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Reconfiguring Systemic Power Relations: A Collaborative Practice-Based Exploration of Inequality with Young People and Adults in Dublin

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Reconfiguring Systemic Power Relations:
A Collaborative Practice-Based Exploration of Inequality with Young People and Adults in Dublin

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Abstract

This collaborative art practice-based thesis mobilises the concept of power as an analytical lens to examine a decade-long collaboration (2007-16) between its author/artist and a Dublin-based youth organisation, Rialto Youth Project. In opposition to the depoliticisation of inequality and associated insidious ethics of social inclusion, a collaborative methodological framework is foregrounded, producing dialogical encounters in which multiple power relations are visualised, challenged and reconfigured and where freedom is recognised as a lived contingent practice. Working across disciplines and in response to lived experiences of systemic inequalities, a series of transgenerational projects were developed to critically examine and respond to power relations at a personal, community and societal level, contributing new transdisciplinary knowledge across the fields of socially engaged art practice, youth work and education. The thesis comprises an introduction, two chapters and a conclusion. By considering the historical ontology of the practice and the formation of subject positions of those working in collaboration, chapter one outlines the construction and conceptualisation of power over time among a diverse group exercising political imagination. In articulating lived experiences of complex and interconnected systemic power relations, the second chapter examines the complex relationship of voice and listening in the public manifestations of the collaborative practice, in which truth speaks to power and politics is staged publicly through dialogical and transformative actions.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for PhD of the Technological University Dublin has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other institute or university. The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of TU Dublin's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature _____

Date _____

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List of Acronyms

CAN   Community Action Network

ICCL   Irish Council for Civil Liberties

NCAD   National College of Art and Design

PAR   Participatory Action Research

RYP   Rialto Youth Project

TEN   Territory, Encounter & Negotiation

UCD   University College Dublin

YPAR   Youth Participatory Action Research

Introduction

> A man who lived by a pond, was awakened one night by a great noise. He went out into the night and headed for the pond, but in the darkness, running up and down, back and forth, guided only by the noise, he stumbled and fell repeatedly. At last he found a leak in the dike, from which water and fish were escaping. He set to work plugging the leak and only when he had finished went back to bed. The next morning, looking out of the window, he saw with surprise that his footprints had traced the figure of a stork on the ground.
>
> (Karen Blixon cited in Cavarero, 2000 [1997]: 1)

This thesis engages with my collaborative art practice, situated in Rialto, Dublin (Fig. 0.1), from 2004-2016, which began when I was awarded a six-month artist's residency in Studio 468, located in St. Andrew's Community Centre.[1] During the initial residency, I developed a strong working relationship with Rialto Youth Project. When the formal studio residency ended, I made a transition to become resident artist in the youth project (RYP), where I would remain for 12 more years.[2] During this time, our collaborative practice as artist and organisation grew organically, until late 2016 when I temporarily suspended my durational residency to begin the process of reflection and writing for this collaborative art practice-based PhD.

Fig. 0.1. Map of Rialto, drawing by Orla Whelan (2013) commissioned for *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014). © Orla Whelan.

While traditionally a working class community, Rialto has a current population of around 5,000, and is a heterogeneous place with a mix of social and private housing and a diverse population. In the late 1990s, Rialto was designated as 'disadvantaged', with a drugs epidemic, evidence of state neglect, and anti-social behaviour all perceived to be significant contributing factors (Fahey, 1999). As documented on the RYP website, the organisation was established in 1981, and was born from a 'recognition that the needs of a significant sub-group of Rialto youth were not being met within the traditional youth club structure of the 1970s', requiring a distinct and separate role for the organisation.[3] This led to an ongoing commitment to working within the two major local authority flat complexes, Fatima Mansions and Dolphin House, while also running an area-wide youth service.

Importantly, in defiance of the Irish State's classification of Rialto as disadvantaged, RYP has always adopted the language of class-based 'oppression' and 'marginalisation', adopting both an orthodox labour-capital Marxist class analysis, as well as a Bourdieuian analysis which hinges on symbolic domination and cultural capital. The organisation's mission statement recognises that we live in 'an age of inequality, where working class communities are oppressed' and aims to work with young people most 'at risk' in the local area.[4] My relationship to Rialto and to specific local young people and adults living and/or working there emerged through my immersion in RYP.

My first three years resident in RYP (2004-7) were characterised by multiple projects with groups of young people exploring their sense of place. During this time, the theme of power emerged as central, encompassing not only unequal societal power relations, but also the power relationships at work within a collaborative process that brings together an artist, youth organisation and young people. A collective appetite for exploring power as a multi-layered theme signalled a direction for future inquiry.[5] Working across disciplines and fields of knowledge, the subsequent decade of practice (2007-16) engaged staff in the organisation, young people attached to the service, their families and wider communities in trans-generational projects, to critically examine and respond to power relations at a personal, community and societal level.

During this decade, our collaborative practice surpassed the traditional programmatic approaches prevalent in the informal/non-formal educational space of youth work, and surpassed short-term developmental projects historically associated with community arts and youth arts in Ireland.[6] In opposition to dominant neoliberal logic, driven by

private and market-driven interests (Harvey, 2005), and founded on programmatic and evidence-based rationalities (Kiely and Meade, 2018), this thesis presents a collaborative art practice, born of a sustained longitudinal relationship between an artist and a youth organisation that was consciously open-ended and indeterminate while committed to exploring and reconfiguring power relations.[7]

Two consecutive projects are central to this time period, each four years in duration, their processes articulated throughout this thesis. Multiple cumulative manifestations emerged from these two projects, each evolving from the knowledge and questions generated by earlier phases of the work. In each public manifestation, the form of the work, its location and venue, the constitution of the targeted and invited publics, and the nature of the engagement between these publics and the authors of the projects were all established organically through the collaborative process itself.[8] This thesis centres around four of these public manifestations.

To assist the reader, each of the works has been assigned an appendix numbered from one to four. Within each appendix, there is a brief textual description of the work accompanied by documentation images. I have also included sections titled 'Published Writing' and 'Conference Papers and Presentations', which together comprise further critical reflection on the specific piece of work, often in collaboration with others. This is followed by sections titled 'Academic Response' and 'Media Coverage', which offer a selective account of key public responses to each manifestation.

Engaging An Garda Síochána (Ireland's National Police and Security Service) in a durational exploration of power and policing, the first project (2007-11) was led by

What's the Story? Collective (hereafter referred to as the Collective), a group of young people, youth workers and myself as artist, who co-produced the first two public manifestations presented here: *The Day in Question* (IMMA, 2009, see Appendix I) and *Policing Dialogues* (The LAB, 2010, see Appendix II).[9] Through the development of these works, new relations to power were invoked, new dialogical forms of public communication developed, and a transformative intervention in police training established.[10] The third work discussed in this thesis is my 2014 critical memoir *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (Whelan, 2014, see Appendix III), which marked the start of a critical writing practice which now forms an important component of my art practice.[11] The publication offers personal insights into the complex working relationships, methods of engagement, creative processes and analyses at the core of the Collective's project, to communicate the tacit practice-based knowledge produced in this collaborative practice. The publication illuminates how the learning and public outputs that emerged from the practice were not prescribed. Rather, my practice has been informed by, and has remained responsive to, my experience in RYP, extending to my relationships with key collaborators, as well as prominent practices and discourses in socially engaged art encountered through my continuous participation at seminars, symposia, workshops, and through formal education.[12]

While writing *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), I was also immersed in a second project (*Natural History of Hope,* 2012-16) which set out to examine the transferability of the methodological approach that was co-developed in the previous project, while bringing together a diverse intergenerational group of women to explore contemporary equality issues. This collaboration took the practice in new and unforeseen directions, whereby techniques for engagement and public presentation

evolved to engage with invisible and intangible forms of power (Two Fuse, 2018), culminating in a major theatre performance called *Natural History of Hope*. This was a collaboration with RYP and Brokentalkers, and was performed at the Project Arts Centre in 2016. *Natural History of Hope* is the fourth public work discussed here (see Appendix IV).[13]

The ethos guiding all of these projects is a commitment to collaboration, which for me entails working across sector, discipline and knowledge with a range of co-creators. This collaborative approach is to be distinguished from participatory arts practice as described by David Beech:

> [T]he palpable shortfall between participation and collaboration leads to difficult questions about the degree of choice, control and agency of the participant compared with collaborators. Unlike participants, collaborators share authorial rights over the artwork, make fundamental decisions about the key structural features of the work and do not hold a status that is secondary to the art's producers.
>
> (2016, para. 11)[14]

Self-identifying as a collaborative artist, my practice can be situated within the contemporary field of socially engaged art, its genealogies, its tensions, and its discourses. Socially engaged art describes a field of practice with 'a dependence on social intercourse as a factor of its existence' (Helguera, 2011: 2).[15] However, the field might also be seen to exceed any single definition to the extent that it 'encompasses a wide variety of practices, rhetorics and different political perspectives that are not reducible to each other' (Wilson, 2018b).[16] With respect to the *how* and the *where*, my practice operates within the texture of everyday life, or more specifically, within a

community youth work setting. As such, implicit in my practice is an engagement with and response to existing models of informal and non-formal education prevalent in Ireland. As a result, the practice has contributed to national and international discourse in the fields of Youth Work and Education (see Todd, 2015a; 2015b; 2017; Kiely and Meade, 2018; Whelan, 2018) in addition to socially engaged and collaborative art practice (see Granville, 2011; Whelan, 2014; 2015; 2018b; Whelan and Ryan, 2016; Morley, 2016; Kearns, 2017).

Grant Kester highlights how artists immersed in collaborative practices adopt a 'vulnerable receptivity' as they engage with collaborators and publics, 'embodying an openness to the specificity of the external world' (2004: 13). This openness typically sees a collaborative artist move outside of their own sectoral boundaries, with the practice 'attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into a space of ambiguity' (Helguera, 2011: 5). As a core tenet of my practice, I continuously invite interlocutors from other disciplines to engage with specific projects, influencing the generation and conceptualisation of ideas and processes, towards transdisciplinary outcomes. This engagement with other disciplines in the development stages of projects and public works contributes to 'how socially-engaged art can (certainly in the case of Whelan's work) dissolve the artificial boundaries that still seem to separate politics and aesthetics, social science and art' (Morley, 2016: 152).

Interlocutors are carefully chosen, valued for their specific perspectives and insights, with their knowledge informing the methodology of a project. In preparing for *Policing Dialogues* (2010), Ailbhe Murphy and Ciaran Smyth of the interdisciplinary research

platform Vagabond Reviews supported the project as advisors. At a later stage, sociologist Aogan Mulcahy was invited to analyse young people's personal accounts of policing, with his insights informing the project as it developed. For the *Natural History of Hope* project (2012-16), the coordination team of the project elicited the expertise of sociologist Kathleen Lynch and psychologist Martina Carroll, with these individuals' disciplinary knowledge becoming a core component of the project over time, while our practice in turn provided all these interlocutors insights into specific phenomenon of interest to their research (see Smyth and Murphy, 2011; Mulcahy, 2011; 2012; Carroll 2015; 2016). The diverse voices of these individuals are therefore important to this thesis, in highlighting how the practice consciously defied any one fixed critical framework, rather contributing knowledge to transdisciplinary practice and discourse.

Reflecting a commitment to *actual* social change, to be distinguished from what Helguera considers to be *symbolic* art practices that claim to be about social change (Reed, 2013), the practice examined in this thesis has been recognised for its capacity to alter the policy arena (McGonagle, 2018). For example, the practice of What's the Story? Collective directly influenced the education of members of An Garda Síochána, and continues to engage with policymakers and educators in policing and youth justice, due to the innovative nature of the methodological approaches developed, which has been recognised as offering 'greater mutual understanding…between youth groups and Gardaí' (Commission on the Future of Policing In Ireland, 2018: 25).[17]

When the aforementioned collaborative manifestations were positioned publically, the practice also drew the attention of individuals from further afield, bringing new theoretical and methodological insights to the practice. Two such respondents from the

disciplines of Education and Sociology are Sharon Todd and Kevin Ryan respectively, who have maintained a consistent engagement with my practice, and whose insights feature centrally in this thesis. My ongoing critical relationships with them are indicative of how my practice unfolds through dialogues with individuals from different disciplines and sectors. Most significantly, Ryan and I developed a collaborative writing platform called Two Fuse in 2016, 'through a commitment to thinking across the boundaries of disciplinary enclosures'.[18] Our latest co-authored publication *Freedom?* (2018) has proven to be an important resource in writing this thesis, and I will thus be drawing insights from it throughout the thesis.[19]

It was also as a result of an earlier conversation with Ryan that I began to examine two forms of relational power at work in my practice with RYP. Operating simultaneously – and examined in depth across the chapters – the first form of relational power is co-produced through collaboration, while the second articulates inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power (Whelan and Ryan, 2016). Importantly, as noted above, both develop concurrently, and I can now identify how they converge temporarily in the collaborative public manifestations of the work, where the collective authors engage in relational encounters with multiple contexts and publics. The concurrent nature of the two forms of relational power in the practice is important, as each has grown over time, operating inter-dependently much like two sides of the one coin. In recognition of this, this thesis has a two-chapter structure, with each chapter examining the same timeline, processes and associated public manifestations, while using the concept of power as an analytical lens that enables me to take up two distinctive lines of approach to the practice.

Chapter one explores the form of relational power that is co-produced through collaboration. In doing so, it retrospectively examines how and in what ways a methodological framework was developed, through a sustained relationship between artist and youth organisation, to question and interrogate the hierarchical power relationships which underpin the field of collaborative arts practice. By considering the historical ontology of the practice, this chapter outlines the construction and conceptualisation of power over time among a diverse group of collaborators. It explores how power relationships were diffused to maximise the possibility for horizontal relationships to be harnessed.

The chapter further draws attention to the significant metaphorical device of a triangle, which gave visual form to the collaborative relationships central to the decade of practice described here, as it highlighted the contingent subject positions of those participating in the process. As the project developed, the triangle transitioned to become a methodological device and was operationalised as a space for agonistic dialogue. In this chapter I position this emergent methodological framework within a register of contemporary collaborative practice described by Mick Wilson as 'applied experiments in political imagination' (2018a: 32).

Chapter two considers a form of relational power that articulates inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power. The chapter examines the complex relationship of voice and listening in the public manifestations from this practice, which at times were dialogical in nature, and on some occasions operated with many of the traits of *parrhesia,* portrayed by Michel Foucault (2001) as an act of speaking truth to power. In doing so, this chapter explores in what ways and to what

ends systemic power relations were unearthed, challenged and reconfigured through practice. Reoccurring methodological devices are examined, including the specific approach to gathering and working with personal anonymous stories of all collaborators regardless of role or position within a project. Similarly the use of further visual metaphors in the public works is explored, which produced a new visual lexicon for power, exposing intangible and invisible forms of systemic power relations.

Recognising the public realm as a 'space of appearances' (Arendt, 1958: 199) and one of 'shared *inter-est*' (Jackson M., 2002: 11), this chapter presents a practice in which politics is staged publicly through dialogical action. As two forms of relational power are identified and seen to converge in the collaborative public manifestations discussed in this thesis, the cumulative methodological framework contributes to how representation occurs simultaneously to the individual anonymous storytellers, to the collective makers of a piece of work, and to multiple publics as part of a continuum of developing and shifting subjectivities. Here collective makers speak back to the de-politicised classification of communities categorised as 'disadvantaged', while something new is set in motion from a set of contingent relationships.

In writing this thesis it has not been my intention to break down the transdisciplinary practice into discreet units of analysis, but rather to put the hybrid practice into conversation with various discourses simultaneously. I have worked to draw out the specific value of operating across the boundaries of disciplinary enclosures, at the intersection of multiple fields, primarily socially engaged/collaborative arts, informal education, and community-based research practice, to identify the knowledge inherent in the work. In doing so, some core themes emerge including the value of ethical and

reciprocal relationships, longitudinal practice, positionality, collaborative agency and relational forms of knowledge production. With these in mind, I present a practice that has adopted and negotiated new and established qualitative methodological approaches, born from an open-ended, durational and collaborative process.

Importantly, the specific methodological features outlined in this thesis have been identified retrospectively. In reality, the practice involved many relational processes operating in 'messy' spaces (Lather, 2009: 17), largely taking place away from the public eye (initially), engaging multiple relations of power and complex negotiations, often not knowing the direction of a project, but trusting in time it would lead to something of significance. As Adriana Cavarero states – and this is the significance of the epigraph at the outset of this introductory discussion – life cannot or should not 'be lived like a story, that what must be done in life must be done in such a way that a story comes after it' (2000 [1997]: 2-3). This is crucial for the life of my practice to date, and for the task of this thesis, which required a retrospective reflection on a complex set of experiences, that did not operate like a linear story with a prefigured map or plan. In looking back over a decade of practice, I have now devised stories and insights that can be shared, which illuminate the forms of knowledge that were co-produced in this collaborative practice, highlighting an emergent critical methodological framework.

As argued by Wilson, 'all critical practice is dependent upon the social and organisational matrices that it chooses to operate within' (2018b). In representing my practice in this thesis, I have moved between four critical registers in which a socially engaged artist operates, as identified by Murphy (2012). The first level of criticality is the phenomenology of the artist, the lived interdisciplinary nature of the everyday

practice, to be registered beyond private subjective experience so that it can enter the critical domain.[20] The second level is the group process or the social encounter, which involves artists negotiating with a constellation of others as a core feature of their practice. The third requires a level of critical awareness that speaks to the micro-political economy of practice, which sees the artist navigating within an inter-organisational and institutional matrix, each organisation with its own inherent ideological commitments. The final register is the macro-political economy of practice, which is always operating either visibly or invisibly, and includes the political and economic forces that influence the social context in which a practice is positioned (ibid.). [21]

In collaborating with a youth organisation that has consciously framed its community in relation to their class and oppressed status, staying attuned to the ethics of practice was of central importance as I negotiated the specific matrices of my practice. While I was aligned to the organisational code of conduct of RYP through its child protection policies, my practice did not emerge from a ready-made model, but instead generated its own ethical framework through the process.[22] As observed by Áine O'Brien in the Foreword to *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 12), I eschewed 'the default position of the tip-toeing, ethically constrained artist', instead creating spaces where decisions had to be negotiated collaboratively. For O'Brien this is achieved:

> [T]hrough strategic slowness if not deliberate caution, via bold steps of intervention and experimentation, or by trial and error with the inevitable repairing of individual and communal egos, mixed with highs, lows and anxieties about methodology and intent (ibid.).

In writing this thesis, I have endeavoured to avoid a tendency which sees collaborative arts practices singularly, which are then 'judged on the basis of the ethical efficacy underwriting the artist's relationship to his or her collaborators rather than what makes these works interesting as art' (Downey, 2009: 595). As the 'tensions between quality and equality, singular and collective authorship' (Bishop, 2012: 3) are central to collaborative practice, my practice is committed to discussing and publicly representing multiple sets of power relations. This approach speaks to an 'ethics of engagement' (Downey, 2009: 603), which extends across intimate private processes, through to multiple outputs engaging diverse publics in dialogical and parrhesiastic encounters. The resulting ethical framework has emerged from a rejection of the insidious ethics of social inclusion, 'in which the problem is how to include more people, not to question whether being included within the dominant framework blocks off vital forms of subversion, difference and the rejection of normalcy' (Beech, 2016: 3).

In reflecting upon a decade of collaborative practice, I'm deeply aware of my positionality as the single author of this thesis, and the fragmented and partial perspective I hold (Haraway, 1998). As such, this thesis does not attempt to be a total representation of a complex durational and polyvocal process; rather it is consciously aware of its own gaps in knowledge (Rose, 1997). I have remained attentive and receptive to other voices, while also being cautious to avoid a kind of 'intrusive empiricism' (Back, 2007: 17). However I recognise the emergence of this thesis from my specific vantage point and the privileged position I hold in writing about a shared experience. Similarly, I acknowledge the temporality of the vantage point from which I currently see my practice, which is significantly different from the one I had upon arriving in Rialto in 2004. As previously mentioned, alongside my art practice with

RYP, I have developed my writing practice, and importantly my role as an educator, now based at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin, with these roles influencing each other to the extent that they are bound together through their concurrent and overlapping development in the last decade of my life.

Having worked with individuals' stories in practice, I understand deeply the temporal nature of experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), and how stories and experiences are altered and rethought over time. I recognise my practice to be a cumulative project, in constant transition and (re)negotiation, and so I consider this thesis a live document, forming another public manifestation from a durational process, which will likely elicit responses and relationships that take the practice in new and unforeseen directions.

This open-ended and indeterminate approach to practice exists against the backdrop of a neoliberal era laden with a means-end rationality, fuelling a prevailing outcome-driven logic 'that forecloses upon other imaginable ways of being-in-the-world' (Ryan, 2017: 7). In strong opposition, this thesis presents an emergent collaborative methodological framework, that values complexity, striving to create agonistic, polyvocal encounters in which multiple power relations can be exposed, challenged and reconfigured and where freedom can be experienced as a lived contingent practice.

Notes

[1] Studio 468 is a purpose-built community based art studio in Rialto established in 2003. When it was established, it was co-developed and managed by a studio team made up of representatives from the Rialto Development Association, Common Ground; a local arts development organisation and the Dublin City Council Arts Office.

[2] During this twelve years, I had use of different spaces at specific times including flat 1J in Fatima Mansions, managed by Rialto Youth Project (RYP), two further residencies in Studio 468 and the fifth block arts studio in Dolphin House which I established with RYP.

[3] See <http://rialtoyouthproject.net/history> [Accessed 8 November 2018].

[4] Rialto Youth Project's mission statement reads: 'In an age of inequality, where working class communities are oppressed, we are working towards bringing about social change, providing an integrated youth service, based on the needs of young people and in particular those most at risk.' The mission statement was written in the 1990s. In a personal conversation in November 2018, with John Bissett, current Chair of Rialto Youth Project who was part of the team who wrote the statement, he described the original use of the term 'working class' as non-theoretical but thoroughly political in its location of young people within a particular class. See <http://rialtoyouthproject.net/mission/> [Accessed 20 June 2017].

[5] Chapters one and two of my publication *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014) track the phases of my practice that led to the decision to focus on power as a theme.

[6] *The Purpose and Outcomes of Youth Work*, a 2009 report by Devlin and Gunning, states that youth work typically results in both informal and non-formal learning. Here non-formal education is seen as structured learning that which takes place outside of the formal education system based on stated learning objectives, where informal education is typically unstructured and takes place within the daily life of an individual.

[7] In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), David Harvey introduces the dominant thought and practice embedded in neoliberalism, which is evident globally since approximately 1970, tracing the political and economic story of where this rationality has come from. In engaging with its genealogies, Harvey also explores the possibilities for alternative, oppositional logics to prevail.

[8] In *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation*, I observe ten key features of my durational practice that I consider to be transferable to future work, one of which is that the '[p]rocess dictates the form of engagement with publics' (2014: 229). The others are: the position of the embedded artist; the commitment to a horizontal collaboration across difference; all involved in a process having shared interests; the practice of interrogating power relations; the use of personal experience to engage with societal issues; the process being ideas led; starting wide and loose and tightening over time; the importance of inviting in external expertise and discourse; the practice of engaging publics in a phased and targeted way to promote listening (ibid.: 226-229).

[9] What's the Story? Collective (2007-11) was a collective of youth workers, artist and young people based in Rialto Youth Project Dublin: Gillian O Connor, Graham Dunphy, Nichola Mooney, Nicola Whelan, Michael Byrne, Garrett Kenny, Jamie Hendrick, Jonathan Myers, Vanessa Kenny, Fiona Whelan.

[10] These projects brought together Gardaí and young people in new types of encounters unlike those experienced through participation in the State run Garda Juvenile Diversion Programmes and Garda Youth Diversion Projects. See chapter two.

[11] See Whelan, 2015; 2018a; 2018b; Whelan and Ryan, 2016 and Two Fuse, 2018.

[12] As outlined in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), there were many key professional events that influenced the direction of my practice. These include my participation in 'Ethnography in Visual Arts' with FOMACS, run by Fire Station Artists' Studios, 2012; 'Deschooling Society', Serpentine and Hayward galleries, 2011; MA Art in Public, University of Ulster, Belfast, 2008-9 and

Working in Public Seminars with On the Edge Research, Grays' School of Art and Suzanne Lacy, Various locations, Scotland, 2008.

[13] Brokentalkers are a Dublin-based theatre company. See <http://brokentalkers.ie/> [Accessed 1 January 2019].

[14] Given the proliferation of online journal publishing where articles do not have page numbers, throughout this thesis I adopt the convention of using paragraph numbers as cited in the referencing guides for multiple institutions including Murdoch University and Southern Cross University in Australia, which adopt the APA and Harvard citation systems respectively.

[15] Helguera describes how socially engaged art 'emerges from that tradition of the here-and-now… the artistic act is inextricable from the time/place context' (quoted in Reed, 2013: para. 27)

[16] As the timing of the social turn in art coincides with the retreat of the neoliberal state in its obligations to social care (Wilson, 2018b), Wilson highlights how early critique tends to unfairly reduce the artists' role as they are seen to fill the void created by the neoliberal state's withdrawal, inadvertently operationalising the practice of neoliberalism itself. Wilson suggests that to avoid this reduction of artistic practice, the multiplicity of practices must be examined as 'they designate different prioritisation, reflect different historical conjunctions and proceed from different, often countervailing, cultural political projects' (2018a: 33).

[17] During *Policing Dialogues* (2010), a weekly training inquiry was held by a diverse group made up of myself, young people, staff from Rialto Youth Project, Chief Superintendent, Sergeant and Gardaí who collectively explored how best to incorporate awareness of power, dignity and respect into relationships between Gardaí and young people. The process jointly explored the current structure, organisation and training of Gardaí, the relationship between young people and Gardaí and how best to mutually enhance community policing. Two training modules were developed and agreed during this process. Due to the closure of the Garda training college from 2011-15, the modules were not implemented. In 2016, the process resumed and a number of meetings took place including one in Templemore Garda training college. In 2017 I was interviewed by Patrick Freyne of the *Irish Times* for the article 'Stop and Search: Garda Harassment or Crime Fighting?', 22 July. I was also invited in 2017 to present at a cross border research event 'New Foundations in Youth Justice' which focused on young people's rights and experiences in the youth justice system, in order to better inform policy and practice. In April 2018, I was contacted by Laura Flanagan – the legal and policy officer for the Children's Rights Alliance. Information about the project was shared with her, in advance of meetings she would have with the Policing Authority and the Garda Commissioner to discuss children and youth diversion. In July 2018, I was contacted by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), as they were carrying out policy work on policing in light of the opportunities for reform presented by the Commission on the Future of Policing's work. I subsequently presented at an ICCL event 'Rights-Based Policing: Visions for Change from the Community' and featured centrally in two articles related to policing in Ireland ('Why Stop and Search on Young People Should be Stopped', Michael Clifford, *Irish Examiner,* 26 July 2018 and 'Gardaí Need Better Training on How to Handle Kids in the Inner-City', Conal Thomas*, Dublin Inquirer,* 31 Aug. 2018). As a result, the Commission on the Future of Policing sought information on the project to include in their final report which was published on 18 September 2018. A decade on from when the stories were first gathered, the methodological approach developed by the Collective as a form of engagement between police and young people, has now been referenced in the final report by the Commission on the Future of Policing to the Minister for Justice in September 2018 titled *The Future of Policing in Ireland* (2018). In this document, my practice with RYP has been described as innovative in its development of 'greater mutual understanding involving collaboration between youth groups and Gardaí' (2018:25), recommending the value of such approaches to be further explored in the context of the new Learning and Development Strategy that the commission also recommend in the document. The report is available at <http://www.policereform.ie> [Accessed 18 September 2018].

[18] See <http://twofuse.com/> [Accessed 15 November 2018].

