THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

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DRAMATISING SOCIAL CARE

Applied Theatre as a Tool of Empowerment for Looked After Children

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

THE FACULTY OF ARTS

<u>Doctor of Philosophy</u>

DRAMATISING SOCIAL CARE

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This research examines the contextual layers and concentric frames that define the worlds of looked after children within contemporary British care systems in the search for an empowering, creative practice. This investigation has used *practice as research* to examine the current cultures, power relations and corporate contexts that intermesh to construct the care system. The core group of this enquiry is looked after children but, as an expanding 12 year action research model, the investigation examines the concurrent trends between children in care, children living in poverty and incarcerated young people. The use of macro and micro practice examples enables the thesis to examine the life cycles, trappings and pitfalls for contemporary poor law children as well as demonstrating how creative practice can impact on interventionist approaches to research and development, before young people end up in care. The potential for applied theatre as a tool for empowerment is interrogated through an exploration of what empowerment *means* in terms of radical freedom as well as the necessity of changes to existing structures and dominant assumptions. This research examines the different shapes, forms and possibilities for this practice from processes of inner discovery to narrative therapies, to collective encounters, to performances to relevant audiences. This research constructs a clear proposal for the efficacy of applied theatre/arts within these arenas and offers a colourful and innovative contribution to this field of knowledge through a range of rich and varied practice experiences and ethnographical sources.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Claire Marie Hope MacNeill declare that the thesis entitled Dramatising Social Care, Applied Theatre Practice as a Tool of Empowerment for Looked after Children and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

- None of this work has been published

Signed: …………………………………………………………………..

Date:………………………………………………………………….

Acknowledgements

There have been many people who have been incredibly patient and supportive throughout the long slog of completing this work. I would like to thank: Tom Tynan, Tim Prentki, Graham Crow, Chrissie Ferngrove, my Mum, Dad, brother, sister, Andy and Glen, Peter Kelly, Michael Balfour, Ramona, Aisling, James Swanick, Robert, Vaughn, Paul Murray, Charlotte, Lizzie, Wendy and Les, Chantelle, the two Michelle's, Andy, Ian and all my other friends. I know it has been repetitive for you all and I thank you for seeing me through. Michael, thank you for initially believing in me; Tim and Graham, thank you for all your guidance.

Most importantly I would like to thank all the young people and community groups who have been involved in this work. It was the conversations with you and the stuff we got to make together that inspired me to keep going and to believe that this thing was worth writing and sticking by. To all the workers on the estates I visited: Jackie, Margaret, Phyllis, Mo, Steve to name just a few; to the young people from the children's homes who consistently blew me away by the things they said and the times we shared; to the young people in the secure detention centre, I pray you have managed to escape that world; to the young people on the estates who welcomed me into their world and were not scared to get involved; to the young people who I have watched grow up and have kept in contact with; to the original Romany Gypsy community: Raymond, Joey, Jimmy, David and Pearl, who I wish I had kept in better contact with; to the staff from the children's homes who were so supportive and willing to get involved; to Wendy, Doug and Donna, the best managers I ever had.

To all of those I worked with and for all the stories people shared; to the young people who made this such a colourful journey and who have impacted on my life immeasurably.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Name Changes

I have changed all names of the young people, staff members, children's homes and the estates within the thesis. This is to ensure confidentiality. Where names appear and are then linked to DVD clip I have *s beside them to warn the reader that the names they are about to see within the footage will not match up with the name within the text.

Restricted Access

The DVDs which accompany this thesis and some of the appendices will have restricted access placed upon them so that the identities of those within them are protected.

The DVDs

The DVDs are designed to act as an aid to bring to life examples of practice. Each DVD contains a selection of short clips that accompany each chapter. Chapter 3 does not have a DVD to go with it.

DVDs 1,2,4,5,6 ,7 & 8 correspond with the same chapter number; for example: DVD 2 contains clips for Chapter 2, and so on. There are spaces created between each clip so that the DVD can be paused whilst the reader reads on. The longest clip is approximately 3 minutes in length.

Chapter 1

The Central Research Problem and Methods of Research

This thesis is the result of a 12 year action research model to examine the potential for applied theatre/arts based practice as a tool of empowerment with Looked after Children (LAC). It has been structured to first introduce how the hypothesis emerged through practice based research with young people; to then unpack the complexities of looked after children's disempowerment and the potentials for applied theatre practice to act as a tool for their liberation.

From within Main-place residential children's home, where the impetus for this research was born, the young people created work about how they were seen, both within the system and by the wider community. They showed us how it had felt to be let down by the decision-makers whom they had never met. They demonstrated the cultures of bullying inherent throughout the setting and the rules and regulations that defined their worlds. This research has worked tirelessly to better understand the 'concentric boundaries and contextual frames' of practice cultures, social theory and political agendas that surround the LAC and shape their realities.[1] Different sites of practice have enriched my research in different ways.

The central focus of my work has been to develop a child-centred praxis that is culturally and contextually relevant and empowering to LAC and frames them in meaningful positions of influence. By creating opportunities for young people to name their own worlds and tell their own truths in ways which empower them and educate others, the practice has aimed to counter oppressive cultures within social care contexts.[2] My approach to the work has been concerned with finding ways to redirect the agenda around

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[1] O'Toole, J. *The Process of Drama, Negotiating Art and Meaning.* London and New York: Routledge, 1992. p.30

[2] These terms are derived from the work of Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Bergman, M. (trans.) London: Penguin Books, 1996; Foucault, M. *Society Must be Defended*, *Lectures at the College De France, 1975-76*. David, M. (trans.) London: Penguin Books, 2004.

the specific needs and ideas of participants; thus creating a counter to conventional hierarchies of power, stifling contexts, closed questions and negative assumptions about young people. The thesis will examine how specific techniques evolved within the children's homes settings before being further adapted and developed through commissioned and employed roles in related areas.

Working with young people on inner city estates and young people detained in Secure Training Centres (STCs) was pivotal in fully grasping the cycle of the children of the poor and the inter-relations between groups of impoverished and incarcerated young people.[3] I realised that children in need quickly become children institutionalised via care and/or detention orders. Therefore, although children in care exist as my core group, my work on estates and in youth justice settings has been congruent in obtaining a fuller picture of the lives and journeys institutionalised and marginalised children are subjected to. As Tim Prentki helps to explain:

> the categories that have emerged [therefore] are not necessarily separate areas of work with their own discrete methodologies but rather an interlocking set of practices based upon some common principles which can…operate across the contexts in which these processes are applied; a process which is grounded in person-centred learning..[4]

Research Methods

This investigation has used an action research model to gather data, make decisions about the direction and foci of the research, develop collaborative techniques with participants, and explore current cultures and trends within child welfare arenas. The twelve years of practical research within these contexts has used grounded theory and hermeneutic cycles to make sense of all that took place and to inform my decisions about what to look at/do

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[3]This idea is discussed by: Muncie, J. *Youth & Crime,* Third Edition. London and California: Sage Publications, 2009; Goldson, B. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice: Neither Welfare or Justice'. *Children & Society*, vol. 11. (1997), pp.77-88; Hendrick, H. *Child Welfare, Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debate*. Great Britain: The Policy Press, 2003. (among others)
[4] Prentki, T. and Preston, S. 'Introduction' in Prentki, T. and Preston, S. (eds) *The Applied Theatre Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. pp.10-11

next.[5] After each cycle of practical work I used reflexive practice to identify emerging patterns and trends and make sense of my experiences. Each piece of practice that contributes to this research, therefore, represents different stages of a wider action research model; As explained here:

> Action research starts with small groups of collaborators at the start [the Romany Gypsy and Main-place group], but widens the community of participating action researchers [other children in residential homes and front-line staff] so that it gradually includes more and more of those affected by the practices in question [young people on the estates and within prisons].[6]
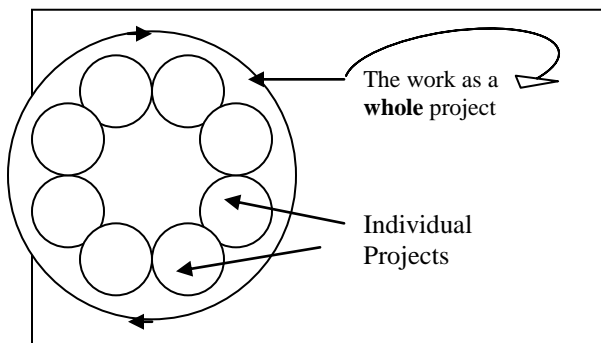
Fig. 1: The Research Process as a Whole

The Romany Gypsy project inspired ideas about collaborative research and the counter narratives of misrepresented and misunderstood young people. The Main-place community motivated my research with looked after children and continued to influence and guide it, representing this 'small group of collaborators'. As I moved into work with other young people and front line staff I continued to visit and work within Main-place and developed a strong relationship with the home as a community. They guided my on-going explorations into the potential for this type of work with looked after children within formal care settings. The research was collaborative in that new uses and techniques were invented and developed *with* and *by* the participants throughout. My role

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[5] As outlined in: Cohen, L., Manion, L and Morrison, K. *Research Methods in Education,* Fifth Edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. ch.13
[6] *Ibid*. pp.229–230

was to introduce different creative media and demonstrate their different potential uses and the participants found ways of adapting these media as tools in relation to their specific needs and the contextual complexities surrounding that moment. As the research project evolved, patterns of difficulties and disempowerments emerged. Different young people and front-line staff revealed recurring issues in relation to the contexts they lived and worked within. As we continued to develop creative techniques, a counter-practice began to emerge as a response to these resonating difficulties.

Ethnographic techniques to collect data and document the research journey were concurrent with the project. Photography and video footage were used to capture the development of each piece of work. I also videoed and photographed any performances or exhibitions linked to project work. Video footage of different workshops has helped to reflect on the work in action/situ. Semi-structured interviews with young people and front line workers have also been filmed to record these groups' insights on the problems they experience and their thoughts on the significance of the practical work. Written feedback in the form of questionnaires and letters from participants has been used to help build up a picture of how different projects were perceived by those involved and the impacts of the work.

As the researcher-practitioner I used 'thick descriptions' in the form of consistently written and sporadically filmed diary entries to reflect on my encounters.[7] As an artist I also found it effective to use sketches and models to deconstruct my findings within the field. Often I was unable to communicate what I was seeing and the intricacies of the patterns that were emerging, immediately, in written form. Sculpture and sketches helped me to capture my readings of these evolving experiences as well as acting as a cathartic process. Through these personal creative and reflexive processes I was able to see, more clearly, the emerging connections and themes;[8] As outlined here:

> Action research is open-minded about what counts as evidence (or data) – it involves not only *keeping records* which describe what is happening as accurately as possible….but

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[7] Geertz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, 1973. pp.3-30
[8] See appendix 1 for an example of these sketches and sculptures

also *collecting and analysing our own judgements, reactions and impressions* about what is going on.[9]

These varied forms of qualitative data form a rich source of core perspectives; my voice as the researcher-facilitator of the work, the young people's perspectives on the worlds within which they live, the front-line workers' perspectives on the worlds in which they work, as well as evidence of the evolving techniques and approaches as an adaptive and context-specific methodology. This research is particularly interested in the significance of the counter narrative within social care systems and will use these voices as primary sources of evidence throughout this thesis via video footage and written extracts.

Sites of Practice

From my early undergraduate work in 1998/9 I have continued to examine the potential for this type of work as a tool of empowerment for looked after children in a range of different settings up until 2011. As a result, the research has taken on three different strands of core analysis: my pedagogical approach as the facilitator-practitioner, the complexities and problems of each context, and the potential efficacy, different forms, scales and uses for the work. These strands are intertwining and each influences the other.[10]

Fig.2 details the range of sites I have worked within as well as locating where particular examples are drawn upon within the chapters of the thesis. My research has undoubtedly been influenced and informed by each of these experiences. The six examples which feature most significantly have been selected because they help to draw explicit links between practice and theory. The length and breadth of this research project has developed a reflexive way of working with misrepresented groups of young people as a specific pedagogy that can be applied in a range of related contexts.

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[9] Cohen, Manion and Morrison. *Research Methods*. 2000. p.229
[10] The complexities of the context, for example, encompasses the group, the setting and the commission including the specifics of *how* and *why* I came to work with this context. See DVD.1, clip 1 for an overview of practice.

Fig. 2: Sites of Practice

Site of Practice	Time Frame	Context for the Work	Participant Group	My Role / title	Chap
Romany Gypsy Project / legal site: Marchwood	1998 4 months	TfD project on the site. Final performance at John Stripe Theatre, on Campus	Young people and adult community members	Student facilitator	2
Main-place C.H *Pilot* Project: Hampshire	1999 4 months	TfD project within the home. Final performance at John Stripe Theatre, on Campus	Core group of 5 young people	Student facilitator	2
Main-place, *Ongoing Project*: Hampshire	1999-2006 7 years	On-going *practice as research* within the home. Multi-media work	Young people and staff members	Facilitator / Voluntary practitioner	5
'Mini-me' Consultation Event: Hampshire	2002 2 months	Commissioned event to consult looked-after children on 'preventative measures' around coming into care	The Care Action Team, LAC and residential staff	Employed Creative Consultant	5
Cross-stones C.H Long-term Project: Hants	2002/03 1 year	Long-term project funded by: 'Your Shout' Awards. Multi-media work within the home	Young people and residential staff	Facilitator / Voluntary practitioner	5
Looked-after-children's Website Consultation Tour: Hampshire	2002 2 months	Commissioned by Hampshire County Council to consult LAC on the design of a website. Toured numberous C.Hs in Hampshire.	LAC/ residential staff from different children's homes.	Employed Creative Consultant	5
Community Practices, University of Winchester: Hampshire	2002-2003 1 year	Wrote and taught on a core module to prepare students for their community drama/film project work	2nd year BAD (Drama, Theatre and Television*)* students.	Lecturer and Module Coordinator	7
Connexions South Central and the Children's Fund: Hampshire	2003-2004 1 year	Position created by Hampshire Children's Fund to build on previous project work. Seconded to South Central Connexions as a 'Participation Development Officer'.	A group of young people funded by Connexions; and other 'Hard to reach' groups	Employed Participation development officer.	7

Ealing Family Housing Association: West London	2004-2005 2.5 years	To engage young people and adults to create events and programmes that improve their community contexts	Y.P and their communities across inner-city estates / Internal staffing teams	Employed Community Development Officer	6
VOICE: Central London	2006 6 months	Employed by VOICE as a Participation Development officer, with the role to develop 'internal and external' participation across the organisation	Young people connected to the organisation / Internal staff teams.	(Full time) Employed Participation development officer	7
VOICE: Medway STC Kent	2005-2008 2.5 years	To visit and advocate for young people locked up within Medway Secure Training Centre (STC)	'Young offenders' within the STC / various staff teams	Part-time Visiting Advocate	4
Dominion Housing Association: West London	4 months	'Stars in Our Yard': To consult young people about their worlds / talents. To create a booklet and exhibition to present back this material	Young people across estates in inner and Greater London	Freelance Creative Consultant / documentary maker	6
Big Fish Summer Project, Peckham: South London	2008 4 months	To run workshops as part a summer programme organised for young people 'at risk' / referred by local schools	Young people 'at risk' from different areas and rivalling gangs	Freelance drama and film practitioner	8
RiO the Real Ideas Organisation, Exeter	2009 1 year	To work with a group of looked-after children in foster care to explore their messages through animation, working within different school settings	4 teenage fostered young people, Foster parents, Teachers and head teachers	Freelance Arts practitioner / Consultant	
Aimhigher, North Devon	2009-2010 2 years, (present day)	To commission and manage projects which 'raise the aspirations' of less-advantaged young people and promote opportunities *for all*.	Community groups / young people and professionals across Devon	Employed Aimhigher Project manager	6

Each practical experience has enriched the research in different ways. The Cross-stones project, for example, was significant in developing a range of techniques from within a residential children's home setting. As a long-term, developmental project this work revealed the different life-cycles within a children's home and the different uses for applied theatre/arts based work as an in residence tool. The work played with the reframing of the children's home as a creative space. The participation of the staff team became a vital part of the work; and they too wanted to play! A range of new methods and techniques were invented as the project spiralled and responded to the changes within the home.

The Main-place and Cross-stones projects were used as the foundations for a liberatory pedagogy and praxis for work within other settings. These projects were worked on, on a voluntary basis allowing for the space and opportunity for the work to be adaptive, organic and responsive to the emerging ideas within children's home settings without the pressure of a looming agenda. Ongoing work in Main-place children's home was useful in understanding the struggles older LAC experience, particularly when leaving care. Within both of these settings the foundations of theories were established in terms of the problems young people face living within the epicentre of an institutional framework of care with particular regards to power relations, the lack of creativity and the loss of individualism. Using the practice as research through ongoing processes of experimentation a distinct praxis began to emerge as a counter-practice to all that was missing and needed in these types of settings. The beauty of working in these settings and over such a significant period of time was the ability to be unrestricted by commissioning agendas.

Commissioned and Employed Roles

In contrast to project work that evolved with the ideas and direction of the young people, commissioned pieces of work challenged me to find ways to re-centre the agenda of the commissioner/employer around the young people whilst still meeting their criteria. These experiences have been influential in creating spaces within child welfare frameworks

within which the child can be treated as an active participant rather than an object of research and intervention processes. I attempted to adapt the techniques we had produced within the children's homes within the restrictions of commissioned and employed roles. This work informed theories about the *potential* to demonstrate liberatory praxis within an institutional, non-creative framework within specific limitations. Whereas before I had been a visitor within these settings, to be 'employed' by the institution presented new challenges in terms of colluding and the expectation for the work to be used as a commodity.

Illuminating Dominant Trends

Other settings and roles revealed the extremes of oppressive and systematic abuse, such as in Medway STC. The exaggeration of oppressive practices in Medway helped to characterise the complexities of power relations, power techniques, institutional displays, cycles of neglect and the insidiously authoritarian approaches that were magnified in this setting.[11] When working on the estates with young people I examined the same trends of disempowerment in terms of learnt helplessness, the service-provider and user relationship and the attitudes towards, and segregations between young people and adults. On the estates I observed the cultures and the current role of art and creativity in the lives of the young people. I documented aspects of their work and their cultures of expression such as rapping and graffiti; and worked towards altering the type of provision deemed appropriate by the Housing Association so that they better reflected the interests and skills of the young people. Fundamental to this work was promoting the use of art-based practice to the Housing Association as a research and development tool to enable the young people to challenge the perception of them as the problem.

Perspectives and Narratives, My Role/s and Representation

My direct contact with looked-after, locked-up young people and those living on the margins of society has helped me to research the ways in which they live and how they

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[11] These are core concepts to be explored in further detail in Chapter 3

view their 'place in the world'.[12] Their insights have helped me to understand how it felt to be in care, in custody and living in areas of high deprivation. I watched as young people entered into youth justice systems and I visited them whilst they were detained there. I maintained contact with young people after their time in children's homes and learnt from their struggles of transition to life as a care-leaver. This thesis will reflect on what young people have taught me about the impact of contemporary child welfare systems on the individual child. Their narratives have helped me better understand, from a looked after child's perspective what it means to be in care, how it feels and the ways in which it affects the ability to grow and develop as an individual. I immersed myself in each new site of practice and used a range of creative, inventive techniques to provide spaces for reflection and critique.

As a novice to social care systems, the narratives of the young people acted as signposts to understanding these worlds and I endeavoured to establish a working relationship with young people that treated them as the experts. I presented examples of practice with previous groups involved in the research when working with new groups and explained that my interests were in the uses and efficacy for this type of work as a tool for their empowerment. I was ever conscious of the inherent power imbalances in the roles I worked under and tried to separate myself from these titles as best I could. I tried to be seen as Claire as opposed to the Participation Development Officer or the Community Development Officer. I addressed this in different ways. When first meeting the Cross-stones group, for example, I presented a cartoon-script made up of photographs of my likes and dislikes so that they would not feel as though our work together was a one-way process of information harvesting and to counter cultures of professional anonymity.

When talking to groups about their worlds and realities I tried to insist that I was their student. With young people and adults who are used to being treated as 'passive recipients' and existing on the receiving end of interventions and assumptions, this approach was, once trusted , well received. I must emphasise here that this approach was also genuine; I was their student and I was genuinely committed to a better understanding

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[12] This idea is examined by Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 1996. p.69

of their realities.[13] This research has been concerned with the collaborative exploration of the uses for applied theatre/arts-based practice as a multi-faceted tool. As the facilitator-researcher my role was to try to understand the complexities of those I was working with in order to create contexts to use the practice in ways most relevant to them.

The Rainbow Model as an Adaptation of a Theatre for Development Model

On reflecting on my early work with the Romany Gypsy group and in Main-place children's home, I developed a model of intervention in the form of the rainbow model to encapsulate what I believed to be the various stages of developing work with groups at this point. The model represents a Theatre for Development (TfD) process that engages in culturally appropriate and collaborative research processes and works towards an event to educate a relevant audience. My research project has revealed the specific relationship between context and practice and the necessary considerations that underpin the application of this type of work within specific sites of practice. If we think of the rainbow model as the trunk of a tree, my research has explored the different branches of practice that can sprout from this central framework. The rainbow model represents the foundations of a liberatory pedagogical approach that has been adapted to the opportunities that have emerged within each site of practice. With these different uses, applications, needs and limitations the research has informed new theory around process and product, participants and audience, performance spaces and personalised processes.

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[13] *Ibid.* p.53

Fig 3: The Rainbow Model

Participatory Observation
- Gaining an awareness of the group
- Watching the group and developing an understanding of the ways in which they live
- Assessing the group and their needs before 'intervention' takes place
- Making contacts
- Introducing the idea

Creative Consultation
- Aiding the group by introducing creative ways of expressing their ideas and exploring their identity
- Involving the group in practical exercises
- Engaging the group in interactive workshops
- Introducing different skills
- Building confidence amongst the group (tackling social / group issues)
- Promoting participation…getting them involved and inspired

Establishing their needs and concerns
- Defining what problems they face as a group / as individuals
- Deepening the process
- Providing forums to help them to articulate their views
- Building on their improved communication skills to help them express their concerns…what worries you? What would you like to change?
- Creating forums to 'demonstrate' their ideas
- Facilitating discussions and debates

Translating their views through creative media
- Collaborating 'the process' into creative, sustainable 'products'
- Devising / producing artistic testimonies which reflect all that has been discussed/ explored/defined/demonstrated
- Valuing their opinions and promoting their messages
- Encouraging recognition in constructive and effective communication skills

Defining the Audience
- Deciding on who needs to hear all they have to say, who is their 'appropriate audience'?
- Promoting the use of their work to inform and educate others
- What action can be taken?
- How can we overcome the problems we have identified?
- What can we do to help ourselves and others?
- How can we independently take control and bring about positive changes?

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Outcomes: The Creative 'Forums'
- Large-scale interactive conferences
- Touring productions, plays, multi-media events
- Training programmes designed and facilitated by young people
- Exhibitions / Installations
- Documentaries / Films

Impacts to ensure positive changes
- An enhanced understanding of the groups' identities and diversities
- An enhanced understanding of the groups needs
- An opportunity to devise action plans to meet these needs
- Opportunities that bring relevant people together to discuss ideas
- Forums which will encourage new and appropriate ways of thinking
- Forums which will create equal opportunities to communicate ideas through a language understood by all
- Environments which allow everyone to meet 'at face value'
- Creative contexts that engage 'the mind and imagination'
- Opportunities to clarify things which are misunderstood
- Opportunities to build necessary relationships
- Opportunities to put into place 'appropriate practices' for the future

Outcomes for the group (and the individuals within the group)
- Improved group dynamics
- Strengthened support systems
- An improved sense of community
- An awareness of their 'cultural identity'
- Confidence
- The ability to articulate their views and educate misconceptions
- The opportunity to interact with others
- Improved skills in communication, performance, camera work
- The ability and opportunity to effectively express themselves
- A sense of achievement / self worth / Raised self esteem
- An understanding of their identity
- Self awareness and acceptance
- An awareness of others and 'difference'
- An awareness of the services available to them
- An awareness of their needs
- Individual packages which reflect their needs
- An awareness of their dreams and aspirations
- A realisation of their dreams and aspirations
- Empowerment throughout the process and project outcomes
- Ownership of the project's development
- Improved relationships with those significant to their lives
- The ability to effectively participate in the development of services
- A sense of belief in a system which they are able to influence
- Independent thinking

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The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 will look more intensely at the emergence of my framework of praxis as informed by my work with Romany Gypsy group, the Main-place group and my undergraduate training in the disciplinary field of applied-arts practice. This chapter is concerned with highlighting my own personal process of a liberatory teaching practice and my development as a facilitator/practitioner. Chapter 3 constructs my critical foundations for disempowerment and liberation before unpacking theories and techniques from a number of applied arts practitioners.

Chapter 4 will reflect on the history of British child welfare arenas and its influence on contemporary contexts. Using the messages from those I have worked with to establish a thematic framework, this chapter will contextualise these themes in relation to socio-political theory, policy and critical theory. The dualism between *welfare* and *punishment* will be established to show how these contradictory ideological bases continue to make and unmake the administration of *care* and *control*. This conclusive element of this chapter highlights the fertility for potential partnerships between the field of applied arts and child welfare arenas.

Chapter 5 will examine the context-specific uses and adaptations of my practice within residential children's homes in Hampshire. This chapter launches into a colourful and critical dissemination of work within children's homes and the different shapes, forms and functions my practice presented. Chapter 6 interrogates my later work on the estates and the ways in which this emerging use of applied theatre was adapted within the context of the housing association as a research and development methodology.

Chapter 7 takes a critical step-back to examine the significance of the resistances and clashes in ideology and approach between conventional child welfare models and applied arts-based work. Within this chapter I will examine issues of translating and transferring this type of practice in non creative contexts and the uses of the work to illuminate inherent power structures and practice trends. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with critical

reflections on the research as a whole and introduces a number of proposals as to how my research findings can further inform ongoing work in light of this extensive research project.

Conclusion

This thesis is fuelled with passion and in some places, pain. I have been conscious of not removing the emotion that rendered it necessary and therefore negating its commitment to *countering* processes that desensitise and silence the counter narratives of these systems. Therefore, where able, I have attempted to 'bring to life' the different voices, live-action and horror that underpinned the research project. In places I use extracts from my diary entries, quotes from participants, photographs, footage, drawn pictures and thick-descriptions of particular sites of practice in the attempt to bring to light these narratives and sources in a real and immediate way as this extract helps to explain:

> I want to talk about how we did find what worked, in a way that opens up useful, transferable insight to my peers in this space and context. But I want to do justice to how open-ended and uncertain our inexact art can be. I want to include what my…..partners learnt from working with me and what I learned from them….I want to show, not just tell, how important appropriateness of medium and story and style are, without sounding too sure of a method that works every time, because it is being honestly *unsure* that helps to find what is appropriate.[14]

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[14] Campbell, A. with Plastow, J. 'Promenade Theatre in Sudanese Reformatory, Diving for Stories: The Cockerel & the King's Ear' in Etherton, M. (ed.) *African Theatre Youth*. Oxford: James Curry, 2006. p.65

Chapter 2

The Philosophies and Motivations behind this Work

As a child I liked to make things, 'farewell' and 'welcome back!' signs, little booklets with exercises for people to do on long journeys. I created a miniature world in a hidden place behind my cabin-bed where various dramas would be played out by the different dolls and miniature people who lived there. As I got older, and talking at length to a mop I had named Sally became less socially acceptable, I discovered drama and attended an after-school club which, for a number of years, I literally lived for.

Drama and performance for me, growing up, provided a space where I could escape and in my process of becoming others, I could make sense of my own world. By creating sets, scenes and miniature worlds in secret places I could 'bring [my] inner house into order'.[15] By pretending I was a multitude of others, living in a different time and place I could play at being elsewhere and consider different types of challenges and dilemmas.

I grew up in an Irish working class family. My Dad was a carpenter and a passionate socialist and my mum was a childminder. They were young parents and our home life reflected the struggles they faced in trying to provide for us and make their way in the world. Both of them were somewhat eccentric and imaginative. It was not unusual, for example, to return home from school and find your toys set up in some cryptic scenario casting you as the detective to decipher what had happened between them. They both taught me to empathise with others and not to believe in all you are told, to fight for the underdog and that childhood is a magical and sacred place. Our house was also always full of children because of mum's job. These children each came with their own stories. Many of them from single parent families and all of whom brought a whole host of different cultures and backgrounds through our door.

This chapter will reflect on the foundations of my practice and theory through my BA

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[15] As further explored by Bettelheim, B. *The Uses of Enchantment.* New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976. p.5.

(Hons) degree that chartered my own process of 'self-actualisation' and defined the beginnings of my facilitation strategies.[16] I will cross-reference my own reflections with the course's philosophy from supporting handbooks; thus crossing between the theory and experience of practice.

Drama, Theatre and Television Studies, BA (Hons): King Alfred's College, Winchester

I feel incredibly lucky to have found the undergraduate degree in Drama, Theatre and Television Studies. I had no idea at the time of enrolling of the type of impact it would have on my life. In a unique and captivating way it created a space for all the things I had loved doing as a child to be useful. It enabled me to continue to create whilst becoming politically and socially conscious of my surroundings and my place in the world. It deepened the meaning, purpose and role of art and shone a light on the injustices I had become more aware of as an adolescent. It reconnected me with the world and showed me that I had the power to transform it.

> It is the belief of the course team that higher education should be a developmental process in which students are encouraged and enabled to move from being situated as passive interpreters of their cultures into roles as active interveners in the development of their societies. To this end graduates from the pathway are expected to be able to use the live and recorded media in socially transformative ways, both as practitioners in their own right and as facilitators of the practices of others.[17]

The course was inspired by pioneers of the applied, community based and alternative drama and theatre genres. It was designed to interrogate notions of representation and ways of knowing and explore the use of drama, theatre and television as media for the purposes of education and social transformation. Throughout the three years of the

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[16] A concept explored by hooks, b. *Teaching to Transgress, Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York and London: Routledge, 1994.

