; B and C are reaching out to each other holding hands.	• A's proximity to B (together with the facial expression) suggests support; he is close behind him; if facial expression and eye contact were different he might be holding him back. • The greater distance between B and C perhaps shows a journey, the desire to help B move through space. The distance is bridged by the outstretched arms which help to 'close' the distance, again suggesting support and guidance.		

Table 4: Close-up view of part of the table completed.

This is an example of how the interpretive process moves in different directions – read from left to right, the material moves from description of individual modes, to the interpretations of specific modes, to emerging meanings which reflect a more holistic perspective. The vertical column increases the specification of the visual/material aspects of the data; the horizontal columns increases the specification of interpretive/relational aspects of the group interaction. While the tables such as the one above do not capture the moment to moment shifts and iterations of the process (which are evident in the videos and dialogue transcripts), I *was* able to use them to draw together an overview of interpretations for each image set. This contributed to analysis by firstly, charting the range of interpretations for each of the selected image sets, for example the lists of interpretations in columns 3 and 4 in the table above. Secondly, recognising the ambiguity and multiplicity of interpretation within single images as can

be seen in column 4. Thirdly, documenting the contribution of modes and other embodied elements to meaning making, as can be seen when reading columns 1, 2 and 3 row by row. Fourthly, juxtaposing the intentions of those creating the images with the interpretations of those viewing them through comparing columns 4 and 5. And fifthly, allowing for a comparison to be made of patterns that emerged when comparing tables across the eight images.

In addition to a table like the one above for each of the images, diagrams of each of the photos focusing on specific individual modes were also created to aid the completion of the tables and to help deepen the analysis, especially in comparing the two images in each set. The examples below show diagrams created for Image A1 for gaze/eye contact, feet positioning, and touch/body contact:
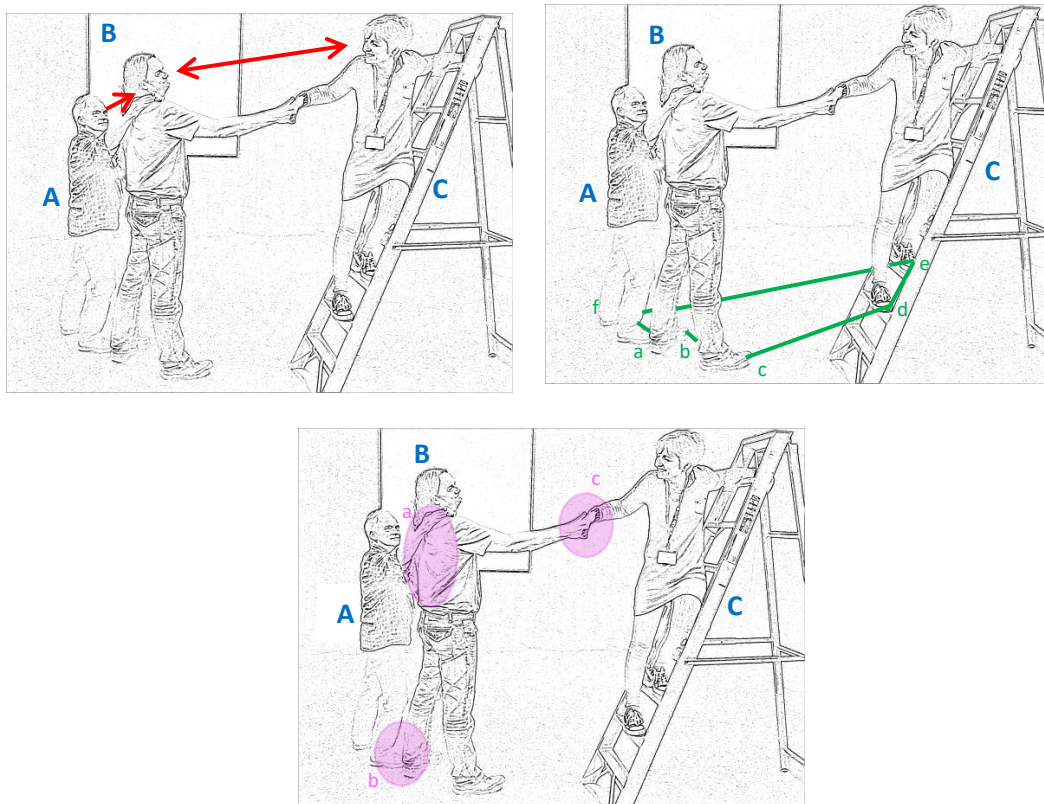

Figure 4: Diagrams of Image A1 illustrating gaze/eye contact, feet positioning, and touch/body contact.

These diagrams were particularly useful for comparing changing modes, shifts within modes and the altering significance of modes between the first and second images of each group. For example, the following two diagrams show gaze/eye contact for Images A1 and A2:
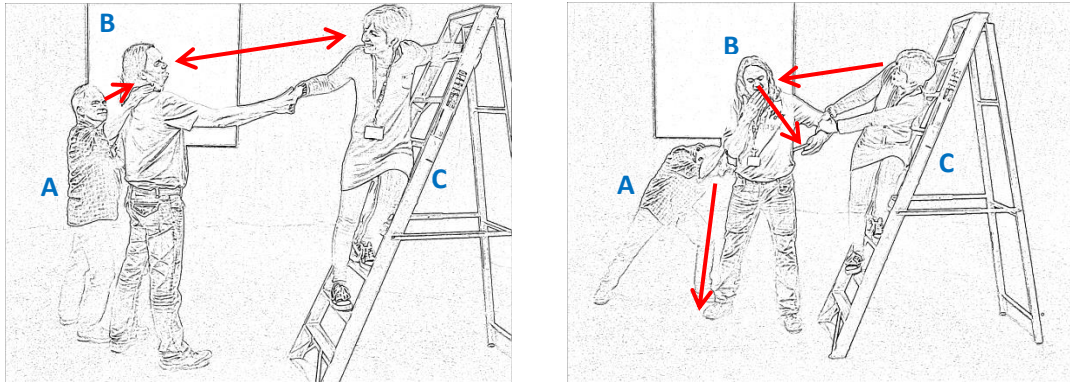

Figure 5: Diagram of Images A1 and A2 illustrating gaze/eye contact.

Creating a set of diagrams for each image enabled me to describe and interpret *visually*. Transcribing in this way offered the possibility of:

- identifying and highlighting different modes and embodied elements within each selected image;
- comparing the way a single mode was used in interaction with other modes/embodied elements to contribute to meaning-making across different images; and
- juxtaposing pairs of images within a single set to note the ways that changes of physical expression - in practice, through an iterative process - lead to changes in meaning, sometimes quite subtly and sometimes more radically.

The value of this type of diagrammatic transcription was that it helped to draw attention to constituent elements within each image in order to analyse the ways in which meaning was produced. In this way, this transcription helped to take account of the embodied nature of the process, and to focus on the significance of the visual, not just as a medium in itself, but as catalyst for discussion and experimentation.

There are, however, limitations in the way I have employed such transcription that must be acknowledged, most notably perhaps, that each photograph is taken from a single

perspective. In the workshop, participants could move around each image or move closer to, or further away from, each image. A development of this method for me, would include working with photographs and diagrams that show an image from different perspectives or points of view. Nonetheless, in evolving this method, it is clear that what it does offer the researcher is a tool for engaging more fully with the specific embodied nature of the image theatre process, and to trace the different stages of experimentation.

3.4.3. *Analysis of discussion/participation*

In addition to the analysis of the images themselves, analysis also focused on the broader workshop interaction related to steps 3 and 4, amongst the group as a whole. This is an area that Claudia Mitchell and Kathleen Pithouse have explored, for example, in studying the engagement of participants involved in a community-based photo-voice project; Mitchell states: "what interested us in particular were the expressions of intensity on the faces of apparently disengaged youth looking at the photos they had taken, the body language of participants as they engaged in picture-taking and image-making, and even the relationships between and among the photographers as revealed by their proximity to each other" (Mitchell, 2011: 135-136).

Continuing to work with the notions of modes and resources, it is worth noting two other approaches (in addition to social semiotic analysis mentioned above) that Jewitt elaborates on which have implications for the way we may draw on multimodal interpretation: discourse analysis and interactional analysis (Jewitt, 2009: 28-39). She points out, however, that these three approaches place emphasis on different aspects of multimodality rather than being wholly distinct methodological theories of the multimodal (Jewitt, 2009: 2). Whereas, 'social semiotic multimodality', which is closely linked to the work of Kress and van Leeuwen, emphasises the sign-maker and their situated use of modal resources (Jewitt, 2009: 30), 'multimodal discourse analysis' emphasises the *metafunctional systems* underlying semiotic resources (Jewitt, 2009: 32), and 'multimodal interactional analysis' analyses what individuals express and react

to in specific situations, in which the ongoing interaction is always co-constructed (Jewitt, 2009: 33).

In my research, six key areas of focus were identified: words spoken by those who are observing and commenting on the image; words spoken by those who created the image; silence; laughter; gesture; proximity and point of view of the individuals viewing the image. As illustrated in the example below, data was recorded for each of the images being analysed.

A simple table documents my observations for each image. These observations are taken from a viewing of photographs and video material, and from my workshop notes. The structure of the table is as follows (Table 5). Table 6 below that shows a completed table for Image Set A as an example.

Notes and observations about the group interpreting the images:

Spoken word by viewers	
Spoken word by those who created image	
Silences	
Laughter	
Gesture	
Proximity and POV of viewers	

Highlighted in table below

Table 5: Table for recording observations of the group interpreting the image

Spoken word by viewers	• Comments while the group is setting up, for example while getting the ladder into place one of the viewers says 'Ooh props!' and there is some general laughter from the viewers and performers which comes across as banter. • Each of the images is shown first in silence for people to simply look at. When the first image is shown again for comment, the first person starts straight in with a comment followed very quickly by all of the other viewers (the video shows that it *was* all of them). • In the first few minutes there is a lot of talking over each other. There is a sense that each person is very quickly trying to offer different perspectives, or build on what someone else is saying. This soon settles down to people speaking one at a time, although sometimes still coming in very quickly after each other. The video seems to show very close listening to each other amongst all participants. • All participants contribute interpretations or comments without being asked or invited. • Some comments or sounds are confirmation of what others are saying, for example if someone offers an interpretation, another viewer is heard saying, "Hmm, yes..." or "yes...exactly...". • Some comments are a questioning of each other, sometimes expecting an answer or perhaps sometimes rhetorically, for example, "Do you think that A might be B's parent?" or "Do you think he is yawning or laughing?" • Some comments are an answering of questions, either from other viewers, or in a response to questions from me as the facilitator. • Once the group showing the image starts participating in the discussion (after viewers have had time to comment on both images), their comments either explain what they intended with their images, or respond to specific interpretations that had been offered by the viewers. • There is also general discussion among the group as a whole about some of the issues sparked off by the images but not directly about them, for example, their general view of students, the university's emphasis on employability, how men and women are perceived differently in the university, or the shift to a mass system of higher education in the UK.
Spoken word by those who created image	• All three members of the group speak – there doesn't appear to be any one particular group member who dominates the discussion. Their comments either support each other or offer alternative perspectives, but there is a strong sense of both group coherence and individual experience characterising their comments. • The group explains their intention with the images, which very quickly opens up more general discussion with the viewers. • Their response to interpretations of their images offered by the viewers take the following forms: - confirming specific interpretations as being in agreement with what they intended in creating the image; - identifying interpretations that were not what they intended, but which they agree are valid; - developing on interpretations offered by viewers by adding their own personal experience. • The group members are very gestural is explaining their images and responding to comments. The video shows a lot of hand movement in emphasising their points and communicating their explanations.
Silences	• The group showing the image remains silent through the whole process of showing both images and listening to interpretations and comments before being invited by the facilitator to join in. • Both images are first shown briefly to the viewers in silence, so that they can simply *look* at them before starting to comment. • In commenting on the images, after an initial flurry of remarks, there is a moment of silence as the viewers look at the images further before starting to offer further thoughts. • The video shows participants listening very carefully to each other. Those standing in silence listening to others comment do not seem distracted or disengaged. Sometimes they seem to be formulating a further response.
Laughter	• Commentary and silence appears to be interspersed with moments of laughter among the group all the way through the process as follows: - laughter of recognition, for example when one participant realises that their view or experience is similar to another's; - laughter at 'in' jokes among the group as a community of academics (even though they haven't all met each other before), for example, when the ladder is being set up and the group member setting it up makes a comment about health and safety procedures in the faculty; - laughing at own interpretations, for example occasionally someone will giggle with their comment implying that 'this may be silly, but I was thinking that...'. This is not the dominant mode of discussion, but it does happen a couple of times, and the person is always reassured and encouraged by others in the group;
Proximity and POV of viewers	• Viewers stood at a slight distance from those creating the image facing them straight on. • All the viewers remained standing; ie. nobody sat on the floor or went to get a chair (which can sometimes be an indication of boredom or disengagement). • A few people shifted position slightly to get a clearer look at details of facial expressions, but nobody moved into the image or around it to take a closer look.

Table 6: Example of the table showing elements of the workshop process for Image Set A

In analysing the data that is recorded in the tables across the four sets of images, I have focused on the following:

- observations that are common across all or most of the images;
- observations that seem unique to particular images;
- insights that emerge from the embodied, collaborative and interactive nature of the activity.

What this approach to transcription allowed was a documenting of aspects of verbal and non-verbal interaction within the participatory process including silence and laughter. It also offered the opportunity to chart, and begin to analyse, the range of kinds of response within each interactional element, for example, the way that dialogue happened or the different kinds of laughter that I identified. Drawing comparisons across the eight image sets helped to identify patterns or deviations.

Whilst part of my methodological process involved identifying and analysing these group actions and interactions, I ultimately sought for ways to integrate these observations into the analysis of the images and the image theatre process as part of a larger sense of embodied engagement. It is on this basis of bringing analysis from this table together with analysis of the images from the previous table that Chapter 4 develops a more nuanced and integrated perspective on how image theatre might be understood as embodied.

3.4.4. *Emerging Issues and Observations*

A further area of data-gathering and analysis focused on the main areas of discussion that emerged from this image making activity. Here, *content* of what is said or explored was foregrounded. This tended to relate to the prompt that had been given to the image – for example, where the prompt was 'The purpose and function of contemporary higher education', this aspect of data collection focused on the perspectives that emerged. However, such perspectives were also likely to be broader than just direct responses to the prompt as other areas of discussion were 'opened up' through the interaction. In this case, a summary of discussions was simply listed for each of the images, as indicated in the box below. In each case the summary was made based on my transcribing of the video material and my workshops notes.

Main Areas of Discussion That Emerged:

- It is difficult to separate the 'function' of universities from the problems or challenges faced in working within them. There was recognition that whilst the prompt that had been given was 'The purpose or function of a contemporary university', much of the discussion was about personal experiences, personal feelings, obstacles and frustrations in this particular work context, tensions and pressures experienced, and shared struggles.

- There was a lot of discussion about a perceived significant increase in the need for lecturers to play a pastoral role for students, especially in 'our kind of university' (meaning post-92 institutions). It was felt that while there has always been a pastoral role to play, there is much more now needed and expected in terms of nurturing, encouraging and supporting students. This was also linked to a recognition of increased pressure for many students particularly in terms of so many of them needing to earn money, mental health issues and the high level of dyslexia in the creative industries.

- The two images shown are the ends of a spectrum, and most experiences for both students and staff is somewhere between those two extremes. To a greater or lesser degree there is a combination of nurturing/guiding and pushing/coercing.

- The tensions of working as a lecturer emerged, arguably reflecting some of the paradoxes of the contemporary university. In particular tensions between creative and critical thinking and practice on the one hand, and a narrowly focused definition of skills development and employability on the other.

- Stereotypes and the realities of student life was a strong theme. It was recognised that quite often staff resort to stereotyping students as tired and disengaged because they've been out socialising all hours, but that the reality is much more complex, especially again in relation to working patterns.

- The experience of parents of university students came into focus a number of times, both in relation to the personal experiences of some members of the group, and more broadly in relation to pressures exerted on students. These experiences seemed to reflect a combination of guilt, self-reflection, and pride.

- The shift in HE from a more elite system to one of mass education was raised in thinking about how the function of universities has changed, and how this is so tied into the specific challenges and problems raised.

- Gender issues came to the fore when considering the placing of group members in the images, and how the images might be interpreted differently if places were swapped. This was particularly so in thinking about how we might perceive the 'pushing' and 'coercing' going on.

Table 7: Example of part of a table recording discussion that emerged.

Analysis of this material included coding the summaries for each set of images to draw out areas of commonality and difference across the groups, and, perhaps most importantly, to identify the spectrum of varied ideas and responses. It should be noted however, that whilst this area of analysis is important to understanding the value of the method, a detailed account of the thematic perspectives that emerged is not the main focus of this thesis; within the limitations of this particular piece of writing, the focus has been on developing insights into the actual method itself, and on understanding how an exploration of embodiment helps us to identify and understand the kinds of distinctive meaning that is produced through image theatre.

3.4.5. *Feedback Analysis*

A final area of data gathering and analysis considered was the feedback received from participants. This was received in two ways:
1. participants provided individual written feedback at the end of the workshop before leaving the room; and
2. four participants (two from each workshop) were interviewed four months of the workshop to reflect on their experiences.

In terms of the written feedback at the end of the workshops, I simply provided each person with a blank piece of paper and a pen, and asked for open comments. Participants were asked not to put their names on the paper, so that all feedback remained anonymous. In analysing the responses, I coded all the feedback to draw out common themes and experiences. In addition, to try and interrogate more fully what an embodied approach to research might offer, I colour-coded words that may suggest particular kinds of response or engagement, in this case:

Red = affect/feeling

Green = collaboration/participation

Blue = thinking/ideas/reasoning

The example below (Figure 6) shows one person's feedback, typed out as written, with the colours applied:

Apprehensive at first but pleasantly surprised how enjoyable the experience was.

Excellent way to meet staff and get a handle on different views and ideas about the area we work in without the desks as a barrier.

Would like to continue these sorts of activities throughout the year just as a way to meet other staff and try to make changes/get ideas about how and what is going on.

Good to be involved with staff from other divisions and have an open honest look at what we are all practising.

Very enjoyable. Thanks.

Figure 6: One participant's feedback, transcribed as written, with colour coding applied.

Other feedback comments, coded in a similar way can be seen in Appendix D. In analysing the feedback in this way, I have considered both the range of each of these areas – for example, grouping all the red words and phrases together from across all the comments – *and*, significantly, the juxtaposition of these colours *within* individual feedback sheets. In considering embodiment in terms of thought, affect, and participation, I have separated these aspects out, not because I believe that they should be categorised separately, but to try to further understand the complex interplay between thinking-feeling-participating.

The other form of feedback came through in-depth semi-structured interviews of four participants four months after the workshops. These participants were purposively selected to ensure two from each workshop group, two men and two women and four different subject disciplines. The interviews lasted about 75 minutes, and were audio recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis. The coding of interviews was based on:

- Reflections on the experience in the four months since the workshop
- Thoughts and feelings about what emerged in the workshop
- Issues or themes that emerged from the workshops.

In many ways, this was about determining what specifically participants remembered of the image-making and of the discussion that had taken place about the images, and by extension, any impact it may have had on their professional lives subsequently. In addition to coding the transcripts as above, the colour-coding applied to the feedback sheets was also layered onto the interview transcripts to further develop that aspect of the analysis.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In carrying out this research I addressed ethical considerations in two key ways: firstly, in relation to the research process itself, and secondly, in terms of the broader ethics of image theatre. In considering both of these aspects I was aware that given that this is insider research and that I hold a senior position within the faculty, participants may have felt under pressure to participate or might rightly have been anxious or worried that what they said would be reported outside of the research process, or indeed whether I would judge them on what they said. There is clearly a political dimension in asking

people to talk about sensitive issues which I considered carefully in planning and undertaking this research.

I made it clear, in inviting colleagues to take part, that they were being invited to opt in, rather than being in the position of having to opt out. I was very conscious of trying to ensure that in both verbal and written communication I adopted a tone which did not inadvertently or directly contribute to colleagues feeling coerced to participate. My intention was to make clear in explaining the research to participants that the richness of the research would come from the variety of perspectives and experiences that staff across the faculty have, and that I did not have predetermined or preferred viewpoints that I would want to hear being articulated. Further, the nature of the research was clearly explained to participants, in writing and verbally, at the preliminary focus group meetings, including its aims and my own role as a researcher and doctoral student.

In terms of confidentiality, I also made it clear to participants in writing and verbally that I would not discuss the content of interviews and individual workshop contributions either formally or informally with any other staff, or in the context of any faculty or university meetings. I was aware that institutionally I may have been involved in decisions that affected participants as part of the Faculty as a whole, but I was confident that with these particular participants this was unlikely to have been a factor, particularly as none of them was directly line managed by me.

There was also the related confidentiality issue to do with the group nature of the project, that is, an anxiety that other group members might report what colleagues had said outside of the formal research sessions. To address this, participants in the focus groups and image theatre workshops were asked to agree to the confidentiality of proceedings so that they could each feel confident that nobody else in the group would report comments or observations to other people. I also spent part of the time with each group collectively drawing up a simple 'code of conduct' that they contributed to and were satisfied with. This was done through noting down on flip chart paper a short list of agreed principles that members of the group suggested and agreed on, and distributing these after the focus group meetings as part of a thank you e-mail to each participant.

I made it clear to participants that I would ensure that audio and video recordings and interview transcripts were not made available to any other person, and would be locked away and/or stored on a password protected computer. I also made it clear that where interviews and workshop proceedings were referred to in any written research report or seminar/conference presentation, individual responses would be anonymised to ensure that particular staff could not be directly or indirectly identified. Interestingly, although I stated that anonymity would be maintained by adapting any photographs used in written reports or conference presentations so that participants could not be identified, participants expressed disappointment at this and made it clear that they thought it would be better for the photographs to be used in a way that faces could be seen clearly. They maintained this view unanimously once I had carefully explained the reasons for proposing anonymising visual material, and they each gave their consent for photographs to be used without hiding individual identities, hence the use of photographs in this thesis.

Image theatre as a form itself also raised some ethical questions for me, including asking participants to work outside of their comfort zones through participating in drama-based workshops, or the possibility of feeling pressured to take part in activities during the workshop itself. I worked to reassure and encourage participants through explaining clearly in advance what the workshop involved and what would be required of participants. I made it clear that the approach used has been specifically developed and refined over many years for use with people who are not actors or training to be actors, but who are members of the public or part of various community groups or communities of interest. I explained the underlying philosophy which is about encouraging dialogue, and that no participant would be asked to participate in anything which would be likely to embarrass them. I also made it clear that I was piloting this as a research method, and that I would welcome their feedback about their experience of participating. Further, in structuring the workshops, I ensured that activities were devised in such a way that participants were introduced gently to the process, that possible feelings of vulnerability were reduced, and that confidence was built progressively during the warming-up phase. In facilitating the workshops, I worked for a facilitation style that was encouraging and non-coercive. I have experience of facilitating similar workshops with non-drama groups, and had a clear sense of what

approach and specific activities would be useful for building a constructive and enjoyable atmosphere.

3.6. Towards an Understanding of Image Theatre as an Embodied Activity

The process of developing the methodology for this research has been a flexible one, subject to shifts of focus as the implications and potential impact of the work has emerged. Partly, this is the result of initially investigating image theatre as a research method itself *and* as an embodied method for working with participants to explore their own workplace experiences. As the analysis has developed, however, the methodology has also expanded to examine in greater depth, the experimental nature of image theatre, the ways that embodied elements contribute to the production of meaning, and the range of kinds of meanings that are produced.

The designing and use of diagrams and tables is part of the distinctive contribution of this research project in enabling me to work much more fully and formally with the data generated from the image-theatre workshop than has previously been reported in published research. Developing these tables and diagrams enabled me to explore, in greater depth than might otherwise be possible, the distinctive productivity of image theatre in generating and producing meaning. Used in combination with video recordings and transcripts of dialogue, these tables and diagrams enabled me to pursue an analysis of image theatre at a more granular level than has previously been undertaken. Further, through identifying modes and other embodied elements, I have been able to interrogate in a more nuanced way than has previously been documented about image theatre, the ways in which this method facilitates a multifaceted engagement with a range of ideas, perspectives, thoughts and feelings.

In working through the material in this way, and tracing patterns and connections, what became evident, as is elaborated on in the sections that follow, was the degree to which the basis of image theatre is rooted in what we might think of as a process of 'experimentation' by the participants. The development of a method for documenting and transcribing the material brought to the fore the ways in which various ways of experimenting are part of an embodied, participatory activity. This is explored in further detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSING THE DISTINCTIVE PRODUCTIVITY OF IMAGE THEATRE AS AN EMBODIED METHOD: THE CONTINUUM OF EMBODIED MEANING-MAKING THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION

In contributing to research in drama education through addressing the lack of empirical support for claims made about image theatre, this chapter develops an understanding of what image theatre 'does', how, as an embodied method, it creates distinctive kinds of meaning. In so doing, it offers empirical support for understanding the distinctive productivity of image theatre workshops. Focusing on the interactive and experimental nature of image theatre, this chapter offers critical perspectives on the ways that meaning is not just produced, but is co-created and re-created dynamically and collaboratively.