[19] *Freedom?* (2018) by Two Fuse, Cork University Press was reviewed widely which generated further critical thinking in relation to my practice with RYP. See McGonagle, 2019; Woods, 2018 and Gildea, 2018.

[20] In writing *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014) as a critical memoir, I intended to engage with my subjective experience over a decade of collaboration and in so doing, I addressed an identified gap in critical writing in the field of collaborative and socially engaged arts practice. This publication could be seen as engaging primarily with the phenomenology of the artist.

[21] See Murphy, A. (2012) *Situation Room: Critical Cartographies for Engaged Practice.* Drawing on her own doctoral thesis, in this paper, artist Ailbhe Murphy presented four levels of criticality in which a socially engaged artist operates. I first engaged with these critical registers in Whelan, F. (2015) 'Insider Witness', *The Visual Arts Newssheet*, July-Aug.

[22] As I was working with children and young people in Rialto Youth Project, I was subject to Garda vetting and I received Child Protection training on two occasions. I was also bound to the child protection policy of the organisation and their consent procedures with regard to the photographic documentation of under-18s.

Chapter One

The Co-Production of Power Through Collaboration

Introduction

It was the evening of 14 May, 2016, the third and final night of the *Natural History of Hope* (2016) performance in Project Arts Centre Dublin, 'an unflinching exploration of gender and class inequality, and the complexity of women's lives told through real stories of oppression, resilience, solidarity and hope'.[1] Hidden down a few flights of cold stone stairs and behind the weight of a heavy door, far away from the audience shuffling into their seats in the theatre above, there was a wash of emotions. Thirty women ranging from the summer to the winter of their lives, excited, anxious, temporarily united in solidarity. The kitchen to the right offered the sound of calm conversation over a pot of tea, in contrast to the nervy upbeat energy coming from the young dancers repeating their routine in a room opposite. A lone youth worker-cum-puppeteer engaged in a last minute practice in the corridor. The remaining core cast waited in the adjacent mirrored room, a diverse group of women who lived and/or worked in Rialto, some of whom were staff members in RYP who along with me, made up the coordination group leading this collaborative process since its inception in 2012.[2] Other women had engaged in the process over time, contributing insights that shaped the performance script, and more had joined purely as cast members in recent months. Brushing hair, chatting, last sup of water, last smoke, last spray of deodorant, last wee, nervous laughter. Let's do it. We were given our cue to make our way up the stairs and silence descended. We all knew the drill.

As we climbed we breathed slowly, the hum of the audience chatter greeted our ears. A local Rialto woman said she felt sick at the sound of them. She was comforted by Sharon, also a local woman, staff member in RYP and member of the coordination team who was instrumental in getting her neighbour and friend involved. Sharon reminded her that we were all great, and should be proud of ourselves. Another woman added, that despite the nerves, she would miss the process and wouldn't know what to do with herself when this was over, predicting the void that would emerge after months of intense preparation. As we were asked to wait on the stairs, Dannielle, another member of the project coordination team, reiterated to me that she still couldn't believe we had managed to get her on a stage. She recalled the challenge I had posed to the coordination team a few months prior to the performance, when individuals began to opt for production and support roles, sacrificing their potential positions as women standing publicly in solidarity with other women, speaking truth to power.

During the *Natural History of Hope* project (2012-16), the adoption of multiple roles had become a unique feature of the practice of the coordination group. This resulted from a commitment to explore, expose and reconfigure the micro- and macro-power relations governing collaborative art practice, and by association, the ascribed subject positions that came to bear on a process such as this one. The coordination group, made up of five staff members of RYP (youth workers and homework club workers) and myself as artist, had worked as leaders of the process over three years. Unusually for staff supporting a community based art project, each member of this group, regardless of professional standing, was also a contributor of personal testimonies, bringing our own lived experience into the process alongside our critical thinking and wider professional practice.[3] Those stories formed part of a collection of anonymous

narratives, which was collated, analysed, read aloud and discussed in multiple previous iterations prior to this performance.[4]

This intersection of *what* we were with *who* we were (Two Fuse, 2018b), created tense and difficult experiences as the coordination group worked to steer the project to a public forum while also being cognisant of personal and emotional connections to aspects of the material world they shared with others within and beyond RYP. As some of the coordination group were both RYP staff and part of the local community, their roles were further complicated when friends and family members joined the process as we worked towards the public performances. At our weekly meetings, the coordination group regularly discussed the complexity and messiness of the roles we each had. One could be at once any combination of participating woman, artist, mother, youth worker, homework club worker and local participant. What was important was our fluidity to embody and value the messiness involved in having multiple and fluctuating subject positions in a process.

Having engaged targeted publics through other manifestations over two years, and with the final performance plans in motion, the coordination team had invited acclaimed theatre company Brokentalkers (Gary Keegan and Feidlim Cannon) to co-develop this most public iteration from the process, bringing their experience in dealing with complex narratives and known for their work with non-professional actors. Many new practical roles related to the production naturally emerged in this phase of the work, causing a rupture within the existing leadership structure. For weeks, I worked closely and intensely with Feidlim and Gary to develop the final performance script. This change to the relational structure had caused the other members of the coordination

team (all RYP staff) to naturally default to one aspect of their role, as they prioritised their familiar professional positions as supporters of local people engaged in the process, inadvertently considering themselves as less central to the performance itself.

The relational and operational structures supporting the *Natural History of Hope* project over its four-year duration, had been born from the accumulated knowledge from previous collaborations with RYP. I was deeply aware of the fragility of collaborative relationships and the rupture caused with each public manifestation, as groups became task orientated. My intervention at a busy and important time in the process, cautioned against an unravelling of the collective, messy, relational power that was being harnessed in the process, which included the members of the coordination team positioned as fellow participants on stage alongside local adults and young people.

Much discussion took place in the weeks that followed as the six leaders of the project considered our respective roles during this highly public phase – a complex process of negotiation, reflecting much of the ethical labour of my practice as a socially engaged artist. In the end it was agreed that we, as a coordination group, would perform on stage. This decision was not intended to promote 'a form of cultural engagement that flattens cultural hierarchies' (Beech, 2016: para. 3), but rather to reflect a commitment to emergent forms of what Stevphen Shukaitis refers to as 'collective subjects' (cited in Sholette, 2017: 26), meaning a subjectivity emerging from a collaborative process, rather than one born of 'a politics formed around already given demands' (ibid.).[5] The diverse group of women waiting on the stairs of the theatre, poised to perform, held a collective subjectivity as social actors committed in that moment to speaking truth to

power (Foucault, 2001), beyond any simplification of roles as set out by the field of practice (specifically artist, youth worker, and participant).

This experiential account of *Natural History of Hope* leads me to the substance and focus of this chapter, which examines the relational methodological framework developed over the decade leading to this public performance, focusing on a form of relational power that is co-produced through collaboration. Questions to be addressed in this chapter include: how and in what ways was a methodological framework developed to interrogate the hierarchical power relationships that underpin the field of collaborative arts practice? How were power relationships diffused to maximise the possibility for horizontal relationships to be harnessed?

As we were ushered behind the solid black curtain separating us from the audience, we arranged ourselves silently in the order in which we would take to the stage, our collective subjectivity and solidarity offering us a temporary position of power. Our audience waited. We would speak. For one hour, they would be invited to listen. With moments to go, we were joined by the main cast member, a cloth mannequin called Hope (Fig. 1.1) who we had created together, who had come to embody a complexity of nuanced thoughts, lived experiences and ambitions from all of us and, importantly, from many other anonymous women and girls who were not standing there for a variety of reasons.[6] A collective deep breath was drawn, lights dimmed, a gap in the curtain was created, and we took to the stage to face the audience (Fig. 1.2) introducing them to Hope:

This is Hope.

Hope was conceived by women.

By young women
and older women.
By mothers and nannies.

By single women,
and married women,
gay women,
bi women,
straight women.

By psychologists,
homework club workers,
sisters,
aunties,
thinkers,
dreamers.

By educators,
activists,
cooks,
sociologists,
and Godmothers.

By students,
and youth workers,
cleaners,
leaders,
and dancers.

By care workers,
by singers,

by fighters,

artists and lovers.

By little girls,

and daughters,

by great grandmothers.

and friends.

(*Natural History of Hope*, Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and

Brokentalkers, 2016)

Fig. 1.1. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Fig. 1.2. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Despite holding different roles and positions of power in the collaborative matrix, the performance script presented multiple complex themes and was considered 'a welcome alternative perspective of women's lives' in highlighting how '[f]eminism is not homogenous' (Keating, 2016: 10), specifically as it related to differing class experiences.[7] The primary performance narrative told the story of visible and invisible forms of power drawn from the lived experience of generations of women living and working in Rialto, which were communicated on stage through visual metaphors and spoken word. Class and gender-based experiences intersected, highlighting concerns related to safety, dignity and the proximity of death. During the first scene of the performance, each cast member turned on a light to remember the cast members from a previous Rialto performance who had since died.[8] This was an important acknowledgement of the rich history of arts and cultural practice that existed in RYP

while being a sombre reminder of what was at stake in the present moment.

Importantly, the ethical tension between our multiple individual subject positions and our emergent collective subjectivity and solidarity was also reflected in the performance. As a collaborative artist, I had positioned myself in solidarity with others whose struggles I was drawn to, committed to examining power relationships to maximise the possibility for horizontal relationships to be harnessed from which new collective subjects would emerge. However, it was important for Brokentalkers and myself not to lose sight of the power relations inherent in a collaborative process such as this one. My own positionality as artist, middle class, college-educated, immersed within a geographic context classified by the state as 'disadvantaged', could not be neutralised simply through commitment to collaboration. Similarly the subject positions of the project's advisors, as well as the language and forms of knowledge they brought to the practice, needed to be problematised. Hence the performance script regularly spoke to the power relations operating at the meta-level of the fields of practice in which we were positioned, to be seen in the context of the macro-political themes related to gender and class inequality being explored in the production. The resulting performance had the accumulative effect of forcing the audience 'to reconsider how we each contribute to the gender, class and social eco-system that we all share'.[9] This shared eco-system was visible in the performance as a young woman introduces Hope to the theme of class, which was represented on stage as a bubble (Fig. 1.3):

> Can you see it Hope?
> The bubble.
> We're inside it.
> You see everything and everyone through the bubble.

And everyone sees the bubble when they look at you.

They look at you in the bubble.

They stare at you.

They make decisions about you.

They tell you, you can't.

They tell you, you won't.

They tell you, you'll never.

They measure you with invisible rulers.

How good. How bad. How big. How small. How much. How little. You're a number. You're lots of numbers.

They study us.

They observe our behaviour.

They write about us, in books, in newspapers.

They give lectures about us.

When they talk about us, they say words like:

working class, underclass, disadvantaged, impoverished, poor, marginalised, oppressed.

They are interested in phenomenology, epistemology, sociology, anthropology,

They say they are doing ethnography,

They do case studies, longitudinal studies, empirical research.

They even do art projects.

People make their careers trying to understand this bubble,

but they will never understand what it's like on the inside.

You will come to love the bubble and hate it.

What does your bubble feel like Hope?

My bubble feels like a shell on my back. It's heavy.

I hope yours is light and floaty and beautiful.

And I hope it's easy to get out of...

(Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers, 2016)

Fig. 1.3. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. Video still by Paddy Cahill. © Shoot to Kill.

In order to examine how the methodological framework at the core of this practice was developed to interrogate the power relationships operating within the collaborative process itself, the next section of this chapter outlines the historical ontology of the practice, thereby reconstructing how the subject positions and disciplinary boundaries of multiple agents were framed. I then explore how the concept of power and the construct of power was conceptualised in order to highlight and trouble the dominant relational paradigms operating at the intersection of collaborative arts and youth work. Here I will return to the beginning of my relationship with RYP, drawing attention to the initial

configuration of subject positions in the practice, specifically by examining the development of What's the Story? Collective (2007-11). This experimental interdisciplinary group of young people, youth workers and artist stayed attentive to the complexities and power relations attached to our diverse subject positions while remaining committed to a horizontal process for four years, subsequently influencing the methodology of the *Natural History of Hope* project (2012-16). The core commitment and approach to questioning and interrogating the power relationships at the meta-level of collaborative art practice is shown to give rise to the first distinct form of relational power in this practice, whereby power is co-produced through collaboration.

The Historical Ontology of My Collaborative Practice

In his essay *What is Enlightenment?,* Foucault argues for a critique of what is being said, thought and done through what he describes as 'a historical ontology of ourselves' (1984: 45). Ian Hacking highlights the three intersecting 'axes of knowledge, power, and ethics' as central to the formation of historical ontology, or more specifically, the 'truth through which we constitute ourselves as objects of knowledge', the forms of 'power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others', and the ethical practices 'through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents' (2002: 2).[10] Foucault recognised that this way of engaging with the present dispenses with historical constants and transcendental conceptions of truth, focusing instead on how 'we constitute ourselves at a place and time, using materials that have a distinctive and historically formed organization' (ibid.: 3). What is thus to be considered is how we recognise the specificity of who we are, which requires attention to the contingency of

our subject positioning, and which in turn extends to our relation to self, to others, and to the contexts or situations we inhabit. I should also acknowledge that as a way of engaging critically with the present, historical ontology generally operates on a temporal scale comparable to an era or epoch. I am thus adapting this analytical device in aligning it to my practice, because it is uniquely suited to the dual task of historicising my practice whilst keeping contingency to the fore.

I should also mention how I came to adopt this approach, since this too has a bearing on my practice, as discussed in the introduction (namely engaging with interlocutors from other disciplines). When I published *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), I considered the publication to be another iteration in a durational, cumulative and open-ended process, and in the final lines indicated that I would welcome feedback and engagement from those who would read it. In 2015, I received a letter from one reader, Ryan, who expressed an interest in engaging with me in a dialogue related to my practice.[11] During this dialogue he observed that I had left something important out of the memoir, which he referred to as 'the historical ontology' of my practice.

As I now revisit and excavate the genealogies that gave root to my position as artist in residence in RYP, my motivation is not simply to address gaps in earlier accounts of the practice. Instead I am positioning the historical ontology upfront, out of recognition of the role of specific genealogies in shaping the subject positions and disciplinary boundaries of the various agents who came to feature in this practice. As will be revealed, these disciplinary frames and subject positions are an important influence on the transdisciplinary, collaborative methodology that subsequently emerged, which involved an ongoing parallel process of learning and un-learning, to produce a practice

that I recognise to be historically and collaboratively constituted, contingent and constantly in flux.

I arrived in Rialto in 2004 as a visual artist interested in collaborating with young people. Having previously had a painting practice, which I supported through casual teaching in informal education contexts, I was drawn to the idea of merging these two pursuits and developing a collaborative art practice with youth. Previous teaching posts had positioned me in very short-term and hierarchical relationships with young people, which failed to foster reciprocity. Positioned within RYP as an 'artist', provided a new opportunity to develop a relational horizontal practice with youth workers and young people based on a set of shared interests and intentions over a sustained period of time.

Engaging others in the field of practice was by no means a novel approach, in that I was tapping into multiple genealogies in social movement history as well as art historical movements such as Dadaism, Fluxus, the Feminist art movement, Community Arts and Relational Aesthetics.[12] Typically, participation 'has been characterised in opposition to the elitism of the aesthete, the passivity of the spectator, the compliance of the observer, and the distance of the onlooker' (Beech, 2016: para. 3). However, forms of participation have also changed throughout history. What were described as the 'crowd' in the 1910s, became the 'masses' of the 1920s, reframed as the 'people' of the 1960s, and later the 'excluded' of the 1980s, the 'communities' of the 1990s, leading to today's 'volunteers' (Bishop, 2011). In the United States in the 1990s, artist Suzanne Lacy articulated a notable change in practice from prior approaches to public art, coining the phrase 'new genre public art' (Lacy, 1995). This new 'genre' would be categorised by its preference for temporary rather than permanent projects and the engagement of

participants, often marginalised groups and communities, as active in the conceptualisation and production of public outcomes that were politically conscious (Kwon, 2004).

With this particular wave of practice and associated commissioning projects came an ethical critique, as participants' encounters with an art work or process was reconfigured 'as an ethically loaded and social mode of address' (Beech, 2016: para. 3) The artist's position in such projects thus required critical attention. In *The Artist as Ethnographer,* Hal Foster (1995) outlines how community-based artists adopted certain methodological approaches from anthropology, but ignored principles of the ethnographic participant-observer. Too often processes were created where the artist's position went unquestioned, while there was a 're-making of the other in neo-primitive guise' (Kwon, 2004: 139). Kester (1995) explored the artist's position from a different angle, problematising the framing of such artistic practice as 'collaborative'. He specifically challenged the artist's position as a delegate, speaking on behalf of a community (Kwon, 2004). In summarising the multiple critiques of art projects at this time, Miwon Kwon highlights the common concern as being the 'uneven power relations in the triangulated exchange between artist, a curator-art institution, and a community group' (2004: 7). These uneven power relations were further amplified when artists engaged with young people, often positioning them as flawed individuals to be fixed, with young people perceived to be 'malleable' and thus also vulnerable to manipulation on the part of well-meaning artists and well-intentioned art projects, which often mitigate against equal exchange in proposed collaborations (Kester, 1999/2000).

Considering the situation in Ireland and the EC/EU at this time, the influence of the language of power on participation must also be acknowledged, which radically changed during the 1980s and 1990s as inequality became reframed using the language of *disadvantage* (Whelan and Ryan, 2016). Todd describes this deficit theory that has become embedded in language, which assumes a flawed moral character of individuals, as 'pernicious in sustaining certain narratives about why people are poor, narratives which often individualise a problem that is really connected to oppressive social, political and economic institutions' (2015b). This language represents a consensual register of inequality-as-disadvantage, which has tended to displace the more conflictual register of inequality-as-domination, or inequality-as-oppression, though as noted earlier, RYP has refused to relinquish the latter (Whelan and Ryan, 2016).

The effect of this new language on the community arts movement that prevailed in Ireland at the time has been notable. What began as a deeply political movement motivated by issues of 'inequality' and struggles for 'equality', over time and through state involvement, became reframed using the de-politicised language of 'disadvantage' and social 'exclusion', leading to a prescribed remedy of social 'inclusion'. Neoliberal workfare regimes subsequently emerged and participation became scripted by state sponsored processes aimed at 'activating' and 'empowering' individuals and communities labelled as 'disadvantaged' (ibid.).[13] As consensual language became instituted in policy, it became more difficult for community-based arts practice to engage in a politics of contestation.

Emerging from the particular trajectory of the Irish community arts movement, the aforementioned 'uneven power relations in the triangulated exchange' (Kwon, 2004: 7) took a different formation in the context of my practice. The artist and local community

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(in this case young people) were similar subject positions to those in Kwon's scenario, but importantly the third stake-holder in our triangle was not the 'curator-art institution' but rather the community organisation RYP, represented by its staff, a team of professional youth workers, and homework club workers. RYP staff, already at that time involved in collaborative processes, were committed to supporting the young people, including against the power of the artist, whose cultural capital and access to practices of representation gave them a specific form of power that could be utilised. In committing to a process of collaboration with young people and youth workers, and in the absence of any curator or commissioning body, my own position and autonomy as an artist would thus require constant attention and reflexivity.

I was the product of an educational tradition supporting signature art practice, which had influenced the formation of my position and identity as an artist to the extent that I had distanced myself from the language of 'community artist', which had been devalued in the context of my education (see Whelan, 2014; Whelan and Ryan, 2016) However, I favoured an immersion in RYP over time as a way to engage deeply with the complexity of relationships and themes, not identifying with the 'binary opposition between artistic autonomy and instrumentalisation' (Murphy, 2013: 18). Importantly, RYP's manager Jim Lawlor resisted on my behalf the emerging position of 'youth arts worker' that existed in other youth services.[14] Instead I was encouraged and supported by him to maintain the title and position of artist, which I did with absolute determination, developing an immersed relational practice with RYP, responding to the organisational and socio-political matrices I occupied.

I also looked to the international field of practice to identify artists with contemporary durational practices working with youth or communities. In 2006, along with a youth worker from RYP, I went on a research trip to the USA to engage with artist Tim Rollins, whose highly respected durational practice with youth had powerfully infiltrated the art market.[15] As Rollins highlighted, the content of their paintings were not overtly political but the act of making such work with youth from the Bronx, New York was the political act (personal communication, 2006). On the same trip I stayed in *Project Row Houses* in Houston, Texas where art and life intertwined in a durational, multi-faceted community based project, committed to art's role as 'an engine for social transformation'.[16] In 2008, I participated in a seminar series called 'Working in Public' which centred on artist Suzanne Lacy's decade long project with youth in Oakland, California, later visiting some of the community partners she collaborated with to gain diverse insights and reflections.[17] Giving time to position my practice within the field of durational collaborative arts practice with youth was equally important to the ongoing process in Rialto, as noted by Ailbhe Murphy when she pointed out that 'one of the dangers with this area of work is that the relationships, the intricacies and day-to-day dramas take over…It's so important to keep an eye to the field itself. Essential if you don't want to feel isolated' (cited in Whelan, 2014: 55).[18]

While researching this international field, the inter-organisational relationships in Rialto were also revealing themselves to me. The strong values and practices in Rialto reflected a 'politically coherent community' (Kester, 1995: 4). This was experienced through its micro-political economy made up of strong community development groups, most of which had been established in the 1980s and 90s as a response by the state to both structural issues and local context markers. This included a poverty crisis, drugs

epidemic and record unemployment figures for young people in Ireland, with the level of unemployment amongst Rialto youth disproportionately high. More specifically, since its establishment, RYP had built a strong capacity for arts-based work committed to the exploration and representation of social issues, and so the complex process of engaging with an artist was not orchestrated naively.[19] The organisation and community infrastructure was robust enough to avoid the artist's potentially paternalistic process, instead creating the ground for 'an equitable process of exchange and mutual education' (Kwon, 2004: 145) as the artist and community could learn from each other in a reciprocal process.

However as Kwon points out, the danger of working with a pre-existing politically coherent community (as opposed to one created for the art project) is the 'singular definition of their collective identities' (2004: 145). This coherency makes a community potentially more susceptible to the artist's appropriation 'because of the easy correspondence between their identity and particular social issues' (ibid.), through a 'quasi-ethnographic co-optation of subjects' (Downey, 2009: 602). In Rialto, with so many of the organisations framed through the state's language of poverty and disadvantage, there was always the danger of singular reductive definitions of community participants manifesting. The specific values of RYP within the national field of youth work, represented in their defiant use of the term 'oppressed' in their framing of local communities, are of crucial importance here.

While youth work has evolved over decades, its practice can typically be described as 'a voluntary and non-formal education process taking place in an informal setting' (Devlin and Gunning, 2009: 5). In the 1980s and '90s, the field of youth work was being steered

by a policy framework that now seems broadly progressive, when compared to more recent policy initiatives.[20] Yet looking back at that period, it is notable that there was very minimal focus on inequality, and insofar as the issue of inequality was broached, it was linked to individual and familial influence rather than structural inequality (Devlin, 2014). This is further supported by the use of the depoliticised term 'disadvantaged' in the language of the state at this time, abdicating responsibility for the marginalisation of working class communities (ibid.).

Although current youth work policy identifies equality as a principle and adheres to equality legislation, since the financial crisis of 2008 the Youth Work sector in Ireland has become increasingly centralised and controlled by the State (DCYA, 2014). While much important developmental work occurs with young people, this increasingly conservative sector (with notable exceptions, of which RYP is one) often fails to challenge the underlying problem of inequality. A case in point is the theme of power, which hasn't featured in youth work policy documents over the past thirty years, nor is it is typically reflected in practice as a focus of discussion amongst youth workers and young people nationally (Devlin, 2014). At an event organised on the occasion of the launch of *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014)*,* Lynch (2014) described this trend as a 'charity model of social justice deep rooted in Ireland, based on the institutionalisation of unequal relationships' (2014).

The historical ontology of my practice, which informs my engagement with RYP, might thus be figured as a dialogue between legacies of the community arts movement, developments in youth work practice, and contemporary critical practice and discourses circulating within the field of socially engaged practice, specifically as these relate to

power. Jim Lawlor's leadership of RYP created an appetite for conversations about power at all levels, largely contributing to the duration and constant rejuvenation of the collaborative practice I sustained with the organisation. However, the subsequent twelve-year residency in RYP overlapped with the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, which in the Irish case has played out through the privatisation of many public services, including some community services in Dublin.[21] While RYP remains a state funded organisation, it has not been spared the managerial instruments of neoliberalism, which became increasingly visible after a number of years of my engagement there, and are now embedded and evident through the increased administrative work, data collection and required attention to demonstrable and prescribed learning necessary for maintaining funding.[22]

The global crisis of this period has also had an effect on the field of contemporary art and the prevalence of the educational turn in the 1990s (Lee Podesva, 2007; O'Neill and Wilson, 2010). This can be witnessed though the proliferation of pedagogical art experiments internationally, a trend facilitated by the surplus of precarious 'knowledge workers' affected by the crisis (Sholette, 2016: 339). Practices that for decades existed on the periphery, largely framed within community arts and greeted with suspicion or total indifference by the mainstream art world, are positively 'embraced today by a degree of institutional legitimacy' (Sholette, 2015: 97).[23] Sholette highlights with caution the timing of this institutional recognition, which coincides with the ongoing process of neoliberalisation, noting the 'paradoxical ascent of social practice art in a socially bankrupt world' (ibid.: 98).[24]

These historic and contemporary global and national tendencies across multiple intersecting fields of knowledge, have influenced the constitution of subject positionalities and power relations present in my collaborative practice with RYP and the critical tensions to be attuned to. Attending to the overlapping sets of micro-, meta- and macro-power relations throughout the private and public stages of my practice is therefore of central importance, while simultaneously striving to build collective subjectivities and solidarities from which to make public works. This combined approach has given rise to an emergent methodological framework, which I now discuss.

An Emergent Methodological Framework to Engage with and Visualise Power Relations

After three years in residence with RYP, and in response to the dominant youth arts development model, or what Kester (1999/2000) (from James Clifford) describes as the '"salvage" paradigm in which the artist takes on the task of "improving" the implicitly flawed subject' (section III - 3, para. 1), a new experimental collective of artist, youth workers and young people was established in 2007.[25] Calling itself What's the Story?, this new Collective (2007-11) was proposed as a horizontal space to explore the theme of power. As Beech highlights, '[p]articipation always involves a specific invitation and a specific formation of the participant's subjectivity' (2016: para. 6). In view of what has been outlined above concerning the context in which we were collaborating, any 'removal of subject identities presented a risk of suggesting some kind of neutralised equality that would flatten the cultural hierarchy we were working to overcome, a dangerous move towards a model of social "inclusion"' (Whelan and Ryan, 2016: section 1.1, para. 8). This is comparable to what Patti Lather describes as the 'liberal embrace of empathy that reduces otherness to sameness' (2009: 19). Rather, the

invitation into this Collective acknowledged the triangulation of subject positions central to much of the creative practice in RYP (youthworker, artist and young people), and proposed a critical engagement with this typically hierarchical relationship.

Fig. 1.4. Fiona Whelan and youth workers from Rialto Youth Project, in conversation. Drawing by Orla Whelan (2013) commissioned for *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014). © Orla Whelan.