[17] *BA Honours Drama, Theatre and Television Studies,* Definitive Document. King Alfred's College, Winchester: School of Drama, Music and Sports Studies. 1996. p.2

programme we were introduced to different performance, documentary and film forms and trained to be critical of the text and context relationship within each. We learnt about the less told stories and the use of mainstream media as a tool for propaganda and manipulation to divide and control groups. We experimented with performance forms and theory from other countries and their role and representation within their native cultures. We became critical thinkers and analysts of the givens that construct our society and were encouraged to analyse more deeply, the socio-political histories that influence and inform our way of being. We were educated in the possibilities for drama, television and theatre as tools to inform, sensationalise and revolutionise. We experimented with the use of theatre and art as a means of protest and resistance. We explored applied theatre processes and specific techniques that encouraged reflexive and dialectical education models. We learnt the use of applied arts techniques in different settings for transformative purposes and the specific terminologies attached to this type of work, as a discipline. The way in which we were taught reflected the core philosophies of the course. There was no voice of authority or definitive right answer. What we brought to the cohort as individuals was both relevant and valued. We learnt by being active participants, rather than passive receivers, in the development of ideas, as explained in this course excerpt:

> The most significant learning resource available to the pathway is the cohort of students and it is from its experience that the course begins.[18]

Practical elements of the course enabled us to become the teachers, documentary makers, workshop facilitators, directors and performers, utilising the rest of the cohort as our students, audiences and critics. The diversity of the cohort and the relationships we formed created a sphere from which we were able to explore notions of identity and difference. Our often extreme contrasts of cultural and class orientation provoked intended tension and debate. Through these collisions and negotiations we realised who we were in relation to those around us and better conceptualised notions of self and other. This collaborative classroom trained us how to accept diversity as well as enabling us to

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[18] *BA Drama, Community Theatre and Media,* Second Stage Revalidation Document. King Alfred's College, Winchester: School of Community and Performing Arts. 2004. p.2

see where we stood in relation to these differences.[19]

A core element of the course was practical project work in community based settings. This is when we left the safety of the cohort to explore the applications and uses for the creative methodologies we had been experimenting with, within real world community settings. We formed small groups based on shared project interests. A significant element of the preparatory stages for our community based projects took place within our smaller group discussions. This is where we hypothesised what would be an appropriate, relevant and ethical intervention into our chosen community contexts. Complex considerations as to what a community group is, how you define them and where you find them ensued. We were forced to interrogate how we perceived others and our understanding of the role of the work. This threw up more questions about assumptions and our right to enter into community contexts at all. Eventually we stumbled into our sites of practice and tried, as best we could, to portray a degree of confidence in our project aims and objectives and our abilities as the facilitators of this work.

> The programme concentrates on issues of representation, starting from self-representation of the students as individuals and groups, moving on to the facilitation of others' representation of themselves….Building on a developing understanding of the self in relation to contemporary society, students are offered an incrementally sophisticated set of opportunities to make interventions into aspects of this society through the live and recorded media.[20]

It was during these practical projects that we were able to explore the potential for the work and the implicit challenges of developing it with different groups, first hand. Our initial project aims and objectives were confronted by the realities and needs of the group and the specifics of the setting. At first we worried that moving away from our original proposals would reflect a weakness in our ability to develop the work as we had set out to do. Guidance from the tutors and supervision that encouraged reflexive practice helped us

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[19] The concept of collaborative classrooms is also explored extensively by hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994.
[20] *Ibid.* p.2

to understand that integral to the facilitation process is the realigning of the work's objectives to embody and emulate the needs of the group and find ways for them to navigate the route of the work, with you. We still existed in a constant state of panic about what we should be doing and whether what we were doing was right, ethical, enough, needed and/or appropriate. Each project enabled us to better understand through experimental learning, our own strengths and weaknesses as the facilitation group. Each stage of the process helped us to better conceive how the work could be used and the complexities surrounding work's functions, implications and restrictions.

The remainder of this chapter will examine how my primary community based projects: the Romany Gypsy project and the Main-place* pilot project acted as a foundation and impetus for this PhD research. Both of these projects demonstrated, through the live experience of doing and developing the work, the potential for applied theatre/arts practice to act as a research tool with young people and the distinct possibilities for the work to develop strategies to help voice the concerns of young people in relation to their specific experiences of marginalisation and disempowerment. The first project took place on a legal rural gypsy site, the second occurred deep within an institutional framework.

The Romany Gypsy Project, 1997

As a student I was interested in discovering undiscovered worlds and hearing from those misunderstood by others. I still am. Perhaps this reflects by own feelings of separation from normality as a child as well as my fascination with people and stories. In the first year of my undergraduate degree we worked with a community of Romany Gypsies and, through this work, we were able to directly experience a world that lived outside the conventions of normal society. We learnt about the pressures inflicted upon this group to conform and the attempts from social welfare departments to reintegrate this group into mainstream society.

> Jimmy: that's what they do, they take you off the road and then they try to get you into a house

Joey: -they try to change you

Jimmy: but they aint gonna change me [21]

Over a four month period we developed a play with a group of young people from the site whilst working with the community as a whole to research their worlds. Research took the form of long chats with the women in their caravans and through proud tours given by the children around the site. We made a cardboard television set that could be worn by ourselves and the children to report on our news and the events that had happened since our last visit. These sessions inspired ideas about how to creatively consult young people and the ways in which different frames can effectively research and represent their lifestyles and stories. We began to develop a theatre piece with the young people about their histories, traditions and modern-day experiences of being a Romany Gypsy based on their insights and ideas.[22]

Likes and Dislikes

Through a brainstorming exercise simply called "good and bad" the young people created a list of positive and negative things about being a gypsy. This became our backdrop for devising workshops to develop these specific ideas into different scenes of the play. We experimented with how these themes could be translated into different performances and shared the role of 'director' and 'actor' to bring to life these messages and themes. This meant that sometimes the young people played their oppressors and at other times they played themselves. Other scenes were written and directed solely by the young people. During other sessions adult community members sat in and directed pieces of the drama. This was particularly useful in authentically depicting the more traditional portrayals of their story/cultural identity. We became the community's players and puppets as they demonstrated, through and with us, their lived experiences. The relationships we developed with the community group enabled an effortless exchange of ideas and statuses. The final theatre piece was performed to a varied audience of students and other members of the university community. The group had felt that 'everyone and anyone!'

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[21] See DVD.2, clips 1-3 for filmed interviews with the young people on site.

[22] See DVD.2, clips 1-3 for footage of devising and rehearsal phases.

was a relevant audience to see their story as so few understood what it meant to be a gypsy and so many held negative opinions of them. The performance was opened by Joey, aged eight:

> My name is Joey, I am eight years old…I wanted to do this play to show you how Gypsies live and how we get treated and that..[23]

This project inspired ideas about working in collaborative ways with young people and marginalised groups to enable them to represent their identities and concerns. The project developed specific techniques for researching and bringing to voice their notions of self and identity through performance based techniques. For the first time in my life I was totally immersed in something that could genuinely help people and impact on an audience in meaningful ways. This passion continued throughout the undergraduate course to influence and define my third year project.

Main-place Children's Home Project, 1999

The idea to work within a children's home setting came about through a group discussion about parenting and child development. This led to the suggestion of developing a project with young people who are not parented by their parents. We eventually discovered a children's home in Hampshire which, for the purposes of confidentiality, I will refer to as Main-place children's home. Main-place was a purpose built unit designed to accommodate six young people at any one time. It was a rather unsightly red-bricked building hidden behind trees from a main road.

> If I was the manager I'd get this building changed coz it looks more like a factory
>
> It's not homely, it's not homely at all [24]

Our original project aim was to try to create something with the young people of

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[23] See DVD.2, clips 1-3 for Joey's opening statement in the play.
[24] Emily, see DVD.2 clips 4-6 for snapshots of these 'Big Brother' Interviews.

importance to them, as with the Romany Gypsy project and to better understand their worlds. We worked with five young people living in Main-place at the time: Aaron, Leo, Lila, Helena and Emily, aged between 12 and 14 years old, over a four month period. Working from within the context of the children's home provided us with many real and raw insights into these young people's lives. It was often an intense environment with many different layers existing as an undercurrent to every moment.

Group Dynamics

Our initial visit revealed some of the problems within the group and some of the potential challenges we might face by working with them. We were invited to visit the home and introduce the idea of the project to the young people over dinner. As the facilitator group we took it in turns to speak a little about the other projects we had been involved with and tried to emphasise that the work would belong to them and could be about anything they wished. As a fun way to conclude this first meeting we prepared a group quiz. It was through this initial game playing that we realised how volatile the group were, especially towards each other. They were competitive and aggressive and we struggled to get through each question without an outburst between them. Keen to leave without an actual fight happening as a result of our visit we rushed through the questions, gave out prizes, thanked them and told them we would wait to hear whether they would like to be involved in the work. As we left, much to our surprise, Ted, a residential social worker, commented on how relaxed the unit had been in comparison to the rest of the week and invited us back to try to develop work with the group.

The Workshops

Our twice weekly visits facilitated improvisation games and role plays from the games room positioned in the middle of the home. By working within the home, we were able to observe how it operated. Meal times, the locking of certain doors at certain times and the language used by the staff members and the young people gave us an insight into some of

the cultures and rituals within the setting.[25] We began to develop simple techniques to help manage the tension amongst the group, such as giving the young people each a turn at being the 'caller'/in control of the game and helping them to introduce and lead their own games with the rest of the group. We realised that by having lots of games prepared it helped to move the workshop on from points of conflict by refocusing the group onto something new.

In contrast to games with too many rules and restrictions the young people responded most positively to improvisation games. The fast-pace of acting alongside each other in-role helped to create opportunities for the group to communicate with one another and experiment with different statuses other than those they were confined to within the pecking orders of the group.[26] We realised how, through these games, we were able to explore the 'real context' through the 'fictional contexts' created through the drama without ever having to leave the room or ask direct questions.[27] The young people's choice of characters and scenarios were insightful indications of their experiences with others and their understandings of their worlds. Aaron played a policeman arresting another young person in one scene. His detailed use of authoritative language and his character portrayal as the policeman suggested a negative experience; yet familiarity with this process. The significance of the young people being able to communicate in-role with one another was highlighted every time we witnessed their normal strained relationships and each time we attempted to defuse their disputes. The sketches momentarily suspended reality and enabled them to interact with one another at ease.

I enjoyed all of the games and the reason why is cause none of us argued [28]

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[25] These ideas are expanded upon in Chapter 3 in reference to Goffman's research of 'Total Institutions' in Goffman, E. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates.* England and New York: Penguin Books, 1968.

[26] As explored by Kahan, B. *Growing up in Groups.* London: The Stationery House for the National Institute of Social Work Practice, 1994.

[27] O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* 1992. pp.1-17

[28] Emily, extract from her written feedback form after the project.

Moment of Crisis, Adapting Techniques

The need to deepen the work and move away from games for games' sake was made clear through the group's rejection of the workshop games one evening. We were left standing in the games room alone and embarrassed after the group abandoned the workshop with a sense of 'what's the point?' We had exhausted the games and the young people no longer wanted to play. In our attempt to keep things safe we had failed to enable the group to take ownership of the work or use it to begin to engage with their specific stories. We were forced to re-evaluate the purpose of the project and refocus the work around their ideas and interests. We were apprehensive about touching on sensitive issues as to why they were in care and therefore had hidden behind games up until this point, not knowing how to develop the work. I suggested that we use the 'good and bad' brain storming activity that was developed during the Romany Gypsy project. For the Main-place Group we decided to give each young person their own piece of paper instead of asking them to work as a full group and to change the good and bad focus to 'likes and dislikes'. We hoped the open ended nature of the exercise would ensure they did not feel interrogated or put on the spot and that they would enjoy creating a personal list about them, as individuals.

Likes and Dislikes and Photo-Voice

The likes and dislikes activity proved to be a significant turning point, with the lists that the young people created used as consistent points of reference throughout the rest of the project, as with the Romany Gypsy group. Each young person worked 'independently but together' to create their lists whilst discussions between them occurred organically without any prompting from us.[29] Up until this point the young people had been very vocal and aggressive about how much they hated living in Main-place, and each other. This activity helped to encourage 'processes of conscientisation' amongst the group as they began to recognise why they felt that way and were able to realise their 'specific and

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[29] Brian Way's philosophy as cited by Bolton, G. *Acting in Classroom Drama, a Critical Analysis.* England: Trentham Books, 1998. p.149

shared sources of oppression'.[30] At the end of the session, as an extension of this exercise, we gave each of the young people a disposable camera for them to take pictures of things they liked and disliked. From these photographs we were given a sequence of snap-shots into the young people's lives outside and beyond the workshop context as a neutral space. One of Aaron's photos showed Lila being arrested by policemen within the home. This was a startling realisation of what happens to looked after young people within their own homes. [31]

The lists and the photographs helped us to better understand the young people as individuals and invigorated discussions about all of our likes and dislikes. A central ethos of the work had been established by demonstrating, to the young people, that their specific interests and concerns were important and relevant to the work and that we were interested in what they had to say. The direction of the project altered from this point onwards and became focused on the ways in which the creative media: drama, film and theatre could be used as tools for further articulation, self-determination and expression. The young people regained faith in the work and started to explore the different potentials for it *with* us. Collaboratively we began to develop new techniques that built on this now established pedagogy for liberation.

Camera Work: the 'Tour' and the Big Brother Diary Room

Aaron and Leo asked us if they could make a film about Main-place in a mock estate-agent style to show some of their thoughts about the home. We helped them to storyboard a short film that presented the various (or lack of) facilities within the home to a fictional audience of potential buyers. Aaron played the host and Leo acted as the camera man/director. Aaron became animated in front of the camera and presented each planned part of the home in a tongue-in-cheek style. Leo took his role as the camera man and director incredibly seriously and seemed to respond positively to being given the

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[30] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 1996. pp.47-90
[31] This technique reflects Augusto Boal's use of 'photo-voice' in Boal, A. *Theatre of the Oppressed.* McBride, C. and M.-O Leal (trans.) London: Pluto Press, 2000. pp.120-142; These techniques are also used by Robb, S., O'Leary, P., Mackinnon, A., Bishop, P. *Hope, the Everyday and Imaginary Life of Young People on the Margins.* Australia: Wakefield Press. 2010; also see Chapter 4 of this thesis for more detail.

responsibility of operating the equipment and making decisions about the film.

This session demonstrated the ways in which the use of fictional frames can explore the *real* views of the participants by helping them to express themselves through an established frame of reference.[32] As the facilitator group we learnt how under-resourced the games room was and how much the young people resented the doors being locked around the home. They also felt the home looked bare and felt 'un-homely'.[33]

Aaron and Leo's tour inspired a new interest in film work and the girls asked if they could make a film too. We were excited about the potential to work on a film with the group as a whole and the possibility that this may become a group piece to be presented to an audience.[34] Our attempts to create a storyboard with the whole group swiftly became a minefield for disagreements. As we struggled to maintain their interest and find ways to resolve their disputes someone suggested creating a Big Brother Diary room instead. This would act as a way for each young person to have a turn in front of the camera, individually, without having to compromise on what they wanted to say. It was agreed. I was nominated the interviewer and we worked together to set up the room and design the questions I was to ask.

Away from the rest of the group the young people were philosophical about how they felt about living in Main-place and reflective about some of the real causes for the problems within the home. They shared their hopes and dreams for the future and talked about their lives outside of the home, at school or with their families. This process illuminated the young people's need to speak independently from each other about how they felt and *who* they were. We realised that the group had been resisting working together because they needed to be heard as individuals and, unlike the Romany Gypsy group, were not a group

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[32] As also discussed by Boal, A., *The Rainbow of Desire, the Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy.* Jackson, A. (trans.) London and New York: Routledge, 1995. p.50
[33] This theme of the lack of affection and comfort within British residential children's homes is explored further within Chapter 4.
[34] One of the elements of the course was to create an 'in-context' event. My hope was that the Main-place group could feel the same sense of pride that the Romany Gypsy group had experienced.

out of choice or preference or proud of their shared cultural identity.[35] This was a pivotal phase of the project's process in realising the importance of being reflexive and responsive to the group's needs.

Forum Theatre: The Court room Reconstruction

We began to work with the young people in smaller groups of two or three and accepted the gender divide between the girls and the boys rather than encouraging them to work together. One evening we arrived to work with Aaron and Leo and were told they had been arrested and charged with criminal damage to a neighbouring building. The two boys were held in a cell for two days before appearing in court to be found guilty. The concept of young people being arrested was alien to us and seemed to affect Aaron and Leo badly when they returned back to the home, edgy and restless. We asked them whether they wanted to show us what it was like to appear in court in the hope that we could better understand their experiences and that they might benefit from the chance to do so. We used a technique called 'blagg' to invent a fictional character and story about a young boy called Fred Jackson.[36] The boys decided that Fred had set fire to his children's home after all of the rooms within the home had been locked because he had 'got bored'. The boys recreated the court room scene where Fred was charged, as they had been, with criminal damage. Within the scene Aaron and Leo chose to play various officials and cast each of us as other roles. I played Fred Jackson. They instructed us to stand and sit at various points of 'the hearing' and allowed us to freeze the action and come out of character to ask questions about what was happening.

This work highlighted how intimidating the court room context is and how little the child speaks throughout the hearing. As Fred, I spoke only once to confirm my name. Aaron and Leo became our interpreters to the complex language and legal proceedings. By

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[35] These revelations and their significance in terms of work with looked after/institutionalised young people are further explored in Chapters 3 and 4 with particular reference to individual theory and narrative therapies.

[36] Blagg is a technique developed by James Thompson and the TIPP centre, Manchester. It is concerned with inventing a 'fictional' character with participants through whom different *truths* are projected and represented providing a safe and symbolic frame of reference.

playing the officials they were given a sense of authority both within their fictional roles and by being our guides to what was happening. Towards the end of the session a fight broke out between Aaron and Leo. Members of staff entered the room and asked us to leave whilst they took control of the situation by physically restraining both boys on the floor. We were left feeling disturbed by how squashed the young people are within systems that restrain and silence them. The response from the staff in the form of a physical restraint seemed to typify the type of techniques that are used to overpower and dominate these young people.

Individual Pieces

As the young people began to trust in us and the work, they began to approach us individually and independently with new ideas. To help manage this influx of proposals we paired each young person with a facilitator to act as their assistant. These informal partnerships were both a logistical way of managing the work and sought to ensure each young person felt supported and valued in the knowledge that someone was especially assigned to helping them to develop their own piece.

> as time on the project went on the y.ps felt that one of the students was theirs as each individual seemed to work with a certain student [37]

The emergence of the young people's *individual pieces* was a significant stage in the project and the pedagogical approach as a whole. There was a fundamental shift in the leadership of the project from us introducing different games and techniques *to* the group, to them leading the work, and us assisting them. Each devising process was unique to each young person from this point onwards. The young people made decisions about the content and style of their piece and the type of assistance they wanted in producing it. We had succeeded in introducing a variation of mediums and forms to the group and they

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[37] Pete, a Residential Social Worker at Main-place. Extract from his written feedback after the project.

were now able to take ownership of the work and manipulate it to suit their own visions.[38]

The *individual pieces* also had a dramatic impact on the group's dynamics. The young people began to praise each other's work and demonstrate a sense of pride and commitment to their individual projects. By owning something independently of one another, they began to respect each other as artists and co-creators and not feel the need to compete with or criticise one another, as they had done before. Some of them required extra people within their pieces to act as different characters. This helped to build bridges between the group members as they approached each other for help and developed relationships based on a mutual trust and respect.

> The changes I saw in the young people were that they interacted for the better with each other and they OWNED the work it was theirs not staff/carers. The atmosphere was 100% improved whilst workshops were being done.[39]

Theatre for Development: The In-Context Event

As their *individual pieces* began to take shape, and a presentation of some sort became a reality we began to discuss an appropriate audience for their pieces. The group were unanimous that they wanted the 'top people' of Hampshire County Council to see their work and were motivated by the potential to use the project to communicate to them. We asked the group to make personal invitations to all of those they wanted to attend to ensure the project was understood as belonging to the young people, and that it was the young people who were 'initiate[ing] the[se] process of communication'.[40] It became apparent how crucial this audience of senior managers and social workers were to the work in terms of the young people having a voice within these frameworks.

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[38] These themes of authorship and authority are paramount to this whole research project in relation to what is lacking and what my practice was able to provide within child welfare contexts; see Chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[39] Ted, a Residential Social Worker at Main-place. Extract from his written feedback after the project.
[40] Mda, Z. *When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993. p.28

We structured the event so that audience members were first met with an exhibition of the project work in the foyer of the theatre building. Spider diagrams, the likes and dislikes lists, photographs and written research pieces were presented in five different areas dedicated to each of the young people. Enlarged photographs of the whole group rehearsing, filming and playing drama games were also displayed in a communal area. The conscious decision to show extracts from behind the scenes was a bid to highlight the process and specific strategies that had been used to create the event. We wanted to emphasise the commitment and ownership of each of the young people over the project and to disseminate the specific techniques we had used to ensure their meaningful and person-specific participation. Once within the auditorium we played a video montage of footage taken from the project to further define the process as well as to remind the audience of the group's real worlds, within the home setting.[41]

We gave each of the individual pieces a running order that structured a multi-media and multi-messaged showcase of the young people's work. The pieces focused on issues of belonging, peer acceptance and the stigma related to being looked after. They explored their relationships with staff members and the other young people in the home, the ways in which rules and regulations impacted on their lives and the physical, aesthetic environment of the home. Helen's piece told the story of a holiday she had been promised and how it felt to be told a day before she was due to go that it had been cancelled. Lila created a fictional piece about a girl struggling to hide the fact that she was in care from her friends at a new school. Aaron's piece spoke of how people look at him on the bus as a mixed-race kid and also what it means to be in care.

The event concluded with an after-show discussion during which we encouraged the audience to comment on the messages within the young people's pieces. When prompted for answers to some of the young people's questions, examples of broken promises and lack of appropriate facilities we were told that it was "not the forum to discuss specifics". Many of the audience members were keen to congratulate the young people and

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[41] See DVD.2, clip 7 for footage of the final Main-place event. This use of media to present back the processes underpinning the work has been concurrent in order to translate the practice to different audiences.

expressed what the experience of seeing them perform had meant to them:

> I started off my working life working in a children's home and I'd forgotten a lot of that and today I think has been a real reminder of what it must feel like to be a child out of their own environment in a children's home and there's some more conversations you could usefully have with the young people who could help us in how better to support them in that situation…..[42]

It was during this after-show discussion that we were asked by the Deputy Head of Hampshire's Children Services if we would like to take the show on tour. This invitation somewhat paved the way for my ongoing pursuit of work with Hampshire County Council as well as highlighting the dissymmetry between their visions for the work as a commodity and my hopes for it as a tool of liberation.

Impacts

Although the experience proved to have a positive impact on the young people in terms of group dynamics and raised self-esteem, these types of transformations were somewhat limited to the moment. My research from this point onwards has been concerned with investigating how this type of work can have genuine, sustainable and long-term impacts on contexts and in identification of the specific considerations required to ensure the practice is more than a good night out and/or a temporary suspension of inherent power imbalances and subjugations.

> Audience member: What do you think you got out of it yourselves?
> Aaron: The freedom to express ourselves [43]

Feedback forms distributed to audience members after the event captured some encouraging comments from different levels of management and front-line staff. At this

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[42] See DVD.2, clip 8 verbal feedback from an audience member during the after-show discussion.
[43] See DVD.2, clip 9 conversation between Aaron and a senior social care professional after a second performance of the play.

point I thought all we had to do was to raise awareness of the young people's needs and keep reaching out to audiences of this type. My research from this point onwards revealed that work within these contexts is more complex and that in order to achieve a genuine impact on frameworks a multiple-pronged approach is often required (see Chapters 5-8).

> Very appreciative of a medium being found so that young people can communicate their views, wants, concerns and aspirations…[44]

> Everyone in social care should see something like this! [45]

Conclusion

The Main-place and the Romany Gypsy project revealed the ways in which creativity could be used to research and respond to the needs and messages of young people suppressed and silenced by systems and society. They took the shape of a Theatre for Development model (TfD) that uses a range of arts based practice to research the realities of participant groups in culturally appropriate ways. TfD works towards an 'in-context' event that invites a specific audience, relevant to the messages and concerns of the group, and uses a performance event to open-up avenues for communication/development. This model of practice will be further analysed in Chapter 3. Of the many messages that emerged through the work both groups revealed concurrent patterns of voiceless-ness, criminalisation / demonisation and exclusion from the wider community and the need to speak out about their realities and individualities. My understanding of the facilitation role and the potential efficiency for this type of work was defined *through* these founding experiences. Practical techniques and the confidence and consciousness to work in reflexive ways were two key strands of the work. The experience of coming to voice and being liberated through my undergraduate course found a way to be replicated within my

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[44] Felicity Hindson, Chairman of Social Services Committee. Extract from her written feedback, after the performance event.
[45] Paul Nixon, Commissioning Officer, Children and Families. *Ibid*

community based contexts where I set about carving out opportunities for the participants to experience comparable processes of self-actualisation and self-determination.

Both of these projects ignited something within me that motivated years of further practice in related fields. The Romany Gypsy work and my degree training helped to establish a pedagogical framework whilst Main-place and the distinct dynamics between the participant group and their audience presented a context for ongoing exploration. I was deeply affected by the ways in which looked-after children battle with the stigma attached to being in care and their treatment in care when *they* have been the victims of trauma.[46] I was disturbed by how little the decision makers seemed to know about these young people's realities and how wholly uncreative these contexts and their practices were. It appeared that in every other child-based setting the importance and efficiency for arts-based work and creativity is well researched and widely accepted apart from with child welfare homes settings such as these.[47] I was dumbfounded at how unusual it was for these children to get the opportunity to be able to meet and communicate directly with those who made decisions on their behalf. I was amazed by the institutional practices that criminalised these young people and subjected them to cold, corporate mechanisms such as meetings and form filling when this was supposed to be about 'care'.[48] I was struck by how emotionless and un-therapeutic these settings were when dealing with intuitive and distressed young people. Overall, I was haunted by the conviction that this type of work had to be further developed. I felt unable to walk away from the Main-place experience, those we had worked with and the thousands of others like them. I was convinced that to do this, I too would be letting them down.

This poem, discovered by a group member during the Main-place project, featured as an important consolidation of my ethical and philosophical basis at this point:

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[46] See Chapter 4 for more detail.
[47] Also highlighted by Chambers, H. 'Creative Arts and Play for the Well-being of Looked After Children'. *Highlight,* no. 212. October 2004.
[48] Such as with the Aaron and Leo example, also see Chapter 4.

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism,

they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility,

they learn to fight,

If children live with fear,

they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity,

they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule,

they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy,

they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame,

they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement,

they learn confidence.

If children live with praise,

they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance,

they learn to love.

If children live with approval,

they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition,

they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing

they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty,

they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness,

they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration,

they learn respect.

If children live with security,

they learn to have faith in themselves and in those around them.

If children live with friendliness,

they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.[49]

The next chapter will expand on these ideas to construct a wider conceptual framework through which to examine the particular models and techniques with which my research practice compares.

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[49] Law Nolte, D. Ph.D. in Law Nolte, D and Harris, R. *Children Learn what They Live*. New York: Workman Publishing, 1998. p.6

Chapter 3

The Conceptual Frameworks of this Research

Applied Theatre as a Socio-Political Tool

This chapter will construct a conceptual framework from which to examine the problems within social care settings in relation to socio-political and cross-cultural trends in the control and colonisation of groups. The combined perspectives presented here demonstrate a distinct rationale to support my critiques of statutory care practices and their imminent damage to the development of the looked-after child. The ideas in the initial sections of this chapter pinpoint the specific forms of oppression related to this research as well as exploring visions for a liberatory practice. These visions are then translated through a critique of applied theatre practice as a liberatory tool. In the construction of a multi-layered and multi-disciplinary conceptual framework I have drawn on a number of critical theorists and applied theatre practitioners to establish a useful and relevant conceptual apparatus. Throughout the thesis I will refer back to this conceptual framework to revisit specific concepts and terminologies. John O'Toole's model which focuses on framing is helpful here in visualising the macro and micro representations of this work as a socio-political tool and the multiple contextual layers and concentric frames which define the contexts of the practice.[50] He uses an image of boxes that fit into each other and descend in size. This chapter is concerned with establishing the binary between applied theatre as a tool of empowerment and the specific trends and sources of oppression relevant to this research. The contextual frames embodying the use of this type of work with LAC include notions of colonisation, welfare and development, processes of institutionalisation and context-specific visions of empowerment. These themes will form the through-line of this chapter.

Using the global perspectives and macro models presented by Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky, Prentki analyses the notion of welfare and development and the potential for applied theatre practice as a socio-political tool of resistance to reinstate the participant as

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[50] O'Toole. *Process of Drama.* 1992. p.6

the expert in their own lives. From a global perspective the 'looked after' represent 'developing countries' kept on the receiving end of aid whilst the western world benefits greatly from their imposed position of powerlessness and dependency. The 'looked-after' are 'othered', epitomized as backward, not yet developed enough and lacking in the resources, know-how, common sense or intelligence to help themselves. We must therefore show them, show them how to be.