To demonstrate the multiple complex aspects of this productivity, my analysis is presented in two parts: the first part sets out a relatively descriptive account of the four stages of experimentation in the workshop process: creating images from initial group discussions; the development of images through viewer interpretations; experimentation through individual interventions; and then full-group interactive engagement. The second part uses the transcription of embodied elements to explore these processes in more depth, arguing that there is a continuum of meaning production through different types of interpretation and engagement with these embodied elements.

This chapter shows that through processes of experimentation, a continuum of meaning is produced, from what is initially seen and interpreted in an image (that is, first impressions and surface-level observations), through multiple readings and alternative interpretations, to active processes in which meaning-making through the body is a shared creative act. In this way, meaning in the images moves from something static and stable which is there to be read, to something that is co-created, ambiguous, and changeable. This also suggests that part of the role of the image theatre facilitator, in working with an awareness of modes and other embodied elements, is to encourage a 'destabilising' of meaning, to guide participants in a process in which meaning is dynamic rather than static, and in so doing to encourage a wider range of discussion,

debate and sharing of personal anecdote than might more normally characterise workplace discourse.

In considering the different types of interpretation of, and engagement with, embodied elements within image theatre, it is important to bear in mind the idea of 'liveness', a term often used in theatre and performance scholarship (see, for example, Auslander, 2008; Reason and Lindelof, 2016), which necessitates an analysis of modes and other elements as embodied through interaction. Having drawn on methodological tools from multimodality, it is important to note that where multimodal studies often focus on photographs, videos or everyday interaction, they seldom focus on the live encounter in a performative mode. It is the experience of liveness in image theatre that highlights modes and other embodied elements as rooted in physical collaboration and discursive interaction, suggesting, from a methodological point of view, the need for an approach that can take account of, record and analyse this kind of encounter. Thus, in seeking to further understand experimentation within this embodied method, I have sought to develop an approach to analysis that takes into consideration this live performative interaction.

4.1. Different Stages of Experimentation in the Image Theatre Workshops

The analysis of the two image theatre workshops suggested a participatory process which was experimental in nature. By this I mean that participants had the opportunity to 'try out' and discuss a variety of bodily representations and interpretations, and in this way, to consider issues related to contemporary higher education from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints.

The very act of 'translating' talked-about ideas into an image sets a tone of experimentation – there is no 'right way' to embody the ideas. The shift from each small group discussing their response to the given stimulus, to writing their thoughts down on flip-chart paper, to creating their 'freeze-frame' images set up a method in which putting ideas into a bodily representation required participants to be physically on their feet trying out different positions and combinations while considering what they might be communicating to the viewers who would be looking at what they

showed. As the workshops proceeded, however, it became evident that while there were no right ways to express ideas through images, there *were* more or less effective ways of capturing the complexity of thoughts, feelings and perceptions, and this in itself spurred on the need to collectively amend, tweak, change or re-imagine the images. Importantly, the images are not just 'summative' in the sense of summarising the ideas through a bodily representation to present to the viewers. They are, more significantly, 'generative', in that they become a further catalyst for discussion and act as a basis for stimulating further image making activity.

Across the all the image sets it was possible to identify a generally common pattern of experimental activity in each of the workshops in four distinct ways as follows (using Image Set C as an example):

4.1.1. Creating the initial images from small group discussion through a process of physically improvising and crafting.

Figure 7: Group C moving from discussion (left) to creating images (right).

Whilst image theatre does not have to have a 'planning stage' – that is, it is possible, and sometimes preferable, to work with images in a way that participants respond spontaneously to a prompt without preparation time (a 'gut' response) – in these workshops it felt preferable to have a step in the process in which participants could discuss and write down responses. Indeed, at that point the groups did not know they would be creating images, only that they were listing or mind-mapping ideas. Based on my experience of working with different groups, I have come to realise that it is often useful to begin with an approach that participants will be familiar with or used to and to take them through a transition to a more unfamiliar way of working. It is in this 'unfamiliarity' that the potential for experimentation and fresh insight resides.

We can of course think about this discursive and written planning as embodied activity – simply the act of sitting in a group talking and writing down ideas is an embodied, physical process. However, what the making of images required was the 'inscribing of meaning' *onto* the body. In more literally embodying ideas, this experimentation was rooted in trying out different positions and relationships (physical relationships to each other and to the space around and between them) in order to find the best ways to communicate not just *an* idea, but a complex combination of ideas. In simple terms, as suggested in the photographs above, it was a move from sitting around talking to standing up and trying out images, working out and agreeing what would best communicate the group's ideas to the other group. I would argue that in so doing, there was a 'disruption' that took place – the language that participants were used to using in meetings and day to day work conversations had to be critically re-imagined in order to communicate the range of feelings, thoughts, ideas and perceptions within a single image, a process requiring a constant clarifying of what was actually meant by points that had been written down. A good example of this can be seen in the transcript of discussion from when groups members were creating their initial image (Image C1):

> **P1:** Okay, we wrote down 'pressure on us from different directions', so how are we going to show that…
>
> **P2:** Maybe we can have someone being squeezed by two others almost like the middle of a sandwich. [*They try this out, there is some laughter*]
>
> **P3:** Or maybe just pushing or pointing? [*They try this out*]
>
> **P2:** But what do we actually mean by pressure? Is it about workload? Is it…
>
> **P4:** Yes exactly, for me it's more about feeling like faculty management are breathing down my neck, like I'm under constant scrutiny…
>
> **P1:** Oh that's interesting, I was thinking more in terms of being pulled in one direction by the demands of students and another by the uni. [*There is a pause as they think about this*]… so how are we going to show all this?...

As this transcript suggests, the written response on the flip-chart paper, "pressure on us from different directions" (one of a number of bullet points), acted as a shorthand for collective experience that was generally accepted by the group without real interrogation – a sense that this kind of phrasing, which is part of daily workplace

discourse, has a common meaning which is understood by everyone. However, it was only in the move to creating an embodied representation, to making the image, that the group started to question the very meaning of what they had written themselves, and to discover the range of different understandings encompassed in that phrase. In this sense then, this move from written response to image-making was an experimental process requiring participants to question their own and each other's understandings. Further, it was experimental in finding an appropriate physical representation (gestures, expressions, relationships to each other and so on), in other words an experimenting with the *aesthetic* dimension of communicating meaning.

Part of this first stage was also about setting a productive environment for experimentation, and it is important to note that shared laughter was part of the process of developing an atmosphere in the workshops to support experimentation. In the transcript above, it is noticeable that the group laughed when trying out an idea. There may have been a sense of 'we are all a bit out of our comfort zones together here' and this served to forge a generally positive collaboration. It was this collaborative ethos that enabled participants to experiment more freely with image-making than might otherwise have been the case.

4.1.2.   Developing ideas and interpretations through dialogue

When each group showed their images to the other groups, a second form of experimentation came into play: the testing and developing of interpretation ideas through dialogue. In responding to the images that were presented to them, viewers had the opportunity to test ideas by offering interpretations and commenting on others' interpretations. In these workshops it was clear from the video documentation that vocal responses initially focused on what viewers 'saw' in the image; what meanings they identified and expressed. Responses were often phrased in terms of questions to other participants in the group (such as 'Do you think the way that [D] is pointing at [A] might mean he is instructing her… or maybe telling her off for something?'), or as comments offering an alternative interpretation to someone else's (such as 'I see what you mean about telling her off, but if [D] represents the management it could show them trying to impose the latest policy?'). In this sense then, comments were often

offered as way of 'trying out' an idea with the other viewers. This can be further seen in the transcripts where it becomes clear that words and phrases commonly used were those such as "or maybe…", "another possibility is…", "or could they be showing…", and "what if…".

It is important to note that the opportunity for this kind of discussion was rooted in the participatory, interpretative nature of the activity. In other words, the interplay between bodily representation and verbal discussion, prompted by the viewing of the image, enabled this form of dialogue and conversation. Further, part of testing out interpretations also seemed to involve drawing on personal experience to substantiate a view. In other words, images sometimes enabled experiences to be 'made visible' by linking something seen in the image to a personal anecdote about workplace experience.

Part of the role of the facilitator is to maintain a process and atmosphere in which different responses and alternative interpretations can comfortably be given. In my experience, this is achieved through questioning, particularly asking different kinds of questions to viewers both about the image as a whole and about details of the image; through silence, specifically giving viewers a chance to look, consider and formulate their responses; and through directly encouraging other possible interpretations. In this example, we can see how commentary (in this instance focusing mostly on eye contact and touch) reflects this testing of ideas while contributing to a building up of possible meanings:
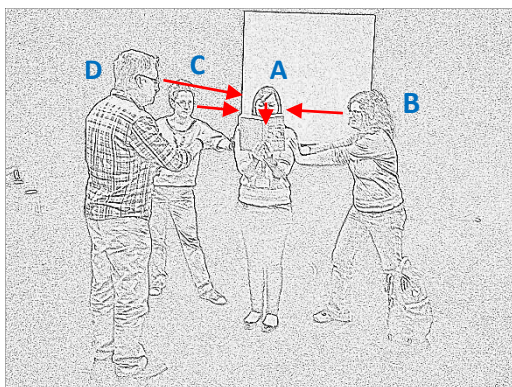

Figure 8: Image C1, with gaze or eye-contact highlighted.

In Image C1, A's focus on the book initially suggested to viewers that she was a student:

> **V1:** She is very focused on her book.
>
> **V2:** She is studying really hard. It's hard work and she isn't distracted.
>
> **V3** [*after some thinking in silence*]: But also… the others looking at her, and pushing and pointing at her, means she is being pushed from different sides. So looking at the book is like a way of keeping focused and not giving in to the pressure.
>
> **Facilitator**: So we have the idea that [A] is a student being pushed or pressured from different sides. Any other thoughts on who [B] or [C] might be?
>
> **V2:** [B] could be a parent or a friend…
>
> **V4:** … or maybe the lecturer… but why does she have that bag?... maybe she's another student?

What emerged from that ongoing discussion is that we might call a sense of 'allegorical' characters – not specific individual characters but 'representative' characters. So, for example, it was suggested that C might represent 'industry' (especially as she was holding a paint can in one hand), B was the lecturer or another student, or perhaps D was the lecturer, or a parent, or even simply "a representation of the pressure to succeed".

Interestingly, in discussing the image after the viewing, those who created the image talked of having in mind specific allegorical or representative characters in the way described above, however, in creating the image they had had it in mind that the person in the middle was actually the lecturer, and that for them, the overall image was one exploring the pressures on academics in the contemporary university. They pointed out that the book that A was staring at so intently was *53 Interesting Things To Do In Your Lectures*. The book, for them, was not just a stand-in prop, but much more directly part of the overall meaning of the image, and so A's gaze was in a sense a directive to this clue for the viewer. This ambiguity of person A (student or lecturer) led to a full-group discussion about the different kinds of pressures and tensions on both students and academics, including, as one participant described it, the "feeling of being constantly watched as an academic… under surveillance all the time".

A further element worth noting in the transcripts above is the moment of silence. In starting out as a teacher or facilitator, silences can be worrying. I watch my own students setting out in their applied drama work, and the temptation to fill silences, to keep coaxing, to give answers and to keep rephrasing questions is common. Experience has taught me that silences can be productive: often participants need time to think, to consider, to formulate a response. In image theatre, looking at the image in silence is a fundamental part of the method, and underpins the opportunity for experimentation. The chance to look and think, not just at the start of the process, but all the way through. The rhythm of the workshops often moves from silence to individual voices to general group discussion interspersed with moments of silent consideration and reflection.

This stage of experimentation thus moved from the small group image-making of the first stage, to a process of image-interpretation in which each image acted as a catalyst for dialogue. The questioning and interrogatory nature of the dialogue, within an atmosphere of openness to explore a range of possible interpretations (there was no 'right' answer), enabled ideas to be developed collectively and links to be drawn to personal experiences. This dialogic participation lead to the third type of experimental activity in which viewers could make changes to the image.

4.1.3.   Changing the image details through viewers 'directing' the performers.

Part of the experimental nature of the image theatre process is the opportunity given to the viewers to physically change the ways that the images are constructed; in this way the viewers shifted from being 'recipients' of meaning, to active co-creators of it. They were able to 'intervene' in the image by instructing those in the image to alter aspects of their positions. This has resonances of what Augusto Boal called 'simultaneous dramaturgy' (Boal, 1979) in which the audience (which Boal re-named the 'spect-actors') could intervene in the action of a play and tell the actors how their characters should react differently based on their own experiences. The actors would then replay the scene changing it in line with the audience members' direction. In image theatre, and in these particular workshops that I facilitated, this stage of experimenting took the experience beyond viewers simply reading images (and in so doing working out what the group might be communicating), to viewers participating more fully in the

embodied *making* of meaning by making changes to those images. The significance of this was that the bodies of the performers became a type of medium through which viewers could try out their thoughts – by communicating or clarifying an idea through changing the bodies in front of them, viewers could reflect on what was being communicated back which would act as a stimulus for further discussion.

Viewers sometimes directed changes at numerous different parts of an image (for example changing the position of three different people) and sometimes suggested multiple changes to a single part of the image (for example, changing one person's hand gesture three times, considering what was communicated with each change). Also, in instructing the performers, the viewers sometimes suggested quite large changes (such as moving one person to a different part of the image) and sometimes subtle changes, such as a slight change of facial expression or a small repositioning of the hand. In all cases this was accompanied by discussion among the group of the impact of the changes on the overall image.

Looking again at Image C2, we can see an example of a change being made when a viewer commented that E's hand on D's shoulder suggested that government (represented by E) has a very direct impact or influence on university management. This particular moment was experimented with in different ways to think about what this relationship between government and university management might be.
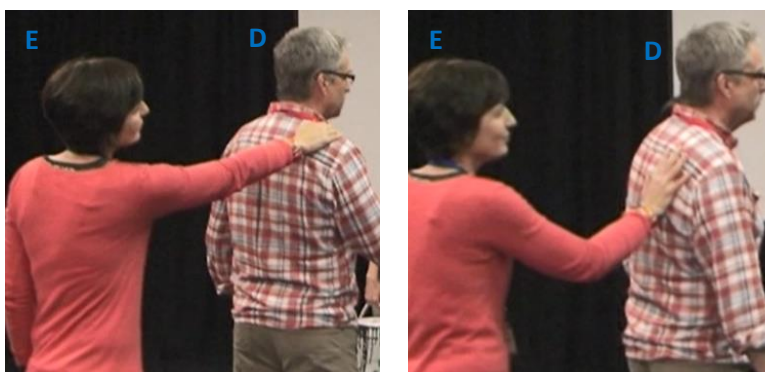

Figure 9: Detail from process in experimenting with Image C2.

At one point in the process, one of the viewers made the suggestion that E move her hand from D's shoulder to his upper back. At this point, the group had been discussing

the idea that D might represent 'Management' (university and faculty), and that E represented a politician or 'Government' looking over the shoulder of D with a firm hand on him. In this example, the group was experimenting to see how the meaning of this part of the image could be changed by a fairly subtle shift of position. The intention was that rather than the government simply having their hand on management's shoulder – that is, having some kind of controlling hand on them – they were also pushing them with a slightly forward momentum. This suggested for some in the group that in reality government had a greater impact than might be suggested in the hand-on-shoulder image. On the other hand, as one of the group pointed out, the hand on the back could also be read as more caring or supportive. The key issue here is that this detailed level of physical exploration was at the root of discussing broader issues in a way that was open to multiple interpretations. And because there were no 'right' ways of constructing the image, the group was able to move towards more and more nuanced understandings and appreciations of the underlying issues and themes.

4.1.4. Experimenting through iteratively amending and/or recreating the images by the group as a whole.

The fourth level of experimentation involved the blurring and breaking down of boundaries between performers and viewers, as viewers took the opportunity to 'replace' performers and to join the image as additional characters; as individuals 'stepped out' of the image to view it from the outside; and as the group as a whole collectively tried out different meaning possibilities. This process was 'iterative' because it was a continual one of trying something out, discussing as a group, making a change, discussing again, shifting a position, making an alternative suggestion, discussing further, and so on through the process. Dialogue happened through *both* discussion and bodily interaction. Physical and verbal expression were part of an embodied collaborative engagement.

Practically what was happening in the workshop space was that where earlier in the process one half of the workshop group (the viewers) would have been facing the other half of the group (the performers), here those space boundaries broke down as

participants entered or stood back from the image. In Image Set C we see an example of this when the group was in discussion as the image was being re-arranged.

Figure 10: Group in discussion re-working Image C2.

This photograph was taken after the images in Figure 9 where we see E with her hand on D's shoulder and then back. In this case, C (who was originally holding the paint can in Image C1), had stepped out of the image to look at it and make changes. She had been replaced in the image by one of the viewers, now labelled 'G', just visible behind E. This is a good example of a moment in the process where someone who was a constituent part of the image, could step out and be replaced by someone else, to be able to look it at from the outside in order to comment and suggest changes. At this point in the discussion, C had moved E (government) next to D (management), rather than have her behind D with her hand on his shoulder or back. She also moved A (the academic) to the same side as D, E and G (industry). Here, the participants began discussing those people/groups/roles being on the same side of the student and how they might have similar aims if different approaches and discourses. This shows a part of the process in which a number of different positions were being tried out in thinking through and discussing the complexity of the various relationships. Literally changing the positions of people in the image became a way of thinking about professional roles and relationships; a form of *thinking through* the body to inform discussion.

This fourth stage of experimentation thus moved participation to a point where the full group was engaged in embodied meaning-making and dialogue. In this stage, experimentation is primarily about working together to determine the impact of changing images collaboratively in order to understand and communicate more precisely, and in an increasingly more nuanced way, the multifaceted range of experiences and insights of the group members.

Overall then, this section has explored what an analysis of the workshops revealed about the experimental nature of image theatre, and how we might understand the different stages of experimentation encompassed in this method, from creating images after small group discussion through to full group participation in changing and recreating images. In this way, it is not simply a process of communicating and interpreting ideas, but about gradually working towards a recognition of, and engagement with, the range of perspective and experience encompassed by the group, and, through dialogue focused on the physical activity, testing assumptions and meanings. From a facilitation point of view, these stages of experimentation are also important in increasing the confidence of participants to engage actively, and in working towards more and more layers of depth in interpretation and meaning-making.

Having discussed the stages of experimentation, the next section offers a more detailed analysis of how modes and other embodied elements within the images themselves, and within the participatory process more broadly, underpin the productivity of this experimental process.

4.2. A 'Continuum of Meaning': The Role of Embodied Elements in Enabling the Productivity of Experimentation

As discussed in Chapter 3, in working towards an in-depth understanding of the image theatre process, it was useful to identify the constituent elements of the images and to determine how these worked together to produce meaning. In this instance, drawing on tools from multi-modal methodologies enabled me to identify constituent elements, and to understand how these underpin the multifaceted nature of the image theatre process.

In line with the stages of experimentation described above, it has been possible to identify a continuum of meaning production through different types of interpretation and engagement with these embodied elements. An analysis of the image-making and interpretation processes, through reviewing video material, workshop notes and photographs, showed that the details of physical arrangement both within and between individuals, were a key factor in the production of ideas, feelings, thoughts and perceptions, both for those within each image and for those viewing and subsequently engaging with each image. The continuum of meaning production, in which we see a move from meaning as something static and stable which is there to be read, to something that is co-created, ambiguous, and changeable, is produced in the process from initial interpretations, first impressions and surface-level observations, through multiple readings and alternative interpretations, to active processes in which meaning-making through the body is a shared creative act.

A focus on elements of embodiment in this section, allows us to understand the move from meaning embedded in the images, to meaning negotiated and co-created through experimentation. As can be seen in the tables in Appendix C, the elements of embodiment (including modes and other relational features) identified and analysed were: gaze/eye-contact; facial expression; proximity; feet positioning; touch/body-contact; and gesture. These specific aspects were selected partly through my own observation of the key constituent visual elements of the images, and partly through analysing participants' comments in discussing the images. Whilst my approach to transcription initially foregrounded individual constituent elements, it is fundamental to understand that meaning is made and interpreted through a combination of these elements in dynamic relationship with each other.

In order to further explicate the ways that we might understand the continuum of meaning that is produced through experimentation in image theatre, I have selected two modes as examples: gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact. While my own analysis of the images gave equal weight to gaze, facial expression, proximity, feet positioning and touch – across all four image sets the participants most frequently referred to gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact, and whilst they do not operate independently of the other elements, they are useful to draw out in order to highlight the different ways that elements interact to generate meaning within image theatre. For example, different kinds of meaning are produced when modes and come into alignment, cohere, move out of alignment, or contrast. In this section then, I use selected examples to show firstly how elements in alignment or dis-alignment produce different meanings (using examples primarily from image sets A and D); and secondly, how playing with embodiment as the focus for experimentation produces new meaning across the continuum (using examples primarily from image sets B and C).

4.2.1. Elements in alignment and dis-alignment: meaning embedded in the image as a first reading of the continuum

In analysing transcript material (written, diagrammatic and recorded), one of the patterns that has emerged is the different kinds of meaning interpreted and ascribed when modes or elements are 'in alignment' with each other compared to when they are in 'dis-alignment'. The following example, using Image Set A, illustrates the ways that the combinations of gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact, alongside other elements, produce alternative meanings and generate a range of interpretations.
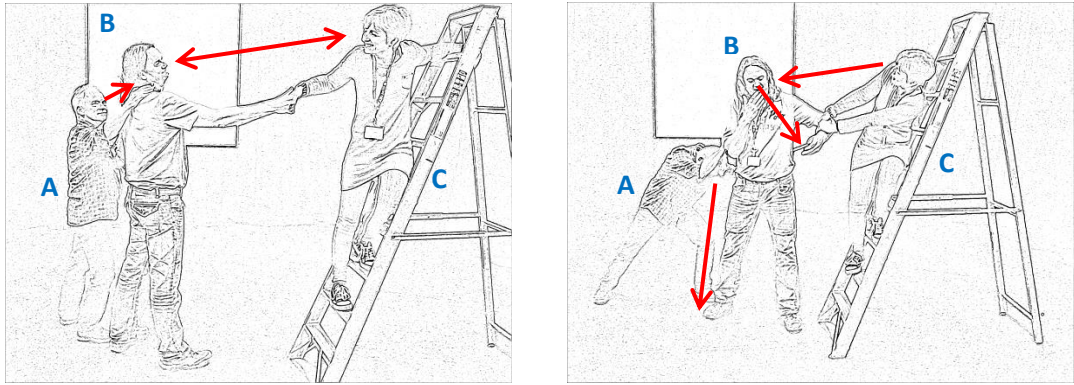
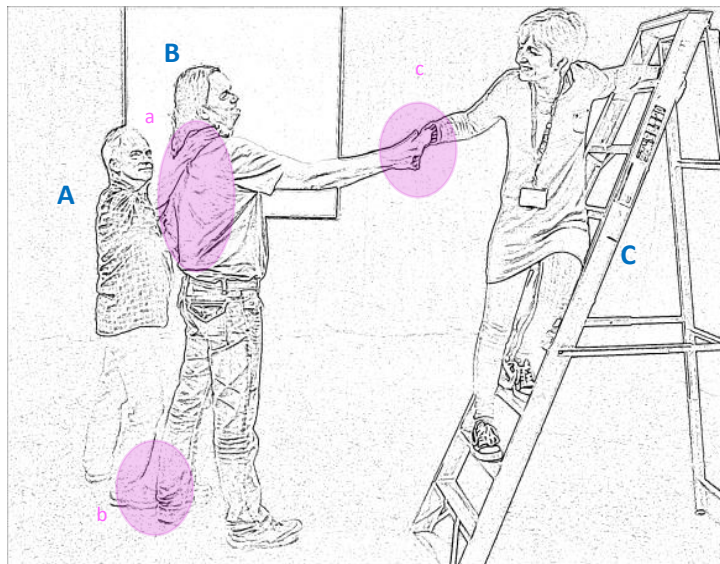**Figure 11:** Diagram of Images A1 and A2 illustrating gaze/eye contact.
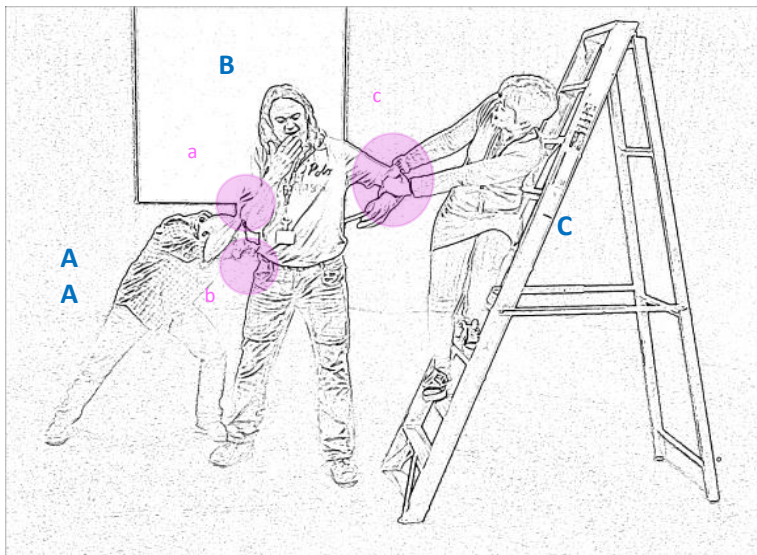

Fig 12: Body contact in Image A1.