In order to test interest amongst RYP staff for the new Collective, a series of Friday afternoon discursive sessions had been arranged with the team of youth workers (Fig. 1.4), examining collaborative process we had developed to date, specifically as it pertained to the roles of youth workers and young people in the triangular working

relationship. While youth workers had established a role as a supporter to young people in partnership with an artist, allowing for more equitable collaboration, I wondered whether it was possible for the youth workers themselves to collaborate with young people, to bring their own influence to the projects beyond any young person's involvement.[26] Youth worker Gillian O Connor described the struggle she felt inserting more of her own socio-political concerns into a collaborative process with young people at that time:

> I would like to effect change, bigger than just the individual or bigger than just Rialto. I think we've a lot to say and I think as youth workers we understand a lot about what goes on and we have ideas, but it all gets stuck in here. It all gets stuck washing around this building or gets stuck in the areas we work and it doesn't go beyond that, and I get frustrated by that sometimes, with myself because I don't bring it and I think we become so totally focused on the individual [young person] and the micro, and the bigger stuff just gets lost altogether.
>
> <div align="right">(cited in Whelan, 2014: 73)</div>

This gave me pause to reflect on a number of questions: 'Had the youth worker become the mediator for the malleable young people against the power of the artist? Had that been the only approach possible to promote a fair engagement', that is, in light of the historical ontology and subsequent power relations that underpinned the practice? 'Was it realistic to imagine a new collective approach, where all three parties would work together in a more horizontal way and where youth workers could themselves contribute as individuals?' (Whelan, 2014: 70).

In March 2008, What's the Story? Collective was established. Committed to entering a creative process where a new form of triangulated collaboration would be attempted, we

adopted the metaphor of the triangle which was visualised and symbolically laid flat, emphasising our different subject positions while reflecting our commitment to a horizontal process. One Tuesday afternoon, the Collective met for our sixth meeting as artist, youth workers and young people. The meeting was in the portacabins in Fatima, nestled in the shadows of the decanted flat complex, temporarily constructed as a community space during regeneration. I borrowed one of the youth worker's keys and arriving first, I entered the youth project's container and began to set up the chairs for the Collective.

As described in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation*, two young men were next to arrive. As they sat down, I shared a question which I had been considering in relation to our new triangular collaborative structure: 'Who had the most power: artist, youth workers, or young people?' (Whelan, 2014: 75). An invitation letter into the Collective had signalled a commitment to equality as a tenet of the new shared practice, but having subsequently heard young people firmly positioning all members of the group as equal had unsettled me. The process did not aspire to the ideals of social inclusion, disregarding systemic inequalities that affected each of our lives differently. Instead it aimed to offer 'a more honest description of the power relations within the project' (Kearns, 2017: 39). Attending to our own power relations was a central operating philosophy in the pursuit of a horizontal collaborative platform.

The two young men enthusiastically engaged in conversation, joined by others who entered the room. It seemed to be an unusual but welcomed conversation for young people, to be invited to consider who had the most power in a given room. My leadership position was recognised in the process, as were my art skills and my position

of privilege. Youth workers' organisational power was also highlighted by young people, who noted that youth workers held keys to spaces we would work in, had access to cash to support the project and had much experience in leading and developing processes. However, the two youth workers Gillian and Nichola explained to the young members of the Collective that this was an experimental space and differed from a typical youth work process, in that the youth workers had responded to the same invitation and so could leave if they so chose. Young people considered this response with much interest and discussion, until one young man interjected stating: 'but you wouldn't leave', understanding the youth workers' duty of care in relation to young people. Other young people also recognised this:

> We do what we want in here. You have to think, 'Is it the right thing or the wrong thing?' We just get up and leave if we want. We just do more spur of the moment things, youse wouldn't. You are more mature, not that we are not mature but we're probably not as mature as you. Youse would prepare yourselves.
>
> (Anonymous cited in Whelan, 2014: 75)

> I think we have the power in some way, because you know the way we can turn around and say to you 'Fuck off', you know like that, but you can't say stuff like that to us.
>
> (Anonymous cited in ibid.: 76)

Young people had started the conversation by describing the power held by the adults in the room but now they had begun to identify their own agency within the specific construct of this project and the organisation, whose existence relied upon their engagement:

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Without us you wouldn't have a job…If we didn't choose to come here, youse wouldn't be here. In this group I think we are equal, but overall I think we have the power, because if we didn't come, if there was no kids coming to your group, what would you do?

(Anonymous cited in ibid.)[27]

In recognition of the aforementioned historical ontology of my relationship with RYP and the colonising potential of notions of social inclusion, the Collective's attention to power relations amongst collaborators, and our shared willingness to engage in complex and uncomfortable conversations, created the groundwork for an emergent ethics of engagement. This engagement speaks to the practice of agonistic dialogue, drawing on Chantal Mouffe's (2005; 2012) theories of agonistic democracy in which consensus is not a priority, as described in *Freedom?*:

Related to the more familiar notion of *agonising*, the overarching objective of an agonistic approach to concerted action is to keep the process of contestation alive, so that power relations cannot sediment so deeply in social consciousness that we lose sight of the fact that who we are, what we are, is fundamentally contingent.

(Two Fuse, 2018a: 75)

While RYP (and the wider organisational ecology of community work in Rialto), can be framed as a politically coherent community partner, the fractious triangulated agonistic space of What's the Story? Collective, was full of all the 'emergent fragilities of an evolving arts collaboration' (Murphy, 2013: 18), and can be seen as its own micro-community. Against the normative idealised vision of community (Young, 1986), we sought to hold on to a process of contestation, acknowledging the political in what Mouffe describes as 'its antagonistic dimension as well as the contingent nature of any type of social order' (2007: 1).

This importance of duration in the creation of such agonistic spaces is described in *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art,* highlighting the role of time in seeding democratic discussion, 'with the durational contributing to new forms of public space by allowing certain differences to develop in dialogue with others' (O'Neill and Doherty, 2011: 34). As Murphy writes, 'in the speculative relational network of an emerging arts collaboration time is the primary resource, the more of it you have the better' (2013:18).[28] My immersion in RYP for a long-term residency could support the time needed for open-ended critical relationships to develop. However, investing my time was not an adequate deed in itself, as Beech outlines:

> If we are going to think politically about art, site, publics and time, we need to put the ideology of duration behind us. We have to stop keeping tabs on *our own use of time*. Let's think instead about delay, interruption, stages, flows, of instantaneous performances and lingering documents, of temporary objects and permanent mementos, of repetition, echo and seriality.
>
> (2011: 325)

As Murphy suggests, Beech's 'prompting towards breaks and flows, delays and interruptions echoes the contingent nature of the complex organisational co-operations generated within the alliances of durational practice' (2013:16). Constant ruptures and tensions were experienced within the Collective as we tried to sustain an agonistic space, while recognising the contingency and the fragility of the Collective as a whole.

Youth workers renegotiated their working relationships with young people in the Collective to be less hierarchical – a process described by youth worker Gillian O Connor as an 'internal tug of war' (cited in Whelan, 2014: 78), balancing a duty of care for a young person with her own personal desires to engage in the Collective. Through

the process, my own privileged position of artist received much scrutiny; I subsequently developed an increased awareness of the invisible nature of an artist's power of representation (as against a youth worker, teacher or researcher's visible position of organisational/institutional power). However, while the horizontal structure better enabled young people to challenge the artist and youth workers, some young people felt intimidated by the lack of a youth worker's usual position of authority in the space, as one young man – Jamie Hendrick – retrospectively described in 2011:

> I wasn't able to challenge my own peers. That was my biggest struggle through the group and I left the group everyday thinking, should I just walk out now and not come back? But at the same time I was thinking, well, I want to do the next project. It sounds exciting and I want to be involved in it.
>
> (cited in Whelan, 2014: 78)

While struggling with power relations amongst peers, the exploration of subject positions in the triangle also led to an increased understanding of young people's classification by the state as 'disadvantaged' and the role and funding status of RYP in relation to that categorisation, causing much upset, as the less tangible power of language was exposed and tensioned.[29] The exploration was revealing the micro-, meta- and macro-political economies of practice, producing a critical tension vital in an agonistic space, as it 'foments dissensus' and 'makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate' (Mouffe, 2007: 4).

When considering this methodological approach through the lens of youth work, our practice could be classified within the 'critical social education model of youth work' which is located in a radical humanist paradigm, 'defined by its concern to develop a sociology of radical change from a subjectivist standpoint' (Burrell and Morgan 1979,

cited in Hurley and Treacy, 1993: 32).[30] The main aim of this model is to find ways that individuals can be freed from the ideological superstructures and structural oppression of capitalism to resist and create a more critically aware understanding of their situation, that is, through a process of conscientisation (ibid.). Rooted in critical pedagogy, this model operates 'in the interest of both individual freedom and social reconstruction' (Giroux 1981, cited in Hurley and Treacy, 1993: 36). Here, processes of conscientisation (where a person's critical consciousness is raised along with an increased awareness of social inequality) become a pre-revolutionary act, interrupting a culture of silence and paving the way for a process of action in the pursuit of social change, categorised as a 'dialogical cultural action' (Freire, 1982: 139).

The raising of critical consciousness (in addition to the dialogical cultural action that would follow) was undoubtedly a feature of the practice of What's the Story? Collective, but importantly, the first process of conscientisation occurred here in relation to the micro-political structure of the intersecting fields of practice. Significantly this process was reciprocal, taking place for artist and youth workers as well as young people, thus transcending the critical social model of youth work as it is applied and operationalised. This holds the youth worker in a position of power, whose job thus becomes a matter of 'transferring power' (Hurley and Treacy, 1993: 42) by engaging young people as 'partners', thereby becoming their enabler in a consciousness-raising process without any expectation of reciprocity.

As heightened consciousness was occurring for individuals, so the Collective worked to respond and act on what was being learned. Mary Parker Follett stresses that many processes in our time exaggerate the importance of 'transferring' power as 'the panacea

for all our ills' but actually 'our task is not to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power' as '[g]enuine power can only be grown' (1924: introduction, para. 6). This stage of the Collective's formation can be retrospectively seen as a process of growing power.

This process also speaks to Participatory Action Research (PAR) – a qualitative research methodology that emerges from some of the same humanist origins (critical pedagogy, popular education) that are considered to be foundational to the critical social model of youth work and the educational turn in contemporary art (see O'Neill and Wilson, 2010; Sholette, 2016). In PAR, practitioners ensure that participation, action and research are operating concurrently in a process, so action and research are done with people and not on/for people (Reason and Bradbury, 2008). PAR can be distinguished from other more traditional forms of research through its pursuit of a 'critical epistemology that redefines knowledge as actions in pursuit of social justice' (Cammarota and Fine, 2008: 6).

The language of *participation* in PAR constitutes a process more akin to *collaboration* within the field of socially engaged art, and here it is worth noting that there has been sustained critique of the instrumentalised and scripted forms of *participation* in art processes (Kester, 2004; Bishop, 2012). As collaboration in art practice sees those engaged, being integral and full members of a shared process, similarly PAR typically uses the language of 'partners' as opposed to 'subjects' and sees 'communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers' (Reason and Bradbury, 2008: 1). Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) has particular resonance for my practice as it sets out to

educate young people about the systemic conditions of inequality and injustice and how they can be challenged. Much like in my own practice, in YPAR, 'young people and adult allies experience the vitality of a multi-generational collective analysis of power' (Cammarota and Fine, 2008: 2). YPAR processes therefore are also structured around a collective and cyclical form of critical research that can lead to a resistance against the oppressive forces that impede a young person's liberation. The key distinguishing feature of YPAR is that it is 'explicitly pedagogical' (ibid.: 6) building on Freire's concept of praxis – a process of critical reflection and action that has much resonance in collaborative and socially engaged arts practice.

However, as with many socially engaged art practices with youth, the position of the researcher in PAR is still one of hierarchical power where s/he creates the parameters in which to invite others to partner and co-research.[31] While this hierarchical structure is reflected in the structure of my relationship to RYP, the indeterminate nature of our collaborative art process as opposed to an entirely educational process (critical social model of youth work) or research process (PAR), singles out the practice of What's the Story? Collective from PAR or YPAR, aligning it to Van Heeswijk's proposition for indeterminate, open-ended invitations as she urges artists to 'start with being in the room. Let's start to unpack our privileges. Let's start to unpack our relationality. Let's start to unpack our histories and then look where forms of commonality can be borne or made' (Van Heeswijk, 2018).

As What's the Story? Collective positioned equality as a point of departure, rather than a destination of the process (Rancière, 1987: xix), and also set about attending to that commitment from our own subject positions (as artist, youth workers and young people)

and relationality, we gave the Collective wider scope to fail and for dissensus to emerge. Week in and week out, meeting as a collective to discuss our own power relations, there were arguments, moments of chaos, attempts to share power, transfer power, with youth workers being verbally abused by some young people who wanted to perform this new power they had been invited to use, leading to unproductive sessions often ending in someone leaving. Gradually, over time, the Collective settled as a core group of nine individuals, where sets of differences developed in dialogue with others.[32]

Visualising the triangulated relational structure at the core of this collaboration, had given rise to a process of constant negotiation with regard to subjectivity, power relations and ethical dilemmas far more complex than the original three defined subject positions. The Collective became more attentive to the fluctuating nature of power and the multi-layered contingency of our power relations as a group of individual people. Having first used the triangle as a metaphor to visualise power, we recognised the methodological potential of the triangle, in making visible other sets of power relations and engaging in further agonistic spaces with a multiplicity of publics, in what could be described as an exercise in 'political imagination' (Wilson, 2018a: 32).

Collaboration as an Exercise in Political Imagination

Political imaginaries have been described as 'symbolic forces and processes of meaning-making effecting (not exclusively or determinatively) the conditions of possibility for political action and reciprocally effected by political action in the world' (ibid.: 37).[33] Recognising the embedded nature of the relationality within practices that are lived collectively, coupled with their generative, open-ended nature where futures

are not foreclosed, Wilson identifies certain registers of contemporary collaborative arts practice as '*applied experiments in political imagination*' (ibid.:32):

> This is not the playful speculative imagination that has no obligations to the world. This is the concrete lived imagination that attempts to operate in the world with all the messiness that happens when people come together to do something.
>
> (Wilson, 2018b)

This 'lived imagination' speaks to the 'practice of freedom' as outlined in *Freedom?* (Two Fuse, 2018: 57-97). Here freedom is not positioned as an abstracted concept or normative ideal, but as a practice that can be achieved in degrees through concerted action. In the context of the neoliberal enterprise society (Foucault, 2008) that has come to condition our lives for example, there are very specific degrees of freedom available to us. We are free to consume in the market-driven society we live in. We are free to choose from multiple options served up as though on a menu, with the available options chosen for us rather than by us. We are also free to compete. In this context, common interest is seen negatively as a restraint on individual and private rights (Woods, 2018), such that cooperation and solidarity become a liability (Two Fuse, 2018a). We are also free to fail, as individuals, with each expected to take ownership of their own misfortune – a proposition aligned with the deficit language of 'disadvantage' discussed previously. However, we are also free to reimagine freedom, considering what it is 'that motivates people to act and struggle in the name of freedom' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 2). Here we are forced to pay attention to the substance of freedom as a collective lived practice (ibid.). In the case of What's the Story? Collective, this freedom was lived and practised in the messy collaborative space in which subjectivities and power relationships with multiple publics were re-imagined through cumulative events.

Over the following two years (2008-2010) of What's the Story? Collective's collaborative practice, the metaphor of the triangle was visualised and performed, as other triangulations were developed through multiple public events, seeing subject positions re-imagined and reconfigured, and new relationships and subjectivities emerging. After months of intense private negotiation operating from within the space of the Collective, we hosted our first participatory reading event *Anonymous: Reading, Narrative and Memory* (2008), in which the Collective sat apart on our respective sides of a triangle, making publicly visible our subject positions as young people, youth workers and artist for the first time.[34] For the performed readings we were joined in a triangular seating plan, by a participating audience made up of our specific peers – the young people in the Collective were joined by other invited young people, the youth workers sat surrounded by individuals working in the community sector or critically engaged with it through their research, and I was positioned with fellow artists and professionals working in the arts. This triangulation amplified these publics' contingent positions in the field of collaborative arts practice (Fig. 1.5). However, midway through the event, in a commitment to our collective subjectivity, we reunited on one side of the triangle as co-authors of the event, thereby reframing our subjective identities as collective, and positioning all others intermingled in the space, as our publics.

Fig.1.5. *Anonymous; Reading, Narrative and Memory.* What's the Story? Collective, Rialto, 2008. Video stills by Enda O'Brien. Collaged by Fiona Whelan. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

Fig. 1.6. *The Day in Question.* What's the Story? Collective, IMMA, 2009. Video still by Enda O'Brien. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

In the subsequent *The Day in Question* (2009), the diverse internal composition of the Collective remained united on one side of a new triangle, sitting opposite members of An Garda Síochána on the second side, and with a group of invited 'witnesses' on the third side (Fig. 1.6). This dialogical experience was later described by one young man as 'a fantasy' (May, 2011: 13); the political imaginary invoked in this triangulation

referenced another set of contingent and highly antagonistic power relations related to the policing of youth in working class urban contexts.[35] However on this occasion, another young member of the Collective, Jonathan Myers, chose to sit amongst the witnesses, so as not to be visualised as part of the Collective during a tense interaction with police. Over a year later, having continued on a reflective process exploring his individual positionality and wider class politics, Jonathan would become a key collaborator in the development of the highly public *Policing Dialogues* (2010) exhibition, during which he confidently articulated to publics and media his opinions on the societal power structures that shape young people's lives.[36]

Fig. 1.7. Five members of What's the Story? Collective in a public conversation with Vagabond Reviews during *Policing Dialogues*, The LAB, Oct 2010. Photograph by Irene O' Donoghue. © Rialto Youth Project © Rialto Youth Project.

Fig. 1.8. Invitation for *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, 2010. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

At a public talk during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), seated alongside members of the Collective, Jonathan spoke critically about his position as a 'young person' in the triangle, publicly challenging the lack of status attached to that position when compared to that of youth worker or artist (Fig. 1.7), which had been highlighted in some of the media responses to the Collective's work. The exhibition itself, as with previous manifestations, was authored collectively 'by What's the Story? Collective' (Fig. 1.8), unlike the dominant form of authoring contemporary artwork made with youth, where the artist's signature is typically emphasised. However, when encountering publics in the specific context of a contemporary art gallery, the work was at times viewed through various discipline-specific lenses, as it became subjected to socially 'scripted interpretations' (Whelan and Ryan, 2016: section 1.2, para.10).

As the positions of youth worker and artist in the Collective emphasised *what* we were rather than *who* we were, these roles were publicly affirmed, with some of the media coverage perceiving a hierarchy of positions when engaging the work in contemporary art spaces, namely the status of me as the artist within the Collective (Two Fuse, 2018a). On occasion, the young members of the triangulated Collective had been subsequently '"read" through the lens of socially-scripted categories derived from the fields of public policy (youth-at-risk), social science (subjects), and art (participation)' (Whelan and Ryan, 2016: section 1.2, para. 10), and thereby given a reduced authorial status, an example of which I described in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation*:

> Seeking to present our work in contrast to what we knew to be a dominant reading of Garda-young people relations, we responded to an invitation to be part of a live radio discussion on Newstalk's 'CultureShock'. I remember arriving with Micka and Nichola M. at the radio station's offices in town for what was to be most tense of the media encounters. It was late evening as the security guard asked us to sign in and directed us to the lift. We took our seats in a waiting area and slugged many plastic cups of water from the buzzing machine to moisten dry mouths. The presenter met us and we took our seats at large, spongy mics opposite him. Three, two, one and the music started with rapper KRS-One: 'Woop woop, it's the sound of da police', followed by an introduction to the project which immediately labelled me as the curator of the exhibition and Micka as one of its subjects, a frame that very quickly made us uneasy. Answering the questions as they came at us with varying degrees of nerves, we worked to recall our media training and not get pulled too far off course. However, when the public's calls and texts began to come in, mainly categorising the young people who had told stories in a negative way, I could feel my anger and frustration rising and recall naming the elephant in the room, the issue of class that quite clearly underlined many of the public positions taken. It is a subject rarely talked about publicly in our country. On hearing us talk about the work on a later occasion, John Bissett questioned me on whether *class* would have served as a better frame than *power* for the overall project,

recognising how invisible it is as a theme within the arts. There is logic in this argument and more explicit consideration of class might have been worthwhile and necessary, but starting with the theme of power had allowed us entry into the debate without any predetermined focus and the subject of policing had naturally emerged, taking us right to the heart of a class debate.

(Whelan, 2014: 201-2)

In practice, and as a result of the process and its multiple dialogical manifestations, initial subject positions represented by the points of the triangle had been transcended as we collectively developed all aspects of *Policing Dialogues* (2010). The process came to respect each collaborator as an incalculable subject (Lather, 2015) engaged in a relational and affective process, with shifting and emergent subjectivities. Mouffe highlights the importance of such a process in the face of neoliberal hegemony:

Today artists cannot pretend any more to constitute an avant-garde offering a radical critique, but this is not a reason to proclaim that their political role has ended. They still can play an important role in the hegemonic struggle by subverting the dominant hegemony and by contributing to the construction of new subjectivities.

(2007: 5)

In response to a series of scripted interpretations during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), the Collective would ultimately come to recognise the now inhibiting nature of our triangulation of original subject positions, when framing our collaborative process in the public domain. The external interpretations experienced during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), highlighted how the Collective was now in tension with its own conditions of existence and the disciplinary boundaries of the field.[37] This was evidenced in a public discussion (October, 2010) where the possibility of shedding these scripted categories

was posed and later discussed in depth, leading to the final group decision to dismantle the Collective.[38] The possibility of reforming differently at a later date was discussed and still remains possible due to my durational commitment and 'repetitive insertion' (Van Heeswijk, 2018) in Rialto Youth Project.

Towards a Relational Ontology
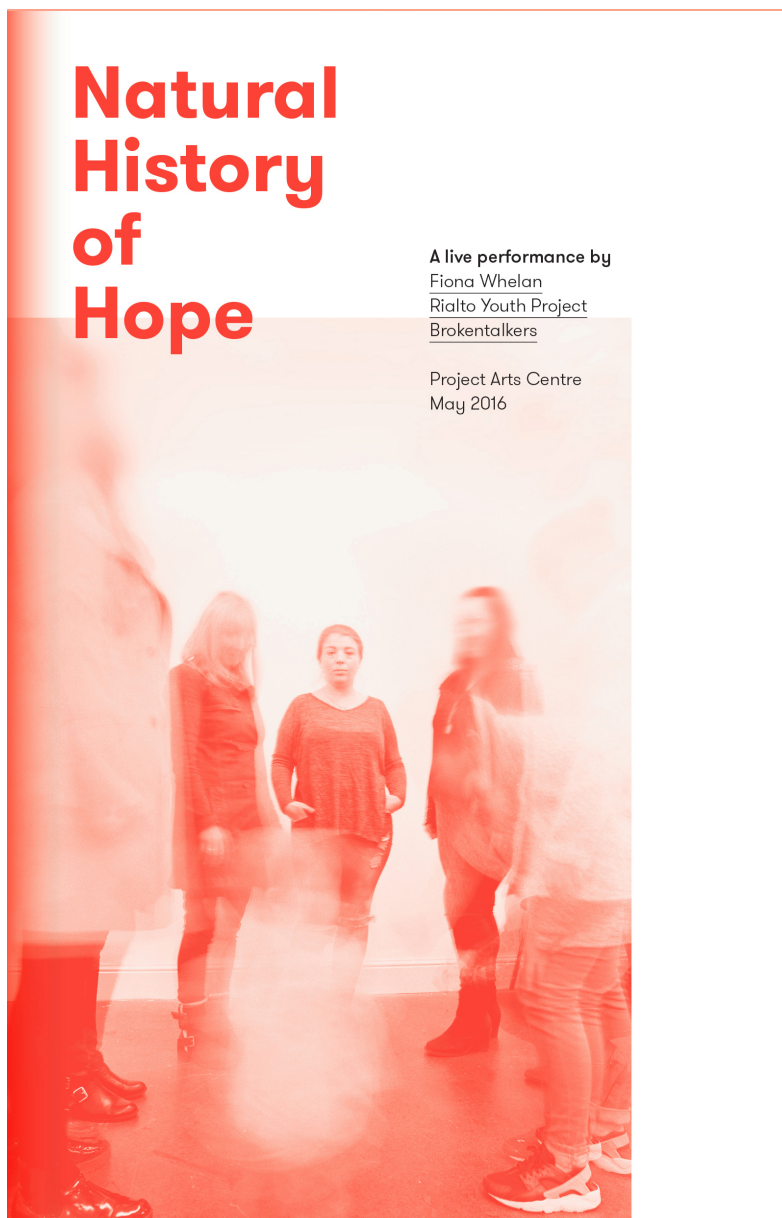
Fig. 1.9. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. Programme design by Unthink. © Chris Maguire.

This chapter ends where it began as I return to *Natural History of Hope* (2016), which took place some years after *Policing Dialogues* (2010), and was authored differently to the work of the Collective. The printed programme that accompanied the theatre performance presented a way of crediting each individual role while respecting the anonymity of all those who contributed content (see Appendix IV). As a cast of actors on stage, united as women, we didn't distinguish between or highlight any subject positions, which marked an interesting progression from What's the Story? Caught in the tension of authorship and responsibility, we decided to acknowledge that the combined practices of a number of collaborators shaped all aspects of the overall performance, ultimately authoring the performance as a collaboration between 'Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers' (Fig. 1.9). We thus opted to avoid classifying roles such as writer, director and producer, which have their own hierarchical weight in theatre practice, instead adopting a more complex description. As noted in the programme:

> Due to its origins and the values of collaboration that underpin it, the collective makers refuse any simplification of roles and identities. No contributor can be reduced to one role. There is no single 'writer', no 'director', no 'researchers' and there are no 'participants'. The lead artist and coordination team of RYP staff shared stories like everyone else and also take to the stage as cast members. We are at once women, subjects, mothers, thinkers, writers and performers. We recognise our diversity of knowledge and skills and have created a hybrid practice in the murky in-between space of collaboration.
>
> (*Natural History of Hope* programme, 2016)

This presentation of a hybrid space that cannot be reduced to specific roles, was an attempt to challenge the dominant currency of socially engaged practice, which often sees the artist as professional, separate from the 'other', with collaboration reduced to a

rational conscientisation process akin to the humanist paradigm.[39] While the practice at the core of both projects brought about an increased conscientisation among its members, related to subject positionalities and their related language, privilege and genealogies, the practice could also be seen as a space of 'intra-active relational entanglements' (Lather, 2015) interrupting both radical constructivism (from humanism) and the belief in independent existence (Barad, 2003). A process beyond rationality could also be seen to be taking place within the triangulated collaboration, uncontained, often unconscious, tangled, relational and agonistic, which became the temporary force, holding together the Collective in its process. Here in the murky in-between spaces of the durational collaborative processes, the post-humanist concept of relational ontology is experienced (Barad, 2003; Lather, 2015).

In his account of relational ontology, Wesley J. Wildman suggests that 'the relations between entities are ontologically more fundamental than the entities themselves' (2006: 1). During a 2016 learning network (see Appendix V), Martina Carroll described the form of leadership that she witnessed in our relational processes, as different from that where a group gather around a leader.[40] She noted that in our process, individual points of view were presented but a collective power emerged through the processes. In her view, it appeared that both the individual and their relations were primary. In practice I believe we equally valued the individual points of the triangle and the hybrid space in the centre, while they challenged each other, creating a more complex set of contingent power relations.

At the same 2016 learning network, members of What's the Story? Collective and the coordination team of the subsequent *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16) project formed

one side of another new triangle, positioned collectively as authors from over a decade of collaborative work. In this triangulation, we were seated opposite practitioners who had supported our processes formally or informally, and a group of academics who had engaged critically from outside the various processes (Fig. 1.10). Seven years after his decision to sit apart from the Collective during the first encounter with police, Jonathan, no longer a youth, now spoke with authority to another set of publics, from the position of experience, posing challenges to ambitions for social change through arts projects. Ryan later described how his most vivid impression of being part of this triangulation was its diversity, noting that '[i]t's one of the weaknesses of academic conferences that they are normally populated by only one side of your triangle'.[41]

Fig. 1.10. Learning Network. Organised by Fiona Whelan, F2 neighbourhood centre, 2016. © Aislinn Delaney.