Klein's *The Shock Doctrine* builds on these ideas detailing the brutality used to erase personal memory and cultural identities for research purposes and as part of invasion strategies. She cites her realisation that:

> now the preferred method of advancing corporate goals [is] using moments of
> collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering.[51]

Klein is concerned with 'the intersection between superprofits and megadisasters' and the use of shock and disorientation to drive the agenda of exploitation.[52] Klein and Chomsky refer to the architects of the invasion and the architects of policy. They analyse the post-war planning by these architects to design a global system in the interests of the super powers and the uses of terror, shock and disorientation to 'domesticate the expectations of the majority'.[53] Collectively these theorists establish the global patterns of domination as the developing world is used as a resource to finance the developed world, propaganda is used to rationalise invasion, processes of 'othering' are used to assert authority and homogeneity over those deemed in need, and 'research' and 'policy' are used to obscure 'the grotesque inequalities of the present moment'.[54] This global perspective of the power techniques and political apparatuses used to 'make and unmake the legal frameworks' is relevant to my research because it outlines the power relations in the macro world of

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[51] Klein, N. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.* London, New York: Penguin Books, 2007.p.8
[52] *Ibid.* p.9
[53] Chomsky, N. 'Profit over People' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.187
[54] Giroux, H. and Shannon, P. 'Cultural Studies and Pedagogy as Performative Practice, Towards an Introduction'. In Giroux, H. and Shannon, P. (eds) *Education and Cultural Studies, Towards a Performative Practice*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997. p.7

welfare and begins to create a broad theoretical frame within which my research sits.[55] It is these annihilated stories, cultures, rights and identities that applied theatre practice as a socio-political tool of intervention has been committed to rediscovering, and, in the process of rediscovering, has developed culturally appropriate, context-specific and person-centred strategies. Applied theatre as methodology has focused on ways to explore and respond to the specific needs and cultural diversities of those within the contexts in which it is operating. What the work has become and how it has been adapted within each example reflects a site-specific relationship with where it places itself. As Michael Balfour explains this is 'because the work is constantly changing in response to the practical experience'[56]. Prentki helps to further define the relationship between the context, the participants and the evolution of the creative praxis in this extract:

> there is no 'correct' model; no workshop manual on how to do process. Again context is all. Specific circumstances give rise to specific strategies for realising the purpose of using theatre as a means for marginalised groups to represent and / or change their social reality. [57]

This type of work is revolutionary because it is concerned with people and the essence of their identities in the face of homogeneity. As such it has the power to act as a site of resistance and as a tool to *counter* dominant influences that are shaping postmodern society; this is because it

> .....works to facilitate independence, to assist communities in a process of building a capacity for autonomous self-development. [It is] Participatory and democratic [and, as such] its principles are at odds with those of globalisation. It provides a means by which those whose indigenous culture is threatened by outside intervention can….create a space in which to articulate that culture and to examine the social bases of communities on their own terms of devising…the present time is witnessing the most extreme, far-reaching

[55] Kershaw, B. *The Politics of Performance, Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. p.36

[56] Balfour, M. *The Use of Drama in the Rehabilitation of Violent Male Offenders*. England: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003. p.8

[57] Prentki, T. and Selman, J. *Popular Theatre in Political Culture. Britain and Canada in Focus.* Bristol, Portland: Intellect, 2000. p.158

manifestation of colonialism yet devised. In the interests of financial gain, a tiny group of people is now working to colonise all the peoples of the earth: not with armies but with ideologies. It is not their lands that are being colonised but their minds…[58]

These themes of the colonisation of the mind and creating spaces to articulate culture feature throughout this chapter. I am interested in the radical spaces the workshop context can create and what self-development and independence can look like in different sites of practice. Prentki refers to 'popular theatre' works whilst elsewhere Kershaw uses the term 'alternative theatre movements'. Terminology within this field has been used differently in the attempt to encapsulate the multiple strands and trends that have emerged.[59] As Thompson clarifies

> although [applied theatre] accepts the idea of a reconnection to the community, [it] should be understood as a contemporary theatre practice that has many different histories and varied rationales depending on where it is happening.[60]

Within my research I have decided to use the term applied theatre/arts to describe my practice. What unifies the specific use of this type of work is the commitment to person-centred practice that is adaptive and responsive to the specific circumstances of participants. Facilitators develop relationships with participant groups based on trust and negotiate spaces to experiment with the possibilities for applied theatre practice within the contextual boundaries and frames each opportunity provides. A fundamental part of the facilitation process is negotiations they embark on to achieve access and autonomy in each context. Prentki describes this as 'the tightrope walk'.[61] These negotiations can be somewhat heightened and magnified when working within closed institutions as will be explored later on in this chapter. The distinct set of power relations, contextual complexities and the dynamics of the group shape the work and the types of outcomes it may have. It is these context-specific processes of negotiation that have informed

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[58] *Ibid.* p.200
[59] Kershaw. *The Politics of Performance.* 1992. p.40
[60] Thompson, J. *Applied Theatre, Bewilderment and Beyond.* Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2003. p.19
[61] Prentki and Selman. *Popular Theatre.* 2000. p.157

different strategies and genres of applied arts practice and have helped to discover new possibilities and potentials.

The umbrella of this type of work is particularly broad because each example of practice is rooted in the realities of each setting and thus form, content and stories have varied vastly each time. My research into the use of applied theatre practice within child welfare arenas draws comparisons with Theatre for Development work (TfD), Theatre in Education (TIE), Drama in Education (DIE), Theatre in Prisons and Probation (TIPP) and process drama. These different genres each overlap with my own work in terms of models of work and uses of practice. However there has been a significant lack of research about the use of this type of work with looked after children in residential settings.[62]

One of the few examples of theatre work with LAC that I discovered was a play called 'Lost and Found' that worked with a number of different young people in children's homes across Hampshire.[63] Unfortunately this production represented a crude example of an uncritical approach and insensitivity in terms of the relationship between the 'real context' and the 'fictional context'. It had also been written *for* the young people by an outside playwright. This resulted in the young people not seeming to understand what the play was about, which, given its setting in a lost property office may have been a good thing? The central framing of the play took place in a lost property office where the staff of the office criticised people for being so careless with their things and awaited the collection of these lost, forgotten and unloved items. The young people were burdened with lengthy and intricate prose which they had been unable to memorise in time for the opening night resulting in them standing on stage reading from scripts. This example

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[62] Thompson, Heathcote, Kershaw, Boal, McAvinchey, Hughes, Balfour and Warren, among others, have examined the use of applied arts based work within prisons, schools, pupil referral units (PRUs) and hospitals to research current cultures of practice, offer alternatives and provoke new ways of seeing within these settings. My practice relates to their work in different ways and will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter. Bundy has researched the use of drama based interventions with adult survivors of former children in care in Bundy, P. 'The Performance of Trauma' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader.* 2009. pp.238-240.

[63] The Beyond Care Theatre Company. *Lost and Found*. First Performance: 23 April, 2001.Tower Arts Centre, Winchester.

raises important questions about the ethics involved in working with vulnerable groups and the role of applied theatre practice as a critically conscious *counter* practice to existing cultures which silence and dominate. The idea of voice, language and identity are central ideas and concerns of applied theatre practitioners and, therefore, a good show is defined by the quality of participation, ownership and liberation participants experience in the process of devising and producing pieces of work as opposed to them becoming somebody else's players.

O'Toole's visual deconstruction of the numerous contextual layers and concentric frames which come into play and are derivative of one another is particularly useful in considering how the fictional context and/or aesthetic of the work relates to the real context in terms of the politics and parameters of the real setting. This focus on *where* LAC are positioned in relation to the frameworks that surround them is a recurrent theme throughout my research. My use of applied theatre/arts as a tool is concerned with how the practice can research and negotiate within these contextual complexities to find ways to be of best use for participants as a counter to oppressive practices. This idea is further outlined in later sections regarding ownership and radical spaces and in Chapter 5 which details how the work took on different shapes, functions and forms as a context specific practice.

Power Techniques in the Institutionalisation of Others

Michel Foucault, Paulo Freire and Linda Tuhiwai Smith collaboratively form another layer to my conceptual framework with a particular focus on power relations and power techniques that help to illuminate how LAC are treated and processed by systems that alienate and exclude them. Foucault examines the use of history-making as a tool to maintain dominant order and silence the voices of the institutionalised and the use of discipline and punishment as a means to control and possess people. He is interested in the myths that construct and maintain dominant institutions' power and control.[64] Freire's

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[64] Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Sheridan, A. (trans.) London: Penguin Books, 1991.

ideas echo many of Foucault's concerns with regards to processes of disempowerment through oppressive systems of education and the restrictions placed on the learner in participating in their own development.[65] Smith's research into the colonisation of Maori peoples examines the impact of alien institutions of thought and theory on the lives of those 'othered' by these systems. She analyses the use of western sciences in the determination of Maori cultures and traditions and argues that these forms of categorisation robbed and raped Maori people of their cultural identities and ownership of self.[66] These are specific patterns and processes relating to the treatment of LAC.

Foucault examined the 'policing of people' through power techniques which monitor, observe and restrict human behaviour and liberty. He described 'the administration over the ways in which people live' as a political apparatus with which to take ownership over the souls of people.[67] His analysis of the evolution of trends to discipline and punish and their particular functionalities in asserting and maintaining state control over the masses begin to frame how and where these techniques live on within modern-day society. They ranged from the 'public spectacle', used to project messages of compliance to the masses as a staged warning to others, to other more discreet punishments conducted behind closed doors to claim the souls from prisoners. He states:

> The expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations…During the 150 or 200 years that Europe has been setting up its new penal systems, the judges have gradually, by means of a process that goes back very far indeed, taken to judging something other than crimes, namely, the 'soul' of the criminal.[68]

These ideas are revisited in Chapter 4 with reference to young offenders in particular. Foucault's ideas about the 'myths' created by institutions help to frame my later analysis

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[65] Freire, P. *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation.* Macedo, D. (trans.) Westport USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1985. p.72

[66] Tuhiwai Smith, L. *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London and New York: Zed Books, 1999.

[67] Foucault, M., Dreyfus, H., and Rabinow, P. (eds) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Brighton, Harvester. 1986. p.112.

[68] Foucault. *Discipline and Punish.* 1979. pp.16-19

of the contemporary use of policy to create a smoke-screen for real change, concern and/or action. Foucault advocated a more critical awareness of these myths and techniques and for a belief in the change that is possible through everyday interactions between people. He claimed that we collude with and strengthen the myths created by dominant institutions by believing in their unification and significance and asserts the idea that perhaps the state:

> is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think.[69]

Freire helps us to expand on these ideas by unpacking models of education that maintain a lack of critical thought and consciousness. He believed that by treating students as the passive recipients of knowledge, their ability to develop independent thought or engage in processes towards change is annulled. He uses what he sees as two central groups: the oppressors and the oppressed to characterise wider patterns of global oppression. Drawing from examples of interplays he uses the classroom context to explore the student-teacher relationship at any level, inside or outside the school. Central to Freire's ideas is the claiming and possession of the soul by treating people as empty vessels to be filled with dominant ideas. He considers these one-way processes of education as representational of wider forms of dictatorship and forced forms of intervention and development, upon groups. Freire describes these oppressive patterns of knowledge-transfer as the 'banking concept', as explained here:

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry…Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat.[70]

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[69] Foucault, M. 'Governmentality'. In Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P. (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. p.103
[70] Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p.53.

Processes of institutionalisation through Foucault and Freire's examples are fostered through relationships of dependency on the dominant institution. The oppressed are made dependent on the instruction and direction from dominant institutions and denied opportunities for independent thought or reflection. Their sense of self and individuality is taken from them by their treatment as recipient and homogeneous groups. They are led to believe in the hidden voices of power within the rhetoric that maintains the myths. Within areas of welfare these power relations are prevalent and prevent genuine liberation from taking place. As Freire notes, if banking concepts are transferred into welfare projects, the oppressed simply become welfare recipients, remaining on the passive receiving end of aid and intervention.[71] He explains that when attempts to help others are underpinned by imbalances of power and control this aid in reality becomes a 'false act of generosity' as outlined here:

> the interests of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them [for]…the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated….To achieve this end, the oppressors use the banking concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of "welfare recipients". [72]

These ideas help to frame the socio-political foundations of the statutory care system that 'flourished' under government subsidies and the protective umbrella of laws and sciences that fed and nurtured its growth (see Chapter 4). These systems were designed so that it is the need, deprivation and deficiencies of the oppressed/the children of the poor that feeds the oppressors/aid agencies. This imposed co-dependency between the institution and the welfare dependant was reflected in laws that protected the child welfare arena, giving 'more leeway in taking over care of children in the face of 'protesting parents'.[73] Freire states:

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[71] *Ibid.* p.55
[72] *Ibid.* p.55
[73] *Ibid.* p.116

An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this "generosity", which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty. This is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source. [74]

Smith examines false acts of generosity through research and forced forms of intervention and development on Maori peoples. She explains how scientific processes of determination and categorisation systematically erased the Maori people's traditions and beliefs by deeming them irrelevant and incorrect.[75] The cultural identities, belief systems and foundations to their entire being were eradicated through the eyes of the western researcher and the dominant voice of knowledge and power. She states:

> Those observers of indigenous peoples whose interest was of a more 'scientific' nature could be regarded as far more dangerous in that they had theories to prove, data to gather and specific languages by which they could classify and describe the indigenous world. [76]

These techniques directly reflect the experiences of the looked-after child trapped within an institutional framework that is dominated by science and an expert culture used to determine who and what they are (see Chapter 3). Smith goes on to discuss the contradictions between how Western and Maori cultures 'see the world' and construct their theories and ideas. As with the child who is unable to meaningfully participate within adult, corporate contexts the colonisation of indigenous cultures reflects these same power techniques of alienation and exclusion. Science is used as a weapon in these contexts to *prove* superiority and determine the 'value' of individuals and groups. These two extracts detail how science was used to determine LAC and Maori people:

> So, for example, skulls were measured and weighed to prove that 'primitive' minds were smaller than the European mind. This was the 'science' of craniometry.[77]

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[74] *Ibid.* p.26
[75] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.29
[76] *Ibid.* p.82
[77] *Ibid.* p.82

He listed twelve methods that could be used to determine to which category a child belonged. These methods included cranial measurements, how many moral defects the child had accumulated…..Using these methods, "after a number of observations, sufficient data to be able to make a differential diagnosis of either neglect or degeneration" could be obtained.[78]

Indigenous people were systematically disconnected from their places of origin, their languages and their social relations and own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world. The 'authorship and authority' of their stories and histories were reclaimed by the western academy deeming indigenous forms of literacy, interpretation and knowledge illegitimate.[79] What happened to their land and their possessions was replicated through the systematic annihilation of their cultural identities. These forms of control and discipline are echoed throughout social care frameworks. They are detectable within the *physical* removal and relocation of young people from their families and places of origin, the processes used to research and define their needs, and the methods used to 'correct' and control them. Through this critical perspective looked-after children are also colonised by western, scientific and corporate approaches to their 'care'.[80] Looked-after young people, as with the indigenous peoples, are disconnected from their childhoods and are prevented from being able to be children and young people. LAC are unable to explore their worlds or use a language and way of thinking that reflects their understanding of place and perspective. LAC are treated as homogeneous groups and are denied the opportunity for a critical perspective, sense of self or authorship and authority over their own histories and truths. The prevalence of an unfamiliar and adult system excludes and silences them from being able to meaningfully participate or even understand much of what is supposed to place them in the centre. Complicated legal proceedings, report writing and meetings dominate their worlds; the language and cultures of which prevent these children from being able to communicate or participate in

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[78] Dekker, J. *The Will to Change the Child: Re-education Homes for Children at Risk in Nineteenth Century Western Europe.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001. p.127

[79] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.60

[80] This 'parallel' between the colonisation of people of New Zealand by the British Empire and the 'colonisation' of social work theory and practice is echoed by Nixon, P. and Lupton, C. *Empowering Practice? A Critical Appraisal of the Family Group Conference Approach.* Great Britain: The Policy Press, 1999. p.54

any genuine way. When young people challenge this treatment they are deemed disruptive and forced to comply by being restrained or deemed 'too young to know' what is best for them.[81] Freire calls this 'the culture of silence', a technique used by oppressive systems to exclude and silence the voices and participation of 'the oppressed'.[82] By finding ways to silence and exclude their voices there can only be one vision, one voice, one way of working which serves and suits the ideals and agendas of the oppressor. These ideas are encapsulated by Smith's conclusions as to how colonisation is fundamental to control:

> The negation of indigenous views of history was a crucial part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views are regarded as 'primitive' and 'incorrect' and mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonisation .[83]

At the core of Foucault, Freire and Smith's ideas are the themes of communication, ownership, identity, relationships and processes of institutionalisation. Science acts as the tool, or political apparatus in each example with which to restrict, control and 'other' groups; making appalling acts of abuse and dehumanisation acceptable in the name or myth of research and development. In these examples, as with the global perspectives introduced in the previous section, Western systematic and scientific systems have been used as a language and as a currency with which to exclude and classify people to serve an imperialistic agenda and vision of righteousness. The oppressed (Freire), othered / colonised (Smith), institutionalised (Foucault) are excluded through processes of alienation from systems owned by dominant institutions of power. These 'systematic and scientific' approaches to social research and human development create a 'regime of truth' that suffocates the opportunity for the individual to contribute to this developing theory.[84] Scientific research methods box and categorise people through the eyes of the researcher and the classifications of the dominant academy. Scientific and systematic approaches to education teach by compartmentalising knowledge and ways of knowing;

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[81] Chomsky refers to this as 'stabilising resistances' in: Chomsky. 'Profit over People.' 2009. p.186
[82] Freire. *The Politics of Education.* 1985.p.72
[83] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.29
[84] *Ibid.* pp.32-.83

disconnecting the students from the inquiry and, more significantly, the question underpinning the inquiry.

> to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.[85]

> the Western academy which claims theory as thoroughly western, which has constructed all the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorized, indigenous voices have been overwhelmingly silenced….The act, let alone the art and science, of theorizing our own existence and realities is not something which many indigenous people assume is possible.[86]

By disconnecting people and their experiences from history-making a world view is created that suits and reflects the imperialistic imagination reinforcing this 'power-knowledge' relationship throughout history.[87] The *only* voice is that of the history-writer creating a subtly disguised dominant perspective of right and wrong/fiction and fact. In humanitarian programmes systematic and scientific methods are used to disconnect people from being involved in decision-making processes and/or opportunities to define what development means to them. Even though these interventions are hailed as projects of liberation, empowerment and stabilisation, visions of development are forced downwards upon them. Prentki argues that these processes of decolonisation are, in reality, simply a repetition of colonisation:

> Western governments set up departments of overseas development and non-governmental agencies mushroomed in the new spirit of righting the ancient wrongs of the colonial era, whilst ensuring the old power relations remained in place……..Having firmly placed these nations in the camp of 'the other', the strategy was to impose development imperatives upon them intended to make them more like 'us'. [88]

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[85]Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. pp.55-.66
[86]Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.29
[87]Foucault. *Discipline and Punish.* 1979. p.28
[88]Prentki and Selman. *Popular Theatre.* 2000. p.11 (my emphasis)

This thesis is concerned with how these trends of institutionalised, western interventions are colonising the lives and development of LAC. There are approximately 60,000 young people in local authority care at any one time all of whom are being parented by a system dominated by these power techniques.[89] For those who are on full care orders, living within children's homes and/or incarcerated within the secure estate (STCs and YOIs) there is little or no opportunity for them to experience anything other than these cultures of 'care'. Research conducted by Stanley, Manthrope and Penhale highlights the differences cited by young people with regard to living within institutions or being fostered within the community:

> The two worst things about being in care most frequently cited by respondents were separation from family and friends, and rules and regulations and formalities. This study also included children in foster care who were twice as likely to find nothing wrong with being looked after as were those children living in institutions.[90]

The macro impact of these processes of globalisation / colonisation / institutionalisation on society is that people cease to exist because their identities have been stolen from them and replaced by the theory of another or by a number used in the place of their name. People become passive, non reactive, disillusioned masses with an inability to think critically about the worlds within which they live and see change as only something that is possible if dominant institutions and power bodies take action. They have been turned into robots that wait for instruction and believe all they are told through the various methods of programming that engulf and perforate their worlds. They are stigmatised into believing they are lower and less than what has been presented as a superior race and are therefore incapable of using their own, internal resources and knowledge. They wait for handouts and instruction from those more capable of making things better *for* them. As they wait nothing does get better, just more complicated and entwined with systems and processes that they are told map the route towards change. They become dependent on these promises and give up on finding or believing in an

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[89] *National Statistics.* Department for Education and Skills. 2005.
[90] This survey was conducted with 2,000 looked after children in: Stanley, N. 'The Institutional Abuse of Children, an Overview of Policy and Practice' in Stanley, N., Manthorpe, J., Penhale, B. (eds) *Institutional Abuse: Perspectives across the Life Course*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. p.25

alternative. Their eradicated sense of self and identity is replaced by a theory belonging to someone else as to *what* and *who* they are and therefore what and who they are capable of becoming. The disposition of their individualities and identities means they lose their sense of self and become dependent on further instruction and diagnosis from the experts. The impact of these systems on society is that people are stripped of any power, belief, hope, individuality and strength because this has been reclaimed by another, more powerful and qualified body, to control. These selected quotes illuminate how the young people from Main-place felt about living within these institutional settings:

> Me: What would change if you could change anything about the care system?
> Aaron: .everyone either goes back home or is fostered straight away otherwise the foster parents are arrested, taken into custody, taken into court…no, otherwise the kids get compensation.

> Me: What are your dislikes?
> Emily: Living in a children's home, I don't like living in a children's home that's the only dislike I've got….it's not homely, it's not homely at all.[91]

> Katherine: Sometimes I feel like I'm trapped and squashed into a little box and I can't get out.[92]

The reality is LAC are indeed trapped within a boxed network of political apparatus and homes are not homely because care, comfort and emotion have been strategically removed from the structures that frame and define their immediate settings.

Iron Homes and Total Institutions

Erving Goffman's analysis of 'total institutions' and their common characteristics establish an important sub-concentric frame at this point in relation to the 'iron homes' of

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[91] See DVD.2, clip 4-6 for snapshots from these 'Big Brother' Interviews. Main-place.
[92] Katherine, verbal communication during ongoing work with Main-place, after the first project.

institutionalised care settings.[93] He critiques the nuances of interplays within asylums that define the experience for inmates and assert the authority of the staff. Goffman echoes previous ideas about the possession of people and the claiming of their souls with specific examples of how this happens within the closed arena of asylums. His disseminations of these power techniques in their material play help to bring to life the day-to-day processes of institutionalisation. Goffman critiques the 'stripping of personal protections' as a crucial component in the 'curtailment of the self' and the process of 'trimming' and 'programming' that shapes and codes the individual into an object that can be

> fed into the administrative machinery of the establishment, to be worked on smoothly by routine operations.[94]

He describes the *mortification* of the individual through the pawing and fingering of their possessions, the bagging up of these items and the issuing of substitute possessions 'clearly marked as really belonging to the institution'.[95] These themes contextualise how identity is eradicated and replaced within institutional settings. He describes the barrier that total institutions place between the inmate and their home worlds and the persistent tension created through this separation as a 'strategic leverage in the management of men'.[96] What is meant by this is that by segregating inmates from their 'personal protections' the inmate loses control over the guise in which he appears before others, thus suffering a violation of the territories of self. As with Smith's ideas about the authorship and authority of self belonging to another, Goffman contextualises these processes through his descriptions of the techniques used in asylums and their impact:

> facts about the inmate's social statuses and past behaviour – especially discreditable facts – are collected and recorded in a dossier available to staff…. [this means] the inmate has to expose facts and feelings about self to new kinds of audiences [and] loses control over who observes him…or knows about his past.[97]

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[93] Goffman. *Asylums.*1968. p.11
[94] *Ibid.* pp.24-26
[95] *Ibid.* pp.28-35
[96] *Ibid.* p.23
[97] *Ibid.* p.35

These themes resonate strongly with Foucault's notions of the dominant voices of history making and the claiming of the souls of prisoners through processes that re-author them. Other observations focus on the power these settings bestow on the staff and the culture of cycles of punishment. These observations raise interesting ideas as to how these settings desecrate the normal spheres of life resulting in the *un*-training of inmates for life on the outside. The extreme power imbalances and access to dossiers detailing inmates previous and on-going behaviour means:

> an inmate's conduct in one scene of activity is thrown up to him by staff as a comment and check….in another context.[98]

This creates 'looping' patterns of punishment that takes the previous behaviour of inmates and re-uses them to condemn them further in unrelated contexts.

> Through the process of looping, then, the inmate's reaction to his own situation is collapsed back into this situation itself...he is not allowed to retain the usual segregation of these phases of action…minute segments of a person's line of activity may be subjected to….judgements by staff; the inmate's life is penetrated by constant sanctioning…Each specification robs the individual of an opportunity to balance his needs and objectives in a personally efficient way…The autonomy of the act is violated…[99]

These ideas are crucial in understanding the impact of these power techniques on the development and sense of self of young people subjected to this treatment. Later work by Goffman, Wolf Wolfensburg and StephanTullman further integrate ideas to analyse the impact of stigma, socially constructed identities and 'the principle of normalization'.[100] In relation to my research these ideas are paramount in considering how the demonised young person can 'become' the identity re-issued to him/her-self in terms of believing they are bad. This point is expanded within Chapter 4 along with a broader view of the

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[98] *Ibid.* p.42
[99] *Ibid.* pp. 42-43
[100] Goffman, E. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963; Wolfensberger, W. and Tullman, S. 'A brief Outline of the Principle of Normalization'. *Rehabilitation Psychology,* vol. 27, no.3 (1982), pp.131-145

criminalisation of the children of the poor historically. Here Wolfensberger and Tullman help to encapsulate the effects of the trends on the development of individual self-perception:

> How a person is perceived and treated by others will, in turn, strongly determine how that person subsequently behaves. The more consistently a person is perceived as deviant, therefore, the more likely it will be that he or she will conform to that expectation and emit the kinds of behaviour that are socially expected, often behaviours that are not valued by society..[101]

Other useful comparisons and analogies from Goffman's research are around 'institutional displays' and 'pet inmates'; both of which highlight specific strategies used to project a fictional representation of participation and positive experience in these settings. These trends are revisited in Chapter 6 when examining the manifestation of pet inmates in social care contexts and the expectation for me to help create institutional displays as opposed to participatory practice. Goffman explains that these displays have 'little to do with facts of institutional life' but are part of giving an 'appropriate image of the establishment' to visitors, governors and parents.[102]

Goffman, rather poignantly, calls for a reassessment of care / treatment which calls for a more individualised, person-specific approach and a critical consciousness within the discipline of social welfare, which is the crux of this investigation into applied theatre as a tool of empowerment within social care settings. He states:

> I plead the state of our discipline. I think that at present, if sociological attempts are to be treated with affection, each must be traced back to where it best applies, followed from there wherever it seems to lead, and pressed to disclose the rest of its family. Better,

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[101] Wolfensberger and Tullman cited in Bytheway, B., Bacigalupo, V., Bornat, J., Johnson, J. and Spurr, S. (eds) (2002) *Understanding Care, Welfare and Community, a Reader.* London and New York: Routledge, 2002. p.139
[102] Goffman. *Asylums.*1968. pp.96-98

perhaps, different coats to clothe the children well than a single splendid tent in which they all shiver[103].

A Vision for Liberation

The 'solution' or revolution to these processes of disempowerment, as defined by Foucault, Freire and Smith is embedded within creative processes that are able to liberate the oppressed from these psychological 'chains'. Foucault, Freire and Smith deconstruct the use of *autobiographical* and *culturally specific* processes to free participants from these hidden power techniques and processes of colonisation. Their combined theories for a liberatory praxis helps to construct a framework for the specific efficiencies of applied arts-based practice within social care settings. Foucault states:

> the question or questions that have to be asked are: "What types of knowledge are you trying to disqualify when you say that you are a science? What speaking subject, what discursive subject, what subject of experience and knowledge are you trying to minorize when you say: 'I speak this discourse, I am speaking a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist'.[104]

Foucault asserts the importance of the counter-narrative as a discourse against power and as a way of destabilising the *reductive* analysis that is intrinsic throughout history-making. He testifies to the importance of voicing the lived experiences of those silenced through scientific ways of producing and presenting knowledge. In opposition to constructing *abstract theories* about these 'others' through the eyes of the scientist, Foucault believed in the power of the counter-narrative and the validity of the personal experience:

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[103] *Ibid.* p.11
[104] Foucault. *Society Must be Defended.* 2004. p.10

> it is this form of discourse which ultimately matters, a discourse against power, the counter – discourse of prisoners and those we call delinquents – and not a **theory about** delinquency.[105]

By magnifying the individual stories and theories of those trapped and objectified within these institutions the 'myth' of the unified state can be contradicted and deconstructed as with the premise of this chapter's opening ideas regarding A.T as a participatory and democratic tool. The act of people telling their own truths and countering dominant theories and ways of knowing can empower people to own their own histories and enable history to be more than *his*-story. By 'localizing the struggle' so that it becomes *for, with* and *about* the personal experiences of those who have been silenced the power-knowledge relationship is challenged and can begin to be restructured from the perspective of the story-teller, the oppressed, the excluded, colonised and silenced.

