

# ***SHARING MIDNIGHT:***

*National and Generational Perspectives on a Theatrical Journey*

*Through Japan and Australia*



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## **Abstract**

This study focuses on performance for and by young people at the intersection between national identity and generational identity. The study began by researching the different national perspectives surrounding the contemporary Japanese/Australian theatrical production *Once Upon a Midnight*. As the production developed, generational difference became a strong discourse inside and outside the rehearsal room, leading the participants to reassess their cultural assumptions. This thesis demonstrates that when interculturalism is explored in relation to contemporary performance by established artists and academics, the emphasis is primarily on national-cultural factors with less regard for generational-cultural factors. When emerging artists and academics enter the discussion this emphasis is reversed.

The study explores *Once Upon a Midnight*'s festival background and the playwright's introduction to national-cultural debate through the works of Edward Said, Rustom Bharucha and Noël Grieg. It further incorporates the generational-cultural perspectives raised by Mark Davis and Ryan Heath, and develops through the work of Rob White and Johanna Wyn, Mary Bucholtz, Bryan S. Turner, and Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, highlighting the production's position as a cultural artefact situated within conflicting frames. The study then goes on to chart the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* itself from character and story creation, and the pop cultural references running beneath the text, into thematic decisions that would impact not only the play's narrative, but the cast and creative team's discussions inside and outside rehearsal as generational-cultural conflict became the overarching journey.

Through a candid analytical account of the artistic process and performance outcome of *Once Upon a Midnight*, and through audience and critical responses and comparisons with a similar work, this study asserts that the forces of nationalism and generationalism must be considered in tandem. Contemporary intercultural performance is a combination of these strong cultural influences.

Some of the tension between these cultural influences can be resolved through transnationalism, as established by Arianna Dagnino. This study investigates cultures as constantly evolving, not only through the force of globalisation overcoming national borders, but through the changing attitudes of new generations and their demonstrated ability to reposition the concept of national-cultural perspective within a wider cultural frame.

## **Declaration**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2008, a team of established and emerging artists from Australia and Japan teamed up to create, rehearse and stage *Once Upon a Midnight*, a bilingual, bicultural, contemporary musical for a young audience. This study charts their journey from conception, initial meetings and rehearsals through to performances in Okinawa and Adelaide. This journey, along with responses from the young audience of both countries, considers visible determinants of cultural difference – ethnicity, gender and national-cultural boundaries – as well as the effect of social progress and technological evolution in shaping the less visible, but no less important, generational-cultural discourse.

**Chapter One** examines the national-cultural festival environment that led to the creation of the production. In 2007, Adelaide's OzAsia Festival gave focus to Australian artists' relationship with Asian cultures. The work in the inaugural festival ranged across retrospective reflections of Asian migrants, the experience of Australians with diverse cultural backgrounds, and direct encounters between different cultures.

To contextualise the work in the festival, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) becomes the launching point for a critique of past 'East/West' intercultural discourse. The critique cites followers of Said as well as recent critics such as Ibn Warraq (2007) and Daniel Martin Varisco (2007), who have begun to question the 'East/West' binary and the accompanying theories related to cultural misappropriation and 'Otherness' raised

in Said's seminal work. This chapter also examines the wider ethics of globalisation, with reference to the contrasting views of theatrical practitioners Rustom Bharucha (2001) and Noël Greig (2008).

Against these theoretical considerations and the background of theatrical work between established Australian and Asian artists, the role of the emerging generations is discussed. The strong presence of young people at the Moon Lantern opening of the festival demonstrated their enthusiasm for cross-cultural engagement.

**Chapter Two** expands from the theoretical considerations established in Chapter One to a practical engagement with the cultural 'Other'. This chapter chronicles my initial research journey to Japan and the intercultural encounters – some illuminating, some awkward – with my Japanese friends and colleagues; building from what many established theorists call the 'Other' into a sense of multiple 'Others', once generational perspective is taken into account. The tone of this chapter is candid and direct, drawing from my personal diary as the primary source. Multiple theorists are employed to contextualise these diary accounts and to illuminate my personal journey, but the emphasis is on the raw, lived experience.

From this practical engagement, the thesis moves from Chapter One's 'East/West' conception of the cultural 'where' into Chapter Three's generational conception of the cultural 'when', reflecting my shifting perspective as an artist, the introduction of emerging theories of globalisation and global youth culture, and the development of the creative work.

**Chapter Three** explores the generational-cultural aspects of the production, the ways global pop culture, fantasy, self-reflexive humour and contemporary music contributed to the construction of a cross-national narrative in order to appeal to both a young Australian and a young Japanese audience. Informed by the work of Mark Davis (1997) and Ryan Heath (2006), and recounting the age-specific cultural divisions apparent during the ASSITEJ forums of 2008, the study acknowledges the presence of an intergenerational cultural gap which is exacerbated by comparatively recent technological achievements, notably the popularisation of the internet. The outspoken rebellion of writers like Heath is discussed in tandem with the recent anthropological and sociological identification of ‘global generations’, spearheaded by Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2009), and the growing ‘soft culture’ movement in Japan where the pop culture of *manga*, *anime*, modern fashion – the aesthetic taste of an emerging generation – is becoming the dominant cultural export.

These explorations are central to the narrative of *Once Upon a Midnight*, an adventure story catapulting cardigan-clad teenager Kelsey Clarke into a world of chaos where she must confront her fear of the uncertain and the unknown. The socio-political framework and narrative core of the production make it a cultural artefact attached not only to place, but to a particular location in time.

**Chapter Four** chronicles the rehearsal period in Japan and the transformation from page to stage, taking into account the conflict between the national-cultural and generational-cultural imperatives in the rehearsal room. In Japan, the bringing together of these cultural aspects played out as part of an intense rehearsal process. By

combining artists born of two diverse national cultures, with a history of armed conflict, as well as artists from disparate generational and political perspectives, *Once Upon a Midnight* acted as both performance spectacle and cultural laboratory. The emerging Japanese and Australian artists defied expectations of difference and miscommunication. Their common global, pop culture references and open attitudes broke down hesitation and social awkwardness. In a matter of days, the group merged into a cohesive cast, developing candid friendships and using self-reflexive humour to tackle the challenges of a high-pressure rehearsal and production period. The bilingual cast members were asked to pull back from translating every conversation and, eventually, chose not to translate at all unless specifically asked. The fact that they rarely were asked was further evidence of the cohesiveness of the group and the relaxed, informal attitude with which participants approached one another.

Nevertheless, what some of the Japanese participants called ‘the wall of language’ remained an empirical fact, resulting in oppositional, generationally-defined attitudes and approaches to communication both within the rehearsal room and in the final performance outcome. This chapter discusses these oppositional attitudes and the relationship between national culture and generational culture in detail, concluding with the work of Susan Bennett (1990) to contextualise the established artists’ expectations of national-cultural difference in contrast to the lived experience of generational-cultural connection from the emerging artists’ point of view.

**Chapter Five** chronicles the cast and creative team’s experiences outside the rehearsal room, highlighting the distinction many of the Japanese participants made between work time and leisure time, as well as the deeper issues the group discussed

outside rehearsal, such as the attitudes and perspectives members of different generations display and how these different generational perspectives impacted upon the exchange. The group focused on intergenerational differences in perspectives relating to gender, as these began to cause confusion and tension, as well as (mis)representations of behaviour when viewed through a strictly national-cultural lens. This discussion is informed by the work of Joanne Hallows and Rachel Moseley (2006) and their examination of the movement to position feminism within popular culture, rather than outside of it. This bears close relation to the work of Sumiko Iwao (1998) and her generational-cultural reading of feminism in modern Japan, as well as the specific feminist discourse advocated by the emerging artists of *Once Upon a Midnight*. From this discussion the chapter moves into an examination of cosmopolitanism as an alternative theoretical model through which to view these interactions and conflicting perspectives, and a way to propel the discussion forward.

**Chapter Six** examines the audience response and critical accounts of the production in Okinawa and Adelaide. In Okinawa, the show was viewed primarily through a national-cultural lens, while the reception in Adelaide favoured the generational-cultural lens. This chapter captures these contrasting reactions and then highlights the different approaches to ‘foreigners’ and ‘Otherness’ in Japan and Australia, investigating how these reflect on the relationship between nationalism and generationalism within the two countries. *Once Upon a Midnight* is compared to *Retaliation* (2010), another theatrical production created for a young audience, establishing that the creative team of *Retaliation* prioritised generational-cultural perspectives over the national-cultural; a direct contrast to *Once Upon a Midnight*’s creative development. This results in two very different responses from young

audiences in Adelaide. Finally, work by Arianna Dagnino (2012) on transculturalism unites the discussion, presenting an alternative to both interculturalism and cosmopolitanism that acknowledges global developments and generational-cultural perspectives. Dagnino also provides a theoretical framework through which the emerging artists of *Once Upon a Midnight* can assert their cultural identity.

**Chapter Seven** concludes the study, engaging with works of global cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai (1996) and a speech by Ashis Nandy at the 2010 OzAsia Festival that advocates a softer approach to national-cultural difference. The experience of creating, rehearsing and staging *Once Upon a Midnight* certainly supports Nandy's argument. It also reveals the need to consider a stronger approach to generational-cultural difference in order to strike a discursive balance between 'time' and 'place' – the generational-cultural 'when' and the national-cultural 'where' – as part of a wider and more detailed study of culture that moves beyond 'East meets West'.

### **Scope and Terminology**

For the purposes of this study the term 'culture' refers to any body of beliefs and experiences through which groups of human beings process their immediate environment and the actions of other human beings. Herskovits and Willey refer to culture as 'a generic term that covers an amazing number of types of behaviour, each incomprehensible unless explained in terms of relation to other customs in the civilization in which it is found, and to its historic background' (1923: 191). Williams characterises culture as 'ordinary': 'Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning' (1958 : 93). Greig (2008), however, asserts that human groups

define their beliefs and experiences in terms of how they differ from the beliefs and experiences of others, and it is this conception of culture that I wish to engage with. Moreover, the beliefs and experiences Greig describes give one group the social and intellectual tools to decode another group's beliefs and experiences. When two disparate cultural groups meet, seeing *isn't* believing. Rather, it is seeing, interpreting through what has been seen or experienced previously, and reaching an imperfect – often biased or unbalanced – conclusion. It is in this biased process of translation and appropriation that mistakes are readily made; it is through these mistakes that cultural differences can be identified and investigated.

This study does not address the dichotomy of 'high' and 'low' culture put forward by Arnold (1869), nor does it make value judgements around cultural artefacts or endeavours. As a project created in association with a youth arts festival and as a narrative, *Once Upon a Midnight* is firmly rooted in the popular or what Arnold may have called 'anarchic'. Others may simply say 'low-art'. Similarly, although this study deals with two distinct nation states, Australia and Japan, the exploration of culture is not restrained by a national discourse. *Once Upon a Midnight* was framed in two international arts festivals as variously 'Japan/Australia' or 'Australia/Japan', or 'Japan meets Australia' or 'Australia meets Japan'; yet these statements become untenable when the cultural history of Okinawa is taken into account and when we consider the serious reservations the project's emerging artists expressed with regards to the value of national labels. This study will demonstrate that the creative team from Australia was schooled in the concepts of cultural misappropriation, cultural imperialism and ethnic exoticification within a national-cultural framework, but it will also reveal the subversion of these concepts in practice: the young participants were



ultimately unconcerned with exploring what constitutes local, national or international cultural property (Bharucha, 2001). As a project for an emerging generation, *Once Upon a Midnight* was created and positioned within a continual, free-flowing, global cultural dynamic.

What this study *is* concerned with is the intersection between ‘place’ and ‘time’, and the tensions that develop when national culture pulls to one side and generational culture pulls to the other. This study analyses these tensions by situating them within relevant interdisciplinary frameworks while following the chronological development of *Once Upon a Midnight* from concept, research, exploration and development, to the dramaturgical process, to workshops in Adelaide, to rehearsals in Okinawa and, finally, culminating in the performances and audience responses. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed analysis of experiential knowledge and theoretical research mutually enhancing one another; a series of underlying creative processes unravel in tandem with the presentation of relevant theoretical material to convey the relationship between theory and practice, highlighting points of disconnection between the two as well as discoveries made. As asserted by Geertz (1973), the question of subjectivity or objectivity in symbolic human action is immaterial; ‘the thing to ask is what their import is: what it is, ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said.’ In this way, the study of *Once Upon a Midnight* serves as *an* account of human actions, viewed through selected frameworks, but by no means a conclusive or exhaustive account, nor is it a replicable blueprint for future artistic endeavours. It is simply a set of stated intentions, behaviours – not excluding snobbery, pride, anger and subversive irony – and outcomes.

This study acknowledges – and indeed highlights – the rapidity with which *inter* and *intracultural* dynamics evolve (Mackay, 1997, McQueen, 2008) and the ways globalisation, in particular, can shape new perspectives on these cultural differences. What is ‘getting said’ may, in fact, be different for each generation represented and that is precisely the issue raised in this study; cultural differences exist well outside of the national-cultural paradigm. Culture is not simply a matter of ‘East meets West’ or ‘Nation A meets Nation B’, a fixed or static phenomenon to be taken outside of – and separate from – the forward momentum of history. Culture is an evolving force where factors of difference are many and varied; not all are easily identified and not all are containable within national borders.

### **Research Methodology and Timeline**

This thesis views ‘culture’ in the context of the creative and theoretical framework of ‘East/West’ interculturalism from which the *Once Upon a Midnight* project emerged. One of the challenges inherent in uncovering and exploring the tensions within interculturalism as an established discourse is the choice of vocabulary. I use the common terms ‘culture’ and ‘interculturalism’ as I position my work within the field and discuss the theoretical background of the creative project. However, I have also complicated this traditional notion of culture by examining the friction between the national and the generational within the context of intercultural theatre-making. As part of this exploration, I establish a more nuanced cultural distinction, employing the terms ‘national-cultural’ and ‘generational-cultural’, as the core of my argument. In other words: I use the tools of intercultural and national(ist) discourse to locate the fissures within it. These terms allow me to discuss different cultural facets or

perspectives in a balanced, symmetrical way. I do this to explicitly link both inter- and *intragenerational* debates to contemporary culture as they inform writing for emerging theatrical audiences, to assert the cultural relevance of these debates, and to uncover those strong generational aspects to culture that are too often obscured in creative practice when the dominant theoretical framework rarely makes allowances for them. I develop an argument against the notion that national borders, national policy and national concerns are all that is at stake when artists engage interculturally. Furthermore, I contend that the reluctance to acknowledge inter/intragenerationalism as a form of cultural engagement is, in itself, an area of generational difference.

There are related terms, such as the binary of ‘East’ and ‘West’, and the concept of ‘Otherness’, with which I engage frequently, but I regard as belonging to a cultural discourse of national separation distinct from the central discourse of this thesis: a global-generational discourse. My difficulty with the binary presented through interculturalism is that it presupposes a power structure in which the self is the actor and the ‘Other’ is a reactor. Therefore, I frame terms such as ‘East/West’ and ‘Other’ in quotation marks throughout the thesis as I challenge the binary approach and position this project as a shared cultural journey.

In the context of generational-cultural concerns, I have adopted the terms ‘established artist’ and ‘emerging artist’ in preference to ‘older’ and ‘younger’, or the nebulous space of ‘experienced’ and ‘inexperienced’. These terms are introduced in the thesis through my critical investigation of the impact that the 2008 ASSITEJ symposia had on the creative process, where ‘established/emerging’ was the accepted binary. These terms are central to the policy of South Australian arts boards, such as Carclew Youth

Arts, the South Australian Film Corporation, Country Arts South Australia, the Media Resource Centre, Helpmann Academy and Arts SA. They are also prevalent on a national scale through similar state agencies as well as the Australia Council for the Arts and Screen Australia. 'Established' and 'emerging' highlight a distinction that avoids a discussion of comparative age and, instead, frames the generational-cultural tensions investigated in this thesis as part of an established discourse and an emerging counter-discourse. These terms also keep the analysis consistent, clear and anchored to current challenges facing the arts sector nationally, while exploring parallels internationally through this project's development.

The methodology underpinning my investigation stems from the entire creative process: from discursive intention and audience observation in 2006 through to research and dramaturgy and the process of workshopping, rehearsing, performing and critiquing *Once Upon a Midnight* in 2008. Therefore, the research scope of this thesis spans a three-year period (2006 - 2008) and culminates in the response of young audience members as *Once Upon a Midnight* played at the Kijimuna Festival, Okinawa, and the Adelaide OzAsia Festival, both in 2008.

The project's genesis can be traced to a distinct series of events in 2006: I participated in exploratory meetings with OzAsia Festival organisers and conducted research into the festival's inaugural program. This was followed by early discussions with Professor Julie Holledge, during which I embraced intercultural performance as a guiding theoretical paradigm, and a field trip to Okinawa and Tokyo, captured in the first Writer's Diary. Julie Holledge was my key collaborator at this point in the process, as producer and dramaturge, shaping the story with me and providing a

research context. By the end of that year, the first rough draft of *Once Upon a Midnight*, entitled *Monster Angel*, was completed.

In 2007, the bulk of the drafting process and audience research for *Once Upon a Midnight* took place, against the backdrop of the inaugural OzAsia Festival in Adelaide. As a response to the apathy I observed on the part of younger audiences (the emerging generation) towards the festival programme (except for the opening Moon Lantern event and associated activities), my creative and research interests led me to pitch *Once Upon a Midnight* as a dark, horror-rock musical. This motivated further research into *manga*, *anime* and popular culture as a way of defining our audience profile. It was at this point that I met my second key collaborator, Yumi Umiumare, a Japanese performance artist living in Melbourne, who was an early creative consultant and subsequently became the choreographer and principle translator in the rehearsal room. Shortly thereafter, Tim Lucas, a fellow Flinders University student, became the show's composer and musical director, under the mentorship of established artist Stuart Day. By the end of the year, students from Flinders University Drama Centre had been cast and initial script workshops completed.

The play, now a developed work, asserted a sense of time as one of its defining characteristics as well as a sense of self-reflexive pop cultural awareness, satire, subversive humour and irony. The final script (see Appendix A: *Once Upon a Midnight*) reflects the aesthetic taste and emerging cultural identity of a generation of *manga* and *anime* enthusiasts with whom the performers identified. I present this script as the creative product that emerged from this exchange to place my analysis in

context. However, I also analyse specific scenes (see Chapter Three) to describe the creative process that is the focus of this thesis. Naturally, the product and the process are linked, but this thesis posits that the script is only part of a bigger picture and cannot represent the complexity of this exchange, nor the competing cultural discourses that informed its creation. Therefore, it sits beside the thesis as a separate but related document.

During 2008, scholarly research and creative practice continued to inform one another. My participation in the Adelaide meeting of the International Association of Theaters for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ) enabled me to recognise that generational-cultural debates were, in fact, central to the OzAsia Festival. As a direct result, the character of the Blue Fairy, Angelica, replaced Yoshiki the *tengu* as the play's antagonist and Kelsey's confrontation with Angelica emerged as a key indicator that, discursively, the text had departed from the 'East/West' intercultural paradigm.

Myself, Julie Holledge, Yumi Umiumare and Tim Lucas selected the Australian cast, with the fortuitous addition of Ken Yamamura, an emerging actor from Japan who had enrolled at Flinders as a first year student and was immediately recruited to translate the text into Japanese. The last addition to the creative team was established Australian director Catherine Fitzgerald, who brought a wealth of theatrical experience, as well as a specific generational perspective, to the exchange.

During the Australian cast workshops in February 2008, the script received several substantial revisions from Fitzgerald. These revisions continued until late May. Over a weekend, the Japanese cast, consisting of native Okinawans as well as performers

from Tokyo, were chosen from an open audition supervised by Fitzgerald during her first visit to Japan. At the centre of this creative exchange was Japanese producer Hisashi Shimoyama, who had collaborated with Julie Holledge and Flinders University previously and who invited Fitzgerald to lead the audition process. However, it wasn't until June that the young artists from Japan met their peers from Australia. The two groups came together to form an ensemble when the Australian cast, the director, composer/musical director, choreographer and I travelled to Okinawa and Tokyo to workshop, rehearse and stage *Once Upon a Midnight*. The mode of collaboration was, therefore, unusual in the sense that the creative team assembled slowly and in specific stages. We initially worked in smaller groups (Julie and I on the text, Tim and Stuart on music, Catherine and Yumi on movement, Ken and Yumi on translation) before combining our skills for an intense period in collaboration with the young Japanese and Australian artists. Even at this point, organised production meetings with all of the key creatives in attendance were rare, providing little opportunity for open discussion or critical reflection, while teaching commitments meant Julie remained behind in Adelaide.

Nevertheless, our experiences are captured in my Writer's Diary from 2008, as well as in a series of interviews with each participant. Working in a small rehearsal room, the creative team attempted to construct a performance for young people across national borders. This process was informed by the intercultural discourse of the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festivals that commissioned the work and their creative partnership with Flinders University. This was a process and a discourse to which the established artists were strongly aligned, while the emerging artists questioned the circumstances of the exchange. Consequently, each of these creative participants

came to the project with different priorities and different challenges in mind, revealing fissures between national and generational perspectives and raising further questions about how culture should be defined in a globalised age and what aspects of culture have an impact upon creative development and performance. These perspectives on the creative process were raised at symposia in Okinawa in late July, in discussion with other artists from the Kijimuna Festival. Further critical reflection took place in Tokyo, in early August, where I discussed generational-cultural discoveries with established Japanese artists and debriefed with Mai Kakimoto, who played the lead role of Nozomi. In late August, the Japanese cast arrived in Adelaide to revise and workshop *Once Upon a Midnight* for its OzAsia Festival premiere, with performances taking place twice a day from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of September.

The show's journey, briefly outlined above, indicates the appropriateness of the primary research methodology underpinning this thesis, which includes diary accounts and field research; immersion in popular culture and traditional research of its role in shaping both cultural agency and target audience profile; festival policy analysis and scholarly investigation of the impact theatre symposia might have on determining creative priorities; and rehearsal as research in creative practice, augmented by a series of qualitative interviews (an opportunity for participants to clarify and elaborate on their experiences within the creative team, highlighting intergenerational dynamics). Accordingly, my analysis of the creative project is situated within emerging perspectives on intercultural theatre – including a critique of established paradigms within the field – and practice-led research on theatre for young people, building from Greig (2008) and the tension he notes between 'the traditional' and 'the new'. From this position, I unpack interculturalism both as a discourse and as



a model for creative exchange with reference to Edward Said (1978) and Rustom Bharucha (1990), among others, while exploring alternative models, such as the global perspective championed by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2009), as well as the associated artistic dilemmas, such as those described by Guillermo Gómez-Peña (2001). It is a multifaceted analysis encompassing sociological, anthropological, ethical and theatrical concerns, but framed primarily in terms of the practical – the pragmatic realities of contemporary global exchange – as the perspectives of the emerging generations, the globally focused, or what Greig calls ‘the new’, encounter established national paradigms and formulate new ways of thinking and new conceptions of ‘culture’.

Critical reflections on the creative project are developed with reference to audience feedback (as solicited by festival organisers in Okinawa and Adelaide) and performance reviews in the printed and electronic media, as well as creative and discursive comparisons with a related work, *Retaliation* (2010). These reflections place *Once Upon a Midnight* in the context of a broader conversation about culture and creative practice.

The interviews, writer’s diaries and research data gathered during the workshopping and rehearsal periods have, to a great extent, provided a structural motivation for the thesis. While the thesis takes into consideration the views of many in the creative team, the emphasis falls on the relationships between the performers, the director and myself as the writer. This is due to the sharp difference in cultural perspective between the director and the performers while I, the emerging playwright, shifted from one perspective to the other. In articulating these differences I have drawn from

sociology and anthropology, placing ideas from these disciplines within the theatrical arena as Clevenger, Jr. suggests: ‘the methods, the concepts, the variables, the theory – every vital part of the research – comes from other fields of study. The theatre is in the final analysis nothing more than the arena in which the action takes place.’ (1965: 120) Haseman, meanwhile, asserts that practice-led research of this kind is ‘aligned with the processes of trialing and prototyping so common in applied commercial research and in the development of research applications for online education, virtual heritage, creative retail, cultural tourism and business-to-consumer applications’ (2006: 9). Therefore, I have combined sociological and anthropological analysis with an analysis of the creative process and audience response, acknowledging that *Once Upon a Midnight* was indeed a ‘trial’ and a ‘prototype’.

Some context is needed here on the qualitative interviews and the circumstances in which they took place. The interviews conducted during this process had the approval of all participants, including the use of their names, and followed a set formula: I interviewed each participant three times over the course of rehearsal, production and performance beginning with the simple question ‘What did you do today?’ As the interviewees were all creative participants, keen to share their perspective, I gave them the freedom to steer the conversation as they chose; in a sense this reflected a freedom that was not embedded in the rehearsal process. On three occasions I was also interviewed by Ken Yamamura, Mai Kakimoto and Shusaku Uchida, respectively. It is important to emphasise that this thesis captures the perspectives of every participant, including my own, to demonstrate the competing cultural discourses in the room by stacking participant responses in descending order from those with national-cultural concerns to those with a sense of an emerging generational-cultural

identity and associated cultural agency. This generational-cultural perspective challenges the rigid binary thinking that forms the basis of the established intercultural model, revealing tensions within it. As my position on this scale shifted over time, as a result of both research and creative practice, I was compelled to associate generational culture with transition and renewal, in contrast to the fixed or invariable state implied by national culture.

*Once Upon a Midnight* was a project designed for a particular audience, at a particular time. The play tells the story of a young woman emerging against the backdrop of contemporary Australia and contemporary Japan and facing her fears, which are focused chiefly on the unknowable future. These fears are represented by fantastic, surreal characters and situations, as expressed by director Catherine Fitzgerald:

It works on many levels. Is it about a young kid with fear who gets kidnapped by monsters? Or is it something else? Is it about the war on terror? There are a lot of things layered into the story. (Catherine Fitzgerald quoted in Lenny, 2008)

The young audience at the fringes of the OzAsia Festival were engaged with *manga* and *anime* but had not seen any theatrical shows that featured the kind of themes, characters and dramatic conflicts that they enjoyed in other media. Why hadn't this audience found expression on stage? Why was this emerging generation restricted to the festival's periphery? Against this background, the key research question was raised: how does an emerging generation of Australian artists engage with their peers in a globalised age with Internet file sharing, a viral pop culture and a transnational

flow of references in film and television? The creative work explores this question; my critical account in the thesis exposes, and reflects upon, the discussions accompanying the text's development and the show's presentation, as well as the attending inter- and *intracultural* tensions and challenges. The core issue raised throughout is one of (mis)communication and (mis)representation between different generations, complicating the notion of a fixed or homogenous national culture and raising further questions about how to conceptualise and frame a creative cultural exchange: what does culture mean to different generations? How is cultural identity asserted intergenerationally as well as internationally? Can traditional notions of culture be reconciled with globalisation? Should established national stereotypes and concerns be applied to an emerging cultural discourse?

My perspective as an emerging playwright and my interest in this topic stemmed from a personal desire to appeal to audiences belonging to my own generation, while the issue of nationally determined cultural difference was secondary. As this thesis demonstrates, my perspective was reflected in the observations of the emerging Japanese and Australian artists who formed the bulk of the *Once Upon a Midnight* creative ensemble. Conversely, for our partners and mentors at Flinders University, the Kijimuna Festival of Okinawa and the Adelaide OzAsia Festival, this generational-cultural perspective and its associated reflections and priorities was secondary to a national-cultural perspective. The tension between these two perspectives is the focus of this study.

The thesis begins with the journey to Japan and subsequent intercultural encounters, as well as the process of bringing this play from script to performance, in a candid and

unvarnished fashion, by acknowledging the clash between national and generational perspective at every stage in the process in order to raise questions about the intersection, and the tension, between the two. It is important to acknowledge that I and the other emerging artists owed our positions and our participation entirely to the support of our established partners, making it difficult for us to make assertions, generationally, during working hours. As a consequence, there is the separate question of my own subjectivity and the distinction between objective researcher and creative practitioner. I have found this distinction problematic as, for me, research and practice are inextricably linked. Rather than present my research findings as fixed from the beginning, I have structured this critical account chronologically, in keeping with the sense of time that this emerging generational-cultural discourse embraces. I have revealed how my perspective shifted from a concern with ‘East/West’ interculturalism to a sense of global-generational solidarity or, as Arianna Dagnino (2012) asserts, the emerging transculturalism. This is why the thesis relies on a hybrid narrative that shifts critical attention between immediate subjective experiences and mediated, theoretically informed approaches, consistent with the Gestalt figure/ground principle of perception. In a sense, the transformations in my cultural perspective over the course of creating *Once Upon a Midnight*, coupled with the attention I give to the personal and subjective, reflect the dialectical approach to writing which Roland Barthes advocates in his *The Preparation of the Novel* (2011): undead, the author returns; the horror-rock musical is hardly a ‘*structure* that transcends its author’ (original emphasis, Barthes, 2011: 208). Given that I was asked to create a work that – this was explicit from the outset – would bring a younger audience into the theatre by appealing to the ‘youth culture’ I keenly identified with at the time, my own substantial, *personal* stake in the outcome cannot be separated from the text. The

transformed ‘different I’ which has developed through *Once Upon a Midnight* challenges the ‘Self/Other’ binary about which critics of intercultural theatre warn us and, in so doing, piles on a new set of intercultural dilemmas and opportunities, opened up by an intergenerational-culturalism. Arguing that it would be a mistake to dismiss the author’s perspective in favour of the text, Barthes asserts the author’s right to adapt and evolve: ‘I change places, I want to be reborn; I’m not where you expect me to be’ (2011: 215). This notion of rebirth, of moving into unexpected territory, resonates sharply with my creative-research experiences. Indeed, while I approached this project with a desire to capture emerging audiences – and therefore emphasised generational-cultural perspective from the beginning – I did not anticipate that a generational approach to national-cultural interaction could facilitate a constructive collaboration between artists, or the level of miscommunication and misreading that would occur when generational-cultural perspective was excluded from the wider intercultural discussion.

The simple fact is this: I changed over the course of creating *Once Upon a Midnight*. For this critical account to accurately represent the event, I must acknowledge my own transformation. I must also emphasise the ongoing journey. I believe this particular aspect of my methodological approach is crucial; this is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to unpack a process in depth while highlighting key concerns in conception and representation, and offering alternative models. The journey did not end when the curtain came down, but continues through subsequent creative endeavours informed by the cultural awareness that this project facilitates. Ultimately, it is not a question of which perspective holds greater cultural capital, but a question of balance – the national and the generational cannot be considered in isolation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### East and West – The Cultural Where

In this chapter I discuss Australia's engagement with Asia through the creation of the OzAsia Festival (2007), an event dedicated to bringing live entertainment from Asia to the Adelaide stage. Quoting festival producer Douglas Gautier I frame the event in terms of 'vital relationships' as I report on key productions viewed during the festival, drawing attention to the audience of young people present at the opening Moon Lantern event but largely absent from the performances themselves. Viewing these proceedings through the lens of intercultural theory and criticism, I argue that this young audience is integral to the development of intercultural performance and to the future of an intercultural Australia.

In *'Vital Relationships': The Inaugural OzAsia Festival*, I turn Gautier's quote back onto the festival itself to critique the national-cultural discourse of the event and begin the central argument of my thesis: that 'culture' encompasses more than national-cultural discourse. I ask some rhetorical questions which capture the confusion of a young writer who, exposed to this material for the first time, wonders why the discourse is confined to a national agenda and why an established generational-cultural perspective dominates the festival. Using Edward Said's *Orientalism* as a springboard, I present different ways to negotiate the dichotomy of 'East' and 'West' and to place it in relation to other cultural factors, contrasting Said's view with that of contemporary writer and critic Daniel Martin Varisco.

*From Orientalism to Interculturalism*, the second section in this chapter, expands on this theoretical approach through the 'oppositional energy' of Rustom Bharucha, who

expresses his ‘suspicion’ of contemporary interculturalists, before returning to young people and the question of ‘what happens now?’ through the observations of artist Noël Greig.

## **‘Vital Relationships’: The Inaugural OzAsia Festival**

In the programme for the inaugural OzAsia Festival in 2007, Adelaide Festival Centre CEO and Artistic Director Douglas Gautier outlined the vision of the festival producers:

Although Australia has been and continues to be an active partner in cultural exchange with her regional neighbours, such exchange is seldom comprehended or esteemed. I believe that it is high time that these vital relationships were recognised.

The inaugural OzAsia Festival will present and celebrate work from Australians who identify with an Asian cultural heritage; collaborative work between Australian and Asian artists; and a cross-section of the cultures of Asia, both traditional and contemporary. (Gautier, 2007)

The inaugural festival delivered on all of these promises, although the final word ‘contemporary’ lends itself to further exploration. The programme reveals a tendency to look backward rather than forward. First generation Australian-born Chinese writer, circus performer and theatrical performance artist Anna Yen told not only her own story, but her mother’s and grandmother’s stories, slipping in and out of each



role as she chronicled the life experience of three generations in *Chinese Take-Away*. A combination of film footage and live performance, Yen's work depicted her family's uneasy transition from one national culture to another; a nostalgic and strongly personal journey anchored by Yen's desire to understand and honour her mother.

I wanted to tell the stories that are in *Chinese Take Away* in order to honour the lives of my mother and my grandmother. I also felt the need to contribute to telling Asian-Australian stories and sharing them in the public arena. I hoped that telling a human story could help build bridges between people of different cultural heritages. (Yen, 2003)

A more irreverent but no less personal journey, Hung Le's *I Still Call Australia by Phone* was a madcap one-man show which took the audience from the war in Vietnam to contemporary Australia. Le's performance drew some disturbing similarities between the time a young Le arrived in Australia as a young child and the time in which the show was performed in the shadow of 'Children Overboard', the War on Terror and the later years of the Howard Government. As Le blended the heart wrenching and the hilarious, generational misunderstandings surfaced, most memorably in the description of his befuddled but well-meaning parents serving cornflakes in his school sandwiches – an understandable mistake given that there is a rooster on the front of the packet. In contrast to Yen's earnest portrayal of cultural alienation, Le went for the heartstrings via the funny bone:

I really wanted to tell this story, so I just thought, you know, the only way to get my story across and the Vietnamese story across is just to make people laugh – have a laugh about it. Then people go home and they think about it and make up their own mind. (Le, 2004)

As I watched Yen and Le look back on their personal and cultural history, a question began to form in my mind that would eventually solidify into the final narrative of *Once Upon a Midnight*: if their work represented the journey so far, then what should be next? What happens now? The stories Yen and Le told were as much about historical events and social change as they were about cultural difference. The memories they drew upon concerned their parents struggling to fit in and adapt socially. Much of the poignancy of Yen's work and the comedy of Le's work came from contrasting an old set of beliefs with a new set through recollections of their parents' struggle and their own formative years. These were important stories to tell, both in their own right and as part of Australian migrant history, but wouldn't they contrast with a current encounter between 'Oz' and 'Asia'? Wouldn't they contrast, for example, with the exploits of a contemporary Australian artist exploring a contemporary China?

Australian-Chinese artist William Yang welcomed the audience into his travels in *China*. Essentially a slide show and accompanying monologue with live music, *China* cast a spell due to the pensive charm of Yang, warmly retelling his adventures from the side of the stage. Whereas Yen and Le described a family's transition from one place to another, Yang described the exploration of his family's homeland from his perspective as an outsider:

I'm a third generation Australian-born Chinese ... I was brought up as an assimilated Australian and the Chinese side was suppressed and denied. I can't speak Cantonese because my mother couldn't see the point in teaching me something she thought was useless. (Yang, 2007)

Although there were some passing images of modern, bustling Beijing and Shanghai, Yang's exploration centred on a historical China. His hike up Huang Shan and his evening spent in a Mongolian herdsman's hut were the standout tales and the most publicised in press releases and reviews. They painted an exotic, sacred and alien world set to the evocative score of the *erhu* (Chinese violin) and *pipa* (Chinese lute). The China Yang chose to discover in *China* gave contemporary Chinese culture a considerable berth, his reflections on city life touching on the 'haze of smog' and the cities 'so crowded it was hard to get around' but offering little insight into the lived reality of urban Chinese. Instead, he chose to focus on traditional sites and based much of his urban commentary on political history, such as the devastating events at Tiananmen Square, although when interviewed Yang acknowledged the changing face of the country:

Now the greatest crowds of tourists at the famous sites are middle-class Chinese. I've been climbing the sacred mountains and last time I was at Huang Shan and [sic] it was crawling with Chinese tourists. They want to be like other affluent people anywhere. (Yang, 2007)

Yang's work stirred new thoughts relating to the present and future of intercultural collaboration. Like Yen and Le's recollections of the past, Yang's *China* reinforced a sense of disconnection and difference between 'Oz' and 'Asia' by focusing on the beauty, otherworldliness and romanticism of a historicised China. This choice made for a mesmerising performance, but was narrow in its representation of a multilayered culture.

China, which is presently the third most powerful economy in the world and rapidly expanding, has many faces. Home to approximately 1.3 billion people, China's culture is a diverse mix of the traditional and the progressive and its dynamic and eclectic youth culture is a force sought after by marketers and business innovators worldwide. Outlining his plans for the future, John Smith, Chief Executive of BBC Worldwide, told an international audience of producers and television buyers at MIPCOM 2010 that China represented an area of focus for their industry, describing China as 'patently massively important every which way you look at it' and a 'brilliant country'. Marcel Fenez, Global Leader of PricewaterhouseCoopers Entertainment and Media Practice, went on to point out that 'there will be arguably more English speakers in China in a few years than there is anywhere else in the world.'

The China of Yang's *China* was far removed from the China of skyscrapers and city sprawl, the subject of marketers and investors and the driving force behind South Australia's mining boom. In retracing his roots and drawing a line in the sand between the culture of his ancestors (China) and the culture of his upbringing and home (Australia), Yang sidestepped the links between the two. These links are evident in the interweaving of Chinese tradition and foreign cultural elements manifest in

popular fashion, lifestyle choices and entertainment, what some commentators call the 'Culture of Cool' (Chan, Yu, Ireland 2006).

*Eyes of Marege* was a further trip to the past, this time celebrating the 400 year history of trade between the people of Northeast Arnhem Land and the Makassan trepang traders of Sulawesi. Visually stunning, the main stage show combined Australian indigenous cultural performance with Sulawesi's Teater Kita Makassar in a tale of an Indigenous man tried and convicted of the murder of a Makassan fisherman and taken to a foreign country full of new sights, new sounds and new wonders before returning 'dressed like a sultan in woven sarong and silver bangle and profoundly enriched by his experience of the culture and peoples of this vibrant sea-faring city' (OzAsia Festival programme, 2007). The culture-meets-culture framework of the production drew on 'a tradition of cultural exchange that goes back hundreds of years. It is a powerful story of love, death and the meeting of Islam with indigenous heritage' (OzAsia Festival programme, 2007). The production was less clear in conveying what this cultural exchange really entailed. Beyond the juxtaposed racial difference, displayed for the viewing pleasure of an Adelaide audience, it was unclear what *Eyes of Marege* had to say. Writer Julie Janson explains:

I realised that it was kind of a powerful political and kind of a remembering of history kind of thing to do. More powerful than just putting on a play with whatever actors we could find. (Janson, 2007)

This inaugural OzAsia Festival line-up raised a series of cultural questions for myself and the other young artists present: Could there be more to OzAsia than a celebration

of cross-cultural history? Would the OzAsia audience ever accept William Yang investigating his queer sexuality instead of his cultural roots? Or Hung Le lending his considerable wit to the task of satirising other aspects of Australian society unconnected to his own specific, migrant background? Were these artists boxed in by their ethnicity, marketable only in so far as they could be packaged and presented for the Adelaide theatregoing set? What were these 'vital relationships' Douglas Gautier touted? What did the banner of 'OzAsia' actually mean?

The demand for a progressive approach to intercultural exchange was further motivated by a contrast in the audience between the opening celebrations and the theatrical events themselves. The Moon Lantern opening event was widely attended by young people, families and children. Elder Park was crammed with bodies waving candles, queuing for doughnuts and mooncakes, and sharing in the spirit of a multicultural country. Groups of teenagers gathered *en masse* to celebrate the diversity of their social networks, snapping pictures on mobile phones, unravelling picnic blankets and applauding the live entertainment. From contemporary music to karate to children's performances to folk tales told by local Asian-Australian groups, the Moon Lantern event was rich and varied. When it came to the theatrical programme, however, what was there for young people to see? The audience of the Moon Lantern event was not filtering through to the theatre. Indeed, it appeared that the theatre catered to an older middle-class audience, an audience focused on the divide between 'East' and 'West', and this required further investigation.

To understand the discourse underpinning the festival, I chose Edward Said's *Orientalism* as a starting point. Said's deconstruction of the attitudes of 'Western'

explorers, novelists, philosophers, anthropologists and politicians towards the 'East' opened up an area of contentious debate which had been scarcely acknowledged within 'Western' academia prior to its publication. Citing academics, artists and other professionals across a broad range of fields, Said painted a picture of the Orient through 'Western' eyes: the web of clichés, assumptions, misreadings and naïve assertions that combined to form an overall misrepresentation, a cloudy lens through which the 'West' characterised the 'East' and its people. By his own admission, Said could never provide an exhaustive account of categorised misreadings, but in a field that had been steeped in xenophobia, Said declared that:

A very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny and so on. (Said, 1978: 2-3)

This distinction between 'East' and 'West' was evident in the naming of the OzAsia festival; a split between 'Oz' and 'Asia' as the banner headline that set the festival up as a dichotomy between the colloquial familiar ('Oz') and the distant exotic ('Asia'). The type face for the OzAsia logo further emphasises this with 'Oz' written in a Roman font and framed by the Southern Cross and 'Asia' written in sweeping brush strokes. Within this construct, 'Oz' stands for the 'West'. On the surface, such a distinction would appear not only logical but also inevitable as two halves of the world defined by both cultural and geographic difference are pitched in contrast to one another. In Said's time, the majority of scholars in the 'West' took this distinction

as natural. By both investigating the root cause of Orientalism and examining it closely, Said was able to expose it for what it was; a manufactured and conscious process:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views over it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said, 1978: 3)

From within a ‘Western’ hegemony, the ‘East’ has become a versatile brand. ‘East’ embodies the threat of the Cold War, terrorism, the rise of militant Islam and yet also the mysticism and the fetishisation of Asia, delights both carnal and culinary, as well as alternative belief systems as diverse as Buddhism, Leninism, Hinduism and Shinto. ‘East’ signifies in equal measures the shattered towers of September 11; chopsticks and hot woks; the ‘yellow peril’ of cheap labour; the unwanted boats; and the elegant silk patterns adorning those shopfront windows that offer cheap tarot readings. ‘East’ stands for the inscrutable, the unknowable, the mad, the beautiful, the distant, the uncomfortably close, the desirable, the deplorable, the alluring, the threatening, the unjust, the indecent, the enlightened, the primitive, the spiritual, the earthly, the special and the raw. ‘East’ is a projection steeped in stereotype.

Said opened the doors to a conversation about the ‘East/West’ dichotomy, where previously there had been little challenge to the *status quo*. The OzAsia Festival, as



Douglas Gautier made clear in the programme, was pitched to celebrate vital relationships across this 'East/West' dichotomy. Yet, in 2007 the dichotomy defined the event. This prompted Hung Le and Japanese performance artist Yumi Umiuare to cheekily cheer 'we're OzAsian!' in the bar afterwards, begging further questions – just what do these labels signify in the modern world? Could someone keep a foot on either side of the Oz/Asia cultural bridge? How did Said's observations apply to this contemporary event?

Ibn Warraq takes a firmly oppositional view to Edward Said's *Orientalism* in *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (2007) in which he systematically deconstructs Said's assertions about the 'West', his vilification of writers, and his factual errors and omissions in a hard-hitting work as heated and polemical as the work that provoked it. Warraq draws attention to the hypocrisy of an academic who criticises the 'West' while enjoying tenure at an American Ivy League university as well as the 'intellectual terrorism' of Said's approach, which, in Warraq's view, has shut down academic discussion on these issue over the many years since. The most telling part of Warraq's critique is that it was published in 2007, a far cry from 1978. In Warraq's post-9/11 political and cultural context, the potential for 'East' and 'West' to form the basis of polemical and passionate writings must be taken into account. Daniel Martin Varisco, meanwhile, answers *Orientalism* in a more measured voice in *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (2007). Here Varisco expands on the conversation Said started:

*Orientalism* need not be rewritten. As a polemic it has served its purpose in stimulating an ongoing debate over the ways in which representation is never

just a description of manners and customs, modern or otherwise. For a generation of scholars it has remained a book that must be read. (Varisco, 2007: 39)

Varisco raises questions about putting a diverse mix of scholars from a diverse mix of fields (anthropology, philosophy, politics and literature) into one basket. According to Varisco, Said did not care for the motives of the individuals, for the circumstances and contexts of their work, nor for those who presented arguments outside the 'East/West' dichotomy:

The boundary between scholars who critically study an Oriental language and mere devotees of the Orient does not exist in Said's textual homogenisation. For example, in labelling modern American political scientists Orientalists, Said admits that his use of the word is "anomalous," because they do not call themselves that. The beauty of this rhetorical ploy is that being an Orientalist is in the eyes of the beholder; Said, in this case, is the one beholding. (Varisco, 2007: 44)

Do artists from the past, like Rudyard Kipling, deserve to be vilified for not living up to a progressive intercultural ideal? Varisco makes a case for why they do not and why the debate should move 'beyond the unresolvable polemic of blame' (Varisco, 2007: 304). If the strength of Said's work and legacy is the deconstruction and denouncement of the headings 'Orient' and 'Orientalism' and, by extension, a reframing of how the 'East' is perceived and studied, then Varisco's critical eye applies that same logic to perceptions and studies of the 'West'. Said's work

identified the biases inherent in the ‘East/West’ dichotomy, while Varisco’s work turns this dichotomy on its head by drawing sharp attention to Said’s own biases and misreadings. Ultimately, as Varisco points out, it becomes a discourse of self-congratulation and mutual mistrust along national-cultural grounds. Varisco’s work repositions *Orientalism* within the context of an ongoing dialogue about ‘Eastern/Western’ relationships, stereotypes and labels. It also highlights the polemical aspect of Said’s writing and some errors and omissions made in his pursuit of persuasive rhetoric. For contemporary artists seeking to work interculturally, the value in Said’s work may, nevertheless, lie in these final questions:

How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved in either self-congratulation (when one discusses one’s own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the “other”)? Do cultural, religious and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories, or politicohistorical ones? How do ideas acquire authority, “normality” and even the status of “natural” truth? What is the role of the intellectual? Is he there to validate the culture and state of which he is part? What importance must he give to an independent critical consciousness, an *oppositional* critical consciousness? (Said, 1978: 325 - 326)

The ‘East/West’ debate, the sparring of theorists past and present, and the political tensions that exist between some nations ideologically married to the labels ‘West’ and ‘East’ are difficult to dismiss. Even when focusing specifically on Japan – a progressive nation with eclectic influences that is broadly categorised as ‘Eastern’ and

‘Oriental’ though largely absent from Said’s work – a sense of ‘East/West’ national-cultural discourse is present. However, this ‘East/West’ discourse is complicated by issues of perception and self-perception; Japan is part of the hemispherical east but many Japanese nationals perceive Japan as a ‘Western’ country in the east, just as many Australian nationals perceive Australia as a ‘Western’ nation despite its regional neighbours. The experiment of *Once Upon a Midnight* was not to ignore the ‘OzAsia’ banner and its associations with ‘East/West’, but to expand from this premise by considering national identity in tandem with other cultural categories or other labels. As the play’s title suggests, one cultural category that asserted itself early was the passing of time. As playwright I drew an association between time and generational change. I looked for contemporary intercultural artists for inspiration.

## **From Orientalism to Interculturalism**

Said’s questions are explored in the works of intercultural artists Rustom Bharucha and Noël Greig who explore national-cultural difference through the notion of ‘historical space’ and generational-cultural perspective, albeit with markedly different attitudes and approaches. These contrasting voices proved helpful in framing the OzAsia festival in its wider cultural context and in devising the stage production *Once Upon a Midnight*.

There is little doubt Said’s *Orientalism* uncovered the theoretical limitations and biases in ‘Western’ scholarship concerning the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Other’; efforts to overcome them have partly motivated the recent turns to international and transnational approaches in studying intercultural performance. As an introduction to interculturalism within a theatrical context, Rustom Bharucha’s essays, compiled in

*Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture* (1990) are instructive if somewhat discouraging for the 'Western' artist. He makes it clear that he distrusts this new 'ism':

In the best of all possible worlds, interculturalism could be viewed as a 'two-way street', based on a mutual reciprocity of needs. But in actuality, where it is the West that extends its domination to cultural matters, this 'two-way street' could more accurately be described as a 'dead-end.' (Bharucha, 1990: 2)

Bharucha argues that cultural misappropriation has occurred in India through the work of Peter Brook and others. This argument is confronting to an emerging writer, unfamiliar with the ethical implications of working across national borders and faced with a steep learning curve. Bharucha refers to his 'oppositional energy' and allows it to underpin much of his prose, crafting an argument that echoes Said's polemical style. Even so, Bharucha's observations hold great value as cautionary tales capturing the difficulty and complexity of working across national-cultural boundaries, especially in the context of cultural-festival tourism:

Sometimes the mere presence of tourists at performances in Indian cities is jarring enough. At a rare performance of the Chhau dances in Calcutta, I confronted some of the ironies of cultural tourism. From where I was sitting I could see the dancers waiting in the wings for their entrances. Before they entered, I saw them touch the ground with their hands to invoke the blessing of the gods. This gesture, which prefigured the earthly sanctity of the

performance, was ignored by the horde of American and European photographers in front of the stage who clicked their cameras with callous indifference throughout the performances. At particularly dynamic moments in the dance, they yelled out instructions to one another over the beating of the drums and the clashing of the cymbals. There was something greedy in the way they vied with one another for the best shots. (Bharucha, 1990: 38)

This concern for the ethics of representation presents a series of difficult choices for emerging intercultural artists, particularly writers. Bharucha feels that ('Western') intercultural artists gloss over respect for traditional cultures in their thirst for marketable and exotic material. Therefore, there is the choice whether or not to engage interculturally in the first place given that Bharucha has cautioned against a 'dead-end' and makes a compelling political argument for why that is often the case. Bharucha advocates an interculturalism based on 'a mutual reciprocity of needs', with careful attention paid to the equality of the process as well as the ethical basis of the exchange. Once an emerging playwright, like myself, is attracted to the principle of an ethical interculturalism, the subsequent choices become increasingly complex: Is it ethically acceptable, for example, to replicate a traditional dance or ritual on the 'Western' stage as part of a new narrative separate from its original cultural context? Is it ethically acceptable to fuse disparate cultural influences in music or costume?

Bharucha's work is helpful in its articulation of ethical dilemmas present in intercultural performance events and in his assertion that artists should not have *carte blanche* when depicting a national or regional culture different from their own. He encourages collaboration between the cultural groups involved in an intercultural

project and, wherever possible, a core creative team comprising representatives from both cultures. He does this by challenging the intercultural movement to live up to the promise of its label: to truly be *intercultural*, an artistic work must represent a ‘two-way street’, seeking symmetrical cultural exchange.

*The Politics of Cultural Practice: Thinking through Theatre in an Age of*

*Globalization* (2001), a more recent work by Bharucha, presents an account of these ethical dilemmas in an increasingly globalised world. Bharucha asserts his position by recounting politically and socially complex cultural events as they unfold around him. Most notable of these is his account of an Indian performance spectacle for ‘Western’ globetrotters of the Young Presidents’ organisation, which degenerates into farce. He describes local Indian performers left hungry as international guests waste food and displaced workers storm the theatrical venue that was once their place of employment. The complexities Bharucha represents in this and other accounts of intercultural performance are even more fraught at the time of this book’s publication in 2001, with technology linking the globe, compared to the early 1990s when Bharucha first began his cultural defence of his homeland. Globalisation adds a new tension to the intercultural asymmetries Bharucha raises, a tension between intentions and practice in a globalised intercultural exchange.

Bharucha is upset that local Indian customs, rituals and traditions are replicated on the ‘Western’ stage and raises the question of intellectual property rights, suggesting that the integrity of these customs and rituals should be protected. This leads to further ethical and pragmatic questions: where does one draw the line between exploitation and inspiration? What about ‘Western’ artists of Indian ethnicity, or the children of

immigrants? The legal framework for such a cultural policy would be difficult to build, and even more difficult to enforce, so at what point must ideology succumb to pragmatism?

In contrast to Bharucha's approach, Indian film critic Shoma A. Chatterji offered a different perspective on the practical reality of modern global interculturalism during an International Symposium on Sound in Cinema:

Culture itself is in a constant state of flux because it is being influenced and determined by the changes that are taking place in our social, economic and political domains. Culture is not a rigid, static word that defies. It does not exist in a vacuum. Nor is it bound anymore within the framework of geographical parameters which are themselves constantly threatened by modern warfare and communicational globalisation via the electronic media. (Chatterji, 1999)

The process of musical, artistic and cultural hybridisation to which Chatterji refers by no means favours 'Western' artists. More significantly, it is a global force that moves irrespective of the ethical concerns of cultural critics. Bharucha's analysis of 'Western' theatrical practitioners relies on the notion that culture does indeed 'exist in a vacuum'; his critique ignores the scale of hybridisation occurring across other media where even the music of Indian cinema is 'influenced, inspired and now, even plagiarised from Western, African and Arabic hits' (Chatterji, 1999).



Fusion between 'Eastern' and 'Western' sound and image, as well as fusion between modern and traditional sound and image, has made hybrid art forms the norm. In contemporary art when two cultures engage, they are likely to be carrying echoes, remnants, artefacts and influences from any number of other cultural sources. Globalisation has already transformed the 'two-way street' into an internet superhighway.

In departing from Bharucha's rhetoric, though remaining drawn to his ideals, the determining factor for a young writer becomes the passing of time and one's own place in history. Bharucha freely admits to this fact in his heated back and forth with renowned intercultural theatre director Richard Schechner in 'A Reply to Richard Schechner':

Let me state quite candidly that interculturalism for me is not merely a subject or discipline that demands to be studied on a purely theoretical level.

Essentially – and there is no other way that I can state my position – it has to be confronted within the particularities of a specific historical condition. As an Indian who grew up in post-independence India, exposed as I was to the remnants and contradictions of colonialism, inspired by and yet resistant to my predominantly Western education, I can perceive the complexities of interculturalism only from within my own historical space. (Bharucha, 1984: 255)

In response to a challenge from Schechner, that 'in an age of ever-increasing telecommunications, traditional boundaries not only between peoples and nations, but

within nations and cultures are being abolished', Bharucha replies: 'I am surely aware of this phenomenon, but the problem is I cannot accept this dissolution of boundaries without feeling that something is being lost or evaded' (Bharucha, 1984: 258). To continue the conversation in the current 'historical space', the issue of acceptance is now moot. The internet exists regardless of who does or does not 'accept' it and globalisation has become a lived reality, indeed the *only* lived reality for many worldwide who occupy a more recent 'historical space'. Bharucha warns that studying the 'Other' can lead to a 'glorification of the self' as artists use 'Otherness' to project and represent their own ego: a shallow intercultural exchange that only serves to reinforce one's own cultural position (260). This remains a valid concern. However, the intensity and unprecedented speed of technological progress has highlighted his concept of 'historical space' and accelerated generational-cultural difference. The gap between parents and children, and older and younger siblings, is widening as new forms of communication and global ease of access redefine cultural perspectives.

Where once Bharucha's work would have been contextualised foremost for its location (an Indian writer's perspective on intercultural exchange) a contemporary reading of his essays has to balance location with history. Bharucha's 'time' is as relevant as his 'place'.

'Time' creates its own cultural perspective, a perspective that has the potential to steer past the self-glorification and egotism which often lead to the 'dead-end' in intercultural exchange. Noël Greig enhances this perspective by approaching interculturalism and generational progress in tandem. As captured in *Young People*,

*New Theatre: A Practical Guide to an Intercultural Process* (2008), Greig's enthusiasm is infectious:

'Change' has of course always been a constant factor in human history. Human beings have always been 'on the move'. Mass migrations, shifts in populations, wars, slavery, colonialism, famines and the effects (and possible benefits) of developing technologies have all contributed to the transformation of the securities and certainties of 'the traditional' and 'the known' into challenges of 'the new'. (Greig, 2008: 3)

Greig's celebration of change acknowledges the speed at which globalisation is shaping the new millennium. His observations are pragmatic: people *are* having increased cross-national contact, the globe *is* rearranging itself. While some of this contact and rearrangement is driven by external factors such as wars, dwindling resources, and the impact of increasingly available and affordable technology, it must also be acknowledged that much of this change occurs through the mobility and, crucially, the *choices* of the emerging generations:

The benefits of cheap travel (the question of 'the carbon footprint' aside, for the moment) have meant that students have been able to experience life and learning in different countries and cultures. Some forms of travel (the ones that do not simply drop us down into expensive resorts in exotic places) have opened eyes, ears, hearts and minds to the possibility that 'the other' is not so *very* different to us. (Greig, 2008: 4, 5)

The interculturalism advocated by Greig is different to the cultural misappropriations discussed by both Said and Bharucha. Greig's interculturalism is not about the 'West' spreading its ideas, its influences and its cultural norms onto the world. It is about facilitating collaborations that recognise, respect and celebrate the diversity of their participants. Greig argues that many people the world over struggle with the act of acknowledging that *my culture is not the norm, my view of life is not universal*. He encourages empathy with other people, other groups, other families and other nations who see things differently, who have different words expressing feelings, ideas and beliefs that differ greatly from what 'Western' audiences know and have experienced. These people, groups, families and nations have words and expressions 'Western' audiences may not have heard to describe emotional states that 'Western' audiences may not immediately understand or connect with. To be human is *not* to be the same. In articulating this philosophical position, Greig does not regress into an Orientalist conception of 'Otherness' where 'Western' middle-class beliefs are the norm and anything else is erroneous or exotic. Instead, he moves toward a positive model of mutual recognition and mutual respect.

Focusing his attention on young people and emerging artists, Greig hypothesises that younger generations are open to embracing egalitarian intercultural communication in a way that previous generations have not been willing or able to do. He asserts that in a complicated world full of fear, there are those who wish to break through the old segregations and the old ways of thinking:

The gloomy predictions may have won the day, but I have a hunch that we may be in for some surprises of the optimistic kind – if we nurture the soil

they may grow from. And that is by investing in the creative wisdom and energies of young people. (Greig, 2008: 13)

One of the teenage artists working with Greig describes this intercultural awareness beautifully: ‘In this universe we all play a different tune on the same violin’ (Anonymous, quoted in Greig, 2008: 14).

In all this enthusiasm it is worth noting that ‘violin’ is the instrument of choice in this quote rather than, for example, Yang’s *erhu*. The tendency for ‘Western’ references in intercultural encounters lends credence to Bharucha’s assertion that interculturalism has often been geared toward a ‘Western’ audience, with ‘Eastern’ cultures simply put on parade to spice up theatrical events. *Eyes of Marege* and, to some extent, Yang’s *China* reinforced these notions in OzAsia 2007. Greig complicates Bharucha’s analysis by adding a generational component, suggesting that the ethnicity of the creative artists is only part of the story. Even so, all the performances in the inaugural OzAsia Festival were enjoyable and effective insofar as they entertained the Adelaide audience and opened the doors for further and deeper exchange. Greig’s call for interculturalism in theatre for and by young people presents a pathway to build on that foundation and aim for intercultural exchange that moves beyond colonial history, Orientalist stereotypes and the tendency toward exploitation, however well-meaning.

Sorting through the conflicting politics surrounding contemporary culture and globalisation unearths a strongly emotional, polemical and divisive debate that is by no means purely academic; a debate where idealism and practicality constantly compete. The relevance of this debate when devising a theatrical production in

*contemporary* Australia and *contemporary* Japan provided further food for creative thought, to say nothing of the hybridisation between the two. Judging by the audience engagement with the Moon Lantern event in OzAsia 2007, the new play *Once Upon a Midnight* would tell a story not only for audiences from two different nations but also for second and third generation migrants and visitors on exchange. It was clear that a rigid 'East/West' conception of culture would not be appropriate; Greig's global focus was the way forward.

As the OzAsia Festival drew to a close, I prepared to embark on my first research trip to Japan. Having taken Greig's global perspective on-board, I asked myself the question: what would it mean to be identified as 'Japanese' or 'Australian' in the mid 2000s? Susan J. Napier takes a close look at the construction of the new wave of popular culture as well as reflections of Japanese cultural identity in *From Impressionism to Anime* (2007). She takes apart the varied views of Japanese society as stereotypically marketed in the 'West':

At various moments "Japan," when viewed with Western eyes, has been: a nation of ascetic artists living in harmony with nature; a fascinating but faintly comic culture of ambitious men trying to beat the West at its own game; a vulnerable but erotic presence eager to sacrifice herself for the Western male; a noble civilisation of disciplined warriors; a brutal horde of subhuman soldiers intent on world domination; a culture of priests offering enlightenment to a world lost in material excess; a brutal horde of suit-wearing executives intent on destroying the American economy; and, most recently, a

world of techno and pop culture innovation that is synonymous with the word “cool.” (Napier, 2007: 2)

Exploring contemporary expressions of Japanese culture and their popularity in the ‘West’, Napier echoes Greig’s positive, progressive perspective on globalisation, a perspective that challenges the dichotomy of ‘East’ and ‘West’. Napier argues that Japan is not a homogenous space, but a diverse mix of styles, trends and cultural preferences. Diversity is evident in the architecture of Tokyo where glittering new buildings stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the traditional, where fashions are noticeably defined according to generational preference, where J-pop culture – that unique Japanese blend of kitsch and chic – competes with the long-established, idealised image of Japan as timeless and unchanging. Japan is in a state of flux, an eclectic nation.

As a modern, multicultural society, Australia displays many contradictory cultural identities. While the OzAsia Festival framed *Once Upon a Midnight* as an exercise in engaging a young audience across two national cultures, Greig and Napier reveal this ‘two cultures’ approach as rather superficial. The Moon Lantern event encompassed Australian, Asian, OzAsian and AsianOz audiences; the Japanese cast of *Once Upon a Midnight* featured Okinawan performers and performers from mainland Japan.

Many disparate cultural identities would engage as part of a contemporary ‘historical space’, reflecting what Napier describes as the new ‘Other’. To truly get a sense of increasing globalisation and its impact across national and generational boundaries, I had to confront the new ‘Other’ – or new ‘Others’ – head on. In 2006, a then-twenty-five year old Australian writer made a solo trip to Okinawa and Tokyo. It was time to

move into what Shakespeare, *Star Trek* and my mentor playfully referred to as the 'undiscovered country'.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Encountering ‘Others’ – Exploring Culture Across Nation, Time and Place**

In this chapter, the thesis expands from the theoretical to the personal. In *Japan, 2006: The First Step or ‘Where Oz Meets Asia’* I share my diary from a research visit to Okinawa and Tokyo in 2006, presenting an uncensored account of my encounters. Eika Tai, John Wiseman, Akio Watanabe, Duncan McCargo and Richard McGregor provide a critical framework for this account as it moves from *Small Town* to *Big City*. However, my methodology in this section is focused on the practical, on the lived experience of encountering ‘Otherness’ in a national-cultural sense, and on demonstrating how the familiar and the alien, the comfortable and the unnerving, are often tied to generational connections and national differences. In these sections, I lay the foundation for a deeper argument about the balance between two cultural markers: the perspective of generational culture (‘time’) and the perspective of national culture (‘place’).

In *Time and Place: The Dramaturgical Process*, this chapter's third section, I chart my departure from a rigidly national-cultural discourse, tracing it to my very first meetings with dramaturge Julie Holledge and our use of ‘time’ and ‘place’ to stimulate discussion. This section is critically informed by the work of Cathy Turner, Synne K. Behrmdt and Geoffrey S. Proehl.

The final section, *Cultural Hybridisation and Cultural Distortion*, builds from all the theorists discussed so far, situating their work in the context of Mary Luckhurst’s discussion of audience alienation across the generational-cultural perspective of time.

By creating *Once Upon a Midnight* from this dual critical perspective, embracing and addressing emerging generational-cultural concerns in tandem with established national-cultural concerns, and drawing from the lived experience chronicled in this chapter, we departed from the 'East/West' rhetoric of the OzAsia Festival.

## **Japan, 2006: The First Step, or 'Where Oz Meets Asia'**

The following is a diary account of my research trip to Japan, charting the initial impressions, the cultural stereotypes, subsequent subversions and the misadventures along the way. I have framed this account with analysis and theorised discussion, as well as reflections made in hindsight. The diary captures the exuberance and wonder of a journey to a new culture, full of allusions to the exotic 'Other', as the contextualising comments and wider research reveal. As a record of an experience, it demonstrates that, even with some foreknowledge and understanding of intercultural dynamics, it is the differences that pop out at the beginning, the sheer newness of another place in the world. As the days pass, however, and encounters with the 'Other' strengthen and deepen, similarities find their way to the surface.

### Day One

Well, I kick off in typical Alex-style by very nearly missing the plane connection from my arrival in Sydney to Japan Airlines. Luckily, the Japanese were anticipating this and escorted me towards the gate immediately after check-in. On the downside, Qantas dropped the bundle by failing to transfer my baggage in time, despite assuring me from Adelaide that they would put it

through. By the time I arrived in Narita Airport, Tokyo, some nine and a half hours later, it was clear my suitcase would not be arriving any time soon. Despite this not being Japan Airlines' fault, they were quick to apologise. I was introduced to the culture of bowing, as the airline's representatives did so repeatedly and one young stewardess even went so far as to hug me. I was just pleased to have arrived in one piece and was all smiles. The only other foreigners on my flight were horribly obnoxious Americans who hassled the Japanese passport officials and were quick to anger. It was disgusting to watch.

The bus from Narita Airport to the Haneda Airport Hotel took longer than I expected, but I got my first glimpse of Japan at night. Bright neon and crazy theme hotels lined the expressway. Sydney suddenly seemed ... really, really small.

Collapsed in the Haneda Airport Hotel around eleven-ish. Everyone here has been insanely polite and helpful. The man at the hotel desk said "Mister Wickery, we have big room for you! Special for you! BIG room!" Everyone bows respectfully to each other – and I mean EVERYONE. The bus drivers bow to the officials at the airport bus stop, who bow back. The people at the hotel desk bow to the guys who take the bags, who bow back. The whole society is based on mutual respect and courtesy. I could live here. Somehow I doubt homesickness will be a problem. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

Immediately the ‘Otherness’ of not only the cityscape, seen briefly from a bus window, but of the people themselves becomes the focus of my jetlagged account. The politeness of the Japanese, in contrast with the forthright behaviour of ‘Western’ tourists, mainly Americans, stands out as a point of difference along with the frequent bowing. There is a sense that I wish to disassociate from my national culture, seen in a new and off-putting context. At the same time, I am clearly a ‘Western’ tourist, viewing Japanese national culture through a rosy lens. The ‘Others’ are depicted as quaint in their attention to manners and decorum. Similarly, the mispronunciation of my name, which I knew to expect due to the well-known Japanese tendency to confuse and interchange ‘V’ and ‘W’, registers as adorable in a quirky – if not condescending – way. In a few hours, Japan has become an exotic wonderland in my mind. The twenty-five year old me likes this new world, but positions himself outside it, looking in. I am not yet engaged, not yet present. In fact: I’m so swept up in the newness of the experience that the hug from the stewardess does not register as a break with Japanese national-cultural norms. This sense of removal, of peering into a cultural zoo, quickly asserts itself both ways, as evident in the next entry:

## Day Two

This morning I made the most dramatic entrance of my life. I had planned to blend in. I was foolish. Foreigners do not blend in. The main doors to my hotel lobby open directly into Haneda Airport. It was around seven o’clock when I emerged, expecting a near-empty airport. Instead, the lobby doors flew open and I stepped out into a crazy, bustling place. A small child immediately turned, pointed and yelled “Gaijin!” (“foreigner”). His mother bowed

apologetically and took him away. But the damage was done. A large group of Japanese high school girls spun their heads around and stared. Some gave me the peace sign and waved, and a few laughed and blew kisses. I bowed slightly and then turned the other way, where an elderly couple stood and both bowed low together. Now completely embarrassed, I bowed awkwardly back and made a beeline for the check-in counter. I shouldn't have worn my bright shirt today. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

The naïvety of expecting an airport in Tokyo to be 'near-empty' at seven in the morning notwithstanding, the lesson learned here was that the dominant cultural gaze would be turned against the 'Western' visitor. Obvious in hindsight, the effect of this gaze at the time was intimidating. 'Westerners' in general do not often experience the sense of being identified as 'Other'. As an ethnic monoculture, Japan is one of the few countries in the world where the appearance of a white 'Western' visitor can still (literally) turn heads. A small child, unrestrained by social convention, openly drew attention to the 'Otherness' of this '*gaijin*', this alien presence, while others reacted in accordance to their generation: teenage schoolgirls flirted and made fun, while the elderly couple bowed a respectful greeting. For all the rosy-eyed quaintness of the first night in, the harsh light of day brought a sense of being truly apart and alone. Eika Tai highlights the 'various kinds of homogenizing forces' that 'operate to produce and reproduce a certain level of cultural homogeneity in [Japanese] society' supported by a 'state education system' which 'plays a central role in disseminating cultural nationalism to the general population' (Tai, 2003: 16). Indeed, she describes an environment where shared 'Japaneseness' comes at the expense of ethnic minorities – including, but not limited to, the people of Okinawa – and where 'the

myth of Japanese culture as homogeneous and unique' forms 'much of public consciousness' (Tai, 2003: 18). For a tourist from an at least nominally multicultural country this 'cultural homogeneity' was striking: being different and openly scrutinised was not, on the whole, a pleasant feeling.

The plane flight from Haneda Airport to Okinawa took around two hours. Along the way I grew increasingly nervous, and my stomach tied itself in double-knots. I was to meet Hisashi Shimoyama, the Japanese producer of my musical show! I had no idea what to expect. Jules [Julie Holledge] had simply said he was "charming", though he didn't speak English at all well. Despite her confidence, my mind conjured images of being struck down by a man in a business suit, inexplicably armed with a samurai sword. By the time the plane landed, Mr. Shimoyama had become a tyrant in my mind. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

Inexplicable indeed, the image of a producer with a samurai sword smacks of stereotype (albeit with tongue firmly in cheek). The feeling of wonder from the night before has been replaced by anxiety. Japan is no longer quaint, in my eyes, but increasingly disconcerting in its 'Otherness'. The cultural gaze has redefined the power relationship.

Ike, a translator, and Shoko, one of Mr. Shimoyama's staff members, met me at Naha Airport in Okinawa. They were holding a large sign, which read "Mr. Alex from Adelaide". Ike is only around my age and speaks English extremely well, having visited America for some time. He struck me as very serious and

solemnly welcomed me, “It is a great honour to have you here in Okinawa”. I adopted the same grave tone, but had to break it when it dawned on me that I had no clothes other than the ones I was wearing. My sombre young writer image was broken quickly, but Ike seemed quite relieved. “OK, let’s go shopping”.

Although it appears as a small dot on the world map, Naha City is pretty damn big. Ike and Shoko drove me to a large clothing store where I fussed over new shirts for about an hour. Shoko, unable to speak English, directed my clothing choices with enthusiastic nods or shakes of her head. Ike, slipping back into his serious tone, gave insightful fashion advice: “That one contrasts well with the gray in your jeans”. Inside, I was laughing hysterically at this absurd situation I had found myself in. On the outside, I was perfectly composed (I hope). The man from the clothing store followed at my heels and bowed whenever I faced him. He wouldn’t allow me to fold anything or carry anything myself. It paid off because I had little choice but to splash out on a new outfit.

The city itself was very busy. Lots of traffic. We arrived at the National Theatre of Okinawa where Mr. Shimoyama made his appearance. He was, I was relieved to discover, a very kind and gentle personality. Even speaking through the translator, it was clear Shimoyama san was pleased to have me around and keen to get talking.



Meeting Shimoyama san, Naha Office, 2006

We chatted for a while, with Shoko taking notes the whole time, before I was taken out for lunch.

The food courts in Naha are more or less the same as what you'd find in Marion (South Australia) except the people were nicer and the food was better. Staff members bowed and greeted us. I made an awkward attempt to use chopsticks while Ike ate a hamburger and Shoko showed me pictures of Adelaide that she had found online. Ike was growing more relaxed and displaying a fun sense of humour. He told me the fascinating history of Okinawa. It had been an independent kingdom for many years until taken over by mainland Japan. After World War II, the Japanese government had allowed the victorious Americans to set up a military base, so almost without expectation, the only foreigners to be seen in Naha City were American soldiers. I read between the lines and saw that their presence was not



welcome, and later heard of several gang rapes carried out by American soldiers against local women and young girls. Perhaps anxious not to offend me, Ike was skirting around these issues. However, the more it became clear that I was sympathetic, the more he opened up. The Okinawan people, and Ike in particular, are very interested in the Aboriginal people of Australia and draw some parallels between the Aboriginal people and themselves.

Mistreated in the past by mainland Japan, and now by the Americans, they feel an understandable affinity with Aboriginal culture and raised many questions about how the Aboriginal people were viewed in Australia, how they were progressing and how our government was relating to them. I was intrigued that this would be such a hot topic and so I answered as best I could.

Talk then turned to Japanese musical tastes. This was a depressing point. R&B is hugely popular in both mainland Japan and Okinawa. Bad, drab 'Western' R&B. The lyrics are in English, but they don't seem to mind. I refuse to have R&B in any show I write! (are you listening Tim?)