Wildman describes how relational ontology is activated in 'imagination-forming traditions' (2006: 3). In this relational matrix, agency cannot be seen as something that one possesses, rather as Karen Barad describes, 'agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements' (cited in Dolphijn R. and Van der Tuin, I., 2009: para. 12). In a post-humanist paradigm, agency extends the realm of choice by an individual agent, and becomes about the 'possibilities for worldly re-configurings' (ibid., para. 14).

These worldly re-configurings can be seen as '[e]mphatically resisting the pre-determination of outcomes' (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 18) – a feature of practices positioned within the educational turn in contemporary art. They exist in opposition to a means-end rationality, instead creating 'new social forms, so that means and ends, struggle and goal, are blended together through *doing'* (Two Fuse, 2018a: 93). Privileging the processual and the emergent, such processes speak of a future potential which can only be imagined (see O'Neill and Wilson, 2010).

In this chapter I have highlighted how over a decade of collaboration and through two durational projects, a unique methodological framework was developed to question and interrogate the hierarchical power relationships which underpin the field of community-based arts practice and the micro- and macro-political context of those engaging in the practice. I have outlined how and in what ways a methodological framework was developed to question and interrogate the hierarchical power relationships, which underpin a collaborative art practice with young people, a community organisation and its staff. I have demonstrated how paying critical attention to ascribed subject positionalities and their historical ontology, while committing to equality as a starting

point of practice, opens out the possibility of reconfiguring power relationships, thereby paving the way for new collective subjects to emerge in spaces of agonistic dialogue. These spaces become a lived practice of shared freedom, co-producing a form of relational power through collaboration.

Notes

[1] This phrasing was used to advertise *Natural History of Hope*, by Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers, Project Arts Centre, 2016.

[2] While starting out as a group of eight, the coordination group for the latter more public phase of *Natural History of Hope* included myself as artist and five Rialto Youth Project staff members: Gillian O Connor, youth worker; Nichola Mooney, youth worker and team leader; Dannielle McKenna, Dolphin House Homework Club worker and team leader; Sharon Cooney, Fatima Homework Club worker and Michelle Dunne, Fatima Homework Club worker.

[3] The bringing together of experiential knowledge and professional knowledge can be seen as closing the gap between *bios* and *logos* (between what one thinks and what one says, between what one says and how one lives), comparable to Michel Foucault's (2011a) [1984] description of the practice of the Cynics of ancient Greece. While in other forms of speaking truth such as rhetoric, there's no necessary correspondence between logos and bios, the ethical labour or *askēsis* of the Cynics closes this gap, putting it into practice everywhere and anywhere (Two Fuse, 2018b).

[4] This included the *Listenings Series* (Various locations, Rialto, 2012-13) – a series of dialogical and performative encounters where women's anonymous stories were shared through spoken word, with audiences of other women, and *New School for Girls* (Studio 468, 2015) – a temporary school engaging 16 females from four generations, with no teachers and no curriculum. Taking power, solidarity and personal truth as the three values of the school, the intention was to unite across difference, examine and grow power and self-direct our own schooling based on each person's own truth.

[5] In his publication *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Gregory Sholette refers to Stevphen Shukaitis' analysis of the 2011-12 wave of global risings in public squares as 'heralding the formation of a New Left constituency that drew upon such Situationist tactics as psychogeography, *detournement* and *derive* to create "the time and space for the emergence of new forms of collective subjects, rather than a politics formed around already given demands"' (2017: 26).

[6] The character of Hope emerged from the collective process between collaborators. The physical mannequin was constructed by Ger Clancy, with costume design by MAGS (Gemma McKenna, Maureen O'Dwyer, Áine Dempsey and artist Sadhbh Lawlor).

[7] *Natural History of Hope* was staged in May 2016 and so coincidentally occurred during the *Waking the Feminists* year-long campaign which spoke out for women in theatre, borne in response to the announcement of the Abbey theatre's *Waking the Nation* programme, marking the centenary of the 1916 rising, which had a visible lack of women programmed. In her review of *Natural History of Hope* (2016) for the *Irish Times*, Sara Keating references a comment made by community activist Kathleen O'Neill during the inaugural meeting of *Waking the Feminists* in November 2015 where she spoke of the importance of recognising the diversity of women's experience, encouraging those in attendance to engage with marginalised women living in the inner city, stating that 'feminism is not homogenous'. In that context Keating described our performance as 'a welcome alternative perspective of women's lives' (*Irish Times,* 28 June 2016).

[8] This particular scene from the *Natural History of Hope* (2016) performance specifically references the cast from a performance called *Inside Out* produced in the mid-90s by RYP exploring the prison system. See <http://rialtoyouthproject.net/inside-out> [Accessed 29 November 2017)]. Some of the cast from this performance were now part of the *Natural History of Hope* cast, approximately 20 years later, acknowledging and paying tribute to their deceased friends. This act is discussed in more depth in *Freedom?* (2018: 85-6).

[9] Philbin Bowman, A., personal email (23 May 2016).

[10] Hacking goes on to say:

> When Foucault wrote of power, he did not usually have in mind the power exerted upon us by a discernible agent or authority or system. It is rather we who participate in anonymous, unowned arrangements that he called power … It is as much our own power as that of anyone else that

preoccupied him: 'power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others', not ourselves as passive victim.

(Hacking, 2002: 2)

[11] The first dialogue between myself and Ryan was later edited and published (see 'Beating the Bounds of Socially-Engaged Art? A Transdisciplinary Dialogue on a Collaborative Art Project with Youth in Dublin, Ireland'). As *Natural History of Hope* (2016) was emerging around the same time, myself and Ryan continued to engage in dialogue, subsequently deciding to create a formalise our relationship and create a collaborative platform Two Fuse, from which we have since published *Freedom?* (2018).

[12] The multiple genealogies of socially engaged art are documented in Bishop C. (2012), *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* and Kester, G. (2011) *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context.*

[13] This is further elaborated on here:

The community arts sector was a key player in this process of discursive formation in that it began to shoulder the task of administering what might be described as 'communities of predicament', such as single-parents, the long-term unemployed, and young people 'at risk' of offending or becoming habituated in alcohol and substance abuse. It would henceforth become more difficult to engage in a politics of contestation because the very language of domination – discrimination, exploitation, oppression – was outflanked by the new consensual register of inequality-as-disadvantage. Instituted as a lingua franca used by policy-makers, administrators and activists alike, this lexicon became a solvent that diluted the ideational underpinnings of social conflict, thereby also taming the unruly field of community art.

(Whelan and Ryan, 2016: note 23)

[14] *The Participation of Young People in the Arts in Ireland,* a proposed action plan of 2002 identifies three avenues through which young people commonly access opportunities to engage in arts processes, outside of formal education. These are through; 1. Dedicated youth arts organisations e.g. youth theatres, youth orchestras, youth dance groups, young film making groups, youth choirs; 2. Youth and community organisations offering arts experiences for young people as part of a broader spectrum of youth or community work provision; 3. Arts organisations offering programmes that target young people as part of a broader spectrum of arts provision - e.g. outreach/ education programmes, arts centres, local authority arts offices. The plan distinguishes the first avenue as committing 'to enabling the aesthetic formation of their members' while the second avenue, which speaks to the context in which I was positioned, sees the use of creative means as 'tools' to achieving the youth works goals of personal and social development of young persons. As I immersed myself in Rialto Youth Project in 2004, I rejected the language of youth arts for my practice with RYP and distanced myself from the singular focus of avenue two. In 2005, following a publication *Visual Arts in Youth Work* by CityArts and NCAD in which my practice was featured, I spoke openly about my preference for the framing of Visual Arts *and* Youth work and the transdisciplinary potential of attending to the development of all involved in a process, in ways that were both aesthetic and of social benefit.

[15] This trip was taken with RYP youth worker Cian O'Melia. Due to our ambition to develop the relationship between youth work and collaborative arts practice, bringing a youth worker on this trip was important. As the practice was immersed in a youth work context on a day-to-day basis, I wanted to invite a youth worker to travel to significant international collaborative arts projects and subsequently engage in critical reflection together.

[16] See <https://projectrowhouses.org> [Accessed 1 December 2018].

[17] 'Working in Public' is a partnership between On the Edge Research, a practice-led research programme developing critical thinking about the role of the artist in the public sphere and Public Art Resource+Research (PAR+RS). The 'Working in Public' seminar series was developed as a unique learning space and ran over four weekends of 2007/08 in Scotland, each with a specific focus. The seminar series centred on artist Suzanne Lacy's practice, specifically the decade long Oakland's Projects (1990-2000), which a range of external speakers invited to engage critically with the practice. The series also benefited hugely from the knowledge of a strong UK based team including Professor Anne Douglas from Gray's School of Art. See <https://ontheedgeresearch.org/working-in-public/> [Accessed 28

November 2018]. I reflect upon the series and its effects on my practice in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation (*2014: 58-60).

[18] Murphy, A., personal email (13 September 2006). Murphy sent this email in her capacity as my mentor. From 2005-2009, local arts development agency Common Ground (who were part of the management team for Studio 468) provided artist mentoring support for me. Mentors during this time included artists Ailbhe Murphy and Jay Koh. In 2009, the methods and learning from this process were documented in a national mentoring programme called Connect – a partnership between Common Ground and Create, the national development agency for collaborative arts. See <http://www.create-ireland.ie/connect-mentoring/connect-mentoring> [Accessed 1 June 2018].

[19] See <http://rialtoyouthproject.net> [Accessed 20 June 2017].

[20] National Youth Policy Committee, *Final Report* (1984), also known as the Costello Report after its chair Declan Costello, highlighted youth work's concern for social change.

[21] In 2015, the Department of Environment intervened in the operation of long running Government funded community programmes intended to tackle poverty and social exclusion, subjecting them to a public-procurement process developed under a new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) funding programme. This saw many community development organisations engage in a bidding processes with private or voluntary service providers. This move to privatise public organisations is consistent with Government practice at the time.

[22] From 2009-2014, Rialto Youth Project received funding from The Atlantic Philanthropies. As Kiely and Meade state:

> Philanthropic funding of youth, community, and voluntary sector activity has been less 'developed' in Ireland than in other European Union (EU) contexts or in the United States. Perhaps unsurprisingly, during Ireland's era of austerity, the government began to actively proselytize the benefits of enhanced private sector, philanthropic, and corporate funding for these fields (Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising, 2012). Of those philanthropic organisations in Ireland, The Atlantic Philanthropies became a particularly influential policy actor during the 2000s. One aspect of its work and mission was to provide grant aid to children and youth programs, funding which was contingent on the delivery of evidence of outcomes and effectiveness. Arguably, its example has provided an additional impetus for the government to enthusiastically pursue the evidence agenda. Consequently, we have witnessed the emergence of an expansive service infrastructure that offers the required supports to help organizations deliver desired outcomes for children and young people.
>
> <div align="right">(2018: 8)</div>

[23] Gregory Sholette (2015) credits this repositioning of socially engaged practice to a reduction in public funding for the arts, increased ephemerality of arts practice due to the lack of urban studio spaces, the emergence of Relational Aesthetics as a rehabilitated version of Community Arts and a multiplicity of other factors.

[24] In an interview with Sholette in 2017, I asked him about the current politics of the international movement of socially engaged art practice that is well and truly legitimised with associated funding streams, awards and educational programmes (which he and I both have a role in). In order to avoid 'the kind of legitimating assimilation that is typical of art world dissidents from Dada to some social practice artists' Sholette argued for a 'more radical agenda' (NCAD, Fire Station Artists' Studios and Create, 2017:11) that prevents the increased popularity of socially engaged art and activist art practices, to settle into a predictable pattern, where their politics are pacified (ibid.). As neoliberal capitalism is becoming unstable, part of this challenge posed by Sholette, is to 'rethink the institution, as well as the academy, and also even the art world itself' (ibid.:12).

[25] The project would continue for four years and would be followed in 2012 with a subsequent four-year project *Natural History of Hope* introduced in the introduction to this chapter.

[26] In *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 69-77), I reflect upon the multiple conversations with youth workers at this time, where we explored the potential for their role to change within the triangulated collaborative process.

[27] This description of the sixth meeting of What's the Story? Collective, is first used in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 74-76), but has been developed here.

[28] This differs from how time is measured in arts processes where the desired result is determined from the outset, later judged on the time taken to achieve goals. Murphy goes to highlight that:

> Interestingly, out the other side of the collaboration, the use of time, like money, comes under review. The degree to which one's collaborators can be seen to have participated, evident in the extent of collective ownership of the project, becomes a measure of how the time is judged to have been well used or squandered. Time becomes part of the measurement device.
>
> (2013:18)

[29] In *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014:140), I specifically explore one young person's increased sense of his own class position developed during the process, causing him to temporarily retreat from the project. This is further elaborated on in Whelan and Ryan (2016).

[30] Over my 12-year residency in Rialto Youth Project, I interacted with many students on placement from BA Youth and Community Work, Maynooth University. On many occasions, they would position my practice with RYP within the critical social education model of youth work, which they had learned about.

[31] This statement is not meant as a negative critique of PAR but is used for the purpose of highlighting its limitations.

[32] In the first year and a half of the Collective, it was comprised of one artist, two youth workers and nine young people. After our first public event in November 2008, three young people left the group resulting in the Collective being comprised of nine individuals who would co-author *The Day in Question* (2009) and *Policing Dialogues* (2010). Between the two events, youth worker Gillian O Connor took a year's leave from RYP. Around this time one volunteer youth leader Garrett Kenny joined the Collective. The rest of the Collective remained the same.

[33] Wilson credits the emergence of the term 'political imaginary' as well as 'social imaginary' to a range of philosophers, cultural historians and social/political theorists including: Cornelius Castoriadis, Benedict Anderson, Claude Lefort, Charles Taylor, Wendy Brown, Drucilla Cornell and Manfred B. Steger.

[34] *Anonymous; Reading, Narrative and Memory* (2008) was produced as part of my MA Art in Public at the University of Ulster and precedes the works presented in this thesis. In January 2009, the Collective then made its first short film *12 Anonymous Stories* based on a re-telling of the stories shared in this event, re-told to camera by actors. This film was later shown during *Policing Dialogues* (2010) as well as during *Fatima – A Cultural Archaeology* by Vagabond Reviews in NCAD gallery (May 2009) and in a mobile cinema and discussion space titled *Section 8* at sites in Galway and Belfast (Summer 2009). These two works pre-date the public works that are central to this thesis.

[35] For many young people living in urban working class areas, their experience of the state is highly antagonistic, their lives appearing subject to persistant scrutiny through their regular encounters with the police as they exist in public and private space (Mulcahy, 2011). In the past in Rialto, residents felt neglected by the government and An Garda Síochána and there were cultures of taking back control, both in active community participation (Corcoran, 1999), behaviours of vigilantism and strong community development models (Fatima Groups United, 2006).

[36] Jonathan spoke about the oppressive nature of the justice and education systems on *Tonight with Vincent Browne*, TV3, 28 September 2010 – a programme dedicated to *Policing Dialogues* (2010) and the issues it raised, which included pre-recorded interviews in the gallery followed by a panel discussion with an invited audience.

[37] See Whelan (2014) and Whelan and Ryan (2016), for further discussion.

[38] In Spring 2011, What's the Story? Collective initiated a month long process inviting Jim Lawlor, manager of RYP, and Ciaran Smyth and Ailbhe Murphy of Vagabond Reviews to facilitate us in a process of ending the Collective as it existed, and mapping out possible future reconfigurations that would respond to new thinking developed during *Policing Dialogues* (2010). It was clear that the initial triangulation of subject positions, which had labelled members as artist, youth worker or young person, was no longer appropriate and our connection to a youth organisation with a remit concerning one part of the triangle (young people) was also questioned. As this reflective process coincided with a significant number of new personal commitments for members of the Collective (new baby, college, travel plans), it was decided to officially disband the group with a view to reforming at a future date with a new framing. This remains a possibility. This process is described in more detail in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 220).

[39] As Foucault suggests, to change the value of currency, 'is to question, subvert, disturb the currency of conventions, rules, and laws' (Two Fuse, 2018b).

[40] In 2016, I hosted the learning network to discuss possibilities for a future phase of work to include progressive forms of pedagogy, which would resist instrumentalisation (see Appendix V) in which Carroll attended. Her observations related to What's the Story? Collective were gained from reading my publication *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), which led to her role as an advisor for *Natural History of Hope* (2016).

[41] Ryan, K., personal email (12 October 2015).

Chapter Two

Articulating Unequal Power Relations

Introduction

I had travelled many times before with Jamie, who was now 20, but it was still an exciting experience, as we disembarked the airplane on a hazy Autumn day in Bristol and made our way through security and baggage collection to the taxi queue outside. It was September 2010 and we were in the UK to participate in a conference titled 'Demanding Conversations: Socially Engaged Arts Practice in a Changing Political Climate', at the invitation of artist Suzanne Lacy and Knowle West Media Centre.[1] We would lead two breakout sessions, exploring firstly what is at stake in collaborative arts projects such as ours and, secondly, examining the political climate and opportunities for young people involved with socially engaged practice. Our inputs to this international event were informed by the six-week public exhibition and residency *Policing Dialogues* (2010) that was underway in The LAB Dublin. The residency programme was committed to speaking to multiple publics related to the work and practice, including 'critical thinkers, policy makers, young people and those who work with them' (*Policing Dialogues* invitation, 2010), as well as those connected to the fields of socially engaged and collaborative arts practice, who were targeted through organised talks, seminars, meetings, workshops and dialogues.

As we climbed into a taxi outside the airport, I recall the driver's response when we indicated our destination. 'Are you sure?' he questioned, appearing shocked at two visitors' choice of destination, urging us to be careful, because it wasn't one of the

'better parts' of Bristol. We didn't engage much further in conversation with the driver beyond some basic chat, but his comment had affirmed the context for Jamie and myself, both of us familiar with such descriptions and prejudice related to parts of Rialto, Dublin, perpetuated by state bodies and the media. Upon arriving in Knowle West, the two days that followed were a hugely positive experience, full of rich presentations, workshops, evening entertainment from local young people and much stimulating conversation with international practitioners, which gave us an opportunity to connect on key issues related to our collaborative arts practice while removed temporarily from our own geographic context.[2]

On the second day, as we emerged from one of our sessions, upbeat after rich critical conversation, the mood changed as our phones began to ring and texts were received. A factually incorrect and highly degrading review of our exhibition had been broadcast on Irish radio and a deflated Jamie now wanted to go home.[3] In the weeks prior, we had received much reasonable and fair media coverage, with our collective media training bearing fruit as print, radio and television commentary shared insights into young people's negative experiences of policing and the process we had engaged in to address this, without anyone feeling misrepresented or exposed. The highlight had been a mediated engagement with 'Tonight with Vincent Browne' – a leading current affairs programme on the Irish TV3 channel, in which the exhibition had been reviewed by the presenter, with members of the Collective interviewed, followed by a panel discussion engaging with the exhibition's themes. In stark contrast, this latest news report by Paddy O'Gorman, aired as part of the hugely popular 'Today with Pat Kenny' radio show on RTÉ (the national public service television and radio broadcaster), reduced the exhibition to an 'anti-Garda rant'.[4]

The report was layered with misinformation, causing much frustration with the quality of journalism.[5] What concerns me here is how this displaced a narrative of systemic forms of oppressive class-based policing, focusing instead on a narrative that speaks of the moral character of individuals. This re-framing was evident in the reporter's live analysis of his vox-pop carried out on the inner city streets close to The LAB. Rather than noting how the views he gathered from a similar class-based demographic resonated deeply with the material in the exhibition, he presented this wholly negative commentary of the Gardaí with 'a familiar ideological underbelly along the lines of "they don't stop a fellow for no reason"' (Smyth and Murphy, 2011: 21) – a view which aligns with the de-politicised register of inequality-as-disadvantage discussed in chapter one.

As Jamie and I stood in a crowded room at the conference coffee break in Bristol, we felt so distant from the events unfolding on Irish radio. In order to understand the significance of this event, it is important to mention several earlier, and by no means unrelated episodes that might be described as mediated blowback. Prior to the development of the What's the Story? Collective, in 2007, Jamie and I had travelled twice to the USA with a previous young people's art group to participate in a project with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. We had all been interviewed about the trip by Fox News. In the final edit, the young people's interviews were prefaced by input from the Director of the Mural Arts Program, who described the participating Irish young people as being from 'the saddest housing project in the city' (of Dublin), 'one of Ireland's roughest neighbourhoods', a framing deeply offensive for the young people involved.[6] Here, the language of domination (such as oppression and marginalisation) is outflanked by tame depoliticised language now commonly used in the policy arena,

which acts as 'a solvent that dilute[s] the ideational underpinnings of social conflict' (Whelan and Ryan, 2016: note 23).

During the early days of What's the Story? Collective, the memory of the Fox News report inspired a process of analysis into media representation of working class neighbourhoods between members of the Collective with some invited external expertise.[7] Engaging in media training subsequently became a feature of the Collective's practice, leading to a carefully controlled relationship with media. As the project engaged explicitly with An Garda Síochána, we became acutely aware of the vast possibilities for alternative readings of the practice that could emerge if we were not careful. Following a shared decision with Garda Chief Superintendent John Twomey, we did not invite any media to engage with our first event involving Gardaí, which was *The Day in Question* (2009) in the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Alternatively, we later chose to elect one reputable journalist in the *Irish Times* to feature the process retrospectively based on interviews with multiple contributors.[8]

However, three weeks later (this was in 2009), I received a panicked call from Jamie, who feared for his safety and that of his family after reading an article in a city tabloid, which described an interview with the Chief Superintendent. I wilted, listening to Jamie read the headline: 'Top Cop Answers Teens' Call', with the article describing how young people in Rialto had reached out to senior police because they felt their safety was endangered by drug dealers in their area.[9] This was of course factually untrue and completely misrepresented the young people's impetus for engaging the police, a story that we had worked to avoid through an agreement with the Chief Superintendent in relation to media engagement. These factually incorrect statements amplified how the

safety of the young people authoring the collective project was a live issue, one that required constant attention and negotiation.[10]

At our Bristol hotel, towards the end of a long and intense collaborative journey, Jamie and I sat around a laptop and listened to the RTÉ radio report. Personal safety, risk or exposure was not the issue here, but a renewed experience of hurt and anger at the individualising of structural inequality and a conscious disregard for the voices and practice of working class youth. As the report unfolded, O'Gorman completely negated the brave and risk-filled durational process that young people had engaged in to arrive in the gallery for this public conversation with the Irish police force, the general public, and representatives from print and broadcast media on urgent issues important to them. Most insulting was the way O'Gorman compared the young people's anonymous stories (which featured centrally on the walls of the gallery) to something one might find on the back of a toilet door.

This chapter considers a form of relational power that makes for a stark contrast with the concerted power discussed in chapter one, in that it articulates inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power. This form of power can been first seen in individual anonymous narratives that are central to the practice articulating relational moments of powerlessness, inequality and risk. However, the relational nature of this power is further articulated as themes are drawn out and collated across collectively authored presentations of stories, whereby the macro-political context of everyday social life takes on narrative form. In this chapter, I explore in what ways and to what ends inequality and related systemic power relations were exposed, challenged and reconfigured in the collective public manifestations that emerged in this practice, as

anonymous individual narratives moved collectively from private to public in stages, drawing in multiple publics to listen and engage.

Of note in O'Gorman's report was the negation of anonymity as a considered feature of the practice – associating anonymity with the evasion of accountability, and subsequently disregarding the personal truth of the stories.[11] Rather than spend time with material that had taken years to collate and present, he preferred leaving the gallery for a walk, during which he witnessed an incident between a local resident and a Garda, which he described in detail while gathering local opinions about the Gardaí from passers-by, all reactive and negative, but more truthful to him in their immediacy and rawness. This form of truth telling speaks to post-Cartesian conceptions of truth. Whether framed as positivism or empiricism, this way of seeking truth appeals to the self-evidence of what counts as evidence, or what passes as objective fact (Cottingham, 1996). This stands in stark contrast to the carefully refined practice of our Collective which adopted a form of speaking truth to power that derives its authority from its relation to personal belief and truthfulness, operating as a counter-narrative (Smyth and Murphy, 2011).

The approach of the Collective has been compared to a form of fearless speech that Foucault (2001) called *parrhesia,* in which the speaker speaks frankly, from below, giving an exact account of what s/he knows to be true and in so doing, takes a personal risk.[12] In our case, for members of the What's the Story? Collective (2007-11) and those later involved in *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16), the nature of risk was largely personal, reflected through lived experience and later based on the preservation of anonymity in articulating those experiences publicly. The next section of this chapter

will explore the complex relationship of story, voice and listening in the public manifestations from this practice, positioning this dialogical practice as both an example of *parrhesia* and as 'counter-parrhesiastic', challenging and critiquing the limits of the parrhesiastic exchange as it relates to risk.[13] Reoccurring methods are subsequently examined which include the specific rationale and approach to anonymity as a core feature of both the process of the practice and the use of visual metaphors, which produced a new visual lexicon for power, exposing and challenging intangible and invisible forms of systemic power relations through performative encounters. Ultimately the practice is positioned as an act of world-making – a lived practice of freedom – which affords a collective public imagining of alternative futures.

Voice and Listening as a Relational Practice in the Face of Inequality

The 'What's the Story?' project (2007-11) was first initiated in response to a series of questions I was faced with, concerning the right to tell one's story; 'Who gets to tell their story? Whose story is always told for them? Who never gets to tell their story?' (Whelan, 2014: 65).[14] Over time, this led to the gathering of sixty anonymous stories detailing lived experiences of power and powerlessness. For the subsequent project *Natural History of Hope* (2012-2016) over two hundred stories were gathered from women and girls living and working in Rialto. Gathering voices through personal story finds resonance in qualitative research practice (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2009; Lather, 2009); narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000); critical pedagogy (Freire 1968; Horton and Freire 1990); progressive education (Dewey, 2007 [1938]); and political theory (Arendt, 1958), emphasising the importance of story and experience as ongoing, temporal, relational as well as political. The concept of an authentic voice is also well

recognised in youth work and socially engaged arts, with many projects uncritically adopting the technique or method of 'giving voice'.[15]

Nick Couldry asserts that 'all human beings have the capacity for voice, to give an account of their lives. This is an irreducible part of their human agency' (2009: 580). However 'voice' cannot be experienced in isolation; the claim to speak is incomplete, without its counterpart 'listening' (ibid.). Drawing on what Couldry describes as 'the second-order value of voice' (2009: 580), the act of speaking in its most complete form can be understood as a relational process, 'recognising our claims on each other as reflexive human agents, each with an account to give, an account of our lives that needs to be registered and heard, our stories endlessly entangled in each other's stories' (ibid.).

In the work of What's the Story? Collective (2007-11) and the subsequent *Natural History of Hope* project (2012-16), the decision to enter the anonymous storytelling process marked a clear stage in the groups' journeys, signalling a willingness to enter a critical enquiry on a deeply personal level, while simultaneously investing in a group process. Similar to the collective and cyclical form of research used in PAR (Cammarota and Fine, 2008), the first destination of the gathered stories in both projects was the core groups' collective processes. The members of the groups engaged with the gathered stories and instigated an iterative action response collaboratively, where the collections of stories transitioned through multiple encounters and accumulative stages, considering the question: 'What does it matter who has the right to speak if another has no responsibility to listen?' (Robbins cited in Whelan, 2014: 184).[16]

Stories were gathered orally in private in a space chosen by the story-teller. I was elected to gather most of the stories and lead the editing process over many meetings with each individual.[17] The mood when gathering stories was informal but serious. The context of the project was clearly communicated, as was the audio recording and subsequent transcribing process, with everyone understanding that they could talk freely and that once the recording was transcribed, there could be multiple edits until they were content with their typed accounts, which would be broken down into smaller vignettes to protect the story-tellers' identities. Once everyone had completed this process, all the anonymous stories were shared with the core group, the members of which collectively negotiated future steps (Fig. 2.1).[18]

Fig. 2.1. Members of the 'What's the Story?' Collective, sharing their anonymous stories for the first time at the Rent Office, Dolphin House. Drawing by Orla Whelan (2013) commissioned for *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014). © Orla Whelan.