> beginning to speak in the domain of history, recounting a history, is therefore simply not a matter of describing a relationship of force….He is doing so in order to modify the very disposition and current equilibrium of the relations of force.[106]

Fundamental to these processes of liberation is the critical consciousness of these power imbalances and their nuances and manifestations. As Foucault, Freire and Smith profess a *counter*-revolution that simply replicates patterns of a one-way dominant system is not one that addresses the relations of force. Therefore a revolution against institutional oppression must not emulate zero-sum notions of power but instead highlight the individualities of experiences within these settings. An important crux to Foucault's ideas is that people need to take responsibility for the ways in which they are integral to administrating forms of control over others. The perception that these power-techniques are the norm and the way in which things have 'always been done' ensures a lack of critical consciousness that keeps these practices in place. Foucault was passionate about destabilising and dismantling the myths by illuminating the counter realities of people

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[105] Foucault cited in Bouchard, D.F. (ed.) *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Interviews and Essays.* Bouchard, D.F. and Simon, S. (trans.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977. p.209 (my emphasis)
[106] Foucault. *Society must be Defended.* 2004. p.171

within oppressive systems. Through the counter-perspective of what it *feels* like to live within institutional contexts through the stories of the so called delinquents there is the potential to re-humanise these systems. By making 'the vehicles' of suppression, for example senior members of staff in care contexts, aware of and exposed to these stories, the myth that is the institution can be challenged and the necessity for collusion in order to keep these systems in place, revealed as explained here:

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain…power is employed and exercised through a net like organization…. individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application [107]

Smith further develops the idea that empowerment exists in the opportunity to reclaim history by 'rerighting and rewriting' it from the perspectives of those who have been excluded from it.[108] She is particularly alert to *how* these stories can be told and the appropriate methodologies used to facilitate this goal. Smith examines decolonising methodologies and the empowerment of participants through processes of self-determination. She explores the significance of communities becoming the active participants and co-researchers of research projects instead of being treated as the *objects* of research, owned by someone else. She advocates for new pedagogies to be developed *with* and *by* indigenous/oppressed people, explaining:

> Indigenous people want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes.[109]

Smith is specific as to how research agendas can be used to help heal groups and enable them to reclaim their histories, identities and sense of self. Integral to these processes are the development of new research techniques and models which are invented and therefore owned by those involved. Liberation through this combined conceptual lens, therefore, has to allow participants to have a voice *and* own the medium through which their voice

[107] Foucault, M. *Power and Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77,* in Gordeon, C. (ed.) Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980. p. 98
[108] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.28.
[109] *Ibid.*

is communicated by taking ownership of the processes and agendas underpinning research and representation:

> Self determination in a research agenda becomes something more than a political goal. It becomes a goal of social justice which is expressed through and across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains. [110]

This places a necessary emphasis on the experience of doing and developing liberatory practice as opposed to it imposing upon and / or testing or proving anything. Freire's ideas about the oppressed being integral to the enquiry and the motivation behind the enquiry echo these theories. In contrast to one-way forms of communication that dictate and instruct, he argues that *processes* of conscientisation facilitate dialogue, create opportunities for communication and explore the individual's specific realities. People are therefore able to gain a critical awareness of their situations and use this knowledge to empower and liberate themselves from domination. He states:

> Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very conditions of existence: critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be "in a situation". Only as this situation ceases to present itself as a dense, enveloping reality or a tormenting blind alley, and they can perceive it as an objective-problematic situation-only then can commitment exist…. *Intervention* in reality-historical awareness itself-thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the *conscientizacao* of the situation. *Conscientizacao* is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence.[111]

These ideas help to critically frame the use of applied theatre in social care settings and the Main-place project as a preliminary example of this work with LAC. The research and devising processes used in the Main-place project helped the young people to better recognise their situations and reflect on their feelings of frustration. They began to identify their specific sources of oppression and refocus their feelings of resentment away from each other by critiquing the care system and the specific things that troubled them. Their 'individual pieces' acted as 'individual theories' about being in care and acted as

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[110] *Ibid.* p.37
[111] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p.90

unique testimonies of their individualities. These pieces, when performed, helped to destabilise and inform dominant assumptions about looked after children, *who* they are, what they need and what they are capable of. The performance event critiqued the care system from the young people's perspectives and, in doing so, countered dominant theory and some of the myths. The audience members were offered the opportunity to better recognise their role in *administering* and maintaining oppressive practices and to realise their positioning within the oppressive frameworks surrounding this immediate setting. The audience were educated *by* young people with some of the evidence from their written and verbal feedback suggesting an enhanced critical awareness of the existing trends within the care system and where they stood in relation to them. The person-specific strategies that evolved through the work, resulting in five very different types of presentations both in content and form, reflected a unique process of self-determination through the research and representation of self. New methods evolved with the work that enabled the practice to be owned and shaped by those involved. Throughout the project the young people were encouraged to have authorship and authority over their own truths and the projection of these truths to others. These quotes help to demonstrate the impact of this work on some of the audience members:

> I think the directness of the approach meant we saw it as it is and just how immediate it is for young people. We recognise it in our own children but may not be as aware for children who are looked after.[112]

> The project was positive because the yps were allowed to voice their opinions and be really listened to and a platform given to them to enable them to air their views to people within s/service they normally would not come in contact with ie. Team Managers, Ast Directors etc….. I think the play had an impact on the audience, and I think they were very surprised with the young people's talents and skills…[113]

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[112] Steve Love, Assistant director of Social Services Children and Families, extract from his written feedback, after the performance event.
[113] Ted, Residential Social Worker at Main-place, extract from his written feedback, after the project.

bell hooks acts as somewhat of a bridge at this point, linking the theories of Foucault, Freire, Smith and Goffman with immediacy for action. Her terminology aligns with Smith's with regards to 'naming our pain' and processes of 'self-actualisation' in the fight against passivity in knowledge production and colonial, male dominated biases within educational / world theory.[114] What she adds to my conceptual framework is a sense of urgency and a passion for praxis, as demonstrated here:

> We must build "community" in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor[115].

> There will be no gap between feminist theory and feminist practice[116]

hooks echoes the core philosophies of Smith, Foucault and Freire whilst adding a sense of urgency for action. What is unique about hooks' theories is the notion of sharing yourself as the teacher / facilitator within the classroom context. These ideas as the basis of recognising ourselves within the roles we play and being aware of our relationships and representations to others are crucial in ensuring, as facilitators and *authentic* teachers, we do not become blinded to the hidden voices within theory or present *our* truths as dominant, non-negotiable givens. hooks helps to home in on the importance of processes of reflection and critical consciousness in ensuring practice does not replicate and enforce the vision of one more powerful and equipped expert. She builds on the 'false dichotomy between theory and practice' citing her frustrations in witnessing liberatory theory framed by and delivered through oppressive pedagogies.[117] These trends are illuminated in my own research with regards to working in 'liberatory' child welfare contexts and through my anticipations for new, emerging child welfare policy and the consistent lack of impact on or commitment to, actual change (see Chapter 7 in

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[114] hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994. pp.25-75
[115] *Ibid.* p.40
[116] *Ibid.* p.75
[117] *Ibid.* p.71

particular). hooks returns to the need for an appropriate pedagogical framework and a praxis to realise genuine liberatory ideas.

> I think so many progressive political movements fail to have a lasting impact…..precisely because there is not enough understanding of "praxis".[118]

At the heart of my practice-based research agenda is the commitment to develop something meaningful and useful and to find ways to effectively translate / transfer this praxis within child welfare settings. hooks is concerned with the same vision within classrooms for students / society made to believe domination is natural, enabling capitalism to exist and prevail. She discusses how the hidden power techniques within education systems have created a capitalist climate of competitiveness underpinned by the belief that to over-power is to succeed, to 'win', to be the expert. These are all pivotal ideas in relation to the treatment of LAC within child welfare systems and the ways in which society has become blinded to and proactive in, the othering, demonisation and criminalisation of young people within their communities (see Chapter 4). These capitalist climates are further manifested in the relationships young people construct between one another, reflected in the pecking orders of residential homes and evident in the gang warfare played out on the streets (see Chapters 5, 6 and 8).

hooks calls for a liberatory pedagogy in 'recognising the value of the individual voice' that creates a 'climate of openness' in which students / young people / staff can come to voice, name their pain and create a radical space for transformation. [119] These radical spaces as places for transformation are contextualised in my research through the symbolism of the workshop space framed by oppressive and rigid systems. In contrast to collaborative classrooms and climates of openness hooks is specific as to what prevents genuine liberatory praxis in terms of forced, one-way confessional narratives, echoing Goffman's ideas about forced social relationships. She discusses the imposition and burden placed on the 'native informer' which is useful in defining my observations of young people treated as 'mini-politicians' in processes saturated with acts of false

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[118] *Ibid.* p.48
[119] *Ibid.* pp.40-85

generosity, as will be explored in Chapter 6. These ideas draw parallels with Goffman's pet inmates.

hooks takes us on a journey, rooted in her commitment to 'imagine and enact pedagogical practices' that engage:

> both the concern for interrogating biases...whilst simultaneously providing new ways to teach.[120]

These ideas help to frame my own adapted approaches as the reflexive practitioner and what I attempted to generate amongst the professionals I worked alongside. hooks testifies that teaching is a performative act and urges that the 'engaged voice must never become fixed'.[121] She expresses her disappointment in those who teach liberatory theory and yet whose 'pedagogical practices are mired in structures of domination' and those who expect students to share confessional narratives and yet are unwilling to share themselves.[122] She advocates for professors / teachers to engage in processes of 'self-actualisation' to enhance their ability to live more fully and deeply. [123] Building on Foucault's notions of localising the struggle hooks advocates for training sites where teachers have the opportunity to express their concerns while experimenting with collaborative and inclusive ways of teaching. In Chapter 7 my proposals as to how this can happen in social care contexts take on the form of 'games rooms' placed as fissures within social care frameworks. hooks advocates for a commitment to embrace struggle and sacrifice as the role of the practitioner involved in this type of work. She interrogates notions of voice and language intently with reference to the annihilation of the other by speaking for them and becoming the author of their stories, as is a fundamental theme in Smith's work. This quote is powerful in visualising what happens through the culture of report writing that dominants social work practice:

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[120] *Ibid.* p.10
[121] *Ibid.* p.11
[122] *Ibid.* p.18
[123] *Ibid.* p.22

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way…in such a way that it has become mine, my own….I am still author, authority.[124]

These themes of language, voice and articulation run deeply throughout my research. They particularly feature in the obsession with finding 'articulate children' as native informers and pet inmates in specific sites of practice, as discussed in Chapter 7, and in my own concerns with not wanting to exclusively use a monolithic scholarly voice in the construction of this thesis. Language and voice exist as an embedded vein within applied theatre practice in the search for new languages and the potential for different performance text as a language that can magnify and find the voices of participants. Spaces for resistance, radical creative spaces, public dialogues and work within the margins are imperative in conceptualising how my use of applied theatre within this research project has forged spaces and fissures:

from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds.[125]

The analysis of these will form the body of this work in context. hooks is effective in translating core conceptual apparatus into practice-based ideas. She is concerned with our lack of access to truth and the ways in which teaching practices can revolutionise.

Forget about the fact that capitalism requires the existence of a mass underclass of surplus labour…Lying takes the form of mass media …it becomes evident that part of our contemporary crisis is created by a lack of meaningful access to truth.[126]

These combined theorists frame my research problem in a way that looks at the dominant voice of Western institutions and their specific uses of 'research', history-making and power-knowledge structures to create a regime of truth. Through their stigmatisations and

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[124] hooks, b. 'Choosing the Margin as Space of Radical Openness' in hooks, b. (ed.) *Yearning, race, gender and cultural politics*. Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1990. pp.145-154
[125] *Ibid.* p.83
[126] *Ibid.* p.29

categorisations of others and their languages used to silence, limit and define they have erased the voices, truths, cultures and individualities of others. The hidden voices of power, presented as absolute truth, have convinced society that there is only one way of seeing and dealing with those othered and de-humanised. These institutions have created myths to maintain their power and control over others and have curtailed the ability of society to conceive / imagine any other way of being. Through their hidden power techniques and processes of annihilation of other world views they have robbed those on the receiving end of their interventions and development programmes of being able to imagine any other way of being either. This, as we have seen, is achieved through the disorientation, dislocation and stripping of the identity kits that each individual possesses as a map routing their distinct cultural complexities and voice of experience.

Through the authoritative voice of the expert and specific strategies used to assume absolute ignorance from both the oppressed and the administrators of these forms of oppression, structures have been put into place to create a one-way hierarchy of power and power-knowledge. Those within these structures are led to believe in the myths of these institutions and are prevented / distracted from opportunities of critical thought. They are trapped physically and psychologically in the imperialist, capitalist vision based on the assertion of power of one onto another. These structures and settings are designed to distort human behaviour and to restrict and condemn relationships based on trust and humanity. Because of this the othered can remain as the other and actions of resistance and non-compliance can be easily framed by the institution as more evidence that these patients / inmates / underdeveloped are less than humans and in need of their 'help'.

Processes of institutionalisation have a multi-pronged attack that is rooted in erasing memory and the demeaning of personal knowledge bases. People are objectified and mortified leaving them with no resources with which to fight. They are categorised and stigmatised, re-written and alienated from the inquiry that is into their souls. They too are convinced of these stigmatisations and begin to act-out in their new roles because there is no way to escape the framework of theory that encases them. Their new-truths are replayed to them daily to remind them of who they are, in the image of the expert

institution. They become trapped because they have been separated from their home worlds and personal protections which have been erased through their re-authoring. The policing, looping and segmenting of their actions has deskilled them and successfully created a co-dependent relationship between the institution and the institutionalised. They have been 'broken – in'.

Due to the dominance of these world views, and the power-knowledge relationships and interplays that secure them, development and empowerment is distorted and stuck within the same apparatus that defines these oppressive regimes. False acts of generosity and paternalistic approaches to social action characterise attempts to 'right the old wrongs'. The voices recognised as having been silenced are 'treated' to fragmented opportunities to play as native informers and pet inmates by engaging in 'institutional displays', opportunities for which they should be grateful. Their stories / art work / languages are exploited to demonstrate that the oppressors *are* listening and *do* care. These false acts of generosity lack any real impact because the structures and dominant ideologies remain the same. Smith highlights this in her stories about Maori peoples being expected to 'dress up'.[127] Freire summarises this in terms of the oppressors being unable to empower because 'the oppressor who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle'; a theme which is further unpacked in Chapter 7. [128]

The Role of the Facilitator and the Possibilities for Applied Theatre as a Tool for Empowerment

The contexts and approaches these theorists each assert as sites for liberation are integral to applied theatre practice and theory. The languages through which to name our pain, tell our stories and create counter-hegemonic discourse have been developed through applied theatre practice in a range of different forms. The awareness of false acts of generosity as a further instrument for dehumanisation has been theorised throughout practitioners' development of reflexive, critical approaches and through critiques of their 'tightrope

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[127] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.72
[128] Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996 .p.29.

walks'. The potential for border crossings and changing institutions that deal with people rather than people for institutions has been researched in relation to the works' interplays with different frameworks and the impacts of this practice on an individual, group and organisational level.

The following section examines the considerations necessary in developing an ethical and liberatory applied theatre practice by examining the strategies of practitioners to create radical spaces. This section examines issues of colluding and commodifying and the 'promises and pitfalls' of trying to engage in empowering practice. [129] It examines the languages of the setting and the new languages that are made possible through applied theatre work. The concluding part of this chapter is led by this extract from Hughes that usefully sets this agenda and frames the specific considerations of the applied arts practitioner working in context:

> The search for an empowering set of practices is an ongoing practical, methodological and philosophical challenge for applied theatre….three areas for further analysis have emerged: exploration of the creative and imaginative skills and capacities of the applied theatre practitioner; increased attention to complexity in understanding the process and impact of applied theatre as an intervention; and more focus on the wider political and ethical questions relating to the applied theatre interventions.[130]

Ownership and Radical Spaces

Central to my arguments are that within the power apparatuses that compartmentalise and fragment the daily lives of LAC there is a 'decentring' from the needs and voices of young people onto the duties, procedures and mechanical operations of the system. This represents the colonisation of space and time and a disruption to the freedom to learn, experiment and develop innate skills. Radical creative spaces working in this context therefore have to ensure a reframing of the young people into a 'position of influence' to

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[129] Nicholson, H. *Applied Drama, the Gift of Theatre.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2005. p.163
[130] Hughes, J. with Ruding, S. 'Made to Measure? A Critical Interrogation of Applied Theatre as Intervention with Young Offenders in the UK' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.223

create a sense of liberation within these spaces that works to counter their feelings of powerlessness and anonymity.[131] In each new context the 'creative and imaginative skills' of the practitioner need to be utilised in considering what existing trends of oppression are evident and how young people can take hold of the work within the workshop context. Heathcote, Peter O'Connor and O'Toole among others, provide useful examples of how young people have been 'reframed' into positions of influence within school based settings. Their uses of 'process drama' demonstrate the empowerment of young people through collaborative and creative learning experiences and research programmes that *counter* expert cultures and one-way banking systems in education settings. Heathcote, in particular, was a pioneer for radicalising conventional teaching practice that deskilled and undermined students, stating:

> I really think it's a real shame that we've set up our schools so that children don't feel they can take power.[132]

Heathcote was concerned with creating two-way learning environments and developed a plethora of teaching techniques and theory explicitly committed to engaged pedagogy and learning communities:

> Thus the very foundation of ….Heathcote's methodology is focused on the school curriculum at a level that demands the integrity of scholarship. It will be a long time before our leading educationalists and politicians recognise the potential in her work…[133]

Gavin Bolton goes on to explain that Heathcote had found a way of bringing the power of make-believe into the classroom 'so that her pupils can be inside the skin of the expert' and achieve 'his sense of joyous intellectual adventure'.[134] These techniques of placing the participants in the role of the expert are echoed by O'Connor whose work presents important parallels with my research. His use of process drama to develop a large-scale,

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[131] Johnson, L. and O'Neill, C. (eds) *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on Education and Drama.* London: Hutchinson. 1984. p.168
[132] *Ibid*. p.21
[133] Bolton. *Acting in Classroom Drama.* 1998. p.244
[134] *Ibid.*

multi-disciplinary research programme around issues of family violence is significant in realising the efficiency of this work as a research and development tool. In this extract he explains how the use of different frames and 'contracts' within this project places the participant in the role of the games master / expert and how, through this role, the young people are placed in a *position of influence* over both the fictional and real frame:

> a tension is established early in the work, through the contract of resolving the family's issues and the students' gaming success. Students play the game, and at the same time get lost in helping the family and lose and also find their own story in the process.[135]

O'Connor's work offers a tangible and coherent example of the efficiencies of applied theatre as a tool within social care contexts for the purposes of group-led participatory research into the causes and potential resolutions to family violence. This work resonates with my own pieces of commissioned work with LAC around preventative measures of coming into care and underlines the potential for this type of work to offer new approaches to doing research *with*, rather than *to*, young people. [136] There is no *one* way to create empowering contexts for participants but rather the role of the facilitator is about engaging in an ongoing practical, methodological and philosophical search *through* the practice as to what empowerment can and should mean in relation to where and with whom it is operating. In my experience this 'search' has helped to develop more defined ideas of the considerations necessary to foster an atmosphere of acceptance and non judgement as well as developing specific techniques that can help to signal that the workshop space is a counter-context to oppressive regimes (as explored throughout Chapter 5). Heathcote describes her approach in relation to this idea, in terms of meeting young people 'where *they* are' and seeing beyond the labels and stigmas often attached to young people:

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[135] O'Connor, P. cited in Dr. C. Holland. *Because you are a Very Important Person: Evaluation Report Everyday Theatre*. New Zealand: Unpublished paper, January 2007. p.6
[136]O'Connor, P. 'Everyday Conversations about Applied Theatre. Child Abuse and Family Violence Addressed through Theatre' in O'Connor, P. (ed.) *Research in Drama Education,* Themed Edition. vol.14, no.4 (2009); Also see appendix 2 for an example of my practice used for research in a similar way.

> If I am to aspire to excellence as a teacher, I must be able to see my pupils as they really are. I mustn't discourage them – I must accept them. This means adjusting myself to my pupils, and seeing things from another standpoint.
>
> I must also preserve an interest in my students and, in this way, grasp something of their potential. *I must see what they are in the process of becoming.* When children come to us with labels …….we tend to shut our minds to change: but the ability to preserve an interest in children prevents teachers from stereotyping them in all sorts of ways. As an excellent teacher, I must not be afraid to move out of my centre, and meet the children where *they* are.[137]

Throughout my practice as research it has been important to be aware of 'body, posture, tone and word choice' to signal that I am not the 'oppressor' as well as taking the lead in sharing personal narratives with participants to counter the notion of the face-less professional.[138] As the facilitator working within these contexts I sought to create spaces that offered an alterative to the boxing and categorisations of LAC and to demonstrate a non-oppressive interplay with LAC. Practitioners such as Brian Way and Peter Slade have been committed to creating spaces within which young people can explore and develop innate skills and connect with their 'inner resourcefulness'.[139] In contexts that homogenise young people and in systems concerned with sameness, creative practice, in these examples, has been used to develop identity and empower young people through open-ended creative processes of self discovery, as Way explains:

> Drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence…opportunity for actually doing the arts is sometimes the wisest way of developing individuality.[140]

This theme of developing individuality is a strong feature in Bernie Warren's work in hospitals with young people where he sets precedence around the importance of children

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[137] Johnson and O'Neill. *Dorothy Heathcote*. 1984. p.18

[138] hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994. p.141; This idea is also echoed by Boal who states: 'We have to be aware of our words and gestures, even our dress, because each social group has different structures of meanings, and will understand the same symbols – verbal and gestural language'. Boal, A. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* Jackson, A. (trans.) New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2006. p.116.

[139] Way, B. *Development through Drama*. London: Longmans. 1967. p.5

[140] *Ibid.*

to be able to create 'unique marks'.[141] In the hospital setting which can be strange and scary for young people and within which their bodies are objectified Warren advocates the significance of exploring their unique marks or 'thumbprints' as liberatory processes of quiet inner discovery. Both Warren and Thompson are interested in exploring the individual markings of participants and the ways in which this type of work can help participants to reconnect with and discover their sense of self. Helen Nicholson develops these ideas in relation to the 'radical creative space' created by applied arts interventions. She claims that these spaces are radical both in terms of the workshop space itself and the symbolism of these spaces within restrictive frameworks. These ideas relate to Prentki's notions of 'person-centred learning' and Kershaw's ideas about 'creating fissures' within contextual confines. Both are useful in determining how I set about developing work as a contradiction to dominant practices that can condemn and curtail the development of young people to create opportunities for them to engage in reflexive practice. As Nicholson helps to explain:

> Creative spaces are those in which people feel safe enough to take risks and to allow themselves and others to experience vulnerability. It is creative moments of transition that enable participants to move out of restricted spaces – literally or symbolically – and beyond identities that are fixed and codified by particular spatial practices into new forms of social identification.[142]

Chapters 5 and 6 have been dedicated to examining my own use of creative spaces. Within these chapters I will disseminate my approach in the children's homes and the formulation of a pedagogy and praxis as an outcome of this as practice-based research. Chapter 6 explores how this praxis conflicted with and challenged dominant cultures within specific organisational structures and the ways in which this further informed ideas about existing power structures and techniques. The specific complexities of

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[141] Warren, B. 'Looking Backward, Looking Forwards: A Preface and Introduction to Using Creative Arts in Therapy and Healthcare' in Warren, B. (ed.) *Using the Creative Arts in Therapy and Healthcare, a Practical Introduction,* Third Edition*.* London and New York: Routledge, 2008. p.5. There are many crossovers between the study of work in hospital settings in this book with residential children's homes settings, in particular reference to the 'powerless' they feel in relation to alien, clinical, scary environments.
[142] Nicholson. *Applied Drama.* 2005. p.129

'empowerment' in relation to the broader frameworks encompassing sites of practice will be explored below.

Processes of Negotiation, Issues of Colluding and the Commodification of practice

In order to remain critically and ethically aware of the politics and potential impacts of applied theatre as an intervention it is crucial to understand these new worlds, their languages, conventions and ideological make-up. Thompson's critiques of work within prison settings are particularly useful in understanding the distinct processes of negotiation and the challenges the applied arts practitioner faces in 'crossing the territory lines' and 'entering a world with its own set of conventions and procedures'.[143] He reminds us that:

> at each moment of theatre application we are entering an arena where current practice is no more than a historically and culturally specific result of different social, political and ideological interests.[144]

and that an integral part of practising applied theatre is to understand these social, political and ideological terrains to find ways to work *with, in* and *around* them. For Thompson, embedding knowledge of the rhetoric that framed the prison setting and using particular 'quasi-theatrical' references when explaining his work *in-situ* was one technique he adapted to try and transcend both disciplinary fields. He is strategic in discovering 'markers' that can explain applied theatre practice to gatekeepers and prison staff to find a 'frame through which to make connections' with them.[145] My research process started from a slightly different angle in that I worked within Main-place on a voluntary basis and gradually integrated into the perpetuating frameworks surrounding this immediate setting from this grounding outwards. This meant I came up against different power paradigms and political apparatus at different stages of the work and in doing so I was confronted by the languages and cultures at each new level. The distinct

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[143] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.25
[144] *Ibid.* p.78
[145] O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* 1992. p.232

similarities between Thompson's work and my own exist in how he treats these processes of discovery as crucial research experiences and sees the 'practice of practising' as the research method itself:

> Theatre is a method of identifying possible and assessing existing interventions. Theatre is the research method itself…Theatre is an action that is research…The act of participatory theatre can ask a community what is working. Theatre becomes the enquiry, not the object of the enquiry.[146]

This use of the work to examine current cultures of practice, with participants as the experts, and to reflect on the symbolism of their lived experiences in relation to, and in contradiction of, the dominant theory that defines these settings is particularly relevant. Thompson reflects on the need to take a step back and see the boundaries within which his practice was immersed. This is a crucial part of recognising these patterns and trends and the potential use for the applied theatre work as a relevant tool. He states:

> Without seeing the edges, we can forget that lines around a field both shape and constrict it…only on stepping away [do] new possibilities for understanding applied theatre start to emerge.[147]

These processes of physical and mental distancing in the ongoing critical and reflexive practice of the practitioner are crucial in maintaining an awareness of the 'problems and pitfalls associated with social intervention'.[148] Thompson discusses the importance and common disregard for the negotiations that take place *in situ.* These are particularly symbolic when developing practice in total and closed institutions. The very nature of the work and its contradictions to the rigid and restrictive nature of the setting means these negotiations are crucial to building relations, gaining access and crossing territory lines. He states:

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[146] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. pp.147-148
[147] *Ibid.* p.44
[148] Nicholson. *Applied Drama.* 2005. p.163

often when examining areas of 'applied theatre' the theatre work is seen as central, and the meetings, promotions and demonstrations that surround it are viewed as secondary…The painstaking action for promotion and advocacy becomes sidelined and undervalued. The actual act of translating the work to the new discipline is not analysed.[149]

These themes of negotiation, promotion and advocacy feature as a significant part of Chapter 7 in identifying my own context-specific experiences of meetings and presentations to those 'in charge'. Many other practitioners have tracked their routes in exploring contextual frameworks and the use of the practice as a tool of negotiation and as a 'magnifying mirror'.[150] Thompson's specific angle of research that encompasses policy, language and social theory with regards to 'what works' is particularly illuminating for my own findings.[151]

In ensuring the practice remains ethical and relevant Nicholson's ideas about gift theory are useful in relation to examining what the work is doing, why, with whom and to what ends. She explains that integral to the role of the facilitator is the 'continual journey of action, reflection and evaluation'.[152] Applied arts theorists are particularly alert to issues of 'colluding' with dominant agendas and ensuring the work does not become 'bound down and defined by' a particular belief system/policy context that serves to further box and suppress participants.[153] This critical consciousness has been fundamental in my own work in child welfare settings in the process of trying to avoid attempts to use the practice as a 'message laden' tool to fulfil the agendas of the organisation.[154] Balfour discusses how the attempt to remain 'radical' can often lead to the irritation of the gatekeepers who assume you are 'their natural allies'; whilst Michael Etherton states:

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[149] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.34

[150] Nicholson, Preston, O'Toole, Hughes, and Etherton, among others, see references to their work throughout this chapter; Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.109

[151] Thompson cites this in reference to Conservative Home Secretary Michael Howard's vision that "prison works", which instigated a movement that asked 'What Works?' in: Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. pp.32-45

[152] Nicholson. *Applied Drama.* 2005. p.163

[153] Thompson, J. 'From the Stocks to the Stage, Prison Theatre and the Theatre of Prison' in Balfour, M. (ed.) *Theatre in Prisons: Theory and Practice.* Bristol: Intellect, 2004. p.73

[154] As discussed by Etherton, M. 'West African Child Rights Theatre for Development, Stories as Theatre, Theatre as a Strategy for Change' in Etherton. *African Theatre Youth.* 2006. p.106

Agencies often say that they want children's participation in 'their' projects when they really mean, the 'agencies' projects.[155]

These considerations return to O'Toole's model of the contextual frameworks and the relationship between the art form, content and political ideologies (or the politics and poetics of the work) framing the work as an intervention. This summary from Nicholson encapsulates a number of other practitioners' ideas on adopting and maintaining an ethical approach:

> Becoming ethical is an on-going process – a continual journey of action, reflection and evaluation – in which values and beliefs may be challenged and tested over time and in response to new situations and different people[156].

There is no one, right answer as to how to ensure the work does not morph into the 'soft arm of the institution' or reassert power imbalances within the setting.[157] I found that these difficulties manifest in trying to maintain a sense of identity and separation from the dominant theory and institutional framework that is designed to 'make you just like us'. It can often be an extremely isolating and alienating experience when you are going against the grain and vulnerable to criticism from those suspicious and threatened by your non-conformity. Working in 'capitalist contexts' it becomes vital for the facilitator to remain vigilant in recognising situations that present themselves as sought after opportunities to develop the practice when this is actually about buying the work 'on a commercial rather than a collaborative basis'.[158]

These ideas echo Goffman's theories about institutional displays and Foucault's 'public spectacles'. As Hughes states, there needs to be a critical awareness in relation to the

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[155] Balfour. *Theatre in Prisons.* 2004. p.13; Etherton, M. 'Child Rights Theatre for Development with Disadvantaged and Excluded Children in South Asia and Africa' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader.* 2009. p.355
[156] Nicholson. *Applied Drama*. 2005. p.167
[157] Prentki, T. 'Applied Theatre in a Global Village' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader.* 2009. p.364
[158] Hughes. 'Made to Measure?'. 2009.p.223; Etherton. 'Child Rights Theatre'. 2009. p.358

assumption that 'creativity [is] implicitly radical and empowering'.[159] Henry Giroux offers an all too familiar critique of a display created 'with' young people about gun crime that resulted in slogans and stereotypes and left the participants 'more confused about the experience than when they began.'[160] Unfortunately 'agencies are very much addicted to messages', making attempts to focus on 'individual voice' and processes of conscientisation overshadowed by the desire to use arts practice to preach and promote rather than empower and liberate.[161] In my experiences agencies were much more interested in being 'seen to do' rather than committing to genuine, liberatory practice. This is bound and defined by the wish to assert their own agenda and is marred by dominant ideologies about what intervention and empowerment mean and look like.[162] Etherton, Boal, Thompson and Nicholson, among others, each point to how the work can illuminate and magnify 'parodies, ironies and contradictions' of dominant practice and how, by creating the space for reflection, the work can remain critically conscious of these pitfalls:

> Applied theatre needs to be constantly reminded that in the act of applying it is meeting a specific moment in the history of a different system of knowledge. Aligning itself too closely with one set of practices relegates the work to one historical moment, making it too easily irrelevant as approaches and ideologies change. [163]

These ideas return to the notion of not being sure and/or becoming too fixed in your assumptions as the facilitator of the work as to how to practice. Thompson found that 'the more fixed and clear we found ourselves the weaker the creative content of our practice'.[164] Prentki helps to signpost the need for 'a dialectical interaction of participants and facilitators' in this ongoing challenge. He states:

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[159] Hughes. 'Made to Measure?'. 2009. pp.222-223
[160] Trend, D. 'The Fine Art of Teaching' in Giroux and Shannon. *Education and Cultural Studies*.1997.p.253
[161] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.116
[162] Thompson. 'From the Stocks to the Stage'. 2004. p.74
[163] As discussed by Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.115; Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.40
[164] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.49

'Optimum intervention', to borrow Zakes Mda's phrase, is not achieved through a fixed

formula but only through a dialectical interaction of participants and facilitators who are

practising a co-intentional approach to self-development and social change.[165]

These ideas echo Hughes' concerns with the need to pay 'increased attention to

complexity in understanding the process and impact of applied theatre as an intervention;

and [to] focus on the wider political and ethical questions relating to the applied theatre

interventions'.[166]

Mediums and Forms, the Creativity of the Practitioner

Although placed under the umbrella of 'Applied Theatre' I am interested in a wide range

of mediums and creative processes that can best work with the specific needs and realities

of participants. Within social care arenas I have determined this work as 'creative

practice' to draw attention to its adaptive and responsive qualities in contrast to more

rigid, inflexible cultures of practice. My use of applied theatre within specific sites of

practice has drawn on a range of media from drama to photography to plasticine. For the

purposes of identifying my practice within an appropriate disciplinary field, I have

defined my practice as 'Applied Theatre/arts'. Here Boal helps to determine the

importance of the discovery of a range of person-specific mediums as tools:

The technique should be adopted to suit the person's needs not vice versa.[167]

This versatility is vital in ensuring applied theatre/arts practice remains reflexive,

culturally appropriate and person-specific as opposed to featuring as yet another forced

form of intervention that assumes it knows best. The creative and imaginative skills and

capacities of the applied theatre practitioner are therefore defined by their understanding

of the potential for process and performance based work and the ways in which radical

creative spaces can enable participants to take ownership over a range of different

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[165] Prentki, T. 'Introduction to Intervention' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.183

[166] Hughes. 'Made to Measure?'. 2009. p.223

[167] Boal. *The Rainbow of Desire.* 1995. p.123

mediums and forms. In a context where young people are alienated by language and restricted by inflexible procedures this work, as an intervention, has to embrace the challenge to be imaginative and inventive with the different languages it can provide (see Chapter 5). I am interested in how the practice can explore new languages and the possibilities for making and creating to address the specific needs of the individual and group. In some settings this has been about working with miniature worlds through which participants have been placed in a position of influence over a fictional space and those within it. Other work has focused on transforming shared spaces so that participants can engage in collective play, and in the act and art of doing so, negotiate new paradigms within these contexts.