Shoko then handed me her business card and took me to my hotel. Business cards are hugely important in Japan. Everyone has one. You must study them intently when you receive one. The hotel is lovely, but the staff do not speak my language (of course) and seem to ring my room to ask me questions. I have no idea what they want to tell me. I hope it's not a fire. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

There are some exaggerations here, the American military is perhaps too much maligned in my self-conscious attempts to make a connection with my hosts and disassociate myself from unpleasant ‘Western’ images. There is also too much emphasis placed on the conversations about Aboriginal history. Our discussions began with the cultural history of our respective countries, but when an international guest arrives that is the expectation. What registers more strongly, in hindsight, is the physicality of the exchange – the Australian with chopsticks, the two young Japanese dining on hamburgers, with R&B music filling the background. It is a picture of hybridisation, and also the first point in the account where I felt truly relaxed and present in the moment, neither filtering through a removed, tourist lens, nor uncomfortably aware of being the subject of a dominant gaze. Therefore, while the national-cultural aspect of this meeting was explicit in our dialogue – through our search for cultural reference points, our discussion of history, our attempts at connection – the generational-cultural aspect, while unspoken, was evident in our physicality, our diet, our fashion and the music around us.

Although there are awkward moments, it is clear both sides are only putting on a formal face during this exchange and are able to drop it quickly to go shopping and take advantage of the food court, which I immediately associate with an image from home. There is a sense of play-acting throughout; Ike (in fact Ishigaki, but he would reveal that later) and Shoko are behaving formally as they’ve been told to and I am filling the expected role of guest artist, with limited success. The national-cultural curtain is slipping from between us. There are jokes, references to fashion and music and a sense of common ground, even with Shoko communicating in pictures more

than words. Although the R&B was interpreted as ‘depressing’ at the time (specifically because of its genre), it was an early indication of shared pop culture between the ‘West’ and Japan. This was one of the few conversations I shared exclusively with members of my own generation.



*‘Just a Small Dot on the Map’ – Naha at night*

John Wiseman predicts the social consequences of globalisation in *Global Nation? Australia and the Politics of Globalisation* (1998), outlining two contrasting scenarios. The first scenario Wiseman describes as ‘disturbingly naïve’, a view that positions globalisation ‘in a positive light’ by ‘combining the best features of local self-governance with democratic decision making informed by a global perspective.’ The second scenario, which he seems to favour, Wiseman calls ‘pessimistic’ as it considers globalisation as the source of ‘the emerging transnational overclass’ (Wiseman, 1998: 117).

My first two days in Japan were shifting my perspective sharply from the national to the global. In all my reading on interculturalism, the emphasis had been on cross-national transaction, the debate between Gautier's 'vital relationships' and Bharucha's 'dead-end'. Wiseman's work takes a step back, exchanging Bharucha's rhetoric of coloniser and colonised, or what Wiseman likens to the cultural archetype of the 'Western' frontiersman or cowboy taming the land, with the image of an astronaut in deep space viewing the earth from afar, as a united globe. The superficial interactions between myself and the Japanese appraising me at the airport and the more complex, multifaceted interactions with the young Japanese translators, evoked this wider global lens. I felt at once 'disturbingly naïve' and 'pessimistic', because both the potential and the pitfalls of a global outlook were clear in these initial encounters. The potential was evident in my ability to connect with my peers across a national-cultural divide, while the pitfalls became evident in the American R&B blaring over mall speakers, the *Nike* t-shirts with their consumerist, *carpe diem* 'Just Do It' mantra, and the gleaming golden arches of McDonald's.

While 'pessimistic', Wiseman asserts that 'the dimension of time also needs to be added to this dimension of space' (Wiseman, 1998: 118). In this context, I saw myself as more than an international traveller. I became what Wiseman and others call a 'citizen pilgrim', experiencing globalisation not so much as a geographical transaction, but rather through a new emphasis on historical relativism. The result is a dichotomy whereby 'traditional citizenship operates spatially; global citizenship operates temporally'. This added dimension to my social and professional interactions in Japan provides a new kind of intercultural framework, one that is more constructive

and satisfying than the 'East meets West' OzAsia model. It is this global-temporal framework that gives context to what follows.

### Day Three

It turns out the staff are afraid to come in and change my bed linen without permission. Ike translated for me. There was more bowing.

Today was a terrific day. Shimoyama san gave me tickets for his latest production. It was a traditional piece in the language of the Okinawan people. Magic. I was able to grasp a good ninety-eight percent of what was going on.

Ike took a cigarette break and left me in the care of Shoko, Yasue, Sayuri and Koizumi. These guys all work for Shimoyama san, although I am unclear who does what. My understanding is that Shoko runs Shimoyama san's second office, Sayuri and Koizumi work in the same office as Shimoyama san, and Yasue is a colleague and also some kind of manager for actors.<sup>1</sup> She ended up doing all the talking, though her English was limited to "come Alex, come". I became a small pet. It was rather funny.

By the time Ike returned, he was keen to go do something. We ended up checking out the castle overlooking Naha City. Amazing place to visit at night, and from the high walls you can see the whole city stretching out. Where in Australia would you be in a castle overlooking a vast city?

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<sup>1</sup> This is almost certainly wrong.

Ike and I were then invited to the cast party. It was in a small bar/restaurant where everyone sits on the floor, as is the custom, to share a banquet. Other patrons of the bar raised their glasses in greeting and got into a conversation with Ike. All very jovial and friendly. I gather it is normal for strangers in a bar to join in on toasts and so on. The musicians from the show arrived. I felt them looking at me very intently, as though I were some kind of exotic animal. They smiled and bought me drinks, and occasionally asked questions through Ike. I was struck by the fact that the two main musicians were so very similar to musicians I know and work with at home, and their plans and ambitions almost identical. People really aren't that different, once you get them talking. I congratulated them on their work and became aware of more drinks being placed in front of me. One pretty violinist shyly placed a cup of food in my hand and said "for you".

Then the cast and staff arrived! Shimoyama san was in high spirits and invited everyone to make speeches. Everyone did. There were numerous toasts and I was, by now, quite rolling drunk. One friend of Shimoyama san's told me that Japan and Australia were two of the only countries without rabies! Ike had trouble translating this, however, and it became "you know that disease ... where a wolf bites? And you go crazy? Yes? No?"

Suddenly I felt a strong arm on my back and looked up to see Shimoyama san beaming down on me. I heard the word "Australia" and then there was applause. Ike looked over and said "They want you to make a speech". I have

nooooooooooooo idea what I said. I had trouble even standing. But I talked for a long, long time. Ike translated and afterwards glasses were raised and everyone said “cheers” in English. I then made a graceful exit to my taxi, aware that it’s always best to leave a party on a high note.

Before leaving the party I was introduced to Megumi, who speaks English. She was assistant director on the show we were celebrating and has lived in Canada. We discussed the weirdness of Japanese television (I had been watching an adventure story about an animated toilet seat just the night before) and joked. I hope I didn’t say anything embarrassing. It’s OK when people can’t understand you completely, but she could! (Writer’s Diary, 2006)

There is an interesting contrast between describing oneself as an ‘exotic animal’ and noting ‘people really aren’t that different, once you get them talking’ in the same night, but both were accurate reflections as I interacted with members of different generations and adjusted my behaviour accordingly. It all was part of the difference in my persona depending on who was nearby. This had begun to develop from the first meeting with Ishigaki and Shoko, and is typical of my interactions with Japanese to this day. With Ishigaki an easy friendship had developed, but when placed in a room full of Japanese from an older generation I became the ‘pet’ and played up to the role of dancing monkey; fittingly ‘rabies’ was one of the few points of connection on offer.

A ‘dual personality’ was emerging; one side establishing points of connection along generational lines, the other playing up to an older generation’s expectation of

difference. Later, this would be reflected by the Japanese visiting Australia, finding expression in the sense of duality that defined a clear barrier between the rehearsal room and the cast interactions outside rehearsal (see Chapter Five). A productive intercultural relationship, it seems, requires a behavioural adjustment in response to the participants' generational *and* national belonging; a social change in the face of varied expectations and cultural norms across the boundaries of 'time' as well as 'place'. The continuous switching between casual and formal, familiar and alien, older and younger, without really understanding the dynamic, was exhausting. It is in these shifts that I see the referents for Wiseman's 'citizen pilgrim' in a globalised age.

It was also at this point in the journey that I encountered my first disagreement with my Japanese hosts. Over dinner, I was asked my opinion on the Japanese 'scientific research' into whales. Knowing that this was contentious territory, I was nevertheless surprised when my perspective as an environmentalist and vegetarian was regarded, albeit briefly, as a national-cultural attack by some members of the established generation of Japanese. This issue 'returned us to our national corners' (Writer's Diary, 2006) and required some careful wording on my part, and careful translation from my Japanese peers. However, when I discussed this with my peers in private I discovered that there is a strong generational component to this debate with many young Japanese opposed to whaling (I later noted a large group of students bearing the slogan 'whaling sucks' in Tokyo) and undermining the national-cultural perspective of their established generations. This 'duel personality' I was developing – this sense of 'time' and 'place' – proved useful when discussing emotive issues and contextualising the many 'Others' I encountered. With my Japanese peers, I explored the notion that issues traditionally represented as 'cultural' in a national sense may



also have a strong generational component underpinning them. Many of these contentious issues – and the question of whether they could be openly discussed – appeared, in fact, to be more influenced by a generational-cultural perspective than by a national-cultural perspective. Acknowledging this allowed me to connect with the young Japanese on a deeper level. We were gradually departing from the idea that our culture was ‘all about where we live’ (Writer’s Diary, 2006) and finding other things to talk about.

#### Day Four

Sayuri arrived with a new translator, Olivia. Ike was running a 42 km race today! He must be utterly mad!

I spilt chocolate milk on my new Japanese shirt, BUT my suitcase finally returned! Huzzah!

Today we returned to the castle and watched some traditional dancing. Sayuri began to laugh hysterically at the “ugly dancer with big head”. This continued to amuse her throughout our two-hour drive to the aquarium. (Writer’s Diary, 2006)

Formality broken, thanks to Sayuri, I was now in the peculiar position of trying to take a traditional national-cultural display seriously and observe politeness and social norms while the Japanese tour guide had the giggles. It is this kind of national role reversal, a subversion of cultural stereotype – the very opposite of what I had

anticipated from this journey – that became my focus and fascination. Wiseman’s global image was eclipsing the nation state as homogenous or uniform, or even consistent, and opening the doors to individualism, non-conformity and layered cultural interaction. Nevertheless, my diary continues to convey a fractured set of observations, as the generational-cultural collaborator sees only sameness and the national-cultural tourist finds examples of difference:

The aquarium is more or less the same as the one in Sydney, but I enjoyed sightseeing without any pressure. We had lunch in a beautiful garden in the countryside, where I ate *goya* ... and liked it. (Writer’s Diary, 2006)

In this one brief paragraph, there is ho-hum sameness followed immediately by the discovery of something new and different. We were, by now, far outside of Naha. The rural setting brought more curious faces, including one man ‘staring openly over his bowl and bowing seriously when I caught his eye’ and others ‘watching me carefully’ (Writer’s Diary, 2006). This was more uncomfortable than ‘being gawked at in Tokyo as there was the sense that these people weren’t too pleased to have a ‘Westerner’ in their midst’ (Writer’s Diary, 2006). This was likely the result of the American occupation and continuous presence in Okinawa, but it brought home the power of the dominant cultural gaze. Here again the schizophrenic nature of my observations is evident, the national lens slamming down to characterise this rural setting as different and potentially hostile. As a ‘citizen pilgrim’, my journey through Okinawa was characterised by nationalism on the one hand and globalism on the other. Two forces were in competition: ‘time’ and ‘place’, the generational perspective and the national perspective. In my diary, the weight between these two forces swings continuously:

We checked out the ruins of a second castle and then, on my urging, visited “Pineapple Park”. Pineapple wine, pineapple chocolate ... you can do anything with a pineapple!

Once back in Naha we visited a Mexican restaurant. A group of American soldiers came in and behaved like vile creatures. The first ‘Western’ people I’d seen in days now appeared to me as fat, grotesque and ill mannered. They barked orders at the petite Okinawan waitress, who was bowing and struggling to understand them. I was disgusted by their behaviour and deeply ashamed to be a ‘Westerner’ if this is who we are and how we are presented to the world. It put a dark shadow over my whole day. (Writer’s Diary, 2006)

Naha and Okinawa City felt like occupied spaces, the American military presence seeping into the types of shops that were on offer (gun shops were everywhere) and creating the sense of local culture under the thumb of a foreign power. Yet, how much of what I was witnessing was unique to Okinawa as a cultural environment given its reintegration into the Japanese cultural space since the 1970s? I had conflated Okinawa and Japan in much of my personal observation, but the reality was that the journey I was making between the two would have been difficult for Okinawan nationals as recently as the 1940s. Akio Watanabe traces the history of the *intracultural* conflict surrounding Okinawa in *The Okinawa Problem* (1970). According to Watanabe, ‘travel to or from Okinawa was strictly limited to ‘repatriation’ from Okinawa to Japan and *vice versa*. It was only in 1949 that the first passport was issued for a Japanese person to go to Okinawa.’ Watanabe points out

that the two cultures had little contact in print media either, and that ‘arguments and activities for Okinawa were conducted by a very limited number of people; they attracted very little attention from the press or the man-in-the-street’ (Watanabe, 1970: 152).

It was little wonder then, that my presence in the more rural areas of Okinawa attracted stares. Okinawa, as Ishigaki hinted in our conversations over the previous days, had been the victim of both Japanese and American interests in the region, its identity absorbed by the two economic and cultural powers. Okinawa as a unique culture with its own language, aesthetic and voice on the world stage had scarcely been acknowledged in all of this toing and froing. Likewise, within the framework of OzAsia, I was steered towards this cultural conflation. The national dichotomy had been set. Japan/Australia was palatable for the festival environment, while the more complex national-cultural relationship of Japan/Australia/Okinawa was more layered and, therefore, more confusing and less marketable, to say nothing of Japan/South Australia/Okinawa or even Tokyo/South Australia/Okinawa or – as the final line-up reflected – Tokyo/Osaka/Naha/Adelaide/Newcastle/Melbourne. Peeling away these layers of identity requires a deeper cultural understanding than the broad strokes of ‘Oz’ and ‘Asia’.

In *Contemporary Japan* (2004), Duncan McCargo critiques such superficial ‘Western’ observations of Japan:

Japan is seen as a place where tradition and novelty, the ancient and the modern, the very simple and the highly sophisticated, exist side-by-side in a

kind of profound contradiction which the Japanese are uniquely able to create and comprehend. Bemused western visitors are always writing books and articles about the deep paradoxes of Japan, writings that often tell you more about the deep ignorance of the authors than anything else. (McCargo, 2004: 7)

My experience of this ‘profound contradiction’ and the ‘deep ignorance’ of my position as a young writer with a daunting challenge ahead are clear in my diary observations. However, these observations also reveal a generational-cultural perspective that is guided by my ‘historical space’. In sympathy with this notion of a layered cultural perspective, McCargo asserts that ‘Japanese people are not defined by their Japaneseness; they are human first, and Japanese second, and not the other way around’ (McCargo, 2004: 7).

Individuals may identify foremost as Christian or homosexual, or vegan, or teen, or any cultural identity, allowing for a more nuanced understanding and definition of ‘culture’. Perhaps ‘Oz’ and ‘Asia’ are incidental to a creative exchange that encompasses vegetarian, 20-something, ex-goth from Bridgewater; gay, 40-something, duck-shooter from Pt Adelaide; Buddhist, 20-something, feminist from Shinjuku; conservative, Christian, 20-something from Glenunga; 30-something bohemians from Naha; and so on. These artists have deeper cultural differences than their national perspective. They are unlikely to view each other neatly through the prescribed prism of ‘Oz’ and ‘Asia’. McCargo supports this observation by acknowledging the need for a layered conception of culture:

One paradox that must be addressed at the outset is Japan's own ambivalence about its Asian identity. From an external perspective, Japan is clearly an Asian country; yet this is not a view with which all Japanese people find themselves in sympathy. (McCargo, 2004: 189)

The OzAsia Festival framework is locked into this 'external perspective'. It is a framework that denies self-perception and agency, and instead lumps a diverse range of cultural identities together. Okinawans who are wary of the US-Japan security relationship, and feel their unique culture made subservient to the wider Japanese nationalist interests will certainly object to this simple binary. Likewise, many Japanese nationals distinguish their culture from the collective label of 'Asia'.

From a young writer's perspective, a day's sightseeing in and around Naha could end with a sobering reminder of just how ugly a cultural clash could be. My visit was positioned in the framework of national-to-global transition and it therefore made sense that my observations would fluctuate. The question that played on my mind as the day's sightseeing drew to a close was how all of these observations would inform the creative work and where I would choose to place my own emphasis as writer.

How would I position national perspectives in relation to the generational? It was time to share my thoughts with the Okinawan producer, whose own cultural identity, both national and generational, would inform the tone and the shape of the work, dictating (to an extent) its frame within the positive, progressive and upbeat ideology of the Kijimuna Festival.

## Day Five

Apparently my speech the other night was “deeply moving”. WHAT THE HELL DID I SAY?

Oh well. Today was the day. Ike picked me up and took me, by monorail, to Shimoyama san’s office. Once seated, tea and cookies were placed in front of me and Shimoyama san began to ask what my project was about. It was a formal meeting, spanning a few hours. I was relaxed and confident when discussing writing, something I can talk freely about for hours, but reluctant to tackle production questions. Not my area. Fortunately, Shimoyama san was happy to discuss the concept and the story, and made helpful suggestions. Ike was such an effective translator that I felt I was able to get everything across well and that Shimoyama san had confidence in the idea. His only concern, and rightly so, is the matter of translation and which characters will be speaking English and which Japanese.

Over lunch I chatted with Ike, who was limping after his run, and Yasue. Yasue had been listening to Ike’s translation of my basic plot for the show and was very keen. I also mentioned my observations of the soldiers from the previous evening and Ike took a long drag of his cigarette and just nodded. He then said he was pleased I was there to help dispel some of the myths about ‘Western’ people, but that the tension in Okinawa was very real. At the same time, though, Ike had spent many months in America and had many American friends. It’s just a pity they only seem to send the nastiest soldiers to Okinawa.

This last point was something I knew not to bring up with Shimoyama san. He was clear that any play I wrote should ultimately highlight equality and friendship, between mainland Japan and Okinawa, and between Okinawa and the 'West'. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

Although faithful to Shimoyama san's discursive expectation and true to his upbeat perspective, the narrative of *Once Upon a Midnight* would still be affected by the underlying cultural tensions I had noted earlier. The idea of a powerful figure telling others how to behave and ruling through fear would soon be given the name Angelica.

On the whole it is in the nature of the Okinawan people to see the best in everyone and to encourage tolerance. My overwhelming impression was of warm, open people.

On the way home, Ike took me down Main Street. It was crowded with tourists from mainland Japan. We picked up some CDs of Okinawan music and some popular Japanese singers. The people who worked there bowed very low.

When I shot Ike a look he said, "I told them you'll be famous here in a few years". I just smiled and felt like crawling into an imaginary hole in the floor.

(Writer's Diary, 2006)





*Main Street, Naha*

The Okinawan adventure was only the first step but already I had bounced between a range of attitudes, impressions and cultural perspectives: a champion of globalisation and generational change, yet repulsed by the direct effects of one culture imposing its presence on another; at ease with generational peers, but lost at sea with the ‘Otherness’ of the Japanese *en masse*; and switching back and forth from the gazer to the gazed, powerful to powerless, confident to naïve and back again. Coming to Japan unearthed few answers, but sharpened each question. The task at hand, to communicate something – anything – across so many boundaries felt more daunting than ever.

And I hadn’t even explored the mainland.

## Small Town, Big City

All behaviour, of course, must be seen in its 'cultural' context. Culture, broadly defined, is passed down through families, communities and countries over generations, and influences all aspects of the way people live their lives and perform their jobs. But in Japan, power and politics often masquerade in the guise of culture – and separating the two is not easy. (McGregor, 1996: 5)

Richard McGregor's observations in *Japan Swings: Power, Culture and Sex in the New Japan* set the scene for the highly complex and contradictory cultural life of modern Tokyo that I would observe during my visit, and for the relationship between that cultural life and the more politically charged (and constructed) representations of Japan to foreigners; representations which reflect an uncertainty regarding Japan's national identity, especially in relation to its standing on the global stage. McGregor asserts that 'Japan has always been notoriously ambivalent about its place in the world. Confused might be a better word' (McGregor, 1996: 39).

McGregor's Japan has 'swung, almost schizophrenically' between identification with Asia and identification with the 'West'. This sense of identity split between traditional and modern, local and global, and the contradiction between powerful generational and national influences that led to my own schizophrenic discourse when describing Okinawa, was evident on a much larger scale as I embarked on the second half of my research journey. Naha was a step into a new world, Tokyo was a leap.

## Day Six

Left Okinawa today. Will miss it horribly.

Another two hours, and I arrived back at Haneda Airport. By now it was dark. My mission was to reach Kimi Ryokan, the hotel I had booked in Ikebukuro. This meant navigating Tokyo's rail system. To my eternal pride I managed to transfer at Shinagawa and reach Ikebukuro in a timely fashion despite being carried along by the monstrous crowd of Japanese business people.

An elevator took me from the underground into Ikebukuro. I emerged, suitcase in hand, to take in this extraordinary cityscape. More flashing neon. People everywhere. I trotted along, utterly confused, as people called "Hi there" and tried to beckon me into nightclubs. Eventually I swallowed my pride and hailed a taxi. The driver didn't speak English. The driver didn't know where Kimi Ryokan was. The driver was as confused as me. Being Japanese, and polite, he didn't kick me out of his taxi. Instead he drove along and jumped from shop to shop asking for directions and talking happily to me in Japanese with a gravelly voice that reminded me of the actor Michael Wincott. Eventually I said "I am so sorry, I am Australian" and he grinned ...  
"Australia!"

When he finally found the hotel, I insisted on paying him a little extra and he then insisted on carrying my bag inside.

My room in Kimi Ryokan is a cupboard. I am not exaggerating. Enough room for a small table and a bed on the floor. There are two showers on each level, to share with others. When this is over, I will print a t-shirt that reads, “I survived Kimi Ryokan!” Still ... I FOUND IT! (Writer’s Diary, 2006)

‘Australia’ became my catch cry on this occasion. I had learned that it carried some cultural standing – or at least leeway – to be an Australian tourist. Of course the link between Japan and Australia was a large part of my reason for being in Tokyo, but I was surprised at how helpful it became to identify as specifically Australian.

McGregor questions the depth of this link between the two nations:

Apart from the fact that men in both countries love sport and regularly get blind drunk, at first glance two more different nations and peoples would be hard to find [...] The differences between Australia and Japan are easily reduced to stereotypes, of the short, hard-working and group-oriented Japanese, who speak as one in a series of delphic pronouncements, and the large, easy-going Aussies, who are congenitally brash, loud and unguarded – and ultimately naïve. These contradictions make Australia and Japan an odd couple, and indeed have done so for over a century. (McGregor, 1996: 188 - 189)

To hear McGregor tell it, the relationship between the two nations is one of cynical political advantage; the two outcasts of the Asia-Pacific banding together to establish economic ties and assert influence over their neighbours. Australia, an outcast for its

‘Europeanness’ and Japan, an outcast for its aggressive nationalist history, forced into a regional alliance. Two countries in the hemispherical east who insist on a ‘Western’ identity. This ‘odd couple’ that McGregor describes seem to be linked *despite* their cultures but are not in any sense interwoven. However, this description is counterintuitive in the face of modern Tokyo. The sense of wonder at riding an elevator from the underground and stepping through its doors straight into the neon lit streets of Tokyo’s entertainment district, Ikebukuro, is difficult to capture for anyone who hasn’t been there. For an Adelaide boy, the city at night was a spectacle nothing short of awesome. The contrast between the rural areas of Okinawa and Tokyo on a busy night could scarcely have been more pronounced. Nevertheless, the alienating effect of all that neon and all that spectacle could not mask the cross-national connections I was experiencing: the ubiquitous global bands, the recognisable fashions and the calls of ‘hi there’.

Once free of the underground, I was not surrounded by ‘hard-working and group-oriented Japanese’, but by younger people sporting various looks and styles – avatars for a myriad of sub-cultures – mingling outside clubs, taking photos, smiling, handing out fliers, spruiking causes and events ... even dancing. I did not conform to the stereotype of the ‘brash, loud and unguarded’ Aussie, either. In fact I was a little uptight and bewildered. When I finally found Kimi Ryokan, I breathed a sigh of relief at having found some place quiet and traditional.

Daylight didn’t make Ikebukuro any easier to navigate ...

## Day Seven

My day of extreme wandering. For some reason, I have this belief that the best way to find your bearings in a new city is to just ... start walking. The more you do this, the smaller a city gets. For example, if you walk your way from Circular Quay in Sydney to Broadway Shopping Centre then you get a pretty good idea of where everything is and how the whole place fits together. Or you can just jump on the City Circle line and it's pretty much figured out. Granted, this technique has seen me get hopelessly lost in Marrickville in 2004 and a little bamboozled in Melbourne more recently. Getting lost is the point, however. By the time you've found your way home, you've got the place sussed. It begins to click into place, like a map in your head. I tried this in Tokyo. First in Ikebukuro, my immediate area, then beyond ...

... seven hours later and this place is still massive. I am really not in Kansas anymore. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

My schizophrenia had increased over the course of my wanderings as I switched between encounters with Japanese of varying generations, as evident below.

## Day Eight

I met a gorgeous and wonderful girl from Hong Kong (I think). She was checking out of my hotel and offered to ride to Ginza with me, to the Kabuki theatre. On the train she introduced me to two of her friends. One said, "You

are the first writer I've ever met". I wanted to say "But I am useless!" I chose to be relaxed and cool instead.

Ginza is beautiful. Autumn leaves. A population consisting almost entirely of flawless catwalk models. I found the Kabuki theatre as per 'Captain Julie's' orders and watched a One Act show. Japanese people shout support from the audience during a kabuki performance, naming the actors and their houses. The man beside me was especially enthusiastic. Alas, there were more obnoxious Americans present.

I then took the train to Shinjuku to meet Michiko. Michiko is a Japanese producer who has been involved with many Japanese/Australian productions and is a good friend of Julie's. She agreed to take me to the theatre and quickly became my new friend as well. I immediately liked this tough, tiny woman who seemed to finish almost every English sentence with "But he died already" i.e. "I worked with so-and-so from Australia in 1983 and he was very talented" ... pause ... "But he died already!"

Michiko took me to a theatre where we saw young people perform in what I can only assume was a political piece, although it was lost on me. Michiko said it made even less sense to her. Afterwards we went to a bar and Michiko introduced me to Mrs. Tanaka, a critic for *The Japan Times*. (Writer's Diary, 2006)



*Michiko and I*

The young actors and their work, dismissed by Michiko, is an ongoing fascination of mine: What were the political statements they were making? What did their gestures signify? Why were the older Japanese so pointed in their disinterest? At around this time there was a report of a young person shooting customers at a convenience store without any apparent provocation, while magazines written in English told of the



*hikikomori*, the shut-in generation, a growing social problem. Was there another Japan hidden beneath the neon? Were emerging generations frustrated and voiceless?

The following day I was thrust into the opposite extreme: a theatrical show devised and performed by a group of elderly Japanese.

### Day Nine

Slept in a little today before jumping on the train to meet Michiko. While standing at the station I heard a sharp voice in my ear and felt a finger in my back, “put your hands up!” It was, of course, Michiko. She laughed hysterically, before telling me we were off to see *The Old Bunch*. This was, essentially, an amateur theatre performance. Ordinarily neither of us would be interested, but the cast was made up of older men (the oldest was in his nineties) many of whom were ex-critics and ex-professors. One was a German language professor. I’d never heard of a bunch of old guys wanting to put on an original show and that in itself made me curious.

When we arrived at the stage door, we were told that we’d been given free tickets from the director. Apparently an Australian writer was coming. I realised with some private horror that they meant me and tried to straighten up and look serious again. The show was terrific fun, about a group of old guys robbing a bank. It felt very amateur, even with the language barrier, with overstated performances and shameless playing to the crowd. But when it’s old guys having fun, you just gotta go with it!

I gave the director my card and bowed. Pity I didn't get to meet the cast.

Michiko and I had dinner at a restaurant, with me struggling with chopsticks and attempting to speak some Japanese to the waitress. They both told me I was doing OK at both, but before long Michiko had a fork put in front of me and laughed. She told me she was seventy-four, which I found impossible to believe. In Japan it is not at all rude to ask someone's age, as old age is seen as something to be proud of. Nevertheless, I struggled to believe it. I've never met someone with that level of energy.

We headed to another theatre – I can't even say where, as we moved from train to train with rapid speed and Michiko calling "this way!" – but the show was called *Children of Seoul Part III*. It was a very slick, naturalistic production. Impeccably acted. Even though I didn't understand the words, the depth of emotion and the contact between performers was in sharp contrast to what I'd seen earlier.

Somehow I worked my way back to Ikebukuro. The city was wild tonight!

The contrast between the world I was being shown during the day and the other world – the after-dark world of stray cats, noisy clubs, shadowy figures and ever-present neon – began to surface, both in my daily diary and in my creative dot points during this time. My notes included the questions 'what is the world behind the world?' and 'what lies underground?' as I navigated the subways and the city streets in search of my hotel. I was concerned, on this particular evening, that the hotel would be locked

after midnight, as some Japanese hotels lock up to discourage guests from bringing visitors to their rooms. I was relieved to discover it still open when I (finally) worked out how to get back there. This sense of racing against the clock also found its way into my notes. In many ways *Once Upon a Midnight* took its tone and aesthetic from Ikebukuro at night.

### Day Ten

I have noticed many vending machines scattered around Japan labelled 'Boss' with a picture of Tommy Lee Jones' face. Very weird example of a 'Western' actor and Japanese product endorsement. Mind you, if I were asked to appear on a vending machine with 'Boss' written on it, I wouldn't say no!

Met Michiko once again and went to her English language class. Every second week Michiko teaches older Japanese people to speak English. They were all so lovely and some of them spoke quite well. I gave out koalas to those who excelled and they seemed to get awfully excited about that. One, Onoshi, was a well-known Japanese cartoonist. He gave me two cartoons, which I will frame and put in my new flat (when I get one). He also drew a cartoon of me on the white board. Great morning. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

Later my grandfather would examine a photograph of this class and pick out one of the elderly Japanese, correctly identifying him as a 'military man' from his bearing. This kicked off reminiscences about his early life as part of the allied occupying force. It also highlighted generational perspective and 'historical space' once again. How

would my grandfather have negotiated his way through this Japanese adventure? What images does 'Japan' conjure for that generation? I noted these questions down, along with a growing list of impressions, avenues of exploration and narrative ideas relating to the theme of generational perspective. My final tourist activities highlighted this contrast between what I began to perceive and categorise as 'new' and 'old' Japan:

Michiko and I had coffee in the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building. From here you can see most of the city and Mt Fuji, on a good day. Sadly, it was foggy and raining so I couldn't see much.

I then travelled alone to Asakasa to the huge temple there. It was still very windy and raining, but that added to the sense of magic in the air. It was a taste of ancient Japan. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

Visiting Asakasa late on a stormy afternoon was the ideal way to capture 'old' Japan. There was indeed a sense of 'magic in the air' as I jostled between the hundreds of visitors to get a close look at the majestic temple, the spiritual hub only a short train journey from the decadent city.

I said "hello" to whatever Gods may have been listening before the weather turned really crazy and I had to grab my umbrella and head back to the station. On the way to my train I was stopped by a very strange 'Christian' man who wanted me to travel for an hour by train, with him, to a foot-washing ceremony. He said he was Catholic. I didn't get a good vibe from him so

politely lied and said I had to rush back to Ikebukuro to meet a friend. I thanked him for his invitation. He may have been entirely legit, but I was not about to travel for an hour on a train with a strange and mysterious old man. The fact that he claimed to be a strange and mysterious old Catholic man hardly put me at ease. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

In the above passage, many elements of *Once Upon a Midnight* are evident: the sense of 'old' Japan with its unique magic, the contrasting belief systems represented by the Japanese temple and Catholicism, and the idea of a 'strange and mysterious old man' who may be more than he appears. My observations and my daydreams had begun to merge. By identifying a binary of 'new' and 'old' Japan, I was moving into a different kind of thinking, an acknowledgement of Bharucha's 'historical space' and a perception of my surroundings that moved beyond 'East' and 'West'. However, this was still the beginning of my creative journey and national-cultural differences quickly reasserted themselves:

#### Day Eleven

How can I even begin to talk about today? Well, firstly the wonderful Michiko and I went to the new national theatre to see some young actors perform (when I say "young", I mean my age). They were doing a Japanese take on *It's a Wonderful Life*, the American movie. They were all part of a two-year acting course and very talented. Afterwards I slipped into my 'trendy writer' mode and handed out cards. Michiko introduced me to Hitashi<sup>2</sup>, a Japanese actor

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<sup>2</sup> His name is actually Atsushi. This is most likely a naive confusion with Hitachi, the Japanese multinational corporation.

who speaks English well and seems to be lots of fun. A bit whacky and off-beat, and very keen to stay in contact.

Then Michiko and I travelled back to Michiko's house, where she cooked.

Here my adventure took an unexpected turn ...

At Michiko's urging, I agreed to surrender my dignity and go to a Japanese public bathhouse. Rather brave, I thought. How can I describe being naked in a room full of elderly Japanese men? Well, it's best that I don't. Basically it's a big room with spas and baths and showers, and everyone is just ... there. I was determined to conquer my inhibitions and did so quite successfully.

Then, while standing in the shower, I became aware that there was blood pouring down my arm. Next thing I heard a heavily accented voice cry "Emergency, emergency". I realised that I was on the floor, no longer standing at all. As I looked up, seven naked Japanese men gathered around me.

Although I didn't realise it, I had fainted quite suddenly and cracked my head against either the showerhead or the wall. I had no idea of any of this.

A towel was thrown around me and I was led back to the locker room.

Everyone was in quite a state. One man spoke in broken English "You fell down, so bad". It dawned on me that, although I felt fine and could not perceive that anything terrible had happened, I must have just gone down like a sack of bricks and really scared them. There was blood everywhere. From

my perspective, it was rather entertaining, but not for them.

A female nurse ran in. My modesty was protected, but everyone else was still naked and rushed to cover themselves. I started to laugh a little and was told “You in shock, be calm please”.

Of course all I could say was “Michiko”. I had no phone number or family name to give them. They looked to each other, all very worried. Then ... I heard the siren. And sighed.

No less than four ambulance officers ran in and started shining lights into my eyes and checking blood pressure. Everyone else scrambled to get dressed. The head ambulance officer bowed and said, “I don’t speak English ... but ... hello!”

Eventually I convinced them to patch me up and let me walk back to Michiko’s apartment ...

I arrived on Michiko’s doorstep with a bandage around my head rather like John Cleese in *Fawlty Towers*. She gaped, wide-eyed “What? WHAT?”

Michiko had prepared a feast and offered to let me stay the night, then take me to her doctor first thing in the morning. I left a koala for Michiko to give to the man at the bathhouse. We watched Michiko’s recordings of *Woven Hell* and other Japanese/Australian collaborations. Amazing to think that I am actually

going to write something like that!

Will I be remembered as fondly by Michiko as Julie Holledge or Rob Brookman? Or will I forever be the mad *gaijin* who fainted at the bathhouse? (Writer's Diary, 2006)



*Shortly after causing mayhem at the bathhouse ...*

As an illustration of national-cultural difference – in real, practical terms – this encounter is significant. Tai's sense of 'cultural homogeneity' and my own sense of cultural alienation and being exposed as an 'Other' are evident in this exchange, and my reporting of it. A spectacular clash of cultures, the bathhouse or *onsen* represented an awkward difference in protocol and social taboo accentuated by my inability to cope with the heat. The *onsen* is a trend that is highly unlikely



to catch on in the ‘West’ (thankfully), thus the tale brought home the need to acknowledge some differences across national-cultural borders. Subsequent chapters will complicate and challenge this notion of a rigidly national-cultural perspective, but this encounter, as part of my ‘first step’, serves as an example of how a national-cultural difference can spiral into absurdity, especially in the absence of peers. Even so, McCargo’s reminder that Japanese people are ‘human first, and Japanese second’ harmonises with my subsequent observation: ‘I was cheered up when a Japanese friend my own age later said “I get dizzy too”’ (Writer’s Diary, 2006).

#### Day Twelve

Fortunately Michiko was a good sport. Although she admitted to wondering if I had died the next morning (I could just see her: “I met a writer from Australia, very talented ... but he died already!”), she was in high spirits. We went to her doctor and he gave me the all clear as far as my injuries were concerned, but told me I’d need blood tests back in Adelaide to work out why it had happened. I have two large cuts. Nothing to worry about. One is by my left eye *à la* ‘Spike’ and one in the middle of my forehead *à la* ‘Harry Potter’. They may leave scars. They decided not to give me stitches. I was pleased at that. I will make up a story of how I defended Michiko from five armed men. It’s better than “I fell in a bath”.

Then we met up with Hitashi (Atsushi) and two other Japanese actors, Shikyo and Hitomi. Shikyo struck me as a gangly, awkward comic actor. He arrived

late and had to cross all the details out on his card and then rewrite them for me, as all his details had to be updated. Totally goofy and eccentric and wonderful. I could definitely see him in my show. Hitomi was sweet and kind, and remarkably beautiful. I also got the impression that she was nobody's fool and a hard worker. She spoke some limited English and gave me two cards. One for myself and one for my "Australian Sensei". When she left, she hugged me and said, "Very great to be meeting you, and your bandana is very ... um ... nice."

I explained, through Michiko, that casting decisions were in the hands of the Gods (in this case Julie and Shimoyama san), but that we should all stay in contact as I plan to be writing for a long time yet!

Michiko has expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the show. She is a producer with much experience and kept pushing for information about story, venue, dates and what Julie's plans were. As with Shimoyama san, I was happy to talk about story, but shied away from the production details. I especially didn't want to step on Shimoyama san's heels by becoming too open with another producer. I really don't understand the politics of these situations and can occasionally suffer from foot-in-mouth disease. I believe Michiko will visit Okinawa in 2007, and perhaps she will meet Shimoyama san then. They'll probably get along well.

Without Michiko my stay in Tokyo would have been far less exciting. She was terrific fun and I secretly hope she is impressed with my work. I am very

pleased to have met her. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

These encounters demonstrate the contradictions I observed within the cultural environment I was exploring and within myself as I negotiated and renegotiated my position. Each encounter was shaped by the conflicting forces of national and generational perspective and it was clear that I floundered in traditional Japan – represented most strikingly in the *onsen* incident – and played the subordinate, wide-eyed tourist in the company of Michiko and her peers. However, I found a new, more confident position when introduced to Japanese men and women from my own generation, solidifying the notion of a generational dynamic lurking beneath the dichotomy of 'Oz' and 'Asia'.

There is something of the classic narrative of a torch being passed from teacher to pupil in my perspective on the discussions Michiko and I shared, and in her playing recordings of *Woven Hell* as well as her many stories of past Japanese/Australian theatrical collaborations. In contrast, my own generation are characterised by their break with Japanese stereotype: Atsushi is 'a bit whacky and off-beat'; Shikyo is 'totally goofy and eccentric and wonderful' and breaking with the Japanese social convention of having a card printed and ready, in fact rushing out onto the city street to meet me while fumbling with his coat and umbrella (more like Kramer from *Seinfeld* than the stereotypically composed and inscrutable Japanese); Hitomi is modern, assertive and career driven, and shrewdly assesses the power relationship between myself and the university, a far cry from any outdated conservative stereotype that characterises Japanese women as meek or shy.

These encounters, consistent with my encounters with Ishigaki, Shoko and Olivia in Okinawa, had given me a new way of thinking through the project. Weaving the national and the generational together in a series of images and encounters, I had laid the foundations for my creative work. I couldn't wait to go back and present it.

### Day Thirteen

My last day was bittersweet. I was pleased at the thought of my own (safe, uncrowded) bathroom ... seeing friends and family ... getting medical attention ... but also sad to leave this beautiful city and its way of life.

Arriving in Sydney felt very harsh. The city seemed tiny but everyone in it seemed huge and so very rude, and disorganised. I saw the customs guys giving some Japanese tourist the sarcastic treatment and politely intervened. With my fresh wounds, I was able to give the guy a dirty look and see him visibly unnerved. That was nice.

On the way back to Adelaide I sat next to some Aboriginal people and we got into a conversation about Okinawa, so the whole thing came full circle.

I guess that's it for now. The plan is to return in 2008 and launch this show. In the meantime I just have to ... well ... stay conscious. (Writer's Diary, 2006)

My return to Australia revealed a subtle change in perspective as I was now viewing my own national-culture critically and empathising with tourists from Japan.

Moreover, the journey had put several creative building blocks in place: the intercultural tensions in Okinawa between the native people, the mainland Japanese and the American military highlighted Bharucha's concerns about interculturalism, while exploring Tokyo highlighted Greig and Napier's optimism and global focus. I returned to Australia having made the decision to explore the generational-cultural perspective of 'time' and the national-cultural perspective of 'place' in tandem.

## **Time and Place: The Dramaturgical Process**

It would seem that dramaturgy may not be inherent in the play text, but may be produced and shaped through the work of a particular company, reflecting the process and production conditions that impinge on it. It will also be shaped by the audience, by its responses and what it brings to the work. (Turner and Behrndt, 2008: 36)

Consistent with this analysis by Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt, the reception of *Once Upon a Midnight* was at least partially shaped before a single word had been typed. Emerging from the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival contexts and with a cast of Japanese and Australian performers, the debut production of *Once Upon a Midnight* had its sense of 'place' determined by the 'process and production conditions' of its development. Nevertheless, the production's discourse would also be shaped 'by the audience, by its responses and what it brings to the work'. As previously identified, the desired audience was not that of the inaugural OzAsia Festival, but the audience lurking at the fringes of this event. Therefore, the dialogue was complex and

multifaceted, encompassing ‘not only the production and the producing company, but the audience and its context’ as ‘part of a wider network of meaning’ (Turner and Behrndt, 2008: 36).

This ‘wider network of meaning’ was very much on my mind as I entered the dramaturgical process. I was reacquainted with Michiko Aoki when she was invited to speak in Adelaide at the Space Theatre opposite Professor Julie Holledge. The relationship between Japan and Australia was at the foreground as Michiko’s work through *Dramatic Australia* has seen a large number of Australian plays translated into Japanese. I watched in fascination as slides from the Japanese version of Elizabeth Coleman’s *Secret Bridesmaids’ Business* and Reg Cribb’s *The Return*, among many others, were presented. However, the audience for Michiko and Julie’s presentation was not of my own generation; not even the young Australian performers who were to workshop and feature in *Once Upon a Midnight* attended this forum. Some chose to go to the movies after staying for the first half hour or so, but most had decided in advance that it would be ‘boring’. This was consistent with the apathy young people expressed towards the OzAsia Festival performances, months earlier.

While the festival environment shaped the ‘wider network of meaning’ by giving *Once Upon a Midnight* an international context, textually the play needed to be about something more than national culture. Judging by their lack of engagement with national-cultural discourse, the target audience would not come into the theatre unless the show contained another cultural element: a generational perspective on both nationalism and international politics, a different view on the ‘vital relationships’ in which Douglas Gautier was invested.

Building from my experiences in Japan and my observations of OzAsia, I began to question the etymology of the word ‘interculturalism’. Up until this point the word ‘interculturalism’ had been framed within the festival context as the discourse between representatives of different nations: ‘culture’ effectively meant ‘country of origin’. This felt unsatisfying as my diary recollections of Japan captured the beginnings of a more nuanced cultural view, placing national and generational perspectives side by side. To accept that ‘interculturalism’ was restricted to a national perspective alone meant an acceptance that Australia itself displayed a homogenised culture in which generational, religious, gender or socio-economic perspectives were somehow subservient to, or graded below, nationalism as *the* cultural marker.

By unpacking the word ‘interculturalism’ in this way, I re-evaluated my own interest in the topic and my stake in the upcoming creative project. As stated in Chapter One, it was not national culture that had been my starting point, but a desire to create work that my own generation and younger generations would respond to. I had been drawn to the question of theatre’s appeal to these emerging audiences and how – or even *if* – theatre could be made relevant to them. The pitch began from this perspective:

*“How do you feel about Japanese monsters?”*

This question was put to me by my wonderful teacher and friend Julie Holledge in her office some time in 2006. Flinders University's Drama Centre was about to enter into its third collaboration with the Kijimuna Festival of Okinawa and Jules was looking for a script. (Writer’s Notes, *Once Upon a Midnight* Programme, 2008)

It was not the word 'Japan' that had drawn me in initially but the specific phrase 'Japanese monsters'. Although my experiences in Okinawa and Tokyo had made returning to Japan an exciting opportunity and working there even more so, it was not the country alone that would be key to getting that emerging audience engaged, but the *manga* and *anime* subcultures: the world of imagination linked with progressive fashion, lifestyle and architecture; the world of a modern rather than a traditional Japan. The play needed to distinguish itself from the national perspectives Yen, Le and Yang had highlighted through their theatrical works in Australia. This is what my peers were communicating through their apathy and their absence.

Douglas Gautier wanted 'vital relationships' to be 'recognised' in intercultural dialogue and cross-national performance and yet this recognition was confined to a narrow generational perspective. If the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festivals gave *Once Upon a Midnight* its Japanese-Australian context, its sense of 'place', then I had to build from Bharucha and his 'historical space' to hook my audience. I had to find the major narrative and thematic thrust of the creative work: this proved to be 'Time'.

'Time' is central to *Once Upon a Midnight*. In addition to being a quote from Poe's *The Raven*, the title plays with time and with tone. It tells the audience that events are not what they appear to be and to expect something dark. It is the title of a gothic fable, not a dry, politicised, earnestly 'intercultural' event. Compared to the titles of the previous collaborative projects between Flinders University and the Kijimuna Festival – *Culture Shock* (1993) and *Red Sun, Red Earth* (1996) – the difference in focus is apparent, as is the intended audience engagement reflected in *Once Upon a*



*Midnight*'s dramaturgical development. Turner and Behrndt identify one of the key facets of the dramaturgical process as 'a dialogue between the play and a particular community of people in a particular time and place' (2008: 36). This concept of 'time' and 'place' is linked with generational-cultural perspective ('time') and national-cultural perspective ('place'). 'Time' was my way to capture the young audience; 'time' was an area I felt comfortable working in.

I was fortunate to have Julie Holledge as my dramaturge. As an academic respected in the field of intercultural performance and as an artist with cross-national experience, Julie was the ideal partner for an emerging writer with a desire to appeal to a young audience across two countries. With our areas of interest combined, *Once Upon a Midnight* was created at the intersection between 'time' and 'place'. The value of such a dramaturge-writer relationship is underscored also by Geoffrey S. Proehl who identifies a candid back and forth as a key part of a productive dramaturgical process:

Although I was drawn to dramaturgs, because they liked to talk and were willing to talk with me even in the midst of my inexperience, *talking with* as opposed to *talking to* implies that those dramaturgs who made me feel welcome were not only good talkers but also good listeners. Indeed, dramaturgy demands brilliant listening. (Proehl, 2008: 39)

Proehl also highlights 'time' as an area of cultural study. He describes a shuttle journey between Kennedy Airport and the upper west side of Manhattan where he eavesdrops on a husband and wife in their late sixties. The husband worries aloud and asks anxious questions of the driver. Finally, after many questions and still more

worries, they arrive at their destination and the older man announces, relieved, that this is the location of the Holiday Inn, where ‘with a castrating scorn the much younger driver tells the older man that he *knows* where the hotel is. In front of the other passengers, this rebuke has surprising power’ (Proehl, 2008: 49). To reach their destination the older couple has to negotiate their way through Manhattan traffic ‘with the driver, who now steps out of the van to guide them across this River Styx of Fifty-Seventh Street’ (2008: 50). In this encounter there is an exchange across generational boundaries, a negotiation not unlike my own experience in Japan when the taxi driver took me under his wing as soon as I cried ‘Australia!’ ‘Time’, in Proehl’s example, is the cultural marker of difference, just as my physicality marked me in Japan as coming from a different ‘place’.

Proehl’s tale illustrates the tension between generations: the mutual egos, the clashing ideals. He develops this discussion to include the day-to-day mechanics of the rehearsal process where ‘time shimmers in the air’ and if the actors are late ‘the stage manager (time, especially mechanical time, personified) will call them’ (Proehl, 2008: 54). Building from these rehearsal room observations into an exploration of ‘time’ as a narrative device, Proehl cites works where characters have ‘an ability to not only be caught in time’s forward movement, but also, as with memory, an ability to defy time’s passing, to move counter to its currents’ (2008:56). He matches this with reference to ‘time’ as a directorial device, touching on the usefulness of pauses and silences in a scene. In all of the examples Proehl provides, the value of ‘time’ as a theatrical tool is made clear. ‘Time’ can be a tool for *product* – as in a narrative or directorial device – as well as a key part of the creative *process*.

If the playwright and dramaturge are 'talking with' rather than talking at each other, to use Proehl's ideal, then that communication is filtered through the generational-cultural perspective of 'time' in tandem with the national-cultural perspective of 'place'. A dramaturge and playwright cannot have a creative exchange about ideological, political or social issues without being subconsciously informed by these two cultural elements of 'time' and 'place'. These cultural elements guide any discussion they may have surrounding character, narrative or theme.

Julie and I had different areas of interest and cultural awareness, different reasons for becoming involved in the project in the first place. My motivation was to engage my peers with theatre by appealing to our generational culture. In contrast, Julie's motivation was to engage her students with another national culture and tell a cross-national story, emerging from her research in *Women's Intercultural Performance* (2000) and her involvement in *Undiscovered Country: National Cultural Diversity Cluster Exhibition* (OzAsia Festival, 2007). Crucially, we embodied contrasting generational attitudes and carried with us a range of values and ways of expressing them. I had spent my formative teenage years in the 1990s at an international high school; Julie was raised in the United Kingdom and moved to Australia in 1981, the year I was born.

Our perspectives on culture, discrimination, racial tension, gender, society, art, politics, Australia, Japan and a whole range of topics relevant to the process and to the project outcomes, were different, despite our having many core values in common. Therefore, we were adding ingredients to the mix based on our contrasting, but

complementary, cultural perspectives. As I drew from pop cultural influences that emerging audiences from both Australia and Japan could understand, Julie developed my understanding of international performance theory. Consequently, the value of the dramaturgical process Julie and I shared manifested in the narrative and thematic ideas we exchanged through our differing perspectives on national and generational aspects of culture – the hybridisation of ‘time’ and ‘place’.

## **Cultural Hybridisation and Cultural Distortion**

Said, Bharucha and many others have highlighted the negative implications of misappropriating another national culture. What Proehl, Turner and Behrndt allude to in their acknowledgement of the interplay between ‘time’ and ‘place’ within a dramaturgical context is that there may be other forms of misappropriation possible that extend beyond a national-cultural perspective. It is important to remember, as Bharucha makes clear, that different perspectives in critical discourse – national, generational, gender and so on – reach beyond academia. They are the lenses through which individual human beings process their world and interpret the actions of others. Although the term ‘misappropriation’ carries an implication of ill-considered or even harmful intent, any perceived misunderstanding of these perspectives, or their dilution, reconstitution, or restaging, carries with it the possibility of a strong emotional reaction, regardless of intent. To frame the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* in this context I have chosen the terms ‘hybridisation’ and ‘distortion’ to characterise two different kinds of generational-cultural and national-cultural exchanges through the categories of ‘time’ and ‘place’, respectively. For the purposes of this study, hybridisation occurs when ‘time’ and ‘place’ are negotiated and interwoven as part of an equal and open creative exchange while distortion occurs

when ‘time’ and/or ‘place’ are not acknowledged, when there is no negotiation, interweaving or exchange. This choice is motivated by the need to move beyond the ‘unresolvable polemic of blame’ Varisco described in his critique of Said, and to frame the creative journey as a nuanced clash of intercultural and *intracultural* perspectives rather than one dominant cultural group misappropriating another. *Once Upon a Midnight* was profoundly political and deeply personal in this way and, although it was hybridised dramaturgically, I will argue that there were many distorted elements evident in the final performance outcome.

‘Place’ was visible throughout *Once Upon a Midnight*’s development due to both the physical act of travelling to a foreign country and back again, and the presence of racially diverse cast members. The need for a hybridisation of ‘place’ was clear to all participants and negotiated accordingly. The implications of ‘time’, however, were not so explicitly addressed and were, perhaps, not as immediately clear to all participants. Despite its visibility through generationally diverse cast members and the core creative team, ‘time’ did not register as a cultural marker of difference. Rather than hybridisation, what occurred with regards to ‘time’ could more accurately be called distortion; a lack of communication and of empathy across generational-cultural barriers. Proehl’s images of the older man expressing unnecessary anxiety to all who would listen, the older man stating the obvious to the younger driver, the younger driver appearing smug and unsympathetic and the younger driver impatiently snapping back reflect symbolic relationships consistent with the process that played out in Australia and Japan as *Once Upon a Midnight* unfolded.

To explore how ‘place’ was seen but ‘time’ was not, Turner and Behrndt’s ‘wider network of meaning’ must be examined. With reference to English theatrical history Mary Luckhurst refers to ‘the left-wing ethos of challenging the mainstream of the 1960s’ leading to ‘an interest in wooing (and therefore researching) audiences previously alienated by mainstream theatre’ (Luckhurst, 2006: 203). My goal in *Once Upon a Midnight* was to woo (and therefore research) new Australian and Japanese audiences who were, likewise, alienated by what had come before. The decision to do so was motivated by a desire to confront both the apathy of my peers – including those directly tied to this production – and the generational disassociation between younger audiences and the OzAsia Festival. It never occurred to Julie or I that this apathy and generational disassociation could carry over into the development, rehearsal and production of the show itself, but it seems obvious in hindsight. The ‘wider network of meaning’ was such that no matter how much generational-cultural perspectives were given weight in the text, they were never going to move to the heart of the performance event. The founding ethos of the OzAsia Festival, the vital (and conditional) support from Flinders University, the working relationship between Julie Holledge and myself, and the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* as a performance were all part of a politicised structure centred around national-cultural discourses. If generational-cultural discourse was considered at all, it was only within the context of the traditional academic hierarchy of teachers and students.

As playwright, I was trying to mitigate the national framework and weight of the work as much as possible but, in practice, that mitigation in the text could only exacerbate the cross-generational tension in the rehearsal room. Simply put: the play commissioned by the festivals and the university was about Japan and Australia; the

play that emerged was about Japan, Australia, youth, rebellion, identity and fear.

Luckhurst's work draws attention to the history of dramaturgy and political ideology, making it clear that the decision to mitigate or alter the political themes and discourses in the text was more significant – and more pointed – than I had realised at the time of writing. To assert a generational-cultural perspective, a young playwright does not want to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater', as Julie often says, but mitigate didactic national statements with new forms of expression, incorporating looser or more fluid narrative structures, pop cultural referencing, self-reflection, irony, subversive wit, colour, music and an overall cultural aesthetic that depicts a sense of 'time' as well as 'place'.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, the issue is not that different generations hold wildly divergent political beliefs or that members of a specific or similar generation can be somehow categorised according to a united agenda; the issue is associated more with modes of representation, aesthetic preferences and the articulation of notions and ideas that change and evolve historically just as they differ according to geographical position. This dissection of the dramaturgical process and the festival framework is necessary to help clarify the hurdles that arose during later stages of the play's development. Rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater, a process of dilution and refocus – an attempt to present this new 'baby' in a different and less didactic way – had begun, and this process was part of a generational-cultural perspective.

The 'baby' was a successful hybrid. It had asserted itself as deviating slightly from the 'East/West' focus of OzAsia while still retaining a connection to the festival's aims through the promotion of its international cast. *Once Upon a Midnight* had the potential to take the festival one step further beyond 'East meets West' and convey a more globalised, youth-driven, multifaceted engagement with the OzAsia theme. This was achieved textually through fluid cross-cultural dialogue between Julie and myself: we built a bridge between our different cultural backgrounds and met creatively across it. *Once Upon a Midnight* was set to challenge the festival environment, turn the apathy of my peers into enthusiasm and combine the academic rigour that is necessary for a university-endorsed project with a passion for practical intercultural engagement and storytelling. Even before the text had been read by actors, even before the Australian and Japanese contingent had met, a form of successful intercultural hybridisation had taken place in the collaboration between dramaturge and playwright.

In summary, *Once Upon a Midnight* was conceived within a specific festival framework but quickly pressed against it. As this hybrid text developed, the creative process revealed that 'culture' encompassed more than national origin. The OzAsia framework was appropriate when the generational focus was narrow, but became untenable once younger people participated. For emerging artists who engage interculturally there is more at stake than 'East meets West'.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Next Generation – The Cultural When

This chapter examines where generational-cultural discourse intersects (or clashes) with national-cultural discourse to form contemporary attitudes regarding popular culture and globalisation. *'Biting the Hands That Feed Us': ASSITEJ, 2008* recounts the generational debates and misunderstandings that informed the writing process of *Once Upon a Midnight*. ASSITEJ marked a significant point of departure from the national-cultural 'where' to the generational-cultural 'when', turning the focus away from the 'East/West' interculturalism presented in the OzAsia Festival to embrace a wider view. Its practical application occupies the centre of *Cultural Connections in a Global Age*, the chapter's second section, which charts the style of pop cultural referencing that led to the narrative, character development and discourse of the text. The methodological foundations here depend on the 'hybridised approach' championed by Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto. Peter Singer provides an ethical framework for this approach.

*Global Culture and Generationalism: Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives* explores globalisation and culture in greater depth through their relationship with generationalism and through the critical lenses of sociology and anthropology. In this third section, my analysis draws a clear link between global and generational concerns through the work of Rob White and Johanna Wyn, Mary Bucholtz, and Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. The goal of this section is to establish the generational-cultural perspective as a legitimate discourse through which a cultural artefact can be conceived, discussed and critiqued. The next section, *Global Culture*

*and Generationalism: Theatrical and Educational Perspectives*, engages with the intercultural agenda of theatrical director Richard Schechner and performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña. It takes the sociological and anthropological phenomenon of generational-cultural perspective and applies it to theatrical endeavours. Gómez-Peña demonstrates that generational difference presents a challenge for contemporary artists and, therefore, serves as a core consideration in his work.

*Global Culture and Generationalism – Perspectives in Once Upon a Midnight*, the chapter's final section, demonstrates how the early drafts of the script developed through the *Research, Writing and Workshopping* processes, with reference to *Character and Genre and Style*, as well as more specific hurdles *From Page to Stage*. These hurdles include *The Many Meanings of Rock*, an example of competing cultural perspectives and the miscommunication caused when these perspectives were left unacknowledged, and *Art Reflects Life*, an account of how the generational dilemmas imbedded in the narrative were reflected in the production's development. This chapter concludes on a high note, describing the excitement the young Australian artists felt knowing they would soon be joined by their Japanese peers.

## **‘Biting the Hands That Feed Us’: ASSITEJ, 2008**

During the ASSITEJ conference of 2008, held in Adelaide, the issue of generational difference came to the forefront of symposia and discussions. Emerging Australian writer Angela Betzien made a passionate and articulate speech as part of a symposium on writing for youth where she listed intent, economy, fear, darkness, humour, hope, danger, action, relevance and truth as the core ingredients of an exciting production for a young audience. She claimed that theatre for youth needs to be scary; the

audience needs to be thrilled. The young artists present applauded her. Fear, darkness and danger tempered with humour and hope are evident in much classic work for children: *Snow White* has a murderous monarch, *Little Red Riding Hood* has a grandmother on the dinner menu.

Criticism of Betzien's approach also came thick and fast; it was the established artists, loosely termed 'gatekeepers', who leapt on fear and darkness, stating that theatre should not be concerned with what young people 'want' but with what they 'need'. Such criticism betrayed a lack of understanding. Betzien was not out to hurt or terrify young people. She was concerned with capturing the imagination of emerging audiences. More importantly, such criticism betrayed a conflicting generational agenda that polarised the ASSITEJ event. Young emerging artists want their work to be relevant to their peers, while many established 'gatekeeper' artists, producers, critics and cultural commentators dodge this vital question in pursuit of a narrow generational agenda where 'young people continue to be economically and culturally marginalised ... [and are] ... rarely sought out for their ideas and opinions' (Davis, 2007, quoted from Emerging Writers Festival). These established 'gatekeeper' artists have positioned themselves as the *de facto* 'guardians', not only of youth taste, but of youth culture.

In the forums and discussions that followed Betzien's speech, artists addressed their approach to young audiences in different ways, advocating diverse agendas. They spoke from generational perspectives, which Bharucha describes as the 'historical space' of the artist. Challenging the 'gatekeeper' function asserted by the established artists, emerging artists questioned the relevance of industry 'experience' as cultural

capital in the context of creating art for youth. *The Girl Who Cried Wolf*, written by Betzien, stood out in the festival for the energetic, positive response it drew from its audience – high school students eagerly expressed their enthusiasm to delegates in the foyer – and confirmed the validity of her creative approach. Playwright Caleb Lewis staged a direct intervention by appearing not as himself reading from his play *Death in Bowengabbie* as had been arranged, but as ‘the fireman’, a grotesque clownish caricature who staggered in, sans trousers, and proceeded to give the audience of delegates a grisly lesson in fire safety, complete with a dollhouse burning. Some of the young artists identified this as one of the few performances featured in ASSITEJ that young audiences would appreciate.

Writing about the cultural agency of young people, Betzien embraces technology and globalisation:

It can be asserted that through mastery over and understanding of these changing forms and technologies young people can ensure their capacity to assert themselves, finding new opportunities for self-expression and reconceptualising old concepts of community and identity. (Betzien, 2007: 54)

She writes of ‘reversing common modes of representation, where adults control the medium through which young people are represented’ (2007: 63) and alludes to a generational aspect to her performance making. In direct response to ASSITEJ, and inspired by Betzien’s speech, *Once Upon a Midnight* was redrafted to confront this conflicting generational agenda. Aware that this could be interpreted as ‘biting the hands that feed us’ in the wider context of the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival events,

the young artists involved nevertheless expressed the view that focusing on generational culture could be an effective way to connect with peers in Japan.

## **Cultural Connections in a Global Age**

*Once Upon a Midnight* was conceived with the expectation that Australians and Japanese in their teens (target audience) through to their twenties (performers) would share common cultural influences as a result of their upbringing in an era of globalised media. This led us to explore popular culture and the fantastic worlds of *manga* and *anime*. As writer, I searched for pop cultural sources that captured the target audience's global connections, discussions, shared interests, hybridised art forms and ever-changing relationships. I considered the possibility that through popular culture the nation state may be giving way to the global, the hybridised, the multi-layered and the multi-aligned.

For example: Hayao Miyazaki incorporates Western fairytales into his work. His film *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) is based on the book of the same name by London author Diana Wynne Jones. In turn, Miyazaki influences many popular directors, writers and animators working in English: Neil Gaiman (*Coraline*, *Stardust*) adapted *Princess Mononoke* from Japanese; Joss Whedon (*Firefly*, *Dollhouse*) devoted a story arc of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Season 8* to a *manga*-inspired adventure and battle royale on the streets of Tokyo. These creative works represent free-flowing cultural hybridity in contrast to the more self-conscious, nationalist, culture-meets-culture model of exchange represented in the OzAsia Festival.

Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto capture a global shift toward cultural hybridity in an edited volume, titled *Popular Culture, Globalization and Japan* (2006). In this work, they focus on ‘movements of popular culture that extend beyond the current Eurocentric notions of what it is that informs the production, distribution and consumption of ‘Japanese popular culture’, that is, Japan as the Oriental or exotic other’ (Allen and Sakamoto, 2006: 1). They outline the impact of emerging technology on global popular culture and the associated movement away from a national-cultural discourse into a more complex notion of global transaction where Japan is emerging as a force of considerable significance. With increasing economic and political ties between nation states, ‘the notion of any society free from the influence of others has become moot’ (2006: 6). Therefore ‘the notion of globalization as homogenization (and in particular Americanization)’ is ‘untenable’ (2006:10). Instead, Allen and Sakamoto suggest that popular culture is a dynamic, diverse, hybridised force that defies all national borders. Yukako Sunaoshi’s contribution to the edited volume describes how *manga* has united the children of Asian migrants in New Zealand, while Koichi Iwabuchi focuses on transnational cultural flows in Japanese film and television circulating Asia. All of Allen and Sakamoto’s contributors emphasise hybridity and transnational communication as powerful emerging forces in a field where:

Ideas associated with claims to ‘ownership’ of ‘original’, ‘indigenous’ and ‘traditional’ culture, which are used to reify the production of nationalism and cultural identity, would appear to have less and less explanatory power in understanding what is really happening. (Allen and Sakamoto 2006: 6)

‘What is really happening’ is a global shift in emphasis from a national-cultural to generational-cultural discourse in response to hybridised global flows. National-cultural discourse thrives on the projection of an unequal power balance among nations, the legacy of *Orientalism*, where the world is rhetorically divided into the coloniser and the colonised, the exoticiser and the exoticised, and, quite absurdly, masculinised and feminised nation states. Allen and Sakamoto confirm that culture is not a static force, but constantly evolving, and that the global sphere is a more fertile launching point for a cultural exchange than two nation states taken in isolation. With technological developments, ease of global access and associated shifts in social attitudes, emerging generations are breaking the confines of the national state to define, assert and embody fresh and dynamic cultural perspectives.

*Once Upon a Midnight* was conceived from the perspective that fear of globalisation is unfounded. Globalisation is not *going to* happen; it happened while we were speculating about it. Furthermore, globalisation has not resulted in the erosion of local cultures or individual identities; it has brought richness and diversity into sharper focus. Peter Singer beautifully describes his view of the positive potential of globalisation in *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (2002):

If the group to which we must justify ourselves to is the tribe, or the nation, then our morality is likely to be tribal, or nationalistic. If, however, the revolution in communications has created a global audience, then we might feel a need to justify our behaviour to the whole world. (Singer, 2002: 12)

Capturing this position and demonstrating its potential became my intention in creating this contemporary work for a young audience. I sought to shift away from the 'East/West' notion of 'what makes us different and what can we learn from each another?' towards an inclusive discourse of 'we're in this together, let's see where we can go.' I adopted the view that global perspective plays an important role in the future of intercultural relations and would support my core ambition to create work relevant to youth.

It was with this global perspective in mind that I wrote the confrontation between my teenage protagonist, Kelsey Clarke, and my antagonist, Angelica, a fairy godmother or 'gatekeeper' character. Kelsey became my avatar for emerging generational-cultural perspectives while Angelica represented the 'old gang', the 'gerrymanders' (Davis, 1997), or the 'Boomer generation' (Heath, 2006) that dominated OzAsia and ASSITEJ. The confrontation between these characters was a clear statement: cultural perspectives evolve generationally. The text had now departed completely from 'East meets West'.

## **Global Culture and Generationalism: Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives**

While *Once Upon a Midnight* ended with Japanese and Australian cast members dancing and singing together in a display of international harmony and kinship, as Shimoyama san had requested, the play's overarching discourse was generational. Kelsey's dialogue makes it clear that, although she is 'Western' and a female, she stands chiefly for her youth. She asserts herself primarily as a young person. Her



stand against Angelica is symbolic of a young person defying the labels and agendas of the 'old gang'.

Similarly, Angelica has no relationship to the 'Otherness' of the 'East', or Japan specifically, nor does she embody any international connotation, expression or subtext. Angelica represents time unmoving, the frozen figure 'setting agendas, demarcating standards', leaving Kelsey and her friends 'culturally marginalised' (Davis, 2007). Angelica is a figure from an established generational-cultural perspective imposing her views, politics, etiquette, social mores and personal standards on the young. She is a figurine; a twirling fairy, untouched and unmoved by time, the antithesis of generational progress. Angelica is what happens when time is ignored.

The play's climactic confrontation between protagonist and antagonist captures the clashing ideals of rebellious youth and established pride; however, a dilemma is raised when Angelica is depicted as 'old' in the mortal sense. If Angelica is frozen in time – unchanging, fixed, static – then she must be blind to the many positive aspects of growing older; untouched by the human capacity to learn and grow. Were it possible to achieve with lookalike performers in the debut production, Angelica would have mirrored Kelsey's face – ideally they would have been twins – to place Angelica firmly in the abstract. This distinction between frozen time and passing time, simple enough on paper, became problematic in production. Even in the audition phase, when established artists expressed sympathy for Angelica, the character's physical age was raised as a concern. It was crucial to the discourse of the play that

Kelsey's final rebellion be against older ideas rather than older people; further research was required to build an appropriate discursive framework.

The generational binaries raised during ASSITEJ – 'emerging artist'/'established artist', 'challenger'/'gatekeeper' – inspire lively debates but do little to inform cultural or artistic practice. Identity is the core concept at stake when cultures clash and one cultural group overpowers or oppresses another. The sense of identity that Bharucha articulates within a national framework may be equally important within a generational framework. Sociologist Bryan S. Turner addresses generational difference by capturing this sense of identity – the generational-cultural 'when' – and giving it weight. He argues that an analysis of generational structures is vital to the construction of a sociological approach to the issues of ageing and conflict. He writes:

In the absence of a systematic theory, I shall define 'generation' as a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share a common *habitus* and lifestyle. [...] To this cultural dimension, we must add the notion that 'generation' also refers to a cohort which has a strategic temporal location to a set of resources as a consequence of historical accident and the exclusionary practices of social closure. (Turner, 1998: 302)

Turner's analysis links a 'cohort of persons' through 'time'. This is not dissimilar to the nation state, which links a 'cohort of persons' through 'place'. He also provides a basis for conflict between the emerging and the established in contemporary global society as we compete for social position as well as economic and cultural resources. The generational-cultural 'when', like the national-cultural 'where', is a marker of

cultural identity in Turner's view. This view is shared by Rob White and Johanna Wyn who assert in *Youth and Society* that:

The idea of identity is critical to most writing about youth. It is almost impossible to understand the decisions made by young people and the actions they take without understanding how they see themselves in their world. This is especially so at this point in time, as young people must engage with a world that is different in so many ways from that of the previous generation. (White and Wyn, 2004: 185)

White and Wyn describe how 'the key relationships and institutions that frame young people's ideas and experiences of their 'self', such as the family, the school, workplaces, and the media have changed' and how 'the relationship between young people and society has shifted'. However, these changes have 'manifested through the use of terms such as 'Gen X' and 'Gen Y' [in an] attempt to describe distinctive lifestyle characteristics of successive generations'. White and Wyn regard these terms as 'superficial' and unsuitable for an analysis of generational change (2005: 191). They raise the need for new theories, perspectives and approaches in order to analyse and deconstruct generational difference, generational change and generational-cultural identity.

Mary Bucholtz considers many perspectives on youth culture in her article 'Youth and Cultural Practice'. She argues that 'the emphasis on adolescence as a staging ground for integration into the adult community obscures young people's own cultural agency or frames it solely in relation to adult concerns' (Bucholtz, 2002: 525). This emphasis

on 'integration into the adult community' accounts for the generational divide during the ASSITEJ forums and the strong reaction to Angela Betzien's speech on writing for younger audiences; the call by established delegates to deny young audiences 'what they want' and instead give them 'what they need'. Bucholtz contrasts this early anthropological perspective with a sociological perspective that categorises youth into subcultures as more specific areas of study, often with an emphasis on 'deviant' or 'class-based' subcultures. This too has strong detractors, among them Mark Davis and Ryan Heath. However, Bucholtz arrives at a third perspective: an 'anthropology of youth ... [which is] ... sparked by the stimuli of modernity and globalization and the ambivalent engagement of youth in local contexts' (2002: 525). She explains how the difficulties of adolescence may be 'compounded among adolescents in societies undergoing rapid cultural change because such young people often face tensions between tradition and innovation' (2002: 529).

This third perspective resonates strongly with *Once Upon a Midnight* as a play that strives to address the nexus between youth culture and national culture. Australia and Japan have in common this 'rapid cultural change' and tension 'between tradition and innovation'. Bucholtz highlights the 'creative dimension' of 'young people's agency' in responding to 'new cultural circumstances' in defiance of 'the structural power of institutions' (Bucholtz, 2002: 531). She sees intergenerational conflict as 'exacerbated by the internal conflicts that young people experience in the process of cultural change' where 'tension between the tantalizing promises of modernity and the expectations of tradition-minded adults may be thought to create resentment among the young people caught in the middle' (2002: 531). This perspective captures the conflict between Kelsey and Angelica, in terms of both an external battle 'between

tradition and innovation' and 'internal conflicts that young people experience in the process of cultural change', providing the framework for Angelica to inhabit the abstract and represent an aspect of Kelsey's inner nature.

Bucholtz also recognises the media's role in disseminating global youth culture:

The global spread of popular culture is often viewed as symptomatic of cultural leveling, yet many scholars have pointed out that how cultural forms are taken up and assigned meanings far from their places of origin is a process that involves creativity and agency, not unthinking acceptance of cultural products. (Bucholtz, 2002: 543)

Bucholtz recognises that young people use globalised popular culture to 'seek like-minded others beyond the local community' (2002: 542). She advocates research into 'the development of global youth cultures, the blending of traditional cultural forms into new youth-based styles and practices, and the possibilities for cultural production offered by new technologies' (2002: 544).