I came to understand that the stories told to me were not a pure form of truth, but recognised to be temporal; 'filtered, processed, and already interpreted' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2012: 3) as experiences are always 're-told and re-membered' (ibid.). In poststructuralist theory, the concept of *voice* (along with its counterparts, *narrative* and *experience*) is 'troubled'.[19] This includes a criticism of the privileging of voice as being equivalent to data that takes us closer to *the* truth (see St. Pierre, 2009: 221).[20] Voice and authenticity thus need to be deconstructed (Lather, 1996). In our intersubjective storytelling encounters (Jackson M., 2002), some individuals told stories for the first time, others shared experiences they had reflected on with friends and family previously, but in all cases, the accounts told to me were understood to be born of the time and context of that encounter, authored dialogically, as Michael Jackson explains:

> Stories, like memories and dreams, are nowhere articulated as purely personal revelations, but authored and authorised dialogically and collaboratively in the course of sharing one's recollections with others…This is why one may no more recover the 'original' story than step into the same river twice. The fault is not with memory per se, but an effect of the transformations all experience undergoes as it is replayed, recited, reworked and reconstructed in the play of intersubjective life.
>
> (2002: 22)

As each individual spoke their stories aloud, the first relational act of listening was already taking place; as I listened to a story being told, simultaneously the story-teller heard themselves tell the story. This listening act was then formalised through an act of representation, spoken words becoming a series of typed vignettes, as I personally transcribed and returned testimonies to each individual to begin a co-editing process. In *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), I describe how I watched a young woman cry, reading back her story for the first time. The gathering process and the

techniques used in the transcription and editing, in turn had an effect on the story itself. It was no longer a private memory, but now existed as a printed text, which required a new kind of acknowledgement from the storyteller. A storyteller later described her experience of this act and its unsettling effect:

> Then I got them back and they are on paper, I was like 'oh god'. What am I going to do with this now? I have this information. I have just become aware of myself and now I have to do something… I felt like I had to respond to myself, that I owed myself that.
>
> (Anonymous, 2016)[21]

Looking through an educational lens, our practice has been described by Todd as '[c]rossing the borders of art and critical pedagogy' (Todd, 2015b). The story-telling practice aligns with the values of critical pedagogy, in opposing an understanding of education as integration into an existing system. Through sharing their story as part of a collaborative, durational and iterative process, those involved alternatively engaged 'with the reality of the place they inhabit in the interest of reconstructing it, in the interest of a freer, more humane, just existence' (Robbins, 2011). In the early stage of the process, the storyteller quoted above reads back her printed story for the first time, and is first to pose questions related to the content of her accounts. In turn she put a series of personal demands on herself, signalling an intentionality to make change, promoting a conscious form of subjectivity and individual agency.[22]

There is a tension here however, between such humanistic ambitions and wider intentions to de-centre humanistic understandings of the subject. As individuals' voices were gathered as part of a cumulative and durational collaborative process, groups worked with their own and their peers' anonymous lived experiences over time and

subsequently invited other diverse publics to engage in mediated relational encounters. Our collective relational approach to gathering and re-presenting the material, surpassed a conscious, rational, simplification of voice and subjectivity, decentring humanistic understandings of both. The stories and subject positions of those who shared them were 'troubled' in practice, becoming part of a relational reconfiguring of possibilities, as can be seen in *The Day in Question* (2009), which operated in the space of this tension.

Fig. 2.2. *The Day in Question*. IMMA, 2009. Video still by Enda O'Brien. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

The Day in Question (2009) emerged in response to the number and power of the gathered anonymous stories by What's the Story? Collective, related to policing. Following much discussion, young people had specifically communicated that they wanted 'to be heard' by Gardaí.[23] The event started with a group reading by the 26 participating members of An Garda Síochána, after which 13 individual Gardaí stood up one after the other and read aloud selected young people's accounts of policing to the

Collective and a group of invited witnesses (Figs. 1.6 and 2.2). The stories were all presented as first person narratives emphasising lived experience rather than an individual's opinions of policing. This emphasis was also encouraged throughout the event, understood to be more effective in creating the possibility of listening. As Jamie recalled:

> It was just for them to hear my side of the story, how I feel when they're stopping me on the street or pulling me over… I just wanted to scream into their face and ask why. Why did you do this? Why did you do that? But I needed to change my attitude if I wanted my answers.
>
> (cited in Whelan, 2014: 137)

In planning the encounter, we focused on creating a relational experience where listening was a collective priority; 'a form of active listening that challenges the listener's preconceptions and position while at the same time it engages critically with the content of what is being said and heard' (Back, 2007: 23). Here young people were positioned with an equality of intelligence to their counterparts in the Gardaí, moving beyond the deficit thinking that frames the label of *disadvantage,* thereby understanding that while 'some of us occupy particular positions within society due to economic and political factors, we are all intelligent beings, capable of understanding and narrating our different situations' (Todd, 2015b).

During a discussion organised by What's the Story? Collective, early in our process, community worker John Bissett had outlined to the group how labels can be internalised, describing how a person living in a so called 'disadvantaged' area is often unaware of the structural inequality that exists and is made to feel that their situation is their own fault.[24] Todd echoes this in explaining how 'disadvantage' becomes a moral

judgment, which doubles the experience of oppression for young people:

> They are 'oppressed' by economic circumstances not in their control and they are told that they are 'lacking', a position which many youth end up internalising, thus straightjacketing them even further. The language of disadvantage, does nothing to transform the conceptual or discursive terms through which people understand their lives as 'negative'.
>
> <div align="right">(ibid.)</div>

In this context, Todd goes on to describe the practice of the Collective as radical, 'since it means accepting the idea that so-called "disadvantaged" others have a right to speak – and be listened to' (ibid.). To emphasise the role of listening, as noted by Susan Bickford, 'is to confront the intersubjective character of politics' (1996: 4), thereby opening up the possibility for something else to emerge. *In The Day in Question* (2009) (and later during *Policing Dialogues* (2010)), the Gardaí were confronted with young people's reflexivity, exposed to young people's capacity for voice – 'the capacity to give an account of their lives that is reflexive and a continuous, ongoing, and embodied process of reflection' (Couldry, 2009: 579).

In *The Day in Question* (2009), the first Garda to read was from Dublin, his accent similar to that of many of the storytellers, which seemed to reduce the potential for tension as he fluently vocalised the jargon and slang, which is part of the habitus of the story's author(s). At the same time however, his nervousness was apparent to all as he rushed to complete the reading, head down and voice quivering. The story he read detailed a young person's experience of their family home being raided, due to a sibling's suspected criminal behaviour, with the whole family subjected to degrading treatment, and their home left in turmoil after the raid had concluded. The second story

followed in a slower pace as another Garda stood to her feet causing a room of heads to turn their gaze to her as she read:

> Some of the Garda were actually being alright, asking questions and being sound, but then when they took me into the cell to strip search me, they were totally different people because they were acting like they had the power to do everything. I didn't know what I had to do. I felt speechless. When I was in the cell, there were two Garda in the cell with me. One of them took mug shots of me because obviously they had to put on file who they arrested so that was alright but then that Garda actually left. He left me with one Garda and he wasn't the nicest of Gardaí, not someone you would actually want to talk to. He started saying, 'You have to take this off for the strip search' and really going through it. I was doing what he was asking because that is what I had to do, well it was what I thought I had to do and I wasn't able to question him on it in case he actually started really controlling it more, so I did what he said. But when I felt most powerless was when he turned around and said, 'You need to squat for me' and I felt it was really disgusting. I didn't know what was going on. I was never in trouble before in me life and I was really scared.
>
> (Anonymous, 2008)

There were also stories about negative treatment when attempting to avail of a public service in a Garda station; for example, a young person recalled the response of a Guard when requesting the use of a pen, with the Guard in question stating 'I don't want to catch something off you' (Anonymous, 2008). There were stories about young people's experiences of public space, having nowhere to sit and be with friends. One young person described how they always saw the Gardaí drive in to the flat complex and 'search kids and search the wrong people' (Anonymous, 2008). There was nowhere else to go. Life had become a process of being moved on.

No fixed narrative was being presented in the event but rather a nuanced and complex social existence, thus avoiding the 'fixing of reality and subjective identity' (St. Pierre, 2009: 226). In the spirit of agonistic democracy where multiple voices are heard and consensus is not a priority (Mouffe, 2005; 2012; Two Fuse, 2018a), working with diverse and complex personal stories helped prevent binary oppositions or a prioritisation of consensus. The polyvocal presentation of multiple diverse narratives aligns to qualitative research interpretation which criticises 'mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes and writing up transparent narratives that do little to critique the complexities of social life; such simplistic approaches preclude dense and multi-layered treatment of data' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2012: vii).

Importantly in this context, young people were not positioning themselves as flawless, and they understood the difficulties of policing an area which had a drug-dealing issue, but they asked simply to be treated with more dignity and respect. Stories about Garda harassment were layered with a broad spectrum of experiences, from having one's home aggressively raided, to a young person's desire to be a Garda, to the experience of living with a family member with a drug addiction and criminal background, as recounted in this story:

> He's my brother. I don't care what he is. He's my brother. I know loads of people that would talk down to my brother and I've never sat there and let anyone talk down about my brother. People wouldn't even talk to me over things that my brother done. I was only 12 but still to this day I can't let that go. I was only a kid. I just felt so small, not even good enough for the dirt underneath their feet. I just feel 'What did I do wrong?' Everything my brother does, I'm a victim for it. He's taking drugs to get it out of his head and once he has the drugs he only thinks about his next hit. He is not going to think about what he done before and then I have to stand there every day with people

looking down at me thinking 'Your brother is this' and 'Your brother is that' and I have to just stand there.

(Anonymous, 2008)

The complexity of young people's experiences was unfolding, spoken from the mouths of new Gardaí who were in the final phases of their training and who would be assigned to the Dublin South Central district; their individual cultural identities, accents, gender and age adding new layers to the spoken stories as they flowed into the room, with subjective stories now re-enacted as relational experiences. One specific story became a point of discussion after the readings (a version of which would later be printed on the gallery walls in *Policing Dialogues,* 2010, Fig. 2.3). It exemplified what one of our witnesses, Aogan Mulcahy, later described as a quest to 'dominate ideologically' (2011: 18). Mulcahy is here drawing on Antonio Gramsci's way of thinking about hegemony, whereby relations of domination are experienced as, and perceived to be, akin to the natural order of things. This seemingly natural order can be identified in this young person's experience of being repeatedly stopped and questioned by Gardaí as he occupied public space:

I'd say I get stopped about twenty times a month, twenty times a month just for walking around. I'd be walking, and a Garda car would see me and stop and ask me where I'm going. These are all different Guards. By now you'd think the amount of Guards that stop me, they would know my name and where I was from, but they still have to stop me to see where I am going and what I'm doing. It's unbelievable. It's unreal. I wouldn't mind if I was in the wrong and going doing things but I'm not. I'm walking places.

(Anonymous, 2008)
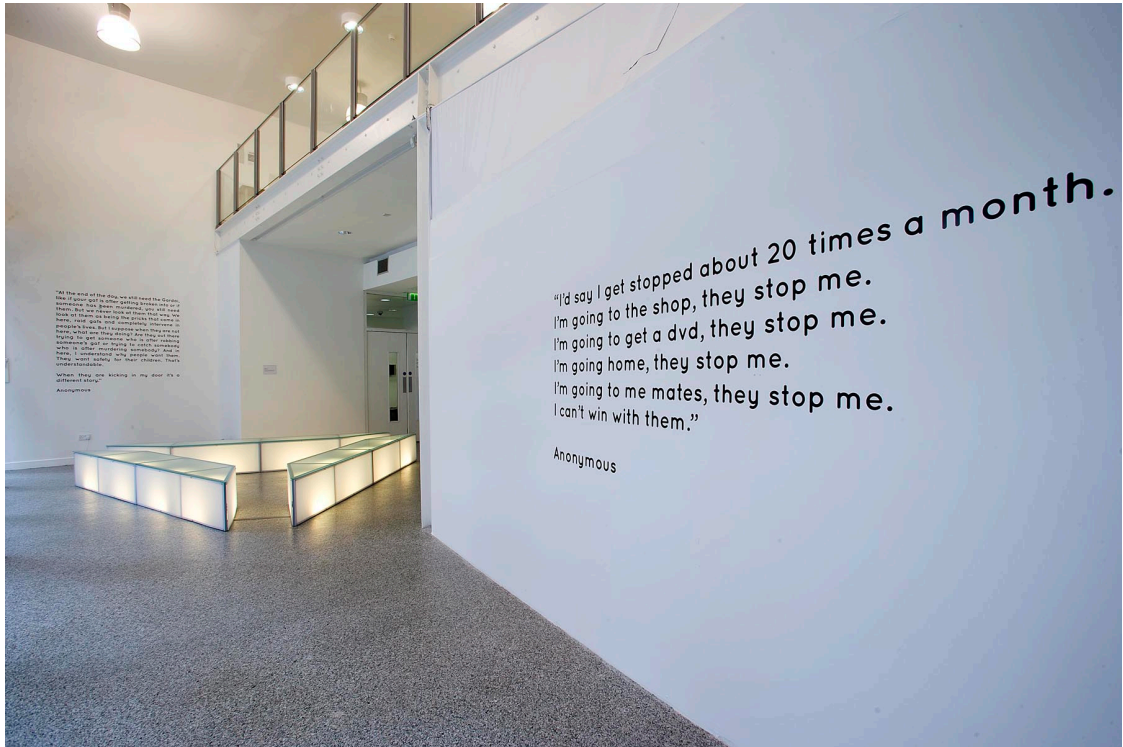
Fig. 2.3. *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. Photograph by Michael Durand. © Dublin City Council Arts Office.

As I outlined at an event called 'Rights Based Policing – Visions from the Community' (2018) hosted by the Irish Council of Civil Liberties, there is no recognition here that young people have a right to exist in public spaces, to have freedom and personal liberty to walk in their city as stated in the Irish constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann, 1937).[25] Their lived experience is subject to domination by the coercive powers of the state. Mulcahy observed how these young people's marginalised status is confirmed in that 'they expect to be considered a problem for the police' (Mulcahy, 2011: 19), repeatedly profiled, and regarded less as people to be protected than as suspects to be questioned and monitored. Highlighting this became important against the backdrop of the loss of language of domination such as 'discrimination, exploitation, oppression…outflanked by the new consensual register of inequality-as-disadvantage' (Whelan and Ryan, 2016: note 23). Such a framework sees marginalised groups reframed as 'communities of

predicament', in a similar register to how reporter Paddy O'Gorman had represented *Policing Dialogues* (2010).[26]

As Mulcahy observes when analysing many of the stories during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), the words used 'do not depict the young people themselves as "tough"; in fact the stories repeatedly talk about the embarrassment of being subject to police action' (2011: 19). As one story relates: 'It's so embarrassing emptying out your pockets and getting searched in your own area' (Anonymous, 2008). The storytellers also describe feelings of anger, fear, and shame. While some accounts described physical restraint and coercion, it was the words and feelings that Mulcahy drew attention to – 'in particular the concept of recognition' and 'the perceived lack of respect', or as one young person explains: 'I feel so small, not even good enough for the dirt underneath their feet', while another states: 'We are not shite. They treat us like we were nothing' (2011: 19). In these stories, for the most part, policing was experienced as a humiliating ordeal.

Inviting those holding state power into a space to actively listen to these accounts, was unique when compared to existing national practices between young people and Gardaí such as the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme and Garda Youth Diversion Projects.[27] Such projects target young people *at risk* of entering the full criminal justice system, with the programmes operating as an early intervention and preventive measure. In *The Day in Question* (2009) and later in *Policing Dialogues* (2010), we subverted these subject positions by demonstrating how it was actually the *Gardaí* who were at risk from behaviour that would cause indignity and disrespect to young people, due to the systemic and institutional power they held as members of the Irish police force. [28] In

doing this, we inverted the 'grids of power and knowledge' (Crary cited in Back, 2007: 24) that are implicated in acts of listening, and created a critical space for dissensus to foment (Mouffe, 2007).

The Challenge of Exposing Unequal Power Relations Through Dialogue

The form of listening that was staged in the practice is akin to the concept of 'political listening' (Bickford, 1996: 2), beyond a caring, empathic practice to a communicative interaction in which conflict and difference are central, such as that which arises from inequality. Susan Bickford argues that it is precisely this kind of listening to one another that is required in democratic politics (ibid.). In doing so, Bickford evokes Habermas' (1981) work on communicative action and the political action of participatory democracy outlined by Benjamin Barber.[29] For Barber, independent private reasoning is set aside so that public action can take place in the presence of conflict. To understand the effects of our actions, 'we need communicative interaction to help ourselves think publicly about the power we exercise and the decisions to be made' (ibid.: 12). It is in considering to what end such interaction might take place that Barber and Bickford diverge.

Barber (I return to Bickford later) evaluates listening as a feature of democratic conversation which aims to transform conflict, such that it becomes 'a mutualistic art that by its very practice enhances equality' (cited in Bickford, 1996: 13). Listening in this case is to be considered neither as merely tolerating what the other has to say or a strategic analysis of it, but rather as an empathic act, understanding the other's position in the process. A common purpose or goal is identified in this process, where conflict

and heterogeneity are transformed into a shared vision or consensus. Through acting politically together, those participating in such a listening act become aware of the connection between their own self-interests and the wider public nature of their conflict (ibid.). In addition to developing the skills needed to democratically participate, through such a listening act 'the *I* of private self-interest can be reconceptualized and reconstituted as a *we* that makes possible civility and common political action' (Barber 1984, cited in ibid.: 12).

In socially engaged art practice, this aligns with a conceptual framework proposed by Kester as *Dialogical Aesthetics* (2004). Unlike a work of art which later provokes dialogue, dialogical arts practices observe conversation to be an integral part of the work itself, which is 'reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict' (ibid.: 8). The work of art framed within this aesthetic paradigm is understood to be durational and thereby not immediate, unfolding over time through a 'performative interaction' (ibid.: 10). Crucially, as with forms of communication advocated by Barber and Bickford, dialogical art practices do not claim universality or an unearthing of universal truth, nor are they rooted in individual self-interest; rather they are 'based on the generation of local consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding and that is grounded instead at the level of collective interaction' (ibid.: 112).

Kester outlines another feature of Dialogical Aesthetics as it relates to subjectivity, highlighting how the dialogical exchange is not intended to communicate a priori content to existing subject positions, but instead is intended to form subjectivities

through the communicative act itself (ibid.). This does not fully align with the form of listening that was being initially orchestrated during *The Day in Question* (2009), which did highlight (through the triangular seating discussed earlier in chapter one) the existing subject positions of those participating, and requested that that the Gardaí listen to the a priori content as presented by the Collective. (Later I discuss why I believe this act was necessary in advance of a more reciprocal dialogical exchange). However the principles of dialogical aesthetics are nevertheless present in the various public performances, as part of an ongoing durational and iterative process, as can be seen from a dialogue staged within *Policing Dialogues* (2010, Fig. 2.4), which took place a year after *The Day in Question* (2009).

Fig. 2.4. Members of An Garda Síochána and What's the Story? Collective, in dialogue. Drawing by Orla Whelan (2013) commissioned for *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014). © Orla Whelan.

During this two-day dialogue, the same group of Gardaí and young people returned for a facilitated dialogue, based on values of an equality of participation in which each participant speaks their true voice and in turn is asked to listen with respect.[30] In making this shift to dialogue, we recognised that we would be letting go of the control we had over the orchestrated listening act of the previous year. In dialogue we 'would be required to participate as individuals rather than as a group presenting and defending a position' (Forrestal, 2011: 10), which could include internal disagreement. New subjectivities were being modelled in the process.

Cecilia Forrestal, the facilitator of our two-day dialogue during *Policing Dialogues* (2010) echoes Barber when she describes how '[i]t's often said that dialogue has the capacity to touch the dangerous, as people use the energy of their differences to enhance the collective wisdom' (ibid.: 11). She felt our dialogue had achieved this collective wisdom highlighting that:

> The dangerous emerged frequently and nearly always highlighted the complexity of what it was we were trying to talk about and understand. Giving voice to different perspectives allowed assumptions to be challenged and new meaning to be co-created.
>
> (ibid.)

In dialogue, young people identified feelings of anger and frustration born of their experiences of indignity and disrespect due to the assumptions they felt were being made of them because of where they lived. The Collective spoke of negative histories of policing in Rialto and subsequent cultures of distrust and non-engagement with policing, that also double as strategies for survival. Gardaí spoke of the particularities of policing within social housing complexes, inadequate resources and challenges working

within the broader justice system. The conversation deepened over two days to a complex discussion on social class, where new understandings emerged along with a collective will to create change.

However, while dialogic practice does give space to collectively examine ways that relationships can be more effective, it is also the case, as argued by Forrestal, that '[d]ialogue is not about agreeing outcomes' (ibid.). While both Gardaí and young people gestured towards actions that could create change in their future relationship with the other towards a common good, a purely consensual politics was never imagined or aspired to. Megs Morley observes that the value of my practice with RYP does not rest in producing representations of consensus; rather the real value 'lies in the imaginative rigour to collectively shift perspectives and social relations by rendering visible unequal power relations, thus exposing them to dialogue, critique, learning and new understandings' (2016: 150).

Just as the triangle initially existed to avoid a neutralising of the power relations within the Collective (as outlined in chapter one), the danger in aligning to a consensual politics is that this would be to ignore the power differences between marginalised young people and Gardaí acting with state sanctioned power. This could perpetuate a violence that acts as 'an appropriation in the guise of an embrace' (Lather, 2009: 19). Dialogue is often solicited to aid resolution between two conflicting sides in a dispute, making it synonymous with binary divisions. In this context, the triangulated process at the core of the Collective's practice 'exceeds the grip of binary thinking' (Two Fuse, 2018: 74), becoming a viable approach to engage 'critically with the problem of power…given that it is both a method and a mode of representation' (ibid.). This

approach provides experiences where individuals can listen to what the other had to say 'without the mutuality presumed by empathy' (Lather, 2009: 20).

Kester argues that 'empathic insight is a necessary component of a dialogical aesthetic' (2004: 115), with empathy produced along three axes: through the collaborative process between artist and collaborators, among the collaborators themselves where solidarity can be enhanced, and with engaged publics who are exposed to more complex understandings of a given community (ibid.). While Gardaí and young people can be seen to have engaged in individual acts of empathic listening where new empathic insights were gained over time with new subjectivities emerging, the tension arises in the participating Gardaí's positions as both individual agents and as part of an institution of power. This tension was posed to Christopher Robbins in a personal email as we prepared for *Policing Dialogues* (2010). Robbins replied, signalling the need for layers of work with both individuals and institutions:

> ([A]uthoritarian) institutions are always constituted by people, yet they often operate in their day-to-day practices and processes seemingly outside of the control of those living, thinking people. So, as concerned actors, do we focus on institutional reform, or do we focus on cultural work with the individuals who constitute those institutions? For me, it seems that work needs to be done on both fronts, with, as you are obviously aware, careful attention paid to local specificities – the personalities of individual people/groups and the embeddedness of certain institutional forms and practices in certain places….Christopher.[31]

Although engaging with a specific group of Gardaí in a dialogical process, we were clear that the context was not an equal space (Whelan, 2014). To emphasise a common interest would be to hide the real conflict of interest (Bickford, 1996), related to

systemic socioeconomic inequality. In her critique of Barber's consensual politics, Bickford argues that when it comes to socioeconomic inequality and related conflict, it is 'inappropriate and potentially dangerous' to consider communicative interaction as a transformative or consensual politics (ibid.: 14).[32] It is for this reason that the communicative approach adopted in the first interaction between young people and Gardaí *The Day in Question* (2009) was a necessary speech act in highlighting young people's lived experiences of inequality, comparable to *parrhesia,* described by Foucault (2001) as speaking the truth to power, which had a specific status in ancient Greece.

Speaking Truth to Power

Parrhesia is a 'verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth' (Dyrberg, 2014: 78), confronting a specific tyrant or powerful person, to whom s/he wants to proclaim an injustice s/he believes them to be responsible for (Foucault, 2011b). A central feature of the parrhesiastic speech act is that it is staged publically, involving courtiers or some type of observer who witnesses the act (ibid.). The speaker who uses parrhesia is frank, speaking his/her own truth, and taking a personal risk by speaking, doing so because truth-telling is considered a duty that may also help or improve other peoples' situations (Dyrberg, 2014). In sharing this truth, the speaker acts as a critic, speaking from a less powerful position than the one to whom he/she speaks, that is, speaking from below:

> In *parrhesia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.
>
> (Foucault, 2001: 19-20)[33]

In all of our public events, the collective makers are positioned as authors of the work, speaking parrhesiastically to publics that include those perceived to be in a position of power. A central feature of the parrhesiastic relationship is that it 'opens up risk' (Foucault, 2011b: 63) – a unique characteristic when compared to other forms of utterance and truth telling.[34] In parrhesia, the risk is ever-present in the public nature of the utterance, with the speaker accepting the risk involved in publicly sharing their grievances.

Gert Biesta (2014) recognises that significant educational processes always involve risk, since students are not objects at an educator's disposal being modelled in a process, but subjects who are free to act. In opposition to the dominant educational practice of the last twenty years, which advocates for a risk-free education, captured through prescribed learning outcomes, Biesta argues for education as a practice that contributes to an ongoing emergent subjectivity (ibid.). As Jamie's experiences in the introduction to this chapter highlights, the most significant personal risk for those engaged in this practice was the risk of being identified through one's personal testimonies. This began with concerns related to other collaborators identifying a story-teller through the content of their narrative, to later concerns with regard to specific publics identifying themselves represented in individual stories.

In a review of *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014), Morley attributes the shift in social relations between Gardaí and young people in *The Day in Question* (2009) and *Policing Dialogues* (2010) to the sharing of vulnerability – a risk from which new forms of collective understanding and political agency were born. Drawing on Judith Butler's call for 'a radical rethinking of the status of vulnerability within

political mobilisations' (2016: 149), Morley identifies how the What's the Story? Collective grew in strength over time, from individual vulnerable experiences, building resolve through each public engagement, creating spaces that allow all engaged to see themselves differently in the world (ibid.).

The inherent risk-taking nature of parrhesia was also prevalent in *Natural History of Hope* (2016) as the core cast of twelve women shared their stories with each other and subsequently positioned their bodies on stage, visible to a diverse set of publics including friends, family and community members, performing as co-presenters of stories that dealt with multiple issues including 'the liability of men'.[35] Although individual stories were anonymous, each public work was co-authored/co-presented by a named group of individuals. Here subjectivity is remodelled and formed relationally, with individual experiences of vulnerability reframed in the process and live act. The women speak truth to power collectively.

Importantly, the anonymous nature of the storytellers and the solidarity experienced within their collective authorship also served to protect individual women in *Natural History of Hope* (2016) from unnecessary risk. Similarly, in planning for *The Day in Question* (2009), we opted to engage with new recruits partly due to a fear from young people that engaging more experienced Gardaí could lead to a situation where a Garda recognises him or herself as part of an anonymous experience being described by a young person. While still speaking truth to power in acts of parrhesia, this choice served to prevent further unnecessary risk-taking, somewhat redressing the relationship between publicity and risk as outlined by Lars Cornelissen:

> [T]he type of risk that they [young people] face is not the extraordinary, heroic, exceptional risk that the parrhesiast *chooses* to take on – it is the banal, everyday risk of being violated by the police that comes with their very existing in public. Their quotidian goings-on (driving a car; going to the corner shop; hanging out with their mates) are risky for them – and it is the *everyday* risk of being the victim of police brutality that they seemed to want to address and criticise.[36]

The injustice that was highlighted in *The Day in Question* (2009) and later in *Policing Dialogues* (2010) was the existing riskiness of these young people's lives, which challenges the inference that risk is something that is chosen. The anonymising and collectivising of the stories are features that make this subversion possible. Rather than the young people reading their own narratives in public, the Gardaí read them, with their collective anonymity representing a refusal to take on significant further public risk – the event further operating as counter-parrhesiastic, creating a more ethical practice for a constituency who experience risk as an inevitable, imposed feature of their everyday lives.