Fig 13: Body contact in Image A2.

The following extract is from the transcript of discussion after viewers considered Image A2:

> **V1:** This one is so different
>
> **V2/V3** [*almost simultaneously*]: Their relationships are completely different.
>
> **V4:** They're pulling in different directions…
>
> **V1:** … and because the eye focus is not the same… there is a lack of unity.
>
> **V2:** Yes, it is much more disjointed, or like, much more effort seems to be required.
>
> **V1:** When they're looking at each other, they are more united or there's better communication. But in the second one the student is so distracted, he is just looking at his phone and yawning.

V5: [C] is more welcoming and supportive in the first one because of their direct eye contact.

V3: In the first one they are looking at each other in a friendly way.

V5: And even though she is still looking at him in the second one, the link between them is broken which makes her eye contact seem to be more to do with the pulling. It is more like she is pressuring him.

…

V3: Because [A] is looking down at the floor it makes the effort of pushing look much more.

V1: He might be the student's parent who is feeling really frustrated at having to push his son.

…

V2: B is just focused on his phone [*general giggles of recognition in the group*]. I think that's the cause of a lot of disconnection. Although I know some students do use their phones for notes, it does distract. He doesn't seem engaged.

The difference in gaze/eye contact alone was clearly visible in the diagrams, and combined with changes in both touch and proximity, contributed to the interpreting of changed relationships between the figures in the images. The red arrows in the diagrams of Images A1 and A2 offer a stark visualisation of the idea of elements (in this case the mode of gaze) being in alignment or dis-alignment. The move from Image A1, where the elements can be described as being in alignment – the lines between them suggest a coherence or continuity - to Image A2 in which the lines point in different directions and have a sense of disconnection, suggests that the generation of meaning was impacted on at a micro level by these shifting orientations of elements.

This was also clear in the language that was used in talking about the images. Where, in relation to Image A1, viewers used words like "welcoming", "supportive" and "united", for Image A2 the dis-alignment signalled a "lack of unity", with characters "pulling in different directions". One of the viewers specifically commented that "you can see this because the eye focus is not the same as in the first image". In other words, this sense of 'pulling in different directions' was not just because of the literal pulling and pushing that could be seen, but because of what was represented by the changed direction of the eyes. The changed relationship here also appeared to be linked to changed

communication, with a sense of eye contact in Image A1 suggesting "better communication" as documented in the transcript above. The contrast in alignment of elements led to discussion about the very different meanings that viewers felt were being communicated. While the basic structure of the image had not changed radically, the meaning of the image shifted to one of coercion. As one viewer pointed out, "[C] is using both hands to pull [B] – there is clearly much greater force being exerted". Another viewer suggested that "it makes [B] look unwilling to move", whilst another proposed that "[A]'s hands, while still on [B], are not the gentle encouraging touches of [Image A1], but rather a more forceful pushing". Those points of body contact, combined with changed gaze, foot positioning and posture, shifted fundamentally both the physical and power relationships between the characters. As discussion of the image proceeded, there was a deepening of exploration including, for example, the specific situations or contexts of people in the image. For example:

> **V1:** Given the way they are pushing and pulling him, there is also the possibility that [B] is not *suited* to university, or that he actually doesn't want to be there, full stop. The expectation is often that you *have* to go to university, and [A] is pushing really hard.

This led to a further discussion about why students go to university, the different pressures on them (A as a parent pushing), and the kinds of students that come to a post-92 university such as the one that the participants work in.

Considering elements in this way further highlighted the dialogic nature of engagement with the images, and a sense in the comments of weighing up options – 'this rather than that'. For example, in Image A1, "[C]'s hand-holding is guiding rather than pulling"; "[A]'s hand on [B]'s shoulder is supporting rather than coercing". This does not mean that viewers were opting for fixed either/or interpretations; rather, this was an acknowledgement that combinations of modes and other elements could mean different things, could be interpreted in different ways, and then, in the context of the image as a whole and in relation to other elements, offered specific choices of interpretation. In Image A1, viewers tended to identify both characters A and C as gentle in their contact with B. A's hands were described by one viewer as "supportive and strong". There was some ambiguity at one point in the discussion, however, about whether A was guiding

B forward or holding him back, but a consensus quickly emerged that in the context of the overall image, A was guiding B forward. It was important, however, that the opportunity was there for this different possibility to be voiced and considered. In this sense the alignment or dis-alignment of elements should not be seen as generating fixed meanings, but in contributing further to a broadening of meaning potential.

It is also noteworthy that viewers' comments also suggested that elements in alignment or dis-alignment were quite often seen as an indicator of feeling or emotion. This is significant when exploring image theatre as an embodied experience which integrates aspects of 'thinking-feeling-being' (as discussed in Chapter 2). For example, in Image A1, the characters were all described (in the transcript above) as "looking at each other in a friendly way". C was described as "welcoming and supportive because of her direct eye contact". In Image A2, B's gaze suggested "a feeling of disconnection". And so in relation to the bigger theme of the purpose or function of contemporary universities, there was a sense of what we might call affective experiences partly interpreted through the interplay of gaze/eye contact, touch/body contact and other elements – the sense of feelings of friendliness, support, welcome, perhaps unity or collegiality, were contrasted with the feelings of disconnection, frustration, tiredness and/or boredom.

Another area in which the elements in alignment or dis-alignment elicited comment was in interpretations of perceived intentions of the characters or figures in the images. For example, in Image A1, it was commented that C's direct eye contact and gentle hand-holding with B made it look like she was inviting him forward or wanting to guide him in an encouraging and supportive way. In Image A2, however, while C was still looking at B, the eye contact and arm pulling was more about pressure than invitation. In other words, there was a change in interpretation of intention brought about through a change in context and relationship attributed to the embodied image. In considering touch and gaze specifically, there was some discussion about who A and C were as characters. Initially, the discussion focused on the ideas that they were lecturers guiding the student. The modes in alignment were in some way symbolic of the nurturing and pastoral role that academics are expected to play in contemporary universities. But as the conversation continued, it was also suggested that A could be the parent of the student, encouraging him to succeed.

It is interesting to note that those who created the image had not considered specific 'characters'. Their response to viewers after the various interpretations had been discussed, included the following comments:

> **P1:** We were talking about the fact that the modern university pushes students, but also supports and nurtures. We didn't have specific roles in mind – in our heads it was more abstract.
>
> **P2:** Someone said I was the parent, and that hadn't occurred to me at all, but that could absolutely be the case.

In this example, then, the combination of gaze/eye contact, touch/body contact and other elements was understood by those creating the image, to stand in for the pushing or supporting of students in a wider sense. Whilst roles were assigned by viewers, for the makers of the image, it was more symbolic. What the image process allowed, however, was for viewers to interpret this broader notion of pushing and support in terms of their own tangible experience, and to make alternative suggestions drawing on personal positioning.

The implication for the image theatre facilitator of understanding the way elements work in combination and in different degrees of alignment, is that it becomes possible to more consciously identify moments for interrogation and opportunities for specific types of questioning. Whilst from experience, as a facilitator I would normally intuitively recognise these shifts as being significant and ask questions accordingly, the ability to analyse changes in alignment and dis-alignment of elements in action offers the opportunity to question viewers with greater depth, and to refine questioning to take account of this specific aspect of meaning-making. In other words, more precise questions can be generated by noting the differences in alignment and dis-alignment as way to more critically guide viewer interpretation.

We can see a good contrasting example in the way that the alignment and dis-alignment of elements contributes to the ways that meaning is interpreted in Image Set D. What was most striking about this image set was the absence of both eye contact and of touch/body contact between the participants.
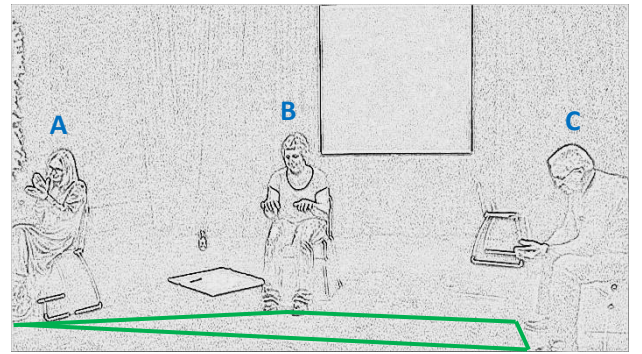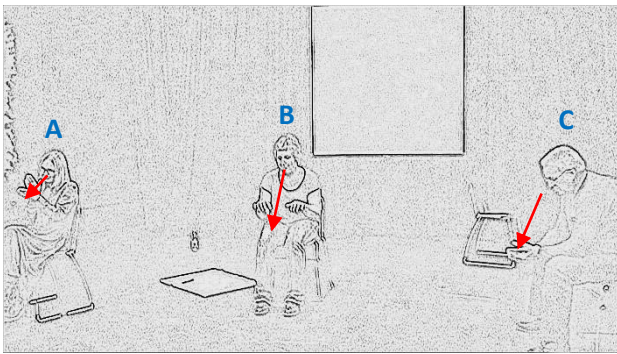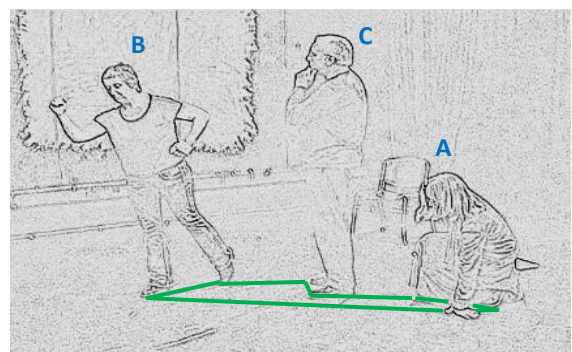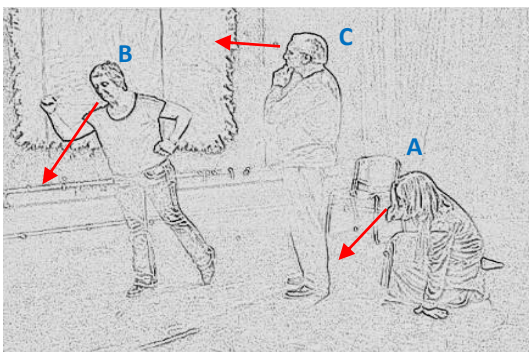
Figure 14: Image D1.

Figure 15: Image D2.

The lack of touch/body contact or eye contact was immediately picked up by the viewers, and this, together with the identification of the distance between the participants, especially in Image D1, became a key focus of interpretation. Where in the other three Image Sets, gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact were dominant because of their obvious presence, in this instance they dominated because of their absence, giving a stark sense of modes in dis-alignment. In this instance, the three characters were first identified as either students or academics carrying out different kinds of activities – A was seen to be on an iPad, B typing on a computer and C reading a book. Initial interpretations suggested that the contemporary university was about writing and researching, and this led to a passionate questioning about why the image did not show any practice of the kind that is predominantly done in a Faculty of Creative Industries, including the kinds of practice-as-research that is carried out through the mediums of, for example, animation, dance, and film. In many ways the viewers seemed to be challenging the group about why they had chosen "old fashioned, stereotypical" ideas of what a university is.

However, as the image was considered further, the perspective shifted when the characters were thought about differently, as this extract from the transcript shows:

V1: What if they are not academics, but administrators… So maybe they are showing that Universities are mostly about administration now.

V2: Yes… I was reading somewhere that the number of university administrative staff in the UK has grown hugely, and the number of academic staff has shrunk.

V1: Which is maybe also why they are at such a distance from each other, because everything is now in administrative silos.

V3 [*laughing*]: Yip, universities would be great places if it weren't for all those pesky academics!

V2: But actually, if you think about it, how much of our role as academics is now administrative. As a Course Leader I seem to do more administration than anything.

V4: If you think about the other image that we created earlier [B2] where we were standing in circles, that's like the antithesis to this one… cos there, academics, administrators and students would all be in those circles of support.

In this case then, the absence of eye contact and touch, the gaze focused on mimed objects, and the clear distance between people, was equated with an experience of being in silos.

As it turned out, when the group who had created the image commented later, they had not considered that they might be representing administration or an idea of isolation; they had indeed been thinking in much more literal terms about the kinds of things that students do. They commented:

> **P1:** It wasn't really about separation; we were thinking more about the journey to graduation. Students working together but learning to use different methodologies.
>
> **P2:** It was more the idea that everyone is completely different, a unique individual. So there are some who respond very well to the interactive nature of it, represented by the iPad, doing stuff that they're always carrying around with them, whilst others are more bookish. So it is like different learning styles. Where you saw the separation as negative, we were seeing a positive in terms of the uniqueness of each learner.

This comment, particularly the last sentence, led to an interesting discussion by group about the actual choices that were made in creating images. There was a sense in which the lack of clarity of modes and elements working together, in alignment or dis-alignment, led to the meaning intention not being communicated effectively. It became a conversation as much about representation and the meaning potential inherent in image theatre as about the content of the images themselves. As one of the viewers put it: "I get what you mean, but to me that didn't show learning styles. The fact that you were so separate, not even looking at each other, was quite a sad image for me actually".

Interestingly, even in Image D2, where the participants were standing closer together and in more of a seemingly coherent formation, there was no eye or body contact. In this case, posture, proximity and facial expression came to the fore, although the lack of the eye and body contact dominated initial discussion; one viewer suggested that "there is no clear relationship between them, although they do look like more of a group even

if none of them are looking at each other", and another stated that "they could be representing the same person in different stages, although there is no contact between them that shows that". A review of the transcripts suggests that the dis-alignment of gaze and touch led to a greater level of uncertainty and questioning about what was being communicated. Nonetheless, there were specific interpretations offered, including that the image showed a progression of some kind from inaction to action:

> **V1:** It is like the two on the left are action and thought. The way that [B] is holding her arms shows something active, and [C] has his hand on his chin as if he's thinking. They're going from inaction [*pointing towards A*] to action [*pointing towards B*]; a kind of progression.
>
> **V2:** [C]'s looking out in a thoughtful way beyond the image… maybe to the future?
>
> **V3:** [B] looks like she's running… like she's in motion. I suppose she could sometimes be looking down at the path like here, and sometimes be looking out ahead.
>
> [*The group looks at the image in silence for a bit*]
>
> **Facilitator:** So if that's the case, what do you think they are communicating about the function or purpose of contemporary universities?
>
> [*The group thinks about this*]
>
> **V2:** In terms of inaction and action… I think they are suggesting that we should be a catalyst, that we [academics/university] should be that thing that inspires, that gets them active, that gets them interested in the subject area, that motivates them.

In this instance then, a link was made between those individual elements (gestures, positions, expressions) and the stimulus question from the start of the activity. When the group themselves explained what their intention had been they stated:

> **P1:** The idea of A crouching down came from the idea of someone helping them up. We talked about the idea that part of what we do is helping people up to a different position and point of view.

P2: We also thought about how in first year you have all this stuff coming at you; 2nd year you're thinking more deeply about it, you're learning and developing a consciousness of what you're learning. And in 3rd year you apply it and run with it.

P3: We didn't think about the [viewers'] suggestion that it shows inaction to action or thought or action, but it is a good interpretation. But their point about motivation was a good one – we were thinking about that.

For the group then, there was particular metaphorical meaning attached to what they were communicating relating to what the role of the university teacher is. Importantly, whilst this group's images might, by comparison, appear to have been the most 'straightforward', literal or lacking in complexity, the discursive process still managed to draw out alternative interpretations and a metaphorical level of communication.

For me, as a facilitator, an interesting question was raised about this particular group's comfort with the process. Could it have been that they simply were not confident enough with each other to be in physical contact, for example? In other words, was the absence of eye contact and touch the result of this specific group dynamic at this point in the workshop process rather than a deliberate aesthetic choice? Or simply this specific combination of people? There is no clear answer in this instance, but is must be considered as a possibility.

In considering examples of the ways that modes and other elements work in alignment and dis-alignment, this section has discussed the ways meaning was embedded in the images and interpreted as part of a first reading on the continuum of meaning production identified in relation to the first stages of experimentation in the image theatre process. Focusing on modes of gaze and touch, working in combination with other elements, it has shown how the alignment and dis-alignment of modes and other elements produces different kinds of meanings and interpretations encouraging a recognition of the multiplicity of ideas, feelings, perceptions and perspectives. If the processes of embedding meaning as image-makers, and interpreting images as viewers, characterise one part of a continuum of meaning, the full continuum becomes evident in the stages of experimentation where group members are changing and recreating the images collectively, playing with the images as part of the dialogic process. The next

section considers further examples, in relation to Image Sets B and C, which focus on the production of new meaning.

4.2.2. Playing with embodiment as the focus for experimentation and the production of new meaning across the continuum

An analysis of the combination of modes and elements in the later stages of experimenting physically with the embodying of ideas and meanings, through changing the images collaboratively, foregrounds meaning-making through the body as a shared creative act and part of the process of dialogue. The set of images below shows two moments in the workshop: The photograph of B1 was taken when person D, originally one of the group viewing the image, added himself to the original image consisting only of A, B and C, to build ideas further. Image B2 was taken at point when the group as a whole (original creators and viewers together) had reworked the image further to explore other potential meanings.
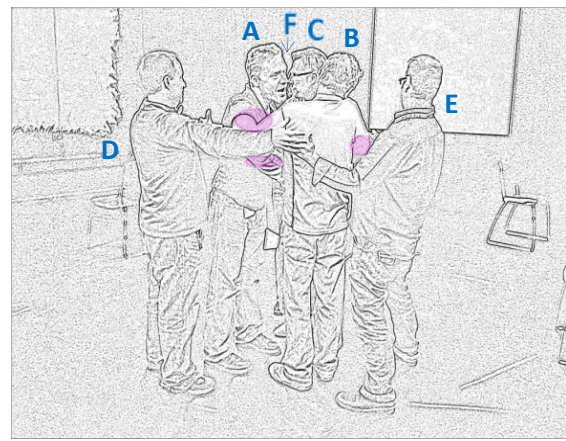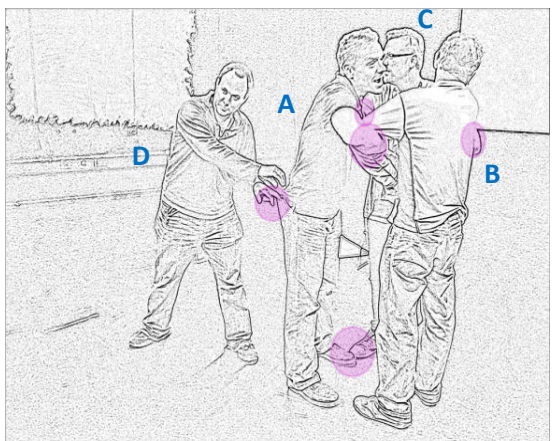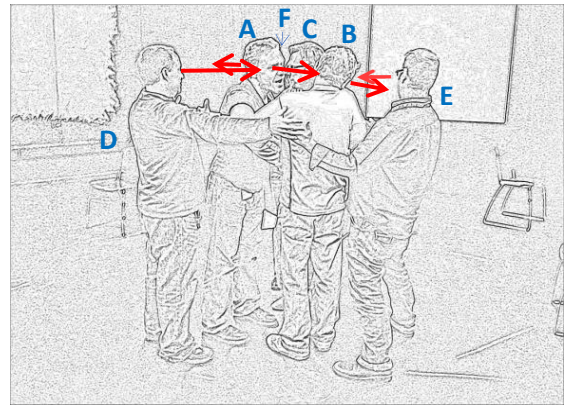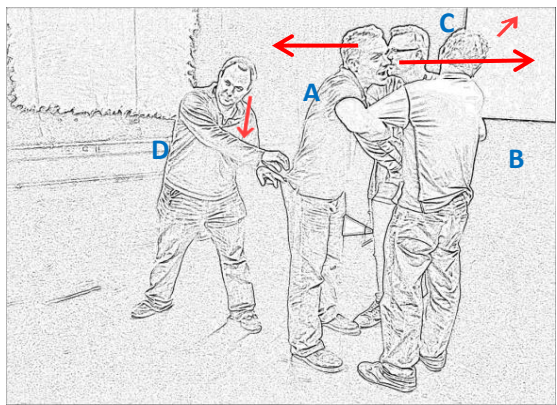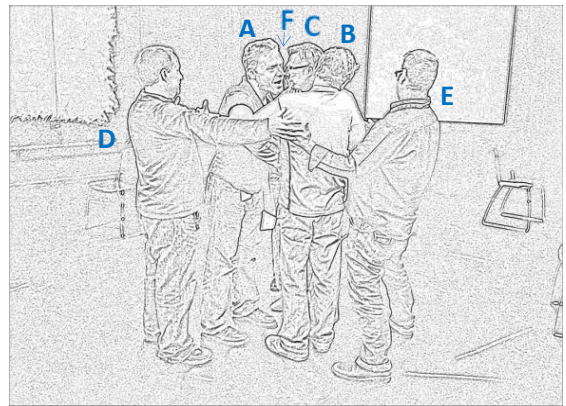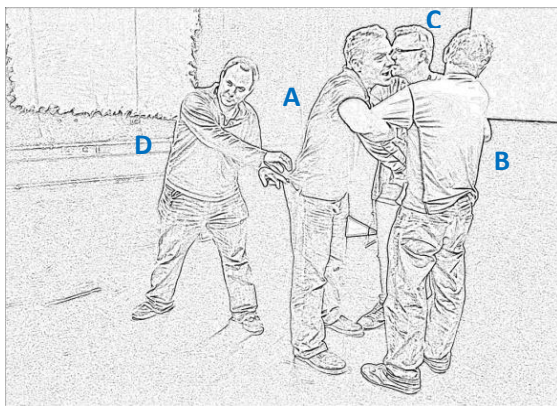
Figure 16: Images B1 (left) and B2 (right).

The first stage of response to the original image (people A, B and C) was developed through discursive interpretation, identifying initial ideas about what the combination of elements suggested. Analysis of the transcripts of the original image for group B suggests that the identification of a combination of elements including of proximity (standing very close together), feet positioning (towards each other in a circle), touch (arms linked) and facial expression (communicating something towards the next person, even if gaze was focused past them) initially suggested for viewers the idea that the image showed people working together and collaborating. One person suggested that "they could be academics and students passing ideas and knowledge onto each other in an ongoing process". It is interesting to note that even if gaze and touch were in dis-alignment here, the configuration of touch/body contact suggested collaboration. It was also pointed out that they seemed to be whispering to each other, which could be ideas or secrets, or perhaps even, as one participant stated it, the old-fashioned game of 'Chinese Whispers' where one thing is said and people hear all sorts of other things. Another suggestion was that it could represent people with different roles having to work together, for example "academics, administrators and other University staff are now all a more direct part of how we work with students". The key point to note here was the way that, through an embodied ensemble of elements, the image was used to evoke a range of initial verbal responses, a reading of the image for its potential foregrounded meaning. In my experience, these initial readings usually reveal the more surface-level (or perhaps simply, the more obvious) interpretations, albeit a variety of different interpretations, and the role of the facilitator then becomes to guide the process backwards and forwards along other points on the continuum to develop a more nuanced and multi-layered set of meanings.

This is illustrated in the way that gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact, alongside other elements, were initially changed and interpreted by the viewers of this specific image. Once a number of interpretations of the original image had been discussed, I, as facilitator, invited viewing participants to make any physical changes to the image in any way they felt would clarify or enhance its meaning, or even shift or change its meaning in line with participants' own experience. Person D had an idea, and rather than explaining it in words, added himself *to* the original image, thus shifting its meaning and introducing the opportunity for further discursive interpretation. In this case the existing multimodal ensemble shifted with the combination of D's proximity to

A (close), his use of gesture and touch (opening A's pocket and putting something in or taking something out), positioning (feet wide apart and turned away from A) and gaze (looking away from the circle).