If Turner and Bucholtz offer tools for defining the sociology of generational categories, then Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim address the unique challenges of defining and analysing a generational identity that transcends national borders. In 'Global Generations and the Trap of Methodological Nationalism: For a Cosmopolitan Turn in the Sociology of Youth and Generation' (2009), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim investigate the phenomenon of 'global generations' and recognise a move towards 'global interconnectedness'. They argue that generations cannot be

confined within the rhetoric of nationalism. Rather than discussing how generational identity can be asserted within the frame of the nation state, the authors take nationalism out of the debate and replace it with the global sphere:

Chernobyl and 9/11, environmental crisis and terrorist attacks. Amnesty International and Coca Cola: such keywords indicate what today is taken for granted in the sphere of experience and activities of the rising generation. This sphere of experience can no longer be understood as a nationally bounded unit, but is determined by global dynamics. (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009: 25)

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim challenge the national focus of the social sciences, or what they describe as ‘methodological nationalism’. They highlight the fluid intercultural discourse, the border crossing and the global interactions of the emerging generations. They describe a world ‘that is ever more strongly shaped by globalizing tendencies’ where the national ‘view of things is inevitably becoming anachronistic – in particular when it comes to understanding the young generation, its situation, orientations, ways of behaving’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009: 26). They advocate a ‘Cosmopolitan perspective [...] which privileges the simultaneity and the mutual interaction of national and international, local and global determinations, influences and developments’ (2009: 26). Further to this analysis, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim draw a distinction between ‘observer’ and ‘actor’ perspectives with regard to global generations, evident below:

... first the level of the scientific observer, who *researches* generations in a global frame of reference (observer perspective); second the level of the active subjects, the members of the global generations, who *see themselves* in a global frame of reference (actor's perspective). (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009: 26)

In conclusion, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim are concerned that, without recognition and research, 'the lived reality of the rising generations will remain terra incognita – no matter how much data the social researchers gather (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009: 35). *Terra incognita* is an apt phrase. With so much focus on nationalism in intercultural performance, the 'unknown land' of generational identity is often ignored, even dismissed. Placed alongside the national-cultural reading of *Once Upon a Midnight*, this generational-cultural perspective reveals how an intercultural transaction was framed and held throughout the production's development, rehearsal, and performance, where so much emphasis was placed on the national identity of participants and so little on their generational identity. Chapters Three and Four demonstrate how the cast and key creative artists of *Once Upon a Midnight* embodied a self-conscious attitude to the issue of 'global generations' and differing, often competing, generational influences, expressions and perspectives.

## **Global Culture: Theatrical and Educational Perspectives**

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's global perspective on generation has not yet been embraced by those working in the field of drama. However, Richard Schechner offers

an early global perspective on culture in ‘Intercultural Themes’ (1989). Although he frames his observations as ‘intercultural’, Schechner moves beyond a national-cultural frame in recognising that ‘No culture is “pure”’: ‘Overlays, borrowings, and mutual influencings have always made every culture a conglomerate, a hybrid, a palimpsest’ (Schechner, 1989: 151). Furthermore, he acknowledges time as an aspect of culture: ‘What is meant by “culture” is actually a snapshot, a stop-frame of an ongoing historical action’ (1989: 152). Schechner contributes a temporal – and therefore generational – perspective to the discussion of cultural development, asking:

‘Who is to set the rules of contact and exchange and, once set, enforce them? The best hope for such an arrangement is the growing awareness that cultural diversity is healthy for the human species.’ (1989: 153)

With this expanded focus, established and emerging artists will have the freedom to offer and compare differing generational perspectives through their work and to celebrate the fact that different generations of artists negotiate these ‘world-spanning’ cultural changes and challenges, in accordance with their own ‘historical space’, relationship to globalisation, and associated experiences and ideas. For all these differing perspectives to be acknowledged and discussed openly, and for interculturalism to be fully explored creatively, theatrical practitioners need to look beyond ‘East/West’ and to question the merits of any form of cultural ‘gatekeeping’ in a globalised age.

The dilemma of how established artists expand and evolve creatively in the midst of ‘formidable changes generated by the cult of globalization’ and the sense of



‘philosophical vertigo’ which such changes bring on is the subject of Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s self-reflexive article ‘The New Global Culture: Somewhere between Corporate Multiculturalism and the Mainstream Bizarre (a border perspective)’ (2001). Gómez-Peña recounts his experience as a performance artist, faced with the global onslaught of diverse and perverse images, new technologies of artistic expression, and new media competing for attention, which reposition his work as part of the mainstream. At the same time, he draws attention to the inequities and injustices which proponents of globalisation tend to gloss over in the pursuit of capital, cultural or otherwise.

Like Bharucha and Schechner, Gómez Peña’s perspective is framed by a specific ‘historical space’. There is a sense of being confused, even threatened personally and artistically, by progressive social change:

Suddenly, binary models of understanding the world were no longer functional – us/them, right/wrong, progressive/reactionary, local/global, Third World/First World, alternative/mainstream, center/periphery, etc. – we’re constantly shifting fault lines in an ever-fluctuating landscape. (Gómez-Peña, 2001: 7)

Gómez-Peña’s list of binaries highlights the dilemma of theorising in the midst of global changes – the ‘ever-fluctuating landscape’ even convincing him ‘to stop writing essays altogether’ over the last three years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The challenges of the new millennium are more complex, the issues multifaceted and perspectives inconstant. The challenge for any artist is to adapt to this phenomenon while still

finding a platform for creative expression, a theoretical vocabulary through which to frame that expression and a wholly informed basis for a critique, in tandem with acknowledgement, of this global social progress. Gómez-Peña captures well the callous side of globalisation, what he calls its ‘dark side’. With a combination of insight and barbed humour, he turns this side face-up and exposes it to his reader:

It is savage capitalism at its most efficient and diabolical: virtual operators discreetly trading capital, products, weapons, and hollow dreams; and starving or killing their inconsequential victims in the ether of virtual space, a parallel “world” devoid of ethical or ideological implications, of tears and blood. It’s economic-darwinism.com. Only the fit will survive. (Gómez-Peña, 2001: 10)

The challenge for artists is how to reflect on this process, how to capture the ‘savage capitalism’ trading in ‘hollow dreams’, and create meaningful and relevant new work, without being marginalised or discredited for resisting what is, essentially, a *fait accompli*. A dialogue across generations is an excellent launching pad for innovative, critical and resonant work in this field. Gómez-Peña admits that ‘the backlash against “political correctness” and humanitarian concerns has thoroughly completed its mission; sensitive questions of race and gender and matters of diversity are perceived as issues of the past, trembling shadows of the old socialist rhetoric’ and that ‘we are now allegedly installed in a fully globalized, post-racial, post-sexist, post-ideological, post-civil rights era, and anyone who thinks otherwise is clearly out of touch with the times’ (2001: 12). Gómez-Peña is critical of ‘younger audiences’ for embodying this attitude, for their apathy, for being ‘desensitised’ – he fondly recalls a time when being naked onstage had real shock value – and for asserting a ‘historical space’ that

identifies ‘issues of the past’, including a critique of the ‘old socialist rhetoric’. He is critical of ‘younger audiences’ for transcending the established generation’s high art/low art distinction in their aesthetic, cultural and entertainment choices. He is critical, ultimately, because he is disconnected from them and fearful of what they may represent – a desire for change, for new, inclusive, relevant and accessible forms of art:

To them there is nothing esoteric about art. Therefore, when attending a live art event, they wish to be included in the process, talk back to the artist, and if possible become part of the actual performance. They are always ready to walk onstage at any invitation from the artist and do something, whatever. It’s karaoke time. It’s a live computer game with the added excitement that people are watching. Given this dramatic epistemological shift, artists and art institutions are pressured to redefine their epistemological relationship with their public. (Gómez-Peña, 2001: 15)

Nevertheless, while the performing arts, and theatre in particular, struggle to reach the emerging generations, this supposedly apathetic audience flocks to rock concerts and music festivals for the shared group experience, for the visceral feeling of ‘being there’ and for the potential for interactivity. It follows that two of theatre’s advantages over film, the internet and other forms of ‘passive’ media are its live, visceral nature and its potential for interactivity. These are strengths on which to build and develop, not impediments to disguise, lament or shy away from. Interactive theatre has enormous potential.

Gómez-Peña asks how to begin a discussion about ethics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century without ‘being self-righteous’ or sounding like ‘old farts’ or ‘boring ideologues’? The answer begins with an acknowledgement of differing generational perspectives and a willingness to engage in generational-cultural collaboration without hierarchy. It is only logical that emerging artists will have relevant skills, relevant experience, an ability to communicate in global terms, a connection with the pop cultural *zeitgeist* and associated creative and critical strategies that can be paired with the knowledge and perspectives of established artists to solve many of the dilemmas Gómez-Peña outlines. Generational culture must, therefore, be acknowledged in order to facilitate effective contemporary theatrical collaboration. Without having explored this generational-cultural collaboration, Gómez-Peña questions how established artists can adapt to a global perspective and assert their relevance while still remaining active and critical:

Why have we abandoned our children and elders to their fate? Why are our local educational and cultural institutions doing nothing about these matters? Why is the media more interested in spectacle than in raising these questions? Why aren't we as individuals outraged enough? Why don't we speak up whenever it is needed? As politicized artists, we have a formidable task ahead of us: How do we make sure these and other equally important questions get articulated in our work in such a unique way that we challenge effectively the compassion fatigue of our audiences? (Gómez-Peña, 2001: 30)

The fact that the diversity of cultural perspectives is complicated by more than nationality and in fact encompasses gender, socioeconomics, political persuasions and

‘historical space’ – or historical *spaces* – exposes a need for individual artists to be open and adaptable, exploring new approaches, new perspectives and new ideas. At a macro level, using progressive approaches in anthropology and sociology as a guide, theatrical studies may benefit from widening to a global focus, embracing generationalism as both an *intra-* and *intercultural* imperative. Through a shift towards cultural exchange across ‘time’ as well as ‘place’, theatre will find new voices to confront the ‘formidable task ahead’ and reframe ‘compassion fatigue’ as differing, and valid, generational-cultural perspectives.

### **Global Culture and Generationalism – Perspectives in *Once Upon a Midnight*:**

The study of *Once Upon a Midnight* provides evidence to challenge the notion that global commercial interests ‘weaken’ attachments to local culture – in fact, the young Australian and Japanese artists interviewed throughout Chapter Four, Five and Six use references to generational culture discursively to counter this notion.

*Once Upon a Midnight* starts from a perspective that does not take ‘East/West’ as a binary, nor globalisation as negative or ‘authoritarian’. It is a rock musical conceived, first and foremost, to draw younger audiences, willingly, into a theatrical space. The pop cultural references are, unabashedly, light, popular entertainment. It is a little scary and a little funny, repeatedly winking to its audience. The globally aware, pop-savvy characters provide metacommentary on their adventures from within and the narrative combines the real with the surreal, in parallel with *manga*, *anime* and popular supernatural fantasy film and television. It is, on the surface, a strange show to be appearing in the OzAsia Festival and almost too light-weight, too pop, to be part

of an international event with ‘high-brow’ government and university support. However, this is precisely the point of the text and the lure for the emerging artists involved.

Getting the audiences into the theatre was always the first priority and the show’s points of generational-cultural difference, its popular references, use and subsequent subversion of popular horror conventions, rock aesthetic, inhuman supporting characters, young cast, gore, guitars and anarchic style, all served to separate it from the rest of the 2008 festival line-up. *Once Upon a Midnight* was separate from *Chika*, a documentary performance about a Japanese woman imprisoned in Melbourne; from Zhengzhou Song and Dance Theatre’s *Shaolin in Wind*; from a predominately ‘East’ meets ‘West’ rhetoric with strong political ties, evidenced by the keynote address from then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd; from, most of all, the established generation. This separation was necessary to attract an emerging audience.

In seeking to engage a global audience in Australia and Japan, *Once Upon a Midnight* is encoded with many layers of meaning. One concerns Kelsey’s personal journey as she conquers her fears; a second reflects the international relationships depicted onstage among Kelsey, Nozomi and Shima, between Ryan and Tengu, and separating Angelica’s prejudiced views from the rest of the characters’, while a third layer explores the intergenerational relationships founded upon the central conflict between Kelsey and Angelica. On the surface this is light entertainment, a fun distraction from the overt politicisation and earnestness of the festival as a whole, but beneath the surface the fantasy narrative subverts a series of cultural prejudices – both national and generational – creating a text and a performance that invites discussion. This

generational-cultural perspective was asserted partly in response to my experiences during ASSITEJ, to the pessimism of some established artists and cultural critics, from Said to Gómez-Peña, and in defiance of Bharucha's prediction that intercultural performance projects often lead to a 'dead-end'.

It was during the research, writing and workshopping processes that these theories were tested, focusing particularly around generational perspectives on culture. This approach carried a significant risk: to undermine the 'East/West' binary and the national-cultural model promoted through the OzAsia Festival could invite strong criticism. Indeed, a common criticism 'established' artists direct at younger people is that younger people, raised in a globalised 'historical space', disregard national-cultural differences. Such a response assumes that youth are psychologically incapable of simultaneously embodying the national and the global, and disregards the eclectic tastes, trends and fashions of youth which demonstrate precisely the opposite. I sought to acknowledge the generational shift in emphasis in order to contextualise the working of the national-cultural discourse within an evolving global hybridity, not to reject that national-cultural discourse entirely. To accomplish this shift in emphasis in *Once Upon a Midnight*, I drew upon global influences, underscoring the complementary rather than binary relationships between 'East' and 'West' in popular culture and using them as building blocks for the text's contemporary, hybrid model.

## Research

The research phase centred on the intersection between Japanese and ‘Western’ popular culture as it emerged through mythology, popular film and the art forms of *manga* and *anime* (see Appendix B: Research Material). Access to the most popular *anime* titles was easy. A wide selection of Japanese favourites subtitled and/or dubbed into English graced the shelves of DVD rental outlets in Adelaide, many of which had recently expanded their collections from one or two popular titles into entire sections devoted to the art form. My research began with the works of Hayao Miyazaki (b. 1941), which have fantasy content spanning from the gently magical (*My Neighbour Totoro*, 1988) to the darker and more thematically complex (*Princess Mononoke*, 1997). From Miyazaki the research expanded into other well-known *anime* titles with increasingly monstrous characters and themes, including *Ninja Scroll* (1993) and *Hellsing* (2002).

Stepping into this *anime* world, it was immediately clear that young Australians displayed an appetite for this material and a familiarity with many of the Japanese archetypes and conventions. The *anime* shelves were often swamped with teenaged consumers who suggested to me further titles and themes to explore, as well as which *manga* titles to source online. Although this demonstrated a blossoming popular form of cross-cultural engagement, identifying global hybridity required me to take a further step, taking note of where Hollywood and *anime* collided. The phenomenon of international pop cultural collaboration in commercial film was emerging in 2006 and 2007, the period of *Once Upon a Midnight’s* conception, but has since exploded with *Speed Racer* (2008), *Dragonball Evolution* (2009), *Astro Boy* (2009), *The Last Air*



*Bender* (2010) and even a South Australian/Chinese co-production, *The Dragon Pearl* (2011). Tracking the internet rumour mill with regard to these upcoming productions led to examples of national-cultural and generational-cultural exchange, demonstrating a movement towards hybridity, as teenagers from around the world swamped chatrooms and message boards to discuss everything from casting choices to aesthetics. Message board users displayed an awareness of the intercultural dynamic underpinning these productions, welcoming the fusion of mythology and pop art across national borders. American, Australian and European teenagers swapped stories, production rumours, scenarios, ideas and cultural perspectives with Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean teenagers, always with a strong sense of camaraderie and good-natured banter.

Another aspect of the research process lay in identifying influential Hollywood films with structures and archetypes displaying a strong Japanese influence, including epic projects like *Star Wars* (1977), which borrowed heavily from Akira Kurosawa (1910 - 1993). Whether actively engaged in the world of *manga* and *anime* or influenced by its hybridised form as a fusion with Hollywood, Australian teenagers interested in fantasy are likely to be acquainted with Japanese popular mythology, from character, to aesthetics, to common story arcs. By constructing a narrative from this pop cultural base, using characters and story conventions that would both fit the paradigm and demonstrate innovation, I anticipated that *Once Upon a Midnight* could indeed build a cultural connection between Australian and Japanese young people. Differences in language and cultural background could be overcome by incorporating a structure and thematic core that would resonate with fans of the fantasy genre, irrespective of national identity.

During the research phase I also looked for evidence of hybridity in literary forms. The novels of Haruki Murakami (b.1949), including *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) and *After Dark* (2007), combine Japanese and ‘Western’ images with poignancy and humour, embodying surrealism and consciously employing ‘Western’ pop references. Their prevalence in Australian bookshops and their popularity with young Australian readers demonstrates that hybridity is not restricted to *anime* or internet chat rooms. With regards to *manga*, detractors claim that young ‘Western’ people seek out Japanese material merely for the high standard of artwork. Murakami’s popularity demonstrates a deeper level of engagement.

Novelists Lian Hearn, also known as Gillian Rubinstein (*Tales of the Otori* 2002 – 2005) and Simon Higgins (*Tomodachi: The Edge of the World*, 2007; *Moonshadow: Eye of the Beast*, 2008) are at the forefront of the Australian literary movement to explore Japanese culture for fantasy content. Their work delves into Japanese mythology and mythologised history to create original fantasy characters and narratives. They, in turn, have influenced a new generation of emerging Australian writers, their inspiration notably evident in Ben Chandler’s debut novel *Quillblade: Voyages of the Flying Dragon* (2010).

At the time of *Once Upon a Midnight*’s conception, Hearn’s work was the most well-known published example of an Australian writer creating a fictionalised narrative in a Japanese setting. The series tells the story of warrior-spy Otori Takeo and the rise and fall of various regimes against a sweeping and beautiful portrait of a mythologised Japan, for which the author claims artistic license. Popular in many

countries, and translated into several different languages, the books are nevertheless difficult to source in Japan itself, where only the first of the five novels has been translated. Hearn explained that the outcaste character Jo-An, who appears in subsequent instalments, was not well-received by the Japanese publisher, effectively cutting off the opportunity for Japanese readers to reflect on her portrayal of their cultural aesthetic.

Higgins takes a path similar to Hearn's in his first *Moonshadow* novel, no doubt the beginning of a planned series, where a historicised Japan becomes the backdrop for the adventures of a talented young spy. Moonshadow is a member of the Grey Light Order not dissimilar to the Tribe, a secret order of spies and assassins featured in Hearn's work. Like Hearn's Otori Takeo, Moonshadow raises the ire of warlords and generals, his actions affecting the balance of power in the region. Both Hearn's evocative, bittersweet, epic prose and Higgins' fast, direct, action-packed style appeal to young Australian and New Zealand audiences, and certainly other countries as well; Hearn claims *Tales of the Otori* has its largest following in France. But when questioned, Japanese youth encountered through the research phrase of *Once Upon a Midnight*, and subsequently Japanese cast members, expressed less interest in what lies at the core of these works: a portrayal of a mythic, reimagined history. It was as unappealing to them as a Japanese writer's reinvented portrayal of Ned Kelly or the Eureka Stockade might be to their Australian peers.

In contrast, Higgins' earlier work *Tomodachi: The Edge of the World* (2007) has a different core, bringing Japanese audiences into the narrative by foregrounding a cross-national plot line. In 1543 an English sailor, Daniel Marlowe, washes up on

Japanese shores where he is befriended by a proud young samurai, Kenji. Their relationship gives the novel a sense of humour and warmth, based around their contrasting personalities, attempts at teamwork, and gradual friendship, despite national-cultural prejudices true to the period. Although *Tales of the Otori* and *Moonshadow* are both terrific reads from an Australian perspective, *Tomodachi* has a cross-national appeal that widens its audience. *Tomodachi* was not yet published at the time of *Once Upon a Midnight*'s research phase, and was only introduced to me midway through production. As an Australian take on shared Japanese and Australian national-cultural sources, it is the story with which, to date, *Once Upon a Midnight* has the most in common. Notably, it was a Japanese colleague who drew my attention to this novel.

If *Tales of the Otori* and *Moonshadow* are Australian fantasies of what historical Japan might have felt like, then *Tomodachi* is a shared, cross-national fantasy of what a first encounter and friendship could have been. The 'East meets West' narrative of *Tomodachi* would have suited the Kijimuna and OzAsia events well, in keeping with the ideological framework of the two festivals. *Tomodachi* was, however, a period piece and as such was not subject to the contemporary generational-cultural discourse that *Once Upon a Midnight* was compelled to recognise. While *Tomodachi* was an example of a nationally focused 'East/West' interculturalist narrative for younger audiences, *Once Upon a Midnight* addressed national culture and generational culture in tandem. This generational-cultural imperative guided the process away from historical referencing, focusing instead on the modern, the bizarre and the fantastic through generationally shared connections which are evident in Murakami's works, as well as in the numerous global examples of hybridised digital media. To engage

young people with theatre, *Once Upon a Midnight* developed an explicitly hybridised fantasy narrative and contemporary setting.

The research phase demonstrated that the fantasy genre is ripe ground for cultural hybridisation. Mythology and cultural motifs cross national boundaries through the media of popular culture at an ever-increasing speed. Theatrical collaborations created for and by young people, born from this hybridised genre, may succeed the ‘East/West’ focus on national culture that has dominated the field of intercultural performance by established theatrical artists. The pop fantasy scenario created for *Once Upon a Midnight* captured shared cultural references in film and television and a sense of the mythic, fun, reflexive, twisted and absurd. This allowed the creative team to transcend a culture-meets-culture framing and create a collaborative work that reflected young people’s contemporary global cultural experience. Early enthusiasm from the Japanese producer and young Japanese translators highlighted these aspects of the story’s potential. The chore of representing two national cultures, and making their representation current, relevant and engaging to young people, had developed into a celebration of the emerging global generational culture – a culture that, as the research phase confirmed, was being explored in novels and digital media but was scarcely represented on the Australian stage.

## Writing

The writing phase began in Australia under the guidance of the dramaturge, Professor Julie Holledge, and continued well into final rehearsals with further input from the director, Catherine Fitzgerald, and cast. It was an ongoing and difficult process, beginning with the invention of key *characters* and a choice of *genre and style*. These decisions would impact not only the work itself but the rehearsal and production process as well as the conversations that took place afterhours.

In the earliest outlines – the rough scribbles made as the research was still being carried out – the cast of characters was split down the middle. Three archetypal ‘Western’ creatures (the vampire, the werewolf and the fairy) and three archetypal Japanese creatures (the *kappa*, the *tengu* and the *kijimuna*) shared the narrative. However, even fantasy creatures defied national-cultural classification. There was ample crossover with these archetypes as the research developed. Vampires, werewolves and fairies repeatedly emerge in *manga* and *anime*, while the *tengu* has made its way into the ‘Western’ pop cultural *zeitgeist* through, among many others, computer games such as *Dead or Alive 2* (1999), the role-playing game *Guild Wars* (2005), and the *Power Rangers Movie* (1995). Meanwhile, the *kappa* myths form the basis of the once mega-popular *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, a modern Japanese/‘Western’ fantasy, first published as a comic in 1984 and most recently adapted for the screen in 2007, with another feature film currently in production. Australian teenagers who were informally consulted during the research phase displayed an in-depth knowledge of these creatures, along with the *kijimuna* (often linked with the iconic *Sonic the Hedgehog*), the *oni*, the *baku* and others. With this in mind, rather than segregating the fantasy creatures within any kind of nationalistic

frame, the mythological structure of *Once Upon a Midnight* assumed this pop cultural hybridisation as a given, with the fantasy characters living harmoniously together.

The decision to give the narrative a contemporary focus came from the idea of thrusting Australian teenagers, at least one of whom would be a *manga* enthusiast, into an adventure with stylised *manga* heroes. The play would not be set ‘once upon a time’ or ‘once upon an alternate history’, but in the present. Our everyday world would be juxtaposed with a wildly fantastic world and its menacing inhabitants. In the first act, it was decided that the fantasy creatures would break into a middle-class home, during a birthday party, to stage an elaborate kidnapping. This idea sprung from observing and interacting with Australian *manga* and *anime* fans and considering both the hilarity and the horror that would ensue if the imaginative world they were drawn to suddenly broke free of television and comic books and invaded their physical world of homework, family and suburbia. What would even the most hardcore *manga* buff do when confronted with a sword-swinging idol?

The second act reverses the relationship, with the teenaged heroes leaping into the fantasy world. In this parallel world – the Underground – eclectic images would be thrust together with little regard for national-cultural discourse. Hybridisation of culture, history, fantasy and reality, as well as comedy and horror, was the principle transforming the scribbled notes on the page into broad characters, unusual settings and possible thematic journeys.

*Characters*

The play's protagonist, Kelsey Clarke, is the world's most frightened child whose reluctance to leave her bedroom echoes both the *hikikomori*, or shut-in generation of Japanese youth (frequently the protagonists in *manga*), and the Australian youth who were, at the time of the story's creation, approaching their adolescence against a backdrop of uncertainty, much of it stemming from the global war on terror and the refugee debates dominating the Australian news. The concept of the Japanese shut-in generation was clarified for me through discussions with the choreographer, Yumi Umiumare, and later during my second visit to Japan where the phenomenon was making news headlines as a social concern. There seemed an immediate parallel with the corresponding Australian generation raised in the post-9/11 climate of fear and mistrust. Many of the Australian teenagers informally consulted as the script was outlined expressed the view that they were being exposed to grisly war footage, racial tensions and political scare tactics on a daily basis. They voiced their confusion and concern for the future. Inspired by these observations of, and interactions with, Japanese and Australian young people, Kelsey became an exaggerated caricature of this global political and cultural climate, stretched to the point of comic absurdity. Kelsey was given all the nervous tics and quirks of the stereotypically neurotic teen: she wears her hair in a protective net, relies on an asthma inhaler to breathe (despite never having been diagnosed as asthmatic), and obsessively cleans her environment, acutely aware of any germs and bacteria that could rise up to make her ill. With her various props and medical aids, Kelsey is immediately identifiable as a cross-national



archetype, without even opening her mouth. When she does open her mouth, it is to share her fear in a morally complex world.

**KELSEY:**                    There's trouble everywhere, you know. Do you watch the news? If you don't watch, how will you know how scary the world really is?

Kelsey's brother, Ryan, is an otaku, or *manga*-obsessive, who exhibits a hyperactive energy, in contrast with his sister's self-isolation.

**RYAN:**                    Kelsey... the world is not out to get you.

**KELSEY:**                    Have you heard of the Ebola virus?

**RYAN:**                    Only because you're my sister.

**KELSEY:**                    It's real! It happens!

**RYAN:**                    Sure, but...

**KELSEY:**                    I don't want to vomit up my intestinal lining, thank you very much.

*He finds a large blow-up hammer and whacks her. She recoils with a yelp.*

Throughout the play's structure, Ryan acts as Kelsey's opposite. Where Kelsey's first instinct is to scream or run, Ryan immediately relaxes in the company of the monsters he encounters, going so far as to tease even those who intend to hold him hostage.

**YOSHIKI:**                    (Japanese) Think hard on your sister, Ryan dono. For even now, she faces ... the lure ... of the vampire.

*TWEETLES and YOSHIKI look grim. RYAN is loving this.*

**RYAN:**           *(spooky voice)* "The lure of the vampire." *(grins)* This is  
the best holiday ever.

*He begins eating once more.*

**RYAN:**           Anyone else want a dumpling?

*The MONSTERS look at each other. They're just not getting  
through to this guy.*

Early in the process, the characters of Kelsey and Ryan were interpreted by the director as Australian xenophobes objectifying and pigeon-holing Japan. Kelsey's fear and Ryan's stereotypical approach to other national cultures were criticised in the initial discussions with the director, a (mis)reading of the text that continued throughout rehearsals and was voiced publicly in the Kijimuna Festival symposium (see Chapters Five and Six). While xenophobia is certainly part of Kelsey's psychological mindset (along with agoraphobia and mysophobia), she and Ryan have their basis in both Australian and Japanese archetypes. Moreover, her irrational fear and his fondness for plastic swords and ninja movies were written as satirical constructs to be explored and subverted through the narrative journey. Split up soon after the play opens, Kelsey and Ryan each have their own separate narrative arc building towards a climactic reunion. Along the way, both encounter the Underground's horrific inhabitants. Kelsey conquers her fear only when she acknowledges the damage that fear has done to others, while Ryan's new friendships encourage him to look beyond exoticisation and stereotype.

Over the drafting process, the lead monsters for the Australian cast went through many incarnations. The first to settle was dapper vampire, Damon, who has shades of David Bowie and parodies the popular romanticised vampires of *Angel* (1999-2004) and *Twilight* (2005-2008):

**DAMON:** You're safe here.

*NOZOMI clears her throat. DAMON pauses.*

**KELSEY:** Safe? With you?

**DAMON:** Sure!

*NOZOMI takes DAMON's ear and pulls him downstage.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) If you can't handle the temptation ...

**DAMON:** You mean Kelsey? Oh come on, like I'd ...

*He clocks her expression.*

**DAMON:** ... I'd only drink a pint, at the very most. That's nothing. That's a trip to the doctor.

**NOZOMI :** (Japanese) You promised me you'd changed.

**DAMON :** I have changed. Really. I ... am a vegetarian.

**NOZOMI :** (Japanese, smiling a little) You've never known how to behave yourself.

Damon was followed by nasty werewolf Scratch, who has his roots both in the snarling Gmork from *The Neverending Story* (1979) and wolf god Moro from *Princess Mononoke* (1997). In *manga*, the lone wolf often appears as an archetype. As Little Red Riding Hood knows only too well, there is also a traditional 'Western' fairytale precedent.

**SCRATCH :** Just because you're all housebroken don't expect me to be the same. (to DAMON) It's sad to see what you've become. An herbivore! An abomination!

**DAMON :** I know what you're trying to do and it won't work.

(Japanese) I'm not going with you. It's suicide.

*DAMON stands with SHIMA and NOZOMI.*

*Beat.*

**SCRATCH:** Stay here and rot with your friends. I'll end this  
my way.

*SCRATCH leaps off. NOZOMI starts after him.*

**DAMON:** Let him go.

The Japanese principle cast began with Yoshiki, the *tengu*, who rules over the other monsters of the Underground and seems wild and villainous, only to be softened through contact with Ryan:

**RYAN:** Yo Yoshiki, what's happening, my man?

**YOSHIKI:** (Japanese) I fear for your sister's safety.

**RYAN:** Aw, come on! You're the *tengu*! You're evil!

**YOSHIKI:** (Japanese) Oh stop!

**RYAN:** Do the lightning thing!

**YOSHIKI:** (Japanese) You flatter me.

**RYAN:** Light-ning! Light-ning!

*YOSHIKI gestures. Nothing happens.*

**RYAN:** Performance anxiety?

*YOSHIKI deflates.*

Yoshiki was in turn followed by Shima, the *kijimuna*, who is manic and loopy at first, in true *Sonic the Hedgehog* (1991) style, but eventually becomes a wise and helpful ally to Kelsey:

*KELSEY goes into a panic attack. She sucks on her puffer.*

*SHIMA snatches it, takes a puff, chokes, frowns and throws it away, laughing.*

**SHIMA:** (Japanese) Don't need that anymore!

**KELSEY:** Help ... I'm dying.

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Kelsey Clarke, are you OK?

**KELSEY:** I'm ...

*She realises that she can breathe.*

**KELSEY:** ... fine.

*Slowly, KELSEY breaks into a smile.*

**KELSEY:** I'm really ... actually ... very ... completely fine. *(then, to SHIMA)* Do you know where my brother is?

**SHIMA:** (Japanese) Your brother can't have gotten far. I am  
an excellent guide. Chin up, we'll find him!

(English) I help rescue.

NOZOMI groans.

SHIMA smiles and hurries KELSEY along.

There is also a *kappa* conceived for a primarily physical performance and six vultures, three 'Western' – Tweetles, Bedlam and Flopsy – and three Japanese – Hiyokko, Kowashimashou and Zuru-Zuru – inspired by *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. Much like the dwarves, each vulture exhibits a one-note personality; the latter three have Japanese names implying naïvety (Hiyokko), physical aggression (Kowashimashou) and slyness (Zuru-Zuru). The world of the Underground, which these monstrous creatures inhabit, is wholly inclusive. Theirs is a world where national culture is invisible.

From this world comes Nozomi, a character born from the myth of the *ningyō* or warrior-doll. Although she was one of the last characters to be written, appearing in early drafts merely as Kelsey's doll, Miss Matilda, Nozomi's inner voice spoke the loudest and she subsequently came to be the dominant figure, even overshadowing Kelsey herself. Female warrior archetypes, from Ellen Ripley to Sarah Connor, from Buffy Summers to River Tam, have taken over from the Jean-Claude Van Damme and Chuck Norris lugs of the 1980s and early 1990s. In Miyazaki films as well, female characters save the day, for example, Chihiro in *Spirited Away* (2001). The

shift from masculinised female characters, such as Ripley, to heroic characters who embrace femininity, as Buffy undoubtedly does, is a trend that has been explored by, among many, Susan Hopkins in *Girl Heroes: The New Force in Popular Culture* (2002) and Lorna Jowett in *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan* (2005). Japanese equivalents are plentiful; Ruka, the antisocial protagonist in *Tokyo Gore Police* (2008), is a modern heroine reminiscent of Nozomi. Both are melancholy figures. Through her back story, developed but not included in the play, Nozomi was once a very kind person, embittered by years of living and dying by the sword. She is intended to be soft-spoken but uncompromising, psychologically and emotionally strong, but closed-off and aloof to many. Nozomi challenges Kelsey to confront each of her fears: the germs of the swamp, the temptation of blood (and the amorality a vampiric lifestyle represents), and Yoshiki's horde of monstrous servants. In the process, Nozomi develops a sisterly bond with Kelsey:

**KELSEY:** Stop treating me like I'm a kid!

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) I treat you like a kid because you are a kid!

**SHIMA:** (sing-song, a little unnerved) No-zo-miii.

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) On second thoughts ... you're a brat!

**KELSEY:** I'm not a brat!

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) You hide from everything!



**KELSEY:** I don't hide from everything, just ... most things.

**SHIMA:** Nozomi!

*NOZOMI and KELSEY turn. They are surrounded by the moaning dead. A SKELETON reaches for KELSEY. She screams.*

In her article in the former NWSA Journal (now rebranded 'Feminist Formations'), entitled 'Grrrls and Women Together in the Third Wave: Embracing the Challenges of Intergenerational Feminism' (2004) Jennifer Purvis seeks to move past the 'linear chronology' of generational perspectives on feminism towards an intergenerational 'community' model which 'honors the ethical and political ideals of feminism and the diverse contributions of feminists in dialogue'. It is important to note that Nozomi was created from this ideal, a character born through intergenerational dialogue between myself and dramaturge Julie Holledge. Through Nozomi, a feminist perspective was imbedded in the text. However, generational-cultural difference would surface when bringing this character to life and portraying her onstage (see Chapter Five). In this way, Nozomi evolved from a supporting role into the dominant presence, textually and culturally, and the most divisive presence when exploring the relationship between national and generational difference.

Ultimately the consequence of Kelsey's fear comes in the form of Angelica, the Blue Fairy, who, like Nozomi, evolved from a supporting role in early drafts into the unlikely antagonist:

**ANGELICA:** Are you not grateful? I've been working so hard to make this world just right, and all for you.

**KELSEY:** It's not supposed to be "just right!" Sometimes it's meant to be wrong. I was wrong. I got it all so very, very wrong.

**ANGELICA:** I came here to save you, Kelsey Clarke. You summoned me to make your world safe, predictable. Isn't that the world you always dreamed of? Isn't that the world you asked me for?

**KELSEY:** My brother has spikes on his wrists. He listens to death metal. Is there a place for Ryan in your world?

*ANGELICA turns her head to the side, confused by KELSEY's change in attitude. This does not compute.*

**KELSEY:** You can't stop people from living!

**ANGELICA:** Oh, but I can.

It is through this confrontation that Kelsey conquers her anxieties and emerges a hero, realising that the damage caused to the Underground, the disruption to its harmony, comes from her own prejudice and fear. Within our rehearsal room discussions, Angelica became a shorthand term for generational-cultural oppression. To this day members of the cast and creative team will occasionally refer to a lecturer or an employer as 'another Angelica'.

Within the narrative of *Once Upon a Midnight* are layers of pop cultural allusion. Nozomi's quest for humanity and the presence of a Blue Fairy invokes Carlo Collodi's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883), the quest of gathering heroes echoes *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), and the darker characters, more aggressive villains and descriptions of modern musical routines conjure the sons and daughters of such classic fairytales, including *The Dark Crystal* (1982), *The Neverending Story* (novel published 1979, film release 1984), and *Labyrinth* (1986), as well as their Japanese cousins, the aforementioned *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001), and *Hellsing* (1997 - 2008). Moreover, the characters themselves are firmly immersed in pop culture and seem aware that they are living out a fantasy situation, as they make quips referencing *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *The Karate Kid* (1984), among others. Ryan calls Yoshiaki 'Mister Miyagi', a particular in-joke since the fictional character is an Okinawan. Later he claims to have been 'encased in carbonite' à la Han Solo, while Kelsey calls Shima the *kijimuna* 'little Yoda here' when his philosophical platitudes get on her nerves.

Nozomi, meanwhile, continued to dominate the drafting process, the focus eventually turning as much to her journey of rediscovering her humanity as to Kelsey's journey of conquering her fear. By later drafts, the two had become an effective duo as their relationship grew to form the emotional centre of the narrative:

**DAMON:** Hold her, Kelsey.

*YOSHIKI concentrates.*

*KELSEY hugs NOZOMI and wishes as hard as she can.*

*EVERYONE* waits.

*Guitars start up. The stage goes from blue to red.*

*NOZOMI's eyes widen and she gasps for air.*

**KELSEY:** You're alive!

*NOZOMI touches her own forehead, and feels her own heartbeat.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) I have a pulse! I am ... actually ...  
alive.

*Cheers.*

**KELSEY:** Just take good care of that heart, now that you have one. Doctor Mortimer says that heart disease strikes one in ...?

*NOZOMI playfully hits KELSEY.*

**NOZOMI:** That ... is for scaring me.

*They smile. NOZOMI pulls KELSEY into a hug.*

*Genre and Style*

Influenced by this hybridisation of ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ fantasy, *Once Upon a Midnight* strayed from the mould the OzAsia Festival had displayed in 2007. The text became less and less an exploration of national-cultural difference and was anchored, instead, to binding themes of adolescent anxiety, adventure, mystery and personal demons. *Once Upon a Midnight* was not concerned with cultural history, past aggressions, or notions of the preciously traditional. It was a fantasy for contemporary Australia and contemporary Japan. Its only acknowledgement of alienation and awkwardness became explicitly satirical in its set-up and execution, with Kelsey painted as the comically absurd abstraction rather than the norm. The story arcs and conflicts were, likewise, explicitly global, with the menagerie of bizarre characters taking action not against each other, but against fear itself. The quest narrative, underpinning everything from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (1948), was solidified as the strongest narrative choice not only because it is the dominant narrative in fantasy fiction, but because it is a narrative where hybridised work sits comfortably, as demonstrated by *Oz no Mahōtsukai* (1986) the popular Japanese *anime* reinvention of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900).

Employing the self-reflexive dialogue style that has come to typify the contemporary fantasy genre was another early choice. Michael Adams captures this youth cultural phenomenon in *Slayer Slang: A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon* (2003). In this work, Adams describes the way the team of influential writers behind *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and its spin-off *Angel* (1999-2004) experimented with

language on screen, reflecting and informing the language of the global youth audience. While series creator Joss Whedon remains prolific in film and television, the spider-web influence of his team, Jane Espenson (*Battlestar Galactica*, *Caprica*), David Fury (*Lost*, *24*), Doug Petrie (*Fantastic Four*, *Tru Calling*) and Marti Noxon (*Private Practice*, *Mad Men*), encompasses many of the most popular sci-fi, drama and, in particular, modern fantasy franchises. Examples Adams gives include changing existing words:

BUFFY: I'll go home and stock up on weapons, slip into something a little more break and enterish. (Doug Petrie)

and creating new ones:

XANDER: Every woman in Sunnydale wants to make me her cuddle-monkey. (Marti Noxon)

A dramaturge might be tempted to convert these colourful lines of dialogue back to their most straightforward and direct forms, for example, 'I'll go home, collect the weapons and change for battle' or 'Every woman in Sunnydale is suddenly attracted to me.' To do so is to miss the personality quirks of Buffy Summers and Xander Harris, their quip-in-the-face-of-danger attitude and the cultural environment they have emerged from. In his work, Ryan Heath provides some further insights into youth language and culture:

Our humour might be silly, but that is irrelevant to a discussion about our ability to communicate with language. I find it funny to read sentences like those sent to me in a ‘forward’ email one day in late 2004:

Her vocabulary was as bad, as, like, whatever.

The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated because of his wife’s infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge at a formerly surcharge-free ATM.

It hurt the way your tongue hurts after you accidentally staple it to the wall.

It is language like this that forms the basis of the thousands of conversational codes that permeate our friendship networks – they mean much to us and little to anyone else, much like our approach to cultural referencing. (Heath, 2006: 51)

‘It hurt a lot’ is an unimaginative substitute for the image of a tongue squirming between a staple and a wall. The reduction of these kinds of lines into ‘vanilla’ sentences (a term I used frequently during the development and production of *Once Upon a Midnight*) robs the characters of their individual flavour. As the script was being written and re-written, it was difficult to argue for why the former style was more appropriate for a young audience compared to theatrical artists trained in conventional, direct dialogue. The issues of national-cultural difference and potential

linguistic confusion were used to reduce many quirky moments in the script to their most simple, often didactic, forms. The counterargument, that explaining playful language to a Japanese peer might not be as fraught with difficulty as the older artists believed, could not be tested as the early script writing sessions, readings and workshops were confined to Australia.

Cultural referencing, as the research phase had highlighted, was another important part of this modern fantasy style. Cultural referencing is relished by the emerging generations, and globally inclusive. Heath says, 'I especially enjoy competitions at house parties to remember story lines from childhood TV shows – from *Astroboy* to *The Mysterious Cities of Gold* and *Degrassi*' (Heath, 2006: 51).

Others Heath mentions are *Transformers* and *Hello Kitty*, and it is worth pointing out that both *Astroboy* and *Hello Kitty* are two of many references shared equally by Australian and Japanese young people. There are many more – literally hundreds – of such references that the young Australian cast and audience had in common with their Japanese colleagues. This too was difficult to communicate cross-culturally in a generational sense. Many such references were deleted during the writing process, the result of the director's intervention. Such a dismissal of a distinctive, youth cultural voice in the text was one of the first examples of generational-cultural tensions, even as the script was still in development. The 'conversational codes' Heath describes may seem trivial, bombastic or even nonsensical to those unable to decode them, but without them, the characters would ring hollow to the intended audience. Heath cites 'failing to understand this basic point' as a flaw of the older generation, which he



likens further to a failure to understand ‘the future of power in Australia’ (Heath, 2006: 52).

Stylistically, therefore, the play struggled from the outset to define its generational address. As a concern for translating across national-cultural barriers was used to reduce the dialogue to its ‘vanilla’ level, the challenge of creating cross-national humour was redirected into slapstick: physical and crass gags. Content was modified to lighten the overall mood, soften the darker-edged characters, eliminate sexual undertones and, as much as possible, trim down to bare action. The rationale was to be certain not to confuse or alienate the Japanese audience. Arguably, each of these decisions, and the rewrites that accompanied them, took the material further away from the demographic that had been researched as the project’s intended audience. This left the script in a nebulous space, trying to appeal to competing generations with competing cultural agendas.

## Workshopping

The workshopping phase took place in Adelaide with the aid of Flinders Drama Centre students, many of whom went on to appear in the show itself. This week-long phase culminated in a presentation to OzAsia Festival producers. It was at this point in the process that the generational-cultural difference described by Greig, Betzien, Heath and others asserted itself tangibly. In response, I have presented this account from the perspective of the emerging artists in the room. I am aware that there is an alternative perspective – that of the established artists – which I and my peers failed to fully engage with at the time. Neither side of this debate had the theoretical nor the discursive tools to articulate a sense of generational-cultural difference. Narrow, nationally-determined definitions of what constitutes a ‘cultural clash’ and the belief that one’s country of origin is more significant than one’s place in history underpinned this encounter. Therefore, this account from the emerging artists’ point of view reveals the limitations of national-cultural perspective when it is emphasised at the expense of other cultural markers.

### *From Page to Stage*

At the first creative development, which began in Adelaide in early 2008, the text was put aside and the characters were explored physically. This started with performers contorting into monstrous shapes and performing routines against tracks the composer/musical director had selected. *Glory Box* by Portishead brought a melancholy energy to the rehearsal room, in keeping with the style of the work, and Nozomi’s nature in particular. Eventually, it was phased out in favour of an

increasingly light and wacky original soundtrack. Musical choices signified a dramatic shift from page to stage.

The pursuit of audience comprehension led to heightened, external performances in an exaggerated, pantomime style that had heavy shades of *Playschool* (1966 - present) and *Romper Room* (1953 - 1995). The characters were pushed to the limits of exaggeration: Kelsey sterilised her environment with an extended array of props including a stethoscope, disinfectant bottle and surgical gloves; Ryan indulged in an incongruous slow-motion fight routine against the vultures; the vultures halted the play to perform an extended mime with balloons and whistles, complete with cartoon theme accompaniment. Even in the dark world of the Underground, inflated characterisation and slapstick became the focus of each scene. Damon and Nozomi's relationship was depersonalised and desexualised, taking it from satire into farce. The director decided in rehearsal that a teenage audience would be squeamish about kissing and the depiction of sexual innuendo. This was an odd and ironic decision, made in the midst of the *Twilight* phenomena that Damon was created to satirise. Damon himself was rechristened 'Dracula' upon his first entrance and the majority of his intimate dialogue was cut to reframe him as a campy stock character, bordering on pantomime dame. His role in the narrative, as tempter for Kelsey and reflection of Nozomi's darker side, was rendered unreadable. His song *Hot Red Sugar* was more Tim Curry, its melody and structure distinctly 'Sweet Transvestite' (1973), rather than Muse (1994 - present).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Author Stephenie Meyer of *Twilight* fame frequently refers to Muse as an inspiration.

Duality and greyness, both core elements of the narrative, were brightened up or glossed over in favour of making each character uncomplicated, direct and comprehensible. The overall arc of suspense involving Angelica's identity and motivations was rewritten to be made explicitly clear – and repeatedly stated – in the opening scene rather than a revelation saved for the climax. Thus, in the prologue, all is laid bare:

**TWEETLES:** It's our only hope! If we can take a frightened child and teach them to face the dark, the Blue Fairy will see the error of her ways.

In focusing strongly on cross-national understanding, the question of connecting culturally with an audience of young people was hardly addressed. The pursuit of cross-national understanding resulted in a reductive treatment of the text and characters which revealed a lack of awareness or concern for young people's cultural perspective, recalling the debates of the ASSITEJ symposia. This was reflected in the daily interactions in the rehearsal room where the nuanced opinions of the cast toward their own characters were marginalised in favour of an umbrella strategy to make the show bright, big and clear.

Each scene was performed in three ways in order to check, double-check and triple-check for cross-national comprehension. During the first run-through of a scene, the English lines were spoken in English and the Japanese lines were spoken in gibberish (as we had yet to meet the Japanese cast). This was immediately followed by a run-through where the Japanese lines were spoken in English and the English lines were spoken in gibberish, to ensure the same information was delivered over both

languages. Finally, the actors performed a silent run-through where the scene was conveyed as mime. This laborious process resulted in further cuts to the text, so that each character lost their personal voice as part of a broad rationale that emphasised physical action at the expense of emotional content and loud, clear statements at the expense of subtle interpersonal relationships. Understanding was the ‘achievement’ of the first workshop. Suspense, personality and character journeys were hastily sacrificed along with the concept of an unfolding narrative.

From a marketing perspective, the workshop experience had transformed the cultural product with lasting consequences for the production. As the script was being conceived and written, there was a requirement that the marketing teams for the Kijimuna Festival and the Adelaide OzAsia Festival be kept informed. During the research visit to Japan in 2006, I had spoken at length with the Japanese production and marketing organisation about what the production would look, feel and sound like. With help from young translators Ike and Shoko these meetings were successful. I was able to convey the cultural aesthetic required; the aesthetic explored during the research phase.

During the workshop phase, I kept in contact with the translators, now friends, and e-mailed pictures of all the contemporary fantasy projects studied in the research phase, as well as the names of contemporary bands with a gothic or emo-goth style. These were shared with the Japanese producer and his assistants, often accompanying early drafts of the script. When the producer visited Australia to participate in the ASSITEJ conference, he voiced his approval and enthusiasm. The young translators had successfully conveyed the narrative and emphasised the appeal for young audiences.

In Australia, the marketing liaison between the production and the OzAsia Festival was in her twenties, aware of the target audience's expectations and how to meet them, and able to culturally position the work. Crucially, the poster design and the associated marketing material in Australia were directed at a teenage audience. Many secondary school groups were invited, while under-10s were discouraged from attending. The festival marketing material built an audience expectation of dark characters and themes, a contemporary horror rock show, as written. The marketing in Australia was, therefore, extraordinarily successful, attracting school groups, as well as large numbers of teenaged *manga* and *anime* fans.

A quick search of *Once Upon a Midnight* online in 2008 revealed publicity material and interviews confirming these expectations; there were even message board postings where young people spread the word. The show had sold large numbers of tickets well before rehearsals were underway and sold out completely before opening night. Rather than please the cast, this caused anxiety. The show being marketed so successfully was the show as it appeared on paper, in the original script. It was not the show we workshopped. This point of departure was evident in the bright and choppy approach to character and story, but caused deeper tension when the soundtrack was introduced. This is an example of cultural distortion in practice: a process whereby one dominant cultural group, in this case a generational group, distorted the representation of another, when 'time' was not acknowledged and there was no negotiation, interweaving or exchange. Contrary to the old saying, music is not a universal language.

*The Many Meanings of Rock*

In all my writing I had framed the show as a ‘modern rock musical’, but to people from different generational cultures this conjured a myriad of different, contrasting images, from Helen Reddy raising her fist to declare ‘I am Woman’ (1972) to pot-bellied pub rock fans crying out for ‘Khe Sanh’ (1978). Early in the process, I tried to clarify this issue by listing a mix of possible punk, post-punk, goth, grunge, emo and electronic pop music acts including but not limited to New Order (1980 - present), Radiohead (1985 - present), Massive Attack (1988 - present), Portishead (1991 - present), Garbage (1994 - present), Evanescence (1995 - present), Eskimo Joe (1997 - present), Ladytron (1999 - present) and the The Killers (2002 - present), alongside individual vocalists such as Elizabeth Fraser (active 1982 - present), Imogen Heap (active 1997 - present) and Adelaide artist Sia (active 1997 - present). Contemporary Japanese artists sourced from the research visit to Tokyo were also explored, the favourite being Mika Nakashima (active 2001 - present) who had recently starred as the punk lead in, and appeared on the soundtrack for, the movie *Nana* (2005) based on the *manga* of the same name. These artists embodied both a sound and a visual aesthetic conducive to the story being told, the dark and dreamy nature of certain key characters and relationships, and the nightmare world of the Underground. Many of these artists were linked directly to the reference material discovered in the research phase and continue to surface in associated contemporary productions to this day. Garbage, for example, lent their hit song ‘Temptation Waits’ to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off *Angel*, to popular series *The Sopranos* (1999 - 2007) and the once-iconic teen soap opera *Dawson’s Creek* (1998 - 2003). Meanwhile, Massive

Attack's 'Teardrop' (with vocals by Elizabeth Fraser) has graced a number of supernaturally themed productions, including the modern witch series *Charmed* (1998 - 2006), while Sia's 'I Go to Sleep' recently played on sci-fi hit *Dollhouse* (2009). Younger artists and associates built on this base and brought emo bands Panic at the Disco (2004 - present) and My Chemical Romance (2001 - present) to the table. By setting the tone in this way, we hoped to signpost the conventions and expectations of the musical genre and the market. Nevertheless, Helen Reddy was referenced with a straight face by the director during musical discussions, along with Chrissie Hynde and The Pretenders (1978). Many young people connected to the production began to identify this as generational-cultural miscommunication:

You can do a dark musical in the style of Slipknot, or in the style of Nine Inch Nails, but ... The Pretenders? (Melissa Matheson, Tweetles)

Is this what we signed on for? Can you imagine *Elvis, the Horror Musical?* (David Hirst, Damon)

Pitching a musical aesthetic to an audience of young people that they were likely to interpret as dated, out-of-touch or incongruous to the marketing campaign would prove disastrous for the production. To prevent this from happening, I sourced and consulted directly with peers well-versed in contemporary rock music whose style had influenced the writing and who in turn had given up their time to assist with the development, shaping, mixing and recording of the soundtrack. The discrepancy between market expectation and the cultural product in production was identified immediately and strongly emphasised. The advice from my peers was that the matter



should be raised and addressed early. Compounding the problem, this area of the production was under-resourced in terms of both time and money: the challenge of mounting a rock show, of mixing, balancing and synching the pre-recorded and live components, and making it feel convincing to the young audience, was hardly sensibly addressed.

I raised the musical dilemma with the director and Australian producer, but this was interpreted as an act of interference, hostility and insubordination; further evidence of cross-generational tensions and the 'Baby Boomer' fondness for 'gatekeeping', which shut down constructive dialogue. Music had become a major bone of contention, and those raising concerns were cut off from the process. Even with this forewarning, the subsequent developments came as something of a shock: Damon was given his Tim Curry makeover and other scenes, characters and themes were dramatically reframed. Tengu's opening number 'Bring on the Night' was catchy but goofy, with a call and answer structure more suited to a Primary School audience – the under-10s who were discouraged from attending – rather than the 16+ age group actually buying tickets. This positioned Tengu as adorably camp rather than commanding (later accentuated by a velvet cape, leopard print armbands, a feather boa and Kiss make-up, valiantly carried off by Japanese actor Tenchou). Also, through no fault of the performer, Kelsey was destined to lose the sympathy of the young audience with a slow-moving, wallowing lullaby 'Frightened of the World'. Largely absent from the score was Nozomi, who participated in one of the show's faux-rock group numbers 'Step into the Dark' and the astoundingly cheerful, campfire sing-along finale 'The Night is Ours Again', but was otherwise left undeveloped musically. Coupled with the

reduction of her character in the text, this condensed Nozomi – the main character in the marketing campaign – to a superfluous bystander in many key scenes.

The music was light, repetitive and basic, steering the show further towards a 1970s pastiche of caricature and broad farce, more suited to a Saturday morning Warner Brothers cartoon or an episode of the Adam West-era *Batman* (1966) than the world of *manga*. The discrepancy between the page and the stage, or what the cast called the ‘before’ and ‘after’ shots, meant that there was now a wide gap between the audience who would appreciate the show as workshopped – a much younger market – and the audience who were coming. As playwright I faced a dilemma: to again attempt to raise this problem or to let it slide, knowing that there was generational-cultural misappropriation in play. The fact that such an obvious discrepancy had to be addressed at all indicated a cross-cultural phenomenon for which none of us were prepared and, subsequently, unable to reconcile: a generational-cultural dilemma. It would quickly become clear that the established artists were hearing rock. Unable or, as it appeared at the time, obstinately unwilling to take stock of their own subjective cultural position, the established artists were hearing what they processed as a contemporary, ‘edgy’ sound. The director, trusting only her own ears and with no research, effectively shut down the discussion, convinced that there was no issue. This was more than creative egos clashing. For a constructive argument to take place, both parties have to reach some fundamental understanding of the problem, or to at least acknowledge that there *is* a problem. When asked to question their ‘historical space’, the established artists would not engage.

The musical discrepancy is an example of how ignoring generational-cultural differences impacts on a contemporary production designed for young people, especially when the artists themselves are working across generational barriers. Musical taste is tied to cultural identity; music positions individuals in relation to 'time' and 'place'. Collective political activism of the 1970s, an era so often referenced and romanticised by older generations as a baton of both personal and generational pride, has become something of a cliché to the emerging generations. This is not to disparage any one artist or group of artists; in fact, Chrissie Hynde is a singer I much admire (so do my parents). However, given the material and the target audience, this difference in generational-cultural perspectives was problematic during the rehearsals of *Once Upon a Midnight* and central to ongoing discussions of contemporary interculturalism. Lurking behind this schism in the production team was a war of cultural capital well-documented by Davis and Heath and given context through the work of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim when they refer to the 'sociological concept of generation'. A singer, song or event worn as a feather of cultural credibility by the 'Baby Boomers' is likely to be cheesy to a contemporary youth audience. To take an example, Reddy's 'I am Woman' was once a feminist anthem, but for Generation X it has become a cliché and for Generation Y it signifies hardly anything but parody. When the director cited this song as an example of the show's musical aesthetic, she was sending different messages to different people in the room. The wider cultural framework for these musical discrepancies is partly due to progressive trends in art but also, crucially, as Davis and Heath contend, a generational shift in attitude. This generational shift does not indicate that younger generations are cynical by nature, or that we have stopped caring about issues of social justice or progressive politics; it is rather that we negotiate issues differently,

from an issue-based perspective rather than a collective group platform. This simply reflects our position in history. As Heath writes, 'it's a different current altogether from the one the Boomers glided along in their Yellow Submarine' (Heath, 2006: 15).

'I am Woman' speaks to a previous generation with different trends, fashions and concerns. It invokes a series of images that emerging generations broadly associate with 'Otherness'. To openly state that it wasn't 1970 anymore and whatever flame of rebellious feeling that song signified to the Baby Boomers no longer burned brightly, proved a very hard sell. Moreover, to a generation credited with a history of collective political action, any challenge to their contemporary position of cultural authority signalled an uprising. Thus a strong polarisation was solidified during the workshopping process; it continued to underpin the experience as the production developed. From my own perspective as writer, analogous to that of the mixing team and some members of the cast, the message from the musical and workshopping debates read: *how dare young people tell us how to communicate to young people?* Were the same logic applied to the cross-national aspects of the production (i.e. *how dare Japanese people tell us how to communicate to Japanese people?*), it would be labelled, quite rightly, as cultural misappropriation. It is the purpose of this thesis that the two be considered with equal weight: generational differences are as culturally relevant as national differences.

In summary, the assumption that 'modern rock musical' would translate within national-cultural borders as a contemporary sound in keeping with the dark, supernatural themes of the text turned out to be naïve. The assumption did not take into consideration the 'Otherness' of generational culture. Even when creative

participants are speaking the same language, the potential for cultural confusion remains vast.

### *Art Reflects Life*

The cross-generational tensions which emerged during the production process found an expression also in the staging of *Once Upon a Midnight's* climax, which portrays Kelsey's defiant stand against the mystical Blue Fairy, Angelica. The latter's cancerous ignorance reduces the Underground to a sanitised, simplified and militantly controlled environment:

**ANGELICA:** Are you not grateful? I've been working so hard to  
make this world just right, and all for you.

While the text framed Angelica as a character born from Kelsey's fearful imagination and, therefore, the same age as the protagonist herself, Angelica was transformed in the rehearsal room, becoming older, more arrogant and clearly parental in her representation. This was echoed in the lyrics to her solo, written by the musical director in consultation with the director, in which Angelica refers to Kelsey as 'my child.' The result of this development in the workshop phase was that Angelica deviated from her origins as a product of the fearful aspects of Kelsey's inner nature and instead became Kelsey's *de facto* mother figure. Director Catherine Fitzgerald provides the following context for the character's transformation: 'One of my running themes is about kids taking on their parents' beliefs and attitudes' (Catherine Fitzgerald, director).

The decision to age Angelica was significant. Framing Angelica as representative of stern motherhood, old-fashioned idealism and racial segregation – and linking ‘historical space’ to these conservative values – firmly locked the production in unequivocally generational terms. Previous drafts had defined Angelica as frozen in time, or ‘time unmoving’, but the production made this literal, more specific. The discourse behind this decision implies that if the Underground represents a positive global perspective and Angelica cannot grasp that, then surely she must belong to another time, another ‘historical space’. The central conflict of the narrative did not address national culture, but generational culture.

During the workshop phase, the challenge of capturing a young audience, formidable in my mind, began to intersect with – and compete against – the more widely accepted intercultural discourse driven by national culture. Youth culture and global hybridity remained the primary focus for many of the young artists as preparations were made for the journey to Japan, but this focus was not acknowledged on the rehearsal room floor. National-cultural discourse, inherent in the casting of the production, was strongly reaffirmed in workshop run-throughs, remaining the principle agenda for the director and producers.

Reflecting on the process up to that point, I maintain that it would have been inadvisable to tie the narrative explicitly to the issue of national-cultural identity and the exploration of national-cultural difference. The research clearly indicated that young people represented a hybridising force in ways that moved beyond national discourse. To make the production relevant to their interests, a global approach to

narrative, theme and character was essential. This global approach promoted intercultural transactions that differed from those in the OzAsia Festival model because they rested on the belief that ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ culture are entwined through popular art forms. The absurd, the popular, the branded and the subversive travel through cyberspace at a faster speed and reach a far broader audience than the artistic works that grace festival stages, which are by their very nature constrained and, arguably, only truly relevant to a privileged few. To progress the art form and establish wider relevance, any contemporary intercultural text must begin from an acknowledgement of these global realities. The Australian cast and I shared this critical position as we developed the work.

In fairness to the producers, the director and other colleagues, those of us who were calling for an acknowledgement of this generational-cultural perspective, and continue to do so, belong to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim identify as the ‘actor’s perspective’. We are positioned *within* the generational categories that are the subject of recent anthropological and sociological global-generational research and, therefore, we embody a sense of opposition, a sense of cultural agency and a conscious assertion of the difference which is part of what Bharucha would call our ‘historical space’.

Through the experience of attending ASSITEJ and the research recorded in this chapter, the young artists who participated in *Once Upon a Midnight* became aware of generational-cultural identity as distinct from national-cultural identity. We began to view the creative process through that different lens. The frustrations through the workshopping phase stem from the absence of any attempts to overcome the assumption that there was no generational difference to consider as part of this process. The generational-cultural perspective, described by Beck and Beck-

Gernsheim as *terra incognita*, underlined most of the production. While the workshop experience in Adelaide may have been problematic, at least from an emerging generational-cultural point of view, it did clarify the cultural issues and differences at hand. It was with some anticipation that we wondered how the young Japanese artists would factor into this evolving dynamic. As bags were packed, we vocalised the expectation that we were not about to meet cultural aliens, but exciting peers.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Working Together – Japan and Australia On Stage

In this chapter, I chart *Once Upon a Midnight's* further development as the production travelled to Okinawa and brought Australian and Japanese artists together. The first section, entitled '*Where*' Meets '*When*', examines the two cultural discourses I have established in earlier chapters side by side. My focus then shifts to language, as this became one of the key topics for negotiation and discussion in the rehearsal room.

This exploration of language encompasses two sections in this chapter: *Language and Communication* and *Cross-generational Communication*, the latter informed by Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo (2002). In the fourth section, *Physical Storytelling*, I move into an examination of the natural consequence of our rehearsal room discussion of language and subsequent directorial decision to pair language back to aid cross-national understanding in the final performance. In the final section, *Shared Narratives, National Bodies*, I discuss audience reception theory through the critical prism of Susan Bennett's work (1990), which challenges some established notions of what constitutes an 'Eastern' or 'Western' body in performance. I suggest that there may be a strong generational dimension to these observations by linking them to the phenomenological 'horizon of expectations', which Bennett applies to her approach to audience analysis.

This chapter also reflects on the comments, debates and cultural clashes of the artists involved in the project using a series of interviews I recorded with their approval over the course of the rehearsal period and into production. These interviews are coloured with emotion and heightened by the pressure each artist was feeling at the time.

Viewed in this context, the interviews, nevertheless, provide a compelling account of the key cultural concerns that motivated different members of the cast and creative team, reinforcing the tensions between the cultural ‘where’ and the cultural ‘when’. Adopting Clifford Geertz’s approach to cultural analysis, outlined in Chapter One, I searched through these subjective recollections for the underlying cultural debate, for what was, in fact, ‘getting said’.

## **‘Where’ Meets ‘When’**

In the context of the OzAsia Festival, *Once Upon a Midnight* was framed in terms of the nationality of its participants with much less regard for the ‘Otherness’ of their generational perspective. As the narrative, casting and aesthetic needs of the production turned toward a young audience, however, the generational perspective called for attention. Chapter Three has charted how this played out in Adelaide, as a miscommunication running beneath the creative decisions of the workshopping phase. In Japan, the ‘where’ and the ‘when’ became much clearer and more competitive forces as the production began rehearsals. When the plane touched down in Okinawa, everyone braced for this crucial next step in the process. It was a rehearsal period that can be described as, in equal measures, arduous, frustrating, thrilling, mad, exhausting and exhilarating; a period that would challenge all participants to look critically at themselves and each other through layered readings and misreadings, confrontations, alliances and self-discoveries. It was a period during which sixteen or more people could interact on any given day and walk away with sixteen or more completely different – and often incompatible – impressions.

In Adelaide, the national-cultural framework had dictated artistic choices largely because the Japanese cast were not present. In fact, their absence heightened the sense of national-cultural difference during the workshopping phase because, without real living, breathing, thinking, challenging people to assert individual points of view and subvert national-cultural expectations, stereotype was all the Australian team had to build from. In Japan, there *were* real living, breathing, thinking, challenging people and they were globally conscious, generationally aware and intent on forging connections beyond the national stereotypes that had defined the framework of the production and had, in their absence, defined them. Subverting the national-cultural assumptions was the starting point for the relationships that followed.

As described in Chapter One, I had first travelled to Naha City and Tokyo in 2006. This research visit enabled me to speak with the Japanese producer, Hisashi Shimoyama, and staff, and to immerse myself in Japanese national culture. The encounters in 2006 optimised the concept of ‘Otherness’; not even the producer escaped a fearful characterisation. Navigating Tokyo proved even more difficult. Culture shock and ‘Otherness’ were the reoccurring themes of the journey, culminating in awkward cross-cultural encounters at that dreaded bath house. The adventure of 2006, therefore, set up ‘Otherness’ not only as an academic construct, but as a lived experience. Encounters with Japanese the same age as myself were limited and formalised on this occasion, as they involved either translators performing duties or actors talking via interpreters. The absence of peers in a social context, in tandem with the fact that it was my first solo trip outside of Australia, fostered a deep sense of cultural alienation. My diary describes Japan and its people warmly, but one can definitely perceive in it an encounter with the ‘Exotic Other’.

My second *Writer's Diary* (2008) was written as we began rehearsal and reflects my excitement upon returning to Japan. After fainting on the plane I was set to repeat the same bumbling behaviour, but this time – crucially – I was in the company of peers. In many ways, what I share in this chapter is a period of transformation, of gradually putting the national-cultural lens to one side. It would be disingenuous to claim that I was not, by this point in the process, aware of a strong generational component to the work, nor feeling a sense of generational difference and tension. However, it would also be misleading to claim that I had fully embraced a generational-cultural perspective as a sociological and anthropological phenomenon, or even as a valid lens through which to view this intercultural experience as researcher. I had experienced the raw frustration of being a writer with a generational stake in the production and, yet, I had not fully appreciated that generational differences comprised a much wider issue, affecting the behaviour and motivating the choices of many concerned. It would be most accurate, therefore, to see this chapter as the point in which I, as both writer and researcher, departed from the national 'where' and, through observing and analysing the day-to-day behaviour and social interactions of my peers, slowly accepted and adopted the generational 'when'. I have chosen to present this account chronologically to chart the journey and capture the change in perspective as it evolved.

The director, musical director and I arrived in Naha City a day ahead of the cast and met with Japanese assistant director Momoko Iwaki for a meal in town. My observations in the *Writer's Diary* (2008) state, 'Naha City was as bright and busy as I remembered it. Lots of colour, lots of tourists and a very big Mickey Mouse winking

at me from a shop window', revealing my transformation into the wide-eyed tourist once again.

The Australian cast were booked into the apartment block the next day and by the evening had been joined by Mai Kakimoto, who flew from Tokyo to play lead character Nozomi. My reading of this first encounter fell back on existing paradigms of gendered 'East/West' relations:

The Australian boys flocked around Mai, introducing themselves and shouting excitedly in their attempts at Japanese. Mai handled it well. Only afterwards did Ken tell me it was the first time Mai has ever met a group of 'Westerners'. We haven't given her a Japanese copy of the script yet. Ken's still working on that. I wonder if she has any idea what she's in for ...? (Writer's Diary, 2008)

Mai confirmed this culture shock when interviewed a few days later:

On the first night I was invited out to dinner with the cast. I stepped outside and there was this bunch of foreigners. I had never really seen Westerners outside of TV. I didn't know what to say or how to behave. I was nervous and confused. People introduced themselves with their real names as well as their character names (from the play). I didn't know who was who or what to call everybody. But I was very happy and excited. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

The following morning I met with translator Ken Yamamura and bilingual Japanese choreographer Yumi Umiumare, at director Catherine Fitzgerald's request. We worked together to ensure the script read well across both languages. Now that I was back on Japanese soil, the issue of national-cultural difference was reasserting itself in my mind, particularly when the whole group met again for lunch:

We tried to use Catherine's translation book to communicate with Mai, but the book says useless things such as "Do you know the way to the shop?" Mai just looked bemused.' (Writer's Diary, 2008)

As the sun set, the ensemble travelled to a performance space where the rest of the Japanese cast and the Japanese drummer were introduced. Over dinner the cast was split arbitrarily; Japanese and Australians sat together. Convinced that this experiment was doomed to failure, and that the earlier generational-cultural research had been misleading, I was surprised when the national-cultural walls began to break down after only a few minutes. Actor Matthew Crook and musical director Tim Lucas had mastered some very basic Japanese, while Japanese performers Keiko Yamaguchi, who had studied in the United Kingdom, and Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, aka Hiro, had a strong grasp of English. But even at those tables where bilingual skills were low, individuals found ways to communicate through gesture, pop references and simple phrases:

Tim's Japanese is outstanding. He communicates with ease and through him I learnt that Mai received and read a Japanese copy of the script this morning. She is quite pleased to be playing the lead, and surprised I think.

As the drinks flowed on, I met another actor, Hiro, who is energetic and speaks a lot of English. At the urinal he proudly announced, “Alex, I am going to pee!” (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

At the first official reading, the Japanese artists clearly demonstrated an understanding of the text, not only its literal meaning but also the implication of genre, style and tone. Mai communicated her view that it was a darker piece initially with Nozomi and Tengu as traditional Japanese hero and villain, moving into modern horror and black comedy as Kelsey is introduced. Keiko understood the subversive nature of the piece with heroic monsters and a villainous fairy; everyone comprehended the basic narrative of a frightened child on a journey to conquer her fear. Shu suggested that Kelsey’s fear could stem from a fear of failure, a very Japanese perspective and an interesting twist.

Yumi raised the issue of which Japanese word to use to describe the ‘monsters’ and it grew into a debate with the Japanese. Which to use? One term appeared divisive, categorising monsters according to difference, and one inclusive. Yet one was Japanese and one was borrowed from the ‘West’. Much discussion was had and it was linked into the themes of the play itself. Perhaps more than anything, this discussion indicated the strong level of understanding within the group. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

At this point, early in the rehearsal process, the core strength of *Once Upon a Midnight* proved to be its youthful and adaptive cast. Actor Matthew Crook explains:

Mai, Hiro and Shu picked up our sense of humour and began to shut us down in the same way we teased each other. Over the next few days we all discussed things like family, boyfriends/girlfriends, pets, other countries we have been to, Australian culture, Japanese culture, Japanese food, Australian food and music. Discussing bands and artists we had in common continued for the whole trip. We all had a common interest in movies, or in Mai's case, musicals. So we bonded over that as well. (Matthew Crook, *Ryan*)

Actor Melissa Matheson adds:

It only took a day or two to break the ice with each other. I was very surprised because all of us were very nervous about the language barrier, and for someone like me who has never been good with other languages, and finds it an insult to speak another language badly, I found it quite overwhelming. We seemed to mingle quite easily without using words so much as drinking games or television, or quirky sign language. Actually, I found the generation gap became more dominant while working. (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

The crucial point of difference between the 2006 research visit and the 2008 rehearsal period was, indeed, generational. The global culture championed by Allen and Sakamoto, the pop cultural references and the shared place in history, had not been a strong factor in my impressions of Japan in 2006 because there had simply been nobody there to share them with, save for brief candid moments with Ishigaki



and Shoko in Okinawa. This time the cast were spending a long period of time together, developing generational connection and solidarity:

Ken hired a DVD of *Back to the Future*, which we watched together as a group. A strange but fun way to cross cultural boundaries. Actually, I think this is proving to be a smart way to cross the bridge. We find references – movies or sports – things we all hook into. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

With the cast having bonded so quickly, generationalism as a discourse came to the forefront of early rehearsals in the director's ocker portrayal of Australian culture:

“Fair suck of the sav” (*who the hell says that?*), “struth”, “f&\*king hell”, “f#%k you” et cetera. Many of the Australian actors dislike the way their culture is being portrayed. They are starting to get visibly annoyed. In private, they are making sure the Japanese cast knows that “not everyone speaks like that!” (Writer's Diary, 2008)

The director's stereotype of what it means to look, feel and sound Australian did not sit well with the young Australian ensemble. The implication that we all live in tents, shoot roos, drink beer with breakfast and say ‘g'day’ instead of ‘good morning’ was far removed from a group of twenty-something university students, predominantly from middle-class, suburban Adelaide. As part of the bonding process for the *Once Upon a Midnight* ensemble, the issue of cultural essentialism within national boundaries strengthened generational solidarity in the rehearsal room. Through their opposition to the stereotyping of their own culture, the Australian cast opened

discussion on the equally outdated and simplistic stereotyping of Japanese culture and behaviour, also far removed from the young Japanese in the room. Walking the streets of Ginza, it seems that Prada has killed the kimono. But this cultural shift is far from cosmetic. Where once the Japanese prided themselves on cultural exceptionalism, and built the metaphorical wall between 'East' and 'West' as staunchly as their 'Western' contemporaries, now it is the young Japanese who insist that such walls be brought down post-haste.