As outlined by Two Fuse (2018b), in *The Day in Question* (2009), Foucault's concept of the 'parrhesiastic game' (2011a: 12-13) no longer operated solely between the parrhesiast, who takes a personal risk and shows courage by speaking truth, and the interlocutor, who shows courage through their listening to what the parrhesiast has to say. Through the specific methodological device of anonymising the narrative material and the co-authored presentation of it, the content is de-individualised, becoming a collective truth. This truth was then staged within the triangular subject positioning whereby the listening Gardaí were also de-individualised, as they collectively occupied one side of the triangle in a common uniform. Furthermore, their speaking of the young

people's stories through their own voices, and the young people in turn hearing the stories as a collection (their own story forming part of a wider truth which they now listen to), contributed to the Parrhesiast and interlocutor positions folding into each other, challenging a typical instantiation of the parrhesiastic game, contributing to acts that have now been framed as both parrhesia and counter-parrhesia.

Another important feature of parrhesia, is that frank and fearless speech aims to avoid misunderstanding (Dyrberg, 2014). This core trait of parrhesia was experienced during *The Day in Question* (2009) as the spoken stories presented a complex and nuanced set of honest narratives that Gardaí were invited to engage with – a tone which was carried through to the dialogue with Gardaí during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), as recognised by two participating Gardaí when they highlighted how '[e]veryone was open and honest when they spoke, enabling us to have heated discussions' (Keogh and Kenny, 2011: 13).[37] This can also be seen in the audience response to *Natural History of Hope* (2016) as described by journalist Abie Philbin Bowman who recognised the effect of frank speech which he described as the women's 'self-awareness' and 'raw honesty' in sharing their truths, stating: 'This was one of the most powerful nights in a theatre I've ever experienced. It's not a play, it's real life'.[38]

A third important feature of parrhesia is that it opens out a space to imagine possibilities for change (Dyrberg, 2014). As discussed above, in the facilitated exchange during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), young people and Gardaí identified specific things they could change in their individual lives, and behaviours that would better effect their relations. Gardaí also identified how the dialogue had given them 'a greater understanding of the lives of the youths they come in contact with on a regular basis'

(Keogh and Kenny, 2011: 13). However, in light of the specific state power occupied by the Gardaí, and the unequal power relations that governed young people and Gardaí interactions, committing to possibilities for systemic change was essential.

This systemic intervention was activated as a representative group met weekly to attend to the change needed on the macro-political level.[39] Here, we discussed the institutional make up of An Garda Síochána as well as the learning from the particular week of the residency, ultimately co-constructing two new local training programmes for future Gardaí assigned to the south inner-city district, focused on giving Gardaí better understanding of young people's behaviour and better understanding of urban 'disadvantage' and poverty. This strand of *Policing Dialogues* (2010) reflected a long-term commitment to institutional reform, moving beyond the participating actors engaging in acts of speaking and listening, to become an ongoing trace of the project at a systemic level, by creating new interventions in police training, which would recognise the dialogical forms of public communication developed.[40]

In this interaction, the representative group (of youth workers, young people, varying ranks of Gardaí and myself) tasked with developing new training sat randomly dispersed on the illuminated triangle after hours in The LAB, no longer visually representing their diverse subject positions in the exchange. Furthermore, the participating Gardaí were not required to be in uniform (Fig. 2.5). Here we were metaphorically occupying the undefined murky space at the centre of the triangle (discussed in chapter one) from which something new emerges, collectively attending to possibilities for change at an institutional level.

Fig. 2.5. *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. © Fiona Whelan.

In this space, the personal stories were discussed as a resource for future Garda training, having journeyed from the private memories and intersubjective narratives, which were then presented to multiple publics over time. At no point in their initial sharing, would one have imagined this ultimate destination for the stories, with each public encounter emerging from the anti-procedural, open-ended dialogical process that is central to the relational matrix described above. Here, the listening audience became implicated in future acts beyond the prescribed dualism of civil society versus the state and consensus versus coercion (Dyrberg, 2014), representing a relational reconfiguring of possibilities. I now explore three features of the methodological framework that contributed to this reconfiguration.

Three Methodological Devices That Contribute to Reconfiguring Power Relations

In Irish society, where the language of disadvantage is arguably normative, and the dominant model of social justice is based on charity (Lynch, 2014), it becomes challenging to speak to issues of inequality in the public realm and avoid the reductive, moralising and deficit language that accompanies this territory. To present a counter narrative, through acts of voice and listening as outlined above, each project eschewed the prevailing preoccupation with expression in order to engage in a *'politics of impression... a move in which mediated communication more readily presents itself as a relational space of intersecting practices and identities'* (Grossman and O'Brien, 2011: 40).

In *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (Helguera, 2011), Pablo Helguera distinguishes between 'symbolic' and 'actual' intervention, drawing on Habermas' (1981) work on communicative action. In an *actual* intervention, the socially engaged artist does not just address an issue in an allegorical or symbolic way, later relying on the representation of the event. The artist instead is committed to a social action that highlights communication and understanding, in an effort to address the public sphere in a meaningful way (Helguera, 2011).

This distinction can be seen in *The Day in Question* (2009) as the collection of stories were heard by the Gardaí for the first time in the presence of those who had told them anonymously. The participating group of Gardaí were not given the collection of stories in advance of the event, which may have risked reducing the young people to subjects of private discussion, while the live act subsequently became a symbolic event.[41] It was important that the collection of stories should first be heard in the live event while the

young people were present, so young people could be part of the mediated dialogical process through which they would come to be understood by the other.

Later during *Policing Dialogues* (2010) as new Garda training was being co-developed as a core element of the residency, the conversations took place on an illuminated triangle highlighting the contingency of relations (as discussed in chapter one). The backdrop to the conversations was the Collective's exhibition including anonymous narratives (spoken and printed) and a documented history of the project to date. This approach speaks to Biesta's (2017) description of the educational tool of *explanation* – a double truth-telling act witnessed as the young people's truths were presented in their stories, and further enhanced by the conditions in which the Gardaí being told the truth could actually see it as true by experiencing it in the presence of the truth tellers.

These processes were activated by both verbal and non-verbal elements, orchestrating a 'politics of impression' that moved far beyond some practices in qualitative research that 'beckon voices to "speak for themselves"' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2012: viii). Acknowledging that the gathered stories were already shaped by the intersubjective process that gave root to them, this practice aligns with poststructuralist research which promotes 'practices that confront and twist voice, meaning and truth' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2009: 3) and with Dialogical Aesthetics in acknowledging the indeterminate nature and liberating possibilities in the communicative process harnessed in the artwork (Kester, 2004). In such durational and iterative practices, public encounters become unpredictable, where 'knowledge is opened up and proliferated rather than foreclosed and simplified' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2012: viii). For this reason, the anonymity of the storytellers became an important feature of the practice, and is the first

methodological device to be explored here.

Anonymity was first introduced as a device to allow people to explore their experiences safely without feeling disloyal or exposing themselves or others to new risks that may emerge if those featured in the stories were identified. The importance of anonymity was described by many involved including youth worker Nichola Mooney, who shared personal accounts in both projects:

> Anonymity was so important, so trusting the person who was collecting the story was important. It didn't matter that you [Fiona] were an artist, just that you knew me… the seriousness you had and the care you gave… You showed in practice that you were looking after them.
>
> (cited in Whelan, 2014: 84)[42]

The protection served by contributing stories anonymously was of central importance in the early stage of each project, but due to the collaborative and iterative nature of the processes, the potential of anonymity grew as it 'allowed people to freely engage alongside their anonymous narratives, as part of a collection, while not feeling bound to the particular version they had shared' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 76). This is broadly conversant with poststructuralist research on narrative, whereby one story overwrites another, as giving an account of one's self or one's life is necessarily situational and deeply contextual. Unlike ideas of voice inherited from metaphysics which position voice as present and static, as collective makers we resisted the positioning of individuals' voices and stories as data to be archived, instead seeing voice as something unstable, 'still "there" to search for, retrieve and liberate' (Jackson A.Y. and Mazzei, 2009: 2), much like the subjectivity of each collaborator as described in chapter one. As Jackson (2002) explains, it would be a mistake to present fixed meanings in stories, and

overlook the meaning-making that comes in the process of telling stories.

Furthermore, as storytellers were part of the durational collaborative process, the anonymous nature of the testimonies provided opportunities for repositioning one's relationship to the version of lived experience initially shared. This repositioning could be seen for Jamie during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), as he became less attached to his own original narratives, in favour of the potential learning to be uncovered from interactions with Gardaí and the development of Garda training.[43] Moreover, all who told stories anonymously did so as part of a relational project where their collaborators had engaged in the same process and the stories were always presented collectively and in relation to each other. Here the temporality of experience was recognised, not merely in the sense that an experience is temporal (i.e. the one documented in the story), but in the sense that experiences taken collectively are temporal (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000); in this case, in the multiple public representations of the stories.

For the publics engaging with the stories in each event, the anonymity of the story-tellers was also important in de-individualising the themes emerging, in order to experience them as macro-narratives layered with systemic inequality. One member of the public at the first local iteration from What's the Story? Collective (2008), highlighted how the anonymous nature of the material allowed the collection to 'wash over him'. This approach worked to avoid a representation of 'our personalised culture' (Lather, 2009: 20), laden with 'easy identifications and sentimentalizing empathy' (ibid.), assisting the listener in creating some distance between an individual story and the story-teller. This could have the effect of unsettling and unfixing categories, so while listening to each other, participants can also recognise the limits to which one can

understand the other (ibid.).

However the practice is not against empathy. As stated above, Kester outlines multiple axes on which empathic insight can be gained in a dialogical art practice, and forms of trust certainly built among many collaborators over time, as detailed by Nichola Mooney above. Furthermore, empathic acts can be identified in the practice including new forms of solidarity that often emerged amongst the collaborators making a work, hearing and identifying with aspects of others' stories. I recall during the first sharing of the stories with the Collective, one young man had mistaken another's story as his own, due to their similarity. While the anonymous nature of the stories prevented a line of empathy to a specific named individual, the young man took comfort in the fact that he was not alone in his experience and turned increasingly towards the collective space as one of solidarity.

After the *Natural History of Hope* (2016) performance, a member of the coordination team commented on the large number of local people who attended the performance, saying they felt represented in the life experiences of the main character Hope, highlighting one specific occasion, when a young woman had ran across the road to her a few days after the performances, shouting 'That was my life on stage… I'm telling you, see Hope, Hope is me' (Anonymous, 2016).[44] As structural and systemic power relations were revealed in the stories, individual accounts of powerlessness and shame were repositioned into the space of collaborative power outlined in chapter one, and new solidarities developing among those involved.

As discussed in *Freedom?*, the tactic of anonymity brings to mind subversive intentions associated with anarchists or hacktivists operating in response to the way in which information circulates across media networks on the world political stage. It also speaks to the practice of the Occupy movement, in both cases, anonymity serves 'to mask the individual's identity while also signifying that the resistant "I" is, in fact, the collective resistance of "we the ninety-nine percent"' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 76).[45] However, Ryan has observed how anonymity operates differently in my practice. While each project built from personal stories that were specific and individual, those stories subsequently came into dialogue with other stories during the public encounters. In these interactions, 'anonymity is part of a process whereby individual/subjective stories are re-enacted as relational experiences within public settings' (ibid.: 77).

Anonymity thus served to both acknowledge and protect the individual authors, while simultaneously drawing publics into the complexity of life and discouraging any individualising of the material.[46] In these public moments, the problem of power is communicated while also creating situations for publics to be exposed to the multiplicity of forms it takes (ibid.).

The approach to the visual component of each public event is the second methodological device that contributes to the communication of power. As described in chapter one, the metaphor of the triangle in the work of What's the Story? Collective was central in highlighting ascribed subject positions and their relationality and contingency. Initially representing the triangulated set of micro-power relations within our specific collaborative process (which reflected the meta-level of governance of the fields of youth work and community based art practice), the triangle was used

repeatedly as a device to reflect multiple sets of power relations in which subject positions were reconfigured and reframed. The materiality of the space created a particular form of 'embodied relationality that [was] able to suggest (if not guarantee) certain possibilities for voices to be heard' (Todd, 2017: 9). The space in the centre of each triangular arrangement subsequently became symbolic of an unknown relational space from which new collaborative knowledge could be produced collectively.

In *The Day in Question* (2009) the tension in the triangle was amplified due to the Gardaí's visual presence in uniform. While reading individually created moments for personal empathy, their uniform visually symbolised state sanctioned power as they formed one side of the triangle (Fig. 2.6). Importantly, as a gesture of acknowledgement of this power, they removed other visual symbols of power in the form of their hats and asps and placed these on a table outside of the triangular space prior to taking their seats for the reading event (Fig. 2.7). This act drew attention to the tangible power they harnessed. '[E]mpathic identification' (Kester, 2004: 113) was encouraged through the stories' capacity to create a connectedness with the other and through each individual Garda's act of removing some of their symbols of power. Meanwhile, the macro-political relationship between police and marginalised youth remained visualised by the triangulation, uniforms and table of hats and asps, so that 'the speakers context is recognized, their history and position relative to social/political power' (ibid.), which is an important feature of a feminist model of epistemology framed as 'connected knowing' (ibid.:114).[47]

Fig. 2.6. *The Day in Question*. What's the Story? Collective, IMMA, 2009. Video still by Enda O'Brien. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

Fig. 2.7. *The Day in Question*. What's the Story? Collective, IMMA, 2009. © Fiona Whelan.

Central to *Policing Dialogues* (2010) was a large illuminated triangular structure (Fig. 2.8), operating metaphorically and performatively as seating for the multiple discursive events that would take place during the residency, while becoming a visible trace of the power relations when the gallery was empty of life.[48] While its scale suggested it was functional, the modernist aesthetic of the triangular structure was not particularly inviting, oscillating 'between hospitality and barrier, between a (forced) togetherness and intimacy of aggregate (antagonized) part(ie)s' (Mey, 2011: 7). While dialogical art practice can be characterised by its openness to empathy and listening, the specific context of the practice was one that highlighted state sanctioned authority and control, the chosen form of the triangle thus representative of 'the inherent contradictions and tensions of this significant aesthetic, ethical and political undertaking' (ibid.).

Fig. 2.8. *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. Photograph by Michael Durand. © Dublin City Council Arts Office

Much like the importance of anonymity as a methodological device in supporting a process of de-individualising stories and creating relational dialogical encounters, the visual metaphors are important in collectivising and giving representational form to disempowering systems. The Two Fuse publication *Freedom?* (2018), for example, examines how my practice with Rialto Youth Project, taken as a whole, has 'generated a method that engages not only with visible power (such as policing), but also with intangible and invisible forms of power' (2018a: 84). Unlike visible forms of power orchestrated by the state through rules and laws, intangible forms of power are experienced as social norms (Brennan and Petit, 2004), characterised as the 'constraints of sociality and belonging' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 13).

As visual elements were central to communicating power relations in the work of What's the Story? Collective, the visual device of metaphor is significantly developed in response to the complex experiences of invisible and intangible forms of power, derived from the lived experiences framed by patriarchy and class relations gathered in the *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16) process.[49] In the context of such invisible and intangible power, speaking to such complex and overlapping power structures became the challenge in developing the performance. Where Gardaí were identified as a public and invited to engage directly in previous events, the insidious nature of the forms of power identified in the *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16) stories presented different challenges when considering their public presentation. A series of metaphors, which emerged directly from the anonymous transcripts, subsequently became a lexicon for engaging with social themes among the collective makers and our publics. Importantly, although each metaphor presented in *Natural History of Hope* (2016) is seen to represent a single social theme, their intersection in the performance represents their

social coexistence – a set of complex challenges to face Hope, who herself is a metaphor.

Fig. 2.9. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

The 'liability of men', a theme identified in the gathered stories of women, was represented by a shadow, a constant threat of violence that follows Hope in her life.[50] This shadow is amplified by the presence of the wolf, a metaphor for patriarchy (Fig. 2.9), who finds his way into many aspects of Hope's life from her interpersonal relationships to her plight for safe and secure housing. The metaphor of the bubble discussed in chapter one signifies the theme of class, shown to Hope by the women on stage who inform her that you can look out from the bubble but will also be observed through it. To come back to the idea of hegemonic relations of power as discussed earlier, this 'external gaze is fabricated from concepts such as "disadvantage", thereby becoming a filter for politics, social science, journalism, and the many other ways in

which inequality is mediated and represented so that it becomes "common sense"' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 91). [51]

The bubble came to encompass the paradox that was described by many women, feeling like both a sanctuary and a trap, highlighting the contingent and relational nature of class-based inequality. This metaphor therefore cannot be viewed solely through oppressive forms of visible power. Much like the paradoxical space of the triangle, the position one holds in relation to the bubble is sustained by forces external and internal to it, including our own perpetuation of its existence through intangible forms of power that can be understood as cultural norms (ibid.). While the public performance of *Natural History of Hope* (Project Arts Centre, 2016) is perhaps more akin to the parrhesiastic speech act than a dialogical encounter, the presentation of the visual metaphors takes the process beyond what Kester describes as an 'orthopaedic aesthetic' (2004: 88), which sets up the viewer as a defective subject to be transformed, and artists as those who possess the ability to remedy the defect. [52] Fiona Woods identifies how, in the context of my practice, the collective makers employ aesthetics 'to visualise and to challenge the constraints that the Enterprise Society imposes on the realisation of freedom and equality' (2018: 339).

In recognising our role and the role of those external to our lives in creating change, (unlike how power is often externalised by movements fighting for equality), visualising the theme of class through the metaphor of the bubble, along with the other metaphors, reminds us how we each contribute to our shared social eco-system, while also helping us to grasp the relational nature of inequality.

It has been essential in all the public manifestations that a core group are positioned centrally as social actors, to create an actual (rather than symbolic) encounter (Helguera, 2011) in which the relational and contingent nature of inequality is performed. This physical presence is the third methodological device highlighted here. While individual storytellers were anonymous, the collective presence of a group co-authoring the stories during *The Day in Question* (2009), *Policing Dialogues* (2010) and *Natural History of Hope* (2016), allows the collection of diverse stories to harness the relational power co-produced through collaboration when positioned publicly. Whether parrhesiastic or dialogical in form, the physical presence of a collective of makers/authors form part of the visual and haptic experience of the encounter. One audience member describes the effect of this during *Natural History of Hope* (2016):

> From the moment that the first group of women came out and took possession of the stage in the way that they did, without a look or gesture towards us in the audience, I felt the line of power was drawn and that power was with the performers who then came on stage. They didn't owe us anything. We owed them and the performance our complete attention.[53]

In being present as collective makers of an event, representation occurs simultaneously to the individual storytellers, to the collective and to the publics as part of a continuum of developing identities. Individual vulnerable 'accounts of powerlessness, shame or negativity are repositioned into the space of collaborative power, as structural and systemic power relations are revealed in the collection and new solidarities built among those involved' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 79). As described previously, in this relational matrix agency becomes a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring contingent relationships (Barad cited in Dolphijn R. and Van der Tuin, I., 2009). In these encounters, the visual language and anonymous narratives are presented performatively

and collectively, as those engaged in the process publicly reconfigure new live relations with the visual lexicon for power, from changing sides of the triangle in the multiple iterations from What's the Story? Collective, to women performing as a wolf in *Natural History of Hope* (2016). The visualising and subsequent performance of power relations presented specific opportunities to explore, diffuse and build new collective subjects. The practice committed to the possibility of transformation, through 'reframing and reengaging conventional modes of being' (Todd, 2017: 8). It subsequently had the effect of resymbolising significant lived experience for individuals, while also becoming 'part of a re-symbolisation of experience that challenges accepted and dominant views of youth in these communities' (ibid.: 7).

In *Natural History of Hope* (2016), the metaphor of the script is of central importance in reflecting this political and collective agency – the performance script acting as a representation of the social script that so many women felt was written for them. Near the end of the performance as Hope sits in a chair dying, her coffin is carried onto the stage, and the script indicates that she will die (Fig. 2.10). This moment connects to the opening lines of the performance as the cast took to the stage, some women recalling another performance they had been in twenty years previously from which many of the cast had since died young.

Fig. 2.10. *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Having commenced our performance with the women on stage lighting a candle in recognition of those from the previous cast who had since died, the *Natural History of Hope* (2016) cast now enacted a united decision to rip up the script, one shouting defiantly that 'Hope's not dying today'. This collective gesture in the face of the metaphorical script being written for Hope was an important act of resistance – an act arguably more easily achieved collectively in that performative moment, than any one individual considering redirecting their own journey against the array of oppressive forces represented. 'Fuck the script', one woman shouted as another tore it to pieces, the cast then turning their attention to collectively writing a new one.[54]

In this relational act, those speaking their truth about inequality, further engage in a concerted act of listening to themselves. This speaks to Noam Chomsky's questioning of the act of speaking truth to power as a priority, asserting that 'power knows the truth

already; it is just busy trying to conceal it' (Eagleton, 2006: para. 9), instead highlighting that the ones who need the truth are those being oppressed. Importantly in the public encounters discussed here, all involved have the opportunity to listen simultaneously as the collective authors of each event become part of the public, highlighting how '"I" am included in a "public" we', which is instantiated performatively (Todd, 2017: 5). This connects to Butler's view of politics and publics as performative acts, as expressed by Todd when she draws our attention to how performativity 'work[s] in and against existing normative structures to claim something new' (2015b). As the methodological devices of anonymity and visual metaphors are presented live through performative instantiations, coupled with the form of collaborative power outlined in chapter one, the public realm is to be seen as both a 'space of appearance' (Arendt, 1958: 199) and as 'a space of shared *inter-est'* (Jackson M., 2002: 11) as social actors appear before one another, wishing to create a world in which they all belong.

The Public Creation of an Imaginary Future

The act of sharing personal narratives that is at the core of this practice speaks to Arendt's framing of storytelling as 'a strategy for transforming private into public meaning' (cited in ibid.: 14-15). A passive relationship to lived experiences is interrupted when they are reconstituted into stories, which are brought into dialogue with others in the world and with the storyteller's own imagination (ibid.). Just as every individual started life being inserted into a web of human relationships, the stories being told reflect complex relational experiences, which highlight that no person is the sole author of their own story; rather, they are an agent within it (Arendt, 1958).

As the women collectively rip the script towards the end of *Natural History of Hope* (2016), they highlight that their story is also the audience's story (Two Fuse, 2018a). The same can be said as young people, Gardaí and other public witnesses face each other in *The Day in Question* (2009). This public space is conceptualised by Arendt as a 'space of appearance' (1958: 199) where people appear in person before each other and are open to each other's judgments. Power is rooted in this public space, in the potential appearance between acting and speaking agents (ibid.). Here, an appearance is not the same as an apparition; '[a]ppearance is not an illusion that is opposed to the real. It is the introduction of a visible into the field of experience, which then modifies the regime of the visible' (Rancière 1998, cited in Todd, 2017: 5). Appearance should be seen as an intervention into the existing ways in which we understand our lived reality (ibid.), although not at a rational or cognitive level, but at a protolinguistic level in which previously lived experiences are symbolically restructured and subject-object relations remodelled (Jackson M., 2002).

While individual strength may be felt by acting individuals, power is harnessed temporarily when people act together in the public space of appearance (Arendt, 1858). In each of the public works discussed, I believe this temporary collective power is born of the convergence of the two aforementioned forms of relational power. In the form of relational power that is co-produced through collaboration, freedom is seen not as an end goal, but a practice that is lived through concerted action (Two Fuse, 2018a). As a group of people acting collectively, simultaneously articulating (through verbal, visual and performative devices) inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power, the combined force of the two forms of relational power generate possibilities for alternative ways of being in the world.

This possibility counteracts the limited experience of freedom that is presented in individual stories. Here collective makers 'begin to sense that the world we inhabit can be altered, maybe even transformed' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 2). For example, the script ripping scene in *Natural History of Hope* (2016) highlights the convergence of two forms of relational power as women combine their agency 'by collectively refusing to live a pre-scripted (as in prescribed) life' (ibid.: 87). In the public space of appearance, where the women show the audience that they could co-author a new story, they 'grant freedom *to* each other and derive freedom *from* each other' (ibid.). Here there is an understanding of 'the self as the embodiment of visible, intangible and invisible power' (ibid.: 93).

In opposition to the neoliberal notion of individual freedom that disregards 'the socially constructed dimension of the self and the relational basis of society' (Woods, 2018: 441), the commitment to acts of voice and listening born out through the collective delivery of the methodological features presented in this chapter, present an approach concerned with enacting freedom as a lived contingent practice.[55] The projects discussed here were not just about gathering and presenting lived experiences as an act of validation to individuals or communities. Stories were not gathered as part of an external process, not part of formal data, but were part of a creative process in which those who shared testimonies 'could work alongside their own and others, creating a sense of possibility and a collective imagining of alternatives' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 80). Each had gone on a personal journey moving a personal narrative through stages including relational public encounters while building a collaborative alliance with other individuals, collectively presenting the stories and authoring public events; agonistic, dialogical and parrhesiastic in form.

For Arendt, each person is 'a beginning and a beginner' (2006 [1961]: 169), with a capacity to inaugurate the new, conceived of as 'natality' (Arendt, 1958). Once born, each human has the capacity to begin something, and it is in this uniquely Arendtian sense that natality denotes the human capacity to engage in what I presented earlier, from Wilson, as 'applied experiments in political imagination' (2018a: 32). Natality is realised in 'the space of appearances' described earlier, where something indeterminate and unpredictable is set in motion, with the potential for a reconfiguring of possibilities. In establishing a collective to explore the power relations in the multiple matrices that form the context for our practice, is to put natality into play. Likewise, to gather generations of women to share and collate lived experiences is to put natality into practice. Importantly, in a collaborative process, whatever emerges from such initiative arises from the contingency of intersubjective relationships.

Todd identifies the claim to freedom that leads to public events, such as those described here, as an educational process: a process that creates the conditions for subjectivation and transformation, enabling those involved to reinterpret their lived experiences, 'thereby creating alternative meanings out of the customary grammar of victimisation and blame' (2017: 9). Speaking about *The Day in Question* (2009), she positions the Collective's practice as 'emergent', acknowledging the durational, open-ended conversational approach to engaging young people as a reimagining of disadvantage, in opposition to the dominant curriculum culture in educational policy, where programmes are implemented without full recognition of the particularities of the students. She explains:

> As *The Day in Question* shows, the power of reimagining what is possible is
> deeply connected not to tests and other instruments of measurement, but to lives

that each of us has the power to narrate for ourselves and thus take a vantage point that no one was expecting.

(Todd, 2015b)

Arguing for educational practice away from the dominant trend, Todd draws on Biesta, highlighting how we are 'losing the language of teaching and education in our rush to become more "effective" in an age of measurement and in the eyes of narrow economic interest' (ibid.). In this paradigm, students have been reframed as learners; teachers reframed as implementers, and the policies supporting education are becoming further detached from those they are meant to be addressing (ibid.). In *Letting Art Teach*, Biesta (2017) argues for a world-centred education, where student voice is only one part of an educational experience, the quality of what is voiced must in turn be questioned. The dialogical matrix of world-centred education, teaches you that you are not alone. Students see themselves in the world, without being the centre of it. This connects strongly to Arendt's understanding of human action contained within the plurality of human existence. In being born, we become part of something bigger than ourselves. Agonism is a core part of this relational world as students' stories are open to response by others. In meeting the world, one can meet resistance of self and body and the social, but Biesta argues that this encounter of resistance *is* the educational moment; this space of dialogue *is* the educational form (ibid.).