Thus, when person D added himself to the image, the primary interpretation changed from one of being about collaboration and communication to one to do with finance and student fees. This emerged from the immediate response of viewers to D adopting a position in which he appeared to be taking something out of A's back pocket. The combination of D looking away from the circle while simultaneously touching A's back pocket shifted the focus immediately to that part of the image. D was described as University Management who "have their hand in the student's pocket. Universities have to make money to survive and this can compromise what they're really supposed to be about". Another viewer expressed the idea that it could also be showing that Management "is *in* the student's pocket", elaborating that university management often seemed to position academics in opposition to students, and always backed up the students. This then, is an example of that part of the continuum of meaning, where one of the viewers was able to shift the meaning of the entire image (or at least add another layer by adding a new set of potential interpretations) by employing those physical modes and elements himself. This is partly what I am arguing is distinctive about the way that meaning is produced in image theatre – rather than suggesting a new interpretation of what was already there, this participant was able to introduce, without speaking, a whole new field of meaning potential to act as a catalyst for further discussion and dialogue.

A different point on the continuum of meaning can be seen in the process leading to Image B2. In this case the greater involvement of the whole group in iteratively recreating the image – along the lines discussed in relation to Experimentation sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 on pp.100-104 above – might be understood in terms of the ongoing manipulation and reconfiguration of elements within the multimodal ensemble.

Figure 17: Three photographs of the process of creating Image B2.

In analysing the interaction between interpretive discourse and shifts in the physical image, this example highlights the ways that working with modes and other physical elements became *part of* the discourse of meaning-making.

In photograph (a) for example, one of the viewers [E] had entered the image to show somebody listening to what is being said by those in the circle and perhaps feeding it

back to D. There was a sense of 'listening in'. Utilising gesture and proximity particularly, this participant was able to introduce a new perspective on the experience of higher education. In discussion, E suggested that he was showing that what was being said by those in the circle needed to be heard more widely. One of the viewers suggested that an alternative idea could be that character D was now feeding messages *into* the circle – his gesture looked like he was talking. There was discussion that there was still a sense of an inside and an outside of the circle, which led to a conversation among the group about inclusivity, or lack of it, in decision making in the university, and the ways that communication happens across different hierarchical levels within the institution.

Further on in the process, in photograph (b), a different viewer [G] had come into the space, not as part of the image, but in a 'director's' role, and broken the circle apart. He was experimenting with the group to see what happened if characters A, B and C pointed to each other and looked at each other, rather than linked arms and looked away. In this photograph he was telling and showing them what to do (his pointing was a demonstrating of gesture rather than instructing). An extract from the transcript shows the way that discussion focused on a specific aspect of the embodiment at that point:

> **V1:** Okay… put your arms down… don't keep them linked anymore.
> [*Everyone relaxes from their positions in the image*]
> **V1:** Let's try and see what happens when rather than linking arms you point at each other.
> **P1:** So… what… should the three of us point at each other?
> **V1:** Yes, as you were before but pointing rather than linking. [*They try that out*].
> [*A pause as they consider the impact of that change*].
> **P2:** Maybe we should also be looking at each other?
> [*They all relax again for a moment*].
> **V1:** Yes, that's what I was thinking… look at each other and point at each other… like this [*he demonstrates*].
> [*They try that out*].
> **V2:** It feels a bit more aggressive somehow. Less like collaboration and more like sending directives around the circle.

V3: A circle of managers all issuing instructions that go round and round [*there is some laughter*].

…

Facilitator: So, let's just look at this a moment. Let's look closely at this. Those in the circle keep pointing and look at each other… now look away… now look at each other… now look away… now look at each other.

[*A conversation continues between the viewers about the differences when the participants look at each other or look away*].

The laughter in the transcript is noteworthy – it is what we might call laughter of recognition, which was a feature of all the groups. This was when participants saw something being represented that was familiar to them from their everyday experience and included, for example, when one participant realised that their view or experience was similar to another's. There was something about the playfulness of the form and the opportunity for experimenting, however, which enabled laughter to signal common experiences.

It is clear in analysing the transcripts that laughter occurred for different reasons, including: laughter of recognition; laughter at 'in' jokes; laughing at own interpretations; and playfulness. The political significance of laughter in drama has been well documented (for example, Jenkins, 2001; Charles, 2005; and Scuderi, 2011). Writing about "taking laughter seriously" in considering the carnivalesque, David Charles mentions Augusto Boal specifically, suggesting that in his work, "artfully elicited laughter emerges as a powerful theatrical and political tool." (Charles, 2005: 13). Whilst image theatre is very different to carnival, Charles' insights into the carnival spirit and the upturning of hierarchy are pertinent, for in the workshop space it becomes possible to 'play' with hierarchies and to reimagine different power structures or relationships. In this sense, the laughter that emerges has the potential to be powerfully political. A similar perspective can be found in Ron Jenkins' study on the playwrights and actors, Dario Fo and Franca Rame, *Artful Laughter*. In this book, Jenkins writes of the idea of carnivalesque misrule in which there is a mix of the real and the fictional (Jenkins, 2001). This sheds useful light on this mix, which we have previously discussed in terms of metaxis (the ability to hold the real and imagined worlds in mind at the same time), suggesting that laughter is one of the ways of making sense of this

juxtaposition. In a different vein, Mary Moynihan examines laughter in community-based theatre, stating that "humour is also used as a political tool to encourage change in a creative way where, together, we as practitioners and participants are sharing laughter (and tears) to define our experiences as they are and also as we would like them to be" (Moynihan, 2004: 128).

In my workshops, the laughter of recognition as highlighted above could be further seen in the groups creating Images C1 and C2. There was quite a lot of laughter generally, but it was not laughter of 'playing the fool' or distracting from the activity. Rather, it was laughter of recognition at common frustrations among the group, especially with top-down management and the lack of agency that they expressed feeling as academic staff. With Image C2, the image of the manager pointing a finger led to some laughter. This, however, led to the process of experimenting through changing different positionings in order to reconsider power relations in different ways. Another form of laughter, that at 'in' jokes seemed to contribute to building a sense of group identity. This may be linked to laughter of recognition, but tended to be about responding to some of the perceived absurdities or quirks of their experience as academics. It is significant that these were 'in' jokes among the group as a community of academics given that they had not all met each other before. An example can be seen with Image A1, for example: when the ladder was being set up, the group member setting it up made a comment about health and safety procedures in the faculty which the rest of the group laughed at. I interpreted this as a laughter emerging from a feeling of subversiveness by setting up a ladder without having to fill in a very long risk assessment form or taking account of the umpteen rules and regulations.

If we consider in further detail the substance of the transcript above it becomes evident that the dialogue was not about what meanings the participants were intending to express, but about the elements making up the image. If we reconsider the first part of the same transcript with certain words highlighted, for example, we can see a focus on physical action, gesture and gaze:

> **V1:** Okay… put your arms down… don't keep them linked anymore.
> [*Everyone relaxes from their positions in the image*]

V1: Let's try and see what happens when rather than linking arms you point at each other.

P1: So… what… should the three of us point at each other?

V1: Yes, as you were before but pointing rather than linking. [*They try that out*]. [*A pause as they consider the impact of that change*].

P2: Maybe we should also be looking at each other?

[*They all relax again for a moment*].

V1: Yes, that's what I was thinking… look at each other and point at each other… like this [*he demonstrates*].

[*They try that out*]…

In this example, 'meaning-making' is not about suggesting meanings and asking those in the group to find a way of showing them. Rather, it is about suggesting physical actions, gestures and positions which will in turn *lead* to new possible meanings. The significance of this cannot be underestimated because it suggests that at this point in the continuum, participants are focusing their discussion on those elements that make up the images. In other words, they are working *through* and *with* the body to communicate ideas.

This is further illustrated in photograph (c). Here, the physical positioning was being set up for the what we eventually see in Image B2. In this instance, the participant at the back [F], who had been one of the viewers of the image, had come into the image as an additional character. She suggested surrounding the others with arms outstretched. When the photograph was taken, she was explaining to the others in the group how they should stand before showing it again to the rest of the viewers for further comment:

P6: If the three in the middle link arms again… [*they do*]… yes.. and those of us on the outside stand around them and form another circle.

P4: Are we close to them or far away?

P1: Not too far, I would think…

P6: Yes, just a step away so that we can still close the circle around them.

[*They try this out*].

P5: Should we be holding hands?

[*They hold hands*].

P4: Are we looking at each other or at them?

P5: Let's try looking at those in the middle.

[*The three on the outside look at the three on the inside*].

V1: It is like some kind of protective shield. Are you shielding those on the inside from something?

V2: Or maybe it shows universities as some kind of 'safe space' in which learning can happen.

P6: Let's not hold hands, but still keep our arms outstretched so that our hands are still close, not touching, but *almost* touching.

[*They try this out].*

Again, if we reconsider this transcript, it is evident that the focus is on the physical action primarily rather than on intended meanings:

P6: If the three in the middle link arms again… [*they do*]… yes.. and those of us on the outside stand around them and form another circle. {touch/shape/proximity}

P4: Are we close to them or far away? {proximity}

P1: Not too far, I would think… {proximity}

P6: Yes, just a step away so that we can still close the circle around them. {proximity/ shape}

[*They try this out*].

P5: Should we be holding hands? {touch}

[*They hold hands*].

P4: Are we looking at each other or at them? {gaze}

P5: Let's try looking at those in the middle. {gaze}

[*The three on the outside look at the three on the inside*].

V1: It is like some kind of protective shield. Are you shielding those on the inside from something? {beginning to interpret}

V2: Or maybe it shows universities as some kind of 'safe space' in which learning can happen. {beginning to interpret}

P6: Let's not hold hands, but still keep our arms outstretched so that our hands are still close, not touching, but *almost* touching. {touch/gesture}

[*They try this out].*

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The blue indicates bodily action contained within in the dialogue; the green highlights my own identification of specific modes or elements suggested by that dialogue; the orange shows interpretative statements within the dialogue; and the purple indicates my notation of interpretation. Again, what is evident here is that the group was more focused on image construction than on communicating *a* meaning. The body had become a dialogic medium together with verbal discussion, rather than simply a conduit through which to communicate a pre-determined message or meaning. This part of the continuum thus contrasts strongly with the earlier part where the body was used to communicate a fixed idea and to be 'read' by an audience. It is important to state that all parts of the continuum are significant in image theatre, and that working up and down along the continuum through the process is part of what builds depth and draws out insights. There is, nonetheless, an importance in pushing along the continuum through the process towards those interactive points where the whole group together is using modes and elements to create image and to shape meaning potential.

A consideration of Image Set C offers a further example of how modes and other elements, as part of each image ensemble and as part of the process of playing with images, functioned as part of the process of experimentation, thus encouraging a dialogue that was differentiated from more usual workplace discourse.
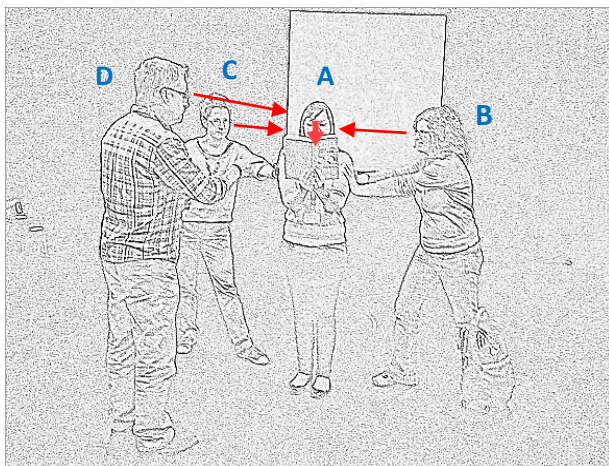

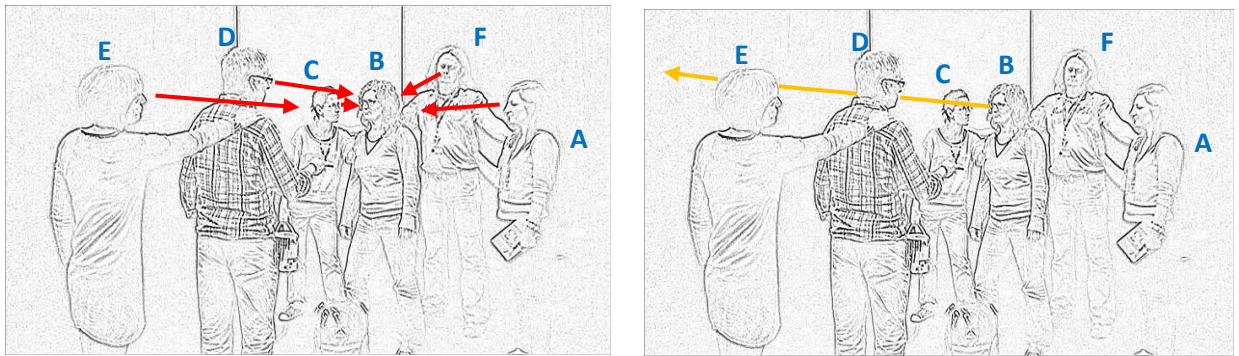**Figure 18:** Gaze in Image C1, showing focus on A

Figure 19: Gaze in Image C2, showing focus on B (left), and B's gaze outwards beyond the other figures (right)
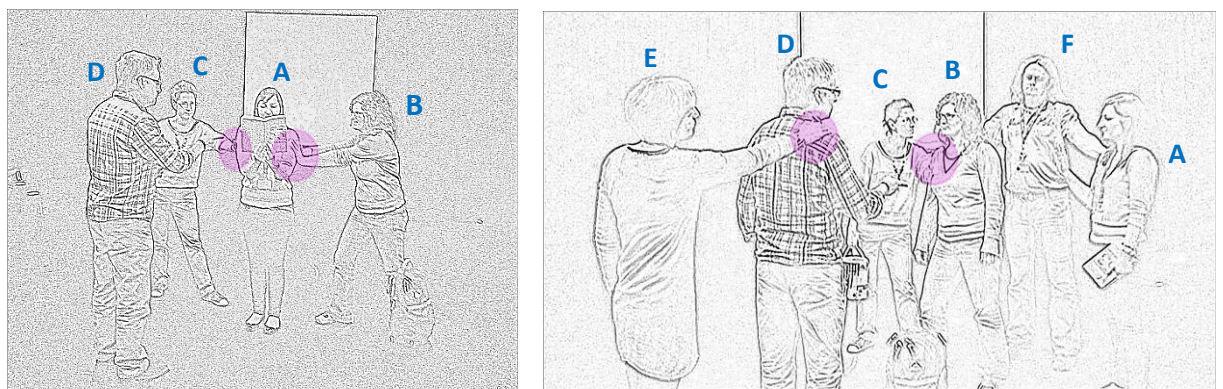

Figure 20: Images C1 (left) and C2 (right), highlighting points of touch.

In Images C1 and C2 embodied elements tended to focus discussion on specific characters and relationships. In this example, the combinations of gaze/eye contact and touch/body contact, alongside other elements, suggested a strong link between relationship and character for viewers. As discussed earlier in the chapter, in Image C1, A's focus on the book initially suggested to viewers that she was a student, while the group creating the image explained that they envisioned her as a lecturer.

In Image C2, where the process had moved from the second stage of experimentation to the third and fourth stages (the image re-created by the whole group as they added characters, changed places and tried out different positions), there was agreement that person B in the middle represented a student, but this time she was looking out beyond those surrounding her. Comments on gaze/eye contact also led to observations about broader political and contextual relationships, including the assigning of additional characters to the people in the image. For example, E was "the Politician who is looking over the shoulder of Management [D], keeping an eye on everyone, with a focus on

[B]". Again, this notion of 'keeping an eye on everyone' became a key point of discussion for this group – who was watching who, the idea of surveillance, different role-players being kept in check. F was described by a viewer as "the parent who has his eye on his daughter [B] whilst embracing the whole system". In a very tangible sense, the different combinations of gaze, touch and proximity allowed participants to give voice to their experiences or perceptions of these different kinds of power relationships that impact on university life.

Interestingly, the agreement that the person in the middle of Image C2 represented a student seemed to broaden the interpretation (compared to C1):

> **V/P1:** Because they are all looking at her, again there is lots of pressure from different directions.
> **V/P2:** Now there is also Government [E] looking over the shoulder of Management [D]…
> **V/P1:** And the student's Parent [F] is also focused on her.
> **V/P3:** They all seem to be focused on the student. She has everyone looking at her. It is perhaps showing how important 'the student experience' has become, but it is also a lot of pressure on her.
> **V/P4:** We should remember, though, that although they may be all looking from different directions and pushing or pulling in different directions, the fact that their eye contact is all focused on her [B] means that there aren't necessarily always different agendas. They might, in their different ways, want what is best for that student.
> **V/P3:** Hmmm, yes… but what is 'best for the student' isn't always the same thing, and the student herself is looking beyond them in any case…

This identification of gaze/eye contact within this specific modal ensemble as a signifier of "the student experience" opened up discussion on an aspect of participants' experience of their University, and perhaps of contemporary higher education more broadly. The observation that "they are all looking at her [B]" and that "they all seem to be focused on the student" translated into the feeling that the student has become all-important in contemporary university politics and strategy, and that everything now seemed to be about satisfying students sometimes to the detriment of staff, or even to

appropriate teaching and learning itself. In one sense then, the whole image became about 'the student experience' – not what it is in practice, but a concept or ethos that seemed to infuse every aspect of the university. In other words, by understanding gaze as a mode working in combination with other modes and elements, we can see how the material/literal gaze of the participants making up the image opened up possibilities for a more broadly metaphorical interpretation of the scene.

This can be seen further in Image C2, where character B was described by one viewer as "not looking at any of the others, but is looking out into the distance. She is looking out to where she wants to go; the future, or aspirations. It is beyond the various players around her". The word 'gaze' is specifically used by one of the other viewers: "[B]'s gaze suggests that she is not bound by the system. She is already looking to a life beyond the university". For some in this group then, this mode was partly seen to signify 'aspiration' and 'forward-looking'. In this way, the specific physical configuration was seen by this viewer to embody a metaphorical meaning that is also linked to their everyday experience in the university.

In considering gaze/eye contact together with touch/body contact, proximity and facial expression, power relationships, and perhaps more specifically, status, were brought to the fore for the group. In the example above, where a viewer of Image C1 questioned whether the fact that the person holding the paint can (character C), was only pushing with one hand whereas B was pushing with two implied different levels of pressure. There was thus a sense that touch and body contact was an indicator of relative power. This became a point of experimentation for this group when they moved to Image C2, as different body contact positions were 'tried out'. It became a process with a lot of swapping around of people, considering and discussing the image and then changing it again. So, for example, at one point (the point that the photo of C2 was taken), one of the participants commented:

> [A] is no longer touching [B]. [C] is touching [B], but not pushing in the same way as in the previous image. The lecturer [A] is standing back from the student; it is almost as if she has the least power, whereas industry [C] has much more of an influence on the university now. Industry is perhaps encouraging the student towards them.

We thus see a shift, as part of the image theatre process, from embodied elements being read and interpreted at literal and metaphorical levels, to being actively used to make meanings that communicated individual and collective ideas of contemporary university experience at broader political levels.

Occasionally, laughter would accompany the suggestion of an interpretation, for example in commenting on Image C2, one of the viewers giggled when suggesting that "*[F] could be some kind of godly figure*", implying 'this may be silly, but I was thinking that...'. No viewers actually verbalised the feeling of 'this may be silly' which does sometimes happen in these kinds of workshops, but the accompanying laugh suggested a certain level of uncertainty in making the suggestion. This was not the dominant mode of discussion, but it did happen a couple of times, and the person was always reassured and encouraged by others in the group. In this sense then, we might think of this as a laughter indicating slight discomfort or lack of confidence. However in signalling this, laughter can also evoke group support to help people through that discomfort.

Figure 21: Participants creating Image C1.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted ways that in analysing image theatre as an embodied method, drawing partly on approaches to multimodality, we can understand more fully the way that meaning is both created and interpreted in this live, participatory process. Through identifying four stages of experimentation in the image theatre process, and a related continuum of meaning production, the analysis of combinations of modes and other elements shifts meaning from something initially seen as static, something to be 'read' in the image, to a dynamic, collaborative co-construction of meaning. The 'playing' with embodied elements through experimenting with meaning potential and creation, opened up both the expression of ideas and the reading of meaning to metaphor, ambiguity, alternative interpretations, personal association and the identification of broader social themes.

The contribution of this chapter is to show that: a) image theatre afforded the opportunity to draw out a variety of layers of meaning or different moments of meaning in ways that were less likely to emerge through more straightforwardly linguistically-based approaches (such as meetings or focus groups). The specific focus on individual modes and other elements highlights the contribution of these smaller units to the analysis of the multifaceted multimodal ensembles; b) from a professional perspective, image-making offered participants the opportunity to experiment with, and understand more deeply, the interpersonal and more broadly political relationships that impact on their working lives; and that c) a focus on modes and elements in relation to this specific kind of embodied interaction enabled the possibility for engaging in a way that echoes the 'thinking-feeling-being' experience. Importantly, whilst much multimodal analysis is focused on responses to, or interactions with, previously created representations (magazine adverts, films, sculptures, photographs and so on), this work on image theatre contributes to an understanding of the way that embodied elements are used in deliberately *creating* layerings of meaning as part of an interactive process.

Gaining greater detailed insight into image theatre as an embodied activity, through focusing on modes and other embodied elements as part of an experimental process, has enabled a way of understanding how constituent elements of images, and their complex interactions, open up meaning potential, leading me to appreciate in greater depth the

way that meaning is made as well as interpreted. The idea of embodiment, in this specific workshop process, is partly focused in the first instance on the body as a material element of discussion. It also encapsulates the interactive nature of the process in which speaking, showing, silence, and laughter are all part of generating and interpreting meaning, and in which the iterative process of experimenting, characterised by a non-linearity of dialogue and making and re-making of bodily representations, highlights an embracing of multiplicity and ambiguity as valuable to making sense of workplace experience. Attention to the bodily suggests that the image theatre process is not only one of representing, but also of being physically present in the world, of knowing the world through the body. In this sense, then, this method used bodily interaction was a way of accessing and making visible, participants' knowledge of the workplace, relationships, positions, feelings and broader lived experience.

CHAPTER 5

**THEORISING EMBODIMENT IN IMAGE THEATRE, A METHODOLOGICAL
CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

Researching and writing this thesis as part of my EdD study has given me the
opportunity to explore ideas of embodiment from different disciplinary perspectives,
and to consider how these might help better understand and investigate image theatre as
a process. In particular, it has enabled me to make an original contribution to
knowledge through understanding image theatre as an embodied activity more fully in
two ways, one specifically methodological and the second a more substantive
theorisation of embodiment in image theatre.

Methodologically, my thesis has developed a specific approach to analysing the image
theatre process. Using this approach, through paying attention to modes and other
elements, the analysis illuminates the dynamic and multiplicit nature of meaning-
making through the combination of bodily interaction and discussion. This substantive
analysis allows us to understand *how* the bodily aspects of the image theatre process
constitute forms of experimentation with meaning-making, and as a result produce
distinctively open flows of meaning.

In addition, this has allowed me to reassess my own practice in applied drama,
specifically through understanding how, in image theatre as an embodied process,
meaning is collaboratively co-created. It has also enabled me to reimagine my own
professional practice as a leader and manager within higher education seeking to more
fully empower colleagues in their work within the university.

In this light, in articulating this contribution, this chapter comprises three sections:
firstly, a theorising of embodiment in the practice of image theatre; secondly, a
discussion on the methodological contribution of this thesis; and thirdly, a consideration
of the implications of this study for leadership and professional development within the
university.

5.1. Theorising Embodiment in the Practice of Image Theatre

A key contribution of this thesis to applied drama research is a more critical understanding of embodiment within image theatre. In Chapter 2, I showed how existing scholarship in applied theatre investigates the use of image theatre in a wide variety of contexts, with a focus on generally visible political and interpersonal structures and relationships. I argued, however, that whilst image theatre is consistently described as an embodied approach, questions of how embodiment is understood, or in what ways an understanding of embodiment elucidates the distinctiveness of this activity, generally remained unexplored. Exploring ideas of embodiment from different disciplinary perspectives, I suggested that theorisations of embodiment give us the resources to begin to think about these questions. In this section I consider conceptualisations of embodiment in relation to my analysis of the image theatre workshops in order to propose how we might more rigorously understand embodiment within image theatre. This section further develops the analysis presented in Chapter 4, showing how it can be understood through conceptualisations of embodiment as intersubjective and dynamic.