Although they remain mindful of respecting their elders, the emerging generation of Japanese are watching the world through different eyes. This is how Mai reflected on the issues at hand: 'Instead of deciding which group is 'weak' and which is 'strong', or focusing on what has happened in the past, the important thing is to look at ourselves and each other as we are now' (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*).

With the acknowledgement that the cultural 'where' was a changing space and with the nation-state mentality far from participants' minds, the 'when' became the point of connection. This may have been a group from two different countries, but the majority were children of the 1980s, reaching adolescence in the 1990s, sharing a history of pop culture and world events. The group was defined more by time than by place.

As part of the process, with the consent of all involved, I recorded interviews with each participant three times – during the first week of rehearsal, final week of rehearsal and our last week together after the production had completed its run. In her

first interview, choreographer Yumi Umiumare spoke about national culture and outlined her expectation of the process, based on previous experience:

Fundamentally, I think it is a great experience for individual actors to communicate and work with other cultures. It is very important for artists to feel those differences, and be in those unnatural and unusual situations. Sometimes cross-cultural can mean cross – a conflict. In the beginning, it can be very happy and respectful but then it becomes almost like a war. (Yumi Umiumare, choreographer)

In contrast, the cast reflected cultural difference primarily with regards to how it is construed, and often misconstrued, across generational barriers, summed up in the assertion that the ‘cultural clash’ of the production ‘has nothing to do with nationality.’ (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

These reflections demonstrate the strong, competing discourses emerging from the process. The choreographer expected the rehearsal room environment to be ‘almost like a war’ along national lines while the cast had already begun to dismiss national-cultural conflict in favour of a generational ‘cultural clash’. These perspectives leave little room for each other. Where some artists involved saw only national tension, others saw only generational tension.

Exploring the group dynamic through rehearsal in Japan quickly confirmed that the ‘where’ of national culture was only one of many cultural perspectives to consider. The ‘when’ of generational culture was an active and divisive force, the origin of as

much, if not more, conflict both inside and outside the rehearsal room. Unlike national culture, however, generational culture was never discussed during working hours. It was not long before individual participants were sizing up the room in search of like minds to approach afterhours. In his first interview, with typically wry humour, actor David Hirst captured competing national and generational perspectives, referring to the rehearsal process as a ‘battle’ complete with ‘alliances’ and ‘common enemies’. He never referred to a national divide, but instead reflected the differences in layered cultural perspectives, discourses and motivations that were being played out. The cultural clash was no longer restricted to the interplay between representatives of two distinct national cultures, the ‘war’ that Yumi referenced from experiences earlier in her career, but born of a more complex interplay between national-cultural perspectives, generational-cultural perspectives, competing agendas for the future, global identities, the changing faces of the two nations being represented and the reinterpretations of ‘taboo’ and ‘misappropriation’ in a cultural context:

The thing about this play for me is that it’s testing me as an actor. I’m not sure what style we’re doing, so I’m doing something and the director says ‘no, no, do this, do that.’ It’s like ‘I wanna do this in a way that suits the story and our audience, so how can I do this within the sort of style she wants?’ It’s very hard. There’s a gap there for some of us. I feel like there’s a battle in the room, sometimes. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t think we could have put a better bunch of people in one show, but you may be talking to a different man in a few days. I will warn you. (David Hirst, *Damon*)

This was a new kind of ‘battle’, beyond the national divide, with more than two distinct sides, where alliances were readily made across racial and gender barriers and where confusions and misreadings were an everyday occurrence. Consider the many ‘Others’ at work in a cast and creative team comprising Japanese, Okinawans and Australians, twenty-somethings, thirty-somethings and fifty-somethings, men and women, outspoken liberals and hardline conservatives, spiritualists and atheists, privileged and penniless, vegetarians and carnivores, those who live in their bodies and those who live in their heads, former goths and jazz fanatics and everything in between ...

And then ask them to represent their culture.

## **Language and Communication**

Language and communication were a source of anxiety from the project’s inception: one of the reasons that there were seventeen drafts of the script before the show had its first run. For many of the actors, performing in a different language with limited rehearsal time was a daunting challenge. As the multifaceted interactions in the rehearsal room became more complex, the bilingual cast members were asked to pull back from translating every off stage conversation and, eventually, chose not to translate at all unless specifically asked. The fact that they rarely were asked by the young artists in the room was further evidence of the ease of communication within the group and the relaxed, informal attitude with which the emerging participants approached one another. Throughout the rehearsal period there was a generational tension between the established participants, who insisted on a regimented ‘slower process’ of translation, and the emerging, who simply didn’t want every conversation

translated and had other communication tools at their disposal. Actor and translator Ken Yamamura was one of the first to advocate the latter perspective:

[The production is] not really cross-cultural if I translate it all. It's just literal, you get the meaning but there's no communication. I was tired so I thought, why don't I just let it go? Let them communicate. It actually worked and it was much better. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

Mai and Keiko offered to assist Ken, Yumi and Tim with translation of the song lyrics early in the process, which was a first step towards tackling the communication issue. Initially, both Mai and assistant director Momoko expressed frustration at what they both called 'the wall of language', but this wall had some holes, as Momoko acknowledged in an interview: 'Even though there is a wall of language, I feel a connection with everyone here. The personality comes through' (Momoko Iwaki, assistant director).

As an experiment, I asked the Japanese cast which Australian participants they felt spoke Japanese the best, prompting a candid response from Keiko: 'Matt and Tim speak Japanese well. Even Mel has tried some words. Even you. Catherine is definitely one of the worst (laughs)' (Keiko Yamaguchi, translator, *Zuru-Zuru*).

The consensus was that actors Matthew Crook and Michelle Pastor and musical director Tim Lucas had the definite edge. The worst were actor David Hirst, who rarely attempted a Japanese word off stage, myself constantly begging Ken for help (quickly becoming a running parody for Mai and Keiko) and the director, Catherine

Fitzgerald, who frequently mixed-up and mispronounced even the cast's names, to say nothing of the character names or any other instructions. When asked who they felt they knew or connected with most, however, the answers from the Japanese cast varied enormously and had no relation to bilingual competency, as Hiro made clear: 'Tim is the best Japanese speaker. The worst ... well, sorry Dave, sorry Catherine. But it doesn't matter. I am closest to Chris. I understand him' (Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*).

Hiro and Chris were indeed very close throughout the rehearsal period, comparing muscles, joking and sharing meals in the hotels afterhours. Keiichi Yonamine and David Hirst, two performers whose grasp of the other's language was (by their own admission) non-existent, shared lunch hours and used pop references, mime and humour to tell simple jokes and stories, with David inviting Keiichi to stay in his house when the production moved to Adelaide. Momoko and actor Lauren Henderson became inseparable early on and many friends remain in close contact despite having to occasionally resort to a bilingual dictionary. As Ken explained, 'They know you. Communication is more than just words' (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*).

Initially, veteran actor Tenchou, the senior cast member, used his mobile phone as a translation device, politely handing it over to ask questions and express his perspective. As time passed, and the participants grew more familiar with one another, the use of such tricks became less and less frequent, particularly in informal situations outside the rehearsal room. With Ken's help, Keiichi described the Australian participants in terms of colour, using this sign system to convey how each individual brought a unique personality element to the production. When asked about

the relationship between the key creatives, Mai didn't use any words at all but rolled her eyes and mimed a spectacular explosion. Some comments do not require translation.

Within formal rehearsal room discussions, communication remained regimented with choreographer Yumi Umiuare as the *de facto* translator for director Catherine Fitzgerald, and Keiko and Ken translating the cast responses. This is how Catherine described the experience:

You learn extreme patience. I say something, Yumi translates. They say something back, and I wait for translation. It's a slower process than I'm used to. (Catherine Fitzgerald, director)

The rehearsal room remained a formalised space throughout the production. Many participants simply saved their questions and insights for the monorail or dinnertime, when it wouldn't be a half hour routine. Ken's increasing reluctance to translate simple sentences or requests caused frustration for the director, who felt she could not be understood. At the same time, Ken was often dismissed by Mai and Shu, who preferred to muddle through and force the more reluctant participants – myself included – to do the same.

A crucial aspect to the difference between communicating within the rehearsal room and communicating outside of it was that the formal, clear language necessary in a rehearsal environment prevented the participants from using the pop culture shorthand they employed afterhours. As in 2006 when I was in formal situations, the rehearsal



room environment in 2008 discouraged participants from using their generational-cultural references to convey meaning; it was a working space that favoured a regimented system of translation, inhibiting the use of parody, mime, mimicry, song and specific movie and television references to convey more nuanced ideas. Outside rehearsal, karaoke bars proved useful. Song choices conveyed personality. Tenchou singing Eric Clapton's 'Tears in Heaven' led to a conversation about Clapton's child falling off a balcony. This common point of pop knowledge was shared with gestures and facial expressions, employing very few words. These kinds of connections became very common:

I can't always understand exactly what the young Australians are saying but it is easy to get an impression. I know what the conversation is about.

Communication is not based on the words, but on the feelings or sense of what they are saying. It is easier as I get to know them. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

I think the whole group has learned to communicate. Look at Dave and Kei.

They don't follow each other's language at all but they understand each other.

They have met in the middle. (Keiko Yamaguchi, translator, *Zuru-Zuru*)

On stage, language proved a big headache for Michelle Pastor, who played Angelica. As originally written, Angelica was going to speak in both Japanese and English as an echoing effect. The mixing team in Adelaide were eager to do this, but the issue of Angelica's dialogue was neglected until Japan, so Michelle was left with no choice but to learn all her lines in Japanese. Although Michelle proved up to the task, she expressed her frustration when interviewed:

I do have to learn a lot of Japanese. I think that it would have been nice to have had access to that before we came to Japan, but even then it hadn't been decided whether I was going to speak Japanese or not, so I really would have liked to have [been clearer] on that. Then I would have been responsible for the situation, rather than somebody else. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

Michelle nevertheless maintained her cool with help from Australian and Japanese peers. David Hirst and Chris Asimos, similarly, found many of their lines rewritten for a Japanese audience, although the more inept they were at speaking Japanese, the more the Japanese participants enjoyed it. Making fun of language, enjoying the challenge and the reaction from international peers became a game as time went on. For translator Ken Yamamura, this was its own kind of headache:

Sometimes we would have three people working on translation at once, and somehow you have to agree. A character might say "I'm finished". In Japanese we might have ... I dunno ... fifty ways to say "I'm finished". It depends on the character, on the age, which period or generation you lived in, or who we are performing to. When Catherine makes a change as director, it can often mean we have to change the whole script. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

In summary, the 'wall of language' was sturdy in the rehearsal room where communication was restricted to direct translation alone, leaving other forms of communication to be postponed until after rehearsal or else conducted furtively in

corners. Everyone learned ‘extreme patience’; especially the cast of emerging artists who knew that they could communicate perfectly well using generational-cultural referencing, and were doing so every evening after rehearsal. The rehearsal room environment placed national language at the forefront of communication in the pursuit of clarity when, as Ken expressed it so well, ‘communication is more than just words.’

## **Cross-generational Communication**

The emerging artists from Australia and Japan drew closer and more candid with each passing day. Their conversations were forthright and uninhibited. In all this, however, there was another level of miscommunication developing. The interpretation of the play was becoming more and more childish and simplistic, in contrast to the complex interactions outside the rehearsal room. David was instructed to paint a tie on his chest, rouge his lips and gel his hair back like Béla Lugosi to play Damon, far from a contemporary vampire, while Keiichi bravely accepted a frilly bonnet to play Baby Leiko, who now threw (horrifyingly realistic) faeces on stage. Meanwhile Scratch, the once fearsome werewolf, became a goofy sidekick, complete with pratfalls, velour pants and a complete change in motivation. He was written with the specific direction ‘seething, disgruntled and aloof.’ The new interpretation grated with the text, as he became more comic foil than menace and his motivation lost its clarity. The performer, Chris Asimos, had trouble putting it all together:

I kind of always saw Scratch as the lone wolf character who didn’t really listen to Tengu or anything like that and kinda wanted to do his own thing. At the

moment he seems kind of [silly]. Like at the beginning, just little things which I personally would wanna change but I'm not gonna go against the director's direction, because you don't do that. Like Scratch is all for bringing [Nozomi] back, and then he wants to kill her. It's just little things like that I wanna change, but I'm worried I might get in trouble. (Chris Asimos, *Scratch*)

It wasn't just Scratch who was lost in translation. The vultures became circus clowns with rainbow wigs. Instead of perching at Kelsey's window out of earshot, they stood behind her bed completely within her space, confusing the scene. Many in the cast expressed their confusion: who were these circus people? Why were they in bed with Kelsey? Why couldn't she hear them yelling?

The majority of the scene [has been] cut and replaced with physical action. This is a childish mime with Ryan spanking Kelsey and threatening to spit on her as the "vultures" give commentary. The tone is slipping further, now surely aimed at pre-teens.

Nozomi is brought on and remains more or less consistent with the text. Baby Leiko is played for broad comedy, with a lot of toilet humour added. We've just lost the pre-teens. (Writer's Notes, 2008)

At the time I had no explanation for these choices. They were bewildering. The generational gap had become so evident – and so vast – that interpreting, let alone empathising with, the director's vision was a challenge for the emerging artists. In many ways the slapstick was hindering comprehension, turning friendly banter

between a brother and sister into a violent beating and turning vultures leering in treetops to circus clowns playing pranks. Melissa Matheson sums up the cast's confusion:

It's not how I expected it to be. I'm coming from when the play was being written, knowing where it started. I have been really in love with the whole story. I mean, obviously you make up ideas of what it will be and they have to change, but I didn't think it would change this immensely. I think it's quite different. The sense of magic is gone. The script brought in the old and the new. It was the world of *Labyrinth* and *Legend*. It was our generation's fantasy world, combined with the world of *anime*. It seems like we've lost the shell of everything. (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

With each rehearsal 'the shell of everything' cracked further as the play lost touch with its generational-cultural influences. The director's comments reflected the generational tension from her cast, without acknowledging its legitimacy: 'There are a lot of challenges to connect with two different [national] cultures, especially with a new writer and such an inexperienced cast' (Catherine Fitzgerald, director).

The 'Otherness' of generational-cultural perspective was reduced to an uneven dynamic between the 'inexperienced' and the established. Consequently, the production's tone lightened well beyond the performers' expectations and the intended audience became another open question. Melissa Matheson had connected with the script and expected to see 'our generation's fantasy world' depicted on stage. In the absence of that world, the production was taking on a different flavour.

Michelle Pastor viewed the production as it unfolded in rehearsal and wondered what kind of audience the show was now intended for:

There is a serious story underneath and there is no reason why a teenager cannot appreciate that story. There's something in there that is important in people's lives [...] But this production is a little bit more on the entertainment value as opposed to getting a story across. There is that element there, the journey of not being afraid, but it's being shown, to me, in a way that is much more towards 12-year-olds as opposed to 16 and up. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

At this point in the analysis, it is important to reiterate that the reflections of the cast are slanted towards one generational-cultural perspective: they are emerging artists frustrated by a creative process that devalues their experience. Even so, it is evident in these reflections that the emerging artists are able to assert and articulate a sense of cultural identity and cultural agency in specifically generational terms, something markedly different to the hierarchical sense of 'experience' and 'inexperience' that our director, like many of the established artists observed during ASSITEJ, drew from.

My own diary account captured the way that the world of the Underground continued to develop in surprising and unintentionally comical ways. As rehearsal continued, I had to choke back laughter when faced with some new additions to the story:

Today I saw my first rice bubble zombie (or “walking condom” as some in the cast have said). All the zombies in the play are actors in plastic cleaning uniforms, hidden in hoods and marked with glow in the dark paint. They look ridiculous. (Writer’s Notes, 2008)

As playwright, I was torn between this sense of generational-cultural disconnection and wanting to put together a coherent performance, which meant endorsing the ‘official’ version of events: that this was a national-cultural encounter between Japan and Australia where everything else was secondary. Nevertheless, when the ‘Ghost Roads’ scenes were staged, I noted that ‘things are getting even weirder today’ and revisited Michelle Pastor’s view of the play as being steered toward ‘12-year-olds’, but even that reading did not adequately summarise the production in rehearsal:

Damon arrives and sings *Hot Red Sugar*. Here the childish nature of the earlier scenes is replaced by a deliberate sexual energy, with the director saying “I want this to feel like a gang rape!” We have the zombies stripping off to reveal the actors beneath, who dirty dance with each other and rub against Kelsey (a 14-year-old girl?) So, again, *who is this play directed for?*

The same kids who “enjoyed” the pantomime humour are now supposed to be watching this “gang rape” sequence? (Writer’s Notes, 2008)

Another gearshift occurred when Damon’s dialogue scenes were staged. Despite nuanced performances from David Hirst and Mai Kakimoto, the relationship between

Damon and Nozomi was curtailed even further from its softening in the Adelaide development period:

Early lines are cut, effectively killing the subplot of Nozomi and Damon as ex-lovers. This is due to time constraints and because the director feels her target audience (whoever they are) will not respond to a “mushy love story.” Damon is left without a story arc.

The scene is criticised for being too long. In actual fact it was two separate scenes, which were rewritten and placed together in the creative development at the request of the director, despite repeated objections. (Writer’s Notes, 2008)

Angelica, the Blue Fairy, then appeared in glittering ... black. Her costume was more Zsa Zsa Gabor than mythological antagonist. When the time finally came to work through her scenes, there was a little surprise sharing the stage: ‘Out of place here was Baby Leiko, written in as a “recurring gag” by the director and placed in the background of this and other scenes. What was he/she doing here? Why was he/she clapping?’ (Writer’s Notes, 2008)

It was difficult for the emerging artists to follow the director’s logic. On the one hand, the play was being brightened for a younger audience with Kelsey and Ryan played for broad comedy, the darker and more romantic interactions between Damon and Nozomi scaled down and Baby Leiko used for gags. On the other hand, Damon’s first entrance was as raunchy as possible, bordering on burlesque. Angelica, meanwhile,



did not seem to have any clear direction at all. It was difficult to discern who, or what, she was. The generational-cultural influences had translated between writer and cast, but were lost in rehearsal:

This play is foreign to me. I'm beginning to wonder if the show isn't going full circle, in the sense that my attempts to write away from the *status quo* – to embrace *manga* and *anime* and modern music, and to create a darker world with relevant themes in a style that moves away from the traditional theatrical and musical form – is now being re-packaged and re-directed into something fluffy and pantomime, and ultimately ... well ... as of today, it's as bland as all hell.

Some of the others – Lauren, Dave, Ken, Michelle, Mai, Shu, Hiro, Mel and Matthew, most vocally – share my sense of confusion. We're in *Wiggles* and Morris Gleitzman territory. We're not sure how we got here, but we need to accept it. (Writer's Dairy, 2008)

This ongoing process of transformation from page to stage and the emotional reactions it provoked highlight the extent to which a shared understanding can occur between creative artists from different nations who have Bharucha's 'historical space' in common. Here Japanese and Australian participants were united in their confusion. Youth culture had become 'kiddie culture' and many of us were taking this personally, feeling that something of our own cultural experience was being misappropriated during this process. This frustration was compounded by the fact that

the original intended audience was in the room; the cast were hoping to communicate with their peers:

The writing of the play comes really close to the way young people speak without the actor having to sacrifice some of themselves. I know that I personally talk like that to my friends. So, in that way, it's right on the pulse and it's so good it works on a subconscious level. It's a fairytale but actually there's a lot of messages and things going on and some will take that away and some will go "that's a crazy play!" (David Hirst, *Damon*)

The new intended audience appeared to be much less sophisticated, an audience of very young children for whom slapstick and pantomime gags were appropriate, but for whom vampires and werewolves would probably be too much, especially when the performers were encouraged to make certain scenes 'feel like a gang rape'. The cultural 'when' had been muddied. In the director's attempt to address what she saw as the 'shortcomings of the script', national-cultural communication had been highlighted while generational-cultural meaning had been misconstrued. Whereas during the developmental period in Adelaide, the justification had been to aid cross-national understanding (in the absence of Japanese participants), the rehearsal period in Japan confirmed that the emerging Japanese, in fact, understood the material as well as their Australian peers. The 'gap' in understanding was not national-cultural, but generational-cultural in nature: what this period exposed was a lack of synchronicity between theatrical work for young people steered by established artists and real youth market expectations. It was a dialogue that harkened back to the 2008

ASSITEJ forums, but now it was being held within and around the rehearsal space and across national and linguistic borders:

As a teenager I'd see things marketed toward youth culture and I would think "Oh, that's somebody thinking that they know what we're doing". I felt that way when I saw ASSITEJ advertised. Some of it might be amazing, I don't know, but it deters young people when they are talked down to. Teenagers are people too and they want to see something of top quality. They want to address the same conflicts and life stories. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

This perspective was central to my own intention as playwright, inspired in part by the ASSITEJ experience, and led to further conflict when the director insisted on using a twee rhyming tagline for the production: 'Will Kelsey Clarke conquer the night? Or will she die of fright?' (OzAsia Festival marketing material, 2008) Many in the cast felt this precious approach would deter a teenage audience and confuse the rest of the marketing campaign with its emphasis on *manga*, *anime* and the goth subculture. The generational-cultural gap overtook the national-cultural gap in the rehearsal room as the emerging Japanese shared the sense of confusion – steadily building into fears of misrepresentation – expressed by their Australian peers:

I saw Nozomi as a strong woman, strong and feminine. Why do I have to yell? Why am I so macho? It is all yelling, yelling, yelling. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

Catherine says something one day, and the next day ... different. Something strange. I sometimes feel she doesn't care what we say. (Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*)

The emerging artists from Japan understood what Melissa Matheson meant when she referred to 'our generation's fantasy world' because they shared that generational-cultural perspective. They agreed with Michelle Pastor when she said the production was developing 'in a way that is much more towards 12-year-olds as opposed to 16 and up' because they experienced that same sense of generational-cultural difference. The cultural issue that they and the emerging artists from Australia identified was not that the young audience would be 'confused by language', as the director insisted, but that they would be turned off by the juvenile aesthetic and the choice to 'concentrate on outside, not on heart' or 'dumb it down for kids', as Mai Kakimoto and David Hirst saw it, respectively.

For the established artists there were other key concerns: the relationship between Flinders University, the Kijimuna Festival and the OzAsia Festival was built on a different reading of events; a university pedagogy focused on national-cultural perspective, marketing teams actively promoting collaboration between Japan and Australia, political interests directly tied to festival funding and a tight timetable in which to produce an entertaining product. Taken in this context, the concerns of the emerging artists may appear trivial. However, by stepping back from the subjective emotional responses of all involved and applying the benefit of hindsight and considered reflection, it is nevertheless clear that something crucial was neglected in the rehearsal room. The play was conceived to invite young people into the OzAsia

Festival experience and to acknowledge some of the cross-generational tension expressed by young artists during the 2008 ASSITEJ forums, and yet in rehearsal that journey went full circle and slipped back into the ASSITEJ paradigm of ‘experienced/inexperienced’. Both Bharucha’s ‘historical space’ and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s ‘paradigm shift’ – two notions that engage with ‘global dynamics and emerging generational perspectives’ – offer possibilities for a more nuanced cultural exploration that could have facilitated a clearer and more cohesive creative outcome.

By charting the development of the story and production, as I have in Chapters One, Two and Three, we can begin to see that the conflict in the rehearsal room had its roots in deep cultural concerns. Cultural identity was at stake, expressed through national and generational difference and supported by an awareness that there was an audience of peers waiting to view this material and that those peers were expecting – and deserving – more than stereotype. The young Australians did not respond well to expressions like ‘fair suck of the sav’ because we did not want this outdated and kitsch view of our national culture to be (mis)represented to our Japanese peers. When the play wandered into ‘kiddie culture’, our reaction was equally fierce. This conflict of national and generational identity manifested as expressions of derision and frustration targeted chiefly at the director, producers, festival executives, university lecturers and other established partners, both Australian and Japanese. Yet again, by moving beyond the subjective and studying these events as a failure to communicate cross-generationally we can find something more constructive than Bharucha’s ‘dead-end’ or Varisco’s ‘unresolvable polemic of blame’. We can, in fact, acknowledge and build from Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s notion of a ‘paradigm shift’ to explore culture

in a complete sense, embracing generational-cultural perspective and the possibilities that this reading provides.

## **Physical Storytelling**

The relationship between text and physicality throughout the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* was a key focus in the rehearsal room. Gilbert and Lo (2002) highlight the trend in intercultural theatre towards favouring ‘visual spectacle’ over ‘linguistic innovation’. They attribute this to the overt politicisation of language, the notion that English gives ‘its native speakers considerable power to substantiate their views and/or secure their particular agendas’ (2002: 46). Another factor is the practitioners’ fear that their stories will not be understood or accepted internationally if they are not supported by a clear, bold, physical sign system.

With national culture identified by established participants as an area of concern, the strategy of staging the work became centred on limiting the amount of text and replacing it with clear physicality. Simply put, the established artists wanted fewer words and more external action, the fear being that much of the dialogue would confuse a Japanese audience and the play should instead be conveyed physically. The director was confident that she could facilitate this transition by removing any unnecessary (textual) ingredients:

Being an actor and a director, when working on other people’s plays, by the time you deconstruct them, pull them apart to work out what they mean and how they’re put together, you do understand structure, you do understand

dialogue, you do know when something's overwritten. (Catherine Fitzgerald, director)

Such limitations on language and emphasis on exaggerated physicality would push the production further towards a younger demographic, what the emerging artists called a 'kiddie audience', away from a more sophisticated high school audience. It became apparent to the emerging artists that highlighting physical action took away from the narrative journey, making it more a series of sight gags than a coherent play. Interpreting narrative across national-cultural boundaries did not register as a major difficulty for the emerging artists; it was their expectation that an international festival environment would include some language hurdles, but that the play would work if its tone and aesthetic appealed to the target demographic. Ultimately, cross-national linguistic understanding was never raised as an issue of concern by any critic or any audience member during the play's run. However, it did register as potentially disastrous for the established artists throughout the rehearsal period; they deemed the stripping away of language in dialogue and the increased emphasis on physical movement not only necessary, but vital. It could be argued that the lack of critical comment along national-cultural lines in the play's reception is proof of this strategy's success, but the emerging artists did not share the established artists' anxiety. To the young Japanese and Australian artists the 'problem' of national-cultural communication was exaggerated from the outset and should have been re-evaluated once they demonstrated their generational-cultural connections in and around rehearsal.

The creative and cultural restrictions that resulted from the established artists' preference for physical action were, on the other hand, a source of considerable anxiety for the emerging artists. The generational-cultural aspects of the script were missing from the production – the target audience and 'world' of the play were no longer clear. Indeed, the original intention of the work was lost as it became more difficult to empathise with Kelsey or to follow her journey. The cast and, subsequently, the young audience, wondered what lay buried beneath the slapstick. Hiro shared the following observations: 'The play is not as strong as it could be. [The story] is hidden' (Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*).

While Japan has a strong physical performance tradition, with *butoh* and *kabuki* as two well-known examples, telling a cross-national story for Japanese and Australian young people required more than a series of actions to depict character and event. It required a thematic connection using tone, nuance and – within the structure of a contemporary rock musical – voice and modern music. As the director acknowledged:

The written word is just one of the texts of the theatre. There's the actors' body as a text, there's the actors' voice as a text, there's the design as a text, there's the lighting as a text, there's the music as a text and then what the director does with spatial relationships. You can't get that live theatre interaction anywhere else. (Catherine Fitzgerald, director)

Focusing too much on physicality, therefore, can make a stage show too action packed, too cluttered – in short: too busy – for an audience to follow. The transformation of text into broad, cartoon-like action was not a strength of *Once Upon*



*a Midnight*, rather, it was a sign system imposed to ward off an expectation of national-cultural confusion. The established artists were afraid that we would not be understood textually and, in an overreaction, added layer after layer of movement, mime and gesture to convey narrative meaning. This in itself conflicted with the sign system already imbedded in the text, a subtler system tailored to a youth cultural aesthetic.

As the text's language was edited, debated, reconstructed and ultimately stripped away, physical action was laid on thick to compensate. The following is one of the early scenes in *Once Upon a Midnight* as it appeared in its tenth draft prior to rehearsals in Okinawa:

**EXCERPT ONE – *Once Upon a Midnight* - Kelsey and Ryan - Tenth Draft**

**KELSEY:**                    *(sniffs)* Allergies.

*Her rasps evolve into a worrying asthma attack. She withdraws her inhaler and desperately medicates herself.*

*It goes on for some time. During this, KOWASHIMASHOU and ZURU-ZURU, the vultures, carefully re-emerge at the window.*

**KELSEY:**                    S'ok ... I'm ... I'm good.

**ZURU-ZURU:**                *(Japanese)* She has a brother. This could be tricky.

*RYAN doesn't blink.*

**RYAN:** Everyone's waiting for you outside.

**KELSEY:** The sun's shining. I'm not going out there.

**RYAN:** Why not?

**KELSEY:** Cancer.

*RYAN sighs.*

**RYAN:** Man, I hate it when you do this. It's your birthday. Cakes. Balloons. Where's the bad?

**KELSEY:** It's irresponsible.

**RYAN:** What is?

*He starts miming flashier sword moves.*

**KELSEY:** Having my party outside. I don't know what Mum and Dad were thinking. And did you see the big knife that Aunt Doris was waving around?

**RYAN:** She just wants to cut the cake with you.

**KELSEY:** I could lose a finger!

*His plastic katana meets her throat. She squeals.*

**RYAN:** Please don't carry on.

*He grabs her into a playful headlock.*

**KELSEY:**           What about Uncle Gary?

*She slaps him away.*

**RYAN:**            What about Uncle Gary?

**KELSEY:**           In the kitchen?

**RYAN:**            So?

**KELSEY:**           Barefoot?

**RYAN:**            OK ...?

**KELSEY:**           Unsanitary!

**RYAN:**            Geez, it's no big ...!

**KELSEY:**           It's big!

*Beat.*

**RYAN:**            I'm sure he bathes.

**KELSEY:**           His feet are hairy ...

**RYAN:**            I'm not listening.

**KELSEY:** ... and wrinkly.

**RYAN:** He's a very old man! All his stuff is wrinkly!

**KELSEY:** You're not grasping how serious this is!

**RYAN:** You're right, I'm really not.

**KELSEY:** I have made a mental list of just how many germs, fungi and bacteria he could be carrying in ...

**RYAN:** Great. That's productive. Kelsey, the whole family is waiting!

**KESLEY:** All of them?

*She begins choking for air once more. At the window, KOWASHIMASHOU looks doubtful.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (Japanese) I don't think Kelsey is going to survive. We should find another one.

**RYAN:** You're wheezing again.

**KELSEY:** I'm distressed!

*She sucks on her inhaler.*

When the play was rehearsed in Japan, the scene underwent a significant transformation. The dialogue between Kelsey and Ryan was stripped away as it was almost entirely in English. Dramaturgically, it was suggested that the vultures watching from the window be given Japanese dialogue commenting on the scene to explain to the Japanese audience what Kelsey and Ryan were discussing. Directorially, it was decided that the vultures should be included more in the scene and be given physical action to entertain the audience. Likewise, Kelsey and Ryan were given physical action to illustrate their intentions.

**EXCERPT TWO – *Once Upon a Midnight* - Kelsey and Ryan - Performance Draft**

**KELSEY:**       *(sniffs)* Allergies.

*Her rasps evolve into a worrying asthma attack. She withdraws her inhaler and desperately medicates herself.*

*It goes on for some time. During this, KOWASHIMASHOU and ZURU-ZURU, the vultures, pop up from behind her bed.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** *(Japanese)* This can't be the right nest! Check the map!

*The VULTURES scuffle.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** *(Japanese)* There were balloons outside! Kelsey is the one!

~~**KELSEY:**       S'ok ... I'm ... I'm good.~~

**ZURU-ZURU:** (Japanese) But, she has a brother. This could be tricky.

*RYAN doesn't blink.*

**RYAN:** ~~Man,~~ I hate it when you do this. It's your birthday. ~~Cakes. Balloons. Where's the bad?~~

**KELSEY:** It's irresponsible.

**RYAN:** What is?

*He starts miming flashier sword moves, chasing her around the stage. The vultures point and giggle.*

~~**KELSEY:** Having my party outside. I don't know what Mum and Dad were thinking. And did you see the big knife that Aunt Doris was waving around?~~

**RYAN:** She just wants to cut the cake with you.

~~**KELSEY:** I could lose a finger!~~

*His plastic katana meets her throat. She squeals.*

**RYAN:** Please don't carry on.

*He grabs her into a playful headlock. She chokes and gasps.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (Japanese) He's going to choke her!

**ZURU-ZURU:** (Japanese) I would choke her if she were my sister!

**KELSEY:** What about Uncle Gary?

*She slaps him away.*

**RYAN:** What about Uncle Gary?

**KELSEY:** In the kitchen?

**RYAN:** So?

**KELSEY:** Barefoot?

**RYAN:** OK ...?

**KELSEY:** Unsanitary!

**RYAN:** Geez, it's no big ...!

**KELSEY:** It's big!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (Japanese) Stab her then! (to ZURU-ZURU) If only that katana were not made of plastic.

*RYAN chases KELSEY around and around. She struggles to get away. He grabs her by the leg, pulls her towards him and spanks her bottom.*

**RYAN:** ~~I'm sure he bathes.~~

~~KELSEY: His feet are hairy ...~~

~~RYAN: I'm not listening.~~

~~KELSEY: ... and wrinkly.~~

~~RYAN: He's a very old man! All his stuff is wrinkly!~~

KELSEY: I have made a mental list of just how many germs,  
fungi and bacteria he could be carrying in ...

ZURU-ZURU: (Japanese) She says she's made a mental list of all  
her relatives' tropical and infectious diseases.

KOWASHIMASHOU: (Japanese) Is that what human children do to  
pass the time? Doesn't she have any friends?

~~RYAN: Great. That's productive. Kelsey, the whole family  
is waiting!~~

~~KESLEY: All of them?~~

*KELSEY wriggles away from RYAN. She begins choking for air once  
more. He holds her inhaler in his hand, taunting her.*

*KOWASHIMASHOU looks doubtful.*

KOWASHIMASHOU: (Japanese) I don't think Kelsey is going to  
survive. We should find another one.



*HIYOKKO, another vulture, pops up behind them, smiling. He wears a party hat and blows a little whistle/party blower.*

**HIYOKKO:** (Japanese) Did I miss anything? There's cake downstairs.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (Japanese) Ooh, cake!

*ZURU-ZURU slaps the blower out of HIYOKKO's mouth. He slaps ZURU-ZURU. She slaps KOWASHIMASHOU. The vultures scuffle as RYAN chases KELSEY around the stage.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** (Japanese) The child is defective!

*They watch KELSEY. HIYOKKO blows up a balloon. ZURU-ZURU pops it.*

**RYAN:** You're wheezing again.

**KELSEY:** I'm distressed!

*She pulls her inhaler out of RYAN's hand and sucks on it.*

The tenth draft depicts Kelsey and Ryan in their bedroom with two vultures whispering at the window. The scene establishes Kelsey as the most frightened child in the world, contrasts her with her fearless brother Ryan and sets up the narrative as the monstrous spies take stock of them both. In contrast, the performance draft depicts Kelsey and Ryan in a physical confrontation: Ryan chokes and spansks his little sister as the vultures (now dressed as clowns) sit around Kelsey's bed performing slapstick

antics separate to the narrative. Despite their party poppers and balloons, these characters remain unseen and unheard by the two teenagers; yet, they are literally a few feet behind Kelsey. Although there is more Japanese dialogue in this draft to aid cross-national understanding, the scene on the whole is largely reduced to action and difficult to follow. For the audience, this scene signifies that Kelsey and Ryan are enemies or that Ryan may be beating or molesting this little girl. The three clowns, far from monstrous, are sitting near Kelsey's bed providing commentary and playing games. What is the narrative here? What is the play about? It is unlikely that the audience would interpret this scene in accordance with the original narrative intention, that of a frightened Kelsey, playful brother Ryan and spooky vultures spying through the window. Instead, they are likely to interpret the scene as two separate events: on one side of the stage, there is a boy beating his sister and, on the other, there is a trio of clowns making jokes and having a party.

Later in the play, Kelsey crosses paths with vampire Damon, Nozomi's ex-lover. This scene was also rewritten many times.

### **EXCERPT THREE – *Once Upon a Midnight* - Damon and Nozomi – Tenth Draft**

*DAMON's pad.*

*Coffins are laid out, surrounded by old records and piles of clothing. It's a young vampire's bachelor pad.*

*DAMON, KELSEY, SHIMA and NOZOMI walk in. DAMON is carrying a lantern.*

**DAMON:** Well, these are my digs.

**KELSEY:** Um ... very nice.

**DAMON:** Ta very much.

*He smiles a fang-y smile.*

**DAMON:** Kelsey, you can have the spare bed.

**KELSEY:** Bed meaning ...?

**DAMON:** Meaning coffin.

**KELSEY:** Right.

*She forces a smile. DAMON sidles up to NOZOMI.*

**DAMON:** Do you miss this place?

*There's that glare again.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Can't you do your own laundry?

**DAMON:** Actually, I thought ... since you're back ...

*NOZOMI presses the crucifix against his cheek. He yelps as it burns him.*

**KELSEY:** You two really used to date?

**DAMON:** Yeah, we had a thing.

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) We had a thing?

**DAMON:** We ... were hot.

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) We were hot?

**DAMON:** Fine! What do you want me to say?

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Say nothing further.

*Long beat. He smiles at her.*

**SHIMA:** (Japanese) I will take first watch.

**DAMON:** You're safe here.

**KELSEY:** Safe? With you?

**DAMON:** Sure!

*NOZOMI narrows her eyes.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) If you can't handle the temptation ...

**DAMON:** You mean Kelsey? Oh come on, like I'd ...

*He clocks her expression.*

**DAMON:** ... I'd only drink a pint, at the very most.

That's nothing. That's a trip to the doctor.

**NOZOMI:** You promised me you'd changed.

**DAMON:** I have. Really.

*Beat.*

**DAMON:** Truly.

*Another beat. KELSEY has moved to the back of the stage. DAMON watches her. He continues to plead his case.*

**DAMON:** That's like a greedy mosquito.

**NOZOMI:** Damon!

**DAMON:** Every creature has a right to live!

*She advances. He raises his hands.*

**SHIMA:** (Japanese) Old flames, those two. Be careful, Kelsey. Vampires are untrustworthy at best. Don't get too close to him.

*KELSEY cannot understand SHIMA's words, but his tone is clear. She takes a step back further as DAMON tries to reassure NOZOMI.*

**DAMON:** I'll behave. I have to. It's not like there's even a choice. Angelica says ...

**NOZOMI:** Ssh!

*He lowers his voice to a whisper. She grabs him by the collar.  
Their lips are close to touching.*

**DAMON:** The rules are clear, that's all I'm saying.

*Beat.*

**DAMON:** And do we have rules?

*NOZOMI stares at him for a long time. He draws closer to her.  
She turns her head away.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Shima, keep alert. We will take it in  
turns.

*She points to the nearest coffin.*

**NOZOMI:** (English) You ... in there.

*DAMON lies down, smiling.*

**DAMON:** There's room in here for two.

*She slams the lid shut.*

**DAMON:** (from inside) Aww, come on!

*NOZOMI sees KELSEY grinning.*

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Wipe that smile from your face.

This scene establishes the romantic relationship between Damon and Nozomi and Damon's justification for why it *might* be socially acceptable for him to take a nibble out of Kelsey's neck. This aspect of Damon's character, his shift from friend to threat and back again, is reduced in the following:

**EXCERPT FOUR – *Once Upon a Midnight* - Damon and Nozomi - Performance Draft**

*Damon's House. Lights stage right.*

~~*Coffins are laid out, surrounded by old records and piles of clothing. It's a young vampire's bachelor pad.*~~

~~*DAMON, KELSEY, SHIMA and NOZOMI walk in. DAMON is carrying a lantern.*~~

~~**DAMON:** Well, these are my digs.~~

~~**KELSEY:** Um ... very nice.~~

~~**DAMON:** Ta very much.~~

~~**SHIMA:** (Japanese) This vampire isn't much of a housekeeper is he?~~

*DAMON smiles a fang-y smile.*

**DAMON:** Kelsey, you can have the spare bed.

*KELSEY looks down ~~at an open coffin.~~*

**KELSEY:** Right.

*She forces a smile.*

~~SHIMA looks to NOZOMI.~~

~~**SHIMA:** (Japanese) He really used to be your boyfriend?~~

~~NOZOMI looks away.~~

~~**SHIMA:** (Japanese) He he, don't be shy!~~

~~**DAMON:** Oh, go on, tell Shima about all the good times we shared here. (Japanese) She's a wild one!~~

~~SHIMA grins. NOZOMI hits DAMON.~~

~~**KELSEY:** You two really used to date?~~

~~**DAMON:** Oww! Yeah, we had a fling.~~

~~**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) We had a "fling?"~~

~~**DAMON:** We ... were hot.~~

~~**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) We were "Hot?"~~



~~DAMON: Fine! What do you want me to say?~~

~~NOZOMI: (Japanese) Say nothing further!~~

~~SHIMA: (Japanese) Old flames, those two. Be careful,  
Kelsey. Vampires are untrustworthy at best. Don't  
get too close to him.~~

~~KELSEY: Oh, like I am going to get too close to him.~~

~~SHIMA: (Japanese) I will take first watch.~~

DAMON: You're safe here.

*NOZOMI clears her throat. DAMON pauses.*

KELSEY: Safe? With you?

DAMON: Sure!

*NOZOMI takes DAMON's ear and pulls him downstage. He squeals.*

~~NOZOMI: (Japanese) If you can't handle the temptation ...~~

DAMON: You mean Kelsey? Oh come on, like I'd ...

*She raises her fist to strike him.*

DAMON: ... I'd only drink a pint, at the very most.

~~That's nothing. That's a trip to the doctor.~~

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) You promised me you'd changed. That you were a vegetarian now.

**DAMON:** I have changed. Really. I am a vegetarian.

~~**NOZOMI:** (Japanese, smiling a little) You've never known how to behave yourself.~~

**DAMON:** I'll behave. I have to. It's not like there's even a choice. Angelica says ...

~~**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Lower your voice, someone will hear.~~

~~He lowers his voice to a whisper.~~

~~NOZOMI slaps her hand over DAMON's mouth shakes DAMON.~~

~~DAMON: The rules are clear, that's all I'm saying.~~

*A bottle of blood rolls out from his coat.*

**DAMON:** Ah.

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) And what's this supposed to be? Tomato juice?

**DAMON:** Strictly for emergency use only. Rationing, just in case ...

*She produces a crucifix and sears his chest. He screams in agony. Lights flash.*

**NOZOMI:** Liar!

**DAMON:** Owwwwwww! Stop, please!

~~**SHIMA:** (Japanese) Wow. Their relationship really is hot!~~

**DAMON:** OK. So I broke the rule.

~~She grabs him by the collar. Their lips are close to touching.~~

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) You should know better than to break the rules.

**DAMON:** And do we have rules?

~~NOZOMI stares at him for a long time.~~

**NOZOMI:** (Japanese) Shima, keep alert. We will take the watch in turns.

~~She points to the nearest coffin open lid.~~

**NOZOMI:** (English) You ... in there.

*DAMON lies down, smiling.*

**DAMON:** There's room in here for two.

*She slams the lid shut, hurting him.*

**DAMON:** (from inside) Ouch! Aww, come on!

*NOZOMI sees KELSEY grinning.*

**NOZOMI:** ~~(Japanese) Wipe that smile from your face.~~

Damon and Nozomi fared much better in the transformative process than Kelsey and Ryan. Nevertheless, the tenth draft depicts a clearer scene change than the later draft. Damon's vampire pad is established. The sexual tension between Damon and Nozomi is also present and palpable through their exchange. These are ex-lovers reunited, hiding their feelings from one another as best they can. The tone is darker, geared for a young, contemporary audience. The performance draft is nebulous in terms of setting: there are no props or set pieces to indicate Damon's space, an open lid implies a coffin but it is difficult to discern. Nozomi's relationship with Damon is less defined and more platonic: they seem to know and distrust each other, and Damon flirts towards the end, but there is no tension there, no sense of history. Damon now has a bottle of blood, a physical symbol, which works well, but Nozomi's burning of Damon with a crucifix is less subtle and playful than in the earlier version; it becomes a major point in the scene, another exaggerated cartoon action. This considerably nastier crucifix burning seems to signify a real animosity between the two, along with her pulling his ear and hitting and shaking him at various points before finally slamming the lid on him.

This scene in performance is comprehensible, unlike Kelsey's conversation with Ryan, but in comparison to early readings, it feels rushed, shallow, mean and less

clear than the original. Many subtle actions that would have aided cross-national understanding, such as those conveying a sense of physical closeness between Damon and Nozomi, were cut from the scene and discarded in favour of more slapstick violence. If the scene between Kelsey and Ryan is an example of physical action obscuring narrative, then this scene is an example of physical action detracting or distracting from narrative. Chris Asimos made the following astute observations:

I think the interpretation is a bit different. One scene in particular is when Mai pushes the crucifix against Dave's chest and she yells out "liar!" In Japanese she yells it out, but when we workshopped it, it was kind of a sexual kind of line, it was meant to have more of an S & M feel, but [now] it's really violent and aggressive. It's little moments like that. (Chris Asimos, *Scratch*)

There were further questions and 'little moments': where was the distinction between Kelsey's normal suburban bedroom and the magic and mystery of the Underground? Where was the clarity of the journey from one setting to the next? Who were all these strange, externalised, manic characters coming and going and what relationship did they all have to the plot? Why was there a man dressed as a baby girl wandering through so many scenes vomiting and defecating everywhere? Why were Kelsey and Ryan constantly attacking each other? Who were the condom-people and why were they so scary? All of these questions begged answers, as Lauren Henderson highlighted: 'I'm confused in every scene we do. We're all confused' (Lauren Henderson, *Kelsey Clarke*).

With the benefit and rationality of hindsight, characters speaking a foreign language calmly and directly may have been easier to follow than all of the jumping,

screaming, pratfalls and bizarre dancing that went on from one scene to the next.

Generally the number of drafts is a good indication of how smoothly a new work has taken shape. By opening night we had reached our seventeenth complete draft, later cut into 17A and 17B, the result of repeated reworking on the floor right up until the evening of the dress rehearsal, when further cuts and rewrites were made. We had all lost our compass and it was impossible to know if the show was getting better or worse through this ‘development’, although many of us voiced the belief that it had become a whole lot worse.

Upon further reflection, the story had been stretched and prodded as far as it could take by the tenth draft and that was well before the team left Adelaide. None of the key creatives knew how to strike equilibrium between spoken word and physical action in a Japanese-Australian fantasy rock musical production for young people, and there was little precedent for any of us to build upon. Whether it was the clownish antics of Kelsey and Ryan roughhousing in their bedroom, the almost fairground-style pantomime interludes of Baby Leiko playing games with the not-quite-vultures, the fake faeces, the milk spat onto the front row, the slow motion, the gyrating, the crimping, the falls, the rolls, the tumbles or the crazy hand movements to illustrate each spoken line, physical action was pumped up again and again: ‘It’s pretty flashy now. It’s pretty crazy,’ David Hirst (*Damon*) observed incredulously.

Physicality and ‘visual spectacle’ had overpowered ‘linguistic innovation’ in this instance. In dance and physical theatre, this would, of course, be the norm, but in

contemporary musical theatre, physical expression is one of many ways to convey narrative. Intercultural performance cannot stand on physicality alone; this is why Tenchou (*Yoshiki the tengu*) expressed regret: ‘I feel very sorry that we have lost the story.’

In his work Bharucha predicts a ‘dead-end’ for the intercultural movement in theatre due to a lack of cultural reciprocity on and around the stage. It is my contention that the movement encounters a more immediate and pragmatic block when narrative is overshadowed by spectacle. For two national cultures to connect in performance, they need to be able to identify and access narrative and theme. Basic comprehension is important, but narrative unity also matters in a play. With the addition of so much extraneous physicality, *Once Upon a Midnight* lost its narrative coherence. We should have trusted our audience. Theatre must always aim for more than cheap spectacle, an opinion shared also by Yasushi Ohsuka (drummer), who insisted that: ‘[Production elements] should all relate back to the script, the story. That is why we are here together.’

## **Shared Narratives, National Bodies**

It was a guiding principle during the conception of *Once Upon a Midnight* that an underrated value of intercultural performance lies in the construction of shared intercultural narratives. The global pop culture of *manga* and *anime* and ‘Western’ writers experimenting and collaborating with these art forms demonstrates that cultures can find common ground through shared narratives, particularly in speculative fiction. Characters and themes can transcend national boundaries. This is what attracted the emerging artists to intercultural production in the first place and

what the research phase demonstrated so well. Young people from around the world are sharing fantasy narratives: *Labyrinth* and *The Dark Crystal* have been embraced by young Japanese audiences and transformed into popular *manga*, while *Pokémon* and *Astroboy* are just as iconic in the ‘West’ as they are in the ‘East’. It is recognition of common human concerns, reciprocation of common human needs, a combination of characters from different national cultures working as a team to solve common problems in settings which incorporate aspects of different national-cultural environments, that can come together to maximise the potential for shared understanding through storytelling. This idea, embraced by Kijimuna Festival producer Hisashi Shimoyama over tea in 2006, provided the core intention of *Once Upon a Midnight*. However, the potential of modern intercultural myths can be eclipsed by the immediate and, once again, overemphasised concern for making a particular production or a particular scene totally clear across two or more languages.

The relationship between text and action is, of course, a primary consideration for almost every performance for the stage. When working between national-cultures, physical expression can convey meaning when words fail, so the relationship between word and action is pulled into sharper focus. Mai Kakimoto asserted that ‘during a scene, I cannot focus on the words the Australian actors are saying. I focus on the emotion they are giving me’ (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*).

At the same time, the story itself can be lost by forced attempts to make the narrative clearer through physical action. What in fact happened through this development process was a sensory assault, an excess of movement, mime and gross-out gags which, coupled with a lack of clear sign system through costume and design, made the



story less comprehensible the more we tried to clarify each scene. Examples abound: Ryan's brotherly banter with Kelsey was deemed too difficult to understand cross-nationally so, instead, he ran into her bedroom to beat her to a pulp; there was still concern that the audience would find the siblings' interactions unclear, and therefore 'boring', so the clowns that had replaced the vultures appeared at the bedroom window to play games with balloons, for no reason, while panto music accompanied them, just so people had something to watch instead of the play; condoms wandered on and off stage at various moments; and Hiro, originally cast as a *kappa*, a traditional Japanese monster resembling a turtle, appeared on stage in a military uniform to sing a song about monkeys. Audiences were understandably confused, as were many of the actors: 'I do not understand this [production] anymore. We have lost the story. Am I a monster or a soldier now?' (Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*)

Using *Once Upon a Midnight* as a case study, the lesson learned is that precision, choice of action, choice of action placement in relation to the text and, wherever possible, using movement sparingly and exactly, is preferable to broader, rougher, cartoon strokes. *Once Upon a Midnight* was ultimately a lot harder to follow as a result of this strategy to emphasise physicality over narrative, text, theme and characterisation. Nevertheless, as a narrative journey *Once Upon a Midnight* had one notable aspect that lent itself to explorations in extreme and fantastic physicality:

This show was about monsters!

Japanese choreographer Yumi Umiuare delighted in contorting the cast into weird and fierce shapes.



*Monsters in training!*

*From left: Tenchou, Mai Kakimoto, Shusaku Uchida, David Hirst, Keiko Yamaguchi, Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, Yasushi Ohsuka, Michelle Pastor, Melissa Matheson, Keiichi Yonamine, Lauren Henderson, Matthew Crook, Chris Asimos and Ken Yamamura*

Yumi transformed Flinders Drama Centre students into zombies by telling them they had goldfish living in their knee and elbow joints or giving them vulture wings, or eyeballs on their fingertips. In Japan, Yumi invited Mai to cut down the rest of the cast with a paper sword. Inventively grotesque, Yumi's influence was one of the highlights of the rehearsal period and one of the more promising aspects of the production. Due to time constraints, however, much of this potential monster development was left under-explored in performance, cut down in favour of the more 'kiddie-friendly' sequences, which were devised separately from Yumi's sessions. Nevertheless, Yumi's work stands as an example of how physicality complimented the production.



*Mai Kakimoto prepares to dismember the cast as drummer Yasushi Ohsuka looks on*  
*Photographer: Lauren Henderson*



*The cast stalks Leiko (Keiichi Yonamine)*

The relationship between physicality and language was a challenge for all and the balance was difficult to strike against the backdrop of competing national-cultural and generational-cultural agendas. This challenge was complicated by the narrative journey requiring an awareness of, appreciation for and immersion in a specific generational-cultural perspective and aesthetic: a cultural sign system that went beyond the national. The global pop references and allusions that had made the narrative easier for emerging artists to connect with at the early readings made it more difficult for established artists to follow in rehearsal. Narrowing the national-cultural gap had widened the generational-cultural gap. Comprehensibility was never simply a question of a national-cultural divide, although discussion in the rehearsal room never moved beyond this framework; it depended on a more complex relationship between national-cultural and generational-cultural understanding. Outside rehearsal, the sense of generational division deepened as participants worried what the original intended audience would make of this raucous and overly-physical slapstick production:

I wouldn't take a 5-year-old given some of the actions we've been encouraged to do, particularly in 'Hot Red Sugar'. Would you be comfortable with me taking your child to see that? For a 15-year-old, I'd say that it's too cartoonish, too childish. It's not the show as advertised. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

What is clear from this development period is that we lost the 'shell of everything' that Melissa Matheson described, and that, even if the story was now easier to follow for some in the group, it was not the story that others intended to share. Melissa Matheson elaborates:

It's something that we all have in common from our childhood, the fantasy and the monsters, and the magic. It's something that's in everyone's childhood, in some shape or form. That's what this show was. (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

Beyond physicality in relation to text and narrative, there is the wider issue of physicality connected to national culture and stereotyping, the differences often attributed to 'Eastern' and 'Western' bodies in a performance space. During the rehearsal of *Once Upon a Midnight*, these differences were noted and explored, although they could not be uniformly applied. Within the rehearsal room, performers shared physical and vocal warm-up techniques. The Japanese demonstrated their skill in crafting dynamic, physical characterisations, while the Australians demonstrated a textual approach, working analytically through a dissection of the text, creating their characters from the inside out. Lauren Henderson, charged with the task of embodying graceless teenager Kelsey Clarke, describes the contrast:

In Australia, our idea of personal space is considerably different to that of the Japanese. This is an interesting notion when considering the structure and function of the Western body, in comparison to the Eastern body. In Australia, we are spatially expansive whereas in Japan, they are spatially contained. The Japanese body is contained, neat, precise and incredibly adaptable, whereas the Western body is loose, free-flowing and sometimes awkward. (Lauren Henderson, *Kelsey Clarke*)

These observations may be valid from a national-cultural perspective, but they become complicated in this context because, as Gupta and Ferguson assert, an

... assumed isomorphism of space, place, and culture results in some significant problems ...[such as] ... the issue of those who inhabit the border [of national boundaries and] those who live a life of border crossings – migrant workers, nomads, and members of the transnational business and professional elite. (1992:7)

The issue of what constitutes a ‘Western body’ or an ‘Eastern body’ becomes unclear. Focusing on national-cultural observations in relation to the body of performers exposed the fact that ‘cultures have lost their moorings in definite places’ (1992: 7) and widened the conversation to embrace new cultural identities. Consider the labels of ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ bodies in the context of the play itself. The difference in physicality was specific to each character and firmly embedded in the text: as Nozomi, Mai Kakimoto was playing a warrior and a doll, a character that required a high degree of physical skill in order to totally freeze on stage for extended periods and perform convincing sword manoeuvres when angered; as Kelsey, Lauren was required to be awkward, clumsy and comic. Mai’s regime of training every night and even jogging on the spot between scenes was noted by many cast members for its example of discipline and control. However, if the roles were reversed, and she were required to be ungainly, then comparisons between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ bodies would not have been so straightforward. If one were to take muscle-bound Chris Asimos as an Australian example and laidback Shu Uchida as a Japanese example, the cultural observations would be upturned. Chris began every day with a seemingly

never-ending series of push ups as Shu kicked off each rehearsal with a coffee, a chat and a cigarette.

There were many dislocated or ‘border crossing’ bodies in the room, such as those, like Ken and Yumi, who live and work in both Japan and Australia, as well as the many participants who embody cultural identities beyond this ‘Japan/Australia’ divide; the Okinawans certainly asserted a cultural identity separate to the mainland Japanese. When focusing on the body, and attempting to categorise these performers accordingly, the fissures in a rigidly national-cultural discourse become clear. As a generalisation, the Japanese were more grounded, their feet planted strongly and only moving when they chose. The Australians tended to be random, less aware of their own feet. Such generalisations – much like many of the generalisations that underpin national-cultural discourse – ignore the transient nature of contemporary culture, of the breakdown of ‘space’ and ‘place’ Gupta and Ferguson describe. In short: theorising the cultural body in performance feels too prescriptive when describing individuals. When considering physicality, the challenge is to incorporate the bodies of the individual performers without falling into predetermined notions or patterns of national-cultural aptness or weakness. As Mai Kakimoto made clear, ‘it is about the individual’.

In terms of what physicality signifies in a wider cultural sense, bodies in a performance space are viewed subjectively by individual audience members and – although movement and gesture *can* have culturally-specific meaning – the interpretation of ‘that body’ in ‘that space’ is filtered and rearranged through an individual audience member’s biases and perceptions. As these bodies move beyond

national borders and lose their 'moorings in definite places' it becomes less about what they signify, in and of themselves, and more about what their audience perceives. Susan Bennett gives due attention to the cultural dimension of audience reception when she states: 'Whatever the nature of the performance, it is clear that established cultural markers are important in pre-activating a certain anticipation, a horizon of expectations, in the audience drawn to any particular event' (Bennett, 1990: 114). If this reception theory applies to audience members' individual expectations and perspectives, then it is equally applicable to the cast dynamic. The 'certain anticipation' was unique to each individual in the cast and creative team of *Once Upon a Midnight*. Accordingly, there was a correlation between an anticipation of difference and an experience of difference, as well as a correlation between an anticipation of connection and an experience of connection. Those who expected to encounter national-cultural difference did so, while those who expected to encounter peers made close generation-cultural connections.

For the younger cast members, in particular those in their early twenties, the idea that they would have real trouble communicating beyond initial nerves and superficial linguistic hurdles never really registered as a plausible concern so, unsurprisingly, they found the cultural connections they anticipated. Matt and Mel discovered they could 'mingle quite easily' and this view was shared by Shu, Keiko and Mai who dismissed the need for translation early on. For others who expected to negotiate wide national-cultural differences, the experience of difference was the focus of their perceptions and recollections, an experience requiring, in Catherine Fitzgerald's words, 'extreme patience'.



As a writer with close ties to the established artists but with more in common, generationally, with the cast, I shifted perspectives midstream. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five, national-cultural difference gave way to generational-cultural connections. For example, my tendency to beg Ken for translation assistance gave way to the realisation that there were many ‘things we all hook into’, which led to a different and more positive set of experiences. If we accept that culture is more than just a national bias then the ‘horizon of expectations’ varies considerably between individuals of different generations, local spheres of influence and other cultural markers. Nationality is only part of the equation. My own experience changed when I re-evaluated my perspective and repositioned my expectations from national difference to generational connection.

In the rehearsal room, the show was continuing its page to stage transformation with a strong and increasingly discordant national-cultural focus. This focus was not shared or embraced by the emerging artists in the team. Until this point, I had expected my academic work to centre around national-cultural interactions across the ‘East/West’ binary, but now I was faced with the dilemma that national culture no longer seemed completely satisfactory, or even the most relevant cultural lens to apply to the exchanges in the room. There did not seem to be a need for a ‘slower process’, or ‘extreme patience’, beyond a ‘certain anticipation’ that there *should* be one. There did not seem to be a tangible sense of national identity as a dominant cultural divider. On the contrary, the emerging Australian and Japanese artists did not view each other as nationally homogeneous, or even nationally directed; their attitudes were filtered through expectations peculiar to each individual, with a shared generational-cultural perspective clearly asserting itself as an active and unifying counter-discourse. To

focus on nationality as the primary cultural lens would misrepresent the situation.

This experience challenged my own 'horizon of expectations' along with the theoretical framework I set out with.

In order to navigate this dilemma, I felt compelled to follow my own cultural instinct and identify with my peers, even if this made the task of analysing the experience complicated and contentious. 'Historical space' coloured the comments of the emerging participants interviewed to the point where generational-cultural concerns had overtaken all others. In sharp contrast, the established artists spoke at length about national differences and national challenges, concerned with the 'manners' of each encounter; the 'appropriateness' of both the script and the experience; the superficial differences in 'Eastern' and 'Western' behaviour; 'respect' for 'established' viewpoints; and acknowledgement of 'experience', as well as an emphasis on physicality while striving not to use English as 'the *lingua franca*'. 'Them' and 'us' was a binary used respectfully but always in reference to the two national groups, as the following statement reveals: 'The Japanese actors obey and give respect to the director. They follow my instructions. The Australians could learn a lot from that' (Catherine Fitzgerald, director).

The emerging artists, meanwhile, advocated an 'anything goes' attitude that was open, receptive, candid, personally and politically unrestrained, non-judgemental and non-divisive. The 'them' and 'us' binary entered their vocabulary as well, but in exclusively generational terms: 'They just don't get us, man. We know what we're doing. We got it covered' (David Hirst, *Damon*).

In summary: throughout the rehearsal period in Okinawa, the cultural 'Other' took on a different shape depending on the cultural perspective of each participant; the stronger the established national-cultural labels, stereotypes, discourses and orthodoxies were applied, the firmer the calls were to reject them along generational-cultural lines. Bennett's 'horizon of expectations' provides a useful reference point for the social interactions and a fluid, candid dynamic between the emerging artists. This was clear in rehearsal, but became even clearer in the encounters outside rehearsal. It was in this environment that the emerging artists were able to realise these expectations and facilitate a deeper level of connection.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Reflecting Together – Japan and Australia Off Stage

In this chapter I examine the reflections of the Japanese and Australian cast members outside the rehearsal space, exploring the key issues that emerged through this process. The first section, *Outside Rehearsal*, describes the afterhours interactions between the Japanese and Australian participants that occurred in the hotels, local clubs and bars. It explores what candid interviews with the cast and creative team reveal about the creative process. Here, the Australian participants learned to draw a distinction between their public and private personae. In the section *Public Face, Private Face* I explore these concepts in some detail and the dilemmas they raise for researchers, cross-referencing my own diary with the observations of other participants in the context of Boyé Lafayette De Mente's work, which helps to clarify some of the Japanese national-cultural expressions behind the professional and social cast interactions. There were further tensions during this period between established discourses and emerging counter-discourses, which I examine in three consecutive sections of this chapter: *Readings Through Gender, Gender and Generational Perspective* and *Repositioning Nationality: A Cosmopolitan Perspective*. I demonstrate that each of these issues is a permutation of the central friction between the national-cultural 'where' and the generational-cultural 'when'.

In *Readings Through Gender*, through the work of Christina Hoff Sommers, I establish a feminist discourse that embodies a generational-cultural perspective. Hoff Sommers provides a distinction between different kinds of feminists and an associated critique of the 'victim' label as regressive and often reductively applied. The

conclusions I draw in this section, informed by my reading of Sumiko Iwao's discussion of emerging generational-cultural perspectives on gender in Japan, are consistent with the attitudes expressed by the young Japanese women in the cast.

I expand on Hoff Sommers' critique in *Gender and Generational Perspective* with reference to Natasha Walter, Ellen Faulkner and Gayle MacDonald, and the recent movement towards acknowledging feminism *within* popular culture through the research of Joanne Hallows and Rachel Moseley. In order to connect theory and practice, in *Repositioning Nationality: A Cosmopolitan Perspective* I compare the experience of the emerging Japanese and Australian cast members and their negative response to established intercultural theory with the theory of cosmopolitanism as represented in studies by Robert J. Holton, Jeremy Waldron, Ulrich Beck and Patrick Hayden alongside Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis. While it would be inaccurate to suggest that the emerging artists embraced this concept completely, a cosmopolitan perspective does offer an alternative to the 'East/West' binary that repositions nationality as part of a wider cultural conversation.

The chapter concludes with a section I have called *Michiko's Challenge*, detailing Michiko's response to my research. The Writer's Diary becomes the primary source in investigating a period of critical reflection that took place in Tokyo between completing the production in Okinawa and rehearsing the South Australian production. I am particularly interested in the ways Michiko challenged the emerging artists not to think simply in oppositional terms – generational differences – but, rather, to consider the value of the creative contributions that could emerge by employing the unique cultural perspective gained through this experience. I reflect on

Michiko's challenge, cross-referencing observations from my Writer's Diary with selections from the interviews with cast and crew and ongoing conversations with my Japanese peers. Michiko had no difficulty accepting that there would be a difference in generational-cultural perspective or that the emerging generations would communicate internationally in a different way, but what would we *do*? Once we had asserted ourselves and convinced artists from established generations that we carried our own unique cultural perspective, *how* would we express it? What would our generational-cultural contribution be? If we rejected the paradigms of the past so resolutely, then what were we going to replace them with? I realised I had no answer to her call...

## **Outside Rehearsal**

Throughout the development of *Once Upon a Midnight*, the rehearsal room was a controlled space. Inside this space, a regimented method of translation kept discussions filtered. It was difficult for participants to have any spontaneous asides or private comments at all. Communication followed a set formula: a participant made a request to ask a question or make a comment, followed by translation, followed by response, followed by translation. Most conversations were brief as the step by step process of working in this way became tiresome.

There was no designated translator in the room. Yumi split her focus, acting both as choreographer and as translator for the director, while Ken and Keiko oscillated between performing and translating for the Japanese cast. Ken pulled back more and more until he ultimately stopped translating at all and encouraged participants to communicate directly. This was difficult during working hours because any

conversation that was overheard by the director had to be translated to the whole group. As a result of these restrictions inside the rehearsal room the hours outside rehearsal became the intercultural laboratory. To set the scene, here are two images from the first week of in the rehearsal period:

One: The rehearsal room, upstairs beside Shimoyama san's office. A black box where the actors work together politely. Unfamiliar with one another and clearly nervous, they communicate in smiles and nods between scenes. Occasionally they are permitted to play live music as the play dictates, but often they are discouraged as there are people working next door. The writer, director and choreographer sit silently behind a table that separates them from the performance. Although it could be described, in terms of discipline, as a *constructive* space, this was not, in any sense, a *creative* space.



*Composer/musical director Tim Lucas watches proceedings inside the black box*  
*Photographer: Alex Vickery-Howe*



*Tenchou and Chris Asimos face off in rehearsal*

*Photographer: Lauren Henderson*





Two: The beach, later that day. The group is free to communicate as best they can in the moment. Participants share interests and hobbies, as Matt and Mel have described in previous chapters, and share their perspective on what happened within a particular scene, song or detailed character interaction during the show.



*Lauren Henderson gets her face playfully punched by Mai Kakimoto  
Photographer: Alex Vickery-Howe*

These two images – one of polite, regimented work, and the other of candid discussion and cathartic, liberated play – capture the duality of the day to day experience. The extent of this duality surprised many in the cast. For the emerging Australian artists in the rehearsal room, there was an expectation that the actors would be able to privately critique the writing, influence the direction and make suggestions over the course of the rehearsal and production period. During rehearsal this is a healthy and routine process, just as it is healthy for key creative artists to disagree with one another, engage in debate and apply that same critical response to the actors,

noting, for example, when the actors are ‘getting it’ and when they are not. The emerging Australian artists’ understanding of a rehearsal experience was that the room would function as both work and social space, where people could be subversive and discuss issues that were not always directly linked to the production, but would ultimately facilitate the creative process: ‘As the cast works together, we play together’ (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*).



*Messing around on the beach*

*Photographer: Lauren Henderson*

*From left: Melissa Matheson, Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, Tim Lucas and Mai Kakimoto (with Matthew Crook lurking in the background)*

The Japanese ensemble members, meanwhile, made a clear distinction between work time and leisure time. During our first week, the director and I had been attempting to communicate with Mai Kakimoto through a book on English-Japanese translation full of simple (and largely irrelevant) phrases. It came as a tremendous shock when a few days later Mai turned from ordering a drink at a bar and asked in clear English ‘So, Alex san, what do you think of Catherine?’

I gave her a carefully worded answer about the challenge of working on a bilingual text and working with student actors and so on. She nodded and then politely repeated the question: “What do *you* think of Catherine?” I turned back to the bar and ordered another drink. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

For the Australians, who did not make such a marked distinction between work time and leisure time, this almost schizophrenic change from formal work persona to relaxed and often subversive leisure persona was unnerving at first. Unnerving, too, was the exposure of rehearsal room politics among the Australian creatives. We had, on occasion, misinterpreted the work persona of the Japanese participants as a lack of understanding when this persona had, in fact, given Japanese cast members an opportunity to observe without pressure, assess the personalities of their Australian colleagues and identify the creative tensions in the room. In time, this strategy would be identified and discussed in detail. (See *Public Face, Private Face*, section below.)

This difference in approach could have gone unspoken, but generational-cultural connections and time at the beach continued to break down social and national barriers. The emerging Australian artists voiced their expectation that the rehearsal

room would be a place of discovery where comments and questions would flow between Australian and Japanese artists, binding the group together as a whole. Invited to compare this approach to their own rehearsal process, many of the emerging Japanese artists found the breakdown of work and leisure personas intriguing:

Australian actors and even the director will talk about the beach during rehearsal, or they will knock off for lunch and talk about other things.

Japanese actors are more focused, but perhaps too serious. It's lovely to have fun in rehearsal. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

I'm surprised by you guys, too easily distracted. (Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*)



*A few drinks later*

*Photographer: Lauren Henderson*

*From left: Keiko Yamaguchi, Mai Kakimoto, Catherine Fitzgerald and Michelle Pastor*

The theatrical tradition of a ‘serious’ rehearsal process, recognised as Japanese by Mai and Hiro, did not last long. In early rehearsal, Ken Yamamura led the way for the Japanese, jumping around with pigtailed in his hair and often playing the fool. The Japanese began to relax and encourage further interaction in this way, but time constraints, production limitations, the system of slow translation and, as Yumi Umiuare and Mai Kakimoto discuss later in this chapter, certain specific aspects of Japanese national influence combined to make the rehearsal room a functional, but slow-moving and creatively restrained space:

The schedule called for us to get through the whole play by [the second week], but it didn’t pan out that way. It is taking a lot longer than we thought. The translation process is difficult. It eats a lot of our time. (Tim Lucas, composer/musical director)

What I’ve learnt is that you have to just go with it. The easiest way is to just go with something, and try your ideas, show your ideas, rather than talk about them first. There have been times when I’ve been forced to use translation and the Japanese performers still don’t understand. The director, Catherine, uses translators to reference things that are only in Australian culture, even Americans wouldn’t understand, and sometimes *we* don’t understand because we’re younger. It’s slower than it needs to be. (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

This kind of functionality had further consequences. The cast became receivers rather than engaged participants, as David, Mai and Michelle reflected in their interviews:

We're powering on through the scenes and trying to get the ending to where it needs to be. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, which is good. I have found parts of it very hard because we've been told to make it very, very big and very animated. There have been times when I've been doing the most ridiculous facials for hours. It's not how I would choose to do it, but there's no time to argue. (David Hirst, *Damon*)

Japanese actors follow exactly what a director or choreographer wants, but Australian actors want to discover ideas for themselves and meet the director halfway. I see it frustrates them. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

I understand the way we have been rehearsing is from start to finish, but the character of Angelica is pivotal to the plot and I think it would have been beneficial to address a little bit of that before the second week. We're waiting for instructions instead of developing character. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

There certainly were games and group bonding exercises incorporated into the first week of rehearsal; however, if one excluded the events outside rehearsal from this experience, the remainder would be a very bland portrait of intercultural interaction, a mechanical system of regimented behaviours that tells the observer very little about the actual group dynamic. Shu was one of the actors to recognise this: 'In rehearsal we work, we follow direction. I wait for after rehearsal to talk ideas.' (Shusaku Uchida, *Shima the kijimuna*)

In contrast, the environment outside rehearsal was both an inventive and active space, where creativity in communication, in sharing ideas and in interpersonal dynamics was evident:

Yesterday, Mai and I did our first scenes together where we had to play ex-lovers. On the train, on the way home after rehearsal, she started talking to me about my actual girlfriend and that relationship. I started asking her similar sorts of questions and I think it was a way of us both saying to each other without saying to each other, that it's OK, that nothing weird is going to happen, that we're both professionals and adults. It's important to have those conversations and we can't do that in the room with a translator. (David Hirst, *Damon*)

It was in this 'outside rehearsal' environment where some of the underlying tensions between the key creative artists, taken more seriously in the room, were being played out for fun in the waves, in a physical and direct style, reminiscent of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954):

After rehearsal, Hiro drove us to the beach for ball games and bonding. Catherine and I had a race. The whole cast gathered, and were nudging each other. She told me to be gentle, then ripped my t-shirt to shreds, clawed at my eyes and tried to push me over. She still lost. Afterwards, she went to shore to talk about how tough she is and how she "coulda played footy as a kid if I'd wanted to." I think someone needs a hug. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

As director, Catherine Fitzgerald made sure that time was set aside each day for these opportunities to play and this provided a space for candid interaction. Focused on national differences, the director attempted to monitor some of these encounters and, initially, I supported this approach and attempted to do the same, even expressing my concern to Ken and seeking his insight as one of the bilingual cast members.