This pluralistic and dialogical space speaks to Arendt's second description of the public realm, 'as a space of shared *inter-est*, where a plurality of people work together to create a world to which they feel they all belong' (Jackson M., 2002: 11). In such a public space, there is a collective imagining of alternatives, an existence where the imagined or desired future is enacted (Two Fuse, 2018a). Importantly, consistent with a relational

ontology, a shared interest and direction arises between acting individuals through the collective practice, rather than being there at the beginning. In the case of my practice, it was the openness of the beginning, where natality could be seen to be enacted, and the commitment to agonistic disagreement as central to the process, which made a common project possible. Furthermore, any shared interest that did arise was tentative because the direction of the practice was always an emergent property. With the dialogical matrix of each iteration, came an engagement with the world through multiple publics.

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined a form of relational power that articulates inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power. Specific methodological devices have been discussed, which combine to reframe vulnerability and re-imagine disadvantage through (counter-) parrhesiastic and dialogical encounters. In doing so, this chapter has explored in what ways and to what end systemic power relations are exposed, challenged and reconfigured in the public manifestations that emerged in this practice. Having started both projects with a collection of individual anonymous narratives, the relational nature of the public encounters developed by What's the Story? Collective and the coordination team leading *Natural History of Hope* (2016), have created polyvocal narratives, in which voice and listening co-exist and visible and invisible forms of power are exposed and tensioned. As the form of relational power that articulates inequalities between those who exercise power and those who are subject to power overlaps and fuses with a form of relational power co-produced through collaboration (as discussed in chapter one), a collective imagining of alternative futures is activated, where a new beginning is born and where the new is thought into existence.

Notes

[1] 'Demanding Conversations – Socially Engaged Arts Practice in a Changing Political Climate' was a conference that took place at Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol, on 22 and 23 September 2010. The conference involved practitioners, artists, policy makers and commentators in debate about socially engaged arts practice within the visual arts sector.
See <https://kwmc.org.uk/projects/demandingconversations/> [Accessed 1 December 2018].

[2] A more extensive account of the conference experience in Bristol is outlined in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 202-205).

[3] RTÉ, (2010) *Today with Pat Kenny*, RTÉ Radio 1, 22 September.

[4] RTÉ Reporter Paddy O' Gorman appeared to have briefly visited the exhibition and misread many aspects of it, viewing it as a blanket statement about policing and not considering the context in which the project arose, or the entire programme of events that were explained in the large painted timeline, highlighting the enquiry in progress. Furthermore, he completely omitted any information that showed that we were engaging with An Garda Síochána in this process. Any engagement with the press release or exploration of the written material on the walls of the gallery would have contextualised the film and exhibition in the context of a broader exploration of power, in which the Gardaí were on-going participants.

[5] As described by Murphy and Smyth, the report included factually incorrect statements such as: 'they interviewed a lot of young people with negative experiences with the gardaí [sic]'; 'what City Council and the Arts Council have done is they've taken those statements, they've printed them up, mounted them in boxes'; '…it's going to Bristol now next month where they're going to be meeting other artists' (2011: 21).

[6] Jane Golden, Executive Director of the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, during a TV interview with Fox News, 2007.

[7] In 2009, the Collective engaged in a process exploring the relationship between class and the media, inviting in a range of external contributors to speak to the issue. See *TEN*: *Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 140-143), for further discussion.

[8] Holland, K. (2009) 'Listening Event Proves a Success Between Gardaí and Youths', *Irish Times*, 7 Dec.

[9] Breen, S. (2009) 'Top Cop Answers Teens' Call', *News of the World*, 27 Dec.

[10] While angered with the journalist, there was a stronger feeling of betrayal by the Chief Superintandent who had conducted a brief interview with a tabloid newspaper, outside of our agreement. The Collective set in motion a process to repair the now broken relationship with John Twomey, essential before any further work would be done on the upcoming *Policing Dialogues* (2010) exhibition and residency. This article is referenced in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 160) and the subsequent process with the Chief Superintendent is outlined on pages 167-171.

[11] Unlike all other media engaging with the exhibition and residency who had engaged members of the Collective in interviews, this reporter had turned up by himself and had not sought any exchange with those collectively authoring the exhibition, which had been offered during press call outs. While this is valid practice for a journalist, meeting with some of the collective authors of the exhibition may have offered O' Gorman a deeper respect for the sources of the anonymous stories and the rationale for their remaining anonymous.

[12] The concept of *parrhesia* was first introduced to the practice in a commissioned response to *Policing Dialogues* (2010). See Smyth and Murphy (2011).

[13] During a presentation 'Power and (im)possibility? Socially-Engaged Art and Cynic Practice' at the Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics at the University of Brighton, 29 May 2018 with Kevin Ryan, under the collective heading Two Fuse, I positioned my practice as an act of *parrhesia*, drawing on an earlier observation by Smyth and Murphy (2011), while acting in the role of advisors to

Policing Dialogues (2010). This framing had been developed and subsequently presented during the presentation in Brighton, but was challenged by an audience member Lars Cornelissen, who later sent a personal email (16 June 2018) convincingly explaining his view that the encounters between young people and police should in fact be considered as a 'reversal of the parrhesiastic relationship, rather than as an instantiation of it'. In the email, Cornelissen described the practice as 'counter-parrhesiastic'. This will be further explored later in this chapter.

[14] These questions emerged after an international symposium 'Memory-Art-Power', which examined the importance of archiving for cultural validation and development. Organised by City Arts, it took place on 19 October 2006 at the City Library and Archive, Pearse Street, Dublin. The keynote speaker was Claire Hackett, Coordinator, Dúchas Living History Project, Belfast, a project committed to recording the experience of conflict in West Belfast. Having attended the archiving symposium, and inspired by Claire Hackett, some key questions about the value of lived experience and the right to speak about it emerged for me.

[15] In his book *Conversation Pieces* (2004:15), Kester outlines the ethical dilemmas faced by artists working to 'give voice' to communities seen to be disadvantaged.

[16] Christopher Robbins posed this question (referencing Couldry), during a keynote address 'Escape from Politics: The Challenge of Pedagogy and Democratic Politics in the De/Schooled Society' at *Deschooling Society,* a two-day conference which took its title from Ivan Illich's seminal book of 1971. My reflections on this question are further discussed in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 184).

[17] The rationale and approach to story gathering is outlined in *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 82-91).

[18] In this phase of What's the Story? Collective, all members of the group shared stories including the youth workers and myself. Having analysed the stories, and presented a selection during our first event in 2008, the Collective decided to focus on the theme of policing, which emerged in many of the stories. This elected focus did not represent any stories contributed by the adult members and so our practice during *The Day in Question* (2009) and *Policing Dialogues* (2010) became focused on young people's experiences of policing. For the subsequent *Natural History of Hope* project (2012-16), once again all members of the coordination team contributed personal stories along with young women and adult women from the local area. However, the theme for the duration of this project remained focused on women's experiences and so was broad enough to encompass diverse intergenerational experiences.

[19] I became interested in the term 'troubling' following '(Re)Thinking Ontology in (Post)Qualitative Research', a lecture and master-class with Patti Lather in 2015. The concept was previously used in 2010 by the Danish curatorial collective Kuratorisk Aktion, who conceived of a platform for socially engaged practitioners, called *Troubling Ireland* 'in which received notions of Irish identity, history and politics, and Ireland's relationship to global capitalism, would be probed and unravelled'. See <http://www.troublingireland.com> [Accessed 15 November 2018].

[20] Adams St. Pierre goes on to explain that her rationale for criticising the privileging of voice is '*because voice* is part of the humanist discursive and material formation Post-structuralism works against' (2009: 221).

[21] This response was gathered during an internal evaluation after *Natural History of Hope*, May 2016.

[22] During a lecture I attended in Trinity College Dublin on 30 May 2016, Patricia Clough spoke about a general view of subjectivity as being associated with rights and private property and the possibility to transform oneself, which is fed by the concept of intentionality. Observing the place of unconscious thought, she went on to describe the subject's position as in a world that is atomic, referencing Karen Barad, noting: 'We have never just been ourselves. Subjectivity brings something unique to something that is already going on'.

[23] On 11 November 2008, during a weekly session of the What's the Story? Collective, we explored our intentions for the upcoming event with the Gardaí. It was at this session that we agreed that the primary goal was for young people's voices to be heard by Gardaí. See *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (Whelan, 2014: 103-5), for further discussion.

[24] See *TEN*: *Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014: 141), for further discussion.

[25] With two months to go until the Commission on the Future of Policing would report, ICCL convened a 'discussion between social justice experts and activists who have hands-on experience of Garda interaction with children in the criminal justice and care systems, with young people in Dublin's Inner City, and with the Traveller community'. Having commissioned their own research on how a human rights-based approach to policing could be achieved in Ireland, 'the aim of this event [was] to tease out, in practical terms, what difference a human rights-based approach to policing could make to members of communities that have particular experiences with An Garda Síochána'. The three other speakers at the event were from the legal profession – Gareth Noble, Children's Law solicitor; David Joyce, solicitor and Travellers' rights advocate and Alyson Kilpatrick BL, Human Rights Advisor to the Northern Ireland Policing Board from 2009 – 2017. My presentation was subsequently published on the ICCL website <https://www.iccl.ie/justice/can-young-influence-policing/> [Accessed 18 September 2018].

[26] See note 13, chapter one.

[27] The two primary state-run programmes that bring young people and Gardaí together are the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme and Garda Youth Diversion Projects. The Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme aims to prevent young offenders in Ireland from entering into the full criminal justice system. When a young person comes to the attention of An Garda Síochána because of their criminal activity, they may be dealt with through the Diversion Programme. The intended outcome of the programme is to divert young people from committing further offences. Children on the programme may be referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Projects, which are community-based youth services that provide a range of activities and seek to support good relations between the Garda and the community. Both projects place an emphasis on the young person being in need of change. *The Day in Question* (2009) was a unique alternative invitation to the Gardaí requesting them to listen to young people on their own terms. The collective positioning of the Gardaí in uniform, speaking the stories of young people from their district, acts not as an accusation levelled at those specific Gardaí, but a classification of the position of the participating Gardaí as 'at risk' of such behaviour and as a process of diversion from future acts. This signals an inversion of power relations, as the langauge of 'diversion' typically practiced on young people through policing initiatives aimed at diverting them from future criminal behaviour, is now applied and experienced by uniformed Gardaí.

[28] On 29 June 2017, in recognition of this unique methodology when compared to existing projects between Gardaí and young people, I was invited to give a keynote address at an event *New Foundations in Youth Justice*, Dublin Institute of Technology Grangegorman. The event was part of a research project funded under the Irish Research Council New Foundations Programme to develop knowledge exchange and collaboration on youth justice research in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The project aimed to focus on young people's rights and experiences in the youth justice system and to examine innovative approaches to researching young people's and practitioners' experiences with the system in order to better inform policy and practice. As part of the project, two half-day sessions were held in Belfast and Dublin respectively in May and June 2017.

[29] Bickford (1996) credits Barber as the first democratic theorist to explicitly discuss listening.

[30] For this dialogue, we invited Community Action Network (CAN) as facilitators. CAN hold four core values central to dialogue practice: Firstly, participants of dialogue are asked to speak their true voice. Secondly, participants are asked to engage in deep listening both within oneself and to others. Thirdly, all involved are asked to respect others by listening to what they have to say, acknowledging that each person has a legitimate reason for having his or her point of view. Lastly, participants are asked to suspend their own reactions and opinions to listen without judgment to others. See Forrestal (2011: 10-11), for further discussion.

[31] Robbins, C., personal email (18 July 2010). Robbins is Associate Professor of Social Relations at Eastern Michigan University.

[32] Drawing on Jane Mansbridge's differentiation between unitary and adversary democracy, Bickford highlights how '[a]dversary democracy understands citizens' interests to be in conflict and takes as its purpose equal protection of those interests' (1996: 14). Mansbridge explains that both forms can exist in a democracy, as long as they can be distinguished in specific situations (ibid.).

[33] Foucault explains the reference to death:

> So you see, the parrhesiastes is someone who takes a risk. Of course, this risk is not always a risk of life. When, for example, you see a friend doing something wrong and you risk incurring his anger by telling him he is wrong, you are acting as a parrhesiastes. In such a case, you do not risk your life, but you may hurt him by your remarks, and your friendship may consequently suffer for it. If, in a political debate, an orator risks losing his popularity because his opinions are contrary to the majority's opinion, or his opinions may usher in a political scandal, he uses parrhesia. Parrhesia, then, is linked to courage in the face of danger: it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger. And in its extreme form, telling the truth takes place in the 'game' of life or death.
>
> (2001: 16)

[34] This is Foucault's interpretation of parrhesia presented in his 1983 lectures.

[35] The phrase 'the liability of men' emerged from Kathleen Lynch's analysis of the gathered anonymous stories, which included accounts of male violence and male sexual violence over which women felt they lacked control. Other themes identified by Lynch included; class, death, gendered identity, lack of safe space, struggle for dignity and the affective domain.

[36] Cornelissen, L., personal email (16 June 2018).

[37] During *Policing Dialogues* (2010), when the Gardaí and young people who had been part of *The Day in Question* (2009) returned to engage in a two-day dialogue, Gardaí spoke frankly about their concerns since the first encounter. One Garda was angered that young people whom she had engaged with during the 2009 event had subsequently ignored her while she was policing their local area. The initial frank and honest expression of *The Day in Question* (2009) had set a tone, which was now returned to by this Garda, her honestly helping to avoid assumptions and misunderstandings, instead igniting a rich complex dicusssion into the politics and governance of local public space, as against the private encounter of the curated engagement (see Forrestal, 2011).

[38] See note 9, chapter one.

[39] This group included the Chief Superintendent of Dublin South Central District, a training Sergeant, two Gardaí, two young people, myself, a youth worker and the manager from RYP, all facilitated by Cecilia Forrestal from Community Action Network (CAN).

[40] See note 17, introduction.

[41] Each individual Garda was shown the story they would read in advance of the event by their Sergeant to ensure they were confortable in reading the content aloud, but the collection of stories was not shared with the full group in advance of the event.

[42] Youth worker Nichola Mooney made this statement during research into our story-gathering process, which I carried out in January 2012. Each person telling a story decided who they would tell their story to. While Nichola references the trust she held in me, it is important to note that this trust was built through the process of the Collective and not assumed from the outset.

[43] See *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (Whelan, 2014: 174-5), for further discussion.

[44] This story was told two weeks after the performances, during a reflection with members of the coordination team of *Natural History of Hope*, 25 May 2016.

[45] The Occupy movement is a people-powered socio-political movement, which opposes social and economic inequality, aiming to advance new approaches to democracy. Inspired by uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and framed by the slogan 'We the ninety-nine percent', the movement began in 2011 with Occupy Wall Street, a protest in New York's financial district against the richest 1% of the population controlling the global economy. For critical discussion on the slogan, see Chantal Mouffe's 2013 journal article 'Constructing Unity Across Differences. The Fault Lines of the 99%'.

[46] As outlined in chapter one, importantly, while individual stories remained anonymous for the reasons stated, the resulting public work which built upon these stories was co-authored, with the individual names of the makers of the public work listed and credited.

[47] In critiquing Habermas' theory of the public sphere, Kester (2004) moves to a feminist model of epistemology framed as 'connected knowing', in which each person works to identify with the perspective of the other. In this paradigm, he outlines two features. Firstly, the speaker's context is recognised, their history and position relative to social/political/cultural power, that are often disregarded in Habermas' public sphere. The second characteristic is empathetic identification. So rather than enter into discursive interaction to represent oneself, with already formed judgments and opinions, 'connected knowledge is grounded in our capacity to identify with other people' (ibid.:114). It is not just about self-interest, or logical argument, but creates an opportunity for individuals to redefine self, to know and feel their connectedness to the other.

[48] In response to a brief outlined by the Collective, Barry Archer, James Ryan and Iósaf Bennis co-designed and manufactured the triangular seating. The process was carried out at Wedge, a furniture design and manufacturing company. <http://www.wedge.ie/> [Accessed 1 February 2019].

[49] The difference in the stories gathered during *Natural History of Hope* – as opposed to the previous work of What's the Story? Collective – is the description of interpersonal relationships that were framed by patriarchy and class relations, arguably more insidious forms of power. See *Freedom?* (2018: 88), for further discussion.

[50] See note 35, chapter two.

[51] In an interview for the *Irish Times* (see Keating, 2016), youth worker Nichola Mooney spoke about how the metaphors have entered the idiom of those from the community who saw the performance, who now use them to describe complex social issues. See *Freedom?* (Two Fuse, 2018), for further discussion.

[52] The four-year project that led to the public performance of *Natural History of Hope* (2016) could be described as dialogical, but the form in which the final performance engaged publics adopted a more traditional format of performer as speaker and audience as listener, which fits with the features of parrhesia as described previously.

[53] Audience member written feedback, 2016. As part of a reflective process following *Natural History of Hope* (2016), members of the coordination team invited individual feedback from diverse audience members.

[54] During a presentation in Brighton University (Two Fuse, 2018b), I publicly questioned our choice of ending for *Natural History of Hope* (2016), asking whether the end should have been a more dialogical experience, engaging the audience to show their implicit role in Hope's future. This has since been discussed with Brokentalkers and Rialto Youth Project, and if this work is to be re-performed in the future, the ending could involve the audience engaged with the cast in acts of writing new futures, a process akin to Lehrstücke or *learning-plays*, the experimental, participatory form of theatre developed by Bertolt Brecht.

[55] Fiona Woods wrote a review of my co-written publication *Freedom?* (Two Fuse, 2018) titled 'A Radical Performance of World-Making: A Review of *Freedom?*' (2018) in which she further discusses my collaborative practice in relation to concepts of power and freedom.

Conclusion

> The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning. If you knew when you began a book what you were going to say at the end, do you think you would have the courage to write it? What is true for writing and for love relationships, is also true for life. The game is worthwhile insofar as we do not know what will be the end.
>
> (Foucault cited in Martin, 1988: 9)[1]

Arguably, we exist in an era shaped by neoliberal modes of control and governance fuelled by a means-end rationality, which has come to influence policy and practice in the intersecting fields of socially engaged art and youth work (see Sholette, 2017; Kiely and Meade, 2018).[2] Against this backdrop, I position my indeterminate open-ended practice as a deliberate shift away from any operating frameworks for practice that employ a 'governmentality analytic' (Kiely and Meade, 2018: 13), which in turn standardises and tames practice and 'forecloses upon other imaginable ways of being-in-the-world' (Ryan, 2017: 7). In this thesis, I have presented a durational practice that strives to hold open the space of 'not-knowing' (Lather, 2009: 18), resisting a staging of prefigurative projects that would colonise the future with the present (Two Fuse, 2018b).

However, this commitment to an emergent and indeterminate practice, does not equate to a practice that is independent or autonomous. In recognising the historical ontology of the specific macro- and micro-political matrices that a practice is rooted in and dependant on (as outlined in chapter one), the contingent nature of practice and its subsequent limitations are recognised. Likewise, understanding social norms as a force

of power (as discussed in chapter two), highlights further the relational nature of human existence and the insidious forms of power that shape and influence lived experience and practice.

Core to the practice presented here was an investment over a decade in one geographic context classified by the state through depoliticising language, as 'disadvantaged'. Aligning with the values of RYP in their recognition of the 'oppression' of working class communities, my primary intentions in engaging with the organisation was to commit to a collaborative process across discipline and sector and to learn and unlearn in the process. Over time through sustained relationships with people and place, supported by external interlocutors bringing additional knowledge, a durational collaborative practice emerged. This practice emerged from the specific relational context and the multiple matrices it intersected simultaneously, responding to the macro-political context of class and gender inequality, to the inter-organisational relationships of community work in Rialto, the discourses circulating within the field of socially engaged art, to the group process and individual relationships formed through collaboration.

This attention to micro- and macro-political contexts gave rise to its own methodological and ethical framework recently described as inspirational in its intentions 'to invert, destabilize, and transcend dominant expressions of governmental power and their problematizations of young people's conduct' (Kiely and Meade, 2018: 19). Over time, through cumulative processes, the practice built towards transdisciplinary outcomes and contributed criticality and new knowledge to a multiplicity of fields, which can be seen in the discourse that emerged through this work

and how it engaged with other disciplines in diverse forums, as discussed in chapters one and two. As specific thematic enquiries developed, the practice also directly influenced practice and thinking in policing and youth justice, reflected in multiple presentations, media reports and recognition at the highest level in the recent report from the Commission on the Future of Policing.[3]

A commitment to focusing on multiple sets of power relationships that effect the collaborative process and individuals engaged, has been a central characteristic of the practice, which gave rise to two forms of relational power, one built through collaboration as outlined in chapter one, the other through the articulation of inequality between those who exercise power and those subject to power, as presented in chapter two. These forms of relational power became interdependent and occurred simultaneously though the practice, giving rise to a practice rooted in the space of political imagination, recognising that the world is produced relationally, and change is therefore possible.

Over a decade of collaboration, through de-individualising and collectivising personal anonymous stories towards multiple public iterations, new dialogical and at times parrhesiastic forms of public communication were developed to speak to themes of inequality. The practice subsequently exposed and challenged visible and invisible forms of power within family, community, the state, justice system, education system, patriarchal and class structures as well as the media, invoking new power relations through collective performative actions. Considering the entire body of work as a series of chapters in a larger story, this collaborative arts practice offers insights into 'how patriarchal power intersects with class inequalities, while at the same time class

intersects with generational power relations, which in turn intersect with patriarchy' (Two Fuse, 2018a: 90). Importantly the collective makers, organisational matrix and local communities are part of the wider public, simultaneously creating and being exposed to this visualisation, with new collective subjectivities emerging.

Staying true to the entangled forms of subject and agency that are central to this practice and thesis, the conclusion resists the presentation of a transferable model. In opposition to the neoliberal evidence-based logic, I am also avoiding the appropriation of what is presented here through the technocratic language of impact. In presenting two forms of relational power and the features of methodological devices that contribute to their sustainability and contestability, I present an approach to collaborative arts practice that resists transforming beginnings into imagined ends. As life is increasingly lived from the point of view of projected ends, which negate the indeterminacy of beginnings, pressure is increasingly applied on the meaning of freedom, freedom not as an individual's own property but as Arendt theorised it – freedom as an embodied relation that emerges through concerted action (Ryan, 2018).

What is argued for through this thesis therefore is not a solution to inequality mapped through future projections, but an approach to life and practice that attends in the here and now, in any context, to multiple lived experiences of power and does so in a way that exposes wider systemic power relations such that they can be challenged and tensioned, through approaches that are dialogical, parrhesiastic and agonistic in form, and where consensus is not a priority.

Each of the four public works presented in this thesis mark a closing of one phase of

work and the opening out of another, though this always commences as possibility rather than inevitability, such that end and beginning are conjoined through an indeterminate/iterative process. As Arendt remarks, '[w]hile strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between men [sic] when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse' (1958: 200). The temporary nature of the relational power inherent in these projects is thus recognised and any new beginning that emerges is always contingent on the agonistic space of collaboration and all its fragilities.[4]

In avoiding the transformation of a beginning into an end, I will conclude this thesis by bringing the reader into another beginning, born of the time period post-*Natural History of Hope* (2016), when collaborators returned to reflect upon the shared experience, signalling new ideas and directions for further work. Over time a core tension that was presented in the performance was recognised as the basis of a further enquiry. This tension is rooted in the theme 'the liability of men' that emerged from the multiple accounts of male violence and male sexual violence in the gathered anonymous stories, over which women felt they lacked control. On stage, alongside this representation of men, we presented Hope's son, a baby boy, born into the world, imbued with all the hope and possibilities of a new beginning, as can be seen from the performance script which was read aloud by multiple women:

> Hope's son is a real funny boy, a little joker. He loves to mess and dance
> about. She fills with joy when she sees the delight in his little face at birthdays
> and Christmas and how happy he is, playing out all day with his friends, only
> coming back when he's thirsty. She treasures her movie nights in bed with him.
> 'Ma, can we bring up the popcorn?' he asks and they gather up loads of pillows
> and the two of them lie in her bed, and he feeds her popcorn while they stare at

the telly. In the morning he helps arrange the cushions and shake out the duvet and she says 'You're very good, you're a great little helper' and he goes all gushy, like he's the business.

Hope wishes she could erase the memories of all the bad stuff her son has seen; She cries when she thinks of his little face, going pure white with fear after running and jumping walls to get away from danger, the adrenaline pumping in his tiny body. She wishes she could change the way his Da is with him. She wishes his Da would bring him to the park or the seaside rather than just bringing him to the pub to watch a United match. She sees how he loves the outdoors, and nature and wishes she could bring him on more holidays.

She teaches him the value of money and hard work. She makes him add up all the prices of the toys he wants in the Smyths' catalogue and think about how much his Ma would have to work to earn that money. On the way to school he sees someone in a BMW and he asks 'Ma, how do people get cars?' and she explains to him that when he is older he will have a good job, and he will save up and buy his own car. He asks her 'Ma why don't you have a boyfriend'. 'I just haven't got one son', she says.

As he gets older Hope's son will hear his friends talk about vodka and red bull and pints of Bud. He'll see his older cousin's music videos and say 'Look at the tits on her'. Hope worries about her boy. She hopes that he'll have the confidence to walk away if he is ever offered a line of coke or a drag of a joint. She hopes he treats women with respect. And that he doesn't see young ones as pieces of meat. Hope tells him that whether he's into girls or boys it doesn't matter. 'I'll love you no matter what', she says. She hopes he doesn't get cancer because it runs in the family. She hopes he's able to come and talk to her if he's ever worried about anything. She hopes he finishes school. She hopes he finds the career he wants. She hopes he doesn't grow up to be like his Da. She hopes he learns how to express his anger without violence. And that he is able to step out of the bubble, and see the world beyond.

She hopes he gets to do all the things she didn't.

Emerging directly from this tension posed during *Natural History of Hope* (2016), in collaboration with RYP and Brokentalkers, we have developed a new intergenerational project titled *What Does He Need?* (2018+). In a time when a spotlight is being shone on many patriarchal and misogynistic cultures nationally and internationally, this project recognises an urgent need for a critical enquiry into the formation of boys' and men's identities, and considers how forms of masculinity are cultivated and subsequently experienced in boys' lives.[5]

Core methodological features inherent in the practice to date remain central to this new project.[6] Importantly these function not as a formula to be applied, but as a set of tried and tested approaches and devices to be built upon. Moreover, there is some key learning from previous work, identified in this thesis, which is seen to explicitly affect the starting point of this new project: understanding that individual agency and relational ontology can emerge between a collective of acting subjects, a core methodological device for *What Does He Need?* (2018+) is a workshop in which a new boy is co-created and guided through life by a participating group of individuals. Furthermore, learning from the exploration of power in previous projects, the workshop recognises from the outset the visible and invisible forms of power that influence our lives, and so groups are tasked with arming their boy with skills and experiences he will need in the face of the social norms and systemic power relations that are likely to influence him, emerging from the context in which he is born.

Inviting external expertise into the project remains a feature of practice working towards transdisciplinary outcomes, with this new project maintaining the advisory support of Lynch due to her research into masculinity and gender inequality. However, in recognition of the implicit pedagogical value of the practice, Todd has also been invited to act as an advisor to *What Does He Need?* (2018+). The importance of the relationship between pedagogy and art is noted by Helguera, who suggests that 'pedagogy and education are about emphasis on the embodiment of the process, on the dialogue, on the exchange, on intersubjective communication, and on human relationships' (cited in Reed, 2013: para. 10). Promoting the educational potential of collaborative process has always been present in the practice. For example, the emergent methodological approach central to *The Day in Question* (2009) was recognised for its educational value in creating a 'greater mutual understanding…between youth groups and Gardaí' (Commission on the Future of Policing In Ireland, 2018: 25), while during *Policing Dialogues* (2010), we set out to develop training modules for Gardaí as a systemic trace of the transdisciplinary learning generated through the project. Similarly, during *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16), while more explicitly aware of the pedagogical value of the process (see Todd 2015a; 2015b; 2017), we temporarily reframed a phase of the project under the heading *New School for Girls*, presenting the project's values as a pedagogical approach.[7] However, in learning from prior experience, *What Does He Need?* (2018+) is more explicit about its position at the intersection of collaborative arts and education.