Embodiment in Image Theatre as Intersubjective

In my analysis of the image theatre workshops it was evident that meaning was both made through, and emerged from, the collaborative process in which participants were working with combinations of bodily interaction and discussion. This opened up the possibility for exploring a range of perspectives and perceptions, and for drawing on individual and collective experiences. In this light, one of the ways of understanding embodiment within image theatre is through recognising how this process encourages a shift from an objective view of the self to a more subjective positioning. As noted in Chapter 2, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that in perceiving the world through and within our bodies, the body is also the subject of perception. This phenomenological perspective focuses on meaning as a living experience – in other words, as objects and situations are experienced by embodied subjects, subjective experience is given value. As Bresler explains, rather than seeing the body as an object in the objective sense of being identified through spatial properties and its location, it is "a subject of action…

Thus, the subject is a perceiving body, situated in time and immersed in the living world" (Bresler, 2004: 18-19). This is fundamental to the image theatre process and can be seen in the four stages of experimentation, which was set out in more detail in the previous chapter: 1) Creating the initial images from small group discussion through a process of physically improvising and crafting; 2) Developing ideas and interpretations through dialogue; 3) Changing the image details through viewers 'directing' the performers; and 4) Experimenting through iteratively amending and/or recreating the images by the group as a whole. Setting out the four stages in this way made it possible to notice opportunities that the process offers for the changing of subject positions, through encouraging alternative interpretations and the sharing of personal thoughts, feelings and anecdotes.

Significantly, meaning is created through interaction and discussion *between* people. Through focusing on modes and other elements in the analysis, it was possible for me to show that all modes and elements are partial, and that it takes combinations of modes and other elements to express different meanings. This resonates strongly with the phenomenological conceptualisation of embodiment as intersubjective, which stresses that meaning and perception happen between people, and between people and the space they move in, rather than exclusively within them (Husserl, 1931; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Moran and Mooney, 2002; Wehrle, 2019). This is a view supported by contemporary cognitive science studies, which as discussed, argue that rather than being understood as abstract mental processes, thinking and consciousness arise from, and are shaped by, experience, emerging from what takes place between people as embodied beings and between people and their environments. In this light, all four stages of experimentation can be understood as helping participants to make more use of this intersubjective aspect of the meaning making process, each stage opening up a distinctive aspect of the meaning-making potential of the body.

In the first stage, the discussion and trying out of complex combinations of ideas by participants through creating the initial images with their bodies helped participants to engage with the multiple meanings that can be created within a single image. This encouraged a disruption of common workplace language, demanding an ongoing clarifying of shared understandings and an acknowledgement of ambiguity. Thus, not only did the composite images that were ultimately created express a range of responses

to the stimulus phrase given and offer the opportunity for multiple interpretations, but each individual within the image was encouraged, through the process of discussion and creation, to reflect and contribute based on their own experiences and responses. Rather than understanding these responses, interpretations and experiences as produced by individual subjects, the distinctive process of the image theatre foregrounds these meanings as intersubjective: that is, the way the meanings are produced in the particular embodied context of the group. Standing up in the group and trying out initial images, introducing the body as an explicit part of the meaning-making, opened up new ideas, and the specific move from spoken discourse to the use of the body was central to this.

This intersubjective meaning-making potential was further opened up in the second phase of experimentation as participants moved through a process of interpreting images. In this phase, when group members were interpreting the images created by other members of the group – that is, 'reading' the static tableaux created by their bodies – a range of perspectives was evident through the testing of ideas and the interplay between bodily representation and verbal discussion. The images discussed enabled experiences to be 'made visible' and the ambiguity and multiplicity of relationships, feelings and experiences were brought to the fore. In comparing images with modes and elements in alignment or dis-alignment, my analysis highlighted how meanings changed when even subtle changes in bodily relationships were made; and how these *bodily* interpersonal shifts altered the way that relationships, emotions and ideas were experienced by viewers. In this phase, the relationship between meaning-making and the body shifted to one which can be understood in three different ways: firstly, in the bodily relationships within the images themselves where, as shown, combinations of modes and elements enabled a range of different readings; secondly, in the spaces 'between' the performers and the viewers where the different experiences and perceptions of the viewers were brought to bear on making sense of the images; and thirdly, in the discussion between the viewers themselves, as they commented on and questioned each other's ideas. This suggests that understanding embodiment in image theatre as intersubjective is not simply about recognising different subjective perspectives being brought together; rather, it shows the complexity of the relationship between the body and the intersubjective production of meaning. It suggests the role of the body as a collection of different material elements, the role of the spaces between bodies grouped as images and bodies as perceiving subjects, and the discursive

interactions between bodies as individual speaking subjects. My analysis of the image theatre process thus opens up further opportunities for the analysis of embodied intersubjectivity.

This exploration of intersubjectivity was further extended in the different relationships produced through physically changing the images in the third and fourth phases of experimentation, first through directing those in the image, and then through iteratively recreating and amending images as a whole group. The idea of embodied ontology, seen for example in the intersection of dance studies and cognitive science (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999; Batson and Wilson, 2014) – the idea of knowing *through* the body, a sense of the world based on being physically, sensorially in it - , helps to make sense of this process. My analysis of the workshops suggested that in the move to the fourth phase of experimentation, participants were focusing on what they should be doing with their bodies to express meaning, rather than on what ideas they might be trying to show, indicating a significant shift in the meaning-making process, to a form of cognition that takes place in the body.

In this case, the process of image construction, of deliberately working through the body as a medium of expression, and of 'playing' with meaning in trying out different possibilities, saw the further opening up of a distinctive aspect of the meaning-making potential of the body as cognition. At the same time, as Crossley argues, embodiment is not about individual bodies but about *inter*action, and so cognition through the body happens in spaces and in groups of bodies. The analysis of the four stages of the workshop thus helps us to understand image theatre as an intersubjective process, and also to understand the complexity of that intersubjective process, involving bodily elements, spaces between bodies, bodies as perceiving entities, and bodies as ways of knowing.

Embodiment in Image Theatre as Dynamic

Nathan Stern's view that embodiment is always *per-formed* rather than pre-formed is compelling when considering image theatre. Stern's argument that embodiment is "continually constituted through its ongoing relations" (Stern, 2013: 12), both reflects

theoretical positions in sociology and cognitive science, and mirrors the image theatre process and approach to analysis in my research. Across the continuum, all four stages of experimentation revealed a dynamic sense of embodiment, albeit in different ways and with a greater emphasis on co-creation in the later stages. Another aspect of my analysis of the workshops suggests how meaning moved from something static and stable that was there to be read, to something that was co-created, ambiguous and changeable. This sense of dynamism and change is another aspect of the way embodiment contributes to the image theatre process.

In the first stage, we saw this dynamism in participants working out how to show what they had noted down on their flip-chart paper, through a combination of discussion and physically trying out ideas with their bodies. In the process of 'translating' talked about ideas into images created with bodies, participants grappled not only with how to express meaning but how they had to clarify what they actually meant by the words they used; for example, when, as discussed on p.96, group C realised that what was meant by the phrase they had written down – "pressure on us from different directions" – was understood differently by each of them and that they then had to find ways of generating multiple possible meanings through their image. It was the move from the discursive to the embodied creation of meaning, intentionally finding ways to express their ideas through their bodies, that seemed to have led to both the identification of their varied understandings, and the need to find ways of expressing those different perceptions. The idea of embodiment as dynamic helps us understand how it was not the case that an action or gesture represented one idea which became its fixed meaning; rather meaning was continually created and recreated through discussion and experiment, and was shown to be fluid and ambiguous rather that fixed. Meaning did not reside exclusively or unequivocally in the frozen image as a *product*, rather it was a changing, negotiated part of a *process*, and even when the final images were decided on, it quickly became apparent that meaning was not static or stable.

This could be seen in the second phase where although the images themselves were static, they lead to a range of interpretations. The testing of ideas through dialogue, and the interplay between bodily representation and verbal discussion not only elicited a range of possible meanings, but also meanings which were sometimes different to what had been intended by those creating the images. In the discussion of Image C1, for

example, there was an extract in which viewers were discussing the image in relation to the mode of gaze or eye contact. The transcript showed a constantly changing idea of who the participants in the image were (including allegorical or representational characters), what their relationships were, what the objects they were holding might mean, and what particular positions or gestures might signify. As the interpretation became more detailed or granular, guided by the facilitated process, the potential for further meaning was opened up. In this sense we can understand embodiment as dynamic through recognising that the meaning attributed to elements of the body in image theatre is not only multiplicit, but in a constant process of renegotiation and reinterpretation.

Whilst we can appreciate a dynamic sense of embodiment through all four stages of experimentation, it is the move towards the changing of bodily configurations, first through directing action in phase 3, and then more specifically iteratively amending and/or recreating the images by the group as a whole in phase 4, that perhaps most clearly exemplifies this sense of dynamism. Linds and Vettraino, writing in relation to storytelling, image and embodiment, mention the idea of 'body storming', "like 'brain-storming', but with the emotional and sensory body as a source and language of expression" (Linds and Vettraino, 2008: 1). It is the 'accessing' of the emotional and sensory, alongside the cognitive and discursive, that arguably drives the momentum, experimentation and shared creativity in image theatre. For example, in 'playing' with embodiment as a focus for experimentation, the group focusing on Image set C (pp.128-132) worked together to determine the impact of changing images collectively. The slight shifting of a hand position for example, or the moving of a character from one part of an image to another, highlighted the dynamic sense of meaning-making, the sense of continuously emerging meaning, and the significance of bodily relationship to the creation and interpretation of meaning. Similarly, when, in image B1, one of the viewers added himself to the image (p.121), he introduced, without speaking, a whole new field of meaning potential which became a catalyst for further discussion and dialogue. In this stage of experimentation, conversations moved from what meanings participants should try to portray, to suggestions about what physical actions, gestures and positions should be used in order to see the meanings that emerged. By moving up and down different points of the continuum, elements of bodies and whole bodies – in dynamic relationship with other bodies - became a dialogic medium together with

verbal discussion, rather than simply a conduit through which to communicate a predetermined message or meaning.

In image theatre, the idea of embodiment as dynamic has a further dimension when we consider that the conscious or intended creation, recreation and interpretation of meaning is fundamental to the activity. Intentionality is important in considering embodiment in image theatre as dynamic because most embodiment theory deals with 'everyday' embodiment. In relation to the research field of Performance Studies, the idea of 'performativity' both in everyday life and in arts-based research brings a focus of intentionality to embodiment. Further helpful conceptualisations of embodiment drawn from studies in theatre, dance and performance helped us to formulate questions about the intentional performance of identity. It is through live, intentional meaning-making that further dynamic impetus is given to the image theatre process. We can understand this idea of intentionality more fully if we refer back to Batson and Wilson's idea that in terms of embodiment, intention is an action ontology, and, as Sheets-Johnstone mentions, at the root of our sense of agency (Batson and Wilson, 2014; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999) . Batson and Wilson's argument that embodiment is not simply about the body, but rather about the generative power of movement is significant when we consider the way that the image theatre process focuses on generating meanings which become the basis for collaborative engagement and, through this, the production of new identities.

Part of the importance of intentional meaning-making is that it encouraged participants to reflect on, and bring into focus, their own multiple identities, as expressed through their thoughts, feelings and perceptions. It was clear in analysing the workshops, that as participants moved backwards and forwards through the four stages of experimentation and along the continuum of meaning, individual and collective identities came to the fore in different ways, quite often linked to perspectives on power relationships. For example, in the analysis of Image set B, it was evident how at various points, individual participants commented on their identity (or took up positions to express their identity) as course leader, academic, teacher, manager, carer, administrator or parent, offering different perspectives which added momentum to the incremental changing and re-creating of the image. This is useful to note in light of the debates discussed earlier about how multiple experiences of identity result from the collaborative and co-creative

process. As Bresler noted, from her perspective as an educationalist, and Williams and Bendelow from theirs as sociologists, in the arts, where the body is central to processes of enquiry and a central communication medium in exploring social relationships, issues of power and control are often linked to the embodied biographies of artists themselves (Bresler, 2004; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). Whilst I discussed in Chapter 2, how current writing on image theatre is generally good at elucidating understandings of social processes and power relationships, what this research does is to highlight the way the body itself, the body as used in the workshops for intentional meaning-making as part of a collaborative process of creating images and discussion, contributes to the exploration of these social issues of power and identity.

In concluding this section, it is important to emphasise that embodiment in image theatre is not simply about the fact that participants use their bodies in the process, nor is it primarily predicated on the fact that the workshops involve physical participation. Rather, a theorisation of embodiment in image theatre is grounded in the idea that through a facilitated combination of meaning-making through both the body and discussion, subjective experience is foregrounded and meaning emerges intersubjectively through collaboration. Drawing on the phenomenological idea that the body is central to perception, experience and meaning, embodiment in image theatre can be understood dynamically as constantly changeable and in flux throughout the process. The experimental nature of image theatre, and the continuum of meaning that is produced, suggests that embodiment is an active process which is continually being reimagined and reconstituted through the ongoing collaborative exploration of relationships, identities and experiences.

5.2. Methodological Contribution

In my role as a researcher, intersecting with my other two roles as applied drama practitioner and academic leader and manager, I have sought to focus on the image theatre process itself, and the methods used for collating, archiving and analysing the material in order to offer insight into how, as an embodied method, image theatre creates meaning. I began this study with a range of video and interview data, visual and discursive material that I wanted to use to explore the embodied meaning making

process of image theatre workshops. In order to do this, I developed a detailed and focused approach to the transcription and analysis of the material. My method drew on approaches to transcription in other visual research methodologies, notably multi-modality, but was distinctive in its object, image theatre workshops, and the intense focus on the live process of meaning making in intentional embodied interactions.

In terms of the broader field of social science and education research, this is significant in light of Jewitt, Price and Xambo Sedo's (2017) argument that the "turn to the body in social sciences has intensified the gaze of qualitative research on bodily matters and embodied relations making the body a significant object of reflection", and in light of the call that some scholars (such as Law, 2004 and Savage, 2013) have made for "social science to engage with and imagine more inclusive method possibilities a key aspect of which is bodily inscribed realities and materialities and less verbal methods" (Jewitt, Price and Xambo Sedo, 2017: 38). In engaging with the bodily, partly through paying attention to modes and other elements, a key contribution of this thesis is methodological development in the areas of embodiment research and professional practice. Namely, in order to understand how and why engagement in image theatre enables participants to express thoughts, feeling and perspectives that reflect the complexity and ambiguity of their individual and collective experiences within the university.

The methodology developed for this research included both the generating of qualitative data (videos and interviews) through image theatre and a method of micro analysis particular to image theatre data collection, which also includes multimodal transcription. In the earlier part of the EdD when working on my IFS project, drawing on visual analysis methods enabled me to take cognisance of the challenge of 'reading' images, specifically beginning to explore the idea that meaning is not an inherent property of the images, but that it resides in processes of interpretation. I was able to build on this fundamental idea in my thesis through creating a method that would enable me to trace the ways in which meaning was generated in the image theatre workshops through focusing at a micro-level on modes and other elements within the images, and on the interplay between bodily representation and dialogue.

The first, and perhaps the most important stage of my analysis was the development of a method of transcription, through the creation and re-creation of detailed tables to capture key elements of both static images and the relation between static images in longer extracts from the video data. In creating the tables of transcription for the static images I was developing a method through which to identify modes and elements in a descriptive way, alongside a documenting of interpretations at the level of modes and elements, broader interpretations of the images (that is, beyond the level of individual modes and elements), and the intentions and responses of those who had created the images. In this way, the method enabled me to use the tables to capture aspects of the meaning-making process at both micro and macro levels, and to trace the links between modes or elements and emerging interpretations and meanings. As shown, the tables were constructed in such a way that read from top to bottom, the contribution of individual modes and elements in the meaning-making process were illuminated; read from left to right, rows highlighted a development of analysis from the description of individual modes and elements to interpretations of individual modes and elements to meanings that emerged through the combinations of modes and elements. In other words, the vertical columns increased specification of the visual aspects of the data and the horizontal columns increased specification of the interpretative or relational aspects of group interaction.

In juxtaposing static images I was able to use the tables to compare shifts in interpretation from one image in a set to another (e.g. from A1 to A2), and well as to observe how a focus on modes and elements opened up meaning potential in similar ways across the different image sets. Methodologically, it is important to note that these tables were added to and recreated as I worked through transcripts of dialogue and analysed the video documentation, recognising that images were moments captured as part of a process.

A further way of exploring the relations between static images was to turn the photographs into diagrams (line drawings) in order to observe more clearly changes to individual modes and elements, and to show how these, in combination with other modes and elements, led to changes in meaning. This diagrammatic representation, using shading and arrows of different colours, enabled me to visually compare images and to mark and delineate micro details such as the direction of gaze, the relative

distance between feet, and points of touch. This method was therefore a significant feature in the analysis of embodiment. For example, these diagrams led to what I was later able to identify as changes of images in alignment or dis-alignment which showed how alternative meanings were produced and how even subtle shifts of modes and elements in or out of alignment changed the ways participants responded to the images. We saw, for example, how the change of alignment in gaze from Image A1 to A2 shifted both the kinds of feelings that participants were interpreting in the images (ranging from friendliness and support to disconnection and coercion), as well as their own feelings towards what was being shown (such as pride in levels of pastoral support given, and guilt at misinterpreting student behaviour).

The use of tables and diagrams in my analysis thus enabled me to identify the way that even slight relational changes opened the possibility to shifts in meaning or to broadening the field of what Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 134) describe as 'meaning potential'. Further, the tables and diagrams showed that it was not only the images themselves that revealed this sense of changeability, but also the related verbal discussion and workshop interaction that moment by moment was characterised by shifting meanings, clarifying thoughts and feelings, and trying out ideas. My approach to transcription and analysis offers a methodology for exploring Williams and Bendelow's theoretical argument that one always observes from somewhere – above, below, left, right, close, at a distance. We can see how image theatre, as a facilitated process, actively encourages participants to consciously change perspective in order to consider and reconsider their interpretations and image creations. Williams and Bendelow, building on Merleau-Ponty's views, describe this perspectival nature of perception as "a primary expression of our embodiment" highlighting the view that it is rooted in behaviour such as seeing, looking and touching by "a sentient body-subject" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 52-53). The development of this methodology has thus enabled me to explore the process of image theatre at a more granular level than has previously been undertaken. It is a contribution to knowledge that shows in a more detailed way than has previously been documented in image theatre research, how, methodologically, this approach facilitates an understanding of the multifaceted and dynamic process of embodied meaning-making.

This methodological contribution can also be understood in terms of its application in a broader public sphere, particularly in the practice of applied drama and in social areas such as health and wellbeing, business and education. It has particular significance for the work of practitioners, students, teachers, and facilitators, and could lead to enhanced facilitation where those using it might work with greater knowledge and a more nuanced perspective on how image theatre works as an embodied process. In a pragmatic sense, this could be through the wider sharing of the methodological aspects of the analysis, the provision of continuing professional development workshops, and the development of a toolkit for image theatre practice.

The sharing of methodological insights across disciplines is likely to include the submission of articles in academic journals in areas of applied drama, higher education, visual studies and participatory research. Beyond academia however, there is also the opportunity for sharing insights in publications such as *Drama*, the professional practice magazine of National Drama, the organisation for Drama teachers in the United Kingdom, or through articles or blogs on websites such as those of The Centre for Excellence in Participatory Theatre and the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA). Continuing professional development for teachers, community group facilitators, organisation managers or participatory workshop leaders could take the form of a workshop series focusing on understanding implications of image theatre as an embodied process, training in the application of facilitation techniques, and exploring the ways that bodily interaction and dialogue produce a continuum of meaning. In addition, I would seek to create a Facilitator's Toolkit, a manual of practice that includes models for using image theatre in a variety of contexts, checklists of items and ideas to consider at different points in the image theatre process, suggested workshop structures, a guide to asking questions, and ways of working practically with images through, for example, being conscious of modes in alignment or disalignment, or understanding where, on the continuum of meaning, activity is taking place.

5.3. Implications for Leadership and Professional Practice

In setting out on my EdD, I was interested in the ways in which employing image theatre as part of my research could simultaneously allow me to fulfil aspects of my leadership and management position. In seeking ways to critically address some of the challenges of leadership and the micro-dynamics of power, including finding ways of ensuring that colleagues have a sense of voice and agency, this research has enabled me to explore how, as an embodied process, image theatre has given me the tools to do this. In Chapter 2, I discussed the potential of image theatre to make power and status in different contexts visible, what Taylor and Taylor call "the micro-dynamics of power" (Taylor and Taylor, 2017:1). Focus on a selection of studies demonstrated the opportunities that image theatre offers for facilitating a collective exploration of alternative perspectives, for modifying habitual or culturally ingrained communication patterns, and for developing new participatory and reflective pedagogical approaches. However, what these studies did not do, was to elucidate what it is about image theatre as an embodied process that may enable the addressing of these micro-dynamics. Investigating more fully the embodied nature of image theatre has enabled me to demonstrate how understanding embodiment in image theatre opens up the possibilities for a more empowering and critical approach to leadership.

In considering the analysis discussed in Chapter 4, the theorising of embodiment in image theatre in the first part of this chapter, and my experience as an academic leader and manager, I would argue that there are key areas of professional development or learning that can be identified which emerge from the study of embodied activity. I offer these as an initial critical reflection whilst at the same time signaling that for me, this is an area for development through future research.

The first is how the image theatre process offers validation to different voices in a way that contributes to critically engaging with workplace issues. We noted in the analysis how the iterative process of creating, showing, interpreting and re-creating images multiple times developed the possibility for building depth and nuance into discussion, and for contributing personal experience and perspective to discussions. By paying attention to this aspect of embodied engagement, from a leadership perspective, the potential was offered to gain access to a variety of viewpoints in a way that colleagues

were not simply saying what they thought management wanted to hear, or in which they resorted to the common workplace language of meeting rooms or policy documents. Through recognising embodiment in this way, it becomes possible, as a leader, to engage with colleagues more fully through acknowledging the significance of thinking, feeling and experience. Further, the significance of a process which encourages multiple perspectives and ambiguity is that it offers a particular kind of opportunity for critical reflection and a sharing of vision. Paying attention to embodiment in image theatre suggests how rich critical reflection might be if we pay attention to interactional and intersubjective underpinnings of cognition, affect and consciousness. Rather than considering reflecting and envisioning as things that individuals primarily do in their heads, the image theatre process depends on what takes place between people within the space.

The second, is the way that a deeper understanding of embodiment in image theatre enables us to recognise the distinctive ways in which the process contributed to participants collaborating across disciplines and developing collegiality. The specific stages of experimentation encouraged those involved to bring their different disciplinary experiences and perspectives to the process, and to some extent meaning-making across the continuum gave them the opportunity to become aware of and reflect on those perspectives in relation to those expressed by others. Unlike some initiatives in our faculty which seek to cross disciplinary boundaries, the image theatre workshops were not about applying one's discipline to a project in collaboration with someone from another discipline (for example, an animator collaborating with a musician by contributing their particular disciplinary skills). Rather, it was about bringing a variety of disciplinary perspectives and experiences to bear on broader issues of higher education workplace experience. In foregrounding the opportunity for the expression of subjectivity, and in recognising how meaning is made intersubjectively, it was possible to recognise how processes towards co-creating and discussing images opened a distinctive space to learn about each other, and share views, perspectives, thoughts and feelings that might be less likely to emerge in normal workplace interaction or more regular professional development activity. The transcripts and tables developed as part of the analysis in this thesis suggested that diverse professional experiences, perspectives and anecdotes contributed to the co-creation process, for example, when the groups working with Image set C were discussing changes to their images, they

would regularly refer back to experience in their own disciplines, and would comment on both similarities and differences with others. Even at the early stage of experimentation, when participants were writing notes on flip-chart paper to begin creating their first images, such as shown in the thesis in relation to Group A, their starting point was often relating their thoughts and feelings from their own professional perspectives. Similarly, the analysis established the significance of aspects such as laughter, silence and dialogue as part of the dynamic of embodied interaction, and as I began to show (although this does warrant further research) these aspects of embodied interaction contributed to building a group dynamic with the potential for a more long-term collegiality beyond the workshop.

In reflecting on the use of image theatre, it is useful to take note of Louise Morley's theorising of micropolitics in relation to professionalism in higher education. Morley writes that

> Power is a central constituent of professional relations. It can be overt in the form of decision-making, resource allocation, accreditation and assessment. Power is also present in everyday transactions that can frequently confound and confuse and leave actors unsure of their readings of complex interpersonal encounters…. Whereas exploration of the concept of professionalism tends to incorporate the core tenets of skills, authority of knowledge, autonomy and standards…, micropolitics focuses on the ways in which power underpins these areas and is relayed in quotidian practices.
>
> (Morley, 2008: 99).

As shown in the examples discussed in the previous chapters, the image theatre process tends to encourage a collaborative critical engagement with micropolitics. However, what the contribution of this thesis shows, is that this engagement is more fully realised if we understand how a dynamic, intentional conception of embodiment in image theatre enables a recognition of the distinctive meaning-making potential of the process.

In conclusion, this thesis has offered critical perspectives on the ways that meaning is not just produced, but is co-created and re-created dynamically and collaboratively. It has outlined stages of experimentation in the workshop process and uses the transcription of embodied elements to explore these processes in more depth, arguing that there is a continuum of meaning production through different types of interpretation and engagement with the images.