However, the speed at which the emerging cast broke all established national-cultural taboos – literally throwing an etiquette book into the ocean – challenged this established attitude. Even though the Australians were still new to Okinawa, they were throwing themselves into the cross-cultural experience with gusto:

Tim threw a ball and hit an Okinawan girl on the head. He was deeply apologetic and immediately left the water in disgrace. I was happy to see him return a half hour later, this time with a mysterious and unidentified Japanese man who just ran up and started playing catch with him. The two frolicked in the waves. It was a Kodak moment. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

There were many such 'Kodak moments' highlighting the contrast in behaviour between the rehearsal room hours and the hours outside rehearsal. The cast toured Shuri Castle, shopped together, swam together, explored mysterious islands and trawled the main street of Naha, looking for new restaurants, or else stayed in to cook up group meals in the apartment block where they swapped stories into the early morning hours. The relaxed attitude, the lack of self-censoring and the unabashedly childish antics that went on at the end of every day defined the intercultural experience:



We went by boat to one of the smaller Islands. Keiko was ill but managed to survive the journey and was only sick when we reached shore. There was swimming and snorkelling. Dave and I journeyed through rocky waters, passing crabs and jellyfish. We returned as men, bloody, exhausted, but stronger, having conquered the forces of nature (in our minds).

I managed to badly burn my arm and stomach, having neglected the patches where my t-shirt had been torn. Catherine wrapped herself, cocoon-like, in many layers. I scoffed, but got my just desserts when the burns became blisters. Serves me right. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

It was not despite of all of these clumsy and informal interactions, but *because* of them that the two national groups formed into a single whole. Catherine's sense of humour encouraged the cast to see her as a person outside of 'director-mode' and her willingness to be informal and fun set the tone, allowing the cast to follow suit, even though her reading of the group's interactions remained fixed within a nationally determined 'East meets West' perspective. In contrast, my perceptions were shifting away from the national and embracing the generational as I watched the group interact: Australian Chris Asimos frequently grabbed, hugged or threw members of the Japanese cast just as he did his Australian peers and, soon, he began a push-up competition with Hiro to start the day, while Tim Lucas shared songs with the Japanese. In the evenings, the cast broke into smaller groups and met in apartments to swap jokes, share opinions of the rehearsal process, discuss favourite films or, in my case, 'discover' what people were cooking and happen to be in the vicinity with an empty plate. It was fortunate that the majority of the cast stayed in the same buildings

over the course of the production with others, such as Tenchou, Hiro and Momoko, often staying over late. There was time, there was a DVD player – and there was alcohol – to break the ice.

## Public Face, Private Face

As I have established in the preceding sections, breaking down the social barrier with the Japanese cast and creative participants could not have occurred in the rehearsal room alone. It was only through group activities outside rehearsal that this barrier eventually gave way. In fact, by all appearances, the Japanese were a passive group within rehearsal room walls, although, as I have already revealed, this appearance was misleading. To give national-cultural context to this formal divide between work and leisure persona, and the social mask of passivity, Yumi Umiumare describes the complex and occasionally guarded nature of some Japanese:

English people speak more directly. If they don't like something, they say "I don't like...", but Japanese is the other way around. The sentence is structured "This chair... I don't like." You have to wait until the end of the sentence to know what they really think or feel. (Yumi Umiumare, choreographer)

Outside rehearsal, Mai Kakimoto also described the subtleties of Japanese behaviour such as *honne* (inner feelings) and *tatemae* (outside feelings), explaining that one's inner feelings are masked by the social façade, particularly in a formal situation like rehearsal. Another concept she introduced was *kamatoto*, the practice of pretending to be naïve and foolish rather than to embarrass a superior. Boyé Lafayette De Mente expands on this concept where he describes *kamatoto* as, rather unfortunately, 'The

Dumb Blonde Act’: ‘I found that it was commonplace for people in all walks of life and in virtually every situation to pretend to be naïve and innocent and much less knowledgeable and clever than they really were’ (De Mente, 1997: 173).

When Mai Kakimoto discussed these concepts in conversation outside rehearsal, she indicated that it is simply good manners to ‘act innocent’ and let others – particularly if they are older – *feel* like they are in control, even if it is rarely true. She and Ken Yamamura described several situations in which it was necessary to keep their *honne* masked, even going so far as to allow their employers to make serious errors, rather than embarrass them, while making corrections in private. Throughout the rehearsal process, the emerging Japanese artists applied this tactic, presenting a social mask of meekness and obedience. As a consequence, I began to openly and affectionately refer to my closest Japanese friends as ‘sly’ when debriefing with them outside rehearsal. This blunt English term for the subtleties of Japanese national-cultural behaviour could only be used in reference to peers with whom I had identified and established a strong bond. I was careful never to use this term in reference to, or in front of, members of the established generations for it would have been interpreted as offensively ‘Orientalist’ or ‘reductive’. Nevertheless, shared ‘slyness’ became a game for the emerging Japanese and Australian participants alike, just as representatives of both genders were willing to embrace the ‘dumb blonde’ mantle in the context of subversion and satire.

Key to our connection as emerging artists was a sense of shared humour, with this subversion and satire becoming our primary modes of communication. For example, many of the Japanese participants would sarcastically refer to Adelaide as a ‘big city’

and ask how ‘little town’ people from Tokyo would get by. Feigned innocence and passivity formed the social façade of the emerging Japanese, a façade that slipped off easily to be trampled underfoot the moment rehearsal was over, as Mel quickly identified: ‘It’s amazing how some of the Japanese group pretend not to have any idea what we’re talking about and then you end up in a car alone with somebody, or in a small group, and it all comes out’ (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*).

This adeptness at playing social roles, often for humorous and subversive effect, revealed the extent to which the emerging Japanese artists used established ‘Western’ stereotypes to their advantage, creating an impression of compliance that pleased the older Australian participants and put them at ease while inviting the younger Australian participants to share the joke:

Culturally, we [Japanese] have two states. There is the surface – “I love you”, “I like you” – and then what is beneath – “Fuck you, what are you doing?” Some English cultures do this too and individuals are different, but famous story in Kyoto is that you say “Come to dinner” and people must say “no” twice. Third time you can say “yes”. But if you say “yes” straight away, people might say “Oh my god, how rude, they want to come to dinner!” It’s a stereotype, but there is some truth to those stories.” (Yumi Umiuare, choreographer)

The more the emerging Australians became aware of this process – the more we were ‘in’ on the joke – the less relevant the rehearsal room interaction felt with regards to honest and open intercultural communication. As friendships developed and alliances

strengthened among emerging participants outside rehearsal, it became clear that none of the young Japanese performers missed any of the politics in the rehearsal room and were simply holding their opinions back. David was one of the Australian actors to recognise this: 'They know exactly what's going on. Don't be fooled' (David Hirst, *Damon*).

The more candid our behaviour grew outside rehearsal, the stronger our social mask became in the rehearsal room and at official functions, a phenomenon I began to refer to in my diary as 'selective amnesia'. The duality of Japanese national culture appeared deeply ingrained. Cutting to the heart of the matter, breaking through the social façade, really only occurred when the Japanese initiated it. This caused some frustration from a research point of view as the Japanese participants will, to this day, unofficially express one opinion and officially endorse another. Even the act of speaking English varies according to the social occasion. Mai optimised this when her first English words spoken to me came completely out of nowhere to probe the writer/director relationship, even repeating the question 'what do *you* think?' when my answer registered as coached and overly tactful. Inside the rehearsal room she had crafted the impression that she could not understand, much less speak, any English. Her public face had given her an advantage, allowing her to observe the dynamic between the key creatives without anything being censored in her presence. She knew us very, very well. When the show finished its run in Okinawa and the social façade was no longer useful or necessary, Mai became quite frank:

The person who had a two-word English vocabulary when I first met her was now talking confidently on a range of topics, as though having lived in

Australia for months. Including basic things such as asking about family and friends and into politics (she thinks the new Japanese Prime Minister looks creepy), Japanese behaviour and how the Japanese and Australian groups work together. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

However, when the show moved to Adelaide and we were all back in the rehearsal room, Mai once again limited her communication in English during working hours. Likewise, Okinawan producer Hisashi Shimoyama, or Shimoyama san, demonstrated reluctance to use the English language in formal situations despite being clear, and jovial, afterhours. He relied completely on translation during the initial pitch and any production meetings, but would converse happily if seen at a party or at a performance opening when no translator was available. This can perhaps be explained by De Mente who terms the phenomenon *Hame wo Hazusu*, 'Make Merry or Suffer the Consequences'. While the Australians were more likely to blur the lines between the work space and the social space, the Japanese displayed a clear sense of delineation. De Mente elaborates: 'Drinking has traditionally been the one socially acceptable excuse for temporarily abandoning the very strict etiquette that characterises normal Japanese behaviour' (De Mente, 1997: 114).

I had observed this in 2006, at the cast party where I made that drunken speech. The Japanese were, much to my surprise, completely open and candid during that celebration. In fact, people who do not let their hair down afterhours in Japan can be regarded as reserved, remote or unwilling to display their true selves. So, it was possible that the 'Westerners' could be viewed as comparatively too relaxed and informal during rehearsal, something implied by Shu on a couple of occasions. On the

other hand, it was equally possible that the ‘Westerners’ could be viewed as too modest and formal afterhours where, from a Japanese perspective, it was perfectly acceptable for Mai to ask probing questions and for the cast to be playful and open. It is no wonder that bars and clubs are so popular throughout Japan and that they are the places where real meetings take place and business deals are done. For all their hard work in rehearsal, the Japanese participants were cheeky afterhours. Keiko revelled in this when she taught me to say ‘*watashi wa hageshii desu*’ as a formal greeting, calmly correcting pronunciation and never betraying the sentence’s true meaning (‘I am hard’) until Ken gave it away.

The emerging artists knew they were being playful and subversive, and that testing the limits with one another was a healthy expression, a progressive attitude; yet, not everyone was ‘in’ on the joke. When established artists and those reporting on the production – not only the director, but both the Japanese and Australian producers, university colleagues, festival staff and, at least for a time, myself – viewed these afterhours interactions from a national ‘East meets West’ perspective, there was a possibility that the revelry could become a lot less fun and a lot more contentious. This emerged as a concern from some participants when social barriers lowered to the point where afterhours interactions moved beyond different national-cultural observations and experiences, and embraced the issues of gender and sexuality.

## **Readings Through Gender**

In this section I deconstruct perspectives on gender through both the national-cultural ‘where’ and the generational-cultural ‘when’ by engaging with a range of contemporary feminist thought, linking this research to the experience of *Once Upon*

*a Midnight*. I have already discussed the decision to make the play's protagonist a young female, Kelsey Clarke, and to focus on her personal journey. The play follows Kelsey, 'the most frightened child in all the world', as she develops into a strong, empowered young woman. Nevertheless, the first disagreement on the text's treatment of the issue of gender arose inside the rehearsal room, when the director labelled the play 'antifeminist':

Catherine described the script to me as antifeminist and xenophobic. She seems to have missed the point that Ryan and Kelsey *are* xenophobic, but conquer their fear by the end. As for antifeminist, how can a play where the female protagonist says "I won't be told what to do anymore" be antifeminist?

The answer, apparently, is that the villain is also female. If the villain were a white male, Catherine would accept it. Silly, silly me I should have remembered that *only* white males can be villainous. Urgh! (Writer's Dairy, 2008)

My reaction to this criticism was dismissive and this was also labelled 'antifeminist'. For me, such a narrow reading of *Once Upon a Midnight* did not register as persuasive or logical, and tipped into absurdity when other fairytales were added to the director's hit list:

*The Little Mermaid* is also, apparently, 'antifeminist'. Something about the mermaid getting a vagina and therefore being killed by the white males. \*slaps head\* It's so formulaic. I'm sure it's not doing much for the cause, and



feminism – equality in all its forms – *is* a cause I believe strongly in. Maybe it's the same with intercultural theory. Maybe it works better without the commentary track. I don't know. But I am certain Hans Christian Andersen wasn't out to attack women with that story. Give Ariel a break, man! (Writer's Diary, 2008)

These conversations entertained the rest of the ensemble at first, but they indicated a generational-cultural misunderstanding that would quickly develop and have more personal consequences for all involved. The director was a feminist whose perspective had formed from within a very specific 'historical space', a space that I and other emerging artists struggled to empathise with. Despite our common ideals of gender equality and sexual freedom, the gulf between established and emerging perspectives was particularly evident on this issue. The terminology used and the means of expression varied considerably according to this 'historical space', to a generationally informed conception of gender politics, as did the views on what being a feminist actually meant and who was 'allowed' to be one.

Although our subversive attitude may have seemed 'antifeminist', a more accurate reading would be post-feminist, progressive feminist or anti-sexist. Christina Hoff Sommers confronts this historical context and captures differing feminist perspectives by asserting a distinction between 'Equality Feminists' and 'Gender Feminists' in her work. Hoff Sommers argues that the 'divisive and resentful philosophy' of 'Gender Feminists' contributes to 'the woes of our society and hurts legitimate feminism' (Sommers, 1995:17) instead of promoting progressive discussions of genuine social issues.

While she identifies with 'Equality Feminists', Hoff Sommers departs from 'Gender Feminists' who, she claims, do not respond positively to criticism: 'How could they? As they see it, they are dealing with a massive epidemic of male atrocity and a constituency of benighted women who have yet to comprehend the seriousness of their predicament' (Sommers, 1995:18). She calls for detailed research that draws on credible and accountable sources and traces key quotes and statistics back to their origin, revealing poor information passed from one 'expert' to another. In this context, she frames 'Gender Feminism' as unscholarly and personality driven. While her rhetoric is strong, her goal is not to diminish feminist issues in social and political discourse, but to represent them accurately:

If others join in the frank and honest critique, before long a more representative and less doctrinaire feminism will again pick up the reins. But that is not likely to happen without a fight. (Sommers, 1995: 18)

Central to Hoff Sommers' critique is the fantasy of victimhood or victimisation, which has been embraced by 'Gender Feminists', who have begun to project the 'victim' label onto emerging generations globally. According to Hoff Sommers, 'benighted women' have little hope of escaping the 'victim' label, even if the people in question are headstrong and making informed choices: 'The gender feminist who claims to represent the true interests of women is convinced that she profoundly understands their situation and so is in an exceptional position to know their true interests' (Sommers, 1995: 258).

The popularity of 'Gender Feminism' in academic discourse and the reluctance of researchers, and even teachers, to question its ideology is a further issue of concern for Hoff Sommers. She points out that 'open criticism' of the 'feminist classroom' is difficult: 'The lesson [students] learn from the cravenness of their teachers is never lost on them: keep clear of controversy. Conformity is safest: practice it.' She describes this as 'the antithesis of what the college experience should be' (Sommers, 1995: 117).

The framework provided by Hoff Sommers is relevant to this production; 'Equality Feminist' and 'Gender Feminist' became useful terms for clarifying some of the tensions during *Once Upon a Midnight*, as the arguments that had begun in abstract terms through discussion of the play and its characters became labels applied to the participants themselves. It was not a discourse between feminists and 'antifeminists', nor was it a discourse of men versus women; it was a cultural clash between competing conceptions of feminism, under the umbrella of generational-cultural perspective which emerged around issues of gender, sexuality and power. Rather than conform to the established 'feminist classroom', as Hoff Sommers puts it, the emerging artists sought new ways to articulate their gendered identities.

The possibility of sexualised objectification between Australian males and Japanese females was an issue of concern for the established artists, an issue repeatedly flagged by the director and anticipated by the dramaturge, constantly raised and reinforced during the rehearsal process. It was made clear to all members of the cast that the Japanese female performers were to be treated carefully and that they were at risk of 'objectification' and 'exploitation', an implicit reference to Edward Said's

*Orientalism* and the concept of the ‘exotic other’. The Australian males were aware that they were being watched both inside and outside the rehearsal room. Many of the cast members expressed confusion – it was not as though these were the first young ‘Eastern’ women these young ‘Western’ men (and young ‘Western’ women for that matter) had ever encountered. Moreover, it was not as though the young Japanese women in the cast were weak or shy people, incapable of taking care of themselves, especially in their own country.

As a student of interculturalism, I initially concurred with the established artists’ perspective and reinforced it in my diary account. Young Japanese women were cast as ‘oppressed’ and ‘victimised’ in my mind, while young Australian males were shoved into the cliché image of the ‘oppressor’. I had naïvely accepted a discourse that denigrated Japanese females and Australian males alike. It became my key subject of personal regret on this journey:

Chris tried to flex his muscles and prove he was tougher than the American soldiers playing volleyball not far from us. Nobody believed him.

As it got dark, Mai came up and tried to talk to me through the lonely planet guide, but the other guys snatched it and went straight to the “sex” section. I despair for my gender. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

These superficial assumptions would, in due course, be turned on their head as I began to adopt the emerging artists’ perspective on these encounters; this demonstrates precisely why direct, face-to-face contact with the not-so-exotic ‘Other’

is vital, particularly for artists and cultural communicators, and particularly for the emerging generations who differ from their parents and grandparents in their attitudes to gender politics, as they do in so many other areas. The contrast between work and play was particularly marked where gender and sexuality were concerned. The majority of the *Once Upon a Midnight* cast, a few crucial years younger than I was and with no formal research background, made the transition from formality to familiarity in days, not weeks; they simply abandoned themselves to the experience, casting established theory aside. They met each other as individuals. While their national-cultural perspectives gave them a series of expectations, it was their youth, their shared global pop culture references, and their ability to respond and adapt that allowed them to shift fluidly in the moment. Mai Kakimoto initially spoke of finding the sheer size of people like Chris Asimos a little daunting upon the first encounter; however, this impression passed overnight as Chris displayed his goofiness and big-hearted humour. Likewise, Lauren Henderson saw petite and polite Japanese women at the first meeting, but soon acknowledged that the dynamic was more complex: ‘Mai and Keiko commanded a lot of respect, not only in rehearsal but outside as well’ (Lauren Henderson, *Kelsey*).

Throughout this early period, I was self-consciously formal with the Japanese cast, misreading much of the ease and familiarity between Japanese and Australian peers as somehow culturally ‘inappropriate’, despite having gathered a body of emerging research that indicated the contrary. As would later be pointed out tongue-in-cheek by the Japanese cast members, I spent the first week opening most conversations with ‘Where’s Ken?’ uncomfortable at the prospect of interacting without a translator. For this first week, I shared the director’s reductive eye regarding the group dynamic.

Having read much of the established theoretical texts on ‘orientalism’ and ‘cultural misappropriation’, it was difficult to accept that the cast members had their own perspective, their own emerging discourse. By reading them through established national-cultural paradigms I had overlooked their unique generational-cultural perspective. Why weren’t people being more formal, more reserved with one another? The answer was that they didn’t feel any need for formality. They weren’t conscious of a national divide, they shared a generational bond. This was a crucial adjustment to make.

The evidence for this generational shift in cultural dynamics emerged with more candour and veracity than any of us had anticipated and this created its own form of culture shock – a generational shock – coupled with the realisation that established intercultural theory had not prepared us for the lived reality of this experience. Within the rehearsal room, there remained a veneer of formality while outside rehearsal many rebelled against the idea that a respectful intercultural process had to be a formal intercultural process.

The young Japanese women were among the first to assert this generational-cultural perspective, raising clear objections to stereotyping; using their sense of humour, they expressed their shock at all the fuss being made about ‘protecting’ them. They laughed at the concept that ‘boys from Adelaide’ should censor themselves or behave self-consciously for fear of offending ‘Tokyo women’. The entire model of a gendered power dynamic was framed, by them, as a joke. However, these conversations took on a serious edge when it became clear that this stereotype was in danger of hampering communication, especially when it was the writer and the

director who seemed most invested in it. Naturally, they picked the weakest link – the writer whose perspective was changing – and staged an ambush:

Tonight was a birthday party for Momoko and Michelle in an upstairs Okinawan restaurant. Fun night. Fireworks outside the windows. Random people hugging the birthday girls.

I was sat opposite Mai, who is now speaking English very well. She has been annoyed that I don't voluntarily talk to her. I think I've been ultra-careful. I've probably read too much theory on the exotic other and am slightly neurotic. Ken was there, so I thought it'd be OK with him to translate but he was tipsy and Mai waved him away ...

“You talk to me, now!”

We joked that she would be fluent by the time she arrives in Adelaide, and she said something Japanese to Keiko, who laughed, before asking me if I'd buy her a present if she could speak for an hour in English, on a subject I chose, by the time she arrived in Australia. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

As I squirmed, Mai and Keiko continued to exchange comments in Japanese and laugh outright. The subtext of this encounter was neither subtle nor lost in translation. Mai would break the ice and in the process establish a dialogue on her terms. On a surface level she was playing up to the stereotype – ‘buy me a pretty gift’ – but it was clearly all about how much she could subvert the idea of ‘old thinking’ based on her

nationality and gender. It was about exposing an absurd dynamic and moving beyond a series of assumptions that were getting in the way. The whole cast was enjoying the joke before long and this didn't escape the director's critical eye: 'Once we were outside, I knew what was coming. Catherine gave me a lecture about objectifying Japanese girls and treating Mai badly' (Writer's Diary, 2008).

Watching this exchange that she had, quite intentionally, set up, Mai shook her head and went home early. Still unsure of my position at the time, 'I asked Keiko if I had been out of line. She laughed and said "No, of course not, you fool. Mai was teasing you"' (Writer's Diary, 2008).

Mai and Keiko's reaction to being monitored and chaperoned in their own country was to satirise the situation, using parody to point out how ridiculous – and offensive – it was to assume that they were 'submissive' and 'weak'. On more than one occasion, Mai indicated that she was not a 'puppy' to be 'protected': 'Japanese women are strong, and getting stronger. We had chauvinism in the past, like every other country, but that is old thinking' (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*). When I later shared some of the theoretical background with her, she made her feelings plain:

To be honest, I wasn't aware of the existence of a book called *Orientalism* or that there was something called 'cultural misappropriation'. And I hadn't ever imagined that people of the 'West' were trying to protect the 'East'.



But if people of the ‘West’ are thinking: ‘People of the ‘East’ are delicate and weak, so we have to take care of them’; there is no need to think like that at all.

To protect, to be protected, to support, to be supported, such things depend on the person. I don’t think nationality or blood matters. (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

Having studied in the United Kingdom, Keiko was more prepared for the cultural misreadings that would grow around her interactions with the Australian males; she recognised the shaky assumption that Japanese women are, without fail, submissive and naïve, incapable of standing up for themselves and requiring constant looking after by ‘enlightened’ visiting foreigners. The idea that any member of the male cast would even know how to be ‘oppressive’ was amusing to Keiko. The assumption that she and Mai would not know how to take care of themselves led to parody and play-acting. Viewed through an inflexible national-cultural perspective, however, satire and parody were themselves misread, creating layers of confusion. Keiko acknowledged this: ‘I have no idea what a “Japanese female” is or an “Australian male”. I can only talk about my own perspective, about people I know. We are not weak’ (Keiko Yamaguchi, *Zuru-Zuru*).

Having lived and studied in Japan and Australia, Ken could see the folly in applying ‘Gender Feminist’ theory to contemporary Japan:

Western people talk about Asian women as oppressed, but it’s much more complicated than that. Feminism in a Western sense would not work in Japan.

The questions Westerners ask are not the questions Asian people ask. The way theories develop is different in both countries and you cannot apply one to the other. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

How this international gender dynamic was ultimately read depended largely on the interpreter's perspective. The young Australian males were offended by the assumption that not only were they misogynistic Neanderthals, but also *inept* misogynistic Neanderthals who would exhibit blatantly inappropriate behaviour in public, in full view of university staff. Melissa Matheson observed her male peers and saw a very different dynamic: 'The Australian men were very shy around the Japanese women as they did not know how to act in front of them. The women had the power' (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*).

Throughout this encounter, it was clear that the stereotypical gendered discourse most often applied to encounters between 'Eastern women' and 'Western men' was being rejected on the basis that it did not place due emphasis on generational difference: labels like 'oppressor' and 'oppressed', 'imperialist' and 'victim', were questioned and dismissed by the emerging cast members. To impose such labels reductively was to risk becoming a target for satire. I clued into this only after being teased by Mai over dinner and was therefore one of the last in the group to understand the cast dynamic. Ken Yamamura expands on the superficial misreadings relating to the public behaviour of Japanese woman:

The stereotypical image of Eastern women as weak is related to the use of language. In the West being verbose is equated with status and power. As

Japanese people, we know what other Japanese are saying through the use of silence, through our bodies and gesture, through specific phrases with multilayered meanings. We are alert to subtext. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

A common term in Japanese vernacular is ‘soft power’, which may strike some ‘Westerners’ used to verbosity and bravado as a contradictory concept; however, it describes well the sorts of polite but strong personalities that many in the Japanese cast, the women especially, displayed as time went by. Mai and Keiko asked rhetorically if perceptions of their inner strength would change if they shaved their heads and wore butch clothing, indicating that Australian representations of power may be superficial.

Another aspect of stereotypical gender dynamics that emerges from this framework, and is frequently overlooked in established intercultural theory, is the way these dynamics can be subverted in contemporary encounters between young people. Such was the case when the young Australian women openly objectified the young Japanese men: ‘They were very shy around Aussie girls, but I remember in particular a time on my birthday when I think I made a breakthrough with one of the Japanese boys. I thought he was hot!’ (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

Thus, the generationally informed ‘Gender Feminist’ perspective, which had been seeded early in the development period, long before the plane had left Adelaide, proved untenable once the group met on the same soil. The self-confident young women in the cast would not have allowed any form of sexism to occur; they

demonstrated this when they defended their male peers. The ‘Gender Feminist’ discourse was further subverted when the interactions between the key creative players were taken into account, as Michelle Pastor observed:

Given the influence of women taking key production roles, i.e. Jules organising the whole project, Catherine directing and Yumi choreographing, there was a strong presence of female power. While Alex and Tim held influential roles, they were second to the women. (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

The ‘Gender Feminist’ reading also failed to acknowledge the presence of homosexual, lesbian and bisexual cast members, projecting sexual desire exclusively onto straight ‘Western’ males, when in fact the dynamic was considerably more complex. Moreover, it became clear when reflecting on the creative process that, while contemporary Japanese women did not wish to be overtly sexualised, they did not wish to be treated as ‘sexless’ either. Their objection to ‘old thinking’ is partly an objection to having their sexuality and sexual agency scrutinised, censored, manipulated or determined by any agents who are not themselves contemporary Japanese women.

In this context, it is helpful to examine the direct contrasts between Japanese and ‘Western’ women, which Sumiko Iwao draws, beginning with a deconstruction of the myth of the perpetually ‘submissive’ Japanese female:

The kimono-clad, bamboo parasol-toting, bowing female walking three paces behind her husband remains the image many Westerners hold of the typical

Japanese woman ... But appearances can be deceiving, a fact that is all too well known among Japanese themselves. (Iwao, 1998: 1)

Iwao describes generational-cultural progress in Japan, with regard to gender issues, where women have been 'winning an astonishing degree of freedom and independence quietly and unobtrusively, largely without the fanfare of an organized women's movement or overt feminism' (Iwao, 1998: 2). When I shared these critical observations with the young Japanese women in the cast (who will wear a kimono or carry a parasol 'if we want to'), they concurred with Iwao by indicating that the appropriate response when confronted by the condescending attitude of established generations is simply to smile, nod and disengage. After all, they asked, why dignify such a narrow perspective with any kind of response? It is this approach, a quiet inner confidence in contrast to an accommodating exterior, that Iwao describes as 'superficial qualities' in contrast to 'inner resources'. Mai Kakimoto calls it 'having a strong heart'. These perspectives mark a difference between the more pushy and demonstrative forms of gender debate in the 'West' and the subtle, relaxed and assured social progress taking place in Japan. In other words, one need not shout to be heard, as Iwao suggests: 'The profound changes now taking place among Japanese women represent no less than a quiet revolution. They constitute an irreversible transformation at the very roots of attitudes and lifestyles in Japanese society' (Iwao, 1998: 265).

The Japanese women in the cast expressed the view that to engage with these issues seriously is a form of self-disempowerment: why stoop to arguments they are quietly winning? Why debate other people's opinions, which they cannot change, when *they*

know who they really are? If anything, many Japanese women feel that the young Japanese men are lacking inner strength. Iwao supports this view: 'Young women are now very well educated and ambitious, and they are not interested in indulged, weak men; they want a partner who is at least as sturdy as they are' (Iwao, 1998: 269).

Whether they choose to carry a parasol or not, the majority of young Japanese women encountered through this collaboration certainly carry a high degree of self-confidence and personal empowerment. They may prefer contemporary fashion to crew cuts and tank tops, and subtle strategy to loud rallies on street corners, but self-confidence and freedom of choice in all matters political, sexual and social are their core expectations.

This rehearsal period and the surrounding encounters facilitated a deconstruction of gender labels across generations with open criticism of both misogyny and misandry in academic, theatrical and cultural discourse. This was achieved by applying the notion of 'historical space' to national-cultural gender stereotypes and labels, giving them a generational-cultural context. The initial clash between the 'Gender Feminist' agenda and the emerging participants in the cast of *Once Upon a Midnight*, which also revealed the need to revise my own attitudes towards gendered identity, allowed a generational-cultural perspective to create firm and lasting alliances. Young Japanese women, young Australian women, young Japanese men and young Australian men rejected the reductive labelling of Japanese females as 'victims' and Australian males as 'oppressors'. It was a concept completely at odds with any aspect of our lived reality, a concept imposed by those outside of our generational-cultural perspective.

## Gender and Generational Perspective

The new feminism must broker a compromise between ‘difference’ feminism and ‘equality’ feminism. The modern woman sees truth in both. (King, quoted in Walter, 1999: 59)

Oona King argues passionately that feminism is still relevant for emerging generations: ‘if feminism is no longer necessary’ then either ‘its world-view is now considered mistaken’ or ‘its objectives have been achieved’ when ‘neither is the case.’ (1999:59). The cast of *Once Upon a Midnight* concurred with this view; however, the dilemma for those writing in the context of post-second-wave feminism is that the ‘world-view’ of the movement has evolved, while many key challenges and objectives are still to be met. Simply put, the goal posts have shifted and the modes of political protest have changed, but the objectives hold worth. It is vital, therefore, that the feminist movement find a new strategy, a new platform, a new language and – in marketing terms – a new ‘brand’ in order to assert its relevance to emerging generations. The 1990s saw the realisation that feminism was not a one-size-fits-all movement, as highlighted by ‘Justice for Women’ co-founder Julie Bindel:

When issues such as class and race emerged in the women’s movement, white and middle-class women were unprepared. The slogan ‘sisterhood is global’ began to sound empty when we really looked at differences between women. (Bindel, quoted in Walter, 1999: 59)

While Bindel acknowledges global perspectives, Louise D'Arcens emphasises generational perspectives when she insists that 'age is the main axis of struggle' and that many commentators 'draw upon the model of generational conflict' (D'Arcens, quoted in Else-Mitchell & Flutter, 1998: 105). She argues that it is 'counter-productive to see 1990s feminism' as 'falling prey to an adolescent *coup d'etat* or covetously ruled over by rapacious monarchs' (1998:116). For both Bindel and D'Arcens, generational differences both within and between national cultures are the forces that the feminist movement must reconcile. As the cast of *Once Upon a Midnight* consisted of young people strongly influenced by the 'historical space' of the late 1990s, this generational-cultural perspective was evident during the rehearsal process.

Krysti Guest expands on the intersection between generational and national concerns popular in this period:

For decades, different groups of indigenous women, third world women, working-class women, lesbian women, women with disabilities have loudly pointed out that the political analysis and strategies generated by white, Western feminists often falsely universalise white women's experiences. (Guest, quoted in Else-Mitchell and Flutter 1998: 165)

The tendency to 'falsely universalise white women's experiences' was unmistakable during *Once Upon a Midnight's* development, evident in the negative reaction of Japanese women to an established 'Western' feminist discourse, the same discourse feminist writers of the 1990s were confronting. The ensuing discussions gave the



group a clear platform for articulating cultural difference in generational terms. This tension between national and generational perspectives is also articulated by Suzette Mitchell:

If only because of sheer numbers, young women are becoming a powerful force. Today, half the world's population is under twenty-five – youth represent a majority. Increasingly, the social and political agenda will be influenced by young minds. In Beijing, you couldn't help but stand back and be inspired, watching them take the floor – articulating the issues of the future and moulding the agenda – across boundaries of nations and ages. (Mitchell, 1998: 192)

While Mitchell notes 'global discourse' as a source of progressive thinking and inspiration in the 1990s, Misha Schubert goes further and articulates how to take advantage of this emerging phenomenon:

Today, our brave new world requires us to translate important feminist concepts into soundbites, rather than lectures. These days the way to reach decision-makers is to influence markets. Accordingly, we need the skills to reach mass audiences with short messages. (Schubert, 1998: 226)

'Soundbites' and 'short messages' are the modes of communication of the emerging generations, able to travel globally at a rapid pace. In *Feminists Fatale* (1998), a collection of interviews by Jan Bowen, 29-year-old Sophie McCarthy describes the

‘metamorphosis’ of the feminist movement in response to differing generational perspectives and the need to address and accommodate them:

I don't think the feminist movement is dead but it has gone through a metamorphosis. The Women's Electoral Lobby still exists, there are still feminist groups, but they have different agendas now and they have different members. (McCarthy, 1998: 72)

McCarthy advocates a less verbose, less demonstrative approach to gender equality. She points out that it is more constructive to make changes subtly and with practical, strategic action: ‘A lot of women, professional women in particular, feel they will make a difference by becoming lawyers and bankers and actually joining the system, not by being politically active’ (McCarthy, 1998: 72).

She contrasts this emergent strategy with the marches and speeches of the previous generation and notes that this modern, ‘pop’ approach will not be universally embraced by those belonging to the old guard, before adding: ‘If that upsets older feminists, well, it is the way things are’ (McCarthy, 1998: 73). There is some confluence between the writings of Sophie McCarthy on feminism and the writings of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim on generationalism: both advocate the need for the emerging generations to continue negotiating issues with the new and different tactics afforded to them by technology and global flows. McCarthy also draws the link between generational culture and national culture through revised readings on gender, highlighting how the three forces come together:

‘Differentness’ is something that is worth promoting now, that it is really good to be different. It is the same with the issue of racism and the value of having a multicultural society. All of us are good at different things and we have different things to offer, whether we are men or women or from different countries. (McCarthy, 1998: 76)

Concerns like these certainly hovered around the rehearsal room, as *Once Upon a Midnight* as a text came to embrace the various forms of the conflict between ‘sameness’ and ‘differentness’. Angelica was used as a metaphor in daily conversation to represent a multiplicity of oppressive forces – racial, sexual and generational – and Kelsey’s rebellion a symbolic breaking away from the paradigms of the past. The director and I discussed the possibility of Angelica becoming male since ‘white male colonialism’ should, Catherine reasoned, be the force for a modern heroine to overcome. Young women in the cast disagreed and the entire ensemble objected to the suggestion to cut Kelsey’s final confrontation with Angelica down to a series of brief physical actions. The story of Angelica and Kelsey encapsulated much of the ‘old thinking’/‘new thinking’ conflict that had become central to the narrative and to the experience of working together: the play was performed in 2008, but the ‘historical space’ of the late 1990s was competing with the ‘historical space’ of the 1970s through the generational-cultural perspectives of *Once Upon a Midnight*’s creative participants.

Like the ‘I am Woman Hear me Roar’ mantra of the 1970s ‘historical space’ from which they emerged, ‘Gender Feminist’ writers were bold for their time; to many emergent feminist thinkers, however, this rhetoric reads as a cliché, sexist and close

minded. Christina Hoff Sommers' alternative feminist approach stirred controversy when it first appeared in the late 1990s. The 'victim' label, however, has been deconstructed and critiqued more recently, in 2009, by Ellen Faulkner and Gayle MacDonald. Faulkner and MacDonald assert that feminism is 'no longer an "in" social movement'; indeed, it has become 'passé'. To combat this social trend they advocate a movement away from the 'victim' label: 'We hope to offer the beginnings of a framework of resistance, one that explores the moments *beyond* victimization ...' (Faulkner & MacDonald, 2009: 10).

They argue that 'women-as-victim is not an emancipatory cry' and 'not what our mothers and sisters intended, at all'. Instead, they offer examples that contribute towards 'turning victim language on its head', by championing a feminism that acknowledges different perspectives: 'True resistance, therefore, can be found through examining the *specificity* of women's conditions, the legal, social and cultural structures that disempower women, and the transformative power of negating the label of victim' (Faulkner, MacDonald, 2009: 11).

It is easy to see why some established feminists, or what Hoff Sommers calls 'Gender Feminists', embody a strong oppositional energy. The cultural environment of their 'historical space' was one of 'oppression and domination', which called for a strong response. Faulkner and MacDonald describe 'fractures in the women's movement' that threaten to 'disconnect women from each other over issues of identity, location, class and race' as the movement struggles to assert itself to a new generation of young women:

What is problematic about this direction is not the presence of victims but the absence of chronology; the treatment of victimization as fixed, rather than fluid, as a state of being, rather than a “journey of life” process. Simply put, the victims do not stay victims. (Faulkner, MacDonald, 2009: 13)

Adopting this approach while acknowledging the achievements of the past, emerging feminist thinkers can use the tools and codes of their generation to their advantage and combat the ‘backlash’ described by Faulkner and MacDonald. A key difference to this approach is the changing relationship between feminism and popular culture. Joanne Hallows and Rachel Moseley make this the focus of their study in *Feminism in Popular Culture* (2006):

Our argument that it is necessary to examine feminism *in* popular culture needs to be understood in the context of the relationship between feminism and popular culture in the second-wave feminism of the 1960s and 1970s. The women’s movement – along with many other political movements of the time– was conceived of as a social movement that was ‘outside’ of, and frequently oppositional to, the dominant culture and therefore as offering an alternative set of ideologies that sought to challenge hegemonic ideas about gender. (Hallows, Moseley, 2006: 3)

As established by Hallows and Moseley, the second-wave feminist movement ‘not only presumed the authority of the feminist’ to choose ‘correct images and ways of seeing all women’ but displayed ‘hostility towards the popular’ (2006:5); this is a key difference in generational-cultural perspective that underpinned *Once Upon a*

*Midnight*. As outlined in Chapter Three, through the work of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, there has been a ‘paradigm shift’ towards global dynamics as part of an emerging generational-cultural perspective. Global popular culture is a major part – if not *the* major part – of that shift.

Hallows and Moseley assert that the relationships between feminism and popular culture has changed since the 1980s, and perhaps through the ‘backlash’ of the 1990s, with the emergence of ‘post-feminist’ perspectives, which they describe as ‘contradictory ways in which feminism is manifested in the popular.’ They argue against a ‘refusal of the popular’ which involves ‘a refusal to engage with the lives of different generations of women’, and warn that such a refusal ‘can only limit the ability of feminisms to adapt’ (2006:15). It is through the work of Hallows and Moseley that the tensions around gender during the rehearsal period of *Once Upon a Midnight*, as well as conflicting interpretations of the text itself, can best be understood. It was not a conflict between feminists and ‘antifeminists’, nor an example of national-cultural miscommunication and misreading, but a conflict between different kinds of feminists, of both genders, representing different generational perspectives. Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, a contributor to Hallows and Moseley’s edited volume, sums up these differing perspectives, stating that ‘girl power may be hot, feminism is not’. She elaborates:

Many women, especially young women, simply do not want to associate themselves with feminism, despite the belief of most self-identified feminists that women of all ages have benefited, and continue to benefit, from feminism

as a political movement and a mode of cultural and political analysis. (Karlyn, 2006: 57)

It was unfortunate, therefore, that ‘antifeminist’ became the reductive frame for these debates during the creative process of *Once Upon a Midnight* because, as Karlyn asserts, the landscape is considerably more complex: ‘It is easy to blame a hostile political and social environment for the problems besetting feminism today; however, it is more productive to look within the movement itself for reasons why young women have resisted it’ (Karlyn, 2006: 59).

Karlyn describes second-wave feminism as a movement ‘institutionalized, especially in academia ... [that has] ... failed to recognize its own growing stakes in the establishment’ (2006:61). Considered in tandem with the research of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Karlyn’s reference to ‘the establishment’ alludes to a cultural hegemony that resists generational change. It is in the context of these differing perspectives on gender that we need to recognise the emergence of the term ‘post-feminist’ and its relevance to *Once Upon a Midnight*: ‘Post-feminism carries in its name many of the ambivalences felt by younger women towards the second wave’ (Karlyn, 2006: 61).

As a text that ‘more openly explores sexuality and femininity as multidimensional’, *Once Upon a Midnight* can be described as a post-feminist text that combines all of its cultural and gender categories ‘together ironically, playfully or with political intent, in a mode typical of postmodern culture’ (Karlyn, 2006: 62). In ways significant for this project, Karlyn references *Buffy* and the *Spice Girls* as ‘girl-power icons’ who can

embody what many second-wave feminists may interpret as a contradiction. They can behave as they choose and dress as they please without undermining their status or power, or without diluting or undermining their feminist ideology. Feminism and femininity are not mutually exclusive to emerging generations. Likewise, more recent pop cultural examples – Scarlett Johansson ‘kicking butt’ as Black Widow in *The Avengers* (2012), Neve Campbell outwitting a serial killer (also female) in her fourth *Scream* outing (2011), the Russian band *Pussy Riot* becoming an internet sensation as political activists and self-described ‘punk feminists’ – demonstrate that feminism holds currency when expressed through popular culture, in a way that emerging generations can relate to and embrace. The platforms of ‘girl power’ and ‘post-feminism’, and the strong hold of popular culture, have created a landscape where ‘young women have complicated the older feminist critique of the male gaze as a weapon to put women in their place, and instead exploit the spotlight as a source of power and energy’ (Karlyn, 2006: 64).

Popular culture has allowed women – particularly young women – to express ‘power and energy’ in a variety of ways, through a variety of icons. Returning to the image of Kelsey and Angelica, the concept of a young woman confronting her fairy godmother’s conservative attitudes has a clear discursive intent to spotlight young female empowerment and to allow Kelsey to assert her own specific generational-cultural identity. Therefore, the encounter between Kelsey and Angelica lends itself to a post-feminist reading. To make Angelica male, as the director suggested, would be a reductive step, denying women agency and choice.



Nozomi was also discussed in terms of gender during rehearsals. Mai objected to the character becoming overtly macho and to the black leather dominatrix-inspired costume. The warrior women featured in global pop culture, from gun slinging princesses to cheerleading vampire slayers, are chiefly *women* and the balance between strength and femininity is a core feature of this comparatively recent archetype. More than the ‘counter-cultural’ political activism of the second-wave feminist movement, the representation of empowered female protagonists in pop art forms influences perceptions of gender equality among women of the emerging generations. ‘Equality’ as a term is, in fact, losing purchase power; as identified by McCarthy, Hoff Sommers and others, emerging feminists chose ‘equity’: a distinction that ensures equal treatment without devaluing ‘differentness’. In this way, just as Angelica should retain her right to be villainous, it was important that Nozomi be female in the whole sense – a warrior woman, not a male substitute. Subsequent script revisions took away her sexuality, her femininity, her psychological and mental strength, and any sense of her inner life beyond her role as Kelsey’s ‘macho’ guardian, making her a proxy male. This was another reductive step.

In summary, gender dynamics is still, in the years after the event, the issue to which the cast responds most readily when prompted to reflect on the process. Gender harmony is expressed by the young artists, who share a generational-cultural perspective.

## Repositioning Nationality: A Cosmopolitan Perspective

Ken Yamamura described the central message of *Once Upon a Midnight* in these terms:

People will see Kelsey finding her courage, and see her friendships, and understand that no matter what culture you come from, it doesn't mean that others are 'evil'. Which is what I think the play is about. That should be very clear for all of us. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

Indeed, this had been one of the core goals of the production and Ken's comment became a handy soundbite for publicity. Yet, by the time the show had been performed in Okinawa, it seemed a reductive statement. *Of course* it was 'very clear to all of us'; in fact, it was such a clear statement that it hardly needed a play to illustrate it. There was not a single Australian cast member who had begun the process with the assumption that other (national) cultures were 'evil' or incompatible, or even all that 'different'. Reading through nationality had not been their primary concern. It had not been the primary concern for the majority of the Japanese either, and it lost all potency once the two national groups met and generational-cultural connections were established. It became evident that there was a steady resistance from the emerging artists towards the intercultural framework they had been given. The process could benefit from a new theoretical structure that allowed for generational perspectives and the acknowledgement of a cultural identity outside of a national construct.

As established in previous chapters, globalisation is one such alternative. Robert J. Holton argues that globalisation is neither ‘a consumer paradise’ nor a ‘demonic system’ (Holton, 1998: 185). He advocates a process of weighing up various structures to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their practical applications, to arrive at a point in-between that cherry picks ideas and influences related to global flow. The emerging artists involved in *Once Upon a Midnight* expressed a similar view, aware of the potential of globalisation as well as its many pitfalls.

To some degree, all rejected ‘East/West’ as a binary, although the degree varied between individuals. Some, like Ken, took the view that the ‘East/West’ binary must be challenged theatrically and that a contemporary artistic collaboration needed to move beyond this rigid frame, but became squeamish at any notion of hybridity outside a creative context. Others took a different view: a commitment to hybridity meant a commitment to immigration and interracial relationships, a complete hybridisation of national-cultural identity as part of an emerging global perspective. Therefore, while all were united in their rejection of what was seen as an established generations’ divisive ‘East/West’ paradigm, there was an *intragenerational* debate about how much needed to change.

In Chapter Three, I discussed Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim’s assertion that ‘a cosmopolitan perspective becomes necessary’ when attempting to understand ‘the young generation’ and ‘its ways of behaving.’ As one alternative perspective to the ‘East/West’ framing of the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival events, cosmopolitanism offers a global focus and a more nuanced view of national-cultural

identity. It breaks down the idea of ‘national culture’ as an umbrella term by acknowledging the many possibilities, including immigration, interracial relationships, hybridisation and emerging global perspectives, which complicate the notion of a ‘fixed’ national identity or a static cultural practice. In this way, cosmopolitanism recognises national cultures as ever-changing; nation-states can no longer keep hybridisation at bay when many citizens travel internationally and generational-cultural identity is welcomed into the mix. Cosmopolitanism allows for these facets, for the space between nations, as well as the generational connections the emerging artists of *Once Upon a Midnight* experienced.

Jeremy Waldron asks ‘What is Cosmopolitan?’, beginning with a characterisation of the ‘cosmopolitan lifestyle’ as:

... a person who lives in California, but came from Oxford via Edinburgh, and came in turn to Oxford from the other side of the world, the southwestern corner of the Pacific Ocean, whither his English and Irish ancestors emigrated in the mid-nineteenth century. [...] He did not take his identity as anything definitive, as anything homogenous that might be muddied or compromised when he studied Greek, ate Chinese, wore clothes made in Korea, worshipped with the Book of Common Prayer, listened to arias by Verdi sung by a Maori diva on Japanese equipment, gave lectures in Buenos Aires, followed Israeli politics, or practised Buddhist meditation techniques. I spoke of this person as a creature of modernity, conscious, even proud, of living in a mixed-up world and having a mixed-up self. (Waldron, quoted in Brown and Held, 2010: 163)

Waldron qualifies this description by making it clear that it is not exclusively people who travel that characterise, experience or embody a cosmopolitan perspective. Indeed many of the cities mentioned – every city in the world, in fact – is the target and the agent of cosmopolitanism to some extent, and the people who live there are, likewise, both targets and agents of a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Of course, one detects some cultural stereotypes in Waldron's description, with the Chinese mentioned in relation to food alone and 'Western' cities and experiences at the forefront, but he does capture, and celebrate, the sense of a 'mixed-up self' in a 'mixed-up world'. This 'mixed-up world' perspective speaks to the core of the experience for the emerging artists involved in *Once Upon a Midnight*. Being 'mixed-up', in the celebratory sense, is part of the positive, affirming, pragmatic reality that the emerging artists experienced in rehearsal. This cosmopolitan attitude negates the need for an 'East meets West' discourse that, as Waldron puts it, 'the proponents of cultural identity politics claim they do need, claim in fact that they are entitled to as a matter of right [and represents] the secure framework of a single culture in which, in some deep sense, they belong' (2010: 164).

Within a cosmopolitan frame there is no need to overemphasise – or artificially apply – superficial markers of difference. On the contrary, cosmopolitanism allows people to acknowledge hybridisation in fashion, language, music, dance, cuisine, architecture, lifestyle choices and, of course, in popular culture. Viewed through this theoretical frame, the generational-cultural connections surrounding *Once Upon a Midnight* can be taken as the 'solutions or purported solutions' of 'one group' united by 'distinctive experience'; in this case generational experience (Waldron, quoted in Brown & Held, 2010: 174).

The emerging artists agreed that the ‘East meets West’ intercultural framework, however well-meaning, did not provide an adequate justification for the ‘distinctive experience’ of developing, rehearsing and staging this production. While standard intercultural theory leaves little room for this shift in emphasis, cosmopolitanism is more fluid, perhaps due to the particular mode of cooperation it promotes. Ulrich Beck presents ‘The Cosmopolitan Manifesto’, where he directly contrasts an ‘old system of values’ with ‘new orientations’: ‘Whereas, in the old system of values, the self always had to be subordinated to patterns of the collective, the new orientations towards the “we” are creating something like a cooperative or altruist individualism’ (Beck, quoted in Brown and Held, 2010: 223).

This concept of an ‘altruist individualism’ as part of a cosmopolitan model of global engagement captures the views of the emerging participants interviewed during *Once Upon a Midnight*. Although linked through a generational bond and united against an ‘East/West’ dichotomy, the emerging artists remained individuals with distinct aesthetic tastes and separate ideas about how to adapt to, and direct, the course of the future. Cosmopolitanism allows the group to celebrate that individualism without abandoning the bond of a generational collective. It allows the group to reposition nationality – to put this perspective in a context that serves the experience, instead of a context that dictates the experience – and reduce the power of ‘East/West’ and *differentness* to dictate the on and off stage interaction.

Patrick Hayden further challenges national discourse by asserting that ‘the state is no longer the only important actor in global affairs’ (Hayden, quoted in Brown and Held,

2010: 369). This also became evident over the rehearsal period of *Once Upon a Midnight*, as the group departed from the national divide and found other shared cultural identities. I'd like to revisit here Ken Yamamura's statement that 'no matter what culture you come from it doesn't mean that others are 'evil''. The publicity surrounding the event followed this idea, but, increasingly, this description of the show failed to satisfy many in the cast because it was an inaccurate reflection of the group's experience. In Chapter Six I will discuss conflicting press interviews in more detail as we track the performances, but the core point here is that the perspective of the emerging artists was already emerging during the rehearsal period and established 'Japan/Australia' discourse did not adequately support this perspective.

This nationally driven discourse was also an inadequate theory to apply to the text itself. Although Angelica shuns and oppresses diversity, her final scene with Kelsey illustrates a multifaceted confrontation during which national and generational-cultural perspectives, identities and concerns intersect. Taken in isolation, national-cultural discourse was not enough to support a story in a satisfactory way. The emerging artists raised the question: was this project *ever* only about nationality?

This thesis affords opportunities to track *Once Upon a Midnight* from its conception through to reflection and, consequently, draw attention to the fact that there was a lot more going on: national-cultural discourse may have triggered this exchange, but it could never offer a complete picture.

As the creative process unfolded, the cultural 'where' and the cultural 'when' jostled for status. The connection between the Australian and Japanese participants came close to transcending nationality, while maintaining a respect for difference. Where

our grandparents fought a bloody war, and our parents' generation struggled to communicate respectfully, we could laugh, joke and comfortably make connections. A shared visit to a Japanese peace museum further solidified the group bond. Boxed in by our own press, many in the group came to the conclusion that the 'East meets West' – or 'West meets East' – label that had opened up the cultural exchange was limiting and divisive: 'As long as this bind of 'West' and 'East' exists, war and discrimination definitely won't disappear' (Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*).

Sharing ideas outside the rehearsal space, in an environment removed from publicity and scrutiny, led the emerging Japanese and Australian artists to take their connection beyond this simple journey and question the relevance of the 'East/West' divide altogether. In-depth dissection of the workings of nationalism and its relationship to global culture readily took place. Although each participant was interviewed separately, the topics we discussed quickly spilled over into our day-to-day conversations to form an impression of the conflicting perspectives within the creative ensemble as a whole, in particular the competing generational perspectives. Below are some samples of these different perspectives as the rehearsal period developed, ranging from those with a primary focus on the national-cultural 'where' to those centring on a generational-cultural 'when':

[When I came to Australia] I missed the group culture. Japanese people bond in groups. I missed that group bonding. I didn't feel like I was part of a community. This is the longest time I have been here [in Japan] for many years. Here I understand every television show and every newspaper. In Australia I understand most, but some things – some jokes or some of the



vocabulary – I have to keep learning. You become the bottom of society. You are not disabled, but it almost feels that way. Just because you cannot speak the language, doesn't mean you are not thinking. It is good training for your ego. You can live in pessimism, or whinging, or you can laugh and celebrate. Laugh at yourself. Every day is a cross-cultural experience for me. (Yumi Umiuare, choreographer)

Directing is lonely, especially when none of the crew speaks your language. (Catherine Fitzgerald, director)

The two cultures contrast. Some of the words can't be translated. An English person might say "good luck" but there is no one term for "good luck" in Japanese. So you have to search to find the sense of what the character means. Australian young people want to grow up earlier than Japanese young people. Our maturity is different. Maybe our audiences will be different. We also contrast in terms of discipline. The Japanese actors practise hard. Mai is probably working as we speak. (Ken Yamamura, translator, *Hiyokko*)

How do you create an arc of suspense across two languages? How do you preserve the mystery without confusing the audience? This has been a major headache. I wanted to craft a bilingual script without slipping into direct repetition across two languages. I flirted with many different ideas, a traditional narrator, a character stepping out of the action to directly address the audience, a character commenting on the action from within the audience ... I even begged for subtitles! Eventually, some level of repetition becomes

unavoidable. To take two cultures with you, there has to be sacrifices. We have sacrificed the subtleties of the story in favour of physical action and broad humour. I wrote a dark fairytale with a mystery element. That's probably not what we'll see on stage. (Alex Vickery-Howe, writer – interviewed by Mai with translation assistance from Ken)

This first interview sample, encompassing the key creative artists and the primary translator, demonstrates a national perspective. Yumi and Catherine talk exclusively in national-cultural terms: Yumi focuses on a sense of Japanese 'group bonding' and returning home to her culture of origin, while Catherine expresses her feelings of cultural isolation. Occupying a slightly different perspective, Ken worries about the 'contrast' between 'two cultures' but still identifies some sense of generational difference between Japan and Australia, while I too identify 'two cultures' but focus on the audience and on the shift from 'the subtleties of the story' to 'physical action and broad humour', indicating my concern for the way the play will translate generationally. National concerns dominate all four responses; although Ken and I demonstrate some generational awareness, we are still more closely aligned with Yumi and Catherine than we are with the cast:

Yeah, we could get around the whole language barrier. Put a white man and a Japanese man in a room together, they'll work it out and I reckon they could eventually come up with something quite good. (Chris Asimos, *Scratch*)

We come from two different countries, but our core, our expression, is the same. I'm a drummer, so to me music is a universal language. (Yasushi Ohsuka, drummer)

I was like "this would be a good experience of just going for something", being totally out of my comfort zone and just saying "OK, let's see what happens". But I'm totally comfortable working with these guys. It's chilled. (David Hirst, *Damon*)

This second sample indicates those with generational-cultural awareness coupled with a strong sense of a 'Japan/Australia' divide. Chris talks of a 'white man' and a 'Japanese man', while Ohsuka san identifies the 'two different countries' first before moving into a sense of music as a 'universal language'. Lastly, Dave talks about his level of comfort changing overtime. All three of these artists find a sense of connection across the barriers they perceive, but their perspective differs slightly to the following:

Are we that different? Who says we're that different? The most exciting part for me is the point where we stop thinking in terms of two languages and find our universal language. There's a third language. (Keiko Yamaguchi, translator, *Zuru-Zuru*)

We are one group. We are together. (Shusaku Uchida, *Shima the kijimuna*)

It is about the individual, not nationality. Japanese people are not all the same!

I feel I have lots in common with many young Australians in the cast.

(Mai Kakimoto, *Nozomi*)

What I've learnt is that you have to just go with it. The easiest way is to just go with something and try your ideas. It's easier with the people in the same age group. (Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

Talk about age. Age is very important in Australia and Japan. I can't walk up to Shimoyama san and say "hey, what's happening?" Age is a big part of this.

(Shimabukuro Hiroyuki, *Kango the kappa*)

This final sample represents artists who are actively questioning cultural barriers.

Keiko asks 'Who says we're that different?' while Mai asserts 'It is about the individual, not nationality.' Mel and Hiro, meanwhile, explicitly state that 'age' is a determining factor in this process.

Positioning the contrasting interviews in this way not only demonstrates a sliding discursive scale from a national to generational perspective, but a sliding emotional scale from a sense of isolation to a sense of belonging. Where some found 'universal language', others felt 'lonely'; where some found 'contrast', others found 'lots in common'. Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis address notions of 'belonging' as they define cosmopolitanism as an ethical position, one that defies the power of the nation state and, instead, seeks to connect globally, finding value and opportunity beyond national-cultural discourse: 'The idea of cosmopolitanism has

historically been a way of addressing the complexities surrounding the question of belonging: in particular the question of belonging to a local community as opposed to a wider world' (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis, 2009: 34).

These scholars note that a cosmopolitan discussion is 'always historically conditioned' and that each period presents 'a threshold of a whole new era, allowing for the re-conceptualization of belonging' (2009: 35). Once again we are reminded of Bharucha's 'historical space' as Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis describe the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marking the end of the Cold War 'global bipolarity'. Similarly, the 'global bipolarity' of 'East/West' stands as an intercultural position antithetical to the ethical position of cosmopolitanism. 'False division' became a phrase circling the cast. There was a sense that 'East/West' was applied externally rather than lived spontaneously; a sense that the play, the two festivals and all reporting on the production were relying on the cast being different, divided and mutually exotic. This metanarrative was constructed around a reading through nationality – a fiction performed for cameras, radio recordings and journalists, and even for the older artists in the rehearsal room. There was the play on stage and the play *around* the stage. Chris and Hiro pretended that they could not communicate at all during a spot on Okinawan television and then, together, told the story of their interview for the rest of the cast, laughing and congratulating each other as they went. In the rehearsal room, much communication was handled through eye contact, sharing reactions and signalling that 'we'll talk later'. It was almost comically absurd that the same people who addressed each other formally in the rehearsal room would then walk a few metres to the attached office in Okinawa or the green room in Adelaide and adopt different and markedly more familiar personas. We all had to 'be' different

because there was an external pressure to display difference. This was a performance that many in the group slipped into easily. It was the default persona when an established artist such as the Australian director, the Japanese producer and staff, a Flinders University representative, or one of the Adelaide Festival Centre producers entered the vicinity.

The emerging Japanese artists, with their sense of ‘public’ and ‘private face’, acknowledged that this shared performance of difference had an amusing, even playful, element as terms like ‘Other’, ‘alien’ and *gaijin* were used ironically and subversively in the green room, but formed a straight-faced discourse at official functions. Why would we all do this? Partly, it goes back to the Japanese delineation between work space and social space and, in that sense, there is a national-cultural element to this behaviour; but largely, it was an expected image that we all understood as necessary. Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis provide a further explanation through the concept of ‘belonging’. Perhaps the act of displaying difference was a bonding exercise in itself, a secret game, part of a generational-cultural assertion of agency:

Belonging, then, from the cosmopolitan point of view, comes to be seen as something based on multiple and overlapping levels. One’s sense of where and with whom one belongs can be connected at a variety of scales, some of which reflect core sociological concerns with class and status groups, and others of which may connect to more nebulous senses of shared identity. Thus a list of sites of belonging might include: profession, sense of class position, ethnicity, nationality and religion; but it would also include such connections

as social clubs, friendship circles, support for a sports team, or adoption of certain fashions. All of these statuses have the potential to be either open or closed. (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis, 2009: 38)

This concept of ‘open or closed’ statuses also resonates strongly with the experience of rehearsing and staging *Once Upon a Midnight*. The generational-cultural perspective of the younger artists was, in many ways, ‘closed’. Secret games of pretending to display difference, specific cultural references, communication through eye contact, private conversations – all of these behaviours which were evident generationally could be applied to indicate a ‘social club’ or *clique*. In Chapter Three, I examined Mark Davis’ references to ‘cliquishness’ and ‘gerrymanders’ when discussing the established generation; but the same sense of exclusivity, the same ‘closed’ behaviour, was used by the emerging generations of *Once Upon a Midnight* to assert their own sense of ‘belonging’.

This ‘closed’ social attitude was largely in response to the ‘closed’ cultural attitude of the established artists involved. The Kijimuna Festival forums that I will discuss in Chapter Six, for example, centred on national-cultural difference and left no room for other perspectives. Likewise, the OzAsia Festival environment encouraged emerging artists to play a part, or ‘toe the party line’ as our university professor advised. We had to ‘be’ what the festivals commissioned. Faced with these circumstances which were – remember we were all students – non-negotiable, the emerging artists could only assert their agency through subversion and satire, and this, in turn, further alienated the established artists involved. The failure of each side to find a middle ground and facilitate ‘open’ communication is the lost opportunity of this process, and

the reason why acknowledging generational-cultural identity is the core of this thesis.

However, it may also be considered a pitfall of cosmopolitanism as Kendall,

Woodward and Skrbis describe:

It is salutary to remind ourselves of Dickens' (1956) novel *Bleak House* where he describes people who are dedicated to 'telescopic philanthropy' in far away places and express beautiful sentiments about the 'brotherhood of humanity' but who have little time or talent to recognize the needs of those around them. (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis, 2009: 38)

In summary, cosmopolitanism provides a perspective that repositions nationality in this encounter and widens the discussion beyond the familiar 'East/West' framework. It also provides discursive tools to deconstruct the umbrella term 'national culture' by breaking it down into varied facets, highlighting global travel, migration, hybridisation and transient cultural identity, all of which were discussed by the emerging artists, inside and outside rehearsal, and would factor into the audience response from young people in Adelaide (see Chapter Six). When the project is viewed this way – with the benefit of hindsight, instead of through the lens of 'East meets West' or 'Japan/Australia' – the intergenerational tensions of the production are given context.

This thesis contends that an acknowledgement of generational-cultural difference could be a step towards intergenerational empathy. Through this acknowledgement, cosmopolitanism could be offered as one alternative to 'East/West' interculturalism as presented by the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival events. At this point in the account,



having established the emerging generational perspective, it is important also to acknowledge that the ‘failing’ of this process, or perhaps the lost opportunity of this process, was due to a lack of generational-cultural acknowledgement and not the fault of any specific generational-cultural group. Generationally, there was no clear recognition from different groups towards ‘the needs of those around them’ and this was to the detriment of the working environment and the production itself. While the emerging artists felt confused and disempowered by this process they were able to adapt to their new environment and circumstances, and develop a strong peer-group identity as a result. Excluded from this sense of ‘belonging’, the established artists were under pressure to deliver a product in accordance with the festivals’ expectations, and were subject to both national-cultural and generational-cultural isolation. Among all the discussions of Japanese and Australian ‘difference’, it would have been constructive to engage in a more candid discussion of what participants were actually feeling, to hear about their ‘needs’ beyond ‘East/West’. From an emerging generational-cultural perspective, there was a strong need to assert a ‘shared identity’ beyond national culture. This is not to deny history, or to disregard the experiences and enormous accomplishments of those who have come before, but rather to recognise that while national-cultural challenges were present in this process, they did not define it. This is why an acknowledgement of generational-cultural perspective is so important and why it too needs to be explored in all the facets this encounter reveals. These include: shared global popular culture, emergent political movements and identities, a deconstruction of what constitutes the labels ‘emerging’ and ‘established’ in theatrical hierarchy – terms used by Australian arts organisations and funding bodies (see Chapter Six, ‘Approaches to Theatre for Young People’) –

and, finally, as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim assert, an acknowledgement of generationally-informed cultural practices, ideals and attitudes.

## **‘Michiko’s Challenge’**

In this section I record the period in-between the production in Okinawa and the production in Adelaide. This is an important part of the account of the process ‘off stage’ for three reasons. First, this is when I had the opportunity to interview Mai, without the aid of a translator. Mai reflected frankly on the process away from the other cast members and creative artists. Second, this was my return to Tokyo and my return to a national-cultural self-consciousness which, while largely dismissed through my account of the rehearsal process, nevertheless formed a part of this overall experience that cannot be excluded, merely considered in tandem with other cultural concerns. Third, this was my reunion with Michiko Aoki. As observers of this process, it was Michiko and her colleagues who first raised generational-cultural difference from an established generational perspective. They freely acknowledged that this cultural difference in perspective was important, but turned the critical lens back on the emerging generations, asking how we would carry the torch our elders had lit. This challenge resonated strongly with me and with my peers when I shared this account. The emerging artists had been championing generational-cultural acknowledgement for months and, when that acknowledgement was finally made, it came with a sense of responsibility. In this section, I record some future possibilities in response.

I begin with my arrival in Tokyo, having separated from the other Australian cast members who had gone home to Adelaide. Adrift once again in the ‘big city’, cut off

from familiar faces, I wondered if the ‘Otherness’ of national culture would strike back to claim some ground or if the experience of working closely with Japanese peers had permanently tinted my cultural lens in favour of generationalism: ‘Alone suddenly, I arrived in Tokyo and staggered about with my bags until I found the hotel. The taxi driver laughed generously when I said “help” in Japanese (“Tasukete!” “Tasukete Kudasai!”)’ (Writer’s Diary, 2008).

Tokyo presented an opportunity to debrief with Mai, who was able to confidently reflect on the journey so far. In contrast to the formal first week, where I had been tied up by a theoretical discourse of ‘cultural misappropriation’, ‘cultural imperialism’ and self-conscious behaviour, this was meeting an old friend. Rather than censor every thought, the attitude was firmly ‘anything goes’:

Mai met me in the lobby and we went to Shinjuku garden. She had never heard of it, but I showed her where it was (having scouted it out earlier.) She realised, belatedly, “Ah, yes, I was here in February.” Not the best Japanese guide!

Mai was uniquely placed to critique the dynamics that had built around her over the production. This was a source of amusement and slight frustration, as some of us had smothered her and some of us had avoided her, and only a few had really taken the time to talk to her. Notably Matty, Mel and Lauren had made a connection early on because “they do not THINK, they just TRY.” On the other hand, she happily mimed me crying “Ken, Ken!” as had apparently been the case every time I’d been trapped with her at the beginning. Because

she didn't understand English as well, at that time, she had told Keiko she thought I was "mean" and only slowly realised I was paranoid about offending her. There's a lot of irony in that. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

These revelations, peeling back the lid of the first week in the rehearsal process, confirmed what many of us – Japanese and Australian alike – had been suspecting: that the theory itself had been a barrier that almost ended communication before it began. Speaking in English, Mai conceded that national-cultural labels made her 'uncomfortable', but was quick to add that the attitude behind them was 'caring', even if they 'mistake us sometimes'. Once again, she wondered why it was necessary to engage with 'old thinking' at all and repeated her view that acknowledging the established theory was in itself a form of disempowerment: 'why study the old way?' In other words, why accept or conform to an established generational perspective when the process of working together had clearly exposed its shortcomings?

Tessa Morris-Suzuki sheds some light on why Mai and many of the other Japanese cast members approach the dichotomy of 'East' and 'West' with cynicism by establishing that 'the notion of "the West" as a coherent entity is itself profoundly "western".' She further contends that 'analyses which try to use the category "Japanese culture" as a means of escaping the grasp of the modern western worldview seem therefore to be destined (like Monkey in the legend) to find themselves, after many speculations and struggles, still trapped within the extended hand of a self-defined "western modernity"' (Morris-Suzuki, 1995: 775). During rehearsal I had sensed reluctance on the part of many of my Japanese peers to dignify established 'East/West' intercultural theory with a considered response. When I pressed the issue

seriously it seemed to annoy them, as though I were failing to live in the experience. It appeared to them that I was continually dragging an old and dusty reading into the mix, even betraying my own generation in my willingness to engage with the intergenerational ‘Other’ and their ‘old ideas’; as Morris-Suzuki confirms, this idea of ‘East’ and ‘West’ was not part of our shared ‘historical space’. Mai’s attitude was to move on swiftly to another topic, but not before pressing back with her assertion that international communication is most effective when you ‘don’t think, just try’. So I followed her example:

I insulted her culture quite well. First ragging on the Japanese love of red bean as a dessert (beans should *never* be a dessert. The whole nation obsesses with red bean!) and, second, pointing out that tea ceremonies have been taken too seriously throughout their history. It’s just a drink. She countered by picking on my language. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

As natural as these interactions seemed at the time, when taken in contrast with the national-cultural anxiety of the first week, where ‘thinking’ overshadowed ‘trying’, it was clear that the journey had significantly altered the participants. Occasional language mix-ups aside, which were always more comical than frustrating, talking to Mai had become as easy as talking to Mel, Michelle or Lauren. The sign of any true friendship is being able to poke fun.<sup>4</sup>

I accepted Mai’s view that the theory had hindered rather than progressed discussion and that communication worked best without self-censoring. However, even with Mai

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<sup>4</sup> When listening back to these recorded interviews with Ken to translate a year later, there were many Japanese comments at my expense left to be discovered in-between the formal English answers.

present as a guide and as a friend with whom I could compare perspectives, returning to Tokyo and again being treated as an ‘Other’ had re-confirmed national culture as a strong force. There was the sense, as in 2006, of being a novelty, although it must be said that some of this attention was earned through eccentric behaviour:

Back in my hotel, I tried to wash my clothes. The first wash was without detergent because I didn’t see the little machine where you bought it. Then I washed them again, but took them out too early when I thought the washer had stopped, but it hadn’t. It was too late to put them back, as I had already put coins in the drier and that was going, but I didn’t want to be wasteful so I took off my socks and let them wash instead. All this while an elderly Japanese man washed his things and stared in wonder at my farcical incompetence.

(Writer’s Diary, 2008)

Under the Japanese gaze, particularly the elderly Japanese gaze, I retreated back into the ‘dancing monkey’ role I had embodied in 2006. But, whereas in 2006 when national culture had felt like a total and far-reaching force, now it was repositioned as part of a bigger and more complex cultural narrative. As I explored Tokyo anew, I was once again aware of the stares from businessmen, the whispers of students always ready to raise fingers in a peace sign if eye contact was made and the girls outside clubs who would spot me a mile off and beckon with fliers and broken English, and random shouts of ‘USA!’ Nevertheless, this time I noted that there were also global brands shining from billboards, young Japanese wearing t-shirts promoting global icons, celebrities and political causes, and there was hybridised art in shop windows, on public video screens and dominating television. National culture was sitting beside

generational culture. My eyes had adjusted through the *Once Upon a Midnight* experience. When reunited with Japanese friends Hitomi and Shikyo, the influence of generational culture and my own changing gaze was clear:

She [Hitomi] told me she was dieting for a photo shoot. He [Shikyo] told me he wanted to move overseas with his wife and children to further his career.

Actors are the same no matter which country you're in. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

I had, of course, participated in identical conversations in Australian bars and cafes with young actor friends in the months before the debut production of *Once Upon a Midnight* and countless times over the years since. With takeaway coffee in hand, we discussed the frustrations of our business. It was all too familiar. Subsequent conversations were further indicative of a generational-cultural dynamic: on two occasions elderly war veterans asked for a chat in English to see if they still knew the language and asked what I was doing in their country. When I told them it was to rehearse and promote a play with a combined Japanese and Australian cast, they were both visibly surprised and delighted, bowing low and wishing me the best. The second gentleman even smiled and commented on how things change over the years before asking me how his English was and whether I thought it was too late for him to see Australia.

Later, at the hotel, a member of staff approached me in the lobby to share stories of Europe, encouraging me to travel there next. What all three of these people had in common was a sense of a new, united future expressed through comparisons with a divided and unhappy past. The discoveries of this process – 'time' and 'place', the

cultural ‘when’ and the cultural ‘where’, Bharucha’s notion of ‘historical space’ – were evident all around me. It struck me how fortunate I was to be living and working in this particular ‘historical space’, this period of global awareness, where such discoveries were not only empowering on a personal level, but socially and culturally progressive, even healing.

No longer the frustrated writer, but an excited researcher with a hypothesis, I decided to share my revelation with Michiko and her colleagues. Michiko Aoki has a lot of experience with Japanese-Australian theatrical collaborations as both a theatrical performer and a respected international producer. I wondered how she would respond to the idea of generational culture and national culture as discourses with equal relevance to be considered in tandem with one another. She agreed to be recorded so long as it was an informal discussion at her home with food and plenty of wine:

I recorded interviews with Wada san and Suwada san, a Japanese director and Professor, respectively. The trio of Wada san, Suwada san and Michiko (or “Aoki san”) make up the big minds behind *Dramatic Australia* taking Australian plays, translating them and introducing them to Japan. Lots of beer and Australian wine. Terrific company, though the interview tape is compromised by how well we were getting along and how boisterous we all became (and Michiko always turned it off when she had something really interesting to say!) (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

It was over dinner that Michiko laid down her challenge. She and her friends had paved the way, but ‘what would happen next? What would the next generation do to



honour the spirit of those who had come before?’ (Writer’s Diary, 2008). Michiko and her colleagues had no difficulty accepting that there would be a difference in generational-cultural perspective, that the emerging generations would communicate internationally in a different way to their established colleagues, but what would we *do*? Once we had asserted ourselves and convinced artists from established generations that we carried our own unique cultural perspective, *how* would we express it? What would our generational-cultural contribution be? If we rejected the paradigms of the past so resolutely then what were we going to replace them with? I realised I had no answer to their call.