Caoimhe McAvinchey provides a useful example of practice that helps to develop these theories about politics and poetics, research and representation.[168] She reflects on her work in a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) setting and the way in which she needed to adapt the work to the needs of the group and the realities of the setting with a particular response to the fragmented attendance of the class. The group's wish to build a *new* space inside the PRU context highlights the proficiency of this practice to create radical spaces and new contexts for reflexivity. This project draws particular lines of comparison with the different spaces we created inside the contexts of the children's homes as well as the new spaces I aimed to create within the wider contextual frameworks relating to these settings. McAvinchey's example of how she adapted to the temperament of the group to reach a point of collaborative realisation as to how best to use form, content and space within this project illuminates the potential of the work as a reflexive and context-specific tool:

> All of the conversations about the material for the final event could be focused on the idea of the young people sharing their thoughts with other people, about letting other people inside their head just for a few minutes.....they came up with the idea of creating a space, their head space, a space that didn't already exist….Everything was laid out. The

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[168] McAvinchey, C. 'Is This the Play? Applied Theatre Practice in a Pupil Referral Unit' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.281

video was on loop….Abi's mum asks, 'Where is everybody?' Abi grins at her mum's confusion, 'Yes'.. 'This is the play and we are all around you but you just can't see us'.[169]

In this example, as with another discussed by Giroux a 'world' was created to represent both the process of the project and the perceptions, home-worlds, minds and imaginations of the participants.[170] This theme of *entering into the worlds* of young people and being able to see them when they otherwise remain invisible or are only understood via negative propaganda or objectifying discourse, is particularly relevant to my research. This example also demonstrates how process and product can become intertwined to educate the audience on the potential of the work as a method as well as creating a 'new space' for the 'critical enactment of stories'.[171] Boal is a strong advocate for a range of mediums in constructing 'declarations of identity', *framing* through fictional and non-fictional camera work and the use of sculpture and image making to provide new languages for participants.[172] Salverson echoes these ideas sharing her concerns with:

> the relationship between aesthetics and politics, with the importance of artistry and imagination…..and with expanding the aesthetic vocabulary of theatre that testifies.[173]

My Hypothesis

My central hypothesis is to examine the potential efficiency for applied theatre practice, in a variation of forms, used in a number of settings operating on varying levels as a tool of empowerment for LAC. Returning to Hughes' focus on the need to examine the complexity of process and impact and to place more emphasis on the wider politics relating to applied theatre interventions, this research examines these complexities and the various shapes, forms and scales of the work in-context. Throughout the thesis I will examine the ethics of my work as an intervention and what empowerment looks like in

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[169] *Ibid.* pp.281 – 282
[170] Trend. *The Fine Art of Teaching.* 1997. p.252
[171] Giroux and Shannon. 'Cultural Studies and Pedagogy'. 1997. p.7
[172] Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.45; also explored by Boal as part of a technique using a 'fictive camera' within a psychiatric hospital in: Boal. *The Rainbow of Desire.* 1995. p.50
[173] Salverson, J. 'Clown, Opera, the Atomic Bomb and the Classroom' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.34

different examples. I am interested in the different levels of impact this type of work is capable of, and on the different paradigms and dynamics relating to the worlds and experiences of these young people. Returning to the idea of frameworks I will examine on what level the work has impacted, from working on an intimate process-based level with young people as a means of quiet inner discovery to negotiating with the wider dominant practice cultures, attitudes and ideals.

Kerhsaw's ideas around 'pathologies of hope' through unique processes of self discovery help to integrate the potential of the work as a unique experience of radical freedom. He states:

> there are some forms of resistance that decisively are not articulated to the dominant structures of authority and power in ways that make them automatically recoupable by those structures, and those forms may produce a radical freedom that is not just negatively against a regime but positively for some value or ideal that lies well beyond its ideological territory.[174]

Empowerment in this example, at this level of impact focuses on processes of self discovery, the development of 'innate skills', 'inner resourcefulness' and the opportunities for critical reflection within and through the 'aesthetic space.'[175] Thompson's ideas of 'unique markings' and the significance of the body experiencing new 'actions that avoid the narrow, stereotypical and singular' are also relevant to this vision.[176] This work can offer modes of communication and the reflexive distance to articulate and make 'thought visible' by equipping young people with the ability to see and make sense of their worlds.[177] Workshop spaces, creative processes and the understanding of new languages can provide young people with control over processes of self-determination *beyond* the stigmas and voices of authority that label them day-to-day; The act of being able to manipulate form in the absence of power and control over other

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[174] Kershaw, B. *The Radical in Performance, Between Brecht and Baudrillard.* London and New York: Routledge, 1999. p.26

[175] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights Theatre'. 2006. p.117; Way. *Development through Drama.* 1967. p.5; Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.117

[176] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.53-75

[177] Specific techniques to do this include 'Blagg' developed by Thompson and Hughes

outcomes and areas affecting their lives, is particularly poignant and relevant to notions of empowerment with LAC.[178] As a form of resistance beyond an attempt to 'just' counter imposed oppressions, the creative process has the potential to reconnect young people with their 'identity kits' and their 'home-worlds'. This work can re-humanise. Radical freedom can take place through escapism and the opportunity to imagine and develop imagination as an internalised tool for survival.[179]

Other uses of the work will examine the capacity for practice to renegotiate contexts of competitiveness between participants trapped in settings based on hierarchical relationships. Freire describes this as:

> chafing under the restrictions of this order [which manifests in] a type of horizontal violence, striking out at their comrades for the pettiest reasons. [180]

'Creative, collective encounters' have the potential to enable young people to realise their actual sources of oppression and develop 'new webs of inter-relations' within residential home settings and on inner city estates.[181] In work that involves and includes front-line staff, the 'face-less professional' can be transformed into the participant, the player, the individual, and a sense of community can be fostered, altering power imbalances and relations of force. The aesthetic space has the potential to develop 'institutional and personal reflexivity', enabling staff to realise their collusion with oppressive techniques and stigmatisations.[182] Within the 'fissures' created in the immediate settings the young people experience, specific 'parodies, ironies and contradictions' can be revealed and new and alternative ways of seeing and being can be made possible. [183]

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[178] Bundy's work reflects this theme of regaining power and control with adult 'survivors' of care systems.
[179] Thompson states: 'I had spent many years condemning a theatre of mindless escapism and suddenly it became the radical counterpart to physical incarceration' in: Thompson. *Applied Theatre*. 2003. p.30
[180] Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p. 44; Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.53
[181] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.53
[182] Etherton.'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.114; as discussed by Boal whose participants 'realised they were tortures' in Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*. 2006. p.117
[183] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.115; Prentki. 'Applied Theatre and Globalisation'. 2009. p.366

On a broader level TfD models help to highlight my proposals with regards to the types of impacts this work can offer in influencing practice trends and altering attitudes. Etherton and Mda critique the use and impacts of TfD processes to reframe the 'artistic endeavour' involved in empowering young people and advocate for 'development activities conceived with and by the community'.[184] TfD models have the potential to enable young people 'to effectively claim their rights as they define them' and to enhance the confidence of young people 'to develop their negotiations with those in authority'.[185] This type of work, when successful, has the potential to advance the entire 'civilization's ability to see' by bringing the 'raw material of actual stories' to the forefront of the minds of those who maintain the operational myths of institutions.[186] TfD models have the potential to have a *re*-humanising effect as well as demonstrating alternatives to cultures 'stuck' in inefficient conventions. Thompson discusses the potential for applied arts work to 'disrupt and disturb neat lines of understanding and simplistic frameworks of practice'; whilst Prentki explains that:

> the role for theatre-based processes grew in line with concerns that sustainable change could only be accomplished by transforming attitudes and that theatre is a powerful means of engaging in transformation.[187]

The quote from McAvinchey's work spoken by a young person participant: 'We are all around you, but you can't see us' is a haunting indication of some of the wider trends effecting excluded and marginalised young people. Applied theatre work possesses the potential to reframe young people and enable their participation within their wider societies. Thompson explores how, through the better understanding of self, new connections can be made, reintegrating young people into communities.[188] I am interested in how 'collaborative, artistic social engagement[s]'[189] can forge new relationships and

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[184] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.99; Mda. *When People Play People.* 1993. p.37

[185] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.114; Etherton. 'Child Rights Theatre'. 2009. p.359

[186] Becker, C. 'The Artist as Public Intellectual'. In Giroux and Shannon. *Education and Cultural Studies.* 1997. p.18; Prentki. 'Introduction to Intervention'. 2009. p.183

[187] Thompson. *Applied Theatre* .2003. p.44; Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader.* 2009. p.13

[188] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.75

[189] Prentki. 'Introduction to Intervention'. 2009. p.182

educate socially constructed divisions between groups.[190] Margaret Mead's observations have helped me to articulate my own concerns with the ways in which the Western world and its preoccupations with profit and consumerism is actively destroying communities and excluding and alienating young people from our society.[191] Her research is useful in formulating ideas as to how the arts can influence a society in becoming more accepting and inclusive. As 'small human beings' my research is interested in how young people can be seen differently by their communities and the potential for this work to alter attitudes that currently condemn, demonise and neglect the *real* needs of young people.[192] Mead states:

> In the Western world children are traumatized in childhood in ways which are new and strange, for which no ritual healing, no artistic form, exists in the culture…….. Those who are not so gifted or who are less fortunate in finding a medium for their gifts go mad or dwindle away, using little even of what they have.….in Bali the ritual world of art and theater and temple is not a world of fantasy, an endless recurrent daydream… It is rather a real world of skill and application….Children are everywhere …..Children not only have precocious postural participation in prayer and offering, dance and music but also a whole series of parallel participations'[193]

This analysis of the potential for the arts to heal and to demonstrate participative practice within community structures is suggestive of how applied arts practice can be used to address and renegotiate the segregation and alienation of young people in a number of ways, both as a means to train and better equip young people and as a way to make their participation become more intrinsic to everyday life. Chapter 6 examines the ways in which the use of this practice on inner city estates in London and in a specific project in North Devon sought to use the work to facilitate a better understanding and acceptance of demonised young people within their communities. By creating a 'counter-public sphere' these projects gave young people a specific, pivotal role in community projects and

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[190] As discussed by Kershaw. *The Politics of Performance.* 1992. p.202
[191] Mead, M. and Wolfenstein, M. (eds) *Childhood in Contemporary Cultures*. Chicago and London: Phoenix Books, 1963.
[192] Mead. 'Children and Ritual in Bali'. In Mead and Wolfenstein. *Childhood.* 1963. pp.40–44
[193] *Ibid.* pp.43-49

created a platform for them to present their ideas, identities and truths to audiences of community members that had previously believed they were 'bad'. My reflections on the riots of August 2011 in Chapter 8 will interrogate these ideas further. Giroux and Boal help to conclude this focus on the wider frames of impact embodying my hypothesises in terms of how and in what ways applied theatre can act as a tool of empowerment for looked after children both in their immediate worlds and on the frameworks that define and influence their realities:

> For it is within such counter-public spheres that the principles of equality, liberty, and justice become the normative[194]

> a society without ethics breeds offenders.[195]

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[194] Giroux and Shannon. 'Cultural Studies and Pedagogy'. 1997. p.5
[195] Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.111

Chapter 4

Contextual Frameworks: The *State* of State Welfare

And the 'Search for Practice'

Fear of the Delinquent Child: the Origins of Child Welfare

The origin of debate about the treatment of young people deemed in need of intervention, care and control within British society is best located in the nineteenth century. It is within this period that 'delinquency was created' and a series of new laws were established that explicitly focused on the punishment and treatment of the children of the poor.[196] This period marks the beginning of new institutions implicitly founded to save, redeem and reform street children and the advent of a whole host of new theories and mechanisms as to how this should be done. These interests were driven by a fear of the threat these slum children presented to moral and social order; with 'ameliorating Acts' reaching statute books to ensure intervention could mould and shape young people into more 'useful' citizens.[197] Although evangelicals and philanthropists played a leading part in developing these new arenas, they shared the dominant assumption that these young people were of a dangerous class, as outlined in these extracts:

> The truth was that Poor Law children were viewed with distaste; they were subjects for reclamation…[and in need of] 'expert handling'.[198]

> the time is approaching when this seething mass of human misery will shake the social fabric unless we grapple more earnestly with it than we have done.[199]

The shifts as to what happened to young people once they had been removed from the streets and taken away from their parents were influenced by economic, religious, political and social imperialistic agendas. These agendas are exemplified in the 'child

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[196] Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.55; In particular the New Poor Law 1834
[197] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.9
[198] Ross, A.M. *Care and Education of Pauper Children.* London University: Unpublished PhD thesis, 1955. p.91
[199] Samuel Smith, writing in 1885, cited by Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical*. 2003. p.48

study movement', the flourishing of child charities and evangelical homes and, most prolifically, in the *exporting* of young people in their thousands to overseas colonies.

> We are bound at all costs to see that the children grow up in such a fashion that they may become useful, serviceable and profitable citizens of this great Empire. [200]

The treatment of young people as human capital and 'building blocks of society' to serve the interests of the imperialist agenda was at the core of emigration schemes.[201] In the 1900s a number of child savers, and most notably, Dr Barnardo, discovered a viable opportunity in exporting 'the waifs and strays' they had rescued to work on colonies in Canada, South Africa and New Zealand.[202] These children were seen as 'investments - human capital in its most elemental form' and were sent out to defend the nation's colours and work on agricultural colonies.[203] Young people were utilised as the *sub-oppressors* of others in the expansion of the Great British Empire. Harry Hendrick states that we can only

> speculate as to the misery endured by these boys and girls, taken from their parents, brothers and sisters, families, communities and friends, and put to work in often Spartan environments where they were subjected to exploitation and violence.[204]

The 'child study movement' also played a key role in the objectification of young people through a variety of experiments around this time. Children's deficiencies became an object of scientific investigation and new techniques in the observation, classification and experiment of young people became a national interest. Institutions for young people provided ideal laboratories within which new sciences, theory and treatment could be extensively exercised. These trends were concerned with the *quality* of the child population and the means by which delinquent and degenerative children might by cured. The influence of science, new theory and laws relating to this new arena began to steadily

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[200] Lord Bishop of Ripon, Vice-President of the Infantile Mortality Conferences 1906 and 1908 cited by Dekker. *The Will to Change the Child.* 2000. p.115
[201] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.49
[202] Hendrick, H. *Child Welfare*, *England 1872-1989*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. p.80.
[203] *Ibid.* p.82.
[204] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.47

assemble a complex web of new services, areas of expertise and institutionalised interventions. Government subsides and charitable donations fed a host of mushrooming organisations, 'experts' and agencies, with *science* and *law* cast as the protective umbrella under which this new web could flourish.[205]

The increased interest in child welfare led to the establishment of more residential homes with more legal power given *to* the state *by* the state to remove and keep hold of poor young people in the face of protesting parents. Throughout a number of historical critiques the severing of relationships between young people and their families is highlighted with letters 'lost' and lines of communication blocked. For the majority of interventionists, reform was seen to be more effective if children were no longer in contact with their parents or their home worlds with foster parents made to sign contracts stating they would not permit family visits.[206]

This early period of invention established a number of important apparatuses, frameworks and theories that are entrenched within contemporary child welfare arenas and continue to be played out under a variation of contemporary guises. The dominant theories, populist assumptions, power relations, uses of science and the institutional abuses of children throughout this early phase of social development are detectable throughout progressive post modern society. The imperialist agenda of the colonies though replaced by visions of capitalism, the use of science as a tool to construct social theory and justify interventions remains endemic and the cycle of threat – demonisation - criminalisation - and the extension and expansion of centralised power and control continues to underpin social development. Foucault states that the basic phenomenon of the nineteenth century was the acquisition of 'power's hold over life'.[207] This was a period during which the state sought out and established control over the biological. The following section will explore how these trends and ideas have been conceptualised within contemporary capitalist contexts.

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[205] As explored thoroughly by Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. pp.22-47; Dekker. *The Will to Change the Child.* 2000. pp.104-116
[206] Hendrick. *Ibid.* pp.45
[207] Foucault. *Society Must be Defended.* 2004. p.239

The children of the poor [therefore] found themselves living experiments in the cultivation of environmentalism. It was a tradition that would linger long in British childcare policy.[208]

Capitalism, Myth making and Moral Panics: Contemporary Frameworks

The contemporary British child welfare system directly reflects the impacts of capitalism, government corruption and the disregard for the abundance of evidence that demonstrates young people who offend are part of a complex network of disadvantage and difficulty.[209] My research has taken place throughout the reign of New Labour. I have spent 12 years observing the impacts of, and attempting to practice under, the 'profound and multiple complex contradictions and tensions' the 'new' 'third way' has constructed.[210] Margaret Thatcher and the previous conservative government had already instigated a neoliberal climate that sought to destroy trade unions, dispel the notion of community and eradicate the industrial workforce.[211] Her concepts of 'the enemy within' and claims that there is no such thing as society reflected the party's strategies to alter ideologies towards a more market driven, competitive society. This was to be closely followed by John Major's *commitment* to 'condemn more and understand less'.

New Labour's enemy from within has *always* been young people. New labour have mobilised and exploited crime and young people in ways unprecedented in history.[212] The party's focus on young people initially featured as a cold, calculated electoral strategy influenced by a number of key incidents leading up to the elections in 1997. These included, but the list is not exhaustive: the tragic death of Jamie Bulger, the Audit and report 'Misspent Youth', the party's alignment with the USA and advice taken in the lead up to the elections and the need to 'revitalise their populist appeal' to a new audience

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[208] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.49
[209] As expanded upon in detail by Goldson, B. 'Wither Diversion? Interventionism and the New Youth Justice' in Goldson, B. (ed.) *The New Youth Justice.* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing, 2000. p.49
[210] *Ibid.* p.53
[211] As discussed by Kershaw. *The Politics of Performance.* 1992. p.168
[212] Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.46

of voters.[213] This exploitation of young people to strengthen political power is directly resonant of the nineteenth century.

The moral panics and grief implosions surrounding the Bulger case, as with Klein's theories regarding the use of shock and devastation to create a climate for invasion, presented an ideal opportunity for New Labour to appeal to the masses. Coupled with an audit that detailed the inefficiencies and cost implications of current youth justice systems New Labour created an identity that eclipsed their 'no more excuses' mantra and could reassure their new targeted body of middle-class voters that 'nasty little offenders' would be locked up for their wrong doings.[214] The result of this intensive focus on young people as being *in need* of discipline and punishment and the cunning spin that British society *deserved* value for money has steadily evolved into an ugly corporate, cold, punitive child welfare / youth 'justice' system that has had devastating effects on Britain's most vulnerable young people.

New Labour chose to ignore evidence that community based interventions and final warnings from the police were working along with rather obvious and well researched connections between deprivation and criminal activity. Instead they chose to promote a blinkered and 'reductionist' view of social problems.[215] They refused to recognise any correlation between the widening gap between the rich and poor, as a direct result of a capitalist society and instead shamelessly exploited the Bulger case as an integral part of their new political identity. Numerous theorists claim that *childhood* and *innocence* were put on trial during the Bulger case. Both of which lost. During this time there was an absence of integrity in exploring *why* two young people may have committed such a crime, *how* it may relate to a wider world context of violence and the moral and social implications of demonising two young people in such a relentless way.[216] A similar case

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[213] Goldson. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice'. 1997. p.79
[214] 'No More Excuses' was a white paper that preceded the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act; The term 'nasty little offenders' was used by the Conservative Home Secretary in the Daily Mail, 22 February 1993 as cited by Goldson. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice'. 1997. p.77
[215] This idea is discussed by Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.47
[216] As explored in Robb, O'Leary, Mackinnon and Bishop. *Hope.* 2010. (see below for more detail)

in Norway evoked a much more empathetic response and was seen as a 'tragic accident'; whilst in Britain the Bulger case instigated the:

most radical overhaul of the youth justice / welfare system in 50 years.[217]

The Machinery of New Labour

This overhaul has displaced social services child welfare approaches and eradicated the binary between *welfarist* and *justice* discourses and models, replacing these paradigms with a new vision dominated by corporatism and 'managerialism'. Corporatism is concerned with system effectiveness and cost effective ways of delivering services.[218] Managerialism has reduced social care practice to a list of procedures and tasks, subjugating professional skills and focusing on meeting predetermined targets; thus managing the 'problem of young people' rather than trying to look at why these problems exist. These cultures and their language have steadily infiltrated throughout child welfare arenas and reconstructed how young people in need are seen, treated and processed.[219] New Labour developed a language of *toughness* and declared there were no more excuses. They systematically removed child welfare from the agenda of new youth *offending* systems and 'widened the net' as to who got caught up in these systems.[220] Their sharp, authoritarian, punitive interventionist, target based and bureaucratic social service systems have meant more and more young people from less advantaged backgrounds have been criminalised, and less and less emphasis is placed on supporting these young people in any meaningful way.[221]

Throughout their 14 year term New Labour continued to look to the USA for inspiration for new mechanisms in how to deal with 'delinquent' young people. They introduced curfews, tagging, stop and search, dispersion acts, 3 strikes and gave the police and

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[217] This case is discussed by Muncie. *Youth & Crime*. 2009. p.8; Quote from Goldson. *The New Youth Justice*. 2000. p.vii
[218] Muncie. *Youth & Crime*. 2009. p.296
[219] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical*. 2003. p.241
[220] Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.41
[221] As is the core focus of this chapter

Youth Offending Teams (YOT) more power and autonomy in speeding up punishment processes. Although there was much evidence that these mechanisms had already failed in the USA and exacerbated problems, New Labour chose to ignore this research.[222] They promoted the '3 Es': *economy, efficiency* and *effectiveness* as relevant and useful indicators of success when dealing with 'clients' (young people in their care) as well as S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timetabled) targets and early intervention programmes that deemed young people *at risk* of offending before they had actually committed a crime.[223] These techniques directly represent the judging of the souls of young people, the colonisation of these young people through interventionist and punitive approaches and the use of an inexact science to demonise them. Young people have been violated, criminalised and targeted in such ways because, among other reasons, they have no power, no vote and rights that remain stagnant in rhetoric; as Haines notes:

young people have been criminalised more than they were 100 years ago.[224]

New Labour negated the 'doli incapax' which assumes the innocence of under 14 year olds and which had been in place for hundreds of years.[225] The party has displayed an unequivocal eagerness to lock young people up by lowering their age of responsibility and denying them legal representation in front of YOT panels based on the assertion that this will delay and blur procedures. This has, unsurprisingly, resulted in them being 'catapulted very young and very rapidly' into youth justice settings.[226] This lack of legal representation is in direct conflict with human rights acts and would not be permitted in conjunction with any other group.[227] Thus, childhood and child welfare in contemporary society, much as it was in the nineteenth century, is characterised by dependency,

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[222] See Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.226; Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.39
[223] As was also the case in 19th Century
[224] Haines, K. 'Referral Orders and Youth Offender Panels: Restorative Approaches and the New Youth Justice' in Goldson. *The New Youth Justice.* 2000. p.83
[225] Haines states: Its abolition at the end of the twentieth century, after many hundreds of years existence, is a telling statement. This presumption of innocence applied until the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. *Ibid.* pp.82-83; Muncie adds that the *dolix incapax* means the opposite of 'common sense' and had been in place since the 14th Century. This revoke was in direct connection with the Bulger case so that the courts could act punitively towards the two boys involved. Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.275
[226] Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.43
[227] Goldson highlights how this breeches Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.43

punishment, obedience, socialisation and institutionalisation.[228] Rather conveniently this extreme focus on delinquents, tearaways, feral gangs, gun crime and yobs through endless *lurid* media coverage has detracted attention away from corporate corruption, genocide and phantom weapons of mass destruction .[229]

Secure Training Centres (STCs), Stigma and Labelling

> Interventionist processes are likely to 'create', or at least consolidate and confirm, delinquent identities for children.[230]

Sharon Moore describes the 'draw-bridge mentality' and compounding characteristics of the juvenile prisons established by New Labour as total institutions within the child welfare arena.[231] These prisons for young people aged 12 upwards were used as a sort of trump-card by New Labour to *prove* their commitment to being tough on crime and were to be called, in direct contradiction to their cultures of *un-training*, Secure Training Centres (STCs). Fraught from the beginning, widely opposed by a number of different agencies and at the centre of Public Inquiries and petitions to close them down, STCs epitomise New Labour's arrogance and ignorance in clinging on to some punitive 'tag line' in the face of mounting evidence of abuse and failings.[232] 30 young people died in youth custody from 1990-2007; deaths which, as John Muncie notes, have failed to evoke any significant sympathy or scandal from the public. This lack of response seems to be indicative of the tarnishing of these young people's souls in the eyes of the public and the success in framing these young people as 'less than fully human' to contemporary audiences.[233] Hendrick describes this as

> the gutter of prejudice, the loss of young people's innocence and the death of reason.[234]

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[228] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.242
[229] Moore, S. 'Child Incarceration and the New Youth Justice'. In Goldson. *The New Youth Justice*. 2000. p.117; Klein. *The Shock Doctrine*. 2007
[230] Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?'. 2000. p.3
[231] Moore. 'Child Incarceration'. 2000. p.125
[232] Moore details the early riots in Medway STC, *Ibid*. p.122; see also: *A False Sense of Security: The Case Against Locking Up More Children*. London: The Children's Society, 1993. p.7
[233] Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996.
[234] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.190

Moral panics and dominant theory have stigmatised and labelled young people in contemporary society in ways that frame them as being separate from their communities. There is no longer any faith in young people, or sympathy, only discipline. They have been displaced as the enemy within and 'sinned against'.[235] By keeping young people segregated from their communities both physically and ideologically, as well as trapping them in the worlds of closed institutions, the myth of 'justice' and the secret world of institutional injustices can be maintained. The public spectacle, described by Foucault, is also embellished within the electronic tag worn around the ankles of young people and the very public process of 'stop and search' that happens daily between young people and police officers. Alison and Adrian James state:

> young people…are…locked into images of disruption, indiscipline and nihilism; they
> become *the* 'threat' to the stability of communities…Moreover "the perceived decline of
> a 'sense of community' and the fracturing of actual communal institutions in the late 20th
> century, are associated in the minds of communitarians with a crisis in social
> regulation".[236]

The lack of training given to the police, who largely administer contemporary youth justice measures, on how to work with children and young people means we have opened the doors to *institutional racism*, biases and top-down, hierarchical cultures of physical violence and abuses of power.[237] Society's most *in need* and most vulnerable are being criminalised and stigmatised in ways that are doing irreparable damage; 'welfare models' have been side-lined by an increased focus on profits, budget margins and punishment

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[235] *Ibid.* p.231

[236] James, A. L. and James, A. 'Tightening the Net: Children, Community and Control', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 52, no.2 (2001), pp.219

[237] Research on institutional racism evidences that black children are 7 times more likely to be stopped and searched, 3.5 times more likely to be arrested, 6 times more likely to be in prison. If found guilty African-Caribbeans are more likely to be given a custodial sentence, for longer periods of time and are less likely to receive probation. Once arrested, black children/young adults are less likely to cautioned rather than charged and more likely to be prosecuted cited by Goldson, B. and Chigwada-Bailey, R. '(What) Justice for Black Children and Young People?' in Goldson, B. (ed.) *Youth Justice: Contemporary Policy and Practice*. Aldershot: Ashgate. ch. 3. 1999; Bowling, P. and Phillips, C. *Racism, Crime and Justice*. London: Longman, 1999; *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2006*. Ministry of Justice. 2007; Webster, C. *Understanding Race and Crime*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007.

and control before any attempt to understand or address any roots of issues or behaviour.[238] Young people are *managed* rather than helped to gain control over their lives and kept in a position of powerless by power relations that ensure they remain on the receiving end of tightly restricted aid. The stigmatisation of young people within their wider communities and thus the displacement from natural support networks means negative attitudes and rejection are compounded onto the lived experiences of these young people most in need. This extract from Aaron's individual piece, from the first Main-place project helps to highlight how these trends can impact on young people like him:

> I have a dream that people won't hold their bags closer to them as I walk by,
> Just because I am of mixed race doesn't make me a criminal,
> Just because I am from a care home, it doesn't make me a bad person.[239]

Who *are* these Children?