In this light, I am struck by the words of Laura Ellingson who comments that:

> Researchers begin with the body. Although some researchers remain unconscious of it (or even deny it), embodiment is an integral part of all research processes, including qualitative, quantitative, and critical inquiry. For example, researchers often select participants to interview based upon physical characteristics (e.g. race, gender, age) and bodily experiences (e.g. living with multiple sclerosis, tattooing). In ethnographic sites, bodies encounter each other as warm, material manifestations of ourselves; bodies do not wait quietly outside while a core ethnographic self interacts with the equally disembodied minds of participants. Nor do free-floating brains analyse data independently of the fingers (or voices or eyes using adaptive technologies) that turn pages, press keys, and wield pens. Likewise, representation is an embodied act; researchers write or type (or draw or paint or photograph or dance) and discover new meanings even as we move across the page, stage, canvas or screen.
>
> Yet despite more than three decades of discourse among qualitative, feminist, postmodern, poststructuralist, critical race, postcolonialist and other critical researchers about the centrality of embodiment to research and sense making, many qualitative researchers still do not know *how* to deliberately embody their practices in ways that make bodies a meaningful presence in their research.
>
> (Ellingson, 2017: 1).

In developing my work as a professional educator and researcher, this is perhaps the challenge that my thesis has begun to address: to bring the body – the creative body – to the fore of the research participation process, as a medium of expression in and of itself, and as a catalyst for collaborative discussion. In so doing, as an insider researcher in the institution that I work within, I have been able to develop new insights into embodiment within image theatre, and to deploy this form in a meaningful way, as a researcher, practitioner and academic leader, alongside the colleagues that I work with.

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APPENDIX A

Photographs of all eight images for ease of reference by the reader.

Image A1

Image A2

Image B1

Image B2

Image C1

Image C2

Image D1

Image D2

APPENDIX B

Table 1: Distribution of participants by gender

	Course Leaders	General Academic Staff	Total
Female	4	5	9
Male	8	3	11

Whilst I tried to achieve a gender balance in the overall group of participants, the breakdown of Course Leaders reflects the gender imbalance of such positions within the Faculty as a whole – there are significantly more male Course Leaders than there are female. I chose to go ahead with this ratio because I felt that the implications of this in terms of broader relationships within the Faculty could be explored and problematized within the context of the image theatre workshops themselves.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by age

Age	Course Leaders	General Academic Staff	Total
20-30		2	2
30-40	4	2	6
40-50	5	2	7
50-60	3	1	4
60+		1	1

A broad spread of age range was achieved, although significantly more than half the group were in their 40s and 50s (65%), a percentage that is broadly indicative of the make-up of the Faculty overall according to formal Faculty statistics. This spread of age range was sampled to include perspectives from a range of experience, including those of staff at early stages in their careers, and those who could bring points of view from experience over a longer period of time.

Table 3: Distribution of participants by level of post

	Course Leaders	General Academic Staff	Total
Lecturer	3	5	8
Senior Lecturer	7	1	8
Principal Lecturer	2		2
Reader	0	1	1
Professor	0	1	1

The spread of staff here again covers the full range of academic post levels, although with a high concentration of staff at the Lecturer and Senior Lecturer levels. This is again reflective of the Faculty overall and is perhaps influenced by the fact that many staff come into academia from a career in industry and don't necessarily work their way up the ranks from being early career academics. It should also be noted that there are no Course Leaders at the level of Reader and Professor in the Faculty at present.

Table 4: Academic disciplines and subject areas of staff sampled for the IFS

	Course Leaders	General Academic Staff
Animation	1 x **3D Computer Animation** with a background in model making. 1 x **2D and stop-motion** animation.	
Communication Design	1 x **Graphic Design**, including print and web-based design.	1 x **Art and Design** historian, including design history.
Drama, Theatre and Film	1 x **Theatre and Media Drama**, including acting, directing, theatre history, sound design and popular performance. 1 x **Film and TV Set Design**, with a background in set design for light entertainment, talk shows, game shows, and film, as well as interior design and model making.	1 x **Drama, Film and Television**, with a particular interest in television drama.
Fashion	1 x **Fashion Design**, covering all aspects of design process, with a background in Menswear design. 1 x **Fashion Promotion**, with a background in business and retail.	1 x **Fashion Promotion**, with a background in illustration
Media	1 x **Radio** including radio production, presenting and community radio. 1 x **Media Technology**, with a background in engineering.	1 x **Media and Cultural Theory**, with particular interests in media business, research methods and creative industries. 1 x **Radio and Television,** particularly radio news and television presenting.
Music and Sound	1 x **Sound Technology**, including studio production, live sound, and audio for film and television. 1 x **Popular Music**, including composition, performance, and community music.	1 x **Popular Music,** including FD developments. Background as professional musician. 1 x **Music & Sound Technology**, including engineering and production. 1 x **Music Business and Performance**, with background as a singer and in music publishing.
Photography	1 x **Photography** including commercial photography, fashion photography, and history with broad background in visual culture.	

Appendix C

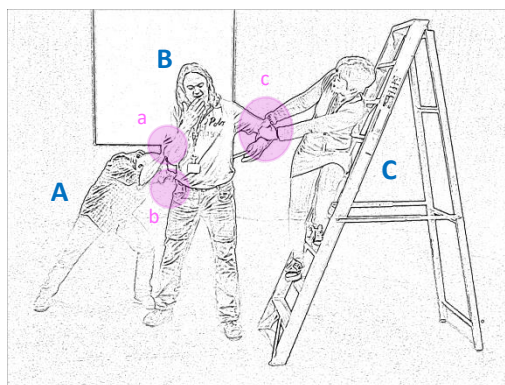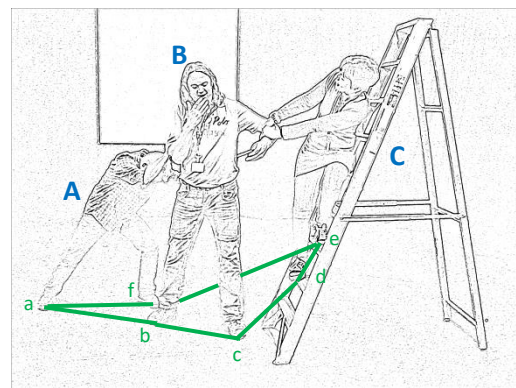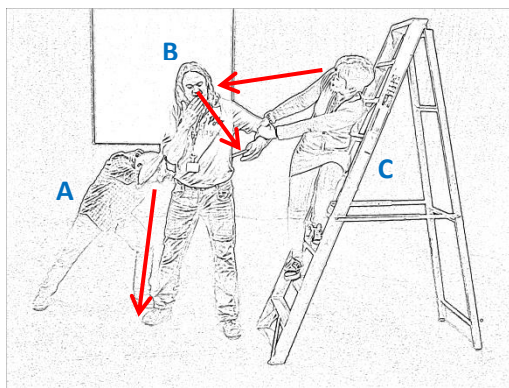## The Purpose or Function of a Contemporary University

IMAGE A1

Interpretations

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking directly up towards B's face, and B and C are looking directly at each other. Eye contact is direct between the three participants.	• They are all looking at each other in a friendly way. • A's direct eye contact with B's head or side of face makes it look like he's encouraging and supportive. • B looks comfortable to be going in the direction that he is being led - his eyes suggest a sense of looking forward, of direction. • C's direct eye contact makes her seem welcoming or supportive. Her eye contact suggests a commitment to B succeeding.	a) B is a student in the middle being guided to greater things and encouraged from behind. b) A and C are lecturers guiding the student. c) A could be the parent of the student trying to encourage him to succeed. d) It may not be any specific person in the middle – more the idea of helping someone to climb the ladder of success. e) In helping someone meet their aspirations there is both guiding and pushing going on at the same time. f) There is a lot of reassurance of B going on in the image. g) Is the ladder a symbol of success or is it something to do with the 'ivory tower' and that type of thing?	After listening to the viewers' comments and interpretations, the group creating the image suggested the following: - We weren't depicting specific people or groups of people (students, lecturers etc). It was a more general image of academia. - We were talking about the fact that the modern university pushes students, but also supports and nurtures. We didn't have specific roles in mind – in our heads it was more abstract. - Someone had said I [A] was a parent, and that hadn't occurred to me at all, but that could absolutely be the case. - It is an image of people who care deeply, and the person in the middle is inspired. - A big role of the university now is about nurturing and support, about being there for the student, about pastoral care. This seems ever increasing; even compared to 10 years ago. - We saw the ladder as achievement and aspiration.
Facial expression	A, B and C are all smiling.	• Facial expressions are 'really positive'. • They all look friendly and happy to be there.		
Proximity	A is standing very close to B, slightly behind him. They are both facing towards C at a distance but facing her; B and C are reaching out to each other holding hands.	• A's proximity to B (together with the facial expression) suggests support; he is close behind him; if facial expression and eye contact were different he might be holding him back. • The greater distance between B and C perhaps shows a journey, the desire to help B move through space. The distance is bridged by the outstretched arms which help to 'close' the distance, again suggesting support and guidance.		
Feet positioning	A and B's feet are both pointing towards C and their inside feet are very close together. C's feet are on the ladder, allowing her body to swivel towards A and B.	• There was no specific commentary on feet positioning, although it was suggested that different levels (the ladder) show inspiration or aspiration. C's feet are higher, suggesting drawing B upwards to 'greater things'. • It might be suggested that A and B's feet are placed sturdily contributing to the overall positive image.		
Touch/body contact	A has his right hand on B's right shoulder, and seems to have his left hand on B's left arm. B and C have arms outstretched towards each other and are holding hands.	• Both A and C appear to be gentle in their contact with B. A's hands are supportive and strong, rather than coercive. • C's hand-holding is guiding rather than pulling. • There was some ambiguity about whether A is guiding B forward or holding him back, but the consensus quickly emerged that in the context of the overall image, A was guiding B forward.		
Gesture	A is holding on to B as if guiding or supporting. B and C are reaching out to each other.	• B looks like he is willing to be led in the way that his arm is outstretched, and C's arm is inviting him forward.		

Interpretations

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking down towards the floor. B is looking down towards a phone in his hand. C is looking at B.	• There is not the same unity in the group as in A1; they are pulling in different directions; eye focus on B is not the same as the first image; • A looking down at the floor shows the effort in pushing B. • C is still looking at B, but the eye contact is more about pressure than invitation. • B's eyes suggest a sense of disconnection from the other two. His eyes are focused on a phone in his hand. • A and B's eyes to the floor suggests a lack of communication.	a) More like the 'reality' of education [compared to A1]; lots of pushing and coercion. b) The person in the middle is a student who looks bored or disinterested – it takes a lot of effort to try and engage him. c) The person in the middle is a student who looks tired. He is yawning. Perhaps he has been up late browsing on his phone, or tired from a busy social life. Or perhaps he is tired from working, from having to have a job as well as study full time. d) The person in the middle is a student who is laughing or joking. Perhaps he is laughing at a YouTube video on his phone, or at a message sent to him by somebody else during a lecture. e) The person in the middle is a lecturer, not a student. He is being pulled by industry and pushed by government, or by University management, and he is just exhausted in the middle. f) A is a parent pushing rather than a lecturer. He is pushing rather than encouraging. g) Raises a question about the role of the lecturer – *Is* it to nurture creativity and critical thinking, or is to push students to make sure they have the skills they need to get a job? h) Would it make a difference if A was on the ladder and C was pushing from behind?	- In many ways, Images A1 and A2 represent the ends of a spectrum, and the reality for students and lecturers in universities is probably somewhere in between. - In preparing the image we spoke about students having to work, and for some it is four days a week, so they come to lectures exhausted. Tiredness was one of the key things we were trying to show. - Two of us are parents of children who are at university. I was thinking, do I encourage, or do I just push? It brings up all sorts of mixed feelings in me. - The other thing is how often do you see students on their phones in lectures? And you say get off your phone, and they say they're taking notes. Which they are. But you have this pre-conceived idea that they're just distracted. - There is also the possibility that B is not *suited* to university, or that he doesn't actually want to be there, full stop. The expectation is often there that you *have* to go to university, and A is pushing really hard.
Facial expression	We cannot see A's face, but the implication is that he is putting effort into pushing hard. B is yawning, or perhaps laughing. C seems to simply be focused on B.	• C's face shows that she is making a physical effort. Whilst not unfriendly it does not have the same sense of 'connection' as in A1. • B looks like he is yawning – he is tired and disinterested. It is an effort for the other to get him to move. He is distracted by the phone in his hand. • Alternatively, B may be laughing, not taking the opportunity given to him seriously.		
Proximity	A is close to B pushing towards him. C is closer to B that in Image A1, pulling him towards her.	• The participants are all closer together than in A1 because of the greater effort being exerted on B. • B's unwillingness to move – or disinterest – is pulling them closer in requiring much more effort from them.		
Feet positioning	A's feet are wide apart giving him leverage to push. B's feet are apart and facing forward. C's feet are on the rungs of the ladder. Each person's feet are generally not facing other people's feet.	• A's feet are far apart and show how much effort he has to put into trying to push B towards C. B clearly has no intention of moving. • B's feet are planted sturdily helping him to stay in place.		
Touch/body contact	A has his right hand on B's right upper arm, and his left hand on B's waist/back. C has both hands in the crook of B's elbow pulling towards her.	• C is using both hands to pull B – there is clearly much greater force being exerted. It makes B look unwilling to move. • A's hands, while still on B, are not the gentle encouraging touches of Image A1, but rather a more forceful pushing.		
Gesture	A is pushing hard against B, and C is pulling B towards her. B has his right hand up towards his mouth as if covering it for a yawn or hiding a laugh.	• B is holding his hand up to mouth to show he is yawning, This could be because he is tired or disinterested. • B may be trying to hide a laugh. • B's gesture contributes to showing his unwillingness to move in the direction the others are trying to push or pull him.		

Notes and observations about the group interpreting the images:

Spoken word by viewers	• Comments while the group is setting up, for example while getting the ladder into place one of the viewers says 'Ooh props!' and there is some general laughter from the viewers and performers which comes across as banter. • Each of the images is shown first in silence for people to simply look at. When the first image is shown again for comment, the first person starts straight in with a comment followed very quickly by all of the other viewers (the video shows that it *was* all of them). • In the first few minutes there is a lot of talking over each other. There is a sense that each person is very quickly trying to offer different perspectives, or build on what someone else is saying. This soon settles down to people speaking one at a time, although sometimes still coming in very quickly after each other. The video seems to show very close listening to each other amongst all participants. • All participants contribute interpretations or comments without being asked or invited. • Some comments or sounds are confirmation of what others are saying, for example if someone offers an interpretation, another viewer is heard saying, "Hmm, yes..." or "yes...exactly...". • Some comments are a questioning of each other, sometimes expecting an answer or perhaps sometimes rhetorically, for example, "Do you think that A might be B's parent?" or "Do you think he is yawning or laughing?" • Some comments are an answering of questions, either from other viewers, or in a response to questions from me as the facilitator. • Once the group showing the image starts participating in the discussion (after viewers have had time to comment on both images), their comments either explain what they intended with their images, or respond to specific interpretations that had been offered by the viewers. • There is also general discussion among the group as a whole about some of the issues sparked off by the images but not directly about them, for example, their general view of students, the university's emphasis on employability, how men and women are perceived differently in the university, or the shift to a mass system of higher education in the UK.
Spoken word by those who created image	• All three members of the group speak – there doesn't appear to be any one particular group member who dominates the discussion. Their comments either support each other or offer alternative perspectives, but there is a strong sense of both group coherence and individual experience characterising their comments. • The group explains their intention with the images, which very quickly opens up more general discussion with the viewers. • Their response to interpretations of their images offered by the viewers take the following forms: - confirming specific interpretations as being in agreement with what they intended in creating the image; - identifying interpretations that were not what they intended, but which they agree are valid; - developing on interpretations offered by viewers by adding their own personal experience. • The group members are very gestural is explaining their images and responding to comments. The video shows a lot of hand movement in emphasising their points and communicating their explanations.
Silences	• The group showing the image remains silent through the whole process of showing both images and listening to interpretations and comments before being invited by the facilitator to join in. • Both images are first shown briefly to the viewers in silence, so that they can simply *look* at them before starting to comment. • In commenting on the images, after an initial flurry of remarks, there is a moment of silence as the viewers look at the images further before starting to offer further thoughts. • The video shows participants listening very carefully to each other. Those standing in silence listening to others comment do not seem distracted or disengaged. Sometimes they seem to be formulating a further response.
Laughter	• Commentary and silence appears to be interspersed with moments of laughter among the group all the way through the process as follows: - laughter of recognition, for example when one participant realises that their view or experience is similar to another's; - laughter at 'in' jokes among the group as a community of academics (even though they haven't all met each other before), for example, when the ladder is being set up and the group member setting it up makes a comment about health and safety procedures in the faculty; - laughing at own interpretations, for example occasionally someone will giggle with their comment implying that 'this may be silly, but I was thinking that...'. This is not the dominant mode of discussion, but it does happen a couple of times, and the person is always reassured and encouraged by others in the group;
Proximity and POV of viewers	• Viewers stood at a slight distance from those creating the image facing them straight on. • All the viewers remained standing; i.e. nobody sat on the floor or went to get a chair (which can sometimes be an indication of boredom or disengagement). • A few people shifted position slightly to get a clearer look at details of facial expressions, but nobody moved into the image or around it to take a closer look.

Main Areas of Discussion That Emerged:

It is difficult to separate the 'function' of universities from the problems or challenges faced in working within them. There was recognition that whilst the prompt that had been given was 'The purpose or function of a contemporary university', much of the discussion was about personal experiences, personal feelings, obstacles and frustrations in this particular work context, tensions and pressures experienced, and shared struggles.

- There was a lot of discussion about a perceived significant increase in the need for lecturers to play a pastoral role for students, especially in 'our kind of university' (meaning post-92 institutions). It was felt that while there has always been a pastoral role to play, there is much more now needed and expected in terms of nurturing, encouraging and supporting students. This was also linked to a recognition of increased pressure for many students particularly in terms of so many of them needing to earn money, mental health issues and the high level of dyslexia in the creative industries.
- The two images shown are the ends of a spectrum, and most experiences for both students and staff is somewhere between those two extremes. To a greater or lesser degree there is a combination of nurturing/guiding and pushing/coercing.
- The tensions of working as a lecturer emerged, arguably reflecting some of the paradoxes of the contemporary university. In particular tensions between creative and critical thinking and practice on the one hand, and a narrowly focused definition of skills development and employability on the other.
- Stereotypes and the realities of student life was a strong theme. It was recognised that quite often staff resort to stereotyping students as tired and disengaged because they believe students have been out socialising all hours, but that the reality is much more complex, especially again in relation to working patterns.
- The experience of parents of university students came into focus a number of times, both in relation to the personal experiences of some members of the group, and more broadly in relation to pressures exerted on students. These experiences seemed to reflect a combination of guilt, self-reflection, and pride.
- The shift in HE from a more elite system to one of mass education was raised in thinking about how the function of universities has shifted, and how this is so tied into the specific challenges and problems raised.
- Gender issues came to the fore when considering the placing of group members in the images, and how the images might be interpreted differently if places were swapped. This was particularly so in thinking about how we might perceive the 'pushing' and 'coercing' going on.
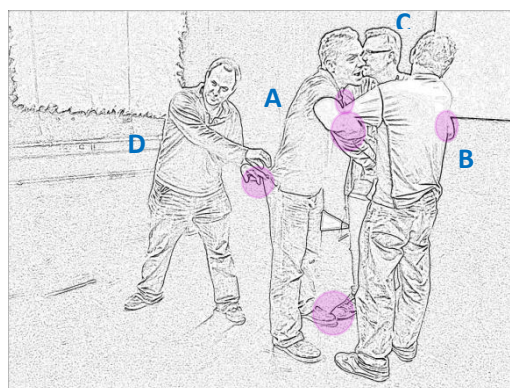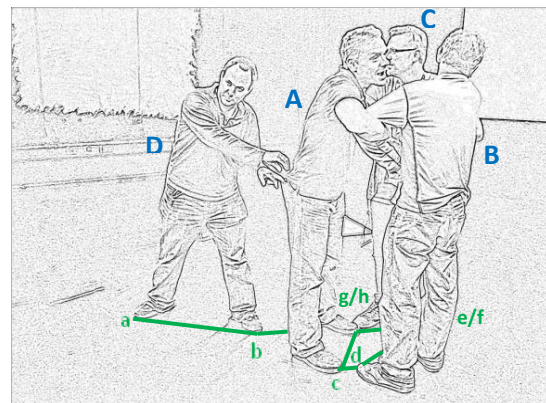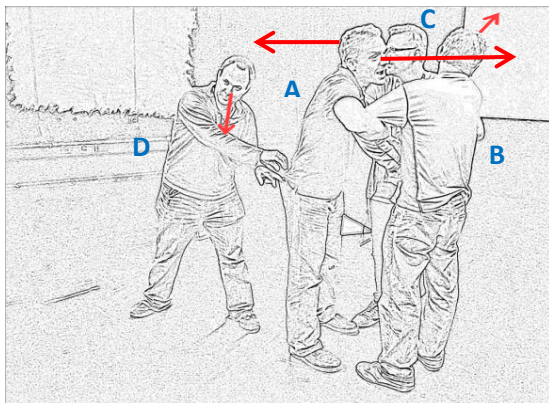
Levels of Interpretation:

Physical details	hand on shoulder; outstretched arms; holding hands; climbing the ladder; pushing; pulling; looking at each other; looking at phone; yawning; looking at floor.
Metaphor and Symbol	aspiration; guiding; encouraging; leading on to greater things; ivory tower; coercing; pastoral care; achievement.
Personal Positioning	academic; parent.
Alternative Viewpoints	student in the middle; lecturer in the middle. lecturer pushing; parent pushing.
Broader Social and Political Issues	aspiration-raising; student work (need to earn money); mass education; gender in academia (men and women academics); competing demands in terms of skills.

The Purpose or Function of a Contemporary University

IMAGE B1

The original image was only A, B and C. After some discussion, D, one of the viewers, added himself to the image to build the ideas further. Commentary below captures both the original image and the addition.

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking past B's head, B is looking past C's head, and C is looking past A's head, all at eye-line level. D is looking out into the distance away from the other three.	• A, B and C are all looking past each other. It could be that they are hearing things they don't want to hear. • Or maybe they're looking out to different futures. They're united, but going in different directions. • D looks shifty. He is looking away from the others, but a bit knowingly towards the viewers.	a) A, B and C are linked, and in a circle. It shows working together and collaborating. They could be academics and students who are passing ideas and knowledge onto each other in an ongoing process. b) They seem to be whispering to each other, so is it passing on ideas, or maybe secrets? Or could it be that teaching is sometimes like Chinese whispers – you say one thing and people hear all sorts of other things. c) It could be that they are all students, and what we're trying to do in universities is to get them to collaborate, to work as a close-knit group. d) It could also be an image of lots of different people having to work together, for example academics, administrators, and other university staff are now all a more direct part of how we work with students. e) D is the university admin or management. They have their hand in the student's pocket. Universities have to make money to survive and this can compromise what they're really meant to be doing. f) It could also be that D, as management, is *in* the student's pocket. Often position academics in opposition to students and always back the students up. g) Interesting because it is both positive and negative. The original image feels positive, in what we should be doing, but adding D, some of the reality, takes the shine off it.	- We saw A, B and C as students. We were trying to show that part of the function of a university is to create a community of learners who are communicating with each other, and that this learning does not end. - We also thought about the ideas of transferable skills. We are trying to show both speaking and moving. And everyone is looking in different directions because the can go off into different areas with the skills they have while still coming out of the same community of learners. - Yes, D is about taking money from the students. Bringing in income is a key focus for universities now, including the increase in fees. [There was some discussion among the group as whole about whether adding D should also mean breaking the circle, but they decided to stay with it, because our aim should still be to create opportunities for students to collaborate and gain transferable skills].
Facial expression	A looks like he may be whispering or talking to B, or perhaps laughing. D is smiling with a tight-lipped smile out towards the viewer.	• A's face shows that he is trying to communicate something to B. The others' faces suggest a certain level of seriousness. Or maybe disinterest? • D looks like he is enjoying picking A's pocket. There is a look of mischievousness.		
Proximity	A, B and C are in very close proximity to each other, their bodies facing towards each other and arms linked. D is at a slight distance from the other three, but reaching towards them.	• A, B and C are in a circle and closely linked. There is a closeness about them, although they are looking away from each other. • D is short distance away, but close enough to reach A's pocket. He is clearly separate from the others through.		
Feet positioning	A, B and C are standing steady with their feet a bit apart for stability. Their feet are facing forward, and perhaps form a circle. D's feet are facing forward towards the viewer and are wide apart.	• D's feet are sturdy on the ground. He is not creeping up on them but is confident in what he is doing. He is also facing in a different direction to the others. • A, B and C are facing each other in the circle, and in some instances their feet are touching, showing a closeness or a whole unit.		
Touch/body contact	A, B and C have their arms interlinked, and in at least one case, feet seem to be touching. D is holding onto A's back trouser pocket as if opening it.	• There is a lot of body contact in this image, especially the inter-linked arms. They are clearly wanting to show some kind of collaboration or close working together, almost in a machine-like way. • D is holding A's trouser pocket open in a way that look surreptitious.		
Gesture	D appears to be removing something from A's pocket, or perhaps placing something into it. A, B and C are perhaps whispering or talking to each other.	• D is picking A's pocket. It is a gesture that seems to undermine what is going on in the circle. It feels a bit underhand. • A is leaning in towards B to communicate something to him.		