On the train home I reflected that *Once Upon a Midnight* had only been conceived because an established artist, Professor Julie Holledge, had suggested and steered it. What would we do when the torch was finally passed? Burn ourselves? Or light the way for those that would come next? The struggle between Kelsey and Angelica had ended with Kelsey moving forward, but into what? *Once Upon a Midnight* had only allowed her to confront the ‘old ideas’ of the previous generation, to move beyond the fearful politics of ‘Otherness’, but the next step was still, as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim would say, ‘*terra incognita*’. Leaving Tokyo, I scribbled down a question on a scrap of paper as the plane took off: ‘*What comes after fear?*’

If Kelsey’s journey was to continue, it would need to portray a larger view of cultural difference, beyond ‘East/West’. It would require a protagonist who had already crossed the perceived ‘East/West’ barrier, not a xenophobe, but a global citizen. It would not disregard national-cultural discourse completely, just tip the balance in favour of the discourse generated by emerging artists: generational-cultural discourse.

It would be all about the next, uncertain step. The sequel to *Once Upon a Midnight* began on the way home from Michiko's house – *The Empty Tomorrow*.

Discussing changing attitudes with relation to generational differences over the weeks that followed elicited advice from Mai, Keiko, Shu and Ken to critique the discourses, not the people who follow them. The issue should not be written up in terms of old or young people, just 'established views' and 'emerging ideas.' It was an ironic fact but differing perspectives, or what the emerging artists referred to as 'misreadings', during the Okinawa rehearsal period had given birth to alliances that otherwise were highly unlikely to have occurred. Generationally defined misreadings of gender dynamics, in particular, encouraged Mai and Keiko to show their strong and subversive personalities, and break down national-cultural barriers. Despite – or, once again, *because* of – the reductive interpretation of the play's text within the rehearsal room in favour of physical action, generationally shared defiance, expressed in self-reflexive humour, satire and parody, had brought the cast together. Finally, through the complex, candid and often embarrassing social interactions outside the rehearsal room, the emerging Japanese and Australian participants found a 'shared identity'. For all the lost opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and exchange, the process had yielded many positive results:

We said our "goodbyes" at the airport. Ohsuka san, the drummer, brought candy. Catherine argued imperiously with Yumi about her bags not being put straight back to Adelaide. Bit of a scene. I realised I will actually miss her. You just never know what crazy and offensive thing she will do or say next, and I found myself giving her a big hug. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

As a framing device, 'Michiko's Challenge' puts the experience into perspective while opening new cross-generational creative and research possibilities, which engaged the emerging artists. In fact, the questions Michiko raised became the project's legacy as many of us seek to answer them through subsequent creative works. Nevertheless, the public response from the Okinawa performance of *Once Upon a Midnight* was still being translated as we returned to Australia and the posters were just starting to appear on bus shelters, street corners and public walls across Adelaide. Before we could move forward with what we had discovered about ourselves, we had first to discover how the young audience members were responding. Our peers were waiting to pass judgement on our performance and the critical question – the research question that had led us to this point – concerned the intersection between national culture and generational culture. The goal to bring young people out of the fringes of the OzAsia Festival and into the theatre had already been met; the show had surpassed marketing expectations and sold out as the 'hit' of the festival, but that only indicated confidence in the concept, not necessarily in its execution. It was time to find out which of the competing perspectives – the 'where' of national culture, or the 'when' of generational culture – would hold sway for a young Japanese and young Australian audience.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Curtain Rises

After all the hard work, long hours, misreadings, confusions, re-writes and adventures, *Once Upon a Midnight* finally had its premieres in Japan and Australia. In the sections entitled *Okinawa City* and *Adelaide*, I chart the performances' stage life, highlighting the contrast in the audience reactions in both countries as well as in critical response across different generations. These responses reflect that the decision to focus on generational culture in the text and national culture in development and rehearsal ultimately shaped the performance outcome. In the third section of this chapter, *Approaches to Theatre for Young People: Generationalism as Cultural Study*, I compare *Once Upon a Midnight* to *Retaliation* (2010), another rock musical designed for emerging audiences. The contrasting creative journeys and critical responses to these productions highlight the need for research, consultation and open debate across generations with stronger emphasis on a generational-cultural framework when artists enter into a performance process and evaluate performance outcomes. Finally, I complete this chapter with *Transculturalism and Generational Social Change*, in which I explore transculturalism as a useful critical framework, situating my reading within work by one of its proponents, Arianna Dagnino, in the context of scholarship by Ulf Hannerz, Sunaina Maira, Elisabeth Soep and Wolfgang Welsch. I demonstrate that, when positioned in contrast to the 'East/West' intercultural perspectives championed by established artists, transculturalism provides an alternative model within which to interpret the process of conceiving, rehearsing and staging *Once Upon a Midnight*.

## Okinawa City

The weather was scorching in Okinawa City when I gathered presents and cards for the cast and crew. I returned to ‘Music Town’, the labyrinthine and brand new theatrical venue that would serve as the backdrop for the official opening ceremony of the Kijimuna Festival. Technicians rushed back and forth in a frazzle, rolling out microphones and speakers for the Mayor’s speech. Inside, *Once Upon a Midnight* would be the main event, the show to open the festival. The play was now in its final dress rehearsal and the cast, many of whom had been struck with flu, rallied to make it as strong an opening as possible. I watched as the condom-wearing chorus, the man in a nappy, and the drummer, looking like a sad clown in his vest, coloured hat and ‘rock make-up’, all passed by me – some were pumped, some were gloomy, some were wondering aloud how in the hell they had gotten themselves into this situation. Walking backstage as opening night drew closer, everyone seemed determined to pull it off, even though feelings about the show’s development were still mixed at best:

Dave said “it is what it is now, man” and went off to gel his hair and paint a fake tie on his chest, as ordered. He’s just happy he won his recent argument and now doesn’t have to stick adhesive to his teeth and wear fangs (which would have made talking difficult and singing damn near impossible. Besides, neither of us was confident that the shoddy glue was safe or that the fangs would *ever* come off).

Chris seemed to dig his Scratch costume, despite the tears of laughter it brought from everyone else, and Mai stood in her bondage-outfit, shaking her

head, “Why, Alex san? *Why?*”, before rather glumly moving off to the wings, muttering to herself in Japanese. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

I watched as the director and the choreographer took a seat together towards the back while I sat alone to one side of the front row, as inconspicuous as possible, heart dancing. The audience filed in and filled up every row, until I was moved to an extra chair. They were mainly couples with young children, in fact, very young, some toddlers. The audience noise was soon loud, against the cast’s expectation of a quiet Japanese reception. Their chatter hummed beneath the mellow rock chosen as front of house music. The sense of anticipation rose. Lights down. Hush. Drums. A wolf – or rather Chris Asimos – howls off-stage. The children shiver. The show begins ...



*Tenchou sings ‘Bring on the Night’*

*Photographer: Tomoaki Kudaka*

The debut performance went by in a flash. When the final number erupted, the audience erupted with it. ‘Music Town’ thundered with cheers and applause:

Two kids walked out when Scratch was (almost) killed. Tenchou loved that. I watched the audience carefully, and they laughed at the Japanese lines – mainly Shu as Shima because of the in-joke about him as a *kijimuna* in the Kijimuna Festival. But it was the Aussie actors speaking Japanese lines that got the biggest reaction. (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

*Once Upon a Midnight* was a hit in Okinawa City. The response was much warmer than many in the cast had expected. However, we reminded ourselves that the bulk of the audience in Okinawa was very young:

I’ll know after the fact what the Japanese children *really* thought, but they were smiling and reacting the way one would hope. Laughing at Scratch and Ryan, getting excited during ‘Hot Red Sugar’ and frightened by Angelica as a disembodied voice. But these kids were young. The teens were arms crossed, straight-faced. Certainly we’ve shot down the ladder demographic-wise. This is an early school show now, not a modern rock musical for teens. *This will have big implications for Adelaide.* (I think we’ve pitched it at 12 and over there too. Not good!) (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

Backstage there were hugs all round and the mood could be described as re-energised. The director gave notes in the corridor as the cast gathered. The show had hung

together once and the next performances would be met with similar reactions.

Although I was apprehensive each time the show began, I was relieved when the audience clapped and stomped the floor at the end. I offered the following reflections in my diary: ‘The costumes baffle me, the music is repetitive and bland, and the direction unclear, but these actors really trust each other and manage to sell *most* of it. Even the rice bubble zombies rocked!’ (Writer’s Diary, 2008)

Catherine’s achievement as director was clear: Okinawan audiences embraced the cartoon-like antics that had made me uneasy. The ‘East meets West’ discourse of the Kijimuna Festival set expectations for the mix of Japanese and Australian artists performing in a light and comic style. When the jubilation died down, many in the cast expressed surprise that the show had been so well-received.



*Journey to the Underground:*

*Kelsey Clarke (Lauren Henderson) clings to Nozomi (Mai Kakimoto)*

*Photographer: Tomoaki Kudaka*





*Nozomi (Mai Kakimoto) vs. Yoshiki (Tenchou) Photographer: Tomoaki Kudaka*



*Kelsey Clarke (Lauren Henderson) gets a nasty surprise from the vultures, Flopsy (David Hirst), Zuru-Zuru (Keiko Yamaguchi) and Kowashimashou (Shusaku Uchida) or, as the cast renamed him, 'the Phantom Chef'. Photographer: Tomoaki Kudaka*

One of the suggested explanations for such a positive reception was that the show's theme of intergenerational conflict may have resonated with the audience in Okinawa, despite the cast's concerns with its cartoonish representation. David offered the following opinion:

It's about Kelsey. She gets put into this strange nightmare world and all she's trying to do the whole time is figure out where she stands and everybody is trying to push her in different directions. [...] If you look at it, Kelsey is being pushed and pulled, and if I think back to when I was a younger, like a few

years ago, it feels like that. It's very much like clinging on. When it's appropriate you're an adult, and when it's appropriate you're a child. And you manipulate those two worlds and live somewhere in between. Maybe that's what's coming through. (David Hirst, *Damon*)

Had the national focus been a strong directorial choice, as asserted by the established artists from the project's inception? Or had the generational aspects of the narrative shone through? What were the Okinawan children actually responding to?

The Kijimuna Festival office provided an audience feedback service. Aside from a few references to a microphone that had failed midway through one performance, the feedback was glowing. The music and musicianship were praised, as was the success in conveying information across two languages. Here is a sample of the responses as translated by the Kijimuna Festival office:

The intertwining English and Japanese dialogue was very interesting. It's nice to see that we could understand in both languages.

Very international project. It was a fantasy, but grown-ups could also enjoy.

Everyone did something amazing! I enjoyed so much. There were some funny parts too. I was surprised at the musical skills they had! I want to come to Kijimuna Festival again! Thank you very much!!!

So powerful and fun to watch!

The timing of music and actors was just right, and despite of the use of different languages, the context wasn't weird. I enjoyed the collaboration between the actors.

I was pounding! Such a rock play!

It's very different from TV programs or movies. The live music was so powerful. I enjoy it.

A very unique perspective, having both international and Japanese artists!

I was in doubt at first, if I could understand with English and Japanese, but their dialogues were constructed well enough that I could enjoy it. Dance and music playing were also great.

I didn't understand the English texts, but somehow understood the story. It's a good experiment. Rock musical!

There's something that can go beyond the words.

These responses indicate that the music, with its combination of Japanese and Australian lyrics, had been successful, and the mix of languages on stage had been embraced. Other productions in the festival were either expressed completely in a foreign language or in movement, or were translated with Japanese narration. *Once*

*Upon a Midnight* combined two languages. As far as the Okinawan young people and their parents were concerned, this combination of Australian and Japanese voices worked. However, this positive response encouraged one artist to reflect on the cast's experience:

The Japan-Australia thing is new for them. We got over it in the first week, but for them it's all brand new. They like seeing us all performing together.  
(Melissa Matheson, *Tweetles*)

Other Japanese audience members took delight in the story itself, something that I, as playwright, was relieved to see shine through:

Such a great energy! It shows children the importance of having courage.

In the beginning, it was mysterious, I didn't know what would happen, but the story was funny. Thank you very much!

I've never watched a rock play before, but I could understand and very much fun to watch. I would love to watch it again!!!

About friendships, about courage to overcome the fear ... I was so moved that I cannot explain in words. Thank you very much!

It felt like taking a walk in a wonderland.

After Kelsey had some courage, a lot of scary things had happened, but I was relieved that it was a happy ending.

It was scary, but very powerful and fun to watch!

The last scene of Angelica was soooooo sad. It was wonderful! I got so excited. Thank you for all your work.

Best! Great. Wonderful. Funny. Want to see it again.

Then there was one comment repeated many time over: 'I love the vampire'. David Hirst's seductively sinister vampire character, Damon, drew a strong response with his Nick Cave aura, leather jacket, bare chest and suave English accent, despite losing many of his darker moments and romantic interactions with Nozomi from page to stage. As observed in Chapter Three, the sex appeal of vampires is a widely recognised global pop cultural phenomenon and there was something of *Twilight* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in the conception of Damon as a modern vamp, captured in David's energetic performance. Nevertheless, the character's effect on the younger members of the Japanese audience was a surprise. They gathered in packs to meet him after the show:

Small children posed for photographs with the vampire, asking "Dracula des?" or "Are you Dracula?" He smiled. "Why, yes." It made me wonder how popular he would be if we had kept the kissing scenes! (Writer's Diary, 2008)

David Hirst's popularity spilled over into official festival events. During a symposium on creating work for youth, a middle-aged woman declared herself a Damon groupie: 'The lady serving tea asked "Dracula des?" obviously confusing me with Dave. I explained that I was just the writer, and she looked a little disappointed' (Writer's Diary, 2008).

Protagonist Kelsey Clarke (Lauren Henderson), fairy antagonist Angelica (Michelle Pastor) and even Scratch (Chris Asimos), with his bulging muscles, failed to garner the attention given to Damon. The danger, mystery and intense sexuality of vampires lent David appeal. It became clear once we returned to Adelaide that Damon's popularity was not restricted to Japanese audiences. This was one example of a generational-cultural allusion that translated across the two nations.

The show went unacknowledged by reviewers in Japan. There were articles about its opening the festival and its success, but an absence of reviews reflecting a critical discourse from a Japanese perspective. This was a pity, but it had been anticipated as critical reviews are not so widespread in Japanese theatre. After dress rehearsal, Yumi's father reflected on the complexities of the narrative and apparently turned it over for some time afterwards, wondering if Angelica should be interpreted as controlling villain or rejected 'messiah':

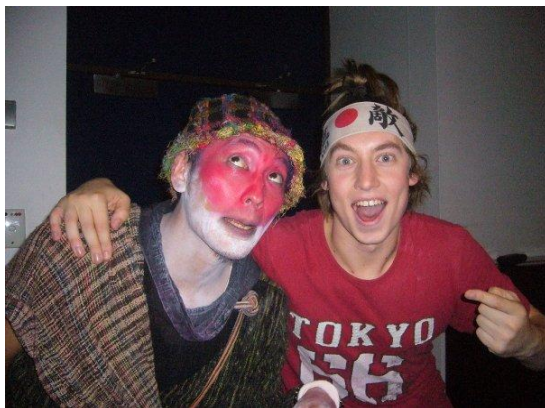
[My parents thought] all actors great, and throwing in energy, and having such good fun. Context-wise, and performance-wise, there was no scenery or costume [in rehearsal] so some things they failed to understand. My father had questions about the ‘ethic’ of the show. Did darkness win, or do darkness and light co-exist [by the end]? Was it a metaphor for war, or just light and fun?

(Yumi Umiumare, choreographer)

Yumi’s father puzzled over the central questions of the play: does Angelica have the right to impose her views onto others? Would the world under Angelica’s rule be a paradise where there was no difference, no dissent and no conflict? Or would it be a tyrannical and xenophobic regime precisely because difference was not allowed? Angelica was representative not only of oppression, as originally intended, but generational conflict, as observed in Chapter Three. The final scene between Kelsey and Angelica captured so many of the conflicts underpinning the experience – nationalism versus globalism, past versus future, absolutism versus individuality – that it resonated differently for each audience member, depending largely on their generational perspective. Kelsey’s rejection of her fairy godmother is an expression of her growing up. She chooses to step into a new, less certain, but more exciting future. Her tears in this final encounter demonstrate that the transition is painful. Angelica’s confused and wounded response is meant to be ‘soooooo sad’ as the Japanese audience members acknowledged. It is a scene of rebellion and rejection: Angelica simply cannot understand why Kelsey is casting aside everything that has been offered to her.



To summarise the audience response to the performance of *Once Upon a Midnight* in Okinawa City, I stress that both the young people who watched the show and their parents enjoyed the interplay between Japanese and Australian actors. Many were drawn to the character of Damon and others found layered meaning in the final scene between Kelsey and Angelica, but, overall, a national ‘Japan/Australia’ perspective characterised their reception of the performance; the culture of ‘place’ appeared to dominate. Had *Once Upon a Midnight* only been performed in Okinawa, my reflections on intercultural performance may have concluded with an affirmation of the ‘East/West’ paradigm and its persuasive power in performance.



*Backstage antics: Shu and Matthew*  
*Photographer: Alex Vickery-Howe*



*Tenchou, Lauren and Mai*



*Ken, Dave and Matthew check out one of many international discoveries ...*

*‘Match: Drink of Champions’*

The official symposia of the Kijimuna Festival occurred behind closed doors. Held over two days these events consisted of directors from various international productions discussing how best to create theatre for young people across national boundaries. The cast of *Once Upon a Midnight* – the only young people in the room – stayed for their director's contribution. What emerged from the discussions was a 'get 'em while they're young' attitude towards intercultural production. Established artists expressed the view that children and young adults who were exposed to other national cultures through theatre would grow up to be better-adjusted adults, more critical of ethnocentrism in their own culture and more aware of the globe as a whole. Director Catherine Fitzgerald acknowledged her own journey in this regard, moving from the images of Japan projected to her in childhood – such as the television show 'Shintaro' or *The Samurai* (1962) – into an increased empathy and connection with Japanese culture through her task of directing our bilingual production. Her contribution also echoed the words of both Noël Grieg, especially his vision to foster intercultural harmony through theatre for and by youth, and Shimoyama san, who had invited us Australians to participate in his festival along with artists from a variety of other countries. Our explorations of Okinawa City had revealed a tension between the Okinawans and the American soldiers sharing their city, so the value of the festival and the importance of Shimoyama san's message was clear to all.

Even so, the symposia were forums for established artists from different cultures to compare notes, like so many similar forums during ASSITEJ in Adelaide in 2008. Before long, the emerging artists stopped attending, expressing boredom and frustration at feeling not only ignored, but misrepresented:

The divisions between Japanese and Australian actors were sexed up a bit, more a stereotypical impression than a reflection on what *actually* happened. We all wonder if this is PR spin or genuine. I kinda think it's well-meant, and that's puzzling to everyone else who has been on this journey. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

Outside the symposia, many of the emerging artists objected to being spoken for publicly in this way: 'I thought it was supposed to be about intercultural youth and we're the only people not being asked any questions. What's the point?' (Michelle Pastor, *Angelica*)

There was also a puzzled and slightly alarmed reaction from many in our cast and creative team towards the strong emphasis placed on national-cultural and, explicitly, *racial*-cultural boundaries during these symposia. The established Japanese artists emphasised race over nationality because race was, for them, the major hurdle. It was not only negotiating national forces but the physicality of race itself that they discussed. One Japanese director even described his 'fear' at the prospect of working with 'large Westerners'. This fear was satirised in *Once Upon a Midnight* through the character of Kelsey and her distrust of anyone outside her family, but what would seem amusing to an emerging Australian writer was a legitimate point of discussion for these established Japanese artists. The young Australians squirmed and exchanged disbelieving glances as the established Japanese artists talked about race in a way that was, for us, indicative of an outdated prejudice. Although we were quite comfortable

satirising and lampooning such attitudes with our peers, hearing them discussed in a serious context was disconcerting.

The established Japanese artists were clearly working within the ‘East/West’ paradigm, talking of ‘fear’ when brought into a professional situation with the national ‘Other’ and speaking as though this were the *status quo*. In contrast, the emerging Japanese artists, having participated in a more direct intercultural engagement, were entering into open discussion with their Australian peers on the themes of national and generational perspectives on culture. The emerging Australian artists were slightly different again, raised in a multicultural society with a multifaceted racial discourse; a discourse with a strong generational component. The symposia revealed these differences plainly. When our Australian director sided with the established Japanese artists, sharing their sense of ‘fear’ and their sense of crossing an ‘East/West’ divide, the full extent of the ensemble’s difference in generational perspective, and associated misreading and disconnection, hit home for the emerging artists.

As I shifted perspectives from national to generational discourse as part of this creative journey, I reflected on the tension between them: many of the arguments around ‘cultural misappropriation’ with regard to Kelsey’s fearful attitude, as depicted in the script, and the director’s overprotective approach with regard to racial-gender dynamics among the cast members began to make sense. A national-cultural discourse emphasises mutual respect and shared power; the underlying concern is the dreaded label of ‘cultural misappropriation’ or the potential for a misunderstanding, even conflict, along national lines. Yumi touched on this when she said ‘sometimes cross-

cultural can mean cross – a conflict’ and I had embodied some of that concern early in the process when I had been critical of the cast’s social interactions. Over the course of this experience, thanks largely to the intervention of the other emerging artists, my shift in perspective made me view these ‘Japan/Australia’ concerns as overstated and often unnecessary. Therefore, I settled on a rougher, imperfect approach in preference to what I now saw as a self-conscious and inhibited cultural perspective.

Observing the conversations between established artists in Okinawa, I was struck by the depth of the concern expressed – the fear of offence – as well as the amount of time spent going over these national issues. The emerging artists were critical of these discussions, interpreting them as redundant, possibly even offensive, in their prescriptive attitude towards (inter)national identity. In contrast to national-cultural perspective, a generational-cultural perspective demands an acknowledgement of changing social norms, shared ‘historical space’ and global developments; it demands a direct and forthright approach, where self-censorship replaces ‘cultural misappropriation’ as the chief concern. When the director ended her contribution to the symposium with her assertion that Kelsey and Ryan were ‘xenophobic characters’ and that her conversation with the writer was ‘ongoing’, our crucial personal differences in cultural perspective were laid bare: My peers and I had taken an ironic and comedic approach to themes many of these established artists were approaching in earnest. That these ‘East/West’ national discourses and debates were still taken seriously by the established artists was a contentious issue for the emerging Japanese and Australian artists; that these discourses and debates were *not* taken seriously by the emerging artists was a contentious issue for the established Japanese and Australian artists. We were looking at the same interactions from different cultural

perspectives. Without the theoretical or discursive tools to articulate this difference any other way, we could only use national rhetoric to frame our interactions, compounding our misunderstanding:

I was asked some questions from Shimoyama san and answered them well enough, I thought. Not well enough for Catherine, apparently. She interrupted my answers, spoke for me and started on me as soon as we were out of there about what is and isn't appropriate (in her view). I tuned out and read the lunch menu until Mai changed the subject. I got the feeling Shimoyama san wanted to hear more from the emerging artists. He kept inviting us to respond. (Writer's Diary, 2008)

My journey from one perspective to another could now be considered in the context of this wider debate, in the context of the established artists from around the world, the assumptions they made and the discourse they presented. These artists spoke of breaking national barriers, of feeling confronted by the 'Other' but wanting to engage respectfully and equally; they spoke of 'bringing countries together', 'crossing the cultural bridge' and 'challenging national stereotypes'. Catherine's example of 'Shintaro' as her first childhood introduction to Japanese culture perfectly illustrated the perspective of a generation of artists for whom national 'Otherness' remains compelling. To these established artists, the counter-discourse presented by the emerging artists from *Once Upon a Midnight* could easily be misread as trivialising rather than contextualising their concerns.

The emerging artists, meanwhile, complicated the ‘two culture’ idea at the heart of national perspective by bringing a wider cultural view into the exchange – a generational view – which highlighted the many and varied cultural identities under discussion and provided a new framework for the concerns the established artists were expressing by placing them in their own, separate ‘historical space’. For these emerging artists there were different ‘Others’ to confront, different ‘cultural bridges’ to cross and different identities to negotiate, evident in the terms they used – ‘old thinking’, ‘old ideas’, ‘them’ versus ‘us’ – to contextualise the symposia. With their explicit rejection of the assumptions they had been presented with, the emerging artists challenged the idea that national perspective was dominant in the interactions inside and outside rehearsal.

For the performance itself, however, the discussion was ongoing. National perspectives had defined the creative product and won the audience over in Okinawa, while generational perspectives had defined the process and divided the participants. The symposia in Okinawa exposed the extent of this division. However, they also raised a question about the next leg of the tour: would a national-cultural discourse engage young audiences in Adelaide?

## **Adelaide**

Visiting Australia for the first time, the Japanese cast members realised that there was a key difference between their experience in Australia and the Australians’ experience in Japan. Namely, the Japanese could blend in. Their presence as ‘outsiders’ was close to invisible, in stark contrast to the Australians who stood out like beacons of ‘foreignness’ in Okinawa and Tokyo. Shortly before leaving Tokyo, Mai had called

herself a '*gaijin*' in jest, expecting to be seen as exotic and alien when arriving in Australia. The reality was that she and her peers were not unlike the thousands of young Asians walking the streets of Adelaide. In Japan, the Australians were rarely talked to in Japanese – after all, how could a 'foreigner' be expected to know the national language? – but, in Australia, the Japanese frequently found themselves in awkward situations where shopkeepers and waiters would talk to them at length in English, not even remotely aware that they were not being understood. Over lunch one afternoon, I watched Tenchou wait politely for a young Australian baker to finish chatting to him about the new tram system before turning to Ken with a smile and a shrug. A newsagent spoke to a perplexed Mai for several minutes about the local council before Keiko came to her aid. The Japanese were not *seen* as different. 'Difference' in Japanese society is based on the physicality of race: a 'foreigner' is immediately identifiable by what they look like. 'Difference' in Australian society is connected to linguistics: an individual is 'foreign' if they do not know the language or if they speak with a heavy accent. When faced with the reality that these were Japanese visitors to Australia and performers in a horror rock musical, the shopkeepers and waiters reacted with a friendly 'welcome to Australia' and then asked what the show was about. Therein lay the crucial point: the Australian audiences would get over the national 'Japan/Australia' aspect in – quite literally – a few seconds, and then they would immediately focus on the story, on the 'rock', on the 'horror', on everything the Adelaide Festival Centre marketing campaign had promised them. I anticipated that, even in the context of the OzAsia Festival, national representations would not carry much weight for young people in Adelaide. It certainly would not carry a creative project. The emerging Australian audiences



would want more. They would want a show, a spectacle and a journey with characters they could engage with.

The show was rewritten in preparation for its Adelaide run with a shift back towards the English language: many of the Japanese cast members would now speak English on stage, just as many of the Australian performers, particularly Michelle Pastor, had spoken Japanese in Okinawa. There were also some strict timing limitations specified by the OzAsia Festival for the high school audiences: the show was shortened to an hour compared to the one and a half hours it had played in Japan. As a result, the rehearsal period became more difficult than the one in Naha:

It was a process of more cutting, more re-jigging and turning the script towards our target of an 'Australian youth audience'. This process was not without tension and disagreement between the key creatives, but in many ways brought the Japanese and Australian cast closer together as a united whole.

(Writer's Diary, 2008)

The 'Japanese and Australian cast' were, indeed, brought 'closer together as a united whole', yet there was still tension in the rehearsal room. A choice had to be made: was this slapstick for very young audiences or dark teenage fantasy? Although they were united beyond the national 'East/West' binary, the cast and creative team were now divided along these two distinct perspectives. Some in the room emphasised national discourse, believing heightened slapstick, physical comedy, pratfalls and gross-out gags had worked in Okinawa and would continue to be an effective means of communication between Japan and Australia. For those aligned to the alternate

perspective, globalism and generationalism carried a greater expressive force. By focusing on Kelsey's journey and the story's origins, we believed the show would resonate with a young audience familiar with *manga*, *anime* and global popular culture.

These contrasting perspectives were also evident in our definitions of the audience profile. Those emphasising national concerns described an 'immature' and 'juvenile' audience that would 'love poo jokes' and think that 'kissing is gross', but would benefit from seeing Japanese and Australian performers interact. In contrast, those emphasising generational concerns framed the audience as a culture in its own right – a culture they respected and identified with – globally aware in their outlook, yet overlooked in the inaugural OzAsia Festival. As neither group intended to make any concessions, communication between the two groups became extremely difficult.

I made the decision to retreat from the debate in the rehearsal room. Performer Keiichi Yonamine described the process as a 'clash of colours', where my 'colour' faded in favour of other key creatives. I encouraged other participants to attend press interviews and let their voices be heard. The result was unexpected: instead of softening, the tension became sharper as opening night drew near. Without a key creative to act as their advocate, the emerging artists became increasingly frustrated that their concerns were not being addressed. Others took the opportunity to be less diplomatic, less respectful, and bring the issue to a head. They sensed that, like themselves, the audience in Adelaide would not be engaged by the cultural concerns of nationalism.

The audience attending the Adelaide performances was an older teenage crowd, very different from the audience in Okinawa. They had been drawn in by the effective publicity campaign created by the Adelaide Festival Centre, a campaign based on an earlier draft of the script. In the lead up to opening night, Nozomi stared ominously from bus stops and television screens, and the press clippings promised ‘horror’ and ‘rock’. The buzz was for a much darker production. Those representing the production to the media reflected the different views in the room. To demonstrate this, I’ll examine two press clippings: an interview with emerging performer Melissa Matheson and another with established director Catherine Fitzgerald. This is how Matheson foregrounds the play’s ‘coming of age’ narrative:

The story centres on Kelsey, a paranoid child too scared to leave her bedroom. She is lured into an underground world of monsters where she has to confront her fears. “It’s a coming of age story, realising she can stand on her own two feet,” Melissa says. She says their aim is to present a show that isn’t obviously Japanese or Australian but rather something “new world”. (Clifton and Fleming, 2008)

In contrast to this ‘new world’ global outlook, Fitzgerald is ‘turning Japanese’ as she tells interviewer Matt Byrne about the ‘differences to accommodate’ as part of an ‘East/West’ intercultural framework:

Catherine Fitzgerald has gone bilingual for her latest rock’n’roll stage outrage for the OzAsia Festival. The multi-talented Adelaide director has been turning

Japanese for her newest creation *Once Upon a Midnight*. The tricky part was creating a bilingual rock'n'roll musical that would appeal to both cultures ...

“It was a fairly involved process, as there were lots of cultural differences to accommodate,” she says. “They really got it and, while it was difficult to make it bilingual, it was also the source of great humour. They loved the way some of the Aussies mispronounced Japanese and, of course, now we have to re-adapt it for a Western audience.” (Byrne, 2008)

The divergent messages in these interviews reflect the differing perspectives in the rehearsal room: a generationally focused ‘new world’ perspective, where ‘coming of age’ is central to the narrative, versus a nationally focused ‘accommodating differences’ perspective, where ‘turning Japanese’ and then re-adapting for a ‘Western audience’ remain the key concerns.

# CULTURAL TIES

OzAsia celebrates the artistic links between Australia and its Asian neighbours

Written by CATHERINE CLIFTON, KYLIE FLEMING

Adelaide's second OzAsia Festival is on this month. Adelaide Matters previews the festival from three angles.

Executive Producer Officially, Jacinta Th...

## Battle lines are drawn

Michelle Johnson's Twister... Battle lines are drawn... The show is a... Adelaide Matters...

There are swerves and... Adelaide Matters... Battle lines are drawn...

There are swerves and... Adelaide Matters... Battle lines are drawn...

## Parkin spreads her wings in love story

Madame Butterfly is a dream... Parkin spreads her wings in love story... Adelaide Matters...

Clayton Leung... Parkin spreads her wings in love story... Adelaide Matters...

## Mythology of two cultures

Mythology of two cultures... Adelaide Matters... The show is a...



## FOUND IN TRANSLATION

FOUND IN TRANSLATION... Adelaide Matters... The show is a...



Popular newspapers promote the national-cultural divide (from top): 'Cultural Ties' (Adelaide Matters); 'Mythology of Two Cultures' (The Advertiser); 'Found in Translation' (SA Life); and, the cast's favourite target for satire, 'Battle Lines Are Drawn' (Sunday Mail).

When the show opened at the Space Theatre, the distinction between the audiences in Adelaide and Okinawa became clear. In Okinawa, they were families with young children, excited by this encounter with Australian performers. They were taken in by the music, the colour and the novelty of ‘Westerners’ speaking Japanese. The comic direction the show had taken worked for them. In Adelaide, among the predominantly teenaged audience were second or third generation Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese Australians with an understanding of the conventions of *anime* and *manga*, and a more developed set of expectations of both theatrical and live musical events.

Here are some comments from the audience in Adelaide, recorded during question-and-answer sessions conducted with high school students after each performance:

The execution was very dorky. It felt like ‘Aunty Beryl’s Old Time Rock’n’Roll musical’.

It could’ve been darker and harder. We were expecting a real rock musical that actually rocked. This was pretty kiddish. It was like what Dad thinks is rock.

The baby throwing poo on stage and all that slapstick stuff, like the vomit and the bit with the glasses, was really dumb. But I liked it once you got to the graveyard, with the Nick Cave guy.

The best bit with Kelsey was when she went feral, but the song was lame and her costume wasn't different enough. That could've been the big rock-out number, but it was softcore.

I could see it being done for teenagers, but parts of this were for little kids.

I wanted to shoot the baby.

Kelsey started to go dark, but then it didn't go anywhere. The song just happened and it was pretty bland. I think the actor tried hard, though.

Angelica is such a cool idea. That bit felt rushed. She was the big fairy and she came and went too quickly.

This was the kid's version. You could do it again for teenagers, just cut the baby and all the running around and give it real music. Make it about Nozomi and make the world scarier.

I think the lines were funny, but there was too much shouting and people running, and you couldn't tell who they were meant to be. I didn't know about the vultures until I read the flyer.

The teenagers in Adelaide wanted a show that spoke to contemporary youth culture – the 'new world' that Melissa Matheson described in her interview. That show had been worn away in development and in rehearsal, leaving the audience confused by

what they saw as ‘kiddish’ and ‘really dumb’. Such a response was what many in the cast had tried to avoid from the project’s inception.

However, not all the news was bad. Damon retained his popularity in Adelaide and was now equalled by Mai Kakimoto as Nozomi. While Kelsey Clarke was acknowledged as a fun and quirky character, the most frightened child in the world was not the sort of heroine that teenage audiences wanted to be identified with. At the question-and-answer sessions, young women, in particular, chose Damon and Nozomi as the show’s icons:

Nozomi is wicked. Does she speak English? Will she come out?

The vampire and Nozomi stuff was the closest you got to an emo-goth vibe.

The Nick Cave guy was hot!

Nozomi and the vampire coulda been hotter together. They should have made out.

Definitely the doll and the vampire bits were the best.

I really liked Damon and Nozomi. It should’ve been more about them.

A teenage boy pitched ‘Nozomi in the future’ and ‘Nozomi in the wild west’. One girl lamented that ‘it would’ve been a great cartoon or graphic novel but this was too



much like a stage play'; others claimed it was 'way too Rogers and Hammerstein'. Another girl in the audience explained that: 'It felt a bit like some people wanted it to be a dark, goth type thing and some people wanted to do a really bright and silly kids' play. So it was kinda both. But you can't be both.' Again, these responses were consistent with the creative divisions in the rehearsal room. They were expected by the young artists, but disheartening because they confirmed that the show struggled to engage the cultural discourse of our generation.

Nevertheless, *Once Upon a Midnight* was a critical success in Adelaide. In radio interviews, including one with the BBC, and articles in mainstream newspapers, the show, its direction and its key performances garnered widespread praise:

It's East meets West as creatures from both imaginations lock horns in an anime-inspired story many young audiences will identify with [...] Director Catherine Fitzgerald has done a mighty job bringing Alex Vickery-Howe's tale of one girl's dream to life. (Byrne, 2008)

Will Kelsey Clarke conquer the night, her seemingly boundless fears of germs, her big brother, traffic, and all the people in the world who are not 'like her'? She and her friends certainly conquered one Adelaide Opening Night audience. (Flynn, 2008)

The audience responses indicated, however, that Kelsey had done nothing of the sort. How to explain the discrepancies in response between the audiences and the reviewers? One explanation can be found by viewing 'cultural misappropriation'

through a generational lens. It is understood that small details in national representation can lead to confusion; a white kimono, for example, would be associated with death to a Japanese audience but may be associated with innocence and purity to an Australian audience. While great care was taken to avoid these kinds of national misreadings, responses to *Once Upon a Midnight* reveal readings that diverged along generational lines: ‘cultural misappropriation’ across the barrier between established and emerging perspectives. An example is the use of a mask from the movie *Scream* (1996) to depict a zombie on stage. Many who understood this particular cultural reference were baffled by its inclusion in the production, while those who had not grown up amidst the popularity of the *Scream* franchise may have interpreted this masked figure simply as a ghoulish or ghostly figure. One close friend leaned over to whisper in my ear on opening night and ask ‘what the hell is the killer from *Scream* doing here?’, confirming a generationally determined response to the semiotics of the production. Another example, cited by emerging Adelaide audience members many times, was Kelsey stripping away her dowdy cardigan and glasses only to reveal a cutesy *Hello Kitty* dress. Had Kelsey ripped her dress away to reveal a t-shirt depicting The Cure, or something darker such as Slipknot or Opeth, or, to use a Japanese reference, Ezo or Blood, then Kelsey’s coming of age would have registered with the audience. In fact, by choosing *Hello Kitty*, the sign system was indicating that Kelsey hadn’t changed at all.

The set also prompted confusion as it was unclear where one location moved on to another. David Hirst quipped that the only difference between Kelsey’s bedroom and his vampire crypt was that the latter did not have a quilt. When I tried to explain to young musicians present in the audience on opening night that the set was inspired by

a 'modern rock' environment, the response was 'Oh, so that's what 'they' think a rock aesthetic is'. Rather than a straightforward difference in taste, it was evident that there were many points in the show where generational perspectives led to a significant difference in interpretation: from the basic meaning conveyed by the events to the behaviour and the symbols presented on stage. This was true of the band (described in rehearsal as 'edgy rock' but by teen audiences as 'light pop ballads', 'Rogers and Hammerstein' or simply 'softcore'), the costumes (feather boas and velvet capes to create a 'rock look', described by teen audiences as 'seventies' and 'try-hard'), and the make-up (Kiss inspired lines and shapes, and clown faces).

Much of the confusion and the criticism could have been avoided by cross-generational dialogue and research. Similarly, many of the gags added in development were simply unsuitable for a contemporary teen market. Youth reviewer Sam Ryan singled one of these out in her review: 'For example when one of the characters exclaimed, 'sushi, teriyaki ... I'm felling [sic] lucky!' the joke seemed to fall flat and I wondered how it would have gone down with a Japanese audience' (Ryan, 2008).

While a difference in interpretation between national-cultural groups was expected by all participants, the difference in interpretation between generational-cultural groups was misjudged by the established artists. Focusing on perceived national differences meant disregarding evident generational differences. If the comments of the teenaged audience can loosely be described as the reaction of an emerging generation, then the bulk of the reviewers represented an established generational response; in fact, many of them had a parental tone. Richard Flynn from the *Adelaide Theatre Guide* claimed the show was 'just right for the kids at bedtime,' while Matt Byrne from the *Sunday*

*Mail* wrote that it was a story ‘many young people could identify with’. The response from these established critics was warm and supportive, but, in analysing their reviews in conjunction with feedback from the emerging audiences, it was clear that the overwhelming majority of the praise for the Adelaide production came from outside the target demographic.

In summary, the conflicts and misreadings between established and emerging artists that were present throughout the development and rehearsal of *Once Upon a Midnight* were reflected sharply in the audience and critical responses in Adelaide, where a similar generational division was evident. With their concerns validated by an audience of peers, the emerging artists strengthened their emphasis on generational culture in press interviews and post-performance discussions. While the audience response in Okinawa had favoured a national ‘Japan/Australia’ reading, the audience response in Adelaide demanded a wider focus, combining national and generational readings and perspectives with a contemporary cultural discourse.

Our creative journey began with a deliberate and calculated attempt to draw young people into the OzAsia Festival. Consequently, the ensemble was able to celebrate our success – clearly, there *was* now a young, emergent audience contributing to the cultural conversation and participating in the festival, where previously that audience had been conspicuous by its absence. At the same time, we were also forced to acknowledge our collective failure to represent their perspective effectively. *Once Upon a Midnight* was, therefore, a qualified success. The production managed to question the ‘East/West’ paradigm and attract a new generation into the conversation, however, it did not, as many of us had hoped, break decisively into a ‘new world’

global perspective that considered representations of the national-cultural ‘where’ and the generational-cultural ‘when’ in tandem.

## **Approaches to Theatre for Young People – Generationalism as Cultural Study**

As discussed in previous chapters, the narrative of *Once Upon a Midnight* was intentionally subversive. Werewolves, vampires, *tengu* and *ningyō* were the heroes while a fairy godmother wreaked havoc from above. The story forces Kelsey Clarke to acknowledge moral complexity, the grey areas between ‘good’ and ‘evil’. In her final confrontation with Angelica, Kelsey accepts that she, like everyone else, is a little of both. This presented the creative team with a challenge. In terms of global pop culture, this kind of story was very much in vogue. *Shrek* (book 1990, film 2001) had subverted the fairytale narrative some years earlier and writers like Alan Ball, Neil Gaiman, George Lucas, Steven Moffat, the Wachowskis and Joss Whedon continue to delight in blurring the line between hero and villain, where smooth politicians become monsters and warlords, and seemingly dangerous rogues become unlikely saviours. From the early 1990s to the present, this kind of subversive writing has been a dominant feature in contemporary fantasy, supernatural thrillers, science fiction and much of the work devoured by emerging audiences, a reaction to the uncertainty of the world at large, often expressed by emerging generations for whom politicians are suspect and friends come from unlikely places. This uncertainty is referenced in *Once Upon a Midnight* through Kelsey’s fear of televised news reports and her desire for a more clear-cut world. It is apparent by the end of the play that Kelsey has moved beyond notions of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and is willing to accept the world for all its flaws. Some parents reacted against this narrative journey. The most extreme of these

reactions came from an anonymous writer who sent a handwritten letter to the Flinders University Drama Centre and expressed 'spiritual' concerns, sounding not unlike Angelica herself:

How very sad it is to glorify the perception that werewolves, vampires, tengs [sic] and ningyo (I haven't heard of the last two before) are our supporters and helpers.

How very sad it is to portray fairies in a negative light.

Our spiritual reality is that it is fairies, elves and salamanders who are our genuine helpers.

Shame on 'Once Upon a Midnight'. (Anonymous letter to Adelaide Festival Centre and Flinders University Drama Centre. 22 September, 2008)

This 'nanny' aspect to the process was not restricted to one letter, although it serves as a somewhat extreme example of the patronising and anxious attitudes surrounding theatre for young people. Had we gone with our original outline for the show, highlighting Kelsey drinking a bottle of blood and embracing her dark side, as many younger participants advocated, the expressions of parental concern would have, no doubt, been even stronger. The dramaturge, however, wisely cautioned against 'alienating parents'. Subversive narrative choices are commonplace in novels and on film, so the hostility and the call for 'shame' surprised many in the cast. *Once Upon a Midnight* is far from being an exploitative or confronting play. It is entertaining,

uplifting and celebratory. The same audiences who watched the Adelaide performances were watching gore-splattered movies like *Saw* (2004) and *Wolf Creek* (2005) in their thousands. It appeared that the public had different cultural expectations when it came to theatre and that some parents, like some established theatrical practitioners, doubted that young people had the ability to think for themselves and make informed choices. This difference in perspective, the tension between 'want' and 'need' identified during the 2008 ASSITEJ symposia, continues to be a source of frustration for emerging artists and colours their relationships with established funding bodies. The future of the theatrical art form can certainly be questioned when emerging generations are tightly controlled in this way.

It is now very difficult to receive a commission for a new piece of theatre for or by young people without justifying it in the context of a wider social issue or presenting a sound argument for the show's 'ethics'. Indeed, without its international cast and institutional (university and festival) support to legitimise it, *Once Upon a Midnight* may never have appeared on stage at all. Theatre for young people is a heavily scrutinised medium, monitored and defined by funding bodies made up of 'gatekeeper' artists. I saw this explicitly when I received my first theatrical commission after *Once Upon a Midnight*. This commission was to write a rock musical that dealt with the theme of violence and young people. The resulting production, *Retaliation*, for the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble in 2010, had the opposite trajectory to *Once Upon a Midnight* and garnered a very different response from critics and audiences.

There was a notable point of departure from the outset: the majority of the *Retaliation* cast were teenagers selected from schools around Adelaide after an extensive audition process. The oldest cast members were in their early twenties and the youngest, one of the main characters, was only thirteen. The key creative team consisted of emerging artists, including director, producer, dramaturge, composer, designer and digital media artist. The challenge was to address the issue of violence and young people as required by the key funding bodies – the Carclew Youth Arts Board and IMPACT, a group of social and youth workers promoting alternatives to violence – and still entertain a contemporary teenage audience. Rather than approach these issues didactically, *Retaliation* had a science fiction premise: high school reporter Becca Leach is drawn into a cyberspace world of spaceships, aliens and robots where war is an everyday pastime and violence has no meaning. Through their interactions with Becca, the inhabitants of this alternate reality learn the error of their ways while exposing a corporate tycoon, J.B. Swan, who plans to replace ‘actuals’ (living people) with ‘virtuals’ (digital characters).



*Becca Leach (Ashlee Ewins) surrounded by ‘virtuals’ in Retaliation*  
Photography: Kurt Janzon & Stephen Nesbitt





*Scenes from Retaliation* Photography: Kurt Janzon and Stephen Nesbitt  
 From Left: Bess Simper-Brown, Anu Francis, Buddy Dawson, Keziah Sullivan and Izzy Shaw



*Kismet (Bess Simper-Brown) versus Princess Blaze (Jana Kerkhoff)*

Although this creative team was significantly closer in generational perspective to both their cast and their target audience when compared to the majority of the creative

team behind *Once Upon a Midnight*, they approached the challenge of generational difference with as much care and attention as they would approach working with another national culture. In this way, *Retaliation* embraced a sense of cultural hybridisation where ‘time’ and ‘place’ were negotiated and interwoven as part of an equal and open creative exchange. The creative team worked with the emerging artists to create a piece of work that drew from the interests and personal experiences of each and every ensemble member, as well as their experience with – and understanding of – their emerging audience. This was the element neglected during the development of *Once Upon a Midnight* and, as a result, the two productions drew very different responses from critics and audience members.



*Retaliation curtain call*      *Photography: Kurt Janzon and Stephen Nesbitt*

*From left: Shannon Parsons, Buddy Dawson, Sam Paige, Ashlee Ewins, Bess Simper-Brown, Anu Francis and Keziah Sullivan*



*Characters from Retaliation      Photography: Kurt Janzon and Stephen Nesbitt*

*Becca Leach (Ashlee Ewins), J.B. Swan (Phoebe Shaw) and Captain Nefaria Barren (Dennis Goodwin)*

The intergenerational bridge was built by asking the cast to bring in their own reference material in film, theatre and music, their own experiences with bullying and violence and their own pop cultural and sociopolitical allusions, many of which surprised the creative team as they combined both generational and national perspectives. For example, the emerging cast altered the following line:

**TAHLIA:** That would be my point, Bec. She's a big, big fish.  
Compared to her you're like ... plankton. (Writer's version)

**TAHLIA:** That would be my point, Bec. She's a whaling ship.  
You're the little dude in the Greenpeace boat. (Cast version)

Many of these subtle alterations helped to steer the play toward the perspective of the emerging generations, their political and personal concerns, their aesthetic and musical taste, their sensibility as an ensemble and the kind of story they wished to tell. The final production also reflected their skill and bravery as performers. Many were not only performing live, but singing live for the first time in their lives. *Retaliation* had been conceived and developed in rehearsal under an entirely different model to *Once Upon a Midnight*. The emerging artists present were encouraged to express their cultural perspective and have these perspectives inform the text (through theme, dialogue, principal characters and plot), the directorial approach, the style and aesthetic of the design, the music and lyrics, and the publicity and media framing of the production. When the response came, it was remarkable. Praised by young audiences for its soundtrack, characters, plot and visual design, the show received an

apathetic response from the majority of established critics and was singled out for not being explicit enough in addressing its core social issues:

Understandably, given the subject matter the team was keen to avoid moralising and to make sure the performance stayed light-hearted ... [However] this means that the ensemble must work harder to present its serious ideas about violence in a sincere way. Similarly, there are several side plots (two love stories and the death of Becca's mother) which, while amusing, shift the focus away from the exploration of violence in young people's lives. (Mylius, 2010)

Work for and by youth comes under critical scrutiny because many believe it must have 'serious ideas' at its core. Reviewer Ben Mylius had clearly been briefed on the production's funding structure and indeed worked for a magazine directly attached to Carclew Youth Arts. If this had not been the case, he may have simply watched it as a rock musical adventure. After all, if taken for what it was, there was much to praise:

The enthusiasm and energy of the young performers shines through and reminds us why youth theatre companies like SYTE are so important. Ashlee Ewins' crusading Becca, Sam Page's blustering Teeko and Bess Simper-Brown's Kismet all provide plenty of amusement. Two of the production's focal points are the spectacular projection and digital art by Adelaide artist LuKu [sic] and costume design by Alia Guidace. LuKu creates innovative large-scale backdrops and visual effects and is one of *Retaliation's* most

impressive features. Guidace's costumes for all key characters are vivid and well realised. (Mylius, 2010)

Why are 'youth theatre companies like SYTE so important?' To allow young people to express themselves as *they* choose or to educate them with didactic messages?

Like the delegates of ASSITEJ in 2008, Mylius seems torn on this issue. Meanwhile cast members, the director, the composer and the company were receiving *Facebook* and *Twitter* requests from teenage audience members declaring themselves fans of Beeca and Teeko's world and letters of congratulations from high school students and emerging artists. Audiences were even jumping out of their seats to dance on stage during the show's finale. A few months later, the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble had its funding stopped by the South Australian Government through the Carclew Youth Arts Board, with specific reference to this production's handling of its subject matter, among other issues. Although *Retaliation* may have been 'what young people want', it was deemed by established artists and 'gatekeeper' funding bodies to not be 'what young people need'. If theatre for young people becomes an exclusively educational tool, then it cannot stand on its own as an art form and cannot hope to generate an emerging audience of enthusiastic theatregoers. Having a message to share is very good, but only if there is an audience of young people engaged with the material. Ironically, the emerging *Retaliation* cast were nominated for an Adelaide Critics' Circle Award, thanks to one outspoken key critic, in the same month the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble announced it would be closing its doors indefinitely, in 2011, due to lack of government and industry support.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The company reformed in 2012 after complaints from parents and apathy from young people towards Carclew's alternative model. The Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble continues to be active thanks to the work of young people who met during *Retaliation* and have now taken direct responsibility for the running of their company.

*Once Upon a Midnight* and *Retaliation* represent a fork in the road: one can please the established or 'gatekeeper' agenda by appealing to their cultural and artistic preferences, as *Once Upon a Midnight* did, or one can entice young people to the theatre by appealing to their cultural and artistic preferences, as *Retaliation* did. However, it is extremely difficult to please both generational perspectives at once. Fortunately, the view that theatre for young people need be restricted or steered in its content is beginning to dissolve. In a recent article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, entitled 'From Cradle to Stage', Michael Anderson, one of the TheatreSpace researchers at the University of Sydney, claims that:

We tend to think they [young people] only want stories about themselves or very simple stories told well. But that's not enough. They want sophisticated work and they want theatre that can take them to places they have never imagined, not theatre that's just a reflection of themselves. (Anderson, quoted in Blake, 2010)

These sentiments are echoed by Emma Rice from Britain's Kneehigh Theatre: 'I think children largely respond to the same things as adults. They want to see the darkness and how to survive it' (Rice, quoted in Blake, 2010).

The intergenerational encounters of *Once Upon a Midnight* and *Retaliation* provide evidence that there needs to be more research conducted in this area and more outspoken comments from emerging artists to break through the perception that generationalism is not relevant to discussions on theatre. Through attentive research and open dialogue, artists holding disparate generational perspectives can combine

skills to determine how best to appeal to an emerging audience and how to accurately and appropriately represent them on stage. Research of this nature is particularly vital to theatrical practitioners as other forms of media and technology evolve and compete for young people's attention.

Central to all research on employing generational perspectives in the creative arts, as revealed in the practical experiment of *Retaliation*, is an understanding of the points of departure between emerging artists and audiences and their more established colleagues. The fallacy promoted by events such as the OzAsia Festival, ASSITEJ and the Kijimuna Festival, and reinforced by funding and teaching bodies such as Carclew Youth Arts, their publications and affiliates, as well as many traditional drama school models, is that the differences between emerging and established perspectives, or even student and teacher perspectives, can be confined to notions of 'experience' or 'maturity', 'want' versus 'need', or framed within strictly hierarchical structures. In practice, the differences in generational perspectives and the points of departure they create are often more complex, more nuanced and more valid, constituting a cultural shift. These differences, in fact, reflect culture as a dynamic and evolving force rather than culture as an exhausted and stagnant force to be regurgitated to each new generation in its set form. To limit cultural perspectives to notions of established generations moulding, informing or correcting emerging generations is to disregard historical and political developments, increasing global awareness and rapid advances in technology.

Taken in tandem, *Once Upon a Midnight* and *Retaliation* demonstrate that emphasising different generational-cultural perspectives in development, rehearsal



and production can lead to opposing audience responses and critical outcomes. While *Once Upon a Midnight* drew some letters of parental concern and pushed against the festivals' boundaries in subtle and subversive ways, the play ultimately conformed to a set hierarchical structure and a set model of intercultural engagement, which was embraced by critics and established artists accordingly, even if the emerging, globally conscious Adelaide teenage audiences were less enthusiastic. In contrast, *Retaliation* openly broke with any notion of hierarchical structure in theatrical practice and put the emerging artists and their perspectives, goals and concerns front and centre, celebrating their generational-cultural identity and 'historical space'. This earned peer acclaim but drew an apathetic, even hostile, response from established theatrical critics and arts organisations, with very few notable exceptions. As practice-led research projects, each production illustrates opposite sides of the same cultural and artistic dilemma by highlighting the gap between emerging audiences and established critical and discursive perspectives. Finding new theoretical frameworks to structure this debate in cultural terms, rather than experiential or hierarchical terms, is vital. This framework can begin with a focus on generational-cultural differences and points of departure which, in time, may lead to new forms of culturally dynamic and expressive theatre that can balance national, global, sociohistorical and sociopolitical – as well as pop cultural and temporal – values, perspectives, ideas and concerns. Expanding our conception and theory of culture to embrace generational culture explicitly in and around development, rehearsal, production and critical reflection of new theatrical works is necessary to remain current and relevant in a globalised age. Acknowledging and understanding generational culture may, in fact, be crucial to the ongoing viability of the theatrical art form itself.

## Transculturalism and Generational Change

The idea of an organic relationship between a population, a territory, a form as well as a unit of political organization, and one of those organized packages of meanings and meaningful forms which we refer to as cultures has for a long time been an enormously successful one, spreading throughout the world even to fairly unlikely places, at least as a guiding principle. Perhaps anthropologists, studying human lives even in places where states have not existed, should have been a bit more wary of the construct. (Hannerz, 1996: 20)

Ulf Hannerz picks national-cultural perspective apart in *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* and, by questioning ‘organized packages’ which resemble those so neatly presented to audiences at the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival events, paves the way for a more nuanced cultural approach. Hannerz supports the scepticism of the emerging artists and our critique in three key ways: firstly, a deconstruction of the importance of language in a transnational context; secondly, an acknowledgement of the generational-cultural ‘where’; and, thirdly, a comparison between what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim would term ‘observer perspectives’ and ‘actor perspectives’, through the perspectives of anthropologists, chiefly concerned with ‘place’, and the perspectives of foreign correspondents, chiefly concerned with ‘time’.

Language was central to our discussion of the rehearsal room experience in Chapter Four as we grappled with how strongly language should impact on the creative process and the final text. I recounted the discoveries made in the room as well as the conflicting attitudes different participants expressed with regard to language; while

acknowledging the difficulty of the task, I suggested that physical action was overemphasised as a result of the anxiety that language caused for the established artists. Building from that discovery, I believe there is a case for deemphasising, rather than scrutinising and debating, language in intercultural performance. Hannerz sheds further light on this process:

For quite some time, language has probably dominated our thinking about cultural boundaries, since it has coincided with notions of nation, and the active involvement in other symbolic modes – music, gesture, and others, and their combinations – has tended to be mainly confined to local, face-to-face settings. Now that media technology is increasingly able to deal with other symbolic modes, however, we may wonder whether imagined communities are increasingly moving beyond words. (Hannerz, 1996: 21)

He goes on to describe the global ecumene as a place of ‘simultaneous news images everywhere’, where ‘we belong to differently distributed communities of intelligibility with regard to different kinds of meaningful form.’ In this context, *Once Upon a Midnight*, as a development, a performance, an experience and a text, demonstrates that many of these ‘communities’ with their own approach to, and identification of, ‘meaningful form’ are generational. With increasingly available globalising technology as a catalyst for change, these communities exacerbate the generational-cultural gap while, to a large extent, mitigating the national-cultural gap or theorising it differently through cosmopolitan or transnational approaches. Hannerz expands on the significance of transnational interaction:

Perhaps the main point in all this is that the arrangements of personal interconnectedness between the local and the global are getting increasingly opaque. So many kinds of kinship, friendship, collegiality, business, pursuits of pleasure, or struggles for security now engage people in transnational contacts that we can never be sure in which habitats of meaning these can turn up, and have a peripheral or central part. (Hannerz, 1996: 29)

In Hannerz's transnational context, the power of language, whether reflected in the mechanics of an intercultural rehearsal and performance, or in Gilbert and Lo's concern about English as *lingua franca*, can be mooted – or relegated to the periphery – by other types of communication and other layers of meaning. By expanding our critical frame from interculturalism to transnationalism in this way, we can more clearly trace the points of departure that were made along generational lines throughout the creative process of *Once Upon a Midnight*.

'Time' and 'place' also factor into Hannerz's critical frame; he acknowledges the question of the generational-cultural 'where' through a contrast of anthropological practice and the work of foreign correspondents, noting that 'anthropologists emphasise place':

The "when?" of our description has not been supposed to matter greatly. We do not make much of the circumstance that even though we have spent a fairly extended period in a place, its timing is a matter of chance ... And some of us may be writing up and publishing fifteen-year-old data. (Hannerz, 1996: 114)

By highlighting the anthropological emphasis of ‘place’ over ‘time’, and asking ‘what, in contrast, are ‘the “when” and the “where” of the foreign correspondents?’, Hannerz makes a distinction between the fixed notion of ‘place’ and the progressive notion of ‘time’. A parallel can be drawn here between Hannerz’s work and the work of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, in the latter’s notion of ‘observer perspectives’ and ‘actor perspectives’ – one fixed, but objective, and the other progressive, but very often subjective. A parallel can also be drawn between Hannerz’s depiction of the working practice of anthropologists in contrast to the working practice of foreign correspondents and an established academic approach to the study of national culture in contrast to the lived reality of an ‘actor perspective’ in the field. The cast and creative team of *Once Upon a Midnight* represented the ‘actor perspective’ and, rather like foreign correspondents, we responded to the immediacy of a lived encounter and adapted our perspectives accordingly. Hannerz provides a theoretical thread to bind these concepts together, offering transnational approaches where intercultural ‘East/West’ approaches have demonstrated limitations. Ultimately, however, whether contrasting anthropologists with foreign correspondents, ‘observer perspectives’ with ‘actor perspectives’, or academics with creative artists, the core point of departure between transnationalism and interculturalism can be summed up clearly by the following: ‘Some are more on the side of difference, others on the side of a shared humanity’ (Hannerz, 1996: 120).

It is this distinction between ‘the side of difference’ and ‘the side of a shared humanity’ that colours much of the South Australian press surrounding *Once Upon a Midnight* and, to a large extent, much of the miscommunication evident throughout development, rehearsal and the staging process. It is with this distinction that the

concepts discussed in this thesis – from Said’s *Orientalism* to Bharucha’s ‘historical space’, to notions of ‘cultural hybridisation’, through to the symposia held between established artists about emerging audiences and the generational-cultural perspective repeatedly asserted by the emerging participants at every turn – begin to solidify into a firm discourse. This discourse is a strong departure from ‘East/West’, recorded in interviews and stridently expressed by the emerging artists, and our audiences, as the production ran in Adelaide. What is, perhaps, most surprising about the emergence of this discourse during *Once Upon a Midnight* is that there is very little existing research linking transnational discourse with generationalism or writing on youth.

In *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National, the Global* (2005), editors Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep address this scarcity of research directly, pointing out that there is a clear association between emerging generations and a transnational outlook. They argue that young people are at the centre of globalisation and that key issues and questions surrounding youth culture may illuminate the study of globalisation, further contending that youth are ambivalent to nationalism and that the ‘cosmopolitan or transnational imaginaries of youth culture are always in dialectical tension with both national ideologies and local affiliations’, all of which was demonstrated clearly in *Once Upon a Midnight*. The short essays contained in their collection examine a range of youth cultural experiences, from child soldiers in Sierra Leone to young people’s lives in San Francisco’s Mission District, touching on a diverse range of influences, from *Avon* to Eminem. In a section entitled ‘Bad Boys: Abstractions of Difference and the Politics of Youth “Deviance”’, contributing writer Todd R. Ramlow observes that:

In multiple media, contemporary youth are marked by the rhetorics of disability and queerness as objects both of discipline (they are the physical embodiment of a deviance in the body politic that must be controlled) and of pity and social concern (they, and by extension American culture, are increasingly disabled by violence). These representations of youth are often not directly concerned with or reflective of real physical difference, disability, or queerness, although the “threat” of all three factors is a regular part of the parables we tell about the perils of youth. (Ramlow, quoted in Maira and Soep, 2005: 199)

These observations connect with Ryan Heath and Mark Davis (see Chapter Three), who point out that young people are often vilified or marginalised in Australian mainstream media, and with a range of texts on youth cultural identity that largely depict young people as subject to both influence and representation beyond their control. While the arguments are certainly persuasive in many of the examples given, this thesis is more concerned with the expression of young people’s agency, through their generational-cultural perspective and associated self-aware and assertive discourse; this agency allows young people to establish an identity beyond notions of influence and representation, to affirm a sense of ‘time’ – of cultural ‘when’ – as a frame through which an artefact, an idea or an experience may be studied and critiqued. One of the research findings of the *Once Upon a Midnight* project that representatives of established generations may find challenging is that there is very little influence or representation transferring across time from one generation to another in this encounter; instead, there are strong questions and clear rejections directed at established theories, discourses and ideas. This generational-cultural

agency covers aesthetic taste, social and cultural perspective, gender identity and freedom, and – by the time the show was being performed in Adelaide – ways of framing a performance through media coverage, where emerging generations proved adept.

Contrary to stereotypes of ‘cynicism’ or a lack of general political engagement (see Furlong, Cartmel, 1997), what was demonstrated through this process was a much more pointed scepticism at the specific ideas and policies of the established generations – the older artists, producers and academics – that the emerging artists were encouraged, even pressured, to represent. As the process developed, the generational-cultural (mis)readings of the professional and social interactions of the emerging artists became stifling. Rather than consent to this (mis)representation, the emerging artists steadily rejected it through humour, subversive behaviour and, finally, open and public contradiction. Through the work of Hannerz on transnational perspectives and the link Maira and Soep draw between globalisation and youth culture specifically, this generational-cultural agency can be situated within a wider trend of shifting critical attention (from interculturalism to transnationalism) in response to global and technological developments. The questions I posed as researcher concerning differing national-cultural perspectives and the challenge I set myself as playwright – to get young people from the fringes of the OzAsia Festival into the theatre – were all flawed in the sense that they accepted ‘OzAsia’ and ‘East/West’ paradigms as fixed wisdom, rather than vehicles of an ideology open to deconstruction and debate. It was only through the strong voices of my peers in Australia and Japan, both assertive and subversive, that this flaw in my critical thinking was exposed and new avenues of research and investigation were opened up



and explored. Generational-cultural perspective emerged organically from this process.

Placing this process in context, Wolfgang Welsch contrasts an intercultural approach with a transcultural approach in 'Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today' (1999). Welsch begins with a critique of the 'traditional' concept of 'single cultures' – the concept of a national-cultural divide – before expanding into a critique of interculturalism, which he describes as 'almost as inappropriate as the traditional concept itself' (1999: 196). Although he acknowledges that interculturalism 'seeks ways' in which cultures can 'get on with, understand and recognize one another', he is quick to point out that there is a 'deficiency' in the concept that 'drags along with it unchanged the premise of the traditional conception of culture'. In making this distinction, Welsch provides a framework for the cast and creative team of *Once Upon a Midnight* that supports the level of connection experienced as well as the united rejection of the 'East/West' festival framework, publicity and critical response. Welsch elaborates:

The classical conception of culture *creates* by its primary trait – the separatist character of cultures – the secondary problem of a structural inability to communicate between these cultures. Therefore this problem cannot, of course, be solved on the basis of this very conception. The recommendations of interculturality, albeit well meant, are fruitless. (Welsch, quoted in Lash and Featherstone 1999: 196)

The rhetoric of interculturalism, therefore, struggles to move beyond what Welsch describes as the ‘structural inability to communicate’ between cultures and can have the effect of splitting a group of creative collaborators along a national-cultural divide, where ‘East Meets West’, ‘Turning Japanese’ and ‘Battle Lines are Drawn’ are acceptable headlines. Transculturalism, in contrast, makes a series of cultural connections beyond national borders, where communication can flourish and binaries can be broken down:

Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures. The way of life for an economist, an academic or a journalist is no longer German or French, but rather European or Global in tone. The new forms of entanglement are a consequence of migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communications systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies. It is here, of course, that questions of power come in. Consequently, the same basic problems and states of consciousness today appear in cultures once considered to be fundamentally different. Think, for example, of human rights debates, feminist movements or of ecological awareness which are powerful active factors across the board culturally.

(Welsch, quoted in Lash and Featherstone 1999: 198)

These ‘basic problems’ and ‘debates’ were a feature of *Once Upon a Midnight’s* creative development and the subject of conversations outside rehearsal, as previous chapters have demonstrated. A transcultural approach embraces hybridisation and acknowledges that ‘there is no longer anything absolutely foreign’; ‘authenticity has

become folklore' (199:198). Welsch argues that contemporary national-cultural difference is largely aesthetic and that 'in substance everything is transculturally determined'; he confronts critics who claim that the breakdown of national cultures will lead to global uniformity:

As transculturality pushes forward, the mode of diversity is altered. If one doesn't recognize this, then one may – as some critics falsely do – equate transculturality with uniformization. For diversity, as traditionally provided in the form of single cultures, does indeed increasingly disappear. Instead, however, a new type of diversity takes shape: the diversity of different cultures and life-forms, each arising from transcultural permeations. (Welsch, quoted in Lash and Featherstone 1999: 203)

He concludes with an assertion that 'these transcultural networks are more capable of affiliation with one another than were the old cultural identities' and that a transcultural structure 'favours co-existence rather than combat' (1999: 204). The emphasis of the transcultural movement is 'exchange and interaction' (1999: 205), which was the premise that underpinned *Once Upon a Midnight*; a premise which, as Welsch identifies, is not necessarily compatible with the intercultural structure underpinning both the OzAsia and Kijimuna Festival.

I turn now to Arianna Dagnino's 'Transcultural Writers and Transcultural Literature in the Age of Global Modernity' (2012). Dagnino represents an emerging field that considers 'time' and 'place' in a balanced cultural context and focuses on a sense of global community, and this is different to the 'East/West' framing that *Once Upon a*

*Midnight* was conceived within; however, it is with this communal attitude that I wish to frame the final part of this discussion. Like Welsch, Dagnino expands on transnational research, links it with a generational-cultural perspective and describes an emerging trend towards creative writing that is not intercultural, *intracultural* or even transnational, but *transcultural* in its focus, drawing from a desire among writers to 'grasp and theorise the dynamic of our global modernity':

I am theorising that this socio-cultural scenario is also giving birth to a new generation of writers, whom I call 'transcultural writers'. That is, imaginative writers who, by choice or by life circumstances, experience cultural dislocation, live transnational experiences, cultivate bilingual/pluri-lingual proficiency, physically immerse themselves in multiple cultures/geographies/territories, expose themselves to diversity and nurture plural, flexible identities. (Dagnino, 2012: 1)

Dagnino argues that these 'mobile writers' capture an 'emerging transcultural sensitivity' in order to 'promote a wider global literary perspective'. She draws a line between transnational, cosmopolitan and intercultural theory and her definition of transculturalism, asserting that the latter is explicitly concerned with a 'cultural attitude' with regards to a 'new global cultural order' and is therefore a separate discourse (2012: 2). If *Once Upon a Midnight* can be taken as an example of this discourse in action, then 'attitude' is certainly at the forefront of these cultural developments, which are pushing back against more traditional notions of intercultural engagement, along the lines Dagnino describes:

Transcultural writers seem to be tuned into a different wavelength and thus are able to capture the first still embryonic, still incoherent, still mostly unexpressed or intercepted symptoms (signals) of a different emerging cultural mood/mode. In other words, these writers are developing an alternative discourse that in any case is perceived by both mainstream parts (let us call them the assimilationist and the multiculturalist stances) as destabilising the perceived *status quo*. (Dagnino, 2012: 4)

Destabilising the perceived *status quo* was, as the process developed, part of the agenda which the emerging artists of *Once Upon a Midnight* advanced; this positions them as ‘living in a dimension without any fixed borders or whose geographic, cultural, national or homeland boundaries and allegiances are self-identified, self-chosen, and possibly impermanent, constantly recontextualised’ (2012: 7) and united under a ‘fundamental critique of narrow identitarian labelling’ (2012: 12). While Dagnino restricts her discussion specifically to writers, her ‘embryonic’ theory can be expanded in the example of *Once Upon a Midnight* to include actors, designers, translators, technicians and musicians, suggesting that this ‘cultural attitude’ or ‘emerging cultural mood/mode’ may be part of the critical thinking of a range of emerging artists. It is also part of the critical thinking of the emerging audiences, particularly the audiences in Adelaide whose rejection of ‘narrow identitarian labelling’ was evident in their refusal to be drawn into the discourse of interculturalism, finding its presentation ‘old fashioned’, ‘old school’, ‘Aunty Beryl’ or ‘pretty kiddish’; in other words, one can include here representatives of emerging generations both on and off stage. Within these emerging generational-cultural perspectives, ‘East/West’ interculturalism is passé.

Dagnino argues that in our ‘rapidly globalising world’ cultural identities tend to be ‘more fluid’ and that transcultural experiences have, therefore, become more relevant than fixed, stagnant, unyielding conceptions of culture. Transculturalism can address divergent cultural perspectives by ‘dismantling boundaries instead of erecting new barriers, encouraging a new sense of communality’ (2012: 14). Although recording and researching the relationship between an established discourse of ‘East/West’ interculturalism and an emerging discourse of transculturalism through the lens of the generational-cultural assertion and tension evident in *Once Upon a Midnight* necessitates a sense of conflict, a sense of breaking away and ‘destabilising the perceived *status quo*’, the end point is nevertheless positive. It is, in fact, the beginning of a more balanced dialogue between the national-cultural ‘where’ and the generational-cultural ‘when’, a launching point for further practice-led research that acknowledges a wider view of culture as part of the transition between this ‘historical space’ and the next.

The potential this project raises as a first step towards a new kind of cultural awareness and engagement among emerging and established theatrical practitioners – and hopefully other artists, critics and cultural thinkers as well – is ultimately more important than the audience reactions themselves. The experience of creating and presenting *Once Upon a Midnight*, when juxtaposed with the experience of creating and presenting *Retaliation*, with its markedly oppositional approach, positions *Once Upon a Midnight* not so much at the intersection of competing national-cultural perspectives, as at the intersection of competing generational-cultural perspectives. This research finding is, ultimately, very rewarding because it demonstrates that

differences in national identity and perspective can be balanced with ‘a new sense of communality’; identities and perspectives shared through a strong sense of generational-cultural connection as part of a ‘new global cultural order’. Viewed through this framework, culture can move beyond fixed notions of ‘place’ and become adaptive and regenerative across notions of ‘time’. In this sense, *Once Upon a Midnight*, a fable of one young woman’s fear of the unknown, has come to represent the fear of social and cultural change, the fear of a future without clear borders and labels, and the possibilities that open up when that fear is conquered.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Conclusion

‘We are one group,’ said Shusaku Uchida, aka Shu, over sausage and bread at a barbeque in West Lakes. His comment was a response to one of the many newspaper articles on *Once Upon a Midnight*, another piece emphasising the ‘East meets West’ national-cultural binary. The ‘group’ Shu referred to had already performed to positive reviews in Japan and was in the middle of a party celebrating the second leg of the production. Over Shu’s shoulder, Mai Kakimoto took charge of the barbeque with Mel Matheson and her dad, while drummer Yasushi Ohsuka was introduced to the Matheson family’s golden retriever, Bella. Shu had just been discussing his love of Wes Anderson movies with Matthew Crook when the article arrived. The heading read *Mythology of Two Cultures*:

Once Upon a Midnight has been rehearsed and staged with a combined Australian and Japanese cast [...] Adelaide director Catherine Fitzgerald was put in charge of the unusual production and has ushered it through development and rehearsals in Okinawa and Adelaide.

“It is a bilingual show, so I went off and did a course in Japanese before I went,” said Fitzgerald. “By the time it was staged I could just about make myself understood to the Japanese cast without the aid of a translator.” (Lloyd, 2008)



‘Remind me to only speak Japanese when Catherine arrives,’ Keiko Yamaguchi said dryly as she took the article from Shu’s hand and continued reading: ‘Fitzgerald says the show, with five Australian student actors, and eight Japanese professionals, was a hit in Okinawa’ (Lloyd, 2008).