> child prisoners are drawn from some of the most disadvantaged, damaged and distressed families, neighbourhoods and communities. Poverty, family discord, previous experience of 'care' institutions, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, self-harm, and a pressing sense of distress are defining characteristics of children in custody.[240]

The demographic of young people affected by these punitive shifts are those who live at the sharp-end of 'adverse social-economic formations'.[241] Barry Goldson, among others, cites the direct link between capitalism and social deprivation whilst The Centre for Social Justice evidences the correlation between growing social problems and the rising numbers of young people taken into care.[242] These trends are reminiscent of 19th century

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[238] Full definitions of Welfare models and Justice Models discussed by Muncie. *Youth & Crime*. 2009. pp.282-289
[239] See DVD.4, clip 2 for an extract from Aaron's *individual piece*.
[240] Muncie. *Youth & Crime*. 2009 p.177
[241] Goldson. 'Wither Diversion?' 2000. p.51
[242] Munice, J. 'Pragmatic Realism? Searching for Criminology in the New Youth Justice' in Goldson. *The New Youth Justice*. 2000. p.23; as has always been the case in relation to 19th Century trends; *Breakthrough Britain: Couldn't Care Less, A Report from the Children in Care Working Group*. The Centre for Social Justice. Sept. 2008. p.20.

patterns. Children in care make up 49% of the young offender population and 23% of the adult prison population.[243] The young people at the centre of these perverse, punitive and profit-obsessed systems are those who have been categorised as being in the 'care' of state welfare systems and/or those most *in need* of protection and support.[244] As the Centre for Social Justice states:

> the treatment of many children in care and those leaving care deserves to be a source of national shame.[245]

The *real* causes for social problems such those as summarised by Hendrick below have been largely ignored by New Labour, and the governments before them; signifying a failure to recognise that the reason for young people's exclusion is due to their exploitation:

> unemployment brought about by the national decline of local industries, poor social and health service provision, inadequate housing, family breakdown, physical and sexual abuse, dilapidated…schools, racism, and the lack of adequate and relevant recreational facilitates [246]

This exploitation has ranged from party-political, ill-advised strategies to win votes, to the creation of an underbelly of society that suppresses the development of modern day 'poor law' young people via socially constructed 'myths', false acts of generosity and widening the net of social control over these groups.[247]

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[243] *First Release: Outcome Indicators for Children Looked After, Twelve Months to 30 September 2007.* National Statistics. England, 2008; Goldson, B. (ed.) *Dictionary of Youth Justice*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2008. p.64.

[244] Young people leaving local authority care are 50 times more likely to spend time in prison and 60 times more likely to homeless and 88 times more likely to be involved in drug abuse than other young people. *Our Children, their Future*: *A manifesto*. London: NSPCC, 2000. pp.7-23

[245] *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.11

[246] Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.225

[247] Ideas about the exploitation of young people are further explored by Muncie. 'Pragmatic Realism?' 2000. p.23; Levitas, R. 'The Concept of Social Exclusion and the New Durkheimian Hegemony'. *Critical Social Policy,* vol. 16, no.1 (1996), pp.5-20

Lord Carlile characterises this group of young people as 'vulnerable and needy children...[and] from chaotic backgrounds'.[248] The Centre for Social Justice further illuminates the 'perverse financial implications' for locking looked after children up due to shifts in budgets with more money now committed and available to YOT and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) than Social Services departments. In this example the extremes of *interventionist* over developmental and holistic approaches are underlined in telling ways:

> Our research shows that there are perverse financial incentives which push our children towards custody and the least effective forms of it. It is cheaper for a Local Authority if an offending child in care is imprisoned. It is cheaper for the state if these children are sent to Youth Offenders Institutions[249]

My research has worked directly with young people living on inner city estates, young people in residential homes, care-leavers and young offenders. As I moved out of the children's homes into a number of different settings the connections between these sites and the young people within them became apparent. Looked after children are drastically over-represented in young offender settings; young people living on the estates are at the front-line of deprivation and are also in the direct firing line for intervention, criminalisation and stigmatisation.[250] The majority of families living on estates are already known to social services with many of the young people in these environments deemed 'at risk'. In the UK, research has shown that approximately half of children held in custody at any given time have been, or remain, involved with Social Services Departments.[251] 30% of children in need will go into care during their childhood whilst

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[248]Mr. Justice Munby goes on to explain: 'Many [of these young people] have suffered abuse or neglect. Over half of the children in YOIs have been in care. Significant percentages report having suffered or experienced abuse of a violent, sexual or emotional nature…Over half were not attending school…Disturbingly high percentages had considered or even attempted suicide', cited in *Chaos, Neglect and Abuse: Looking After Children Leaving Custody. The Duties of Local Authorities to Provide Children with Suitable Accommodation and Support Services.* Howard League for Penal Reform. 2006. p.7
[249] *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.18
[250] Many of whom were young black and mixed-raced children, see statistics in footnotes above regarding institutional prejudice towards this group. African Caribbean children are 6 times more likely to be excluded than other children from schools. Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.248
[251] Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.177

many others will continue to live in households with chaotic and uncertain lifestyles.[252]
The 60,000 children in care represent the tip of the iceberg of family dysfunction.[253]
These young people are at the sharp end of a much larger group living in severe poverty
and deprivation. Although the reasons young people are taken into state care are multiple,
there is growing evidence that many of these crises could have been prevented and that
current interventionist cultures are compounding and exacerbating resolvable issues.[254]
The inequalities created by a capitalist society are breeding whole generations of souls to
be let down and fed through the administrative machinery of care/youth 'justice' systems.
This point is highlighted here by The Centre for Social Justice and Goldson:

> The experiences of children in care are not just a product of the care system but also of
> their homes and society. If we are to care for these children more effectively, then
> government must understand and deal with the wider social factors which lead to children
> being placed in care in the first place.[255]

> Crime will be endemic in societies built on principles of competition, conflict and
> individualism… "we must build a society that is less unequal, less depriving, less
> insecure, less disruptive of family and community ties and less corrosive of cooperative
> values.." [256]

The young people trapped in the frameworks of STCs and residential children's homes
are undoubtedly Britain's most in need, vulnerable and abused who, framed in a different
way, would evoke sympathy from the public and would be seen as 'deserving' of help
and support. Socio-historical trends have been adapted to subject contemporary society's
poor-law children to a witch-hunt on all manner of levels resulting in them being seen

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[252] *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.36
[253] ¼ million living in severe poverty and 300,000 chronic cases of children in need: Ibid, p.35; *Children in Need in England: Results of a Survey of Activity and Expenditure as Reported by Local Authority Social Services Children and Families Teams for a Survey Week in February 2005: Local Authority tables and further National Analysis.* Department for Education and Skills. 2006.
[254] '9 out of 10 children go into care for preventable reasons'. *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.35; *First Release: Children Looked After In England Year Ending 31March 2007.* The Office for National Statistics. 2007.
[255] *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.5
[256] Muncie. 'Pragmatic Realism?' 2000. p.23

and treated as inherently evil, feral and alien.[257] The myths created by government bodies and illuminated and reverberated by the media have culminated in the colonisation of the innocent child and the legalised abuse, torment and torture of Britain's most vulnerable children. The voice of authority presents absolute truths via carefully selected and manipulated statistics and scientific 'evidence'. Policy is used to create a culture of silence and to disguise hidden power techniques and abuses through objective language that assumes a reasonable and rational response to a fathomed 'endemic problem'.

The following sections will further explore the *impacts* of these trends on those who live and work within these systems and the dominant, institutionally owned and manipulated uses of research and development. I will also examine my personal experiences of working in an STC setting. The final section of the chapter will begin to knit this complex context and the use of applied theatre practice together in preparation for my critiques of practice within Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

The Void between Policy and Practice

The contemporary child welfare system uses what Boal calls 'ornamental rhetoric' and top-down directions of theory to divert the gaze from the realities of the appalling abuse and suffering of Britain's most in need young people. [258] The promises that *Every Child Matters* and slogans that appear in the wake of new scandals create tactical smoke screens whilst silencing the voices of practitioners and young people lost under a mound of policy and guidance.[259] The blatant breaches demonstrated through Britain's relationship with the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child is just one indicator that the liberty and humanity of young people is far from being a high priority

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[257] Full quote: 'Children in trouble were pilloried in the most vulgar sense. They were, and have since been, located within that specious concept of `underclass': they have been redefined, their childhood has been reconstructed, they are presented as `different', `alien', `other', `evil' and `wicked'. Goldson. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice'. 1997. p.79

[258] Full quote: 'The UN has turned into a fine pulpit for ornamental rhetoric. Each nation may do as it pleases, if, of course, they have the requisite quantity of tanks and numbs for the job. Terrorism is fought with state terrorism; religious fanaticism, with fanatical bellicosity'. Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.111

[259] As explored by Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 1996. p.76

of the government, as explored below. There is a deep-rooted trend that young people are failed by a culture of 'fine words and poor actions'.[260] These gaps are magnified within The Children's Act 1989, The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' that each specify a creative, reflexive and transparent system that celebrates diversity and the freedom of choice, as these extracts outline:

Article 13, UN Convention:

The Child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.[261]

Principles of the Children's Act 1989:

Children and young people and their parents should all be considered as individuals with particular needs and potentialities.

Every young person needs to develop a secure sense of personal identity and all those with parental or caring responsibilities have a duty to offer encouragement and support in this task.[262]

Every Child Matters:

We want to put children at the heart of our policies, and to organise services around their needs. Radical reform is needed to break down organisational boundaries.

Real service improvement is only attainable through involving children and young people and listening to their views.[263]

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[260] *Breakthrough Britain*. 2008 .p.22
[261] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
[262] The Children's Act 1989. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41
[263] *Every Child Matters. Presented to Parliament by the Chief Secretary by Command of Her Majesty September 2003*. London: Department for Education, 2003. p.9

Although this language creates an ideal framework for a liberatory, creative pedagogy and praxis these *radical values* remain confronted by and trapped within a system dictated by one-way, top-down directions of power and authority. Social work practice, in reality, is centrally controlled and enveloped by an implicitly punitive attitude towards the 'correcting' of young people within institutional settings which dates back to the origins of social care systems. In short, the socio-political, cultural and historical backdrop to the working order of this system dramatically contradicts this liberatory rhetoric, preventing it from becoming a reality. Chris Jones explains that

> The state has taken a sharp authoritarian and controlling turn….reflected in every part of the welfare system, social work included.[264]

making the realisation of liberatory values and ideals a contradiction in terms. These contradictions materialise in the lack of resources and spaces made available to action these ideas. Restrictions and pressures placed on social workers, from higher management, obstruct them as practitioners from being able to use individual and client specific ways of working. Although endorsing a 'rhetoric of change' New Labour continued the previous Conservative administration's strategies of ever-tighter control of public spending, increasing involvement of the private sector in public services, and intensifying regulation, inspection and centralised control of social work and social workers. [265] Franklin and Franklin state: 'the word should not be mistaken for the deed'; whilst hooks reminds us that 'liberatory language is not enough'. [266] [267]

The British government's historical hostility towards the UN Convention on the Rights of

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[264] Jones, C. 'Social Work and Society' in Adams, R., Dominelli, L and Payne, M. (eds) *Social Work, Themes, Issues and Critical Debates,* Second Edition. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave in association with The Open University Press, 2002. p.48

[265] Cree, V. E. 'The Changing Nature of Social Work' in Adams, Dominelli and Payne. *Social Work, Themes, Issues.* 2002. p.23

[266] Franklin, A. and Franklin, B. 'The Developing Children's Rights Movement in the UK' in Pilcher, J. and Wagg, S. (eds) *Thatcher's Children? Politics, Childhood and Society in the 1980s and 1990s.* London: Falmer Press, 1996. p.103

[267] hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994. p.153

the Child demonstrates its deep-rooted punitive attitude towards children.[268] When the Polish government initially suggested a Convention on Children's Rights in the International Year of the Child in 1979, Britain was the only government to reject the idea on the basis that it was unnecessary.[269] After eventually signing up to the agreement in 1991 and submitting their first report to the UN Committee in 1994 Britain received a damning backlash from the Children's Rights Development Unit (CRDU) with specific reference to Britain's failure in meeting some of the most basic principles of the Convention. The CRDU claimed the UK government's report was 'dishonest by omission' and had highlighted 'particular laws and statistics' that indicated *compliance,* without an 'adequate recognition of gaps, inconsistencies and blatant breaches' of the Convention.[270] One such example of these 'blatant breaches' was rooted in the existence of and increases in Young Offenders Institutes (YOIs) and STCs when the UN Convention explicitly proscribes the physical punishment of children.[271] The dissonance between the British Government's proclaimed commitment to child welfare and the actual realisation and direct contradiction of this commitment in practice is inherent throughout contemporary child welfare arenas. This trend features prominently in Chapter 7 and is echoed here by Kaganas:

> Partnership has become a watchword under the Children's Act…yet there is no consensus on precisely what this means in practice, whether it is desirable and, indeed, whether it can be achieved. [272]

Science, Surveillance and the Colonisation of Communicative Reason

The impact of capitalist climates and the increased centralised control over social work practice, hidden behind the myth of 'efficiency' has resulted in the social worker role being conflated into that of a manager of cases and a regulator of budgets. Social work

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[268] Franklin and Franklin. 'The Developing Children's Rights'. 1996. p.102
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] *UK Agenda for Children*. London: Children's Rights Development Unit. 1994. p.xi.
[271] Franklin and Franklin. 'The Developing Children's Rights. 1996.p.105
[272] Kaganas, F. 'Unequal silence in partnership with families'. *Community Care Supplement.* 28 October, 1993. p.1

settings have become a breeding ground for fear mongering and deskilling eclipsed by the *distortion* of young people, human relationships and communication. These cultures have established deep rooted provider-receiver power imbalances whilst also collectively dehumanising both worker and client. Science, surveillance, policing, monitoring and the rationalising of abuse and neglect have been made integral to practice and disguised as 'procedurally correct' practice. A culture of scape-goating, blame and whistle blowing has resulted in an obsession with a defensible, albeit ineffective or humane, practice, and following procedure.[273]

The hierarchical structures within care systems and the complexity of different scientific techniques to *manage* and *deliver* 'care' have created inherent divides and disruptions to the *relationships* within these frameworks. Those with power and influence rarely meet those they make decisions about, face to face. A culture of fragmentation and compartmentalisation dominates statutory care systems with researchers working in isolated contexts examining statistical evidence and policy-makers rarely interacting with those on the ground. Similarly social workers are no longer expected to work with young people but are instructed on what *is* and *is not* possible by team managers with an ever increasing scrutiny of budgets. Le Grand highlights these shifts:

> In general, social workers enter their work with a strong moral purpose, idealism, energy and enthusiasm. However, once into the job, they often feel de-motivated, overwhelmed by bureaucracy and deprived of autonomy….[274]

The *impact* of these structures and cultures is the destruction of humane relationships between looked-after children and their carers. There is a fundamental void between those who govern the lives of looked after children and the lived realities on the ground. A culture based on *processing* young people has created an institution that systematically removes 'care', interaction and emotion, from its working order. In the place of therapeutic and holistic work sits a policy-driven system underpinned by techniques

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[273] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.90
[274] Le Grand, J. *Consistent Care Matters: Exploring the Potential of Social Work Practices*. London: Department for Education and Skills, 2007. p.5

designed to police as opposed to provide.[275] These shifts have been described as the 'McDonaldization' of welfare where social work has become like a 'factory through which people are processed'.[276] The *impact* of these cultures on the immediate settings I worked in was a consistent theme and point of contention that left young people and front line workers feeling at a loss as to how to cope. LAC want to feel cared for, valued and understood and are instead met with the cold reality that this simply does not fit into the regime that care provision has become. Similarly, as Le Grand and other researchers have highlighted, front-line staff want to make a difference and few of them anticipated becoming the 'wolf of man'.[277] The communicative reason and the caring, emotional elements of social work activity have been colonised, resulting in the *distortion* of the face to face interaction that lies at the heart of human caring.[278]

The reality is young people and the poor simply do not have any economic 'use' or value to the wider capitalist picture and thus, essentially, the social worker's role revolves around keeping down the cost of their dependency', as with Dr Barnardo.[279] Direct and compassionate work with young people and families is culturally discouraged and framed as sinister and 'unprofessional' resulting in the disillusionment of the social worker who genuinely wants to help and the distress of the family/young person who tries to take control of their situation. These implied 'incestuous relationships' and 'cycles of involvement' echo Goffman's observations. Social workers are trapped in a climate of 'professional helplessness' and caught up in the gulf between all that the rhetoric promised and all that the power apparatuses constrict.[280] The mechanisms which underpin the '3, Es' reflect the general distortion that LAC are *children* with voices and needs.

[275] This theme echoes Foucault's ideas regarding the 'policing of society'.
[276] Cree. 'The Changing Nature of Social Work'. 2002. p.26
[277] Howe discusses this theme in: Howe, D. 'Modernity, Post-modernity and Social work'. *British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 24, no.5. (1994), p.529; 'Wolf of man' Plautus quoted by Boal. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed.* 2006. p.104
[278] Blaug, R. 'Distortion of the Face to Face: Communicative Reason and Social Work Practice'. *British Journal of Social Work,* vol. 25. (1995), p.429
[279] Jones. 'Social Work and Society'. 2002. p.48; It was an economic fact, of which Dr Barnardo was well aware, that it cost only £10 to send a child to Canada, while to keep a child in a home cost £16 a year. Samuel Smith (MP and a founder member of NSPCC) made a donation to Barnardo to be used solely for emigration, he accepted, see Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.47
[280] As explored in depth by Braye, S. and Preston-Shoot, M. *Empowering Practice in Social Care.* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995

These implicit processes of dehumanisation and the colonisation of young people through scientific and clinical approaches, as with the indigenous peoples Smith discusses, are magnified throughout the contexts, settings and rituals that frame social work practice.

Case files, Review Meetings and Care Plans

Case files follow each looked-after child around as they enter into different residential settings and are issued with yet another social worker.[281] These files are made up of different reports written *by* various professionals *about* these young people. This file is used to determine each young person, a definition that is constructed by a group of adult professionals in the absence of the young person's perception of events or truths. There is no space for the child to participate in these report writing processes. The dominant voice, the *history-maker* of these young people's identities and stories, is that of the social care professional, as highlighted here:

> The…child's voice continues to be undermined by assumptions embedded in professional culture…The voice of the child or young person is not considered relevant because the experience and knowledge she or he holds has no value in the face of objective, professional understandings of her or his needs…[282]

These methods of surveillance and recording and the *contexts and settings* looked-after children are subjected to create a 'culture of silence' by suppressing any opportunity for young people to meaningfully contribute to their development or life-courses. Throughout:

> The professional remains in control [as] the one with the authoritative, legitimate voice, who stands on the platform of valued knowledge.[283]

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[281] 'Children in care are suffering because the Government is doing too little to reduce turmoil in the social workforce and to improve the conditions in which foster carers, kinship carers and social workers perform their roles….Many leave. It is also makes it harder to recruit. We believe we need to..[bring] in fresh help and outside perspectives': *Breakthrough Britain* .2008. p.22

[282] Smith, R. *Social Work with Young People.* Cambridge: Policy Press, 2008. pp.42-45

[283] *Ibid.*

Review meetings, care plans and assessments dominate practice cultures with the emphasis on 'fitting' need into pre-determined boxes and categorising young people so that they can be appropriately processed. These practices reflect and belong to an adult world of business models and corporate conduct. They alienate and intimidate young people and children, stifling and silencing them.

Throughout my research review meetings were highlighted as traumatising experiences by young people. Those which I sat in on, whilst acting as an advocate within Medway STC, confirmed the ways in which these rituals are wholly terrifying.[284] The dynamics of these meetings and the ways in which they are conducted reflect wider contextual cultures ingrained throughout statutory care systems. Young people are treated as the *subject matter* with each professional reading out a report, based on their professional involvement with the young person as the voice of the expert. Review meetings are structured so that the professionals speak first, collectively setting the tone and perception of the young person before the young person is able to contribute. Professionals list the things they have identified as problems. This may include a health care professional presenting their concerns about the young person's hygiene levels and/or the specifics of any ailments they may have had. This information is shared in front of family members, teachers, social workers as well as other professionals the young person may have never met before. They hear things they are unprepared for from people who they previously trusted.[285] These feeling of powerlessness and exclusion were visualised during a workshop with Claire, echoing this theme of being talked *about* rather than to.[286] This is echoed by further research with other LAC about how review meetings can feel:

> The review meeting has become the main mechanism for implementing the Children Act 1989 regulation to ensure that children's wishes and views are elicited and taken into

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[284] As an advocate and representing a disruptive role / 'enemy within' I also experienced, first hand, how it felt to be bullied and undermined in these meetings

[285] *Start with the Child, Stay with the Child: A Blueprint for a Child-centred Approach to Children and Young People in Public Care.* Voice and National Children's Bureau**.** 2005. p.51

[286] See DVD.4, clip 1 where this theme is explored by a young person

account. Children and young people are aware of the significance of this meeting, but it is still a process that many find alienating…[287]

The proposed purpose of the *review meeting* was to enable young people to contribute to the discussion and participate in decisions about their lives but the 'apparatuses of repression' and obsession with science has meant liberatory policy has been collapsed back into a power technique. [288] The reality in practice is that these meetings are often conducted in obtrusive and obstructive ways through the use of jargon and the aesthetics of the formal settings they take place within. How welcoming the window created is for the young person to add to the discussion will depend on the chair of the meeting. Often, by the time this opportunity has been offered the young person is too distressed and frustrated by all that has happened prior to this window being created to feel able to express themselves. During review meetings young people are blocked so that if they wish to challenge anything that is being said about them they are accused of being aggressive or defensive and are contradicted by the adult professionals. Young people are told that it is not the place or time to respond and that there will be time for their input at the end of the meeting. Professionals will also use previous examples of the young person's behaviour to prove that the young person's point is invalid and/or inaccurate. These cultures directly reflect Goffman's ideas of looping. The power imbalances within these contexts ensure the young person remains silent and is dictated to by the adult expert who acts as the administrator of the dominant agenda.[289]

The review meeting, Children's homes, YOIs and the courts of law each represent contexts that prevent LAC from being able to participate. Within these settings LAC are treated as the 'passive recipients' of decision making processes with their individual and specific needs overshadowed and disregarded by procedurally correct practice.[290] These environments restrict opportunities for exploration, negotiation or independent learning to take place and thus actively nurture relationships of dependency on the institution. Everitt

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[287] *Start with the Child, Stay with the Child.* 2005. p.51
[288] Term used by: Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.296; as with Foucault's 'Power Apparatuses'
[289] Smith. *Social Work.* 2008. pp.111-112
[290] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* p.53

highlights the implicit problems with these cultures and their homogenising, globalising effects:

> The prevailing view of both research and policy development assumes processes imbued with objectivity, neutrality and rationality….Unless particularly addressed, the world will continue only to be known through the lenses of those with power and resources. [291]

The 'Distinct Cultures' of Closed Institutions and their Distortions

The impact of these contexts and settings and the power apparatuses that support them is replicated in the distortion that happens on the ground, behind the closed doors of immediate settings. The culture is such that to not get attached, show concern, love or humanity is the best and most efficient way to process the child and meet targets. Those who cannot do this leave burnt-out and exhausted. This culture is replicated within the children's homes where the majority of residential staff's time is dedicated to monitoring, surveillance and log-book keeping in order to *protect* themselves by evidencing procedurally correct practice. The human touch has been largely removed from the care agenda and is cited as a form of psychological abuse, resonating with John Bowlby's 'attachment theory'.[292] Similarly foster carers are not allowed to discuss problems with young people in their care resulting in the consistent breakdown of relationships and trust between young people and their carers. Foster carers are often forced to go behind the young person's back in decision making and are discouraged from helping young people to work through their issues. This extract from *Breakthrough Britain* highlights this trend and its impacts:

> In theory, the government recognises that physical affection or 'touch' can be 'used appropriately in everyday situations to support, encourage, guide or comfort a pupil.' In

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[291] Everitt, A. 'Research and Development in Social Work'. In Adams, Dominelli and Payne. *Social Work, Themes.* 2002. pp.114-116

[292] Original attachment theories by Bowlby, J. *Attachment and Loss:* Volume 1. England: Penguin Books, 1971. p.26; Howe states: 'The more children and adults are able to make sense of their social world and understand their place within it, the more adept, skilled and relaxed they can be in social relationships.' Howe, D. 'Psychosocial Work: an Attachment Perspective' in Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. *Critical Practice in Social Work*. Second Edition. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave in association with The Open University Press, 2002. p.139

practice, however, the working group has heard testimony that many within the child care workforce, especially those in social care, feel discouraged from showing affection to, or even touching, the child in their care. Dr Seán Cameron, an educational psychologist at UCL, told us: "Can we bring back touch please? The hands-off procedure in professional child care is like a form of psychological abuse."[293]

The front line worker is discouraged from expressing emotion and/or believing in looked after children's futures or working in creative ways.[294] 40% of young people taken into care have a criminal record within 6 months.[295] Children in care are brought to the attention of the law every day through incidents as minor as breaking windows and playground fights.[296] Top-down, one-way directions of power, control, expertise and the lack of critical reflection or two-way dialogues between young people and staff, staff and managers, social workers and managers results in abusive, distorted and disempowering contexts within which young people at the bottom of a hierarchal tower of power (leading back to the government) are squashed, tormented and provoked.

Distinct Cultures

Depending on the specific culture of the children's home the space for play, experimentation and shared communication may or may not exist. The manager of the children's home creates the type of environment within each residential setting. My experiences of working closely within two residential homes and visiting a number of others revealed how different each of these settings could be. Within one the doors were locked, physical restraints were common and the staff spent much of their time in the office writing reports about the residents. The policing and surveillance culture within this home dominated the time and space created to interact with the young people. This, in turn, had a negative effect on the young people with many of them regularly absconding and offending. In another home the culture was very different in that meal

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[293] *Breakthrough Britain*. 2008. p.120
[294] 'we have found that there is a lack of aspiration on the part of many corporate parents for their children – they do not expect them to achieve much and so they often don't. This culture of accepting poor achievement contrasts with many European countries'. *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. pp.16-17
[295] *Ibid.* p.129
[296] *Ibid.* p.18

times, group activities and the opportunity for staff to interact with the young people was made a priority. These young people were more settled as a result. They each attended various after-school activities and play was a regular feature within the home.

Within these 'closed institutions', such as children's homes, the culture that defines day-to-day practice is kept isolated from any outside influence.[297] This creates detached microcosms of cultures and norms led by the management styles and the ways in which staff groups respond to this direction. The dominant top-down directions of power that are inherent within the wider contextual care structures are often replicated within these settings; from senior management teams onto the unit manager onto the residential staff teams. These power structures are often further manifested in the 'pecking order' created between the young people. Bullying between groups of LAC is a significant problem with often serious implications.[298] This piece of research comments on the 'distinct cultures' created within different residential care homes:

> Yet each group developed a unique culture with respect to the details of its goal systems; its beliefs and attitudes; norms, structures, procedures, routines and customs; degree of internal cohesiveness, and the nature of the boundary between home and the outside world. In each case the distinctive culture that emerged was influenced….by the leadership style of the unit manager and relationships within the staff group. Some staff groups were mutually supportive, some conflict-ridden.[299]

The dangers of distinct cultures in closed, total institutions with no clarity on role other than to detain and police young people are the degrees of abuse and neglect that can become normalised. Depending on the integrity of the unit manager and the motivation of the staff team these settings have the potential to be dire places fraught with power games

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[297] Discussed in Prentki and Selman. *Popular Theatre*. 2000. p.158.
[298] 'Of all calls made to Childline in the year up until 31 March 1996 1,130 were made by young people in care. 9% of these calls were about bullying and violence within their residential care homes. 20% of calls were about sexual and physical abuse at home and within care'. MacLeod, M. 'The Abuse of Children in Institutional Settings, Children's Perspectives'. Stanley, Manthrope, and Penhale. *Institutional Abuse*. 1999. p.46.
[299] *Caring for Children Away from Home, Messages from Research*. Chichester and New York: Department of Health, 1998. p.82

and abuse. This is touched on within this extract from Alison Lapper's story of growing up in residential care:

> The staff abused us. They exploited us. They terrorised us. It's a sickening thing to have to write, but the children who were most impaired and most vulnerable, much more than me, were the ones they targeted for the worse abuses and mistreatment….I didn't like Banstead from the first moment I saw it…I could tell immediately that this was yet another place where the staff exerted power over the residents and bowed down and scraped to the hierarchy above them. [300]

'Pindown' and Gareth Myatt

'Pindown' is a widely acknowledged case of institutional abuse that took place across a number of residential children's homes as the result of methods introduced by Tony Latham, an area manager who rose to the position over a number of children's homes in Staffordshire.[301] Latham's methods of severe and repetitive forms of physical and mental abuse inflicted upon the young people living within these settings were readily adopted by those who worked in institutions that he managed. 'Fuelled by crude ideas about therapeutic techniques [and] unregulated and in the hands of its exponents [his] approach went disastrously 'over the top'[302]. As Kahan and Levy explain:

> Pindown was clearly an attempt to exert control over a group of children who were seen as prone to absconding: one of the house rules of the unit where it was employed was 'DO AS IS TOLD'.[303]

Kahan claims that the Pindown case created shock waves that greatly heightened awareness in central and local government and 'made a new beginning possible'; yet this 'new beginning' has fundamentally failed to impact on the very real opportunities for

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[300] Lapper, A. with Feldman, G. *My Life in My Hands.* London: Simon and Schuster, 2005. pp.72-139
[301] Stanley. 'The Institutional Abuse of Children'. 1999. p.18
[302] *Ibid.* p.25
[303] Levy, A. and Kahan, B. *The Pindown Experience and the Protection of Children: The Report of the Staffordshire Child Care Inquiry 1990.* Stafford: Staffordshire County Council, 1991. p.198

these types of abuse and neglect to continue happening within such settings.[304] What is significant about the Pindown case is that these practices were open to 'scrutiny by managers who found nothing wrong with them'.[305] It was media exposure by a Granada Television programme in 1990 that eventually prompted an inquiry and later resulted in five life sentences for Frank Beck in 1991for related sexual abuse on those in his care.[306] This highlights that residential settings are breeding grounds for distorted ideas about appropriate practice and no opportunity for staff to use their innate skills or engage in reflexive practice. Theory is driven down onto these closed settings with the unquestionable voice of authority coming from above.