The open-ended participant-led characteristics of the practice align with those identified in the educational turn in contemporary art in the 1990s, an era which saw a 'widespread adoption of pedagogical models' (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 12), moving

from their previous peripheral position in relation to an exhibition, biennial etc. to a central component of art practice (ibid.).[8] Features of works emerging during this turn includes their aleatory nature, their tendency toward process (versus object) based production and their endless temporality which preferences exploratory and experimental approaches of which collaboration is at the centre (Lee Podesva, 2007). In such processes, educational forms are appropriated for artistic production (ibid.), and those engaged act as 'participatory agents actively shaping and analysing both the nature and outcome of the learning experience itself' (Sholette et al, 2018: 281).

However, although artists increasingly engage in running schools and pedagogical projects that may be seen as groundbreaking in contemporary art, when analysed explicitly for the pedagogical value, they may amount to 'bad education' (Helguera cited in Reed, 2013). In other words, as Helguera notes, artists must examine where and how they set about producing criticality. Through the reflective processes engaged in with those involved in the last decade of work, coupled with the external academic analysis, I believe my practice has further contributions to make to the intersection of contemporary socially engaged art practice and education. Importantly, that contribution can only be constituted through the relational process that set it in motion, with whatever emerges being born from the inaugurating act, and beyond any individual's control, but rather influenced by multiple forces, born of the temporary potential harnessed through the convergence of two forms of relational power.

I would like to finish with a final reflection on *What Does He Need?* In the coming year, multiple 'boys' will be born through different group processes in which both individual agency and the relational ontology between members of a collaborating

group will be foregrounded. Here, power relations can potentially be temporarily reconfigured as an application of political imagination, rooted in the space of appearances (Arendt, 1958), full of its conflicts and tensions. In completing this thesis as another iteration of a long-term cumulative practice, I now turn to immersing myself in this new project with all its emergent possibilities, marking another chapter in a long-term exploration of inequality.

Notes

[1] Cited in our printed programme for *Natural History of Hope* (2016).

[2] In the context of socially engaged art and/or social movements, means-end rationality is prefigurative to the extent that it engages in 'struggle here and now in order to achieve a predefined goal that exists somewhere in the future' (Two Fuse, 2018: 92).

[3] See note 17, introduction.

[4] These new beginnings have in some cases marked another phase in a long-term project, and at other times become a new project marking another chapter in my long-term relationship with Rialto Youth Project.

[5] This new project exists against the backdrop of a rise of women's rights movements such as *Repeal the Eighth* and *I Believe Her* in Ireland and the global movement *#MeToo*. These movements highlight many deep-rooted patriarchal and misogynistic cultures that have become normalised in today's society. Importantly, Brokentalkers are collaborators from the outset of this project, along with Rialto Youth Project, a development from *Natural History of Hope* (2012-16).

[6] See note 8, introduction.

[7] See note 4, chapter one.

[8] In their introduction to *Curating and the Educational Turn* (2010), O'Neill and Wilson highlight the contested significance and credibility of this turn in contemporary art practice, taking issue with how these practices, amongst other things, adopt the territory of education and learning while distancing themselves from official formats of education and associated pedagogies.

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Appendix I

Title	*The Day in Question*
Date	July 2009
Authors	What's the Story? Collective
	(Gillian O Connor, Graham Dunphy, Nichola Mooney, Nicola Whelan, Jamie Hendrick, Michael Byrne, Jonathan Myers, Vanessa Kenny and Fiona Whelan)
Venue	Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

Description

The Day in Question (2009) was a triangulated dialogical exchange between What's the Story*?* Collective, 26 uniformed members of An Garda Síochána and a group of invited witnesses. Intending to expose and temporarily reconfigure systemic power relations, the relational encounter centred on participating Gardaí reading aloud a choreographed collection of young people's anonymous lived experiences of policing.

Images

Fig. 3.1: Th*e Day in Question*. What's the Story? Collective, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2009. Video still by Enda O'Brien. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

Fig. 3.2: The *Day in Question*. What's the Story? Collective, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2009. Video still by Enda O'Brien. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

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Whelan, F. (2015) 'The Politics of Listening'. In *TransActions #1 - Dublin and Chicago,* TransActions: Dialogues in Transdisciplinary Practice, NCAD and Stockyard Institute. <http://transactionspublication.com/2015/06/11/the-politics-of-listening/> [Accessed 1 January 2019].

Whelan, F. (2014) *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation – A Critical Memoir by a Socially Engaged Artist.* Dublin: self-published.

Conference Papers and Presentations (Individual and Co-Presented) Featuring
The Day in Question **(2009)**

Whelan, F. (2018, July) *Can Young People Influence the Future of Garda Training?* Presentation at Irish Council of Civil Liberties' event Rights-Based Policing, Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin.

Two Fuse (Whelan F. and Ryan K.) (2018, May) *Power and (Im)Possibility? Socially-Engaged Art and Cynic Practice.* Guest Lecture at Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics (CAPPE), University of Brighton.

Whelan, F. (2017, Nov.) *Through the Lens of Power – An Arts Based Exploration of Power Relations with Young People in Dublin.* Conference paper at IJADE (International Journal of Art and Design Education) Conference 2017: Art and Design as Agent for Change, National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Two Fuse (Whelan, F. and Ryan K.) (2017, May) *Power and Freedom in the Enterprise Society: 'Catch up, Keep up, Get Ahead…'.* Conference paper at RC 36 Interim Conference The Power of Narrative, University of Pavia, Italy.

Whelan, F. (2016, Oct.) *Power Three Ways: A Place-Based Methodology.* Conference paper at Mapping Spectral Traces VIII: The Place of the Wound, Hosted by Geography Department, Maynooth University.

Whelan, F. (2016, Aug.) *A Fair Land Discussion: Social Change through Creative Practice.* Presentation during A Fair Land exhibition, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin.

Whelan, F. (2016, May) *A Durational, Practice-Based Model of Identifying Learning.* Presentation at Creative Research Practices and Alternative Sites of Learning, College of Social Science, UCD, Dublin.

Whelan, F. (2015, Sep.) *Renegotiating Power Relationships – Who Speaks and Who Listens?* Conference paper at Signal Summer University: Excluded Bodies, Urban Bodies, hosted by CIFAS, Brussels.

Whelan, F. (2015, March) *Speaking Truth to Power and the Politics of Listening.* Conference paper at the second Irish Narrative Inquiry Conference: A Field in the Making, Maynooth University.

Whelan, F. and O Connor, G. (2015, March) *How Can You Explain the Complexities of Collaboration?* Presentation organised by PS2 as part of a UK wide series Artworks Conversation by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, New Lodge Youth Centre, Belfast.

Whelan, F. (2009, Nov.) *The Day in Question.* Conference paper and workshop at Engage/Enquire International Conference: Future Perfect: Art, Gallery Education and Regeneration, Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Whelan, F. (2014, July) *Who is Listening?* Presentation at These Immovable Walls: Performing Power festival and seminar, Dublin Castle.

Whelan, F. and O' Connor, G. (2013, June) *Durational Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Power and Policing.* Presentation at Pathways to Interdisciplinarity, Creative Praxis and Digital Humanities Research, UCD.

Whelan, F. (2013, May) *Who Shall Speak is Less Crucial Than Who Will Listen.* Presentation at Art and Activism: Dialogical Art Practice as a form of Activism, The LAB, Dublin.

Whelan, F., O' Connor G. and Myers, J. (2012, June) *Representing Young People; voice, Image, Practice, Power.* Conference paper at International Youth Studies conference, NUI Maynooth.

Whelan, F. and Myers, J. (2012, June.) *Arts Practice and Collaborative Learning.* Conference paper and workshop at Kultur Agenten Conference: Participation, Collaboration and Intervention, Berlin.

Whelan, F. (2012, Feb.) *The Potential of a Cross Sector Art Project.* Presentation and workshop during international conference Radius of Art: Creative Politicisation of the Public Sphere, Heinrich Boell Foundation, Berlin.

Academic Response to *The Day in Question* (2009)

Kiely E. and Meade R. (2018) 'Contemporary Irish youth Work Policy and Practice: A Governmental Analysis', *Child and Youth Services*, DOI: 10.1080/0145935X.2018.1426453

Todd S. (2017) 'Culturally Reimagining Education: Publicity, Aesthetics and Socially Engaged Art Practice', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2017.1366901

Kearns, G. (2017) 'Enduring Place', *Klaxon 6 – For an Inclusive City*, published by CIFAS, Brussels. Available from: <http://www.in-situ.info/en/blog/en/klaxon-6-for-an-inclusive-city-21> [Accessed 15 December 2018].

Todd, S. (2015, June) *Culturally Reimagining Education: Performativity, Voice and Publicity.* Keynote presentation at Critical Pedagogy and Philosophy of Education Conference, Liverpool Hope University.

Todd, S. (2015, June) *Facing 'Disadvantage': Experiences, Narratives, Reimaginings,* as part of a session Radicalising Disadvantage, Education Forum, Maynooth University.

Leahy, E. (2012) 'Media Literacy through Community Film: Participatory Approaches in Fatima Mansions, Dublin', *Media Education Journal,* (51) Summer, 26-31.

Media Coverage Featuring *The Day in Question* (2009)

Thomas, C. (2018) 'Gardaí Need Better Training on How to Handle Kids in the Inner City, Some Say', *Dublin Inquirer,* 31 July.

Clifford, M. (2018) 'Why Stop-and-Search on Young People Should be Stopped', *Irish Examiner*, 26 July.

Freyne, P. (2017) 'Stop and Search: Garda Harassment or Crime-Fighting?' *Irish Times*, 22 July.

Holland, K. (2009) 'Listening Event Proves a Success Between Gardaí and Youths', *Irish Times*, 7 Dec.

Appendix II

Title	*Policing Dialogues*
Date	Sep - Oct. 2010
Authors	What's the Story? Collective
	(Graham Dunphy, Nichola Mooney, Nicola Whelan, Garrett Kenny, Jamie Hendrick, Michael, Byrne, Jonathan Myers, Vanessa Kenny and Fiona Whelan)
Venue	The LAB, Dublin

Description

Policing Dialogues (2010) was a six-week exhibition and residency exploring neighbourhood relations of power, which positioned young people centrally, controlling their own representation and engagement with a range of publics, including the Gardaí. With multiple strands, the residency included a programme of presentations, tours, discussions, seminars and workshops and a two-day dialogue with the same group of Gardaí and members of the Collective as participated in *The Day in Question* (2009). Newly gathered material from the residency informed a weekly training inquiry held in the gallery which explored how best to incorporate awareness of power, dignity and respect into relationships between Gardaí and young people, producing two training modules proposed as an induction programme for future Gardaí assigned to Dublin South Central district.

Images

Fig. 4.1: *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story*?* Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. © Fiona Whelan.

Fig. 4.2: *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. Photograph by Michael Durand. © Dublin City Council Arts Office.

Fig. 4.3: *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story? Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010. Photograph by Michael Durand. © Dublin City Council Arts Office.

Fig. 4.4: *Policing Dialogues*. What's the Story*?* Collective, The LAB, Dublin, 2010 Photograph by Cecilia Forrestal.
© Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project.

Fig. 4.5: The *Policing Dialogues Review*, 2011. © Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project

Published Writing (Individual and Co-Authored) Featuring *Policing Dialogues* (2010)

Two Fuse (Whelan, F and Ryan, K) (2018) *Freedom?,* part of the series 'Síreacht - Longings for another Ireland', Cork University Press.

Whelan, F (2018) 'Through the Lens of Power: An Arts-Based Exploration of Power Relations with Young People in Dublin', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 37(4), November.

Whelan, F and Ryan, K. (2016) 'Beating the Bounds of Socially-Engaged Art? A Transdisciplinary Dialogue on a Collaborative Art Project with Youth in Dublin, Ireland', *Field Journal*, 4, Spring. Available at <http://field-journal.com> [Accessed 1 September 2016]

Whelan, F. (2014) *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation – A Critical Memoir by a Socially Engaged Artist.* Dublin: self-published.

Whelan F. and Rialto Youth Project (2011) *The Policing Dialogues Review*, 24 page newspaper. Available at <http://www.fionawhelan.com/shop/> [Accessed 1 January 2019].

Whelan, F. (2010) 'Power and the People', *YNow*, Dublin: City of Dublin Youth Service Board.

Conference Papers and Presentations (Individual and Co-Presented) Featuring *Policing Dialogues* (2010)

Whelan, F. (2018, July) *Can Young People Influence the Future of Garda Training?* Presentation at Irish Council of Civil Liberties event Rights-Based Policing, Dublin.

Whelan, F. (2017, Nov.) *Through the Lens of Power – An Arts Based Exploration of Power Relations with Young People in Dublin.* Conference paper at IJADE (International Journal of Art and Design Education) Conference 2017: Art and Design as Agent for Change, National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Whelan, F (2017, June) *Policing Dialogues.* Keynote Address at New Foundations in Youth Justice, Dublin Institute of Technology, Grangegorman.

Whelan, F. (2015, Nov.) *Policing Dialogues; A Creative Exploration of Neighbourhood Relations of Power.* Conference paper at The Geographical Turn, hosted by Maynooth University Geography Department, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Whelan, F. (2016, Oct.) *Power Three Ways: A Place-Based Methodology.* Conference paper at Mapping Spectral Traces VIII: The Place of the Wound. Hosted by Geography Department, Maynooth University.

Whelan, F. (2016, Aug.) *A Fair Land Discussion: Social Change through Creative Practice.* Presentation during A Fair Land exhibition, Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Whelan, F. (2016, May) *A Durational, Practice-Based Model of Identifying Learning.* Presentation at Creative Research Practices and Alternative Sites of Learning, College of Social Science, UCD.

Whelan, F. and O' Connor, G. (2013, June) *Durational Dialogues: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Power and Policing.* Presentation at Pathways to Interdisciplinarity, Creative Praxis and Digital Humanities Research, UCD.

Whelan, F. (2013, May) *Who Shall Speak is Less Crucial than Who Will Listen.* Presentation at Art and Activism: Dialogical Art Practice as a Form of Activism, The LAB.

Whelan, F., O' Connor G. and Myers, J. (2012, June) *Representing Young People; Voice, Image, Practice, Power.* Conference paper at International Youth Studies conference, NUI Maynooth.

Whelan, F. (2012, Feb.) *The Potential of a Cross Sector Art Project.* Presentation and workshop during international conference Radius of Art: Creative Politicisation of the Public Sphere, Heinrich Boell Foundation, Berlin.

Whelan, F. (2011, Nov.) *Policing Dialogues.* Conference paper during Engage International Conference: Work in Progress; Artists, Education and Participation, Margate, UK.

Whelan, F. and Hendrick, J. (2010, Sep.) *What's at Stake?* Presentation and workshop during conference Demanding Conversations – Socially Engaged Arts Practice in a Changing Political Climate, Bristol, UK.

Academic Response to *Policing Dialogues* (2010)

Mulcahy, A. (2012, June) *Policing, Power and Powerlessness: Young People's Stories of Policing in Dublin.* Conference paper at Irish Criminology Conference, UCD.

Granville, G. (2011), 'The Falcon Cannot Hear the Falconer…The Pedagogical Turn and the Negative Space of Irish Art Education', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 30(3), 349-362.

Media Coverage Featuring *Policing Dialogues* (2010)

Thomas, C. (2018) 'Gardaí Need Better Training on How to Handle Kids in the Inner City, Some Say', *Dublin Inquirer,* 31 July.

Clifford, M. (2018) 'Why Stop-and-Search on Young People Should be Stopped', *Irish Examiner*, 26 July.

Freyne, P. (2017) 'Stop and Search: Garda Harassment or Crime-Fighting?' *Irish Times*, 22 July.

TV3, (2010) Tonight with Vincent Browne, 28 Sep. 2010 [Programme dedicated to *Policing Dialogues* and the issues it raised].

RTÉ, (2010) Today with Pat Kenny, RTÉ Radio 1, 22 September.

Newstalk (2010) Culture Shock, Newstalk Radio, September.

Irish Independent (2010) 'Policing Dialogues', Critics Choice, *Irish Independent*, 24 September.

McEnroe, J. (2010) 'Young People's Tales of Garda Harassment in New Exhibition', *Irish Examiner*, 16 September.

Appendix III

Title	*TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation*
Date	2014
Author	Fiona Whelan
Publisher	Fiona Whelan

Description

TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation (2014) is a self-published critical memoir, produced as a learning tool for the sectors of collaborative arts, education and youth/community work. The publication explores a decade of collaborative art practice from the vantage point of the primary artist involved. It offers a personal and subjective insight into complex working relationships, methods of engagement, creative processes and analyses from ten years of direct engagement with young people. The memoir tracks the collaborative decision making process coupled with my own thought process at each juncture of the work, to retrospectively identify the methodology inherent in the practice.
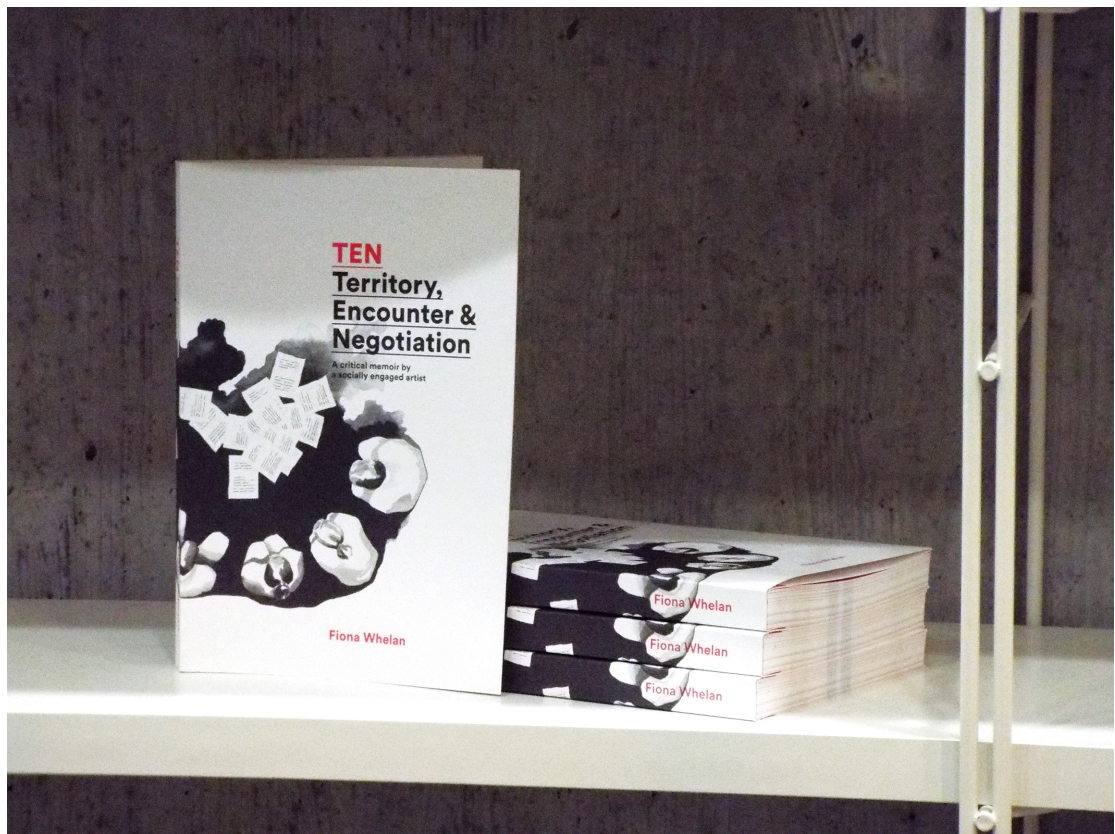
Images

Fig. 5.1: *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation, a critical memoir by a socially engaged artist*, Fiona Whelan, 2014. © Fiona Whelan.

Fig. 5.2: *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation, a critical memoir by a socially engaged artist* (contents page), Fiona Whelan, 2014. © Fiona Whelan.

Published Writing Featuring *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014)

Whelan, F. (2015) 'Insider Witness', *Visual Artists' News Sheet*, July - August.

Whelan, F. (2014) 'Territory, Encounter and Negotiation - Collaborative Practice in a youth work context', *YNow* (17), Dublin: City of Dublin Youth Service Board, Winter.

Conference Papers and Presentations (Individual and Co-Presented) Featuring *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014)

TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation (2014) was launched at NCAD on 5 November 2014 by Martin Drury (Strategic Development Director, the Arts Council), following a half day seminar *Territory, Encounter and Negotiation – Collaborative Practice in a Youth Work Context*. The seminar included inputs from Professor Kathleen Lynch (UCD), Professor Desmond Bell (NCAD), Professor Maurice Devlin (NUIM) and Katherine Atkinson (Professional Development, CREATE, the National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts) along with a performance lecture drawing from the publication. The seminar was moderated by Dr. Áine O'Brien (Co-Director Counterpoints Arts). Available from: <http://www.fionawhelan.com/event/ten-seminar-book-launch/> [Accessed 1 December 2018].

Whelan, F., Lawlor, J., Byrne, M. and Mooney, N. (2014, Nov.) *Performative Readings (Mis)Readings of a Shared Practice*. Performance lecture at Territory, Encounter and Negotiation – Collaborative Practice in a Youth Work Context, which was co-organised by Fiona Whelan and Rialto Youth Project on the occasion of the launch of *TEN:*

Territory, Encounter & Negotiation (2014), NCAD.

Whelan, F. (2015, March) *Territory, Encounter and Negotiation: Speaking Truth to Power and the Politics of Listening*, at The Second Irish Narrative Inquiry Conference: A Field in the Making, Maynooth University.

Whelan, F. (2015, Jan.) *Territory, Encounter and Negotiation.* Presentation followed by a critical discussion organised on the occasion of the Galway launch of *TEN: Territory, Encounter and Negotiation* hosted by the Para-Institution in partnership with the Community Knowledge Initiative – National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) – Centre for Creative Arts And Media (CCAM) with inputs from Megan Johnson (The Model Sligo), Megs Morley (Para-Institution), John Langan (GMIT) and Deirdre O' Mahony (GMIT), GMIT CCAM. Available from: <http://www.fionawhelan.com/event/territory-encounter-negotiation-galway/> [Accessed 1 January 2019].

Academic Response to *TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation* (2014)

Todd S. (2017) 'Culturally Reimagining Education: Publicity, Aesthetics and Socially Engaged Art Practice', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2017.1366901

Morley, M. (2016) 'Negotiating the Territory of Socially Engaged Art', Book Review, *Journal of Political Power*, 9(1), 147-152.

Gonzalez-Ayala, S.N. (2015) 'TEN: Territory, Encounter & Negotiation', Book Review, *Irish Journal of Anthropology*, 18(1).

Todd, S. (2015, June) *Culturally Reimagining Education: Performativity, Voice and Publicity.* Keynote presentation at Critical Pedagogy and Philosophy of Education Conference, Liverpool Hope University.

Todd, S. (2015, June) *Facing 'Disadvantage': Experiences, Narratives, Reimaginings.* Presentation at the Education Forum, Maynooth University.

Appendix IV

Title   *Natural History of Hope*
Date   May 2016
Authors   Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers
Main Cast Audrey Wade, Lydia Lynam, Niamh Tracey, Michelle Dunne, Vicky White, Sharon Cooney, Lisa Graham, Nichola Mooney, Dannielle McKenna, Amy White, Gillian O Connor and Fiona Whelan
Venue   Projects Art Centre, Dublin

Description

Natural History of Hope (2016) was a live performance by Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers. Based on hundreds of anonymous testimonies from generations of women living and working in Rialto, the performance was an unflinching exploration of gender and class inequality, and the complexity of women's lives told through real stories of oppression, resilience, solidarity and hope. Presented on stage by 30 women, the performance was the final iteration in a four-year inter-generational project by Rialto Youth Project and Fiona Whelan, exploring contemporary equality issues for women and girls living and working in Rialto. Through this process new techniques for engagement and public presentation evolved to engage with invisible and intangible forms of power.

Images

Fig. 6.1: *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Fig. 6.2: *Natural History of Hope*. Fiona Whelan, Rialto Youth Project and Brokentalkers, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Fig. 6.3: *Natural History of Hope* post–show discussion, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2016. © Ray Hegarty.

Published Writing (Individual and Co-Authored) Featuring *Natural History of Hope* (2016)

Two Fuse (Whelan, F and Ryan, K) (2018) *Freedom?,* part of the series 'Síreacht - Longings for another Ireland', Cork University Press.

Conference Papers and Presentations (Individual and Co-Presented) Featuring *Natural History of Hope* (2016)

Two Fuse (Whelan F. and Ryan K.) (2018, May) *Power and (Im)Possibility? Socially-Engaged Art and Cynic Practice.* Guest Lecture at Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics (CAPPE), University of Brighton.

Academic Response to *Natural History of Hope* (2016)

Kearns, G. (2017) 'Enduring Place', *Klaxon 6 – For an Inclusive City*, published by CIFAS, Brussels. Available from: <http://www.in-situ.info/en/blog/en/klaxon-6-for-an-inclusive-city-21> [Accessed 15 December 2018].

Carroll, M. (2016, Nov.) *The Arts and Psychology - An Example of Collaborative Research.* Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) annual conference.

Carroll, M. (2015, Nov.) *Women's Stories of Family and Friends Through the Lens of a Psychological Analysis.* Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) annual conference.

Media Coverage featuring *Natural History of Hope* (2016)

Keating S. (2016) 'When Feminism Met Real Working-Class Lives in Rialto', *Irish Times*, 28 June, 10.

RTÉ, *Arena* (2016) Abie Philbin Bowman*,* 11 May.

Appendix V

Title   Learning Network
Date   1 October 2016
Participants Collaborative authors of prior work: Dannielle McKenna, Sharon Cooney, Michael Byrne, Jonathan Myers, Nichola Mooney, Fiona Whelan; Interdisciplinary supporters of prior work: Jim Lawlor, Chris Maguire, Martina Carroll, Ciaran Smyth, Tony McCarthy; Invited Academics: Sharon Todd, Alice Feldman, Kevin Ryan, Dervil Jordan, Gary Granville, Stephanie Springgay, Sarah Truman.
Venue   F2 Centre, Rialto

Description

Recognising how my collaborative practice with RYP has overlapped with individuals, theories and processes from diverse disciplinary frameworks, a learning network was organised to bring together previous interlocutors and respondents to engage in a dialogical interaction with makers and supporters of this durational practice. Following a series of readings, which presented extracts from multiple analyses related to the works discussed in this thesis, the participants were invited to explore an emerging idea related to the development of a new pedagogical platform in Rialto based on the trans-disciplinary learning and methodologies developed over our decade of collaboration.

Images

Fig. 7.1: Learning Network. Organised by Fiona Whelan, F2 neighbourhood centre, 2016. © Aislinn Delaney.

Fig. 7.2: Learning Network. Organised by Fiona Whelan, F2 neighbourhood centre, 2016. © Aislinn Delaney.

Fig. 7.3: Learning Network. Organised by Fiona Whelan, F2 neighbourhood centre, 2016. © Aislinn Delaney.

Fig. 7.4: Learning Network. Organised by Fiona Whelan, F2 neighbourhood centre, 2016. © Aislinn Delaney.