The labelling of ‘five Australian student actors’ and ‘eight Japanese professionals’, both divisive and – upon a quick head count – numerically inaccurate, raised groans from the Australians and good-natured teasing from the Japanese. The ‘student/professional’ split had been restated every day for over two months, although nobody in the group felt it carried any relevance to the process. The article proceeded to discuss the ‘hilarity’ of Australian actors speaking Japanese and the hope to ‘achieve the same effect here’ through ‘rescripting.’ Shu reclaimed the article and repeated his assertion: ‘we are one group.’



*Shu strikes an ironic pose with an Australian icon* Photographer: David Hirst

Everyone agreed that since embarking on this adventure we had, indeed, become one group, although reviewers represented us as two distinct groups – two national sporting teams temporarily playing together. We had shared some skills and ideas, but the exchange was a curiosity, a structured meeting between two distinct, and with the added branding of ‘student’ and ‘professional’, distinctly unequal halves. On the surface, this was a reasonable assessment and it certainly had not hurt our publicity. We had been brought together as part of two cross-national festivals and, as the article indicated, many in the group were still students. From a marketing perspective, it made absolute sense to frame the event in this way and our director was not the first to exploit this angle. Many of us had emphasised a national divide on previous occasions, to both Japanese and Australian media, when pressed to do so. Below the surface, however, something else was going on. This was a party of friends, completely in tune with each other and at liberty to laugh, joke, poke fun and broach any topic that sprung to mind. Physically, too, there was no visible divide between us. We were just like any other cast on tour: open, familiar and with a catalogue of reference points and in-jokes. We were now mocking articles that dwelt on national difference. Japanese and Australian artists had discovered they had an enormous amount in common.

The adventure began with my first encounter with ‘Otherness’ in 2006, where children cried ‘*gaijin*’ and bath houses proved less relaxing than advertised, and evolved to the scene in the Matheson backyard in 2008 where a shared place in history had, ultimately, overshadowed the waning cultural influence of geography. For a group of emerging artists who had shared a moment in time, the world had become a lot smaller. What had happened to this simple festival exchange? Why had

the prevailing cultural theories and discourses between Australia and Japan felt intrusive, misapplied and inaccurate, right from the first meeting, when the focus shifted from the established generations to the emerging? How will future generations balance national identity with global unity?

The word that had been part of *Once Upon a Midnight* from the beginning, the word that had been central to the script, the pitch, the journey and the outcome was neither 'Japan' nor 'Australia', but 'youth'. Where the play succeeded, as a narrative and as a trigger of self-discovery for the performers, a focus on shared global youth culture had been the strength. Where the play failed, as a production criticised by emerging audiences and as a splintered effort from the creative team, generational perspective had been the point of difference. As a practice-led research project, *Once Upon a Midnight* revealed that writing, producing, directing, composing and performing across generations requires as much research and acknowledgement of difference as writing, producing, directing, composing and performing across nations. Therefore, the term interculturalism is unsatisfying, as it limits its embrace of culture to national-cultural borders when, in fact, there are other cultural categories of significance. This is especially true in our current 'historical space' as the technology that links us globally and the digital media that both captures and informs stylistic and aesthetic preferences has never been more powerful or more accessible. If established artists and academics are quick to dismiss these global developments, this only serves to highlight generational-cultural division and the need to have this debate in order to facilitate constructive collaboration.

When we set out to create *Once Upon a Midnight*, we all suspected that we would encounter some unique challenges. Devising what would, ultimately, be best described as a transcultural work for emerging audiences, with a core creative team consisting primarily of established artists, revealed differences. The impact of these differences – not always *national* in nature but certainly *cultural* – could not have been predicted through the ‘experience’ of any participant from the established generations or derived from the theoretical framework of ‘East/West’ interculturalism. Instead, the cultural differences that made *Once Upon a Midnight* a challenging project were those captured in Bharucha’s concept of ‘historical space’, revealed through Proehl’s focus on ‘time’, and manifested in the ‘turf war’ discussed by Davis and Heath. These differences motivate Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s examination of a ‘paradigm shift’ with regards to the new ‘global generations’, underscore the cosmopolitan sense of ‘belonging’ discussed by Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis, and prompt Dagnino’s transculturalism. Regardless of their theoretical guise, however, these differences help to understand the conflicting perspectives of each generation represented in my recorded interviews with the cast and creative team and, finally, the audience responses in Okinawa and Adelaide. It is important to recognise that these differences did not arise as a result of physical age, its effects and its prejudices, but as a result of the cultural perspective created by maturing at a specific point in time: the generational-cultural ‘when’.

This project has clearly demonstrated that a responsive audience is no longer a given for emerging theatrical practitioners. Fostering an audience from the emerging generations for the new generations of artists requires research and consultation; it requires theatre to assert rather than assume its cultural relevance. There was an

understanding from the emerging cast members early in the process that there was a new cultural dimension in play, a dimension raised as soon as the word 'youth' entered the show's vocabulary. We anticipated that confronting this challenge openly would lead to negotiation and discovery along the way. While the script reflected this understanding, the production obscured it.

Although some disagreements are aesthetic in nature, the deeper generational differences identified through this process relate to a reconfigured relationship between nationalism and globalism: 'East meets West' versus 'New World.' Perhaps the first question that should have been asked was not how emerging artists and audiences could be drawn into an 'East/West' intercultural model, but whether emerging artists and audiences respond to 'East/West' as a concept. Do we wish to be confined by 'East/West' and 'Oz/Asia' binaries? The result of this experiment is a resounding, if cheeky and subversive, negative. For the emerging generations, hybridising national and global identities from adolescence (if not before) may already have led to new cultural awareness. Arjun Appadurai approaches this phenomenon by taking 'media' and 'migration' as the key points of discussion, suggesting that 'electronic media give a new twist to the environment within which the modern and the global often appear as flip sides of the same coin' (Appadurai, 1996: 3). In his work, Appadurai captures the intersection between global and national identity through the use of linking technologies:

As Turkish guest workers in Germany watch Turkish films in their German flats, as Koreans in Philadelphia watch the 1988 Olympics in Seoul through satellite feeds from Korea, and as Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago listen to

cassettes of sermons recorded in mosques in Pakistan or Iran, we see moving images meet deterritorialized viewers. (Appadurai, 1996: 4)

Appadurai argues that this phenomenon ‘confounds theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state as the key arbiter of important social changes’ (1996: 4) and goes on to expand the meaning of ‘culture’ beyond ‘the discursive space of race, the very idea it was originally designed to combat’ (1996: 12). In his view, media and migration have given emerging generations a common imaginative space, the space that allows a group of Australians and Japanese to communicate through shared fantasy such as *Back to the Future*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Akira*, *Spirited Away* and *Once Upon a Midnight*. I have argued that this shared fantasy space exists due to a shared cultural history, made more evident through the proliferation of global social media. Beck, Beck-Gernsheim, Dagnino and others support this core argument that the power of global digital media, coupled with migration and increasing accessibility to global travel, has made this space between nation-states – this common global identity – the dominant cultural lens. It would seem logical, therefore, that the ‘local’, the immediate set of cultural influences, would become subordinate, perhaps even irrelevant, in the face of this emerging global social cohesion. The rehearsal process for *Once Upon a Midnight* revealed, as Appadurai hypothesised in his work, that the final picture is more complex: in fact, even while campaigning for an appropriate level of acknowledgement for the social and cultural power of generational-cultural identity as a shared perspective, individuals in the cast and creative team of *Once Upon a Midnight* applied and removed their generational-cultural and national-cultural lenses according to circumstance.

Although frustrations with the dominant, established generations lead every page of my 2008 diary, are evident in the dry remarks of the young interviewees from Australia and Japan, and rumble beneath the subversive antics of emerging artists during international symposia on youth performance, it should be stated in this conclusion that none of the participants in *Once Upon a Midnight* allowed their local lens to dissolve completely. Therefore, instead of denying the legitimacy of national-cultural perspective, I have presented an argument that advocates generational-cultural acknowledgement within a global framework, where transculturalism may be a less restrictive, less divisive theoretical model compared to the 'East/West' intercultural model, which, in our experience, limited the discourse in and around the conception, rehearsal and performance of *Once Upon a Midnight*. I have considered this argument from a variety of angles and demonstrated that a generational-cultural perspective can offer new insights into nationalism, feminism and globalisation as well as social and cultural change. At the same time, I do not intend to put forward a notion that emerging generations have all the answers, merely that they should be invited into the conversation. The *Once Upon a Midnight* project has demonstrated that while a strictly national-cultural 'East/West' perspective is self-conscious, formal, structured and requires lessons in 'extreme patience', a generational-cultural perspective is quicker, casual and much less constrained.

While some issues may yet cause anxiety and division, a generational-cultural perspective allows for these issues to be confronted and debated beyond the divisive rhetoric and convenient labelling of national-cultural discourse in a manner that is frank, often humorous and seldom self-consciously tactful or polite. The strength of the emerging artists in *Once Upon a Midnight* was the ability to raise contentious

issues, to discuss them and joke about them, to have a clash of opinion without hesitation or self-censorship, to poke fun at the national-cultural traditions encountered, to learn from them, to reflect them back and, in so doing, reach a deeper, more honest level of connection than ‘East/West’ interculturalism alone can ever achieve.



*Final Performance, Adelaide*

In 2010, Ashis Nandy delivered the Keynote Address to the audience of the now well-established annual OzAsia Festival in Adelaide. In contrast to the self-consciously politically correct notions of intercultural engagement that continue to dominate the festival, Nandy advocated a more honest and candid approach. After all, he argued, aren't friends permitted to disagree?



It is difficult nowadays to find people who will criticise Bombay commercial films, though a lot of Indians hate them. It is difficult to even say that Thai or Sri Lankan food is too spicy, even though steam comes out of your ears, you have to claim that they are very nice and you are not used to so much of spice perhaps and that it's your fault and not the fault of the food. (Nandy, 2010)

The tolerance that Nandy promotes is a tolerance that celebrates diversity and welcomes disagreement. He sees nothing wrong with people putting their own culture, their own upbringing, their own place and space in history ahead of others. It is important to accept this national-cultural perspective and to acknowledge it, or else, Nandy cautions, our engagement will be limited to 'defanged cultures'. However, when taken in tandem with generational-cultural perspective, divisive issues can be repositioned beyond Appadurai's 'discursive space of race' and into a more nuanced, well-rounded discursive space – a 'historical space' – framing intercultural clashes as a combination of nation and generation, of 'where' in tandem with 'when'. In this way the tension between national-cultural and generational-cultural perspectives is less about cultural capital or one perspective dominating the other, but a continual negotiation, a joint acknowledgement of the 'where' and the 'when'. In this space, issues can be debated with more depth and candour.

The experience of staging *Once Upon a Midnight* demonstrates that communication across nations and generations must be an active and open process; a process where participants will – and should – clash. As Nandy asserts, while there is a strong global pull, there is also room for putting one's own values first:

It is a bit like marriage, you can define a good marriage by saying that a good marriage is one where there is no quarrel at all, but you can define a good marriage also by saying that a good marriage is one which can take a lot of quarrels and not get destroyed. (Nandy, 2010)

The ‘marriage’ of cultures in *Once Upon a Midnight* was certainly of the latter kind: the Japanese criticised the English language, most memorably the unnecessary confusion surrounding words like ‘bored’ and ‘board’, while the Australians poked fun at, among other things, the constant use of red bean in Japanese dessert and the solemn attitude surrounding the simple act of drinking tea. This, too, had a generational aspect: tongue-in-cheek exchanges were often criticised by established artists. The differences satirised in good-natured teasing, parody and one-liners were differences nonetheless, making the rehearsal process a cultural balancing act: we held global, generational-cultural solidarity in one hand and acknowledgement of some lingering national-cultural influence in the other. The emerging participants were simultaneously global citizens, easily crossing boundaries to find common ground with peers, and local citizens, celebrating their own biases and backgrounds. For some participating in the creation of *Once Upon a Midnight*, it was the national-cultural lens through which this process was most often filtered; for others, it was the generational-cultural lens. The tension between these two specific lenses was most evident on this occasion, due to the nature of the project as a Japanese/Australian collaboration specifically targeting a youth market, but other lenses were slipped on and off throughout the encounter. These lenses informed the daily interactions, filtering experience through spirituality, gender, sexuality, wealth and class status, as

well as a whole series of more subtle tints that form the minutiae of intercultural engagement.

Returning to the barbeque in Adelaide, Shu's statement that 'we are one group' holds true, especially in response to so much press emphasising national-cultural division. However, it would be more precise to say that there existed one group comprising many smaller groups. There were atheist groups, spiritualist groups, vegetarian groups, environmental groups, conservative groups, progressive groups, dance groups, rock groups, happy groups, disgruntled groups, younger groups, older groups – many cultural categorisations. Understanding this dynamic in terms of its many facets, rather than categorising it simply as 'Japan/Australia' or 'Australia/Japan', was a crucial part of the creative and personal journey undertaken by the participants of *Once Upon a Midnight*; although this may have been anticipated, it was doubtlessly underestimated at the project's beginning, obscured in the rehearsal and staging process and hidden by the public discourse surrounding each performance. As a text, however, *Once Upon a Midnight* will continue to develop. Kelsey's first steps into a 'new world', her coming to terms with difference and her confrontation with 'old thinking' in the form of Angelica are all part of an ongoing narrative.

The conclusion to this project, therefore, can be described best in those terms: culture is an ongoing narrative. Culture is a series of discourses and counter-discourses between human beings of different nations, different classes, different faiths, different genders and different times. Culture is both a celebration and an understanding of difference. Culture encompasses how we all look at the same world and choose a different path, perhaps even arriving to discover a different 'truth'. For the team that

worked on this flagship production of *Once Upon a Midnight*, exploring cultural perspectives, or trying new lenses on for size, was a revealing experience that has informed our subsequent creative work, as demonstrated, in my case, by *Retaliation*.

Now that I am back in my office at the university I have flashes of returning to one of the many smoky bars in Okinawa – in fact, one of the bars was actually called ‘Smoke’ – with Shu dragging on a cigarette in a dimly lit corner and telling me about his family and his politics, and his thoughts on Marlon Brando, and Mai leaning against the bar with hands on hips declaring that ‘ladybug’ is a ‘stupid English word’ because ‘there is *nothing* ladylike about a bug’. I still share emails with members of the group, often with tongue-in-cheek subject headers (‘Dear Exotic Other ...’) and we still go over our war stories from the rehearsal room. What has emerged from the smoky haze, from the process of analysing the experience step by step and from continued discussions and reflections, is the question of the established generations’ right to impose their discourses on the next generation of creative thinkers. If *Once Upon a Midnight* has in some small way helped to stimulate that conversation then the journey has been well worth it. In this ongoing narrative, the established cultural labels, lectures, orthodoxies, dichotomies and prejudices must be considered in tandem with emerging attitudes. Generational-cultural perspective can balance this established dogma with a sense of change, a progressive theoretical perspective that can lead to a ‘marriage’ – to use Nandy’s metaphor – that is honest, candid, lively and dynamic. By embracing the concept of generational-cultural perspective, artists and academics can find new ways to connect around the globe. We can acknowledge that culture is not static, but fluid and evolving.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Once Upon a Midnight**

The following is the ‘final’ (17th) draft of the stage play *Once Upon a Midnight*.

This is the show as it appeared at the beginning of our production week in Japan, prior to last minute cuts. The text in red indicates dialogue that was written and performed in Japanese to aid cross-national understanding. This is the draft that best captures the original performance.

**Once Upon A Midnight**

Written by

Alex Vickery-Howe

17<sup>th</sup> Draft, Okinawa and Adelaide

CastMonsters of the Underground

Nozomi, the Ningyō	<b>Mai Kakimoto</b>
Angelica, the Blue Fairy	<b>Michelle Pastor</b>
Shima, the Kijimuna	<b>Shusaku Uchida</b>
Yoshiki, the Tengu	<b>Tenchou</b>
Kango, the Kappa	<b>Shimabukuro Hiroyuki</b>
Damon, the Vampire	<b>David Hirst</b>
Scratch, the Werewolf	<b>Chris Asimos</b>

People of Earth

Kelsey, a fourteen-year-old girl	<b>Lauren Henderson</b>
Ryan, her brother, sixteen	<b>Matthew Crook</b>
Leiko, a toddler	<b>Keiichi Yonamine</b>

And the Vultures ...

Tweetles	<b>Melissa Matheson</b>
Flopsy	<b>David Hirst</b>
Bedlam	<b>Michelle Pastor</b>
Kowashimashou	<b>Shusaku Uchida</b>
Zuru-Zuru	<b>Keiko Yamaguchi</b>
Hiyokko	<b>Ken Yamamura</b>

Before the show

*The stage is littered with dolls and doll parts, building into a pile of rejected childhood belongings. Beyond this lies a nightmare forest. Through the fog, decaying trees reach out with their leafless, twisted branches.*

*A group of vultures, TWEETLES, FLOPSY, BEDLAM, KOWASHIMASHOU, ZURU-ZURU and HIYOKKO move about the pile, snapping at one another and making fun of the audience. Each should develop his or her own distinct personality ...*

*TWEETLES is the most outspoken and insulting of the group. She holds status. FLOPSY is dimwitted and ungainly. BEDLAM is wild-eyed and hyper. KOWASHIMASHOU is physically aggressive. ZURU-ZURU is the most intelligent and cunning. HIYOKKO, the youngest, just wants to be accepted.*

*Likewise, each has a distinct appearance and physicality to reflect these traits. TWEETLES snaps and sneers. FLOPSY wears a goofy smile and seems to trip over his own wings. BEDLAM is brightly feathered, and will leap and climb atop the others, never pausing for breath. KOWASHIMASHOU is larger and sporting an eye patch. ZURU-ZURU's colouring is the darkest and her claws the sharpest. HIYOKKO still has his baby down instead of feathers, and toadies to the others.*

*The comedy should be both verbal and physical with as much audience interaction as possible.*

*Meanwhile, SCRATCH, the werewolf, prowls the stage. He is sleek and black. There is nothing remotely human about this character. For all appearances, this is a real wolf. His only acknowledgement of the audience should be expressed in snarls, growls and the showing of fangs.*

*When everyone is settled, the vultures take their places and SCRATCH howls to the waning moon.*

*Lightning.*

*Music kicks in.*



PROLOGUE: NOZOMI'S RETURN

## OPENING NUMBER

YOSHIKI, the tengu, appears from darkness. He shuffles along, a lost old man, until he finds the head of NOZOMI. Smiling, he pulls back his cowl to reveal razor teeth and crimson eyes. He sings to his six VULTURES and orders them to reconstruct NOZOMI's body. He is the monster king, the master of ceremonies, and his scheme is about to be unleashed. The VULTURES provide a frenzied rock chorus.

## 1) BRING ON THE NIGHT

YOSHIKI                    *Though we once were enemies  
We must now set aside  
The blood that's come between us  
If we are to survive  
I will wake you from your slumber  
I will raise you for the fight  
I will pick up all your pieces  
I will bring you back to life  
Angelica will force us all  
To live a life of lies  
So I'll blacken out the sky  
Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Come together*

YOSHIKI                    *Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Live forever*

YOSHIKI                    *While you rest in pieces, our world is caving in  
Angelica is gonna make us pay for all our sins  
We will reach into the darkness  
We will raise you from your grave  
We will put you back together  
If you promise to behave  
Oh sweet child you've gotta help us  
We are running out of time  
We will blacken out the sky  
Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Come together*

YOSHIKI                    *Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Live forever*

YOSHIKI                    *Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Come together*

YOSHIKI                    *Bring on the night*

CHORUS                    *Live forever*

YOSHIKI                    *Now, arise!*

**CHORUS**                    **Bring on the -**

As YOSHIKI sings, his servant KANGO, the kappa, grins at his side. He is slimy and repulsive. SCRATCH, the werewolf, remains at a distance - seething, disgruntled and aloof. He loathes this plan.

Once assembled, NOZOMI blinks.

**NOZOMI:**                    Where am I?

**YOSHIKI:**                    Nozomi

**NOZOMI:**                    Tengu.

**YOSHIKI:**                    (flattered) She remembers.

She tries to rush him but her body stiffens and she half-falls. The VULTURES help her to steady herself and straighten up.

**NOZOMI:**                    You destroyed my life!

**YOSHIKI:**                    So long ago, little doll.

**NOZOMI:**                    Do you think I've forgotten?

YOSHIKI considers this.

**YOSHIKI:**                    Well ... I was hoping.

NOZOMI draws her katana. YOSHIKI nods to KANGO and he presents his sword to him. NOZOMI and YOSHIKI face off.

Their blades clash.

**BEDLAM:**                    Scratch, they're fighting already.

SCRATCH clearly doesn't care. He turns and raises a lazy paw.

**SCRATCH:**                    Hold her.

The VULTURES restrain NOZOMI. SCRATCH brushes KANGO aside and slinks closer to his "master". His annoyance is boiling below the surface.

**SCRATCH:**                    (to YOSHIKI) Your plan will never work.

**YOSHIKI:**                    My plans always work.

**SCRATCH:**                    The doll doesn't trust you.

**YOSHIKI:**                    She does trust me!

**SCRATCH:**                    She doesn't!

**YOSHIKI:**                    She does!

**NOZOMI:**                    I don't!

NOZOMI pulls free of the VULTURES, spinning her katana.

**FLOPSY:**                    Ooh, Tweetles, do something clever!

Thinking quickly, TWEETLES throws HIYOKKO straight for NOZOMI. HIYOKKO shrieks and cowers.

**TWEETLES:** Tell her to put the sword down!

**HIYOKKO:** (terrified) Your katana, please, it is unnecessary.

**TWEETLES:** (to NOZOMI, urgent) The tengu brought you back for a reason.

**HIYOKKO:** The tengu brought you back for a reason.

NOZOMI brings her katana to HIYOKKO's throat.

**NOZOMI:** And what might that reason be, little one?

**TWEETLES:** We need your help, Nozomi!

**HIYOKKO:** We need your help!

NOZOMI's eyes dart to each of them. HIYOKKO whimpers.

Beat.

Slowly, NOZOMI smiles. She begins to laugh.

**NOZOMI:** Is that so? (turning, to YOSHIKI) I'd like to see you beg.

YOSHIKI takes a step closer to her. He smiles as best he can and bows.

**NOZOMI:** Lower.

Infuriated, YOSHIKI performs a deeper bow. NOZOMI laughs once again. She throws HIYOKKO back into the other VULTURES.

**NOZOMI:** Speak (then, mocking, in English) Well, speak.

**SCRATCH:** Things have changed since you were last in one piece. We've changed. We've had to!

**NOZOMI:** I don't believe any of you can change. Monsters never change.

**SCRATCH:** That was before.

They all look to the sky.

Beat.

**SCRATCH:** (stage whisper) Before she came.

**NOZOMI:** What's up there?

**TWEETLES:** Angelica.

**VULTURES:** Angelica ... Angelica.

**NOZOMI:** Angelica?

**YOSHIKI:** The Blue Fairy, the creature all monsters fear.

**SCRATCH:** The Blue Fairy. She changes everything.

**BEDLAM:** She's no fun!

**ZURU-ZURU:** She's a killjoy!

**TWEETLES:** She's a scrag!

**SCRATCH:** Our world is upside down!

**HIYOKKO:** Our world is upside down!

**SCRATCH:** With each new day, Angelica grows more powerful.

**KANGO:** With each new day, Angelica grows more powerful.

**TWEETLES:** The nights are growing shorter!

**ZURU-ZURU:** The nights are growing shorter!

**SCRATCH:** Angelica makes us laugh, and sing, and hold hands!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Angelica makes us laugh, and sing, and hold hands!

**TWEETLES:** And soon ... soon ...

**ALL:** **SOON THE SUN WILL RISE FOREVER!**

*They all cower, shake and cling to each other. HIYOKKO jumps into FLOPSY's arms and nestles into his chest. Total fear and despair. YOSHIKI turns to face NOZOMI and hisses the translation.*

**YOSHIKI:** Soon the sun will rise forever.

*Beat. NOZOMI looks YOSHIKI up and down.*

**NOZOMI:** You are afraid. (turning, sizing up the VULTURES)  
All of you.

*She considers this.*

**TWEETLES:** *(pleading)* Don't you see? We're all on the same side.

**SCRATCH:** Even the tengu has learnt fear.

**BEDLAM:** It's time to kiss and make up!

*NOZOMI puts her katana away.*

**NOZOMI:** Very well. How do you wish me to help?

**SCRATCH:** You're the only monster who can blend into the human world!

**NOZOMI:** The human world? Why would I want to go up there?

**FLOPSY:** There's something there that we need.

**BEDLAM:** *(winks)* Just a little something.

**SCRATCH:** We need you to borrow a human child, and not just any child.

**NOZOMI:** You need me to "borrow" a human child?

**YOSHIKI:** Yes, yes ... but we'll give it back! I promise!

**SCRATCH:** The most frightened child in all the world.

**HIYOKKO:** The most frightened child in all the world.

**TWEETLES:** Nothing more, and nothing less.

*NOZOMI's tone becomes deeply suspicious once more.*

**NOZOMI:** And what use have you for a cowardly child, Tengu?

**YOSHIKI:** If we can take a frightened child and teach them to face the dark, we may yet save our world.

**SCRATCH:** Only children may speak to Angelica. She lives for them.

**NOZOMI:** I don't trust any of you.

**KANGO:** *(teasing)* You don't have a choice, pretty doll. If our world dies, you'll die with it.

**TWEETLES:** It's our only hope! If we can take a frightened child and teach them to face the dark, the Blue Fairy will see the error of her ways.

**HIYOKKO:** They're right! The Blue Fairy must see the error of her ways! Only a child can teach her!

**BEDLAM:** If not, our world will fade into sunlight.

*The music returns, as an instrumental, and starts building.*

**TWEETLES:** Children need monsters, Nozomi. They hate to admit it, but they do.

**HIYOKKO:** Children will always need monsters.

*The VULTURES gather around NOZOMI. At YOSHIKI's command, they dress her in a flowing red kimono. She stands, with katana in hand, as they all bow to her.*

*SCRATCH throws YOSHIKI a scornful look.*

**SCRATCH:** You'd better be sure, old man.

**YOSHIKI:** We have no choice, Scratch.

*YOSHIKI glances back at the sky.*

**YOSHIKI:** And no time to argue.

*NOZOMI raises her blade. The music reaches a crescendo.*

**NOZOMI:** Then I will bear my sword.

*Lightning.*

I - THE CALLING OF KELSEY CLARKE.

Lights up. KELSEY's house. A banner reads "Happy Birthday Kelsey". There are numerous presents laid out.

KOWASHIMASHOU and ZURU-ZURU appear.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Did we get the address right? Is this the nest of the chosen one?

**ZURU-ZURU:** Don't call her "the chosen one". She's just some silly kid, and she has a name. (reading the banner) Kel-sey.

A blanket in the corner of the room reacts to the name. The VULTURES duck in fear. As they cautiously reemerge, KELSEY sits up, throws off the blanket, and makes an appalling wheezing noise.

Mechanically, she reaches for a puffer and medicates herself.

Beat.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** How can she save our world? She's disgusting!

KELSEY winds up a music box. A little fairy in a blue dress rises from the box and pirouettes as a haunting melody plays. KELSEY hums along.

**KOWASHIMASYO:** It's her, the oppressor!

**ZURU-ZURU:** Quiet!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** KOWASHIMASHOU!

He tries to reach the music box. ZURU-ZURU tackles him.

They struggle outside. KELSEY does not notice.

**KELSEY:** I'm not going out there, Blue Fairy. There's alcohol ... and party crackers. I am staying here. I'm staying safe ... with you.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Death to Angelica!

**ZURU-ZURU:** It's just a toy!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** It's Angelica! It's her! It's the Blue Fairy!

**ZURU-ZURU:** Behave yourself, you moron!

ZURU-ZURU whacks him.

**KELSEY:** (to herself) The Blue Fairy waves her magic wand and the sun shines down onto a better world. All our fears melt away forever and ever.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Tell me what she said!

**ZURU-ZURU:** "The Blue Fairy waves her magic wand and the sun shines down onto a better world. All our fears melt away forever and ever."

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** There, you see? Such vile words! Death to them both, I say!

**ZURU-ZURU:** I knew we shouldn't have brought you!

*KELSEY turns, slamming the box shut. They duck.*

**RYAN:** Ah-ha!

*RYAN enters, scaring her.*

**KELSEY:** Jesus, Ryan!

*He is swinging a plastic katana. His speech is larger-than-life as he imitates bad Japanese-English movie dubbing.*

**RYAN:** So - we - meet - again, Shogun, but - this time ... you will fall ... on- my -sword.

*He lets out a war cry and leaps around, quoting 'The Seven Samurai'.*

**RYAN:** "Fight like a sword man!"

*KELSEY sighs. The sigh becomes a hopeless rasp. She's having trouble snorting air into her lungs.*

**RYAN:** Kelsey, come on. Why are you wheezing?

**KELSEY:** (sniffs) Allergies.

*Her rasps evolve into a worrying asthma attack. She withdraws her inhaler and desperately medicates herself. It goes on for some time. During this, KOWASHIMASHOU and ZURU-ZURU pop up again.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** This can't be the right nest! Check the map!

*The VULTURES scuffle.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** There were balloons outside! Kelsey is the one!

**KELSEY:** S'ok ... I'm ... I'm good.

**ZURU-ZURU:** But, she has a brother. This could be tricky.

*RYAN doesn't blink.*

**RYAN:** Man, I hate it when you do this. It's your birthday. Cakes. Balloons. Where's the bad?

**KELSEY:** It's irresponsible.

**RYAN:** What is?

*He starts miming flashier sword moves.*



**KELSEY:** Having my party outside. I don't know what Mum and Dad were thinking. And did you see the big knife that Aunt Doris was waving around?

**RYAN:** She just wants to cut the cake with you.

**KELSEY:** I could lose a finger!

*His plastic katana meets her throat. She squeals.*

**RYAN:** Please don't carry on.

*He grabs her into a playful headlock.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** He's going to choke her!

**ZURU-ZURU:** I would choke her if she were my sister!

**KELSEY:** What about Uncle Gary?

*She slaps him away.*

**RYAN:** What about Uncle Gary?

**KELSEY:** In the kitchen?

**RYAN:** So?

**KELSEY:** Barefoot?

**RYAN:** OK ...?

**KELSEY:** Unsanitary!

**RYAN:** Geez, it's no big ...!

**KELSEY:** It's big!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Stab her then! (to ZURU-ZURU) If only that katana were not made of plastic.

**RYAN:** I'm sure he bathes.

**KELSEY:** His feet are hairy ...

**RYAN:** I'm not listening.

**KELSEY:** ... and wrinkly.

**RYAN:** He's a very old man! All his stuff is wrinkly!

**KELSEY:** I have made a mental list of just how many germs, fungi and bacteria he could be carrying in ...

**ZURU-ZURU:** She says she's made a mental list of all her relatives' tropical and infectious diseases.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Is that what human children do to pass the time? Doesn't she have any friends?

**RYAN:** Great. That's productive. Kelsey, the whole family is waiting!

**KELSEY:** All of them?

*She begins choking for air once more. KOWASHIMASHOU looks doubtful.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** I don't think Kelsey is going to survive. We should find another one.

*HIYOKKO pops up behind them, smiling. He wears a party hat and blows a little whistle/party blower.*

**HIYOKKO:** Did I miss anything? There's cake downstairs.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Ooh, cake!

*ZURU-ZURU slaps the blower out of HIYOKKO's mouth.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** The child is defective!

*They watch KELSEY.*

**RYAN:** You're wheezing again.

**KELSEY:** I'm distressed!

*She sucks on her inhaler.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** Look at her, she's pathetic!

**KELSEY:** There's trouble everywhere, you know. Do you watch the news? *(off his look)* If you don't watch, how will you know how scary the world really is?

**HIYOKKO:** She says the news makes her afraid. The world is falling apart. Aw, poor thing!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** What kind of sappy monster are you?

**ZURU-ZURU:** We're supposed to frighten children, you nerd! That's our job!

**RYAN:** Kelsey ... the world is not out to get you.

**KELSEY:** Have you heard of the Ebola virus?

**RYAN:** Only because you're my sister.

**KELSEY:** It's real! It happens!

**RYAN:** Sure, but ...

**KELSEY:** I don't want to vomit up my intestinal lining, thank you very much.

*He finds a large blow-up hammer and whacks her. She recoils with a yelp.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Let's take the boy instead. He seems much healthier. Look at him go.

**HIYOKKO:** The most frightened child in all the world, that was the order.

**ZURU-ZURU:** Then our orders are nonsense! She can't help us!

**HIYOKKO:** She's perfect! She's frightened of everything. Have you heard of the Ebola virus? She thinks she has it!

*ZURU-ZURU and KOWASHIMASHOU shrink away, squawking.*

**HIYOKKO:** You can't get it here! It's all in her head!

**ZURU-ZURU:** We can't use her if she's diseased.

**HIYOKKO:** She isn't!

*RYAN hits KELSEY again.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** I still say the boy is better.

*The three VULTURES duck as the children's play drifts nearer to them. RYAN tickles KELSEY.*

**RYAN:** Man, you are sooooo messed up! You don't even have asthma.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Finish her, boy! Strike the final blow!

*KELSEY wriggles away. KOWASHIMASHOU looks disappointed.*

**RYAN:** *(panting)* I'm gonna get me some cake.

**KELSEY:** Fine. I hope Aunt Doris slips and decapitates you!

**RYAN:** When I come back, we're opening the rest of your "highly dangerous" presents.

**KELSEY:** Did you even get me anything?

**RYAN:** Um ... yeah.

**KELSEY:** Did you?

*He grins.*

**RYAN:** Cake first. *(dark voice)* The cake waits for no man.

*RYAN heads off.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** Excellent. The brother is about to deliver his present. Or, should I say, our present?

*She grins, a little evil. HIYOKKO and KOWASHIMASHOU just look dully at her.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** Nozomi.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Oh, I see. *(then)* That's very clever.

*KELSEY, alone, deflates.*

2) FRIGHTENED OF THE WORLD

**KELSEY**                    *They tell me not to worry but I can't hide my fear  
They tell me not to worry still an end seems near*

*My brother thinks I'm crazy  
But he doesn't understand  
I'm just frightened of the world  
I'm just a girl*

*They tell me not to worry but I'm paranoid  
Of the microscopic dangers that I can't avoid*

*Agoraphobic, Claustrophobic  
All the other phobics too  
I'm just frightened of the world  
So why aren't you?*

*And everyone's telling me what I should feel  
And everyone's telling me what I should feel  
But what should I feel?*

*All these nightmares never ever fade away  
All my fears are here, they're here to stay  
I am afraid that I am frightened  
Always, I'm afraid*

*She calls out to RYAN.*

**KELSEY:**                    *It had better not be stupid!*

*RYAN returns, holding a red box tied up with the biggest golden bow you ever saw. Their niece, LEIKO, trails with him. She is drooling cake.*

**RYAN:**                    *I come bearing gifts. Well, a gift. (then) Oh, yeah, and a baby.*

**KELSEY:**                    *Hello gorgeous!*

**RYAN:**                    *She's here for the big unveiling.*

**KELSEY:**                    *Look at you, Leiko, all fat and frosty. Who's a funny girl then?*

*KELSEY starts talking baby language.*

*LEIKO beams up at KELSEY. The VULTURES peer at her from the window.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:**    *She looks tasty.*

**RYAN:**                    *(impatient) Come on, sis, let's see you open her up.*

**KELSEY:**                    *Her? Her who? (regarding the present) It's a "her", is it?*

*KELSEY moves over to the box. She rips the paper away to reveal ...*

NOZOMI.

**KELSEY:** (nonplussed) Ryan, why did you buy me a doll?

**RYAN:** She's a special doll.

**KELSEY:** She's a creepy doll.

**RYAN:** She's Japanese. Expensive.

LEIKO tentatively approaches NOZOMI.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** You there, infant! Don't move a muscle!

LEIKO turns to the VULTURES and glares, hands on hips.

**LEIKO:** I am not an infant! I am one and a half!

The VULTURES react.

Beat.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** KOWASHIMASHOU!

He's off again! The other VULTURES stop him from harming LEIKO. KELSEY and RYAN miss it all.

**KELSEY:** I already have a doll, Ryan. And she is much, much prettier.

KELSEY moves to the blue box with the fairy inside. The red and blue boxes now occupy opposite sides of the stage. LEIKO stalks NOZOMI.

**LEIKO:** You're not a normal dolly. I can see you wincing!

**NOZOMI:** (hissing, to the VULTURES) Help me.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** That smart baby is going to ruin our whole plan!

**ZURU-ZURU:** Distract her!

The VULTURES slip into a mime routine. They move up and down invisible stairs and elevators, and row invisible boats. Every time LEIKO gets close, they reach out to snatch her. RYAN and KELSEY are preoccupied.

**KELSEY:** Where did you find such an awful gift?

**RYAN:** Some new place. "Yoshiki's". The old dude behind the counter couldn't stop talking about her.

LEIKO sticks her tongue out at KOWASHIMASHOU and wriggles her bottom at him.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** She's mocking me!

**HIYOKKO:** Don't sink to her level!

**RYAN:** She's a ningyō, a warrior doll, from Okinawa.  
(*off Kelsey's look*) It's an island.

**KELSEY:** How come you're an expert all of a sudden?

**RYAN:** I read ... comic books.

*NOZOMI draws her katana. LEIKO squeals.*

**KELSEY:** It's OK, sweetie. It's just a doll.

**RYAN:** Not just a doll, Leiko. She's Japanese. Like somebody else around here.

*He tickles LEIKO.*

**LEIKO:** Stop tickling me! That doll is dangerous!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Shut it, you brat! I'll kill her! I'll --

*The VULTURES scuffle on as RYAN plays with LEIKO.*

**LEIKO:** Silly grown-ups! Can't you see what's in front of you?

*KELSEY turns away. RYAN tries to draw her interest.*

**RYAN:** Her hair is real, even. Real human hair.

**KELSEY:** Probably swimming in disease.

**RYAN:** (*ignoring her*) Kelsey, it's high time you replaced little twinkle-toes over there.

*He gestures to the blue box.*

**RYAN:** There are some dolls who're all "La la la. I like ribbons, and lollipops, and let's all hold hands," and there are some that are like ...

*Now, back to NOZOMI.*

**RYAN:** "I am the defender of earth! Cower before me!" This ...

*He puts his arm around NOZOMI's shoulder.*

**RYAN:** ... is the latter.

*KELSEY huffs and rolls her eyes. RYAN pulls some moves with NOZOMI.*

**LEIKO:** Idiot! Don't get so close!

**RYAN:** Feel the power ... the precision ... none may stand against her ... she is the Dragon Slayer ... the buttock-kicker ... "There can be only one!"

*LEIKO cowers as NOZOMI tries to skewer her.*

**LEIKO:** Can't you see the doll is armed? She has a katana!

RYAN grins, proud as mustard.

**RYAN:** I think she's beautiful. She'll protect you.

Beat. KELSEY smiles.

RYAN: (smug) See? I was being thoughtful!

The VULTURES snigger.

**ZURU-ZURU:** Ha! Kelsey's smiling! I think our gift has been very popular.

KOWASHIMASHOU punches the air.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** We rule! (then, mocking) What are you going to do now, infant?

LEIKO throws up on NOZOMI. It's not pretty.

Beat. RYAN states the obvious.

RYAN: Kelsey, the baby vomited.

**HIYOKKO:** Oh, that's just ... mean!

**KELSEY:** You gave her too much cake.

**RYAN:** (gasps, offended) You can never have too much cake, Kelsey!

**KELSEY:** Help me fix the doll.

They clean up NOZOMI.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** I think I am going to be sick.

The VULTURES watch in horror. KOWASHIMASHOU starts heaving.

**ZURU-ZURU:** Oh no you don't!

KOWASHIMASHOU turns and vomits onto HIYOKKO. ZURU-ZURU hits him and he hits back.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (feeble, as he falls) KOWASHIMASHOU!

KELSEY and RYAN remove NOZOMI's outer clothing, reducing her to her underwear. NOZOMI wants to kill them, but can't risk moving. Instead, when they're not looking, she sneers at LEIKO. The little bub raises her fists.

Meanwhile the VULTURES collect themselves.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Don't look at me ... she started it!

LEIKO punches him. RYAN and KELSEY are watching NOZOMI.

**RYAN:** I think she makes a terrific present.

**KELSEY:** Are you saying that because she's naked?

*LEIKO rushes and tries to disarm NOZOMI. RYAN scoops her up. KELSEY is redressing NOZOMI, in a canary yellow dress.*

**RYAN:** I'm going to clean up the bub and put her to bed.

**LEIKO:** Release me!

**KELSEY:** You're scaring her, Ryan. You and all your stories.

**RYAN:** She's a fighter. Y'know, I'd ask if you'd wished the family farewell, but I may as well ask if you'd said hello.

**KELSEY:** *(deep sigh)* OK, fine, I'll go down.

*He takes LEIKO by the hand.*

**RYAN:** Say "nighty-night".

**LEIKO:** Goodnight.

*KELSEY notices LEIKO's speech for the first time.*

**KELSEY:** What did she say?

**RYAN:** Dunno. Baby talk.

*They all leave their separate ways. KELSEY fixes NOZOMI's hair in pigtails.*

*SCRATCH and the remaining VULTURES appear in a (suitably dramatic and spooky) flash.*

*KOWASHIMASHOU, HIYOKKO and ZURU-ZURU approach NOZOMI.*

*SCRATCH, new to the scene, is utterly appalled.*

**SCRATCH:** What is that smell?

**NOZOMI:** Baby vomit.

**HIYOKKO:** *(with a nod)* Baby vomit.

*They recoil from her.*

**TWEETLES:** *(oozing sarcasm)* So it's all going very well then?

**NOZOMI:** It's going along fine. I do not need your help.

**SCRATCH:** Do you realise what we have risked already?

**NOZOMI:** Don't you dare talk to me about risk! I am the one sticking my neck out here!

**SCRATCH:** If she knows what we're up to ...

*The VULTURES whisper to each other.*

**TWEETLES:** The Blue Fairy

**VULTURES:** Angelica ... Angelica ...



**NOZOMI:** Enough!

*NOZOMI looks murderous.*

**NOZOMI:** Kelsey cares for the younger one. She will do anything to protect her.

*NOZOMI gestures to indicate a small child.*

**SCRATCH:** The baby? (*smirks*) Perfect. Birds, we must have bait! Where the baby goes the brat will follow. (*turning*) Tweetles, Flopsy - you're on point! Kowashimashou, Zuru-Zuru - you're on flank! Bedlam, Hiyokko ...

*All of the VULTURES have become muddled and confused.*

**SCRATCH:** Oh, let's just do this thing.

**NOZOMI:** I didn't mean that you should take the baby as bait ...

**SCRATCH:** We'll snatch her from her crib!

**BEDLAM:** Mm. This is gonna be fun.

**NOZOMI:** Scratch, you're going too far. This is my job! My decision!

*The VULTURES are assembled like a row of soldiers. SCRATCH prowls up and down, the general.*

**SCRATCH:** Just remember, nobody is allowed to eat the baby.

*TWEETLES, BEDLAM and FLOPSY whine.*

**BEDLAM:** No fair!

**HIYOKKO:** You must not eat the baby.

*KOWASHIMASHOU and ZURU-ZURU do the same whine routine, equally peeved.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** An arm? Just one arm? She has two of them!

**HIYOKKO:** The baby needs both of her arms!

**TWEETLES:** But she's so little ...

**BEDLAM:** And pudgy.

**TWEETLES:** And tender.

**SCRATCH:** Birds, move out.

*They turn and march off. FLOPSY trips as he goes. BEDLAM jabs HIYOKKO with her beak and giggles when he shrieks.*

**NOZOMI:** Scratch!

He turns.

**NOZOMI:** You're not listening to me!

**SCRATCH:** Kelsey is your mark. Leave the rest to us!

She draws her katana. He growls dangerously.

**NOZOMI:** I agreed that we could take Kelsey, but not the infant as well! Give me time and I'll coax Kelsey Underground. You don't need to make a scene!

He takes a step. She twirls her katana.

Beat.

SCRATCH laughs in her face.

**SCRATCH:** I wouldn't get any smart ideas if I were you. We might have put you back together, but we'll smash you again in a heartbeat!

Slowly, she lowers her weapon.

**SCRATCH:** That's right. That's a good girl.

He turns to leave, then spins again, with a snarl.

**SCRATCH:** Never forget what you are, Nozomi. A monster, just like the rest of us.

**NOZOMI:** (calling after him) I know I was born a monster, but I am nothing like you! (then, to herself) I won't let you tear this family apart.

RYAN is with LEIKO. We see three identical, purple sets of eyes. Lightning reveals three of the vultures, KOWASHIMASHOU, BEDLAM and ZURU-ZURU. They stifle their giggles.

**RYAN:** There's nobody there. Nobody.

He backs away.

**BEDLAM:** Nobody?

BEDLAM rushes and leaps into the air. ZURU-ZURU circles around above, laughing at RYAN. They are swift and nimble. Wherever RYAN turns, there is another VULTURE in his face.

**RYAN:** Nobody. Nobody at all!

A pair of yellow eyes appears behind him. Lightning reveals SCRATCH. He's all business, moving directly for his prey.

**RYAN:** There's nobody drooling on my t-shirt.

SCRATCH gets closer.

**RYAN:** There are no giant birds, no rabid canine ... there is nobody but me, and the baby ...

**ZURU-ZURU:** Can we eat this one?

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** I believe we can!

**RYAN:** Who are you? What are you saying?

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** We work for the tengu!

**SCRATCH:** You don't want to make any sudden movements. These birds will bite.

**RYAN:** A talking dog?

**SCRATCH:** Did you call me a dog?

*He snarls.*

**LEIKO:** I tried to tell you, Ryan! We're being invaded!

*RYAN backs away. TWEETLES, HIYOKKO and FLOPSY cut him off.*

**TWEETLES:** What do we have here?

**BEDLAM:** Supper.

**LEIKO:** Let me at 'em!

*LEIKO assaults KOWASHIMASHOU with talcum powder!*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Arrgh! Retreat!

**RYAN:** It's OK, Leiko ... vultures don't eat people unless they're already dead.

**SCRATCH:** Are you willing to bet your life on that?

*RYAN stands in front of LEIKO.*

**RYAN:** You're not taking my niece!

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** (rubbing his eyes) I think he's decided to be a hero!

**ZURU-ZURU:** Silly, silly boy

**RYAN:** You'll have to kill me.

**ZURU-ZURU:** We're taking the child.

**LEIKO:** If you want me to go with you, you'll have to ask politely!

*More talcum powder! TWEETLES charges in and disarms her.*

**TWEETLES:** Come here you little monkey!

*RYAN snatches the plastic hammer he brandished earlier and knocks each of them. The hammer makes a feeble squeak.*

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** Your weapon does not intimidate us! KOWASHIMASHOU!

*He lunges. RYAN swings.*

**RYAN:** Back, back!

*They laugh.*

**RYAN:** I can take you! I've got a black belt!

*They guffaw.*

*Lightning. Smoke starts to move through the room.*

**TWEETLES:** Uh-oh. Here comes trouble.

*BEDLAM leaps onto TWEETLES' back. They both snigger.*

**BEDLAM:** Kappa!

**VULTURES:** Kappa!

**SCRATCH:** Who invited him?

**FLOPSY:** This is going to be messy.

**KOWASHIMASHOU:** The kappa is here! The boy is doomed!

**TWEETLES:** I call the boy's liver. The liver is always delicious.

**BEDLAM:** I'm going eyeballs!

*KANGO, the kappa, appears. RYAN pales.*

**KANGO:** Hello there, little boy.

**RYAN:** What the hell is that?

**SCRATCH:** Kango, the swamp demon. He's Tengu's right arm.

**RYAN:** OK, so we're really not in Kansas anymore.

**KANGO:** The master grows impatient! I'll deal with this mammal myself!

**SCRATCH:** Look, we agreed to be subtle ...

*KANGO gestures. Green lights shine. MUSIC!*

**SCRATCH:** *(big sigh)* He really isn't subtle.

**RYAN:** Boys don't get scared. Boys don't get scared.

*The music reaches an eerie climax.*

*Disco beat.*

### 3) DANCE, MONSTER, DANCE

**KAPPA** Oo oo ah, the monster dance  
He he he.  
You're gonna dance

Gotta do the dance, dance, monster dance  
Gotta do the monster dance.  
Gotta do the, oo ah, monster dance.  
Gotta do the monster dance.  
Gotta do the, oo oo ah, the monster dance  
The, oo oo ah, the monster dance

You'll lose your mind  
Come on baby now  
You'll lose your soul  
Come on baby  
When you hear that beat  
That's when you're gonna lose control

And then the monster said  
"Be you alive or dead, everybody get up on your  
feet and dance"

Everybody do the dance, dance monster dance  
Gotta do the monster dance.

**CHORUS**

Gotta do the, oo ah, monster dance.  
Gotta do the monster dance.  
Gotta do the, oo oo ah, the monster dance  
The, oo oo ah, the monster dance

Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
I said everybody do the monster dance  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
I said everybody do the monster dance  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
I said everybody do the monster dance  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
Everybody do the-  
I said everybody do the monster dance

**KAPPA**

Oo oo ah, the monster dance  
He he he

KANGO has RYAN in his thrall. Crazy disco dancing follows.

The dancing and zany electronic music both become more and more elaborate. Soon RYAN, SCRATCH and the VULTURES are moving about in outrageous choreographed routines. LEIKO wriggles away.

More dancing!

It just won't stop!

Let's see how far we can push this ...

Everyone collapses.

*KELSEY's room.*

*LEIKO charges for NOZOMI.*

**LEIKO:** That's it! I am getting grouchy!

*SCRATCH rushes in, panting.*

**NOZOMI:** Is there a problem?

*NOZOMI looks dangerous.*

**SCRATCH:** The kappa arrived and ...

*LEIKO leaps onto SCRATCH.*

**NOZOMI:** A kappa? Here? In the human world?

**SCRATCH:** Don't look at me! It was Tweetles! She left the gateway open!

*TWEETLES enters just as SCRATCH completes his sentence. She nips him.*

**SCRATCH:** Ow! Get this thing off of me!

*LEIKO jumps onto TWEETLES.*

**LEIKO:** I'll take you all!

*TWEETLES goes down in a heap. The rest of the VULTURES stagger on.*

**NOZOMI:** Clearly, the baby has outwitted you.

**FLOPSY:** (breathless) The kappa kidnapped the boy instead.

**NOZOMI:** The kappa kidnapped the boy instead?

**TWEETLES:** Look, we tried to explain but shell-head wasn't listening. There ... was ... a dance ...

**NOZOMI:** Dance?

**TWEETLES:** Yeah, y'know, a dance.

*She throws LEIKO off and mimes dancing. Abruptly, she deflates.*

**LEIKO:** You really had to be there.

**NOZOMI:** Is this what you call "handling it"?

**SCRATCH:** Alright, it's not perfect ... but it'll do. Birds, to the Underground!

*They vanish.*

*LEIKO draws her nappy pins. She starts throwing them like ninja stars.*

**NOZOMI:** Don't make me hurt you!

**LEIKO:** Nobody messes with my family!

*KELSEY enters.*

**KELSEY:** Leiko? Sweetie, what's wrong? Gosh, you're covered in slime! Lots of it!

*KELSEY takes out a handkerchief and starts cleaning her up.*

**LEIKO:** Back away, Kelsey! I will handle this! The monsters have stolen Ryan!

**KELSEY:** *(shaking her head)* Always leaking.

*She cleans Leiko.*

**KELSEY:** And regurgitating. I hope this isn't toxic.

**LEIKO:** *(big sigh)* Nobody ever listens to me.

*LEIKO runs at NOZOMI.*

**KELSEY:** That's it, no more red cordial!

*NOZOMI disarms LEIKO. KELSEY stares at NOZOMI in wonder, and horror.*

**NOZOMI:** Good evening.

**KELSEY:** What ...? How ...?

**NOZOMI:** I am Nozomi.

**KELSEY:** You can't talk ... you're a doll!

**NOZOMI:** Yes, a talking doll. Strange, isn't it?

*KELSEY holds LEIKO protectively.*

**NOZOMI:** I do not have time to explain, Kelsey Clarke. It seems the kappa has stolen *(annoyed sigh)* your older brother, Ryan.

**KELSEY:** Kappa ... kappa ... You're talking about a monster, right? And Ryan? A MONSTER HAS TAKEN RYAN!

**LEIKO:** Yes!

**NOZOMI:** You must come with me to the Underground. Now.

*She takes KELSEY's hand. KELSEY snatches it back.*

**KELSEY:** As if I am going anywhere with you! Ryan is big, and strong, and smelly. He can take care of himself.

*NOZOMI gestures and a gleaming beam shoots out from the box she was once contained inside. KELSEY screams.*

**LEIKO:** *(in English)* I will go! *(Japanese)* Leave Kelsey unscathed. I alone will go with you. There is no challenge I cannot face.

**KELSEY:** No, sweetie! You're much too little! If I don't come back by the end of my birthday, when both hands reach the top, tell Mum and Dad. And Aunt Doris. And Uncle Gary.

LEIKO nods. KELSEY kisses her forehead.

**NOZOMI:** I have Kelsey! Open the gateway!

The beam shifts from white to red.

Dark music. Thunder and lightning rage.

KELSEY gets dressed. She is a complete fright. Oversized glasses, cardigan, grey and black plaid dress, mammoth backpack.

NOZOMI tears off the yellow dress, lets her hair down and retrieves her red kimono.

The light engulfs KELSEY. Metal guitar. LEIKO cries out!

KELSEY and NOZOMI ride the gift box deep into the Underground.

YOSHIKI appears in spot, singing as he waits for his chosen child to arrive.

Each of the three - NOZOMI, KELSEY and YOSHIKI - sing of their private fears and expectations of what is to come.

#### 4) INTO THE DARK.

**NOZOMI:** A storm has been coming all your life  
If you run, if you hide, the boy will be lost in  
the dark forever.

**VULTURES:** Will she cry all night? Or will she stand and fight?

**SCRATCH:** This is the moment. This is the time. You must decide -

**VULTURES:** What will happen next? Can she stand the test?

**NOZOMI:** The longest journey will be started by the smallest  
=

**CHORUS:** - step into the - step into the - step into the dark!

**KELSEY:** A storm has been coming all my life  
If I run, if I hide, he will be lost in the dark forever.

**VULTURES:** Will she cry all night? Or will she risk her life?

**NOZOMI:** This is the moment. This is the time. You must  
decide -

**VULTURES:** What will happen next? Can she stand the test?



SCRATCH:            *The longest journey will be started by the smallest*  
 -

CHORUS:             *- step into the - step into the - step into the*  
*dark!*

YOSHIKI:            *Howl at the moon just like a child*  
*Who's been left out in the wild*

NOZOMI:             *Oh honey no one's coming*  
*Baby no one's coming to save you*

BOTH                 *There is only you*

VULTURES:           *Will she cry all night? Or will she risk her life?*

SCRATCH:            *This is the moment. This is the time. You must*  
*decide -*

NOZOMI:             *I did not want her help -*

YOSHIKI:                                    *- There is no one else*

BOTH:                *She'll do the fighting -*

KELSEY                                      - *but I cannot do it by myself*

VULTURES:            *Can she hold her own when she's all alone?*

SCRATCH:            *She's gotta figure out which way this thing is*  
*gonna go -*

CHORUS:             - *into the - go into the - go into the dark!*

NOZOMI:             *And you can cry*

KELSEY:             *I'm just a girl*

CHORUS:             *Into the dark*

KELSEY:             *I'm afraid of the world*

CHORUS:             *You can cry*

KELSEY:             *I'm just a girl*

CHORUS:             *Into the dark*

KELSEY:             *I'm afraid of the world*

CHORUS:             *You can cry*

RYAN:                *Kelsey!*

CHORUS:             *Into the dark*

KELSEY:             *Ryan! Hold on!*

CHORUS:             *You can cry*

KELSEY:             *I'm going to find you!*

**LEIKO:** *Kelsey! It's a trick!*

**CHORUS:** *Into the dark*

Finally, YOSHIKI rubs his hands together.

**YOSHIKI:** *It's show time!*

*Splash!*

**II - THE SEARCH FOR THE TENGU**

*The lights gradually come up and we see that KELSEY has crossed into a new world. Warped trees bend and twist out from the swampy earth.*

*KELSEY is having an asthma attack.*

**NOZOMI:** Oh no. Don't die on me.

*She helps KELSEY to fumble with her puffer.*

**NOZOMI:** Better?

*More lightning. KELSEY is a mess.*

**KELSEY:** I want to go home!

*SOMETHING moves in the shadows.*

*A throaty growl is heard, from another direction.*

**KELSEY:** What's that sound?

*She removes her glasses and closes her eyes tight.*

**KELSEY:** I'm not looking, I'm not looking, I'm not looking  
...

*SHIMA, the kijimuna appears. He has yellow and orange spikes poking out from his tiny form. In one hand, he holds (and eats) a raw fish. In the other, he clutches a little staff.*

*KELSEY screams!*

*SHIMA screams back!*

**KELSEY:** Is that the thing that took Ryan?

**NOZOMI:** No, don't panic, Shima is just a local. *(then, English) Friend.*

*SHIMA frowns over at KELSEY.*

**NOZOMI:** Tengu has her brother.

**SHIMA:** (gasp) Tengu!

**KELSEY:** Yes, tengu has my brother! Have you seen him? I can draw a sketch if you like.

*SHIMA shakes his head. He offers KELSEY his fish.*

**KELSEY:** No, thank you. I had cake earlier. *(to NOZOMI)* What the heck is he?

**NOZOMI:** What is he? (pointing) Kijimuna!

**KELSEY:** Is that word supposed to mean something?

**NOZOMI:** *(English)* Water spirit. *(Japanese, to SHIMA)* We have no money for you. I ask that you grant us safe passage through the swamp.

*KELSEY tugs at NOZOMI's sleeve.*

**KELSEY:** What do you mean "safe passage through the swamp?" Is it like a bog? If we don't tread carefully, will we drown up to our eyeballs in black, hungry sludge?

*The other two stare at her. After a while, they both nod together. "Well, obviously".*

*KELSEY goes into a panic attack. She sucks on her puffer. SHIMA snatches it.*

**SHIMA:** Don't need that anymore!

**KELSEY:** Help ... I'm dying.

**NOZOMI:** Kelsey Clarke, are you OK?

**KELSEY:** I'm ...

*She realises that she can breathe.*

**KELSEY:** ... fine.

*Slowly, KELSEY breaks into a smile.*

**KELSEY:** I'm really ... actually ... very ... completely fine. *(then, to SHIMA)* Do you know where my brother is?

**SHIMA:** Your brother can't have gotten far. I am an excellent guide. Chin up, we'll find him! *(English)* I help rescue.

*NOZOMI groans.*

*SHIMA smiles and hurries KELSEY along.*

**SHIMA:** We go West! *(moves right)*

**NOZOMI:** East! *(moves left)*

**KELSEY:** My brother was the one kidnapped! I say ... we go north. *(points downstage)*

**NOZOMI:** North, you say? But, you are pointing south!

**KELSEY:** I am pointing south? Then we'll go south.

*Laughter echoes around them.*

**KELSEY:** OK, we'll go north.

*They move. SHIMA hums as they walk.*

*Blackout.*

YOSHIKI's lair.

*RYAN is bound in chains, TWEETLES hides him with her wings.*

**TWEETLES:** Sir, there's been a slight ... hitch. I don't want you to be disappointed.

**YOSHIKI:** Show me the prisoner!

**TWEETLES:** Please try and remember all my years of loyal service.

**YOSHIKI:** Tweetles!

*TWEETLES whimpers. She reveals RYAN.*

*YOSHIKI spins to face KANGO and SCRATCH.*

**YOSHIKI:** Who is he?

**RYAN:** Ryan.

**YOSHIKI:** Ryan?

**TWEETLES:** Ryan, yeah, he said his name was Ryan.

*YOSHIKI explodes with anger. Lightning rages.*

**RYAN:** Wow. Cool.

**YOSHIKI:** Idiots!

**SCRATCH:** This whole operation has been a monumental cock-up!

**YOSHIKI:** You and those incompetent birds have ruined everything!

**SCRATCH:** Don't look at me! It was the slimeball!

**KANGO:** Shut your mouth, fleabag!

**SCRATCH:** I've had enough! I'm not sticking around to watch this go from bad to terminal.

**YOSHIKI:** You're leaving? Now?

**SCRATCH:** I'm going to face Angelica! I'm taking matters into my own paws! *(Japanese)* I never liked your plan anyway.

*SCRATCH storms off.*

**RYAN:** He's a very tense animal.

**YOSHIKI:** That moron. He's running off to face Angelica!

**KANGO:** Surely he would not be so foolish.

**YOSHIKI:** This is Scratch we're talking about.

**KANGO:** He just needs to blow off steam.

**RYAN:** The green dude's right, I'm sure he'll come back with his tail between his legs.

*TWEETLES nips at RYAN. He yelps.*

**YOSHIKI:** And what of this one?

*YOSHIKI looks to RYAN and frowns.*

**YOSHIKI:** I have seen you somewhere before.

**RYAN:** *(light bulb)* Wait a sec ... you sold me that doll.

**YOSHIKI:** Ah, yes. I sold you the doll. My little ... surprise.

**RYAN:** I'll sell her back to you for half-price, yeah? There was this whole vomiting incident.

*YOSHIKI strokes his thin beard, a smile forming.*

**YOSHIKI:** Of course ... you are the brother of Kelsey Clarke.

*KANGO nods enthusiastically.*

**RYAN:** Brother, yes. That's me. Kelsey is my little sister.

**YOSHIKI:** Make yourself comfortable, Ryan dono.

*He chuckles evilly. RYAN is unfazed and so chuckles back.*

**RYAN:** You're hilarious.

*Lights fade.*

*KELSEY, NOZOMI and SHIMA walk on. A signpost grows in front of them. KELSEY screams.*

**KELSEY:** What does it say?

*SHIMA studies the Japanese characters.*

**SHIMA:** *(in English)* "Onwards ... to certain death"

*Beat. He grins. KELSEY pulls him back.*

**KELSEY:** *(little voice)* I don't want to die.

**NOZOMI:** *(English, gentle)* You will.

*She holds out her hand.*

**NOZOMI:** *(English)* In time.

*The Ghost Roads stretch out before them.*

**KELSEY:** *(whispers)* Are you going to tell me where we are?

**NOZOMI:** This is the path to the Ghost Roads. (*then, English*) Ghost Roads.

**KELSEY:** I'm terrified of ghosts, and ... also ... roads.

**SHIMA:** Be calm, child.

**KELSEY:** I am sick of little Yoda here trying to calm me down. I can't be calm! I'm highly-strung!

**NOZOMI:** This task has fallen on your shoulders, Kelsey Clarke, and so you must fulfill your duty.

**KELSEY:** Ryan's the hero!

**NOZOMI:** There is more than Ryan's life at stake.

*SKELETONS and half-decayed ZOMBIES stagger out from the houses. SHIMA spins, staff at the ready.*

**SHIMA:** Nozomi ...

*KELSEY explodes.*

**KELSEY:** Stop treating me like I'm a kid!

**NOZOMI:** I treat you like a kid because you are a kid!

**SHIMA:** (*sing-song, a little unnerved*) No-zo-miii.

**NOZOMI:** On second thoughts ... you're a brat!

**KELSEY:** I'm not a brat!

**NOZOMI:** You hide from everything!

**KELSEY:** I don't hide from everything, just ... most things.

**SHIMA:** Nozomi!

*NOZOMI and KELSEY turn. They are surrounded by the moaning dead. A SKELETON reaches out to stroke KELSEY. She screams.*

**NOZOMI:** We need blood, to call my friend. (*English, urgent*)  
Blood, blood.

*NOZOMI raises her katana.*

*KELSEY sifts around in her backpack. Around her, SHIMA and NOZOMI fend off the slow-walking ZOMBIES.*

**KELSEY:** I got it.

*She empties her backpack, revealing band aids, a stethoscope and assorted medical paraphernalia.*

*KELSEY has withdrawn a blood-testing device.*

**KELSEY:** It's for my hyperglycemia. I need to check my blood sugar, always. Did you know that one in four young women ...?

**NOZOMI:** We're a little busy, Kelsey!

**KELSEY:** Right.

*She pricks her finger.*

**KELSEY:** Ooh, that's low.

**NOZOMI:** Kelsey!

**KELSEY:** OK ... erm ... come and get it!

*KELSEY holds up her bleeding finger.*

*The music grows.*

**DAMON:** Nozomi, honey!

*Lightning. The ZOMBIES part.*

**DAMON:** I always knew you'd come back, someday.

*DAMON steps down from the stairs leading to his graveyard pad. He is striking, youthful. His smile reveals razor fangs.*

**KELSEY:** Your friend is a vampire.

*The SKELETONS and ZOMBIES grovel as DAMON draws nearer.*

*NOZOMI twirls her katana.*

**KELSEY:** YOUR FRIEND IS A VAMPIRE!!!

*NOZOMI shrugs. Sparks fly! Torches light up and, within the brightest fire, WRAITHS appear. They dance and twirl in the flickering flames. DAMON moves hungrily for KELSEY, but finds NOZOMI in the way. Her sword pokes at his bare chest.*

**DAMON:** Really, what did you expect?

#### 5) HOT RED SUGAR

**ZOMBIES** Stranger! Stranger! Stranger!

**DAMON** *Out of the shadows I see a stranger come  
So sweet and scared. I'm gonna get me some.  
I'll dip my teeth into your crimson flood  
I will bite your neck. I will drink your blood*

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar

**DAMON** *Oh, I wanna taste it*

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar

**DAMON** *Oh, don't wanna waste it*

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar



**DAMON** Oh, oh, oh!

**ZOMBIES** Stranger! Stranger! Stranger!

**DAMON** I smell your blood. I taste it on my tongue.  
I hear your heart beat like a bleeding drum.  
This one is fresh. This one is nice and ripe.  
If you're A or B then you're just my type.

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar

**DAMON** Oh, I wanna taste it

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar

**DAMON** Oh, don't wanna waste it

**ZOMBIES** That hot, red sugar

**DAMON** Oh, oh, oh!

**ZOMBIES** Stranger!

*DAMON, the most charming vampire ever, welcomes his guests.*

*The SKELETONS and ZOMBIES rock out. They dance. The fires intensify. The WRAITHS turn hellish red. It is clear that the residents of the Ghost Roads have been itching for a party. The music reaches a climax and suddenly drops ...*

*Bells toll.*

*Lightning crackles overhead.*

*KELSEY moves downstage, frightened. Soon the sound has become the roar of thunder and the lights have lost their radiance. Everything turns blue.*

**DAMON:** It's her ... the Blue Fairy.

**ALL:** Angelica, Angelica.

*AIR RAID siren!*

*NOZOMI runs to KELSEY's side, her katana drawn.*

**NOZOMI:** Behind me!

*SHIMA and DAMON close in, shielding KELSEY. We get the sense that something is moving overhead.*

**ANGELICA:** (voice only) Soon, the sun will rise ... forever.  
(Japanese echo)  
Soon, the sun will rise ... forever.

*KELSEY appears momentarily transfixed by the call.*

**KELSEY:** What are you?

**DAMON:** (to NOZOMI) You can hide in my pad. This way!

A SKELETON is caught in the blue spotlight. He cries out, as though wounded.

A WRAITH runs in the opposite direction. She is struck by the same blue light, and falls.

KELSEY, NOZOMI, SHIMA and DAMON run through a door and disappear.

Beat.

The SKELETON and WRAITH have been transformed into a happy-faced 'Hello Kitty' TOY ANIMAL and CARTOON GIRL à la Strawberry Shortcake.

**ANGELICA:** (voice only, louder) Soon, the sun will rise ...  
forever.  
(Japanese echo)  
Soon, the sun will rise ... forever.

Slowly, the blue lights withdraw. ANGELICA has flown elsewhere.

### YOSHIKI's LAIR

The lights rise. RYAN is wearing a kimono and eating a small banquet. He looks right at home.

**RYAN:** Yo, Yoshiki, what's happening my man?

**YOSHIKI:** I fear for your sister's safety.

**RYAN:** Aw, come on! You're the tengu! You're evil!

**YOSHIKI:** Oh stop!

**RYAN:** Do the lightning thing!

**YOSHIKI:** You flatter me.

**RYAN:** Light-ning! Light-ning!

YOSHIKI gestures. Nothing happens.

**RYAN:** Performance anxiety?

YOSHIKI deflates.

**YOSHIKI:** It's a sign. My powers are failing. Angelica's grip grows ever tighter!

**RYAN:** Angelica ...

**YOSHIKI:** (furious) Angelica!

**RYAN:** Settle down, Mister Miyagi! You'll get your powers back! Scratch has gone to take care of everything.

YOSHIKI scoffs at this.

**YOSHIKI:** Scratch has gone to take care of everything? Bah! Scratch is a fool!

**RYAN:** I'm sure Scratch can handle a Blue Fairy. He's a big bad wolf!

**YOSHIKI:** His claws and fangs are useless against the Blue Fairy.

**RYAN:** Useless, eh? Then why choose Kelsey to fix your world? I mean, as heroes go she's ... so lame.

**YOSHIKI:** Kelsey is the only one who can face Angelica! The most timid girl in all the world, Ryan dono, it must be she.

**RYAN:** Well, be careful what you wish for. Kelsey is more than a timid child. She's a grade A fraidicat.

**YOSHIKI:** But if we can teach Kelsey to overcome her fear, if she could learn courage ...

**RYAN:** Teach Kelsey courage? You must be tripping. I've been trying that for years.

**YOSHIKI:** It can be done! Nozomi will train Kelsey well!

**RYAN:** Kelsey's a wuss. It can't be helped. *(then, sharing a secret)* I think she still wets the bed.

*A ZOMBIE lumbers in spotlight. He moans as he drags himself along.*

*TWEETLES enters from within the lair.*

**TWEETLES:** Mail's here!

**ZOMBIE:** Buuuuuuuuurrrrrrr.

*YOSHIKI spins to face the ZOMBIE.*

**YOSHIKI:** Hurry along, Zachary. You are wearisome.

**ZOMBIE:** Maaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaarrrrrgh.

**YOSHIKI:** Yes, yes ...

**ZOMBIE:** Oooooooooorr.

**YOSHIKI:** Oh, for crying out loud!

*The ZOMBIE reaches YOSHIKI and stands moaning. TWEETLES plucks a letter from his belt. YOSHIKI takes the letter from her beak. The ZOMBIE collapses.*

**YOSHIKI:** You're so embarrassing.

*There is another moan from the floor. YOSHIKI kicks him.*

**YOSHIKI:** Your sister has reached the Ghost Roads.

**TWEETLES:** Check it out, your sister has reached the Ghost Roads.

**RYAN:** *(nodding)* Ghost Roads.

RYAN belches.

**RYAN:** Awesome!

YOSHIKI leans close to RYAN.

**YOSHIKI:** Think hard on your sister, Ryan dono. For even now, she faces ... the lure ... of the vampire.

TWEETLES and YOSHIKI look grim. RYAN is loving this.

**RYAN:** (spooky voice) "The lure of the vampire." (grins)  
This is the best holiday ever.

He begins eating once more.

**RYAN:** Anyone else want a dumpling?

The MONSTERS look at each other. They're just not getting through to this guy.

**DAMON's house.**

Coffins are laid out, surrounded by old records and piles of clothing. It's a young vampire's bachelor pad.

DAMON, KELSEY, SHIMA and NOZOMI walk in. DAMON is carrying a lantern.

**DAMON:** Well, these are my digs.

**KELSEY:** Um ... very nice.

**DAMON:** Ta very much.

**SHIMA:** This vampire isn't much of a housekeeper is he?

DAMON smiles a fang-y smile.

**DAMON:** Kelsey, you can have the spare bed.

KELSEY looks down at an open coffin.

**KELSEY:** Right.

She forces a smile.

SHIMA looks to NOZOMI.

**SHIMA:** He really used to be your boyfriend?

NOZOMI looks away.

**SHIMA:** He he, don't be shy!

**DAMON:** Oh, go on, tell Shima about all the good times we shared here. (Japanese) She's a wild one!

SHIMA grins. NOZOMI hits DAMON.