What is also paramount is that these types of practices remain ingrained throughout *closed* institutional care settings within contemporary arenas. The treatment of LAC and young offenders is implicitly based on doing as they are told. Their lives are undoubtedly governed by the same one-way directions of power with no opportunity to meaningfully participate in their development or *be* children and young people. The regimes within young offenders' institutions continue to subject young people to the deprivation of 'their liberty' and 'enforce social isolation, humiliation and oppression' that characterised Pindown, as do many other residential care settings.[307] Deprivation, abuse and deaths within these *closed institutions* still occur, as with the case of Gareth Myatt who weighed seven stone and was killed whilst being physically restrained / PCCed (Physical Control in Care) by staff at Rainsbrook STC. In the eyes of the Crown Prosecution Service this was deemed a 'tragic accident', a theme that will be explored below in terms of the incestuous relationship between the law and intervention. This newspaper extract helps to summarise this story:

> Criminal charges will not be brought against the three staff who were restraining a
> teenage prisoner when he lost consciousness and later died. The Crown Prosecution
> Service (CPS) has ruled Gareth Myatt's death just four days into a year sentence for theft

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[304] Kahan. *Growing up in Groups.* 1994. p.46
[305] Stanley. 'The Institutional Abuse of Children'. 1999. p.18
[306] 'For his distortion of 'regression therapy' which included buggery and rape on young people within the care home he managed administered by him and members of his staff team. *Ibid.*
[307] Kahan. *Growing up in Groups.* 1994. p.47

and assault at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre near Rugby should be treated as a tragic accident. Fifteen-year-old Gareth…was being held in the now-banned double-seated embrace by three staff when he lost consciousness…He died later at Walsgrave Hospital….. The decision has been slammed by the Howard League for Penal Reform. The Charity's director Frances Cook said corporate manslaughter was a notoriously difficult charge to bring, but added private companies prepared to make a profit out of locking up young children should be held responsible when a child dies while being restrained by their staff.[308]

These closed, total institutions are inherently subject to extremes in power abuse and the oppression of the young people within them. Forms and techniques of abuse and neglect vary and are played out on a number of different levels. For many, living within a care home that 'looks like a factory' because of the bare walls and lack of *care* and affection they receive is a form of abuse and neglect.[309] For others, being restrained and locked up in police cells for bad behaviour is predominant. For many more being treated as a number in a mechanical system that dehumanises and objectifies them is a form of institutionalised abuse that is often much more difficult to articulate but the effect of which renders them as 'beings for others and less than fully human'.[310]

The Impacts on Young People

The impact on young people trapped within these frameworks is dependent on their unique responses to their specific set of experiences. The *trends* in how living in residential 'iron-homes' and processes of dehumanisation and stigmatisation affect LAC are as follows. LAC lack confidence, self awareness, self-esteem and suffer with depression and mental health difficulties.[311] A number of LAC have attempted or

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[308] 'No charges in teenage prisoner's death case, Gareth Myatt'. *The Rugby Observer.* 5 January, 2006. p.7
[309] See DVD.2, clips 4-6 for quotes from the 'Big Brother' Interviews. Main-place.
[310] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* p.53
[311] 'Children who are taken into care have often sustained appalling levels of abuse and neglect connected with addiction, poverty and domestic violence. Mental health problems are clustered in families which experience these issues. As a result, children in care are 4-5 times more likely to struggle with mental health issues than their peers.' *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.17; *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services and Psychological Well-being of Children and Young People*. Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health. 2004.

considered suicide and self harm is endemic within children's homes and young offender settings. LAC have no ownership over their stories, histories, 'personal preserves' of information and are routinely and systematically objectified. They are made to beg for basic provisions such as toiletries and often cannot keep up with their peer group's fashion trends, further alienating them from another source of potential support. LAC are moved around to different homes, depending on budgets, top-down decisions and/or disruptions to placements. They fail academically and are often isolated by unfamiliar environments and displaced from their 'home worlds' and support networks.[312] LAC have limited and curtailed opportunities for self expression, therapeutic ways of dealing with past abuses and traumas, and residential settings are not designed to encourage communication or reflection. The mistakes young people make, which are integral to growing up, are often penalised and criminalised disproportionately. The police and the courts of law are used as a first resort by front-line workers who have been disempowered and deskilled to think or practise in other ways.

Looping cultures of punishment are often replayed to young people via case files and review meetings making it impossible to move on from past experiences or behaviour. LAC have no voice and no means through which to effectively communicate. As a result they often abscond, self-harm and become substance and alcohol dependent. LAC are stigmatised and criminalised both throughout care frameworks and within the wider community. They often have difficulties forging trusting relationships, which have historically been abusive and negative, experiences which are then compounded by the lack of love and affection experienced in residential/prison environments.[313] The importance and rarity of the human touch was illuminated throughout my research:

> Me: what makes a good staff member?
> Aaron: Sue's the best!

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[312] Only 12% of children in care gain 5 A*-C GCSEs compared to 59% of all other children. Only 6% of care leavers enter higher education. 22% of care leavers will be unemployed after they leave school: Statistics gathered from various sources within: *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008. p.28

[313] 'Children and adults whose attachments are classified as disorganised/controlling are at significantly increased risk of a range of behavioural and mental health problems including depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder' in Howe. 'Psychosocial work'. 2002. p.143

Me: Why does she do a good job?

Aaron: Coz she rubs my arm

Me: She rubs your arm?

Aaron: Yeah, she makes me cups of tea, sits down and watches t.v with me and rubs my arm[314]

Residential settings *un*-train young people in basic life skills by curtailing their development processes. Rules, restrictions and top-down decisions determine LACs lives. They therefore do not develop a 'normal' understanding of action and implications because these are distorted, over-blown, exaggerated and inconsistent. LAC are disempowered and alienated from decision making processes; their provisions are allocated to them for which they are in constant dispute and stuck in a provider-receiver relationship. As a result, LAC struggle when they are deemed a 'care leaver' and are effectively spat-out of the care system most commonly aged 16. They lack life skills and have been 'un-trained' throughout their institutionalised upbringing. A devastating number of LAC become embroiled in the adult prison system, end up on the streets and/or become teenage parents, thus repeating the 'cycle of deprivation' that embroils generation after generation.[315] LAC are colonised, institutionalised and have been labelled with a criminal record from an early age and never supported to address the roots of their problems. Restraints, power relations and mental torment within residential settings compound their trauma and offer them no relief from a life of misery.[316] This is further exasperated by bullying cultures within care homes between young people as another layer of playing out power as learnt behaviour.

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[314]Aaron within filmed his *'Big Brother'* interview. Main-place project.

[315] '23% of the adult prison population has previously been in care'. *Social Services Performance Assessment Framework Indicators,* Children 2005-2007. Commission for Social Care Inspection. 2007; 'One third of homeless people were formerly in care' cited by Dixon, J. 'Young People Leaving Care: Health Wellbeing and Outcomes', *Child and Family Social Work.* vol. 13. no. 2. (2008), pp.207-217; 15-17 year old girls from care are three times more likely than other girls the same age to become teenage parents. *Impact Assessment for White Paper on Children in Care.* Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007. p.35; 'The cycle of deprivation' is discussed by Hendrick. *Child Welfare Historical.* 2003. p.242.

[316] As cited by Moore, 'Child Incarceration'. 2000. p.119; Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.175; *Banged up, Beaten up, Cutting up*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform. 1995.

LAC often become fragile adults and remain dependent on social services systems in one capacity or another. Raped and robbed of their identities, imaginations, childhood spaces, protections and belief systems they have become an empty vessel to be filled with dominant ideas. Many care leavers are left believing in the identity they have been given, issued with and had enforced upon them. They live under the stigma of bad, useless, mad, underachiever, criminal, violent, worthless and unlovable with no reason to believe anything other. Their lives have been a revolving cycle of neglect and labelling. It is little surprise that they go on to be the parents of the next generation of poor law children.

The Lack of Practical Impact of 'Radical Values' within the Web of Welfare

Intervention in the form of language wrangles in *closed* court rooms where an example of institutional care failings is used to make minor alterations to the understanding of law simply etches out a more complicated system. These cases are important but only provide those who are fighting within these systems more terms of reference when working within these institutional frameworks about what defines good and legal practice. These new references have little impact on the day-to-day lives of looked-after children because their lives are overshadowed by the dominant cultures, attitudes and practices that fester within these closed settings. The public look to the government for answers; but it is the *methods* used by the government and the dominant directions of power and influence that maintain and exacerbate these problems. *Institutionalised intervention* results in the institutionalisation of young people. YOIs contain a social problem that is not dealt with in any holistic way. The bigger picture of their needs is ignored whilst they are being processed and then spat out again, back into the chaos they were plucked from. Control and restraint dominates over the investment in the specific needs and potentials of young people within contemporary care systems. Change is seen as something done *to* people as opposed to *with* them. Flexibility and creativity simply do not fit with the rigid infrastructures that scaffold the existing system.

Recent developments in the practices of the youth justice field include restorative justice as a mechanism to help reform young offenders. This, as a technique and a model has

been 'proclaimed as a significant development', representing 'a participative approach to dealing with young offenders outside the court process, and promoting dialogue and problem-solving between offender and victim'.[317] The *problem* with this 'significant development' is that it relies on the young person, the 'offender', first admitting their guilt with the prime focus being on 'the offence rather than any other significant issues of concern'.[318] As Smith explains:

> The young person's perspective comes into play, but the power to define the 'problem' and the form of intervention remains elsewhere.[319]

These trends are replicated by the *complaints system* used within residential care and youth justice systems. Introduced as a way for looked after and locked up children to have their say about the services they receive and articulate any grievances they may have, the complaint system is often worse than useless. Not only do these procedures reduce young people's concerns and feelings to a paper exercise but the *investigation process* into the complaint is kept within the realms of the institution. It is therefore owned by the institution and open to the manipulation of those within these frameworks. These same problems haunt advocacy interventions as I came to realise when attempting to make a difference within this role (Chapter 7). The 'ladder of participation' is a useful indicator as to how these radical values and liberatory language are circumscribed by a hierarchical, linear, successive framework which is epitomised in this diagram and was referred to throughout social care practice.[320] This is symptomatic of practice cultures throughout capitalist and globalising models of development. The next section will examine my experiences at Medway.

Medway Secure Training Centre (STC)

I worked in Medway for 2 ½ years as a visiting advocate employed by Voice advocacy service (Voice will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7). Medway is one of the five

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[317] Smith. *Social Work.* 2008. pp.45-46
[318] *Ibid.*
[319] *Ibid.*
[320] 'The Ladder of Participation' developed by Roger Hart, see appendix 15

STCs New Labour introduced into the Child Welfare arena in 1998. Goldson refers to the 'barrage of informed critique' from professionals that have led to petitions, inquiries and explicit demands to close down STCs that have been ignored.[321] This further demonstrates how research is selected carefully by central government offices and supposed methods of regulation, intervention and transparency are dismissed and/or deviated from at their own discretion. These investigations have consistently exposed the institutionalised abuse that routinely takes place in these 'soulless, warehouses for vulnerable young people'[322]. Within these settings staff are poorly trained and ill-equipped to deal with the young people they work with resulting in an extremely high staff turnover rate.[323] The cost of incarcerating a young person within a STC is estimated at £3,000 a week and re-offending rates are almost 90%.[324] Millions of pounds are therefore being wasted in compounding and exacerbating looked after and locked up children's problems, money which could go towards making genuine differences to their lives in ways *led by* them.

The practice of physical restraints within STCs dominates the culture of how to deal with young people. This power technique is rationalised by the rhetoric 'Physical Control in Care' (PCCs) whilst simultaneously masking the brutality involved in the act of physically over-powering, humiliating and violating a young person's body and soul. It is at this *sharp-end* that the dominant trends, attitudes and cultures intrinsic and entrenched within British child welfare arenas, are magnified. The power structures, acts of false generosity and webs constructed around the misery of disadvantaged young people to feed off their imposed powerlessness and maintain dominant order over an underclass are

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[321] Goldson. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice' 1997. p.84; *A False Sense of Security*. 1993
[322] Goldson. 'Children, Crime, Policy and Practice'. 1997. p.84 – this terminology also echoes Goffman's ideas: 'Many total institutions, most of the time, seem to function merely as storage dumps for inmates, but…they usually present themselves to the public as rational organizations…for producing a few officially approved ends'. Goffman. *Asylums.*1961. p.73
[323] '1,577 custody and other staff appointed were appointed to the STCs since 1988 and 1,026 had left by October 2005': *The Carlile Inquiry, Lord Carlile of Berriew QC's Independent Inquiry into the Use of Physical Restraint, Solitary Confinement and Forcible Strip Searching of Children in Prisons, Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Home.* London: The Howard League for Penal Reform. 2006. p.34
[324] 'The vast majority of the annual budget for the Youth Justice Board is spent on keeping children in custody. A secure training centre place, run by private contractors, costs £164,750 per year' cited in: *Chaos, Neglect and Abuse*. 2006. pp.7-8

played out behind the closed doors of Medway STC in ways that are barely conceivable to outsiders. The impact of these cultures of violation and physical brutality inflicted on young people who have already suffered abuse at the hands of adults and are made to re-experience these power techniques, is sickening.

> It is of concern that the only compulsory component of prison officer training is physical control and restraint….Children in a residential care in Scotland cited feelings of violation and abuse following restraint…while patients of mental health services who had histories of abuse often related restraint to previous traumas… It has also been suggested that restraint of a child can also impact on those children who witness the restraint…Observing a child being restrained can be traumatic and lead to divisive "them and us" relationships between staff and children.[325]

The following extract attempts to critique my observations within Medway STC and contextualise the theories I have presented in Chapters 3 and 4 up to this point. I have chosen to use a less academic tone in this section to avoid presenting a theory of abuse but rather a story of experience as to what this abuse looked and felt like for the young people. Throughout this extract I will draw on the common characteristics observed by Goffman to highlight how Medway represents a total institution within British child welfare arenas. I will also use abstracts from the Carlile Inquiry and 'Chaos, Neglect and Abuse'. Both of these reports were commissioned by The Howard League for Penal Reform that works extensively across the secure estate representing the rights of young people in custody and campaigning for changes to the ways in which these establishments are run.

Other extracts drawn upon within this section have been selected from the notes I was required to write after each visit as a record of my work as an advocate. These reveal my immediate responses to incidents as well as the culture of 'recording' that dominates professional interventions. Regardless of the horror that takes place and is reported back via 'official procedures' impact is curtailed and hands are tied. Voice advocacy service was commissioned and contracted by the YJB to work within youth custody settings

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[325] *The Carlile Inquiry.* 2006. pp.30-46

across England and Wales and, as a result, anxiety over their own self-preservation and perverse relationship of co-dependency overshadowed their integrity in terms of exposing the truths for fear of ruffling too many feathers. This summary from Muncie helps to contextualise this use of science and procedure as a contemporary tool of hidden power abuses:

> [In Children's Homes, YOIs and STCs] officially sanctioned policies and practices are tantamount to 'institutionalised child abuse'…those responsible are frequently able to neutralize accountability, evade responsibility and operate with impunity.[326]

My Reflections

I never got *used to* going into Medway. The horror of seeing children locked up and being treated in the way they were never wore off in the 2 ½ years I made visits to the centre. For me, Medway encapsulates the fundamental problems with British society and its *care system*. It epitomizes the examples of repressive practice and the *impact* of these practices on the individual child. It typifies how institutionalised care provision has replaced *community* and *humanity.* Medway represents the extremes of Western, capitalist, institutionalised systems and what they *do* to young people, relationships, human interactions, instinct and development.

I do not believe that anyone was born 'bad'. I believe that every child is innocent and what happens to them and how they develop is a direct reflection of their surroundings and their 'parenting' both by their immediate guardians and by the wider society. I do not believe that children should be locked up and denied their human rights as a resolution to their behaviour and actions. I believe young people's actions are a testimony to their understandings and are their responses to the situations they find themselves in. We are *all* responsible for how the children of our society are developing and what is happening

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[326] Muncie. *Youth & Crime.* 2009. p.176; This idea is also discussed by Goldson, B. *'*Child Incarceration: Institutional Abuse' in Scraton, P. and McCulloch, J. (eds) The Violence of Incarceration, London: Routledge. 2009. pp.86-106

to them; and what *is* happening to them is that they are being neglected and abused by systems that fool people into believing in and paying for this mistreatment.[327]

I'm afraid Medway has left me cynical to the belief that the government is in any way interested in helping and supporting young people from the most disadvantaged and deprived areas to be able to turn their lives around and have positive futures. The youth offending system is a horrific cycle of suffering within which 'young offenders' are punished on a level deeper than any justifiable action for their crimes.

Entering Medway: Institutional Displays

The reception area of Medway was a small room with pieces of artwork by the young people decorating the walls. Rather ironically the theme for this work was 'safely contained'.[328] This was where visitors signed in. I would wait in reception until I was collected by a member of staff and brought through a doorway into another area to be searched and issued a radio. It was compulsory to carry a radio for 'safety reasons'.[329] In this second room there were lots of television screens behind the desk showing footage from the dozens of cameras hidden throughout Medway. If you stared at these screens for too long you were told to look away. Within this small compressed area you waited to be met by a member of staff to take you through onto the units. Through another door and you were within the main block. This is where outside visitors would be taken for meetings and visits. On the walls large framed posters were hung with liberatory philosophies from Ghandi and Martin Luther King.[330] It was modern and clean. Once

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[327] 'The vast majority of the annual budget for the Youth Justice Board is spent on keeping children in custody. A secure training centre place, run by private contractors, costs £164,750 per year…The use of custody is equivalent to an admission of failure. Prevention is better, and cheaper, than cure. Re offending rates for children being released from custody are almost 90%. If the children do not receive appropriate care and support on release they are virtually guaranteed to get involved in more crime, creating more mayhem in local communities, and they head straight back into custody. Investment at this stage is essential if we are to interrupt the cycle. *Chaos, Neglect and Abuse. 2006.* pp.7-8

[328] A theme I later discovered had been issued to young people sitting their GCSE art exams. This use of artwork and theme directly resonates with Goffmans' idea of 'institutional displays'.

[329] This theme of assuming we were the natural allies of staff by issuing radios and briefing us on new 'dangers' of inmates resonates Balfour's and Thompson's ideas regarding prison work.

[330] Echoing hooks, Freire and Goffman regarding slogans, displays and oppression hidden behind liberatory rhetoric

through the main block you entered onto 'the green', a balding grassy area encircled by the different units.[331] The atmosphere from the main block onto the green area instantly changed. You were within the prison confines. Young people would often be standing around the green area in a huddle. Occasionally they had a ball to play with; otherwise they just stood whilst various members of staff reminded them of the rules. These included not walking on the grass but staying on the paths unless a specific grass related game was being played.

The 'Breaking-in' of Young People

Medway was horrific for many different reasons but by far the most prevalent was the visible *impact* it had on the young people there. I would watch a common cycle being played out from when a young person first arrived onto the unit over the course of my next visits, normally with two weeks in between each one. The stronger characters would come in loud and bold, making very noisy efforts not to be seen as a pushover. As the weeks would go by I would watch them become broken by the regime of Medway. By my third visit they would appear distant, lost and shell-like. They would have less to tell me because they had given up hope that anything would change as a result, and they were right. This would take just over a month. Their physical appearance would have dramatically changed. Made to wear substitute clothing belonging to Medway until their own clothes arrived, they were often made to wait unnecessarily to receive these items with regular reports of things going missing in transit. The toiletries provided were often cheap with no consideration to the needs of Afro-Caribbean hair or skin. They were stripped and humiliated of their personal preserves, with strip-searching also a part of 'normal routine'.

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[331] The shape of Medway reflects the Panopticon model Foucault describes in Foucault. *Discipline and Punish.* 1979. pp.195-228

Lack of Therapy, Ability to Express Emotion

There was no space for young people within Medway to be young people. They were taken through a strict regime of education, meal times and bedtime. Free time was spent watching television or films. 'Green-time' was their time allowed outside which was normally spent huddled together or walking around in a circle. I was concerned by how little space or opportunity there was for the young people to express themselves and release anger and frustration. There was no outlet or therapeutic intervention for any of the things they had experienced or *were* experiencing whilst inside Medway. As a result the young people often hurt themselves as explored in these two extracts below.

My notes: Wednesday 17th October 2007

I called and spoke to Abbi. She is very distressed and has started self-harming which she has never done before….She smashed up her room because she was so angry about not being checked on and being forgotten. After this (later on) she tied a sock around her neck and tried to kill herself. She has spoken to Rena about this and was told that Rena would look into why this happened. She said that she did not want to make an official complaint because she didn't want to get anyone in trouble. She has recently lost a very good friend who also killed themselves and feels she needs counselling but there is no therapy in Medway, she has been sent to Dr. Davenport but she feels that she does not need a psychiatrist because she "is not mad"[332].

Letter to the Pastor: 23rd September 2007

Dear Nathan / someone / anyone:

 We wanted to write to you with some ideas to help us, we need somewhere to go and lash out in, like a soft room with a punch bag and somewhere like a sensory room to help us to chill out. At the moment we're punching mattresses and walls and if you want or need to get off the unit you can't there's no where to go and we need to get away from each other. By punching things we let out our aggression, which we need to do because we all have a lot of anger[333].

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[332] Extract from my notes written after this visit.
[333] Letter composed by a group of young people in Medway to the Pastor of the STC.

Stigmatization, Negative Self-image

The young people would often ask me how I felt working with 'criminals'; their perceptions of self were very negative. A large proportion of them were in custody for breaching their licensing terms and conditions. For many others I did not know why they were there and I did not ask. They spoke about their lives on the outside and where they had come from. Their stories resonated with what I had seen and heard during my time working on the estates. They rarely protested their innocence but would share with me the type of chaotic and violent backgrounds they had come from. Where possible I tried to facilitate discussions between them about their experiences and how they would like things to be different when they left Medway. I remember this once happening between a small group of girls on one unit and sitting back to listen to them try to help each other and make sense of their worlds and each other's realities. There was no space created for these types of discussions or processes of reflection within Medway, nor were they part of my role as a visiting advocate. I was expected to *just* ask each young person if they were O.K and assist in the writing of a complaint if this was requested.

I met hundreds of young people in my time working at Medway. In all of them I saw children lost in an adult world, suffering at the hands of a crumbling society and further denied by systems that fail to help them to recover or move on. Different young people whom I had worked with years before in the children's homes would appear on the units, no longer as little as they had been, all with the same haunted expressions. Others came from the estates I had worked on during my time at the housing association. Sometimes I knew them personally, other times I knew the estate they lived on and people they knew. This cycle is echoed below:

> Everyone I knew was in here, from the kids' homes. It was like a big family reunion![334]

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[334] Taylor C. 'Justice for Looked After Children?' *Probation Journal.* vol. 50, no. 3 (2003), pp.239-251

All them little jobs – special needs, social workers, police, prison officers – at the end of the day depend on black boys like us failing. If we don't keep on failing what would happen to all those high salaries?[335]

Sanctions, Disinfecting Identities and 'Looping' Punishments

There were many strategies and techniques used to *other* the young people and ensure the staff treated them as such. One rather poignant example was the naming of the staff area which was off-limits to the young people. This was called the 'sterile area'.[336] On each floor there were two units where the young people were detained with a 'sterile area' in between. The 'sterile area' consisted of offices where files were kept about each of the young people for all members of staff to access. The use of the term 'sterile' implied that because none of the young people were able to access this area, it was therefore 'clean', uninfected and sanitised. Within this area large warnings about particular young people were hung up and a points system that scored each young person's sanctions was monitored. This was something of a power hub where staff could decide on different actions for the young people and where clothes and toiletries were stored.

The young people often complained that their points dropped dramatically when a member of staff they did not have a good relationship with, was on shift. The amount of points earned would dictate the privileges each young person was eligible for. Different points meant different bandings of liberties. These one-sided, exclusive decision making processes about young people, what they were and were not deserving of, was typical of how Medway and 'total institutions' work; reflecting 'Looping' punishments and the judging of the soul cited throughout Goffman and Foucault's critiques of penal worlds:

This obligation not only puts the individual in a submissive or suppliant role………but also opens up his line of action to interceptions by staff. Instead of having his request immediately and automatically granted, the inmate may be teased, denied, questioned at

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[335] Interview with young person in the wake of the 2011 riots in England. Sergeant, H. 'Fixing Broken Britain'. *The Sunday Times: News Review.* 14 August, 2011. p.2

[336] As discussed in relation to 'the disinfecting of identities' in Goffman *Asylums.*1968. p.28

length, or…merely put off…The inmate's attention…comes to be fixed on these supplies…He can spend a whole day, like a fanatic, in devoted thoughts about the possibility of acquiring these gratifications…[337]

Often, on the whim of the 'Duty Officer Manager' (DOM), the young people would be denied green-time. The access to fresh-air is a legalised, basic human right, but in this context could easily be revoked and reframed as a necessary injunction. A green-time ban would also be used as an individual punishment under the guise that a risk assessment had deemed that a young person was not safe enough to be allowed outside. On occasions a 'lock-down' of the whole centre would occur meaning every young person in Medway would be confined to their rooms/cells for lengthy periods of time.

Being denied fresh air and open space had a drastic effect on the young people. The units were small with basic, hard furniture and no play resources. There was little light and no luxuries.[338] Green time was their only opportunity to escape the dark, dank, depressing feeling of the unit. Denying green-time had a direct impact on the levels of tension on the unit, as was the intention. As young people, who had already experienced a disproportionate amount of abuse and neglect, confining them to a small space with no place to escape resulted in an escalated number of fights, incidents of self harm and PCCs. There is no doubt that this was used as an intentional cause-effect power technique by the DOMs, as a way of exerting power over the young people to remind them *who* was in charge. The unit staff would often despair about how much harder their shift was made as a result of green-time bans and openly confirmed that these were a strategic power-control technique employed by the DOMs.

> The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty states:
> *Every juvenile should have the right to a suitable amount of time for daily free exercise, in the open air whenever weather permits, during which time appropriate recreational*

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[337] *Ibid.* pp.44--52

[338] Contrary to media myths that STCs are full of 'play stations' and somewhere kids get let off lightly whilst costing the tax-payer thousands. This was something I regularly found myself trying to explain to cab drivers dropping me off at Medway and other members of the public when I spoke about visiting young people at Medway.

*and physical training should normally be provided…...*There seemed no opportunity for children to run. They rarely felt fresh air, sunshine or rain. This is almost certainly a contributory factor to conflict…[339]

Violation and Physical Abuse

Throughout my time working at Medway I saw countless marks, bruises and cuts on young people's arms, necks, faces and legs from physical restraints. One young person had finger marks on his neck four days after a restraint had taken place. Another young person had one whole side of her face raw and bleeding from a carpet burn whilst being pinned down to the floor. Medway is the epitome of a culture that is designed to *control* and *restrain* young people as opposed to helping them to reflect, recover and participate in their development. The dominant mechanisms used within this setting emulate the fundamental problems within British ideology in terms of how care, development, intervention and aid are perceived. Medway throws a light on the philosophies and practices that underpin British social care cultures and how British governments believe 'care' should be *administrated.* This theme was echoed in The Carlile Inquiry:

> My Inquiry has considered the various ways that children are treated in penal custody, which I believe would, in any other circumstance, trigger a child protection investigation and could even result in criminal charges. The Inquiry's work was based in England but I believe the general principles apply more widely……there are over-riding concerns about the forcible stripping of young people, long periods of isolation as punishment and the physical restraint of children.[340]

Medway, as a micro-example, demonstrates the ways in which British institutional approaches towards child development and child welfare are based on segregation, isolation, punishment, point systems, brutality, labelling, reports, merits, power, control, restraint, restriction, inconsistencies, bullying, abuse, mental torment. It is these power techniques that contribute to the unnecessary suffering of young people and ensure that

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[339] *The Carlile Inquiry.* 2006. p.32
[340] *Ibid.* p.9

they remain trapped within a cycle of deprivation and crime. It is the *unseen* crimes of these institutions that are causing the real pain and damage to our society whilst maintaining the class divisions on which capitalism and the Western world relies. Medway reveals the fundamental problems of attitude and practice in these *closed, total institutions* and the very real potential for these settings to become hot-houses for torment and abuse rather than reform and recovery.

Within Medway I noticed changes in new members of staff who, initially expressing a genuine level of care for the young people, became hardened and more aggressive over time. The dominant culture was to hold the young people with low regard, with those who were *most* tough, most likely to be promoted. I witnessed staff members provoking individual young people into 'kicking off' which would be followed by calls to senior members of staff to come onto the unit to restrain the young people.

> The Inquiry received one submission alleging that some staff would "bait" children into situations that would result in restraint for their own gratification[341].

I listened to many stories about the trends of abuse the young people had suffered at the hands of their 'carers'. Within the STC the dominant staff culture was to treat them as criminals, 'others' and to tease and provoke young people. Those members of staff from a different mindset often ended up resigning from their positions or eventually colluding with this culture.[342] Chloe was a young traveller child:

> **My notes: 2nd March 2006**
> When I arrived on the unit Chloe was distressed and staff seemed to be following her around the unit telling her to calm down. Natalie and Jade informed me that the staff had PCCed [physically restrained] her for 'ages' the night before and it had upset everyone. Natalie said that staff and young people had cried because it was so traumatic. …she was PCCed in her room for approx. 40 minutes. Natalie had tried to calm her down whilst the staff held her. Chloe seemed to get more distraught and various members of staff kept

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[341]*Ibid.* p.47
[342] See numbers of staff who have left in footnotes above.

arriving on the unit resulting in approximately 7 members of staff stood around Chloe in the living room area. Staff included Rene, Andy and Lynn. Eventually Lynn and others took Chloe into the kitchen where she was spoken to….I felt that Chloe would have been PCCed if I hadn't been on the unit. The other young people seemed to be anticipating this also[343].

Cultures of Silence: Complaints and Reviews

It was normal for these children to be let down over and over again whilst continuing to punish them for what they had done. Plans regarding young people's release were non existent with social workers often using the time young people were in Medway as a chance to concentrate on other caseloads. Some young people were advised by social workers to go to housing departments and declare themselves homeless on release. Although the young people were criticised and condemned endlessly for their bad and irresponsible behaviour the professionals broke endless promises and treated them with total disregard. The power imbalances and dominant views of these young people allowed these hypocrisies and inconsistencies to appear entirely rational. It seemed such an obvious and blatant oversight of all these 'professionals' that these young people were simply acting out and responding to the chaotic lifestyles they were trapped within. Perhaps it was just easier to believe that they were 'born bad'. This neglect for the young person's future upon release was particularly evident in Abi's case:

> **My notes: Wednesday 17th October 2007**
> Abbi does not know where she will be living. Her YOT has told her this will be a hostel – she does not want to go to a hostel because she is likely to get back into drugs and fall into a bad crowd….She said: "If I had something to do I wouldn't be on drugs and drink.. I am not a violent person and I am in here for a violent offence" I advised Abbi to speak to Howard League, the phone then went dead[344].