The process towards Image B2 on the next page included trying out various ways of interacting with the image to try out different possibilities for re-interpreting it.

In this image, another viewer has entered the image to show somebody listening to what is being said and perhaps feeding it back to D. There is a sense of 'listening in'. Perhaps there is a suggestion that what is being said needs to be heard more widely. Or maybe D is now feeding messages into the circle – his gesture looks like he is talking. Still a sense of inside and outside the circle.

Here, a different viewer, has come in and broken the circle apart. He is experimenting to see what happens if the A, B and C point to each other and look at each other, rather than linking arms and looking away (in this photo he is telling/showing them what to do).

This image is setting up for the what we see in B2 below. In this instance, the participant at the back, who has been viewing the image, has come in to suggest surrounding the others with arms outstretched. Here she is explaining how they should stand before the other viewers comment on what they see.

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A still looks past B's head, B past C's and C past A's. However, D is now looking at A, E is looking at B or C, and F (hidden) is possibly looking at A or C. There is a general sense that the three in the outside circle are looking towards the three in the inner circle.	• The three in the middle haven't changed. They are still looking outwards beyond the circle. • The outer circle gives more of focus onto those three in the middle – it guides our [the viewers'] gaze towards them. • The people on the outside are looking at the people on the inside; it shows that they are creating this protective circle *for* the people on the inside.	a) This looks more supportive or caring. It is not as cynical as the image where D was taking something out of A's pocket. b) There is still that sense of collaborating, or working together, but they are more supported. The people on the outside are the staff who provide a protective circle of some kind. c) But it could also be that they are protecting students. It could be both a positive or a negative image - a safe space for learning, or it could be shielding them from the realities of the world. d) It seems like a more gentle supporting though. They are not holding hands, they are facing the students. e) So it is perhaps suggesting that universities should provide opportunities for students to learn together, to share their learning with each other, and to be supported by the academics. f) It's always hard to judge the balance of how much independence to give students and how much to molly-coddle them, and there is a feeling of that in this image for me. But ultimately there should be a supportive and caring environment that helps students learn and grow.	- For us the group in the middle still represents the students, and there is that sense of interactive learning. Or of us providing opportunities for it. - The staff are on the outside, and we were trying to show a more nurturing image. In some ways universities should play a nurturing role. - We did try holding hands, but we felt that said something different – that was more like caging them in. In this image we are not even touching hands, they are just lightly overlapping. - The idea of the circle is that gives a sense of community. Actually there are two circles, so there are communities within communities. But the focus is still the students in the middle.
Facial expression	A is whispering or talking to B and perhaps smiling. Eyes are open. D simply seems focused on the group in front of him.	• You can see a huge difference in D's face – the mischievousness has been replaced by more of a look of caring. • D, E and F's faces don't show huge emotion, but there is subtle look of seriousness or care.		
Proximity	All six participants are in close proximity, with the outer three seemingly forming an enclosed circle around the inner three whose arms are linked.	• They are all close together, and the circle within the circle makes this seem like a close-knit image. • The closeness shows safety – university should be challenging, but students should also be supported. • It could show closeness and unity, but it could also be quite suffocating. Perhaps needs more people on the outside circle to open it up a bit and give the people on the inside some space to grow.		
Feet positioning	As in Image 2A above, A, B and C are standing steady with their feet a bit apart for stability. Their feet are facing forward, and perhaps form a circle. D, E and F now also have feet facing forward towards the inside of circle, with feet apart.	• The way they are standing makes two distinct circles. • The pattern shows an outer layer and an inner layer. • The way they are facing puts the focus on the students in the middle.		
Touch/body contact	A, B and C have their arms interlinked in a circle. D, E and F have open hands very closely overlapping as if joining hand in a circle, but they are not actually touching.	• What I noticed is that the outside circle are not touching – either each other, or the people in the middle. • While there is still close contact between A, B and C, there is still a 'closed' circle around them, but one which seems much more porous.		
Gesture	D, E and F have arms outstretched towards each other forming a circle around the inner three people.	• By stretching their arms towards each other, D, E and F create a kind of shield or enclosure which possibly represents the university as encompassing everything the students are experiencing?		

Notes and observations about the group interpreting the images:

Spoken word by viewers	• Initial comments tend to take the form of questions, as viewers seemingly try to reach some kind of consensus of what the image might be showing. • There is quite a lot of laughter initially among the group commenting as they settle into the activity. Because this group is made up of course leaders, they are used to being in meetings together, or in sharing their worries and frustrations with each other, and so there is a degree of familiarity which allows a certain light-heartedness to emerge. • All of the viewers comment, sometimes building on what the previous person has said, or sometimes introducing a new perspective. The nature of the comments tends to be conversational amongst the viewers. They are not so much talking to the facilitator as to each other. • The make-up of the group is clearly male-dominated (reflective of the make-up of course leadership in the Faculty at that point), however, all participants do contribute a number of perspectives without being prompted. Because of the balance of numbers, however, it might be argued that there is a strong male voice dominating the discussion. • The response of the participants creating the image when they are given opportunity to speak leads to some debate among the group as a whole about what or who A, B and C represent, and particularly about the perceived power status that students currently hold in the University (which is seen to be higher status than academics).
Spoken word by those who created image	• Initially, all members of the group creating the image speak. They tend to interrupt each other, or come in at the end of each other's sentences to build an explanation or clarify ideas. There appears to be strong agreement amongst the three of them about what they are intending to communicate, and this is sometimes complemented by individual anecdotes. • After the fourth person has joined the image, his commentary becomes part of a conversation with the group as a whole rather than an explanation. Perhaps what has started off as a bit of a joke (pick-pocketing the student) takes on a more serious tone as the group talks about student fees, and the impact of money on University decision-making. • As with the other groups, the group members in this group are very gestural in explaining their images and responding to comments. The video shows a lot of hand movement in emphasising their points and communicating their explanations. • The group members creating this image appear particularly energetic in talking about the image – each of them speaks loudly, has a lot of body movement, and shows a real eagerness to communicate ideas.
Silences	• Both images are first shown briefly to the viewers in silence, so that they can simply look at them before starting to comment. • The group showing the image remains silent through the whole process of showing both images and listening to interpretations and comments before being invited by the facilitator to join in. • There are moments of silence when viewers are formulating responses to the image, or possibly thinking through how to articulate their views. Comments tend to come in 'batches'; in other words, there will be a flurry of comments with participants contributing ideas, then some silence, and then another flurry of different comments. • There is silence when viewers are adding to the image, or are watching as one of the others add to the image to focus on what they are doing and what the impact of the change they are making might be.
Laughter	• There is quite a lot of laughter in this group – but it is not laughter of 'playing the fool' or distracting from the activity. Rather, it is laughter of recognition at common frustrations among the group, especially with top-down management and the lack of agency that they feel as academic staff. • There is sometimes a 'playfulness' that emerges out of collaboration. An apparent enjoyment of working together on something that is quite different to the ways that they normally interact. • There is no laughing *at* anybody's suggestions or interpretations, suggesting a certain level of respect among participants for different viewpoints. There is occasionally self-deprecating laughter, however.
Proximity and POV of viewers	• For the initial image, i.e. A, B and C on their own, viewers walked around the image to see it from different angles, and specifically to see each person's face. After that, viewers tended to adopt a 'front-on' view, that is looking at the image from one point of view. • All the viewers remained standing, and sometimes turned to face each other to listen to each other's comments. • Individual viewers seemed comfortable to walk 'into' the image to suggest changes or add to it.

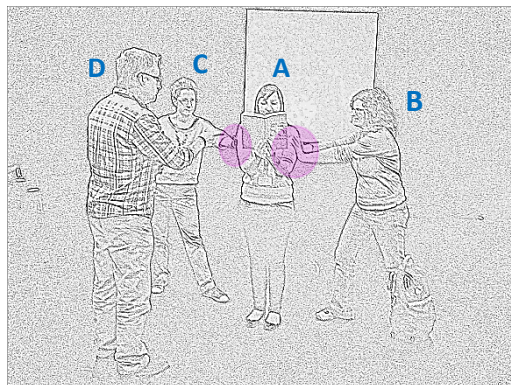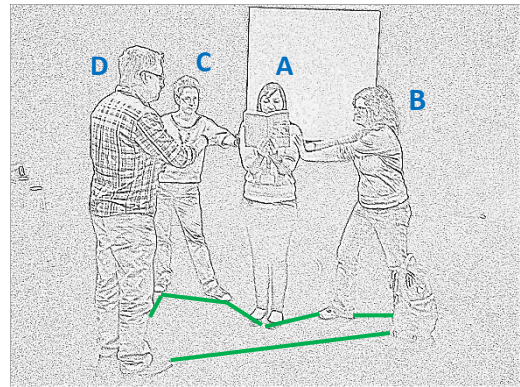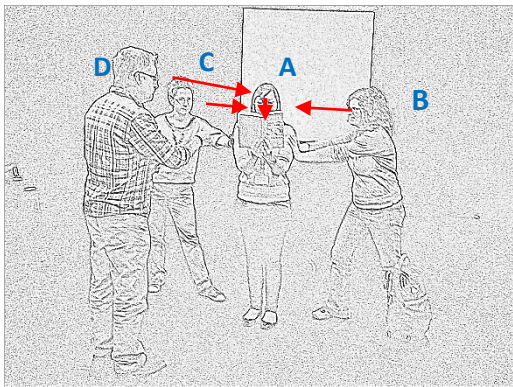**Main Areas of Discussion That Emerged:**

- There appeared to be a clear tension between what participants felt a contemporary university *should* be doing, and what their actual experience as academics and course leaders was. There was a strong commitment to an active approach to learning in which students work collaboratively and actively on projects supported by a caring and guiding staff.
- The student was the main focus of the images, although much of the discussion was about the administration or faculty and university management. The dominant view being expressed was that students were rightly at the centre of university activity, but that students also had an undue amount of power (that is, that management will bend over backwards for whatever students ask for, but do not seem to take the views of academics seriously).
- The issue of student fees and university income was a clear area of concern, possibly because as course leaders they are under a lot of pressure from the faculty to increase and maintain student recruitment. It seemed to raise questions for the group about what the university's main functions were or should be, and whether the commitment to a rigorous, critical and creative higher education was at odds with the business-like corporate nature of the institution.
- A key part of higher education for this group was the idea of transferrable skills. The view that within creative industries students learnt specific disciplinary skills, but that they were likely to go into a range of different jobs and activities beyond university because of the types of more generic skills they had developed, including group working and communication skills.
- The idea of 'community' also featured strongly in this group. The vision of the university made up of a range of communities (and being a community itself), perhaps shown by the two circles at the core of these images, seemed important to the group. The implication of this was perhaps that people are at the heart of the university rather than systems or corporate values, and that communication flow, sharing and support were key.

Levels of Interpretation:

Physical details	inter-linking arms; circle; whispering or communicating; distant gaze; hand opening pocket; outstretched arms.
Metaphor and Symbol	communication; collaboration; flow; interaction. pickpocketing; support; guidance; community.
Personal Positioning	academic; course leader; administrator; community member.
Alternative Viewpoints	student; manager; lecturer.
Broader Social and Political Issues	corporatism; student power and agency; lack of academic staff voice; competing institutional values; decision-making; hierarchies.

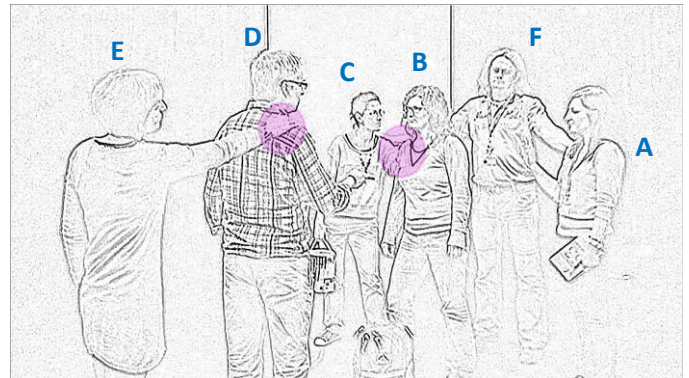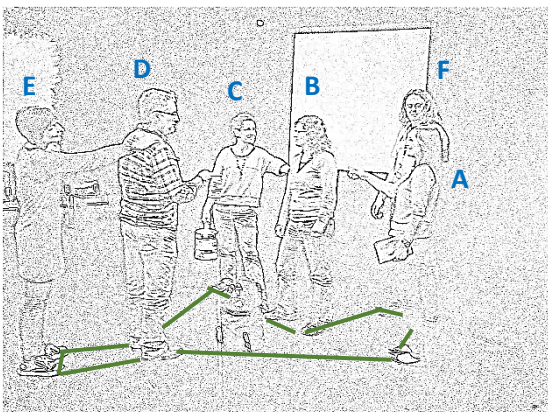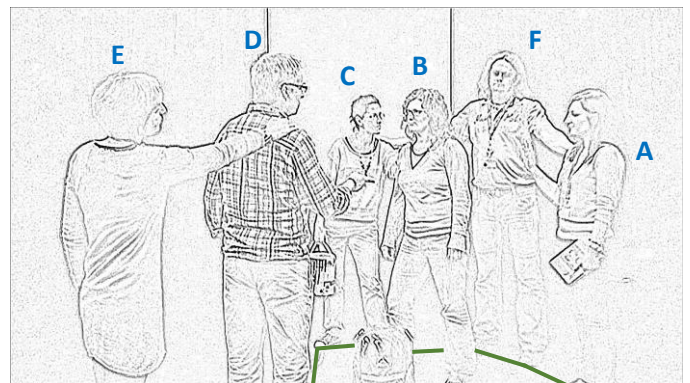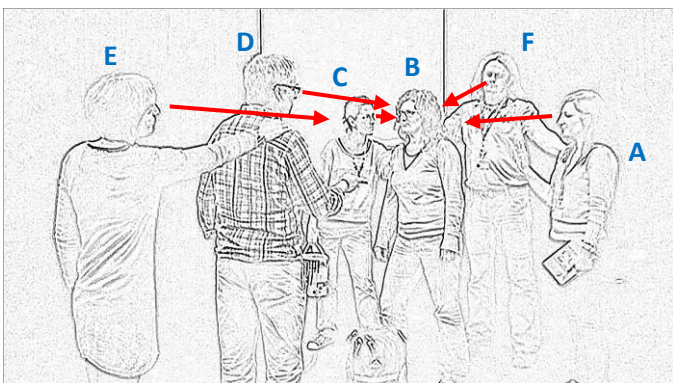# The Purpose or Function of a Contemporary University

IMAGE C1

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	A is looking directly at the open pages of the book which she is holding in front of her. B is looking at A and is pushing her left upper arm and shoulder with both hands. She has a backpack at her feet. C has her left arm outstretched towards A with her hand on her right shoulder as if pushing gently or supporting; she is looking at A. D is looking at A (or at the book) and is pointing towards A or the book.	• They are all looking at the student in the middle, so she is the main focus. • D's looking at A, which together with his pointing make him look quite domineering. A is being lectured at by D. • A is very focused on her book, which suggests that she is studying hard, but also because she is being pushed from different sides.	a) A is a student and she's the centre of attention. Everything is about 'the student experience' and so the focus is on her. b) She is being lectured *at* by D, who is the lecturer. She has to concentrate. c) C is holding a paint can. Perhaps she is some kind of artist. Or maybe 'industry'. d) Perhaps it is B who is the lecturer, trying to push the student to succeed. D could perhaps be a parent? Or just represent the pressures to succeed? e) It is an image of competing pressures. f) Why does B have a bag (backpack)? It could just be her bag as a lecturer, always full of work needing to be done. g) Or perhaps the bag is more symbolic, to show the baggage that students bring with them, and this 'baggage' becomes one of the pressures on them. We sometimes stereotype students as being free and easy, but some are married with children, or are carers for ill family members.	After listening to the viewers' comments and interpretations, the group creating the image suggested the following: - We actually saw A as the lecturer in the middle rather than the student. - Note the book that A is holding: *53 Interesting Things To Do In Your Lectures*! - Each person in the image was representative – so B was the student; C was industry; and D was the University/Faculty management. - There is a sense of being under pressure from all sides. A is not able to move fully in any direction. A feeling of being 'channelled' with little room for flexibility. - Question of whether this is the experience of academics especially in post-92 universities. Real pressures of working with industry, for example, which has plus points, but also negatives. - Pushing can be positive too of course, but we were showing the student as 'customer' with demands and wants. Students have a lot of power, and NSS scores are a huge pressure.
Facial expression	A is concentrating on the book. B looks angry or annoyed. C has a neutral look on her face. It is hard to tell D's facial expression.	• Their faces show that they all quite determined. There is no humour or enjoyment. They are all putting pressure on the student to succeed.		
Proximity	A is at the centre of the image, with B and C at arm's length from her and turned towards her. D is at a similar distance from A directly in front of her. There is a sense of encroachment on A without being very tightly packed together.	• B, C and D are crowding in on A. She doesn't seem to have much space to manoeuvre. The student has to concentrate; she can't get out of there. • They are trying to keep her on the straight and narrow, but are adding pressure from different sides.		
Feet positioning	A has feet together, while B and C have feet apart to give them leverage as they push towards A. All four people are more or less facing towards each other creating a solid shape (a wonky circle or rectangle).	• There was no specific comment on positioning of feet. However, there was discussion about the fact that B, C and D are facing towards A, and that B and C are exerting pressure as seen in their stance.		
Touch/body contact	B is applying pressure to A's left shoulder, pushing into her with both hands. C has one hand pushing gently on A's right shoulder.	• The student in the middle is having pressure exerted from opposite sides, being pushed. • B is pushing with two hands, whereas C is only pushing with one (and is holding a paint can); is this significant? If B is the lecturer, and C is an artist or industry, maybe there is slightly less pressure from C?		
Gesture	D is pointing towards A, or at A's book.	• D pointing makes it look as if he is commanding. 'You will do this!'. He is either pointing at her, or at the reading she has to do.		

IMAGE C2

This image is one of a series of images trying out different positions. This includes brining two of the viewers into the image to take on different characters/players, and negotiating as a group, the trying out of different positions and configurations. I have selected this one as the key development from Image C1 for analysis, but have also tried to indicate the somewhat fluid and dynamic process that this image was part of.

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	B has moved to the centre of the image (where A was in the previous image) Most of the eye contact remains on that central figure (previously A, now B). B seems to be looking past the others into the distance.	• They all seem to be focused on the student (B). She has everyone looking at her. It is perhaps showing how important 'the student experience' has become, but it is also a lot of pressure on her. • B is not looking at any of the others, but is looking out into the distance. She is looking out to where she wants to go; the future, or aspirations. It is beyond the various players around her. • E is the politician who is looking over the shoulder of management, keeping an eye on everyone, with a focus on B. • F is the parent who has his eye on his daughter (B) whilst embracing the whole system.	a) The politician and the parent add to the overall complexity of the different relationships and tensions that make up our universities. b) The relationship with industry is a complex one. Not always friendly, but can be really positive. c) The fact that A, C, D, E and F are looking in the same direction (towards B), suggests that although there may be different tensions and pulls, there aren't necessarily always different agendas. d) There is a strong sense that all these characters/players are connected and shifting. As soon as one changes, all the relationships shift. It is possible to put any of them in the middle, and the relationships will change, but still be connected. e) Interesting where the 'gaze' is (the word used by one of the viewers). B is looking out beyond university. She could be looking at A or C, but would be unlikely to be looking at D (management). She is looking where she wants to go. A (academic), could also be looking in the same direction as B.	In the main there was agreement with what the viewers were expressing, and indeed the discussion frequently turned into a whole group discussion, with different options for re-shaping the image being tried out collaboratively. Other points that emerged, however: - The parent (F) does have both industry and the university in sight – and can look across at government – but is also confused to a certain degree. There are a lot of choices and decisions not helped by the number of different players or voices. - Tensions can be positive or negative, but they are often stressful for academics, and probably university management, because of the constant change and negotiation.
Facial expression	None of the characters are smiling; they look either serious or neutral. B has a neutral, or perhaps focused, look on her face as she looks out.	• B looks like she is looking ahead – her face suggests she is serious about getting ahead. It is a look of concentration. • The others all have a serious look – none of their faces give a sense of enjoyment at this particular moment, perhaps because they are all feeling the various tensions. C looks determined; maybe this is because industry is pushing to have a bigger influence on what students learn.		
Proximity	A, B, C and D are in similar proximity to Image C1 although in different positions. E is arm's length from D as if looking in from further back. F is equidistant from A, B and C. There is a sense of B being surrounded by the others.	• There seem to be two parts to the image – D and E are facing A, B, C and F. They are not spread over a great distance, however, so are all impacting, particularly on B. • A (the academic) seems slightly further away (and hands-off) than C in this image. Is this because of a declining influence?		
Feet positioning	A, B, C and F are facing towards D and E, who are facing towards them. E behind D extends the distance from B in the middle.	• B looks sturdy in her stance, and is perhaps in a position of being able to move forward. It gives her a sense of confidence.		
Touch/body contact	E has her hand on D's shoulder from behind. C now has her left hand on B's right shoulder from beside her.	• A is no longer touching B. C is touching B (but not pushing in the same way as in the previous image). Industry is perhaps encouraging the student towards them. E's hand on D's shoulder suggest that government has a very direct impact or influence on university management (but also see below tables)		
Gesture	D is now pointing towards B. F holds his arms out as if embracing the three in front of him. C still holds a can of paint, and A still holds the book. A has one hand up towards the student, either keeping her at a distance or maybe trying to get her attention?	• The parent (F) gesturing towards A (academic) and C (industry), shows he want his daughter to get a good education and a good job. • D (management) is still making demands, maybe this time telling everyone that the student is the most important. • It is 'pointy-finger' management. • A is trying to get B to look towards her.		

Two examples of the kinds of changes that were discussed in reworking the image:

In the two images above, we see the suggestion by one of the viewers for E to move her hand from D's shoulder to his upper back. Having discussed that D represents 'Management' (university and faculty), and E represents the politician or government, the group is experimenting to see how the meaning of this part of the image may be changed by a fairly subtle shift of position. The intention is that rather than the government simply having their hand on management's shoulder – that is, having some kind of controlling hand on them – they are also pushing them with a slightly forward momentum. This suggests that government has a greater impact than might be suggested in the hand-on-shoulder image. On the other hand, the hand on the back can also be read as more caring or supportive.

This image shows the group in discussion as the image is being re-arranged. In this case, C (who was originally holding the paint can), has stepped out of the image to look at it and make changes. She has been replaced in the image by one of the viewers, now labelled 'G' (just visible behind E). At this point in the discussion, C has moved E (government) next D (management), rather than have her behind D with hand on shoulder or back. She has also moved A (the academic) to the same side D, E and G (industry). They are discussing those people/groups/roles being on the same side of the student and how they might have similar aims if different approaches and discourses. This shows a part of the process in which a number of different positions are being tried out in thinking through the complexity of the various relationships.