**KELSEY:** You two really used to date?

**DAMON:** Oww! Yeah, we had a fling.

**NOZOMI:** We had a "fling?"

**DAMON:** We ... were hot.

**NOZOMI:** We were "Hot?"

**DAMON:** Fine! What do you want me to say?

**NOZOMI:** Say nothing further!

**SHIMA:** Old flames, those two. Be careful, Kelsey. Vampires are untrustworthy at best. Don't get too close to him.

**KELSEY:** Oh, like I'm going to get too close to him.

**SHIMA:** I will take first watch.

**DAMON:** You're safe here.

*NOZOMI clears her throat. DAMON pauses.*

**KELSEY:** Safe? With you?

**DAMON:** Sure!

*NOZOMI takes DAMON's ear and pulls him downstage.*

**NOZOMI:** If you can't handle the temptation ...

**DAMON:** You mean Kelsey? Oh come on, like I'd ...

*He clocks her expression.*

**DAMON:** ... I'd only drink a pint, at the very most. That's nothing. That's a trip to the doctor.

**NOZOMI:** You promised me you'd changed. That you were a vegetarian now.

**DAMON:** I have changed. Really. I am a vegetarian.

**NOZOMI:** (smiling a little) You've never known how to behave yourself.

**DAMON:** I'll behave. I have to. It's not like there's even a choice. Angelica says ...

**NOZOMI:** Lower your voice, someone will hear.

*He lowers his voice to a whisper.*

**DAMON:** The rules are clear, that's all I'm saying.

*A bottle of blood rolls out from his coat.*

**DAMON:** Ah.

**NOZOMI:** And what's this supposed to be? Tomato juice?

**DAMON:** Strictly for emergency use only. Rationing, just in case ...

*She produces a crucifix and sears his chest.*

**NOZOMI:** Liar!

**DAMON:** Oww!

**SHIMA:** Wow. Their relationship really is hot!

**DAMON:** OK. So I broke the rule.

*She grabs him by the collar. Their lips are close to touching.*

**NOZOMI:** You should know better than to break the rules.

**DAMON:** And do we have rules?

*NOZOMI stares at him for a long time.*

**NOZOMI:** Shima, keep alert. We will take the watch in turns.

*She points to the nearest coffin.*

**NOZOMI:** (English) You ... in there.

*DAMON lies down, smiling.*

**DAMON:** There's room in here for two.

*She slams the lid shut.*

**DAMON:** (from inside) Aww, come on!

*NOZOMI sees KELSEY grinning.*

**NOZOMI:** Wipe that smile from your face.

*She moves to the back of the room and finds herself a coffin. KELSEY looks at SHIMA and they both break into smiles and laughter.*

**SHIMA:** I think she still fancies him! A vampire and a ningyō, what strange children they'd make!

*Beat. KELSEY settles herself for the night.*

**SHIMA:** I will stay alert, Kelsey. No harm will come to you on my watch!

*SCRATCH prowls into the room. He knocks SHIMA down and opens DAMON's coffin.*

**DAMON:** Nozomi, I knew you missed me.

*He hugs ...*

**DAMON:** Scratch?

**SCRATCH:** (dry) Hi honey.

**DAMON:** What are you doing here? This wasn't part of the ...

**SCRATCH:** Forget the plan. I'm calling Angelica out!

*NOZOMI rises from her coffin, katana drawn.*

**SCRATCH:** (jumps) Nozomi!

**DAMON:** She'll talk some sense into you!

**SHIMA:** (nursing his head) Scratch plans to run off and confront Angelica!

**NOZOMI:** He wouldn't dare!

**SCRATCH:** Oh, I'd dare alright. That blue bint doesn't know who she's messing with!

**NOZOMI:** It is out of the question! Angelica can only be defeated by a human child!

**SCRATCH:** I know how the story goes, doll face, but I've got some plans of my own!

**DAMON:** Use your common sense. Angelica will know that you're coming. Monsters can't fight this thing.

**SHIMA:** Monsters can't fight this thing!

**SCRATCH:** I'll tear Angelica's wings off!

**NOZOMI:** If I thought it was possible, don't you think I'd have chopped Angelica's wings off by now?

**SCRATCH:** As if you'll ever get Kelsey ready in time! You've always had a soft spot for humans!

**NOZOMI:** I'll get Kelsey ready! I'll do what needs to be done!

**SCRATCH:** Nozomi, the human sympathiser ... the monster who wants to be loved! (spits) No wonder we chopped you to pieces!

*NOZOMI and SCRATCH lunge for each other. SHIMA and DAMON restrain them.*

**NOZOMI:** I won't let compassion sway me. Kelsey's destiny is to confront Angelica. I understand that. But, if you run off now, it will only arouse Angelica's suspicions.

**SHIMA:** The Blue Fairy must not learn of our plan! Not before Kelsey is ready!

**SCRATCH:** Just because you're all housebroken don't expect me to be the same. (to DAMON) It's sad to see what you've become. An herbivore! An abomination!

**DAMON:** I know what you're trying to do and it won't work.  
(Japanese) I'm not going with you. It's suicide.

*DAMON stands with SHIMA and NOZOMI.*

*Beat.*

**SCRATCH:** Stay here and rot with your friends. I'll end this my way.

*SCRATCH leaps off. NOZOMI starts after him.*

**DAMON:** Let him go.

*He holds her for a moment. Will they kiss?*

*Quickly, NOZOMI pulls away.*

**SHIMA:** Maybe Scratch is right. Are you certain Kelsey will ever be ready? Are you being too gentle with her?

**DAMON:** Nozomi knows what she's doing. Teaching Kelsey will take time. It can't be rushed.

**NOZOMI:** Bite her.

**DAMON:** What?

**NOZOMI:** (English) Bite her.

**DAMON:** Nozomi, that's ...

**NOZOMI:** Test her.

**DAMON:** That's risky. Once I start, I might not be able to hold back.

**NOZOMI:** Don't hold back.

*They stare at each other a moment longer. NOZOMI brushes her hair back to reveal her own exposed neck. He watches her.*

*Beat.*

*He starts toward her. She smiles and holds his face close to hers.*

**DAMON:** If Angelica found out.

**NOZOMI:** Angelica isn't here.

*NOZOMI winks. She crouches with SHIMA as DAMON sneaks over to KELSEY.*

*KELSEY's eyes pop awake and she screams.*

**DAMON:** I was kidding!

*Another scream is the only reply.*



**NOZOMI:** Time to throw Kelsey into the deep end.

*DAMON covers KELSEY's mouth. He turns dark.*

**DAMON:** I've been denying myself for so long. What I wouldn't give for something plump ... and young ... and bloody.

**SHIMA:** (to NOZOMI) Do you think she can handle him?

*NOZOMI is riveted. KELSEY struggles away.*

**KELSEY:** I won't have you sucking on my entrails!

**DAMON:** Kelsey, relax.

*He bares his teeth and rushes at her. She draws a flask.*

**SHIMA:** Holy water! Well-played, Kelsey!

**DAMON:** Holy Water? *(mocking)* Pah! Pah I say!

**KELSEY:** This is disinfectant.

**SHIMA:** Disinfectant!

*She shoots. DAMON screams and stumbles. NOZOMI catches him, clicks her tongue in mock-disapproval and throws him back into the ring.*

*KELSEY draws a second bottle.*

**KELSEY:** Shampoo.

**SHIMA:** Shampoo!

**DAMON:** Ooh. *(runs fingers through hair)* Well, I can always do with a little extra sheen.

**KELSEY:** I think you have dandruff.

**DAMON:** What? Where?

*KELSEY bops DAMON on the head with the shampoo.*

**NOZOMI:** Vanity has always been Damon's weakness.

**KELSEY:** The sooner I get back home, the better. This world is ... full of freaks.

**DAMON:** We'll take that as a compliment.

*KELSEY storms back to her coffin.*

**KELSEY:** Goodnight!

*NOZOMI dangles the bottle of blood over DAMON's head. He licks his lips. Finally, she gives it to him.*

**DAMON:** You'd better hope she never finds out how hard you've been pushing her. This isn't a game.

**NOZOMI:** I know this isn't a game, Damon. But you're a sore loser nonetheless.

*He sneers and grabs her tight.*

**DAMON:** You're pushing me as well.

*They're both breathing heavily.*

*SHIMA makes a very ... interested ... noise.*

*Beat.*

*They separate.*

**NOZOMI:** The girl is ready.

**DAMON:** Yes, Kelsey is ready ...

*Beat.*

**DAMON:** ... but, thanks to Scratch, Angelica will be ready too.

*Lights cross-fade to:*

*Moonlight. Angelica's Doorstep.*

*SCRATCH howls.*

**ANGELICA:** (voice only) Are we having a tantrum?  
(Japanese, echo) Are we having a tantrum?

**SCRATCH:** I'm not going to be told what to do anymore! Do you hear me, Angelica? I am standing up!

*A beam of blue light shoots down from the sky. It pulses and pins SCRATCH down.*

**ANGELICA:** (voice only) If you're going to stand against me, I will have to teach you how to sit.  
(Japanese, echo) If you're going to stand against me, I will have to teach you how to sit.

*SCRATCH fights. It takes every inch of muscle but he to get back up.*

**SCRATCH:** No, not this time!

*The beam intensifies. ANGELICA giggles.*

**ANGELICA:** You can't fight me, Scratch. I am eternal. I am the light of the stars. I carry the voice of the wind.  
(Japanese, echo) You can't fight me, Scratch. I am eternal. I am the light of the stars. I carry the voice of the wind.

*He strains against the beam of light.*

**SCRATCH:** You really do love to hear yourself talk, don't you, baby?

The light slams him down. He drags himself forward and struggles to raise his head to the sky.

**SCRATCH:** Go back to where you came from!

**ANGELICA:** (voice only) Now, now. Don't make me hurt you.  
(Japanese, echo) Now, now. Don't make me hurt you.

He forces himself into a crouching position, throws his head back and howls. Winds swirl around him.

**ANGELICA:** (Polite, calm) Enough.  
(Japanese, echo) Enough.

He sneers. The light streams into him again and again.

SCRATCH howls until he cries. Finally, he is blown backward.

Music.

#### 6) TAMING OF THE WOLF

**SCRATCH** You won't make me beg  
You won't make me bow  
I am not your pet  
This is not your town  
Here I am, Angelica!  
Come and fight, Angelica!

**SUGAR BABES** Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba  
Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba

**ANGELICA** Now, now, stop all this howling at the moon  
You will do what I want you to do

**SCRATCH** I am ready to fight  
I am ready to fight  
I am ready to fight you  
Here I am, Angelica

**ANGELICA** Now, now, it's time I taught you to behave

**SCRATCH** Come and fight, Angelica

**ANGELICA** Now, now, it's time I taught you to behave

**SCRATCH** Here I am, Angelica

**ANGELICA** Now, now, it's time I taught you to behave

**SCRATCH** Come and fight, Angelica

**ANGELICA** Now, now, it's time I taught you to behave

**SUGAR BABES** Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba  
Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba

ANGELICA chastises SCRATCH. She is playful at his expense. SCRATCH glares up at her. He summons what's left of his strength and sings back. His voice carries into a defiant howl.

The energy between them aurally explodes. SCRATCH falls for the last time, beaten. ANGELICA is in control!

The stage fills with HAPPY TOYS and SUGAR BABES - a range of ultra sweet cartoonish characters. SCRATCH is surrounded.

The HAPPY TOYS dance.

From above, ANGELICA sings. She is manic in her happiness, just as her wind-up minions are sickly sweet.

SCRATCH backs off, on the defensive.

ANGELICA, the voice of a psychotic angel, rocks up a storm as the HAPPY TOYS move about the stage. Each is impossibly cute, and terribly unsettling: a collection of zany style stuffed animals and wind-up toys, with oddly cold expressions.

SCRATCH starts clawing at the HAPPY TOYS ... but to no avail. The HAPPY TOYS begin to groom and clean SCRATCH.

Finally, ANGELICA builds into a hypnotic trance. Intense blue light. SCRATCH is enthralled. The HAPPY TOYS hold SCRATCH, forcing him to look.

SCRATCH collapses. He'll never be the same again.

Lights dim. The HAPPY TOYS back away and are gone. With them, the music drifts away.

**ANGELICA:** (voice only) Soon, the sun will rise forever.

"Forever" echoes again and again, and again.

The blue light departs as it did on the Ghost Roads.

SCRATCH moves as though drugged. He falls with a pitiful whimper.

**YOSHIKI's lair.**

TWEETLES drags SCRATCH in by her beak. He's not moving.

**YOSHIKI:** Scratch! (to TWEETLES) What happened?

**TWEETLES:** Angelica.

**RYAN:** Is he alive?

YOSHIKI gestures for RYAN to stay back.

**YOSHIKI:** Water, now!

TWEETLES snatches a bucket and rushes over. YOSHIKI pours the water over SCRATCH.

**TWEETLES:** (crying) Why won't he move?

Slowly, SCRATCH opens his eyes.

**YOSHIKI:** Scratch?

*He sits up. For a second, he appears to be OK. Then... much to everyone's surprise... he barks.*

**YOSHIKI:** Sit.

*He does.*

**YOSHIKI:** Beg.

*Once again, he obeys.*

**YOSHIKI:** Roll over and play dead.

*SCRATCH wags his tail and does so.*

**TWEETLES:** Say something! (to YOSHIKI) Master, why isn't he talking?

**YOSHIKI:** Speak!

*More barking. They all stare in horror.*

**RYAN:** He's gone. He's really gone.

**TWEETLES:** Everything's changing. (bitter) Everything's becoming the way she wants it to be.

**YOSHIKI:** I am sorry, Scratch.

*YOSHIKI bows his head, devastated, and draws his katana.*

*SCRATCH pants happily, uncomprehending.*

**RYAN:** Wait!

*RYAN gets in the way.*

**YOSHIKI:** Monsters aren't supposed to live like this.

**RYAN:** Kelsey can fix your world.

*Beat.*

**YOSHIKI:** We can't wait for Kelsey! The sun is rising, Angelica is too strong!

**RYAN:** OK, calm down! (to TWEETLES) What happens at sunrise?

**TWEETLES:** The party's over! Angelica will tip the balance between darkness and light. Imagine a world where the sun never falls.

**YOSHIKI:** If Angelica has her way, the sun will never fall.

**RYAN:** But, that's crazy! Koalas would sleep all day. Plants would wither and die.

**YOSHIKI:** Yes, the result would be catastrophic! Koalas would sleep all day. Plants would wither and die.

**RYAN:** Nightclubs would never be open!

**YOSHIKI:** A world without shadows, without adventure.

**TWEETLES:** A world without shadows, without adventure.

**RYAN:** Without ... you guys.

**YOSHIKI:** (nods, sad) Without us.

*RYAN takes this in. He's deeply saddened. These are his friends. SCRATCH barks. He, on the other hand, has no idea what's going on.*

**TWEETLES:** Scratch isn't the first. One by one, we're all changing. Angelica wants us tame, and empty.

**YOSHIKI:** One by one, she will change us all.

**TWEETLES:** If that doesn't work, she'll make us disappear. We'll melt and fade under her never-ending sun.

**YOSHIKI:** This is our final hour, the final midnight.

**RYAN:** Kelsey can change everything back. I know she can!

**TWEETLES:** This is the final hour, the final midnight.

*Beat. It's a serious moment ... until SCRATCH starts pulling at RYAN's shoelaces, or gnawing his jeans, or cocking his leg.*

**RYAN:** Yep, we've hit rock bottom.

*He pushes SCRATCH away.*

**RYAN:** Let's quit moping and start thinking outside the box, people.

**YOSHIKI:** If you think there is a way to make Kelsey braver, faster, then you must share.

**RYAN:** There might be a way to speed Kelsey along. You're totally sure she's the key to all this?

**YOSHIKI:** Our every hope rests with Kelsey.

**RYAN:** You've been on the right track. There is one thing Kelsey puts ahead of herself ... one thing that gets her hackles up every time.

**YOSHIKI:** What is the secret? How do we motivate her?

**RYAN:** Family!

**YOSHIKI:** Family?

**RYAN:** We come before her. We always have. *(grins)* Luckily for you, I'm a fine actor. "Kelsey, help, help! The old man is chasing me!"

*YOSHIKI frowns.*

**RYAN:** I didn't mean "old." Mature. Distinguished.

**YOSHIKI:** So, if she thinks you're in danger ... she will rise to the challenge!

**RYAN:** *(nodding)* Put me in danger, and she'll rise to the challenge. That, my scary friend, is how we raise the stakes.

*They huddle.*

**The Ghost Roads.**

*KELSEY is searching for RYAN.*

**KELSEY:** Ryan! Ryan!

*SHIMA watches KELSEY go, shaking his head.*

**SHIMA:** Kelsey must move faster. We must push her harder!

**DAMON:** If we push Kelsey too hard, she'll fall and break.

**NOZOMI:** Damon is right, if she is pushed too hard, she may lose all control.

**SHIMA:** But she is controlling her fear.

**NOZOMI:** She is hiding her fear. There is a difference.

**DAMON:** Nozomi's right, hiding your fear is one thing, controlling it is something else entirely. Kelsey needs time.

**SHIMA:** Kelsey does not have time, and neither do we.

*KELSEY wanders back.*

**KELSEY:** I'm sure somebody must have seen him. Ryan can't go anywhere without making a fuss. *(then, after a deep breath)* RYAN!

**NOZOMI:** Stop hollering, you foolish child.

**DAMON:** Nozomi, you really must learn to relax. You've always been so stiff.

**KELSEY:** She's made of clay.

**DAMON:** Yes, well, even so.

*NOZOMI takes hold of KELSEY, who shrugs her off.*

**KELSEY:** Don't get physical. I'll go when I'm good and ready.

*NOZOMI hands KELSEY a dagger.*

**KELSEY:** What's this, a little knife? And you've got that big honking katana? No fair!

**SHIMA:** Somebody's coming!

*Tension.*

**NOZOMI:** Everyone stay close.

*RYAN rushes onto the stage. KELSEY screams and shuts her eyes.*

*Lightning.*

**KELSEY:** It's hideous! Kill it! Kill it!

*She swings her knife. RYAN throws NOZOMI a look. NOZOMI shrugs apologetically.*

**RYAN:** Kelsey, it's me.

*KELSEY opens an eye.*

**KELSEY:** Ryan? Oh god, Ryan!

*KELSEY runs into his arms.*

**KELSEY:** You're alive!

**RYAN:** I made it, Kelsey. When the guards had their backs turned, I went all Jet Li on their asses. I was like ... "waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa".

**SHIMA:** Who is this imbecile?

**NOZOMI:** That's Kelsey's brother, Ryan. What's he doing here?

*RYAN performs the lamest martial arts move we've ever seen. It ends in physical pain. He doesn't miss a beat.*

**RYAN:** So, picture it, me surrounded by evil, hungry, kung-fu vultures.

**DAMON:** (Japanese) He says he escaped from evil, hungry, kung-fu vultures.

**RYAN:** I was scared, I'm not gonna lie. But when your back is flat to the wall, you gotta deliver. You can't let anyone push you around, right, sis?

**KELSEY:** Well ...

**RYAN:** Right?

**KELSEY:** (jumps) Right!

**RYAN:** And I didn't take it for a second. I laid the smack down. And then ... you wouldn't believe what I went through. It was ... it was ...

**KELSEY:** Yes?

**RYAN:** It was ... bad.



*NOZOMI curls her clay hands into clay fists.*

**RYAN:** Really bad.

**KELSEY:** What did they do to you, Ryan?

*Long beat. RYAN is drawing a blank.*

**SHIMA:** Were you tortured?

**RYAN:** *(big grin)* Tortured yes! *(suddenly sad)* It was horrible.

**DAMON:** *(hopeful)* Was there blood?

*NOZOMI slaps DAMON over the ears.*

**RYAN:** Sure ... lots of blood ... and, to top it all off, they ... encased me ... in carbonite.

**DAMON:** *(Japanese)* He says they encased him in carbonite!

**SHIMA:** Ah, *The Empire Strikes back!* I love that movie!

**KELSEY:** Well, I'm glad to have you back. Now we can get out of this crazy place!

*We hear insane laughter.*

**KELSEY:** Or ... not.

*The VULTURES swoop in and attack. KELSEY squeals.*

**TWEETLES:** I've been waiting for this part all evening! Make me proud, birds!

*The VULTURES snap and flap around. SHIMA and NOZOMI spring into sword-swinging, staff-wielding action!*

**TWEETLES:** Damn our lack of opposable thumbs!

*DAMON rushes into the fray. BEDLAM giggles and claws him.*

**KELSEY:** Ryan, save me!

*KELSEY pushes RYAN forward. ZURU-ZURU grapples with him. They roll away together.*

**BEDLAM:** We've got 'em, Tweetles. *(laughs)* The girl is on her own.

*TWEETLES grins as the VULTURES restrain DAMON, SHIMA and NOZOMI. RYAN backs away. TWEETLES pecks at him.*

**RYAN:** Kelsey, I can't fight them all!

*Laughing, TWEETLES tortures RYAN. The other VULTURES join her.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** *(to Kelsey)* Your brother is suffering, little one.

*They cackle.*

**TWEETLES:** Now let's see if all this hard work has finally paid off!

*YOSHIKI appears.*

**YOSHIKI:** Splendid. The night is ours!

*The VULTURES cackle and guffaw.*

**SHIMA:** We've been betrayed! You can never trust the tengu!

**NOZOMI:** Kelsey!

*NOZOMI throws her katana to KELSEY. She catches it but looks uncertain.*

**NOZOMI:** You are ready to bear my sword.

*NOZOMI bows low. KELSEY looks to RYAN, who is screaming. Something inside her builds...*

**KELSEY:** Get away from my brother.

*The VULTURES push NOZOMI, SHIMA, RYAN and DAMON to the dirt.*

*Everyone crowds around. It has become a grand arena.*

*KELSEY looks confident. She steals RYAN's favourite quote.*

**KELSEY:** "Fight like a sword man."

*She rushes forward, swinging as she goes.*

*YOSHIKI attacks!*

**SHIMA:** Here goes nothing!

*They duel. YOSHIKI clearly has the upper hand.*

**TWEETLES:** I call her liver!

**BEDLAM:** Eyeballs for me!

*YOSHIKI swipes. KELSEY falls back.*

**ZURU-ZURU:** Stab her!

**HIYOKKO:** Pulverise her!

*He swipes again. KELSEY hits the deck. The VULTURES love this.*

**DAMON:** Nozomi, he won't let up!

**NOZOMI:** It is a test, nothing more.

**DAMON:** Sure it's a test, but what if she fails?

**SHIMA:** What if she fails?

Thunder rumbles.

KELSEY leaps back at YOSHIKI. The duel is becoming even.

**KELSEY:** I'm not scared. I'm not scared. I'm ... petrified.

YOSHIKI roars and swings. KELSEY ducks.

**NOZOMI:** (calling) You can do it! You've braved the swamp, you've danced with the dead ...

**YOSHIKI:** *(English, laughing)* As long as children fear the night, Kelsey san, there will always be new monsters.

She lunges. He falls back.

**KELSEY:** As long as children dare to dream, there will always be friends to guide us.

TWEETLES makes a gagging gesture. The other VULTURES laugh. YOSHIKI cocks an eyebrow.

**YOSHIKI:** *(English)* How poetic.

KELSEY lets out a savage war cry. She's wailing on him now.

**YOSHIKI:** Is that the best you can do? Come on!

He spins and regains the upper-hand.

**NOZOMI:** Don't hurt her!

**YOSHIKI:** You've failed, Nozomi! This brat is no stronger than when you found her!

YOSHIKI means to kill. He disarms KELSEY and starts to choke her, laughing all the while.

**YOSHIKI:** (To KELSEY, dangerous) Maybe you really are just another frightened little girl. *(English)* Maybe I overestimated you.

SHIMA darts forward.

**SHIMA:** Kelsey san!

He throws KELSEY her puffer. She catches it. YOSHIKI guffaws. She sprays his eyes. With a most undignified scream, YOSHIKI goes down.

Beat.

KELSEY stares at YOSHIKI's cowering form.

**KELSEY:** We're done here.

She raises her puffer, triumphant. The VULTURES surround YOSHIKI.

**HIYOKKO:** Holy smoke, she did it!

**ZURU-ZURU:** I want a rematch! No fair!

**SHIMA:** Nozomi, did you see how amazing she was?

**NOZOMI:** (English) Kelsey, you are ... my hero.

*KELSEY and NOZOMI share a grin.*

**KELSEY:** Ryan, you still with me?

*He gets to his feet.*

**RYAN:** Holy smoke! Sis, you rule!

**KELSEY:** I did it Ryan! I won! I'm not afraid anymore.

**YOSHIKI:** She has conquered her fear!

*All attention turns to YOSHIKI, as he emerges from between the concerned VULTURES.*

**YOSHIKI:** Hurrah for Kelsey. Head of the class!

**RYAN:** Are you hurt?

**KELSEY:** Is he hurt? Ryan ...

**NOZOMI:** You got very carried away there, Tengu. If I didn't know better I'd say you really meant to hurt the girl.

**KELSEY:** Wait! You two know each other?

**SHIMA:** Yes, they know each other.

*The VULTURES nod vigorously. KELSEY clocks their happy faces.*

**KELSEY:** What's going on here?

*RYAN and YOSHIKI hug.*

**RYAN:** It was a trial, Kelsey.

*KELSEY's face registers the betrayal. Music builds.*

**YOSHIKI:** Allow me to explain ...

**KELSEY:** You're all in this together?

**YOSHIKI:** If the most paranoid child in all the world can conquer her fear then the Blue Fairy will no longer harm us.

**HIYOKKO:** You are a great hero, Kelsey Clarke. If the most paranoid child in all the world can be taught to conquer her fear then the Blue Fairy will no longer harm us.

**KELSEY:** You mean this is a game? A sick, twisted game?

**NOZOMI:** Kelsey ...

**KELSEY:** (Stunned) You lied to me.

7) MAKE BELIEVE

**KELSEY** You tell me not to worry and I face my fear  
You tell me not to worry then you bring me here  
I have had enough of this

**CHORUS** This wicked web we weave

**KELSEY** Oh, I can see it now

**CHORUS** The truth lies underneath

**KELSEY** You're gonna regret it  
I have been deceived  
All of your lies  
This is the last time that I play make believe

**NOZOMI** I told you not to worry when we needed you  
I told you not to worry, now you know the truth  
We lie to save ourselves

**CHORUS** This wicked web we weave

**NOZOMI** Put the bottle down

**CHORUS** The truth lies underneath

**NOZOMI** You're gonna regret it

**KELSEY** I have been deceived  
All of your lies  
This is the last time that I play -

**CHORUS** This is the last time

**KELSEY** The last time that I play make believe

*KELSEY* throws off her cardigan and rips at her shirt. The extent of *NOZOMI*'s betrayal has been made plain to her.

*NOZOMI* recoils as *KELSEY* throws her katana at the doll's feet.

As she sings, *KELSEY*'s hair is torn loose. She turns on each of them.

The bottle of blood rolls out from *DAMON*'s coat. *KELSEY* picks it up.

Instrumental beneath:

**SHIMA:** What are you doing, child?

**RYAN:** Sis, put the bottle down.

**YOSHIKI:** This was not part of my plan!

**KELSEY:** You want fearless? I'll show you fearless!

**RYAN:** Kelsey, you mustn't. If you cross that line ...

**KELSEY:** What? What will happen?

*She holds the bottle to her lips.*

**SHIMA:** No, if you drink from that bottle, all will be lost!

*KELSEY explodes into the final line of her song.*

*She drinks. Lightning flares. The blood runs down her body.*

*EVERYONE cries out in horror and despair.*

*Beat.*

*KELSEY collapses. RYAN catches her.*

III - THE ANGELS FALL

**RYAN:** Kelsey!

*She's out cold.*

**RYAN:** Kelsey, can you hear me?

*Silence.*

**NOZOMI:** We pushed her too far, too soon.

**RYAN:** Is this what I think it is?

**TWEETLES:** Ha! Damon fell off the wagon.

*DAMON forces a smile. RYAN sniffs it.*

**NOZOMI:** The bottle was full of blood. It's not safe for Kelsey to drink.

**RYAN:** What happens when humans drink blood?

**ZURU-ZURU:** When humans drink blood, they don't stay human for very long!

*The VULTURES laugh.*

**YOSHIKI:** Tweetles, go. Scan the heavens.

*One by one the VULTURES get it.*

**VULTURES:** Angelica, Angelica.

**TWEETLES:** Birds, we fly!

*The VULTURES run off.*

**NOZOMI:** (to YOSHIKI) Is this what you wanted?

*NOZOMI leaps at YOSHIKI.*

**NOZOMI:** I warned you!

*RYAN separates them.*

**RYAN:** Yoshiki, will my sister wake up?

*YOSHIKI moves over to KELSEY and examines the bottle.*

**YOSHIKI:** She took it all.

**SHIMA:** Then she may never wake up! Or, if she does, she will not be your little sister anymore! She'll change!

**RYAN:** What do you mean "she'll change"?

**DAMON:** *(grim)* Those vultures were all children once.

*RYAN looks horrified.*

**NOZOMI:** If you take her home, quickly, she might recover.

**DAMON:** You would have to leave straight away, Ryan. If Kelsey stays here, she is in grave danger. You must take her home.

*NOZOMI starts to zone out.*

**NOZOMI:** If Kelsey stays here much longer ...

**DAMON:** If Kelsey stays here much longer ...

**NOZOMI:** ... she will become a creature of darkness and the Underground will be her prison, for all time.

**RYAN:** Nozomi, speak clearly I can't ...

*She rolls forward. RYAN supports her.*

**DAMON:** ... she will become a creature of darkness and the Underground will be her prison, for all time.

*Beat. NOZOMI's leg stiffens.*

**DAMON:** Nozomi?

**NOZOMI:** *(English)* It's ... started.

*NOZOMI's whole body is hardening. Her arm falls to the floor.*

**RYAN:** *(to DAMON)* What's happening to her?

**NOZOMI:** I am lost.

**DAMON:** Kelsey was her owner. As Kelsey loses her humanity, so too does Nozomi. She's becoming a doll again.  
*(to NOZOMI)* Stay with me.

**SHIMA:** I am sorry, Ryan dono. Without Kelsey, she is just a useless doll.

**NOZOMI:** I tried to save us. *(weak)* I ... tried.

**DAMON:** Nozomi!

*NOZOMI blinks once.*

**NOZOMI:** Where am I?

*Her head turns and she moves with the very greatest effort.*

**DAMON:** I'm here. We're here.

*He places his forehead against hers.*

**NOZOMI:** Tengu.

*YOSHIKI looks up at her. She frowns, as if seeing him for the first time.*



**NOZOMI:** My enemy.

**YOSHIKI:** Enemy? No!

**DAMON:** Nozomi, we're friends. You're here with friends.

**YOSHIKI:** We've come so far, Nozomi.

*No response.*

**SHIMA:** Nozomi?

*KELSEY stirs.*

**SHIMA:** Her mind has faded. Without Tengu's magic, or Kelsey's spirit, the doll will remain empty.

*SHIMA closes NOZOMI's eyes. She lies still.*

**RYAN:** Hey, check it out, little sis is waking up.

*He rushes over to her.*

**RYAN:** How're you feeling?

**KELSEY:** I'm fine. I feel terrific.

*She gets up.*

**KELSEY:** Did I scare you? Nozomi looks lost for words.

**RYAN:** Kelse ...?

**KELSEY:** What, you wanna play rough? Huh? Big brother?

*She hits him.*

**KELSEY:** You want fear? I'll show you fear!

**YOSHIKI:** Careful, Ryan. The blood has tainted her.

**DAMON:** Kelsey, this isn't the way.

**KELSEY:** Sure it is! Beats cowering under a blanket, waiting for the bad things to come.

**SHIMA:** You make me ashamed of you, Kelsey san.

**KELSEY:** Now I am the one who's scary!

*She gets in YOSHIKI's face.*

**YOSHIKI:** Take her home before she becomes one of us!

**RYAN:** Kelsey, open your freakin' eyes. Nozomi's dying.

*Beat.*

**RYAN:** You blew it. (then) We blew it.

NOZOMI has frozen completely. DAMON holds her.

A blue ball rolls onto the stage. SCRATCH follows and picks up the ball. He looks up at the sky.

**YOSHIKI:** *(English)* It's over, Ryan dono. *(Japanese)* Take your sister and go.

**RYAN:** But, what will happen here?

**ANGELICA:** *(voice only)* Soon, the sun will rise forever.  
*(Japanese echo)*  
Soon, the sun will rise forever.

SCRATCH barks.

**YOSHIKI:** It's her ... the Blue Fairy!

**DAMON:** It's her ... the Blue Fairy!

**KELSEY:** *(a dim memory)* Blue Fairy ...

**YOSHIKI:** *(To Ryan)* Nobody knows where Angelica came from exactly. But we do know why. The frightened children. They called her into being.

**DAMON** *(to Kelsey)* Nobody knows where she came from. But we do know why. The frightened children called her into being.

**KELSEY:** I? I made this happen?

**DAMON:** We believe so.

**RYAN:** How is that even possible?

**YOSHIKI:** Angelica is tyranny, and tyranny is the product of fear.

**DAMON:** Angelica is tyranny, and tyranny is the product of fear.

**YOSHIKI:** Kelsey is to blame!

RYAN helps KELSEY to stand.

**KELSEY:** Everything's dancing.

ANGELICA giggles above and around them.

**KELSEY:** Ryan, what did I do?

KELSEY has begun to regain her senses. She looks hard at NOZOMI.

**KELSEY:** And, why?

They all gather close to her.

**KELSEY:** Why didn't you tell me?

No response.

**KELSEY:** Nozomi, wake up ... please!

**DAMON:** It's no use, Kelsey.

**YOSHIKI:** Go. You have blood on your hands, Kelsey san. Angelica's curse threatens you too.

**KELSEY:** Angelica.

*She looks to the sky.*

**KELSEY:** I know you.

*No response.*

**YOSHIKI:** It's almost the hour of midnight. The new morning begins forever! You must leave!

**DAMON:** It's almost the hour of midnight. The new morning begins forever!

**YOSHIKI:** (to RYAN) Take your sister away from here, Ryan dono, before it's too late.

**DAMON:** Take Kelsey and go!

*KELSEY won't move.*

**KELSEY:** *(calling)* I know you!

**RYAN:** Sis, we don't have time to argue.

**KELSEY:** Oh, there's always time to argue, Ryan.

**DAMON:** This isn't wise. Listen, Kelsey ...

**KELSEY:** *(calling)* I know you, Angelica!

*An air raid siren rings out!*

**YOSHIKI:** Kelsey, no!

*YOSHIKI tries to pull KELSEY away. She resists.*

**KELSEY:** Run. (Japanese) Run.

**SHIMA:** Kelsey ...

**KELSEY:** It's your turn to be afraid.

**RYAN:** We're not going to just ...

**KELSEY:** Run away, Ryan. This is my mess. *(calling)* ANGELICA, I'M WAITING!

*YOSHIKI and SHIMA turn and run. RYAN hesitates before following. DAMON, torn, is the last to leave. NOZOMI stands immobile.*

**KELSEY:** COME MEET YOUR MAKER! COME MEET YOUR MAKER!

A beam of stunning blue light penetrates the darkness.  
War drums. Choir.

SHE appears.

ANGELICA.

THE BLUE FAIRY.

She is flying, a dark outline against the blue light.

The light fills the theatre as the music reaches a terrifying,  
beautiful climax.

KELSEY backs away.

Silence.

Then, gradually, new music. Soft, melancholy, haunting.

We can see her clearly now - not a terrifying creature but a winged  
girl. She has pale skin, blonde locks and impossibly blue eyes. She  
watches KELSEY with curiosity.

**KELSEY:** (awed) It is you.

ANGELICA is the music-box ballerina from KELSEY's room, magically  
brought to life. No longer a simple toy, ANGELICA has evolved into a  
living, breathing entity. Her little dress has been replaced by an  
elaborate gown, flowing and majestic. Once-tiny wings are now large  
and fashioned from feathers in varying shades of blue. The old  
silver stick has been replaced by a sparkling wand, which looks as  
though it could do some real damage. A silver wind-up gadget, set  
into her back, is the only reminder of her old self.

#### 8) CLOSE YOUR EYES

ANGELICA

Kelsey! Kelsey, my child!  
Where have you been?  
My love I thought I'd lost you  
Come to me

I will shine my light upon this world  
To make it bright again for you  
To keep the night away from you

You've been gone for so long  
Lost in lies  
I will keep you from harm  
Close your eyes

I will shine my light upon this world  
To make it bright again for you  
To keep the night away from you

Close your eyes  
You will never leave again, my dear  
Close your eyes  
Let the world around you disappear

**SUGAR BABES**            *Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba*  
*Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba-da, ba, ba*

*ANGELICA sings of her search for KELSEY, and all she has done to protect her. The song is longing, sad, seductive and beautiful.*

*She glides to the stage and walks toward KELSEY.*

*KELSEY stands her ground.*

**KELSEY:**                So, you're the reason I'm here.

*ANGELICA lands.*

**ANGELICA:**            I knew you'd call me. I knew you'd understand. They wanted to hurt you, and lead you astray, but I wouldn't let them. I never let them.  
*(Japanese, echo) I knew you'd call me. I knew you'd understand. They wanted to hurt you, and lead you astray, but I wouldn't let them. I never let them.*

*Her tone is innocent and child-like, but there's something unnerving, something mad in her eye. She pirouettes as snow begins to fall, giggling as she goes.*

**KELSEY:**                You're making a mistake.

*ANGELICA gasps. She takes out a napkin, licks it and wipes a smear of blood from KELSEY's bottom lip.*

**ANGELICA:**            They don't know how to take care of you, precious. But I do.  
*(Japanese, echo) They don't know how to take care of you, precious. But I do.*

*Beat.*

**ANGELICA:**            I'm here now.  
*(Japanese, echo) I am here now.*

*SCRATCH approaches ANGELICA.*

*Beat.*

*ANGELICA claps her hands twice. SCRATCH moves to ANGELICA's side. She snaps her fingers and he sits obediently.*

**ANGELICA:**            Good dog.  
*(Japanese, echo) Good dog.*

**KELSEY:**                He's not a dog!

**ANGELICA:**            Kelsey, are we having a tantrum?  
*(Japanese, echo) Kelsey, are we having a tantrum?*

**KELSEY:**                You're hurting them, Angelica. You have to stop.

**ANGELICA:** Little girls should be seen and not heard.  
 (Japanese, echo) Little girls should be seen and not heard.

*She throws the blue ball away and SCRATCH leaps after it.*

**ANGELICA:** Are you not grateful? I've been working so hard to make this world just right, and all for you.  
 (Japanese, echo) Are you not grateful? I've been working so hard to make this world just right, and all for you.

**KELSEY:** It's not supposed to be "just right"! Sometimes it's meant to be wrong. I was wrong. I got it all so very, very wrong.

*ANGELICA approaches NOZOMI.*

**KELSEY:** Get away from her!

**ANGELICA:** Such a vulgar gift for such a little girl.  
 (Japanese, echo) Such a vulgar gift for such a little girl.

*KELSEY takes a step toward ANGELICA.*

**ANGELICA:** Now, now. (Japanese, echo) Now, Now.

*She raises her wand to KELSEY.*

**ANGELICA:** Leave this world to me, Kelsey Clarke.  
 (Japanese, echo) Leave this world to me, Kelsey Clarke.

*She smiles.*

**ANGELICA:** Go back home.  
 (Japanese, echo) Go back home.

**KELSEY:** I want Nozomi!

*ANGELICA blinks, perplexed by the request.*

**ANGELICA:** She's gone, Kelsey. (Japanese, echo) She's gone, Kelsey.

*She taps the doll with her wand.*

**ANGELICA:** All gone. (Japanese, echo) All gone.

*Her empty smile returns.*

**ANGELICA:** Look, Kelsey. I've brought you a present.  
 (Japanese, echo) Look, Kelsey. I've brought you a present.

*LEIKO appears. KELSEY's face lights up.*

**KELSEY:** Leiko!

*KELSEY runs over to LEIKO and scoops the baby up in her arms.*

**KELSEY:** I am so sorry I left you behind.

**ANGELICA:** I came here to save you, Kelsey Clarke. You summoned me to make your world safe and predictable. Isn't that the life you asked me for? (Japanese echo) You summoned me to make your world safe and predictable. Isn't that the life you asked me for?

*ANGELICA pirouettes.*

*KELSEY considers this.*

**KELSEY:** My brother has spikes on his wrists. He listens to death metal.

*ANGELICA clicks her tongue.*

**KELSEY:** Is there a place for Ryan in your world?

**LEIKO:** Kelsey, what are you doing? It's not smart to defy her!

**KELSEY:** My little niece here can't even control her own bladder. She's loopy, messy ... she's mad ... that's just how babies are.

**LEIKO:** You can't reason with the Blue Fairy!

*ANGELICA freezes, struggling to comprehend KELSEY's change of attitude. She looks at LEIKO, eyes narrowing.*

**LEIKO:** Kelsey ...

*LEIKO tugs at KELSEY's sleeve.*

**KELSEY:** I braved the swamp, and danced with the dead.

*These words have no meaning to ANGELICA. She switches to her default response.*

**ANGELICA:** My poor Kelsey.  
(Japanese, echo) My poor Kelsey.

*She raises the wand and aims it straight at LEIKO.*

**ANGELICA:** Danger is everywhere.  
(Japanese, echo) Danger is everywhere.

*LEIKO is struck. She falls with a squeal.*

**KELSEY:** No! Stop!

**ANGELICA:** *(repeating KELSEY)* She's loopy, messy ... that's just how babies are. (Echo, as before)

*KELSEY gets in her face, angry.*

**KELSEY:** You can't stop people from living!

**LEIKO:** Kelsey's right ... you can't stop people from living!

*KELSEY's desperate tone does not register. ANGELICA keeps smiling.*

**ANGELICA:** Oh, but I can. (Echo, as before)

*As LEIKO stands unsteadily, KELSEY rushes to protect her.*

**ANGELICA:** I must save you, Kelsey. (Echo, as before)

**KELSEY:** From what?

*Beat. The cogs turn again.*

**ANGELICA:** From yourself, if needs be. (Echo, as before)

*She raises the wand once more, smiling vacantly. LEIKO cries.*

**KELSEY:** No!

**LEIKO:** Angelica is out of control, Kelsey. Your fear brought her to life, and now she is obsessed with protecting you!

**ANGELICA:** Stand aside, Kelsey.

**LEIKO:** She's not just hunting monsters anymore. She will hurt anyone who gets too close. Your friends, your family - she suspect us all!

*KELSEY puts her own face against the tip of ANGELICA's wand.*

**KELSEY:** You can't bewitch me! I made you!

*Beat. ANGELICA cannot respond.*

**LEIKO:** Tell her you're strong. Tell her you can face the world without her!

**KELSEY:** I don't need you to shelter me Angelica. It's time for you to go.

*ANGELICA blinks.*

**ANGELICA:** Go, Kelsey Clarke? (Echo, as before)

**KELSEY:** I'm not afraid anymore! This has to end. I'm going to work my own way from now on.

**LEIKO:** We can fight our own battles!

*KELSEY softens. ANGELICA's arms lowers, then raises, then lowers again. None of this computes. If ANGELICA strikes KELSEY, she knows she'll die with her.*

**KELSEY:** It's OK, I can do it.

*She takes a step back and reaches for LEIKO's hand.*



ANGELICA stares.

Gradually, her arm drops.

**ANGELICA:** To where? (Echo, as before)

KELSEY has no answer.

**ANGELICA:** To where shall ... I ... go? (Echo, as before)

She's winding down.

**ANGELICA:** It ... is ... get ... ting ... late. I ... feel ...  
lost.  
(Echo, as before)

**KELSEY:** I'm right here.

**ANGELICA:** I ... am ... af ... raid, ... Kel ... sey. (Echo,  
as before)

**KELSEY:** We're all afraid, Angelica.

ANGELICA's head turns to the side. She can no longer see KELSEY.

**ANGELICA:** Why ... is ... the ... night ... so ...? (Echo,  
lingering)

Beat. The unfinished sentence hangs in the air.

KELSEY kisses her cheek.

The wand drops and the cogs stop turning. Mist rises around ANGELICA and the Blue Fairy is no more. We hear a chime through the Underground.

**LEIKO:** Midnight, Kelsey. The curse is lifted. (then,  
worried) I just hope the monsters are grateful.

Music.

**MONSTER VOICES:** Bring on the night!

**KELSEY:** It's OK, baby.

LEIKO cowers behind KELSEY. The old music box lies where ANGELICA once stood. KELSEY picks it up.

**MONSTER VOICES:** Bring on the night!

FIGURES appear in the darkness - YOSHIKI, followed by SHIMA, DAMON, RYAN and SCRATCH.

**MONSTER VOICES:** Bring on the night!

**KELSEY:** It's over!

**MONSTER VOICES:** Bring on the night!

Some of the VULTURES emerge.

**MONSTERS:**           **Bring on the night!**

*The MONSTERS gather.*

*KELSEY takes LEIKO by the hand, unsure what will happen next.*

*Long beat.*

*HIYOKKO bows and the others follow his example.*

**HIYOKKO:**           Hail Kelsey Clarke!

**MONSTERS:**           Hail! Hail!

*KELSEY only has eyes for one person. She approaches NOZOMI, still frozen.*

**KELSEY:**            (Japanese) Forgive me.

*She strokes NOZOMI's hair and holds her, crying.*

**RYAN:**                Is it too late?

*YOSHIKI nods.*

**SHIMA:**             You can't help her?

*He shakes his head. Long beat.*

**RYAN:**                But you're the tengu. This is your world. You're the monster king!

*YOSHIKI puffs himself up.*

**YOSHIKI:**           You're right, Ryan dono! I am the tengu! I am infallible!

**RYAN:**                You can do anything!

**YOSHIKI:**            I can!

*He throws out his arms ...*

*Lightning.*

**YOSHIKI:**            (English, delighted) I'm back!

*RYAN punches the air!*

**YOSHIKI:**            Hold her.

**DAMON:**             (prompting) Hold her, Kelsey.

*YOSHIKI concentrates.*

*KELSEY hugs NOZOMI and wishes as hard as she can.*

*EVERYONE waits.*

*Guitars start up. The stage goes from blue to red.*

NOZOMI's eyes widen and she gasps for air.

**KELSEY:** You're alive!

**SHIMA:** You're alive.

NOZOMI touches her own forehead, and feels her own heartbeat.

**NOZOMI:** I have a pulse! I am ... actually ... alive.

Cheers.

**KELSEY:** Just take good care of that heart, now that you have one. Doctor Mortimer says that heart disease strikes one in ...?

NOZOMI playfully hits KELSEY.

**NOZOMI:** (English) That ... is for scaring me.

They smile. NOZOMI pulls KELSEY into a hug.

**NOZOMI:** Thank you, my friend.

The moon rises behind them.

**SCRATCH:** Well, check it out. The old man actually did something right for a change.

YOSHIKI spins, shocked.

**YOSHIKI:** Scratch? You're back to your old self!

They hug and quickly reassert their masculinity with back patting.

SCRATCH winks.

**SCRATCH:** I still think you're an idiot.

Rock music.

#### 9) THE NIGHT IS OURS AGAIN

**RYAN** Kelsey!

**KELSEY** Ryan!

**NOZOMI** I think he's going to sing

**SCRATCH** I am! I am! I am alive again  
I can! I can! I can do anything

**YOSHIKI** Bring on the night! Let every monster sing  
I can! I can! I can do anything

**CHORUS** The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear  
The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear

**KELSEY**                    *I am not as scared as I used to be  
You have opened a whole new world to me*

**RYAN**                      *I have! I have made some peculiar friends  
How cool would it be if we did this again?*

**KELSEY**                    *No!*

**CHORUS**                    *The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear  
The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear*

**NOZOMI**                    *I am! I am a beating heart again!  
I can! I can! I can feel everything!*

**DAMON**                    *I am! I am glad that we're still alive  
I swore I would do this if we survived (kisses her)*

**CHORUS**                    *The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear  
The night is ours again  
No longer will we live in fear  
Now bring on the night!*

*The final number is a wild, upbeat celebration. ALL the main characters sing, coming together for one last, insane, joyous party.*

*DAMON and NOZOMI kiss passionately.*

*KELSEY, the hero of the evening, has conquered her fear.*

*Or has she?*

*As the rock dies off, KELSEY peeks into the music box. A blue light shines from inside. We hear ANGELICA giggle.*

*Beat.*

*KELSEY slams it shut.*

*Blackout.*

## APPENDIX B

### Research Material

#### Fantasy Fiction – Print

##### *Cross-cultural Fantasy (Comics):*

Forbes, Jack. T. *Return to Labyrinth*, Tokyopop, Los Angeles, 2006 – present  
(ongoing)

Kesel, Barbara Randall, Arnhold, Heidi and Kim, Max. *Legends of the Dark Crystal*,  
Tokyopop, Los Angeles, 2007 - present (ongoing)

##### *Australian authors writing Japanese Fantasy (Novels):*

Chandler, Ben. *Quillblade: Voyages of the Flying Dragon*, Random House, North  
Sydney, 2010

##### *Tales of the Otori series:*

Hearn, Lian (aka Rubinstein, Gillian) *Across the Nightingale Floor*, Hodder, Sydney,  
2002

Hearn, Lian. (aka Rubinstein, Gillian) *Grass for his Pillow*, Hodder, Sydney, 2005

Hearn, Lian. (aka Rubinstein, Gillian) *Brilliance of the Moon*, Hachette, Sydney, 2005

Hearn, Lian. (aka Rubinstein, Gillian) *The Harsh Cry of the Heron*, Hachette, Sydney  
2005

Hearn, Lian. (aka Rubinstein, Gillian) *Heaven's Net is Wide*, Hachette, Sydney, 2008

Higgins, Simon. *Tomodachi: The Edge of the World*, Pulp Fiction Press, Brisbane,  
2007

Higgins, Simon. *Moonshadow: Eye of the Beast* Random House, North Sydney, 2008

#### **Adaptations of Japanese Fantasy (Novels):**

Murakami, Haruki. *Kafka on the Shore* (adapted by J. Philip Gabriel), Harvill Press,  
London, 2002

Murakami, Haruki. *After Dark* (adapted by Jay Rubin), Harvill Press, London, 2007

**General Fantasy (Novels):**

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*Original Wizard of Oz Series:*

Baum, L Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, George M Hill, Chicago, 1900

Baum, L Frank. *The Marvelous [sic] Land of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1904

Baum, L Frank. *Ozma of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1907

Baum, L Frank. *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1908

Baum, L Frank. *The Road to Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1909

Baum, L Frank. *The Emerald City of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1910

Baum, L Frank. *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1913

Baum, L Frank. *Tik-Tok of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1914

Baum, L Frank. *The Scarecrow of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1915

Baum, L Frank. *Rinkitink in Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1916

Baum, L Frank. *The Lost Princess of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1917

Baum, L Frank. *The Tin Woodman of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1918

Baum, L Frank. *The Magic of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1919

Baum, L Frank. *Glinda of Oz*, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1920

*Alice in Wonderland:*

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Macmillan, London, 1865

Carroll, Lewis. *Through the Looking-Glass and what Alice Found There*, Macmillan,  
London, 1871

*Dark is Rising* sequence:

Cooper, Susan. *Over Sea, Under Stone*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1965

Cooper, Susan. *The Dark is Rising*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1973

Cooper, Susan. *Greenwitch*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1974

Cooper, Susan. *The Grey King*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1975

Cooper, Susan. *Silver on the Tree*, Bodley Head Children's Books, London, 1977

Ende, Michael. *The NeverEnding Story* / 'Die unendliche Geschichte' (translation by Ralph Manheim), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979

Gaiman, Neil. *Stardust*, Spike, New York, 1999

Geraldine McCaughrean. *Peter Pan in Scarlet*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006

*The Chronicles of Narnia:*

Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1950

Lewis, C.S. *Prince Caspian*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1951

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Lewis, C.S. *The Silver Chair*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1953

Lewis, C.S. *The Horse and his Boy*, HarperTrophy, London, 1954

Lewis, C.S. *The Magician's Nephew*, Bodley Head, London, 1955

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*Wicked cycle:*

Maguire, Gregory. *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, HarperCollins, New York, 1995

Maguire, Gregory. *Son of a Witch*, Regan Books, New York, 2005

*Twilight* series:

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Meyer, Stephenie. *New Moon*, Little, Brown, London, 2006

Meyer, Stephenie. *Eclipse*, Little, Brown, London, 2007

Meyer, Stephenie. *Breaking Dawn*, Little, Brown, London, 2008

*His Dark Materials* series:

Pullman, Philip. *Northern Lights*, Scholastic, London, 1995

Pullman, Philip. *The Subtle Knife* Scholastic, London, 1997

Pullman, Philip. *The Amber Spyglass* Scholastic, London, 2000

*Harry Potter* series:

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Bloomsbury, London, 1998

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Bloomsbury, London, 1999

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Bloomsbury, London, 1999

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Bloomsbury, London, 2000

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Bloomsbury, London, 2003

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Bloomsbury, London, 2005

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Bloomsbury, London, 2007

Rushby, Pamela. *Circles of Stone*, Angus & Robertson, Pymble, 2003

Rushby, Pamela. *Millions of Mummies*, John Wiley and Sons, Milton, 2006

*Lord of the Rings* Trilogy:

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Geo. Allen & Unwin, London, 1954

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Two Towers* Geo, Allen & Unwin, London, 1954

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Return of the King*, Geo. Allen & Unwin, London, 1955



**General Fantasy (Comics):**

Eastman, Kevin and Laird, Peter. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, First Publishing, Chicago, 1984

Golden, Christopher and Brereton, Dan. *Buffy – The Origin*, Dark Horse, Milwaukee, 1999

O’Barr, James. *The Crow*, Pocket Books, New York, 1989

Matthews, Brett and Whedon, Joss. (story) *Serenity: Those Left Behind*, Dark Horse, Milwaukee, 2005

Moore, Alan. *V for Vendetta*, DC Comics, New York, 1982 – 1988

Rodionoff, Hans. *Lost Boys: Reign of Frogs*, mini-series, Wildstorm, La Jolla, August – May 2008

Whedon, Joss. *Buffy Season 8*, 15 issues, Dark Horse, Milwaukee, 2007 – present (ongoing)

**Theatrical Productions***Fantasy*

*Space Demons*, Patch Theatre Company, Adelaide Playhouse, 1989, written by Richard Tulloch (from the novel by Gillian Rubinstein), directed by Ariette Taylor, Australia, 1989

*The Girl Who Cried Wolf*, Arena Theatre Company, AIT Performing, ASSITEJ 2008, written by Angela Betzien, directed by Rosemary Myers, Australia, 2008

*The Snow Queen*, Windmill Theatre Company/Sydney Theatre Company (Australian Tour), Adelaide Playhouse, written by Verity Laughton (from the story by Hans Christian Anderson), directed by Julian Meyrick, Australia, 2003

*Intercultural Theatre*

*Chika: A Documentary Performance*, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, created and produced by Mayu Kanamori, directed by Malcolm Blaylock, Australia, 2008

*China*, Space Theatre, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, conceived, written and performed by William Yang, Australia, 2007

*Chinese Take-away*, Looking Glass Pictures and Anna Yen, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, conceived, written and performed by Anna Yen, Australia, 2007

*Dis-oriental*, Space Theatre, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, created and performed by Yumi Umiumare with dramaturgical assistance by Deborah Pollard, Australia, 2007

*Eyes of Marege*, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, written by Julie Janson, directed by Asia Ramli and Sally Sussman, Australia, 2007

*I Still Call Australia by Phone*, Space Theatre, Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, written by Hung Le with dramaturgical assistance by Caleb Lewis, directed by Catherine Fitzgerald, Australia, 2007

*Masterkey*, 1998 Telstra Adelaide Festival and the 1998 Perth Festival, based on the novel *Oi Naru Genei* by Masako Togoawa, adapted by Miriel Lenore, devised and directed by Mary Moore, Australia, 1998

*Never Say Die*, Makhampom Theatre Group, Odeon Theatre, Adelaide, ASSITEJ, Australia, 2008

*The Bridge*, Hanyong Theatre Company in association with Buk Se Tung, AIT Performing Arts, ASSITEJ 2008 (also performed during Kijimuna Festival 2008), written by Peter Wynne-Willson and Ko Sun Duck Nam, directed by Peter Wynne-Willson and No Son Lak, Australia; Japan, 2008

*Undiscovered Country* (presentation), Adelaide Oz/Asia Festival, chaired by Julie Holledge, Australia, 2007

#### *Japanese Theatre*

*Citizen of Seoul 1928*, Tokyo 2006

*The Old Bunch*, Tokyo, 2006

*The Voyage*, Adelaide Festival Centre, Kijimuna Dance and Music Troupe, ASSITEJ 2008, written and directed by Megumi Tomita

*Yanbarusen*, Okinawa 2006

#### *Fantasy Fiction as Music Theatre*

*Little Shop of Horrors*, WPA Theatre, written by Howard Ashman, music and lyrics by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, original production directed by Howard Ashman, USA, 1982

*The Rocky Horror Show*, Royal Court Upstairs, music and lyrics by Richard O'Brien, original production directed by Jim Sharman, London, 1973

*The Witches of Eastwick*, Theatre Royal, book and lyrics by John Dempsey (based on the John Updike novel), music by Dana P. Rowe, original Production directed by Eric Schaeffer, London, 2000

*The Wiz*, written by William F. Brown, music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls, original production directed by Geoffrey Holder, Broadway, 1975

*Wicked*, Curran Theatre, written by Winnie Holzman (based on the novel by Gregory Maguire), music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, original production directed by Joe Mantello, San Francisco, 2003

#### *Intercultural Music Theatre*

*Miss Saigon*, Theatre Royal, written by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby, Jr. music by Claude-Michel Schönberg, London, 1989

#### *Music Theatre (Youth)*

*Avenue Q*, Vineyard Theatre, written by Jeff Whitty, music and Lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, original production directed by Jason Moore, USA, 2003

*Spring Awakening*, Atlantic Theatre Company, written by Jeff Whitty, book and lyrics by Steven Sater (based on the Frank Wedekind play), music by Duncan Sheik, original production directed by Michael Mayer, USA, 2006

#### *Musical Soundtracks*

*Phantom of the Paradise*, A&M, music by Paul Williams, Canada, 1974

*The War of the Worlds*, music by Jeff Wayne, London, 1977

### **Music**

#### *Japan*

*Hamasaki, Ayumi - My Story*, Avex Trax, 2004

*Hamasaki, Ayumi - (Miss) Understood*, Avex Trax, 2006

*Hamasaki, Ayumi - Secret*, Avex Trax, 2006

*Jyongri - Possession/My All For You*, EMI, 2006

*Nakashima, Mika - The End*, Sony, 2006

*Nakashima, Mika - Yes*, Sony, 2007

*The Best of Anime*, Rhino Entertainment Co., 1998

*X Japan - Vanishing Vision*, Extasy (sic), 1988  
*X Japan - Blue Blood*, CBS Sony, 1989  
*X Japan - Jealousy*, Ki/oon, 1991  
*X Japan - Art of Life*, Atlantic, 1993  
*X-Japan - Dahlia*, Atlantic, 1996

### *Okinawa*

*Amuro, Namie - Genius 2000*, Avex Trax, 2000  
*Amuro, Namie - Break The Rules*, Avex Trax, 2000  
*Amuro, Namie - Style*, Avex Trax, 2003  
*Amuro, Namie - Queen of Hip-pop*, Avex Trax, 2005  
*Amuro, Namie - Play*, Avex Trax, 2007

### *General*

*Depeche Mode - Violator*, Mute, 1990

*Eskimo Joe - Black Fingernails, Red Wine*, Mushroom, 2006

*Garbage - Garbage*, Mushroom, 1995  
*Garbage - Version 2.0*, Mushroom, 1998  
*Garbage - Beautiful Garbage*, Mushroom, 2001  
*Garbage - Bleed Like Me*, Warner Bros., 2005

*Gorillaz - Demon Days*, Virgin, 2005

*Heap, Imogen - Speak for Yourself*, Sony MBG, 2005

*Ladytron - Witching Hour*, Island, 2005

*London Calling - The Clash*, Epic, 1979

*New Order - Get Ready*, 2001

*Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - Let Love In*, Mute Records, 1994  
*Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - Murder Ballads*, Mute Records, 1996

*Panic at the Disco - A Fever You Can't Sweat Out*, Decaydance, 2005

*Pink - I'm Not Dead*, LaFace, 2006

*Placebo - Without You, I'm Nothing*, Virgin, 1998

*Portishead - Dummy*, Go! Discs, 1994

*The Cure - Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me*, Fiction, 1987

*The Cure - Disintegration*, Fiction, 1989

*The Cure - Wish*, Elektra Records, 1992

*The Cure - Wild Mood Swings*, Fiction, 1996

*The Cure - Bloodflowers*, Fiction, 2000

*The Killers - Hot Fuss*, Lizard King, 2004

*The Killers - Sam's Town*, Vertigo, 2006

*Massive Attack - Mezzanine*, Virgin, 1998

*McLachlan, Sarah - Fumbling Towards Ecstasy*, Nettwerk, 1993

*Radiohead - Ok Computer*, Capitol Records, 1996

*Radiohead - Kid A*, Capitol Records, 2000

*Radiohead - Amnesiac*, Capitol Records, 2001

*Radiohead - Hail to the Thief*, Capitol Records, 2003

*Stefani, Gwen - Love, Angel, Music, Baby* (feat. The Harajuku Girls), Interscope, 2004

*U2 - Achtung Baby*, Island, 1991

*Weezer - Pinkerton*, Geffen, 1996

### **Fantasy Fiction – Screen**

#### *Japanese Fantasy (Film/Anime)*

*Akira*, Toho, written by Katsuhiro Otomo and Izō Hashimoto, directed by Katsuhiro Otomo, produced by Ryōhei Suzuki and Shunzō Katō, 1988

*Castle in the Sky*, Tokuma Shoten, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, produced by Isao Takahata, 1989

*Ghost in the Shell*, Palm Pictures, written by Kazunori Itō and Masamune Shirow, directed by Mamoru Oshii, 1998

*My Neighbour Totoro*, Toho, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, produced by Toru Hara, 1988

*Ninja Scroll*, Body Taing, written and directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, produced by Kazuhiko Ikeguchi, Masako Fukuyo and Shigeru Kitayama, 1993

*Princess Mononoke*, Toho, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, produced by Toshio Suzuki, English adaptation by Neil Gaiman, 1997

*Tokyo Gore Police*, Fever Dreams, written by Kengo Kaji, Sayako Nakoshi and Yoshihiro Nishimura, directed by Yoshihiro Nishimura, produced by Satoshi Nakamura, Yoko Hayama and Yoshinori Chiba, 2008

*Samurai X: Trust and Betrayal*, Studio Deen, written by Masashi Sogo, directed by Kazuhiro Furuhashi, 1999

*Spirited Away*, Toho, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, produced by Toshio Suzuki, 2001

*Vampire Hunter D*, MGM, Urban Vision Entertainment, written by Hideyuki Kikuchi, directed by Toyoo Ashida, 1985

*Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, MGM, Urban Vision Entertainment, written and directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, produced by Taka Nagasawa, Masao Maruyama and Mataichiro Yamamoto, 2000

*Wicked City*, Urban Vision Entertainment, written by Hideyuki Kikuchi, directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, produced by Kousuke Kuri and Yoshio Masumizu, 1987

*Japanese Fantasy (Television)*

*Dai Guard*, Complete Series (26 episodes) ADV Films, written by Akihiro Inari, Fumihiko Shimo, Hidefumi Kimura, Hiroaki Kitazaki Junko Okazaki and Kurou Hazuki, directed by Seiji Mizushima, 2005

*Death Note*, Selected Episodes, Madhouse, written by Shoji Yonemura, Tomohiko Ito, Toshiki Inoue and Yasuko Kobayashi, directed by Tetsuro Araki, 2006

*Hellsing*, Complete Series (13 episodes), Gonzo, written by Chiaki Konaka directed by Umanosuke Iida, 2001 – 2002

*Noein: To Your Other Self*, Selected Episodes, written by Hiroaki Kitajima, Hiroshi Ohnogi, Kazuharu Sato, Kazuki Akane and Miya Asakawa, directed by Kazuki Akane and Kenji Yasuda, 2005

*Rune Soldier*, Selected Episodes, ADV Films, written by Akatsuki Yamatoya, Jiro Takayama, Katsuhiko Chiba and Nobuaki Kishima, directed by Yoshitaka Koyama, 2005

*Outlaw Star*, Complete Series (26 Episodes), Morning Star Studios, written by Chiaki Morosawa, Hajime Yatate, Katsuhiko Chiba, Mitsuru Hongo Mitsuyasu Sakai, Takehiko Ito and Takeshi Ashizawa, directed by Mitsuru Hongo, 2001

*Witch-Hunter Robin*, Complete Series (26 Episodes), Bandai, written by Aya Yoshinaga, Hiroaki Kitajima, Kenichi Araki, Shin Yoshida, Shukou Murase and Toru Nozaki, directed by Shukou Murase, 2002

*Cross-cultural (Film/Anime)*

*Howl's Moving Castle*, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, produced by Toshio Suzuki, based on the novel by Diana Wynne Jones, 2005

*Lady Death: The Motion Picture*, Adv Films, based on the comic by Brian Pulido, directed by Andy Orjuela, 2004

*Cross-Cultural (Television)*

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz / Oz no Mahōtsukai* (Japanese anime series), Complete Series (52 episodes), TV Tokyo, series directed by Naisho Tonogawa, executive Producer Katsu Denka, adapted from the novel by L. Frank Baum, 1986 – 1987

*General Fantasy (Television):*

*Angel*, Complete Series (Seasons 1 – 5), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, The WB, Mutant Enemy Productions, Head Writer/Creator/Executive Producer: Joss Whedon, 1999 - 2004

*Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, Complete Series (Season 1 – 7), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, The WB, UPN, Mutant Enemy Productions, Head Writer/ Creator/ Executive Producer: Joss Whedon, 1997 - 2003

*Doctor Who: Adventures in Time and Space*, All current (Season 1 – 4), BBC, Head Writer/Executive Producer: Russell. T Davies/Steven Moffat, Head of Drama/ Executive Producer: Julie Gardner (BBC Wales)/Piers Wenger and Beth Willis, 2005 - present

*Firefly*, Complete Series (1 season), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Mutant Enemy Productions, Head Writer/Creator/Executive Producer: Joss Whedon  
Writer/ Executive Producer: Tim Minear, 2002 – 2003

*Smallville*, All current (Season 1 – 7), The WB, The CW, Head writers/Executive Producers: Alfred Gough and Miles Millar, 2001 – Present

*Torchwood*, All current (Seasons 1 & 2), BBC, Head Writer/Creator/Executive Producer: Russell. T Davies, Head of Drama/ Executive Producer: Julie Gardner (BBC Wales), 2006 - present

*General Fantasy (Internet)*

*Dr. Horrible's Sing-A-Long Blog*, (Three part musical fantasy distributed online), Mutant Enemy Productions, written and created by Joss Whedon, Jed Whedon, Zack Whedon, Maurissa Tancharoen, 2008

*General Fantasy (Film)*

*AEON FLUX*, Paramount, MTV Films, written by Phil Hay and Matt Manfredi, directed by Karyn Kusama, produced by David Gale, Gregory Goodman, Gale Anne Hurd and Gary Lucchesi, based on the animation by Peter Chung, 2005

*Ever After: A Cinderella Story*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, written by Susannah Grant, Andy Tennant and Rick Parks, directed by Andy Tennant, produced by Mireille Soria and Tracey Trench, 1998

*Fantastic Four*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, written by Michael France and Mark Frost, directed by Tim Story, produced by Avi Arad, Bernd Eichinger and Ralph Winter, based on the comic book by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, 2005

*Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, screenplay by Don Payne and Mark Frost, story by John Turman and Mark Frost, directed by Tim Story, produced by Avi Arad, Bernd Eichinger and Ralph Winter, based on the comic book by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, 2007

*Galaxy Quest*, DreamWorks, screenplay by David Howard and Robert Gordon, story by David Howard, directed by Dean Parisot, produced by Mark Johnson and Charles Newirth, 1999

*Harry Potter (Film Series)*, Warner Brothers, written by Steve Kloves (*Philosopher's Stone, Chamber of Secrets, Prisoner of Azkaban, Goblet of Fire, Half-Blood Prince, Deathly Hallows*) and Michael Goldenberg (*Order of the Phoenix*), directed by Chris Columbus (*Philosopher's Stone, Chamber of Secrets*), Alfonso Cuarón (*Prisoner of Azkaban*), Mike Newell (*Goblet of Fire*) and David Yates (*Order of the Phoenix, Half-Blood Prince, Deathly Hallows*), based on the novels by J.K. Rowling, 2001 – 2011

*Labyrinth*, Lucasfilm, Tri Star, written by Dennis Lee, Jim Henson and Terry Jones, directed by Jim Henson, produced by George Lucas, 1986

*Mad Monster Party*, Embassy Pictures, written by Len Korobkin, Harvey Kurtzman and Arthur Rankin Jr, directed by Jules Bass, produced by Joseph E. Levine, Arthur Rankin Jr and Larry Roemer, 1989

*Masters of the Universe*, Cannon Films, written by David Odell and Stephen Tolkin, directed by Gary Goddard, produced by Edward R. Pressman, Yoram Globus and Menahem Golan, 1987

*Merlin*, Hallmark, written by Edward Khmara, David Stevens and Peter Barnes, directed by Steve Barron, produced by Dyson Lovell and Robert Halmi Sr., 1998



- Mortal Kombat*, New Line Cinema, written by Kevin Droney, directed by Paul W.S Anderson, produced by Lauri Apelian and Lawrence Kasanoff, 1995
- Return to Oz*, Disney, written by Gill Dennis and Walter Murch, directed by Walter Murch, produced by Paul Maslansky, based on the novels by L. Frank Baum, 1985
- Serenity*, the *Firefly* movie, Universal Pictures, written and directed by Joss Whedon, Christopher Buchanan, David V. Lester, Barry Mendel and Alisa Tager, 2005
- Shaun of the Dead*, United International Picture, Rogue Pictures, written by Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright, directed by Edgar Wright, produced by Nira Park, 2004
- Shrek*, DreamWorks Pictures, written by Ted Elliot, Terry Rossio, Joe Stillman, Roger S.H Schulman, directed by Andrew Adamson, Vicky Jenson, produced by Jeffrey Katzenberg, Aron Warner and John H. Williams, based on the picture book by William Steig, 2001
- Stardust*, Paramount, written by Jane Goldman and Matthew Vaughn, directed by Matthew Vaughn, produced by Lorenzo di Bonaventura, Michael Dreyer, Neil Gaiman and Matthew Vaughn, based on a novel by Neil Gaiman, 2007
- The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Disney, written by Ann Peacock, Andrew Adamson, Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, directed by Andrew Adamson, produced by Mark Johnson, Perry Moore, Philip Steuer and Douglas Gresham, based on the novel by C.S Lewis, 2005
- The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*, Disney, written by Andrew Adamson, Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, directed by Andrew Adamson, produced by Cary Grant, Mark Johnson, Perry Moore, Douglas Gresham and Philip Steuer, based on the novel by C.S Lewis, 2008
- The Craft*, Columbia Pictures, written by Andrew Fleming and Peter Filardi, directed by Andrew Fleming, produced by Ginny Nugent, Lisa Tornell and Douglas Wick, 1999
- The Crow*, Miramax Films, written by David J. Schow and John Shirley, directed by Alex Proyas, produced by Jeff Most and Edward R. Pressman, based on the comic book by James O'Barr, 1994
- The Crow: City of Angels*, Miramax Films, written by David S. Goyer, directed by Tim Pope, based on the comic book by James O'Barr, 1996
- The Crow: Salvation*, Dimension Films, written by Chip Johannessen, directed by Bharat Nalluri, based on the comic book by James O'Barr, 2000

*The Dark Crystal*, Universal, written by Jim Henson and David Odell, directed by Jim Henson and Frank Oz, produced by Jim Henson and David Lazer, 1982

*The Golden Compass*, New Line Cinema, written by Chris Weitz, directed by Chris Weitz, produced by Deborah Forte, based on the novel *Northern Lights* by Philip Pullman, 2007

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, New Line Cinema, written by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Peter Jackson, directed by Peter Jackson, produced by Peter Jackson, Barrie M. Osborne, Fran Walsh and Tim Sanders, based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien, 2001

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, New Line Cinema, written by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Peter Jackson and Stephen Sinclair, directed by Peter Jackson, produced by Peter Jackson, Barrie M. Osborne and Fran Walsh, based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien, 2002

*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, New Line Cinema, written by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Peter Jackson, directed by Peter Jackson, produced by Peter Jackson, Barrie M. Osborne and Fran Walsh, based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien, 2003

*The Lost Boys*, Warner Brothers, written by Janice Fischer, James Jeremias (story and screenplay) and Jeffrey Boam (screenplay only), directed by Joel Schumacher, produced by Harvey Bernhard and Richard Donner, 1987

*The NeverEnding Story*, Warner Brothers, written and directed by Wolfgang Petersen, produced by Bernd Eichinger and Dieter Geissler, based on the novel by Michael Ende, 1984

*The Princess Bride*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, MGM, written by William Goldman (based on his novel), directed by Rob Reiner, produced by Rob Reiner and Andrew Scheinman, 1987

*The Seeker: The Dark is Rising*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, written by John Hodge, directed by David Cunningham, produced by Marc Platt, based on the novel by Susan Cooper, 2007

*The Wizard of Oz*, MGM, written by Noel Langley, directed by Victor Fleming, produced by Mervyn LeRoy, based on the novels by L. Frank Baum, 1939

*TMNT*, Warner Brothers, written and directed by Kevin Munroe, produced by Thomas K. Gray and Galen Walker, based on the comic book by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, 2007

*V for Vendetta*, Warner Brothers, written by Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski directed by James McTeigue, produced by Joel Silver, Grant Hill, Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski, based on the comic book by Alan Moore, 2006

*Willow*, MGM, Lucasfilm, screenplay by Bob Dolman, story by George Lucas, directed by Ron Howard, produced by Joe Johnston, George Lucas and Nigel Wooll, 1988

*Wolf*, Columbia Pictures, written by Jim Harrison and Wesley Strick, directed by Mike Nichols, produced by Douglas Wick, 1994

*X-Men*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, screenplay by David Hayter, story by Tom DeSanto and Bryan Singer, directed by Bryan Singer, produced by Lauren Shuler Donner, Ralph Winter, Richard Donner, Avi Arad, Stan Lee and Tom DeSanto, based on the comic book by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, 2000

*X2*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, screenplay by Michael Dougherty, Dan Harris and David Hayter, story by David Hayter, Bryan Singer and Zak Penn, directed by Bryan Singer, produced by Tom DeSanto, Avi Arad, Bryan Singer, Ralph Winter and Lauren Shuler Donner, based on the comic book by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, 2003

*X-Men 3: The Last Stand*, 20th Century Fox, written by Simon Kinberg and Zak Penn, directed by Brett Ratner, produced by Lauren Shuler Donner, Ralph Winter and Avi Arad, based on the comic book by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, 2006

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