Notes and observations about the group interpreting the images:

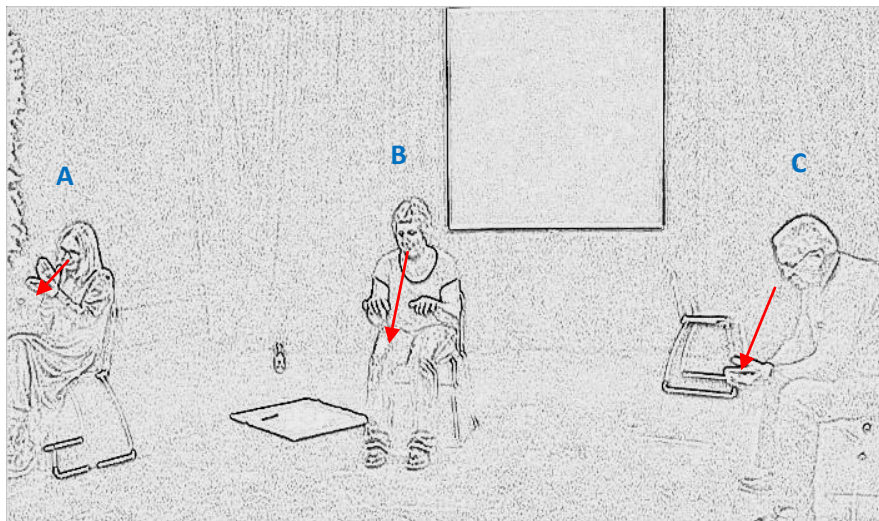|	
Spoken word by viewers	• The group starts to comment one at a time. Everyone contributes a thought, but they do spend a bit of time walking around the image, looking at from different perspectives and then commenting. • There is a clear sense of participants listening to each other – they nod in acknowledgement, for example, as one of the others makes a point, or make a statement in direct response to what the previous person has said. • All participants contribute interpretations or comments without being asked or invited. • Some comments or sounds are confirmation of what others are saying, for example if someone offers an interpretation, another viewer is heard saying, "Hmm, yes..." or "yes...exactly...". • There are a number of questions asked of each other, for example, "Why do you think [C] is holding a paint can?" or "Who do you think [A] is"? • Some comments are an answering of questions, either from other viewers, or in a response to questions from me as the facilitator. • When the second image is being shown, the conversation quickly comes to include both those in the image and those watching, as they try out different possibilities, and, to a degree, co-construct the images. Whilst normally this would not be part of the process, in this particular instance, it seemed appropriate to encourage this fuller co-group collaboration because they seemed to be sparking a number of ideas or perspectives off each other. • Thus, a lot of spoken commentary consists of suggestions for changing people's positioning in the image (both where they were standing, or aspects of a position such as the angle of the person's head). In trying out these changes physically, further conversation then emerges in response to this.
Spoken word by those who created image	• In terms of the first image, all four members of the group speak. Their comments either support each other or offer alternative perspectives. They highlight that their broader intention was different to the interpretation offered (e.g. they saw A as a lecturer, whereas the viewers had discussed her as a student), and this leads to an animated discussion. • There are points where they confirm specific interpretations as being in agreement with what they intended in creating the image, for example identifying the competing power relationships. • They sometimes develop interpretations offered by viewers, such as giving an example of how under pressure they may personally feel as an academic by the micro-management of managers. • A lot of gesture is used in explaining, responding and discussing. There is a constant use of hand movement in emphasising their points and communicating their explanations. • In the second image (part of a series of different images), comments are much more discursive in terms of the group as a whole. Rather than explaining, there is negotiation and suggesting, discussing and responding.
Silences	• In showing the first image, the group creating the image remains silent, listening to interpretations and comments before being invited by the facilitator to join in. • The viewers first consider the first image in silence. There are then moments of silence between comments as viewers look from different positions or consider their responses. • In discussing the second series of images, there are silences that may be described as thoughtful silences, as participants consider the impacts of changes that have been made to the image before articulating verbal responses. • On the video, moments of silence seem to be listening moments. As far as can be gauged, there are no silences as a result of simply not knowing what is going on or being disengaged – all the way through the process they seem rather to be silences in which thoughts, feelings and responses are being processed and responses are being formed.
Laughter	• There is quite a bit of laughter at various points, especially laughter of recognition at various situations, for example, feeling like management is pointing a finger at them. A laughter of empathising or identifying. • Some laughter seems to indicate getting used to working with each other. • The video seems to suggest that laughter emerges from the enjoyment of engaging with other people and taking decisions as a group.
Proximity and POV of viewers	• For the first image viewers initially stood and looked at the image from one vantage point, but then started to move around it to look at it from different perspectives, sometimes going right up to different people in the image. • All the viewers remained standing; i.e. nobody sat on the floor or went to get a chair. • In experimenting with the second series of images, there was a lot more moving around and between the people creating the image, including placing viewers into the image as part of it. In addition, there were points in which people in the image stepped out of the image and were replaced by one of the viewers, so that they could get a viewer's perspective and add further thoughts or suggestions.

Main Areas of Discussion That Emerged:

- A key focus was the idea that universities are made up of a complex web of different relationships, sometimes pulling in different directions. This creates various tensions (which can be positive or negative), which need to be constantly negotiated and taken account of.
- The main focus of universities (and specifically post-92 universities) seems to be to 'serve' students, but this brings with it various tensions and sometimes conflicting or competing demands. The idea of 'the student experience', the pressure of the NSS, and the focus on 'customer service', for example are all central.
- Fundamentally, there was a strong feeling that as academics, participants often feel pulled in different directions by different agendas.
- The impact of, and relationship with, 'industry', has become a major factor in considering the function of the university. This includes questions of what 'industry' is, especially in the arts and creative industries – a vary varied and diverse spectrum of companies, organisations and individuals. Part of the expectation of the contemporary university is to work much more closely with industry through placements for students, research partnerships, curricula that prepare students for 'employability', and so on. There was a recognition that this can be positive, but participants see the value and role of the university as much broader than this, and there is a sense that a narrow of view of this relationship needs to be challenged.
- The roles of government and university management and the relationship between the two impact on the experience of staff and students. Discussion considered different ways that 'pressure from above' might have an effect, and what the nature of that relationship is.
- In thinking about different relationships, the parents of students were also discussed as pat of the overall complex set of relationships. As a further set of voices with perspectives on both industry and the university, as well as views on government, they are part of choices and decisions that get made, can sometimes be directly involved in their children's university life or might express views from a distance.
- Student aspiration came into focus a number of times, including the idea that looking out beyond the university makes it possible to transcend some of the tensions. Equally that 'aspiration-building' is now a significant function of the university.

Levels of Interpretation:

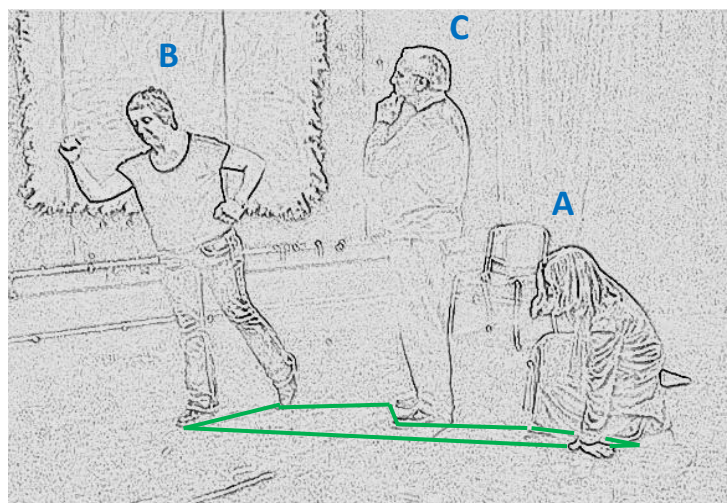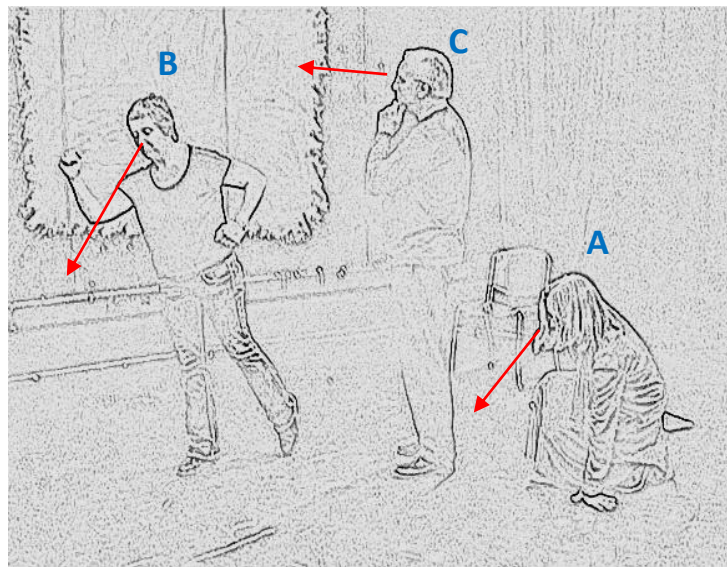| Physical details	pushing; pointing; reading; staring; hand on shoulder; hand on back; arms outstretched; looking out; holding up palm of hand; encircling.
Metaphor and Symbol	student (bag); academic (book); industry (paint can); management (pointing); government; web of relationships; tensions
Personal Positioning	Self as lecturer; reference to own experience as student and as parent.
Alternative Viewpoints	This particular image allowed for opportunity to consider different perspectives - lecturer or student in the middle; changing who was in the middle; changing position of politician and academic; viewpoint of parent.
Broader Social and Political Issues	Power dynamics (and micro-dynamics); HE management; the perceived impact of industry demands; government influence on universities; understanding changing relationships.

The Purpose or Function of a Contemporary University

IMAGE D1

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	There is no eye contact between A, B and C. A is looking at her hands, which may be clapping or holding or opening an object. B is looking straight down to the floor ahead of her, or to an imaginary computer in front of her. C is looking down at his hands which are holding an object or perhaps show a book.	• They are not looking at each other which emphasises their separation. • They seem absorbed in what they are doing because their eye focus is completely on their work. They are not making connections. • They are looking in different directions so each has a different focus.	a) What is striking is that they are so far apart. It's as if there is a big distance between those different activities they are doing – reading, computer and iPad. They are individuals, but they are isolated as well. b) It's as if these different form of learning, or technology, are disparate, and we need to bring them together. But I would have thought that universities now, and especially our type of university, would be more together, more joined. They seem to be suggesting that they're going further apart. c) It could also show a development: from books, to computers, to tablets. d) They're on their own, learning on their own. Seems to be about developing one's self as a person, rather than being a group thing. They're absorbed in what they're doing, but entirely separately. Which is not really what happens in most of our courses. e) I wonder if it could be to do with administration. One person is trying to be a more serious academic, but they're mainly involved is spreadsheets, tabling things up, finance. And even in this instance they're still quite separate from each other.	- We were surprised that people picked up on the distance between us in that way. One of us had just suggested it as we were getting into place to make the image more interesting. - It wasn't really about separation; we were thinking more about the journey to graduation. Students working together but learning to use different methodologies. - It was more the idea that everyone is completely different, a unique individual. So there are some who respond very well to the interactive nature of it, represented by the iPad, doing stuff that they're always carrying around with them, whilst others are more bookish. So it is like different learning styles. Where they saw the separation as negative, we were seeing a positive in terms of the uniqueness of each learner. - Also, remember of course that they may be isolated from each other in this image, but the people on the computer and iPad are connecting with other people, and the people with the book is connecting with other people's ideas. They are using different modes of learning.
Facial expression	A, B and C's faces all seem to show concentration on the focus of their attention. There is no obvious emotion shown on their faces.	• They all have a fairly neutral look. • Their faces show that they are concentrating on their work. • They don't look unhappy, but they don't look particularly inspired either. • It is difficult to read any particular feeling or thought, other than 'we have to get this work done'.		
Proximity	The three participants are sitting at a distance from each other. There is the clear impression of three individuals. Their chairs are set far apart from each other.	• It is striking that they are so far apart. • They are three individuals, and do not seem to be collaborating in any way. • The distance between them gives a feeling of isolation. • The distance makes it quite a negative image.		
Feet positioning	Feet positioning seems to emphasise the distance between them. Positioning does not seem to indicate any specific contact between the individuals.	• There was no specific commentary on feet – just the implication that they are three separate individuals facing different directions. In other words, there is no obvious connection between them in terms of feet pattern.		
Touch/body contact	There is no touch or body contact between any of the participants.	• They are completely separate; there is no contact between them at all. It is an image made up of three individuals. There is no sense that they are collaborating or doing any group learning.		
Gesture	Each of the participants appears to be indicating interaction with an object, for example B appears to be typing. A and C may be holding books or other objects.	• They are using their hands to show different kinds of learning or technologies. A has an iPad or tablet of some form; B is typing on a computer, and C is holding a book. • Their hand gestures could also be showing doing administrative work.		

MODE	MY DESCRIPTION	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF MODES	VIEWERS' INTERPRETATION OF IMAGE	EXPLANATION OF GROUP CREATING THE IMAGE
Gaze/eye contact	Again, there is no eye contact between any of the participants. A is looking down to the floor in front of her from a crouched position. B is also looking down to the floor in front of her, from a standing (running) position. C appears to be looking off into the distance behind B.	• They're still not looking at each other, but are more of a group. Maybe the same person at different stages, so different points of focus. • C is looking out to the distance. He is thinking and so his gaze is into the space beyond the image, maybe into the future. • B is in motion, so she could be looking ahead at times, and at other times down to her path.	a) It is like the two on the left are action and thought. They're going from inaction to action; a kind of progression. b) There is a sense of growing up, thinking, running off to the future. A forward dynamism. There is studiousness, cognitive development. c) In terms of inaction and action they are suggesting that we should be a catalyst, that we [academics/ university] should be that thing that inspires, that gets them active, that gets them interested in the subject area, that motivates them. d) Students go through a whole range of experience, don't they? They learn to communicate, to socially get on with each other. It's not just how a piece of software works, for example. It's learning about learning.	- There is a sense of development as people suggested; like the evolution thing. It's the student journey, growing, getting bigger and then they're towards the finish line, and out there to go for it; the next chapter. - The idea of A crouching down came from the idea of someone helping them up. We talked about the idea that part of what we do is helping people up to a different position and point of view. - We also thought about how in first year you have all this stuff coming at you; 2nd year you're thinking more deeply about it, you're learning and developing a consciousness of what you're learning. And in 3rd year you apply it and run with it. - We didn't think about the [viewers'] suggestion that it shows inaction to action or thought or action, but it is a good interpretation. Their point about motivation was a good one – we were thinking about that.
Facial expression	Facial expression tends to be relatively neutral, and do not suggest specific emotions or relationships, although C does seem to be contemplative. He is the only one looking outwards rather than down at the floor.	• C has a thoughtful look on his face; he is thinking about something or trying to understand something. • B has a look of concentration. • There is no clear indication of A's expression, but it seems to be deliberately obscured; we cannot tell yet what she is thinking or feeling.		
Proximity	Participants are in much closer proximity than in the previous image, and seem to be in some kind of relationship to each other, although they are each still completely separate from each other. The distance between each of them is closer.	• They are closer together which gives the impression of a closer relationship. • Their physical relationship to each other is more of an image of development, so rather than three completely separate individuals, they are now the same person at different stages.		
Feet positioning	The position of the feet highlights this closer proximity, but also indicates that they are all facing in the same direction, perhaps suggesting moving or progression.	• B is in a running position. She is moving forward. This gives the image a sense of being dynamic. • It is as if the whole image is moving forward from the crouching, to the standing and thinking, to the forging ahead.		
Touch/body contact	There is no touch or body contact between any of the participants.	• Even though they are the same person, the student, there is no contact which might suggest this.		
Gesture	A is crouching down on her feet supporting herself with her hand on the floor. B's arms and legs are positioned as if running. C has his hand on his chin as if thinking.	• B's arms show that she is running or moving forward. • C has his hand on his chin to show that he is contemplating something. • There is no gesturing towards each other.		

Notes and observations about the group interpreting the images:

Spoken word by viewers	• There are a number of fast responses to the image at the start, with viewers coming in quickly one after the other and responding to each other, especially in noting the distance between those in the images. • There is a certain directness in analysing the image, particularly as this group is made up of course leaders who they are used to being in meetings together, or in sharing their worries and frustrations with each other. This sometimes takes the form of questioning what was being shown, and sometimes critiquing. • All of the viewers comment, sometimes building on what the previous person has said, or sometimes introducing a new perspective. The nature of the comments tends to be conversational amongst the viewers. They are not so much talking to the facilitator as to each other. • As with Image set B, the make-up of the group is clearly male-dominated (reflective of the make-up of course leadership in the Faculty at that point), however, all participants do contribute a number of perspectives without being prompted. Because of the balance of numbers, however, it might be argued that there is a strong male voice dominating the discussion. • Some comments are in answer to questions, either from each other, or from me as the facilitator. • All participants contribute ideas and perspectives without being asked or invited. • A number of comments are in response to what other viewers have said, building on their perspectives or offering alternative interpretations. • There is debate among the group as a whole about the ways that ideas get represented. This is particularly the case when the group presenting the image is given the opportunity to speak. The debate focuses on whether the image communicates what is intended by the group.
Spoken word by those who created image	• All members of the group creating the image speak. Whilst they are in agreement amongst the three of them about what they are intending to communicate, they are not as confident in their ideas as other groups have been. However, they do have a clear common view of what their intentions with the images are. • At points they confirm that some interpretations are in agreement with what they intended, particularly in the second image. However, they engage in debate about the first image having primarily had different intentions (individual learning styles) to what was interpreted (working administratively in silos). • Although there is debate, comments are always constructive and supportive. There is no evidence in the video material of participants being disagreeable or defensive in their discussion. • In discussing the second image, conversation tends to confirm interpretations of the viewers, whilst also clarifying decisions that have been made. • As with the other groups, the group members in this group are very gestural is explaining their images and responding to comments. The video shows a lot of hand movement in emphasising their points and communicating their explanations.
Silences	• The group showing the image remains silent through the whole process of showing both images and listening to interpretations and comments before being invited by the facilitator to join in. • Whilst the viewers begin by looking at the images in silence, they are much quicker in coming in with interpretations from the start. However, there are longer silences after the initial responses as viewers consider alternative possibilities. • There are moments of silence when viewers are formulating responses to the image, and quite often, in the case of the first image, it is about thinking through the right way to give critique or to question choices that have been made. • Moments of silence seem to be listening moments. As far as can be seen on the video, and as noted in my journal, there are no silences as a result of simply not knowing what is going on or being disengaged – all the way through the process they seem rather to be silences in which thoughts, feelings and responses are being processed and responses are being formed.
Laughter	• There is quite a lot of laughter in this group which seems to come from being more familiar with each other as course leaders. • There is an apparent enjoyment of working together on something that is quite different to the ways that they normally interact. • There is no laughing *at* anybody's suggestions or interpretations, suggesting a certain level of respect among participants for different viewpoints. • In this group, there is some self-deprecating laughter, or some laughter that comes out of a 'nervousness' for sharing ideas.
Proximity and POV of viewers	• For both images, viewers looked primarily from the front. For the second image there was more movement to have closer look to consider details such as facial expressions. • All the viewers remained standing, and sometimes turned to face each other to listen to each other's comments. • Individuals seemed comfortable to change their viewing position without waiting for the whole group to move.

Main Areas of Discussion That Emerged:

- It was striking that in both images, there was no touch or body contact, and this became a key area of discussion, both in terms of how the distance/proximity might be interpreted, and in terms of the choices made by the group in communicating their ideas.
- Ideas of isolation and distance came to the fore including: staff working in disciplinary silos; a sense of isolation or loneliness experienced by some staff members; a feeling that different parts of the university, or different roles, work separately.
- There was discussion about the kinds of activities that were being shown in image D1, such as reading, working on a computer and using an iPad. This led to two further conversations: one about disparate forms of learning which need to be brought together, and another about why the group seemed to be showing more regular or 'traditional' ways of learning, rather than the vast amount of learning that happens through creative practice in the faculty.
- The amount of administration required from academics was raised- the idea that while one person looked like they were trying to be more scholarly, they were mainly involved with spreadsheets, tables and finance documents.
- Individual learning styles came up as a significant point of discussion, including the idea that what was being shown was not isolation, but a more positive image of learning in different ways and using diverse methodologies on students' journeys towards graduation.
- The second image prompted discussions about the move from inaction to action, and how as a university we facilitate this in students. There was discussion about the idea that as academics and teachers we should be the catalyst for this.
- This also led to conversations about growth and development in thinking, in maturity, in skills and in aspiration, and the role that lecturers (and the university as a whole) play in helping students along that journey. The idea that image D2 represented a move through the three years of the degree was discussed.
- This also brought to the fore a comparison between the two images, and in particular the stillness or static nature of the first one, and the sense of movement and action in the second, leading to a conversation both about the ideas encapsulated and about the aesthetic choices in each.

Levels of Interpretation:

Physical details	Distant from each other, sitting; miming reading a book, reading on a device and typing; no eye contact between people; running; thinking; crouching; standing.
Metaphor and Symbol	Isolation; silos; collaboration across different platforms; administration; learning styles; growth; development; progression; moving forward; journey.
Personal Positioning	One participant referred to his own experience as a student moving from first through to third year; experiences as academics and administrators in course leader role; sense of isolation.
Alternative Viewpoints	Student, academic, administrator.
Broader Social and Political Issues	Isolation in the structure and management of the university; education in terms of a journey of growth and development; technology and learning; the impact of different learning needs and styles; where does the power of learning sit?

Appendix D

Feedback from participants on the workshops

Participants provided written feedback at the end of the workshop before leaving the room. Feedback was anonymous. Each section below gives an individual participant's feedback, transcribed directly from their hand-written sheets. I have annotated these, using colours as follows:

Red = affect/feeling
Green = collaboration/participation
Blue = thinking/ideas/reasoning

Apprehensive at first but pleasantly surprised how enjoyable the experience was.

Excellent way to meet staff and get a handle on different views and ideas about the area we work in without the desks as a barrier.

Would like to continue these sorts of activities throughout the year just as a way to meet other staff and try to make changes/get ideas about how and what is going on.

Good to be involved with staff from other divisions and have an open honest look at what we are all practising.

Very enjoyable. Thanks.

Really enjoyed working in this way with colleagues that I don't get the chance to interact with.

Took me out of my comfort zone, but reminded me why doing that was really important, ie. made me think about things in a different way.

Challenging at times – but some really interesting ideas, images, and discussion came from these challenges.

Good to try and "articulate" ideas non-verbally. This ensured that our perception and interpretation of the subjects was focused in a way not usually possible.

Innovative research method. Considering action research myself. Effective data collection.

Insight into various teaching philosophies.

Very much outside my comfort zone, which is really healthy and challenging.

Good to spend time collaborating with others and learning about each other.

Liked having the time to think about what we do and how we do it. We are usually so busy and 'in the moment' that we don't reflect enough.

I liked being a participant and not the facilitator, a nice change.

I'm very open and forthcoming in conversation, but the physical side of the workshop was hard for me. It made me behave in a way I don't usually, but I think that is a positive thing.

It was really great to mix with other members of staff.

I found it useful to get to know other staff members. What they do regarding teaching and learning and their own practices.

It was useful to discuss education and learning, and what elements are important or not.

The informality of the sessions I think allowed for more openness in comments about HE.

The workshop for me was an unexpected opportunity to play in a way I haven't for probably 30 years!

I didn't feel uncomfortable and felt quite open to engage without feeling judged or as though there was an expectation.

It was also great to spend time with other award leaders I perhaps have never spoken to before in an environment that was free from the normal university conditions or roles.

Good fun! Thanks Michael.

I enjoyed the idea of making a 'creative response' to some of the concepts I felt were on the table. I worry about my physical inarticulate-ness and whether I'm contributing anything coherent, but the other people in the workshop contributed enthusiastically and that put me at my ease.

I think we all say something about out identities, but maybe in a way we've never thought of before.

First time I've taken part in an activity like this – very impressed at the way drama can lead to discussion and raise issues which wouldn't necessarily come up in ordinary conversation or debate.

Found session stimulating – gained some fascinating insights into views and experiences of others, and also feel it's a good way of creating bonds between participants.

Nice to know that there are others (from different departments within the Uni) who think the same way as I do regarding some of the issues raised.

Expression through drama no doubt gave interesting results.

Much of today was student focused, role plays focused on the students.

Finding out about colleagues as we have no staff room/meeting point.

The combination of speaking, listening, writing and moving created a very dynamic workshop. It felt very inclusive and everyone's thoughts/ideas/contributions were valued.

Having worked as a group in creating the still poses/images it was much less daunting to then do individual poses.

This has given me a lot to go away with – I will continue to think about what we've done/learnt as the day goes on – continued learning.

Image theatre is a really good way to come at issues from an unexpected angle. Good not to rely on verbal reasoning.

A good way to learn about other people in the group.
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Reveals things that just talking wouldn't. Shows how complex issues and relationships are.

Allows you to move from detail to the big picture and see the connections.

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I was initially rather wary of a dramatic way of addressing teaching/learning/etc issues, but I think it actually was quite effective in getting us/me to think about issues in a way that we/I probably would not have done in a more standard discussion-oriented session. Sometimes I felt a bit "on the spot" and not sure of a response when we had to think of things quickly. It was easier when we could chat about it as a group, such as in the image 1 & 2 exercise. Overall, it was one of the more interesting research activities/workshops that I've been involved with.

Really interesting way of developing ideas in the participants of the workshop and bringing concepts to the consciousness. I think these ideas would work very well as a teaching method for semiology in particular.

I very much enjoyed working 'outside of the box' with colleagues from other subject areas.

Thought provoking – made me see things differently.

Nice to actually 'see' that other people have many of the same concerns/hopes/aspirations for academic teaching and research.

Also helpful to 'hear' them rationalise their ideas as they discuss the images.

Was nervous at first that I wouldn't be creative enough but tasks were straightforward and well explained.

Very much enjoyed this and will use it in my own teaching!!!