As a *visiting advocate* one of my main roles was to help the young people to voice their concerns and challenge aspects of their treatment within the STC. The procedure for

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[343] Extract from my notes written after this visit.
[344] *Ibid.*

making a complaint against the institution was *owned* by the institution, meaning that an internal investigation into each complaint was conducted by those working within the STC. Many of the young people reported incidents when they had been visited by senior members of staff and advised to drop their complaint. They were intimidated into withdrawing their grievances and I would be informed by the young person on my next visit that they were no longer interested in pursuing their complaint as with Jamie:

> **My notes: 15th August 2006**
>
> Jamie said that he had written a letter of complaint regarding the second PCC when Jack Tilley had "strangled" him. Jamie's mother had also written a letter to Lucas regarding this. Jamie told me that this had happened at 9am in the morning when Maria Taylor had sent him to his room twice and he felt she was picking on him. Jamie told her to go to the other end of the corridor and argue with herself. Maria told him to go to his room and when he wouldn't go he was PCCed. Jack was called and involved. Jamie feels this was unfair because he hadn't been abusive or violent in any way. Jack visited Jamie's room at 12noon (3 hours afterwards) to "patch things up" and said "there's no hard feelings" to Jamie and shook his hand. Jamie said he thought this was "really sly of him".[345]

These types of diversion and intimidation tactics occurred throughout the units and were also reflected within review meetings. The young people would be accused of 'exciting behaviour' which was used as a warning which could result in a restraint and/or being physically removed from the room. As the young people tried to express how they felt and/or challenge their experiences of abuse within the STC this term was used as a threat to ensure they calmed down and shut-up. It was also used in reference to trying to 'excite' others into rebellion if one young person was seen to be enticing others into being aware of the contradictions within Medway. Discussions around the *problems* within Medway between young people were actively squashed with the blame placed on the strongest and often most articulate character as the ring-leader who would be removed and penalised. The young people were forbidden from critiquing their experiences within the institution.

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[345] *Ibid.*

The Howard League for Penal Reform's legal team has identified serious gaps in the planning and provision of support and accommodation for children leaving custody, such that the risk of children re offending is unnecessarily high and many children are returning to precisely the same situation that led to their initial incarceration.[346]

'Packs' for Development

Within Medway there was no access to therapeutic intervention. There was one psychologist who worked with all of the children. These sessions were reported to be disturbing and negative experiences, the result of which was whether the young person was prescribed medicine, or not. This reflects a clinical approach to social problems. The young people are categorised by a professional and prescribed a scientific cure for their ailments and deficiencies. The young person does not participate in their own development and instead they are told what medicines they require. Similarly packs were issued as a means of addressing the young people's issues, the completion of which contributed to a broader programme of point and banding systems. The packs dealt with varying issues and problems such as drug misuse and were to be completed by the young person and overseen by a member of staff. Again, the young people spoke negatively of the packs and their efficiency at helping in any *real* way. For many, they were viewed as something to further their position on the points system in order to gain more privileges. These clinical and academic approaches to development, self awareness and growth reflect a wider systematic culture that views social problems as a deficiency *within* the individual that can be fixed by a process of correcting people. The use of a form, a pill, a pack or a meeting between professionals continued to characterise the relationship between contemporary institutionalised care and the philosophies that founded these corrective institutions in the nineteenth century.[347]

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[346] *Chaos, Neglect and Abuse.* 2006. p.8

[347] Brown describes this as reducing groupwork to a 'sterile exercise in which group members receive packaged group programmes of limited usefulness, making no real impact of them as unique individuals often caught up in oppressive social conditions of poverty': Brown, A. 'Groupwork in Britain' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. (eds) *Practising Social Work*. London: Routledge, 1994. p.45

As with restraints and locking young people in their rooms to calm down, both in Medway and in the children's homes, these practices are based on the belief that if you contain the problem, if you suppress the emotion, it will not disrupt the wider system. There is no space for individual problems or emotionally-driven behaviour. The system in short, cannot cope with people because people are unique and unpredictable and governed by feelings, reactions and opinions. Instead the system is interested in containing and processing people as if they were cattle. It is designed to treat young people as a homogeneous group who can be funnelled down various paths and routes until they are no longer the responsibility of the care system and are passed over to another department. As with academic systems there is a governing agenda and criteria within which young people must fit; refusal to comply results in exclusion. Western development systems are rigid and intolerant of individual needs regardless of how persistently social policy claims this is a priority.

> Evidence submitted to the Inquiry suggested that the emphasis in children's secure establishments appeared to be very much on physical intervention….Merely to punish children does not teach them how to behave differently and in fact can leave them angrier and more likely to respond in an aggressive way in future. If staff are seen to respond in a physical way to conflict this will be 'modelled' by the children…..There are different restorative justice models that can be used……..flexibility should be maintained so that all needs are catered for[348].

Within Medway and other closed institutions the distinct culture is dominated by the management and infiltrated through the staff team regardless and often in direct contradiction to the rhetoric, rights and research from the outside. New policy exists as an abstract concept to the day to day realities of the young people and front-line staff trapped within these perverse microcosms. It is the cultures of practice and dominant attitudes of those who control these immediate environments that impact on the lived experiences of the young people and the personally harboured biases and racisms held by the staff teams that construct these realities, not the words found on the glossy pages of new policies.

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[348] *The Carlile Inquiry.* 2006. p.34

The Search for Practice

> How to drive change on the ground, that is the big question'[349]

> Evidence suggests that an alternative practice approach is to respond in a non judgemental but sensitive way that allows the young person to build up trust while retaining control over their own body to do what they want. This approach, carefully managed, has been demonstrated as effective[350].

The well acknowledged *problems* within contemporary social care settings have inspired a number of new theories as to how to improve practice, as these quotations exemplify. Cross-disciplinary ideas help to frame and define what my work within these settings has achieved. My research has brought together the applied theatre paradigm and the child welfare arena and has examined the potential for applied theatre practice to illuminate and address the problems within these contexts. The interplays, resistances, new techniques and strategies, as defining elements of my research, will be examined over the next three chapters (5-7). This investigation sheds new light onto a number of emerging critical theories that explicitly call for a new type of practice. My work, therefore, introduces a pedagogical model and creative praxis, as applied theatre, within child welfare arenas that can demonstrate and translate these calls for a critical, creative, child-led, reflexive practice, as will be further explored below.

> we need to be ethnically sensitive, self-aware, reflective and reflexive if we are to develop the capacity to engage in open and honest dialogue with service users and other professionals[351]

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[349] Caroline Abrahams, Local Government Association. *Breakthrough Britain. 2008.* p.20
[350] Roy, A., Young, F., May-Chahal, C. 'Looked-after Children and Young people in Residential and Foster Care'. Adams, Dominelli and Payne. *Critical Practice.* 2009. p.273
[351] Burke, B. and Harrison, P. 'Anti-oppressive Approaches' in Adams, Dominelli and Payne. *Critical Practice.* 2009. pp.209-214

Hendrick cites feminist theory in the search for a 'sharp-methodological understanding' of how to better research the lives and worlds of young people. [352] His concerns with the 'muffled voices of children' and the inherent power relations in history-making and Western research echo my theoretical framework (in Chapter 3 in particular) and my praxis as a counter to these trends.[353] Research with children is a broad sociological field with many new techniques resonating with liberatory methods endorsed by Smith and hooks. 'Narrative therapies', holistic, biographical accounts and quasi-longitudinal approaches each demonstrate a practical, emancipatory approach to enabling young people to explore and define their own worlds within flexible research agendas.[354] These techniques and models reflect *de*-colonising methodologies and creative approaches to helping young people to *come to voice* as well as developing a critical consciousness of their existing realities through the process of formulating their own perspectives.

My use of drama, theatre, film, sculpture and the reframing of young people as researchers, interviewers and curators of their own 'individual-pieces' builds on these theories. My work demonstrates a child-centred pedagogy through which new techniques can emerge in response to specific research agendas, ideas and identities, as will be established in Chapter 5 and expanded upon in Chapters 6-8. This notion of frames and repositioning young people at the centre of research aligns with Heathcote, O'Toole and O'Connor's work.

The focus on 'Hope' in Robb, O'Leary, Mackinnon and Bishop's book and the use of photography as a methodology to enable young people to capture their worlds through images relating to hope presents a unique insight into the world views of young people living on the margins and into the use of narrative therapies and photo-voice . These

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[352] Hendrick, H. 'The Child as a Social Actor in Historical Sources, Problems of Identification and Interpretation' in Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds) *Research with Children, Perspectives and Practices.* London and New York: Falmer Press, 2000. p.41

[353] *Ibid.* p.43

[354] As discussed throughout: Robb, O'Leary, Mackinnon and Bishop. *Hope*. 2010; MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J. *Disconnected Youth? Growing up in Britain's Poor Neighbourhoods.* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005. pp.41-44

authors raise important ideas regarding materialism, violence and capitalism and the ways in which these frameworks impact on and are reflected through young people's ideas of hope and success. This research makes important connections, from the young person's view *outwards*, placing them at the centre. Narrative therapies create a space for young people to reflect on and 'name their own worlds'. Combined with the use of photography and artwork to construct these personal narratives[355] this approach to research demonstrates Smith's notions of 'telling our own stories in our own ways' and Boal's ideas of 'declarations of identity'. My research relates to and expands on narrative therapy techniques to explore specific ways of sharing these perspectives with relevant audiences. I am also particularly interested in the idea of children and young people as social actors and the need for the wider society to realise their responsibilities in creating a safe space for young people, as will be explored in Chapter 8. My research builds on the 'unique marks' and multiple forms and shapes narrative therapies can take.

Reframing Young People within their Communities

Criminologists and sociologists have focused on the need to reveal the 'faces and histories' of young people trapped within penal institutions as a *counter* to media frenzied 'moral panics'. Muncie believes in the humanity of the public and the repeal of punitive approaches if these counter narratives were more widely known. These ideas resonate with TfD models and, in particular, Mda's research regarding 'bullet theories' and the evolution of democratic mediums for the re-education of audiences programmed to think in certain ways about groups.[356] Chapter 6 will focus on the experimentation of new methods to research and capture the *real worlds* of young people and the use of media to project these representations to a number organisational and communal audiences. Chapter 8 looks at the riots of 2011 as a cultural revolution and presents proposed new models through which to harness this rebellion and protest of young people in more effective ways. This theme of re-educating audiences and bringing to voice those silenced

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[355] As highlighted by hooks and Foucault.
[356] Mda. *When People Play People.* 1993. pp.2-21

in closed, total institutions so that young people can be reframed and *re-believed in* is paramount to my research.

Creative Practice in Social Care

Social work critical theorists express an explicit concern for the lack of opportunity for LAC to make sense of their lives and worlds and the specific barriers they face in communicating and/or developing meaningful relationships with others.[357] Chambers has been a leading advocate for the efficiencies for creative arts as a varied tool to counter-act the consequences of abuse and neglect and to help with resilience, self esteem and relationships between young people and their carers. Chambers, who was involved in my later work at Voice, see Chapter 7, cites the wide use of

> creative arts and play in terms of promoting health, self-expression and enhanced social integration[358]

in other settings and the comparable disregard for this work with looked after children. She reveals a culture in social care practice that considers arts work with looked after children as the professional preserve of play and drama therapists and asserts the need for this field to be opened up. Chambers calls for the training of social care staff in creative arts practice, for guidance in how to set up, manage and evaluate projects and for new partnerships between creative arts workers and social care professionals; all of which constructs a vital testimony to the fertility of this field in terms of developing applied arts practice within it.

Other theorists widely acknowledge the need to develop a creative, critical, reflexive, engaging and transformative pedagogy amongst social care professionals.[359] Their

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[357] Howe. 'Psychosocial work'. 2009. p.137; Petrie, P., Boddy, J., Cameron, C., Wigfall, V. and Simon, A., *Working with Children in Care: European perspectives*. Berkshire: McGraw Hill Open University Press, 2006; *Breakthrough Britain.* 2008; among others
[358] Chambers. 'Creative Arts and Play'. 2004.
[359] Roy, Young and May-Chahal. 'Looked after Children'. 2002. p.273; Taylor and White. *Practising Reflexivity.* 2000.

language demonstrates recognition of what *creative approaches* can do and the wish to better understand this type of work. Critical theorists and disillusioned, yet determined, practitioners call for a praxis rooted in a creative, non linear framework. Alastair Roy, Frances Young and Corinne May-Chanal define this as a 'critical practice framework' with particular emphasis on how new pedagogy, critical reflexivity and consciousness can enable residential care to become more reflexive rather than defensive. These theorists resonate with many of hook's ideas about collaborative classrooms by discussing multi-method approaches that recognise the diversities of children and facilitate their awareness of the 'ecology and social constructions of the residential space'.[360]

Chapter 5 realises this vision after reflection on many years of collaborative creative work within residential settings involving staff and young people. This aspect of the practice looks specifically at the role of the facilitator as a cultural worker and a critical teacher working in oppositional spaces, as explored by Giroux and Shannon.[361] My work in the children's homes directly represents the re-invigoration of relationships within this setting and possibilities for a space to be created within which front-line workers can be re-humanised to work in re-humanising ways. My research examines some of the structural barriers that restrict and prevent this from happening and the cultural exchanges that I attempted to realise between myself and others in creating sustainable changes.

'Social Pedagogies'

'Social Pedagogues' who construct Denmark's social care system represent the most significant example of radical, creative social care practice.[362] The list of attributes that characterises this European equivalent of the social worker's role illuminates the stark differences between a capitalist approach, aligned with the USA and European practice, which Britain used to concur with. Social pedagogues are highly qualified and each train to degree level over the course of 3-4 years. This training places an emphasis on

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[360] Roy, Young and May-Chahal. 'Looked after Children'. 2002. p.273
[361] Giroux and Shannon. 'Cultural Studies and Pedagogy'. 1997. p.6
[362] Petrie, Boddy, Cameron, Wigfall and Simon. *Working with Children*. 2006

developing a range of creative skills with which to engage young people and share with them new skills. The social pedagogy role is grounded in philosophies of dialogue, empathy, affection, therapeutic approaches and inventive, person-specific ways of working with young people. The role of the 'Social Pedagogy' is committed to equipping young people with relevant tools for recovery and providing spaces with which to develop critical consciousness and self-belief.

The comparisons between the outcomes for young people in care in Britain and Denmark are indicative of a culture that values people as well as reflecting the differences in how looked after children and being in care is nationally perceived. England's interest in adapting this practice to British social care systems provides an explicit framework from which to teach applied arts practice and translate this type of work in relation to an existing and established model of practice. My work in children homes, working on the estates and my proposals in Chapter 8 examine how practice cultures can be transferred and translated.

Family Group Conference (FGC) and Theatre for Development (TfD)

Family Group Conference (FGC) is another international model that has been eagerly anticipated within British Social Care systems and seen as a potential new way to address structural power imbalances and the treatment of young people and families as welfare recipients. As the 'search for practice' continues in social care frameworks applied theatre/arts models continue to present the possibilities and points of cohesion.[363] Nixon draws comparisons between New Zealand and British developments in their respective areas of child welfare/child protection. In New Zealand new policy was accompanied by practice development that sought to generate new models to support the rhetoric around empowerment, inclusion and partnership working. Nixon goes on to state how detrimental and inefficient safeguarding protocols are if all they do is monitor and further exacerbate the pressures already felt by struggling families, as has been the case in

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[363] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.90

Britain. Nixon was present at the Main-place pilot performance and declared the need for 'everyone in social care practice [to see] something like this'.

The FGC model is based on enabling those deemed in need of intervention being integral to decision-making processes about what this intervention should look like alongside the active involvement of wider community representatives and service providers. In this model agencies advertise and promote what they can offer with families deciding on what would best meet their needs and work best for them. This model is explored in relation to TfD practice within Chapter 6 and directly relates to TfD work that uses research, performance and discussion to achieve these shifts in power and control.[364] FGC represents a fundamental shift in power and structures and it is this that makes it revolutionary in social care contexts. There have been attempts to adopt FGC in British cultures as Nixon explores below. Ironically, my manager at Voice who fervently resisted the idea of a workshop to generate new agendas with young people has been instrumental in researching FGC as a technique in British social care systems. This tension between new liberatory models and the 'sticking points' of implementation are most extensively explored in relation to my research in Chapter 7 as Nixon helps to highlight:

> A major concern for FGC implementation groups across the UK has been to establish procedures that effectively make the link between FGCs and more established decision-making processes….but this appears beset with problems. Firstly, the transplantation of FGCs into current systems has tended to antagonise rather than complement existing processes and procedures. Working in specific procedural and administrative contexts, there is a tendency for social workers to see FGCs as another 'technique' to use 'on' families, rather than representing a set of principles and values that could frame their agencies' practice.[365]

These types of inclusive models are echoed by other theorists in relation to offender programmes that link young people with their communities and advocates for practice cultures to build on accumulated, grass-roots professional knowledge and experience as

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[364] As explored in Chapter 6 in the original Summer In Da City proposal.
[365] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.79

opposed to having to respond to top-down abstract theory. Other theorists explicitly appeal for 'whole family approaches' and the need to change the mindset of organisations and engage in a 'whole systems approach' to do so. FGC and these more widespread ideas are realised through TfD and applied theatre strategies and techniques, as I will examine in relation to specific examples of my practice.

Conclusion

Applied theatre practice endorses and demonstrates the 'false dichotomy between theory and practice' and, used with the social care context, has the capacity to expose the inherent contradictions of a liberatory rhetoric enveloped in inflexible systems as well as working in innovative ways to develop new praxis with young people and practitioners.[366] Etherton's work with NGOs throughout a variety of Children's Rights and TfD projects in Asia and Africa demonstrates specific shifts of emphasis away from 'expert culture' and the reinvigoration of the innate skills and capacities within practitioners. The personal and institutional reflexivity these projects encourage evidences how the work can be used to challenge prejudices within organisational frameworks, reframe young people as active participants in the realisation of children's rights and engage in a whole systems approach.

The *architecture* of TfD programmes have the capacity to work on a number of utilitarian levels. The work itself demonstrates participatory and collaborative methods in developing more fixed ideas as well as reframing research as a collective activity that can utilise a range of different tools, mediums and frames. Young people can be seen differently by those who consider them *passive receivers* of welfare and intervention, and less than fully human. Genuine partnerships between young people and adults can be exemplified through the work and founded in the experience. Doing this work realises/materialises core concepts such as partnership, ownership, empowerment, and research. Text, theory, policy and language are translated in relation to actual situations,

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[366] hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994. p.65

stories and needs rather than policy being a concept that bears no relation to practice, *driven* in a downwards direction.

Demonisations, globalising trends of development and homogenising and fathomed truths of othered groups can be reversed, revoked and made strange and unfamiliar through specific projections of the *real worlds* of participants. This work can illuminate the individual's perspective and complexities and, in doing so, can dismantle power techniques that rely on the silent suffering and surplus use of others. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 will examine my practice in a range of specific contexts that bring to life and continue to knit together the critical, theoretical framework outlined throughout Chapters 3 and 4. This work will assess the potential for applied arts practice as a 'pathology of hope' for looked after children, examine the potential for the work to improve relationships in the immediate settings of the home context, examine how this work can alter practice cultures within organisational frameworks, and its impact on wider relationships within community contexts between young people and their communities; as well as using these wide ranging ideas to formulate a number of ongoing proposals with regards to what should happen next, in light of my extensive research project.

Chapter 5

The Evolution of a Liberatory Pedagogy and Praxis

in Residential Children's Homes in Hampshire

I developed a range of specific techniques and approaches when exploring the use of applied theatre work within residential children's homes. These techniques and approaches aimed to counter context-specific sources of oppression and evolved as a practical realisation of what a *liberatory*, creative pedagogy and praxis could look like within these settings. As an adaptive methodology this work has explored how applied arts work can be used to create opportunities within different settings to critique the lived experiences of individuals and invent new ways of working within them from a person-centred perspective.

Over a number of years my work within the children's homes acted as research through practice. This research actively explored the cultures within the homes, the problems both young people and residential staff experience and the potential for applied theatre work to enhance these settings as an adaptive tool by responding to the changing dynamics and dimensions within them. It was through this work that my understandings of the role of the practitioner were formed. By working collaboratively with the young people and the staff I learnt, through reflexive practice, how to be of best use and how to read the various changes in atmospheres within the home.

This chapter examines how the practice was shaped and moulded to explore identity, voice and hope through the reframing of the residential children's home setting as a creative, collaborative space. By engaging both young people and the residential staff members this work revealed the potential to celebrate examples of good practice that takes place within these settings and helped to capture and critique these examples. By reframing the context and the relationships within it, the practice explored ways to liberate participants as individuals and engage them in ways that brought them together through play, experimentation and shared experiences. This chapter and Chapter 6 are

supported by visual appendices to bring to life these examples of practice and to demonstrate the ways in which this work could be further adopted within social care frameworks as a methodology. The following sections contextualise the potential for applied theatre/arts practice within this setting.

The Mantle of the Expert as a Counter to Powerlessness; Raising Self Esteem

I explored ways of treating young people as experts and as artists; both as the creators of meaning and as performers. 'Daniel* the King of Cross-stones' is one example where, by raising the status of the young person and making him the expert within his own world, he was able to critique his environment and reflect on what makes good and bad social work practice.[367] This use of role was particularly significant because Daniel had been the longest resident at Cross-stones which was difficult for him because he had not been found a foster placement. This meant he had watched other young people move on whilst he stayed behind. By making him the 'King of Cross-stones' I tried to celebrate his knowledge and *expertise* of the setting. In a filmed interview I asked Daniel what new rules and ideas he would be implementing within the home now that he had been crowned 'King'. I adopted this same idea when working with different groups for the website consultation that toured a number of different children's homes. By interviewing them in role as the 'head of social services' they too were consulted as the experts in their own environments and experiences. This reflects Heathcote's 'mantle of the expert' and symbolises how research within these contexts sought to ensure the young people were treated as informers of these settings rather than being undermined by the professionals' viewpoint. By countering and reframing current feelings of inferiority, exercises like this one aimed to raise the self-esteem and feelings of self-worth through these experiences.[368]

In another activity with Cross-stones we transformed different areas of the home into an exhibition space where each of the young people were interviewed as *artists* on their

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[367] Bundy. 'The Performance of Trauma'. 2009. p.238
[368] See DVD.5, clip 1 for 'The King of Cross-stones' video extract

'individual pieces of art'. These pieces of art were made up of three objects of importance to them, which they chose. Each young person could also choose to be assisted by a member of staff to present their objects in interesting ways with fabric and different exhibition spaces and stands. The young people were then interviewed about their 'pieces of art' on camera as artists talking about their pieces. This task gave the young people the opportunity to represent themselves in their own ways. Some of the young people chose to present pictures of their family and gifts that had been given to them, whereas others focused more on their hobbies and used a football or a football boot to do this. The *framing* of this exercise meant the young people could make independent decisions about what they wanted to share and how they wanted to represent themselves. The contract which established them as artists and me as the researcher of their art meant they were the curators of their own realities and *who* they were. These types of activities enabled the young people to create representations of their worlds through objects that meant something to them. The context of the setting was transformed into an exhibition space with the young people cast as the artists and experts within it. This exercise was an extension on the 'likes and dislikes' activity as well as transforming the space and making this exercise more practical.[369] O'Toole highlights these relationships between the 'frame' and the setting as a methodology:

> In one very important sense, **fictional context** is derivative from **real context**. It is a particular *framing* of aspects of the real, for purposes which relate very directly to the real, and the real network is never fully or deeply suspended…[370]

Creative Spaces

This theme of transforming spaces played a key role throughout my practice. With the use of props, material and costume we created different worlds and atmospheres within their existing ones. We experimented with different frameworks to liberate and explore particular themes. In the example of the website consultation this was used to create an exhibition of ideas as a way of consulting the young people. Casting the young people as

[369] O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* 1992. p.50
[370] *Ibid*. pp.51-52

'art-critics' and experts I invited them to 'vote' on the different sketches presented to them as an exhibition. These sketches outlined different ideas from the commissioner, helping to open up what had initially been presented to me as a list of *closed questions* requiring a yes or no answer into something that could be critiqued, reviewed and discussed by the young people. These exhibitions were set up within the different children's homes as a way of trying to alter the aesthetics of the *real* context as well as creating a *frame* through which the 'current equilibrium of relations of force' could be modified. By entering into these contexts and changing the direction of power, even if just for a short while, I hoped to demonstrate the importance of working in this way as well as consistently exploring what worked and what didn't when engaging groups. [371]

In other examples we made entire sets within which we created stories and scenarios. These ranged from visits to space in 'space-ships' to other, more complicated story lines. An example of this was used to raise the status of a new member of the home and engage the whole house in a story that transformed space, place, context and the roles and representations of the participants; an example of which is discussed below.

Using the Camera as a Frame: Keith the world famous basketball player

We spent hours one evening at Cross-stones filming a semi-improvised piece that built on a particular interest of a new young person who had come to live in the home. Keith was new to the home and experiencing difficulties settling in to this new environment. When asking him about his interests he told me that he liked playing basketball. By drawing in the other young people and staff members we created a mock basketball championship where the title of 'world champion basketball player' was being defended. Simon, a member of staff, acted as the opposition whilst the other staff members and young people swapped between the roles of the crowd, managers, reporters, score-keepers, basketball officials and deranged fans. I filmed and facilitated the development of the story by acting as the commentator behind the camera. This allowed me to alter the focus between each group member and facilitate the development of the story by acting as the narrator

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[371] Foucault. *Society Must be Defended*. p.171

and stating what was happening and seeing it being played out and/or capturing the story as it unfolded. This mock film helped to raise Keith's status amongst the group and demonstrate his skills and interests as well as making him the champion. Simon acted brilliantly as the opposition who lost his title as world champion. This prompted a whole other storyline through which Joel, another young person, acted as Simon's manager and had to *look-after* him as the press demanded a statement about his downfall. This theme of reversing and exchanging the role of the cared-for and the carers / those *in-charge* recurred through the work as a context-specific technique of power sharing.

These full group workshops brought the whole home together in a fantasy world where everyone was someone different and the home became a stage through which they could all interact with one another and play out different characters. Through basic props and costumes we transformed different spaces within the home into dressing rooms, press-release conference spaces and the garden as the basketball pitch. These types of techniques revealed ways of entering into the worlds of young people and creating new worlds within them. Through fictional frameworks we were able to celebrate the skills of young people, alter power imbalances and collaboratively participate in *shared experiences* within which everyone could have a shared ownership. As the facilitator, these types of activities demanded an awareness of the dynamics and a two-way exchange of ideas to enable the story to develop. Relationships of trust and mutual respect were paramount to enabling the 'contract' between myself and the participants to be accepted and played within. [372]

Creating Counter Narratives; Authorship, Authority and Self-determination

As a counter to the homogeneous treatment of LAC I explored different techniques to help young people develop a critical awareness of self and engage in processes of self-determination. As with Way's interest in equipping young people with an awareness of instinct, this work has aimed to treat participants as individuals and encourage young

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[372] As discussed in Chapter 3 regarding O'Connor's work and the creation of contracts and frames with young people; O'Toole. *The Process of Drama*. 1992. p.16

people to consider their likes, dislikes, abilities and points of view. This reflects the notion that empowerment is a process of developing a better understanding of oneself, one's individual circumstances and place in the world and that this is a spiral process. A key aim of the work has been to celebrate diversity and difference and to empower young people to think independently of the systems and circumstances that may oppress, silence and group them into negative and often crippling categories. As Way helps to underline:

> opportunity for actually doing the arts is sometimes the wisest way of developing individuality'.[373]

Mini-Mes

The technique of making 'Mini-mes' became an efficient and well-used way to do this. This technique was originally invented within Main-place. Using plasticine we played with different shapes and colours to create abstract representations of *who* we are and *why*. Different colours and forms could represent different aspects of our identity; thus showing declarations of identity through shapes and colour instead of this being something dictated to them by adult professionals and scientific forms. The concept of 'mini-mes' was used throughout other work in different settings as a way of representing self as well as exploring other.[374] Within commissioned pieces of work 'mini-mes' were used to explore decision making processes, notions of care and care provision by asking participants to consider the needs of their mini-mes. This pedagogical strategy and approach has taken on different forms and represents one of many techniques that evolved from work within the children's home that continued to be adapted in different ways in other settings. As a technique that used plasticine to *mould* an identity it also encapsulated many ideas and prompted important discussions about development and the ways in which we are being 'shaped' and moulded by our experiences and influences, thus helping to facilitate a deeper sense of reflexivity and self awareness in all age groups.

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[373] Way. *Development through Drama.* 1967. p.3
[374] See DVD.5, clip 2 for a Montague of the many mini-mes and their uses throughout the research.

As with activities that enabled participants to research themselves (mini-mes) self-determine who they were (individual pieces of art) and present these declarations of identity in ways that made sense to them, I tried to find lots of different ways to frame them as the decision-makers and feel in control (art critics). As a Christmas time activity in Cross-stones I prepared a special full group Christmas workshop where each of the young people became 'Santa's little helpers' and were given different missions to help them complete stockings for fictional children. This represents another way of them becoming the carers rather than the cared-for.

Story-telling and Blagg

As with enabling young people to have ownership over processes of creating work, I tried to cast them as the decision-makers in as many ways as possible.[375] The use of 'goblins' as a follow-up activity for one of the children's homes involved in the website consultation tour, aimed to treat young people as the story-tellers of their own fictional characters. Using a dice with questions on each side, the young people were prompted to create a character for each of the little goblins (trolls) they had been given. This proved to be an effective way of helping young people to feel in control of shaping the identity and development of a fictional 'other'. I later received story books the young people had created about their goblins and the different relationships between them.[376] As Bettelheim explains:

> The child needs ideas on how to bring his inner house into order and on that basis be able to create order in his life…The child finds this kind of meaning through fairy tales.[377]

Bundy also reflects on the importance of power and control through her work with adults who had been brought up in care homes and the ways in which story-telling can facilitate empowering processes and act as tools for liberation:

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[375] See DVD 5, clip 3 for example of this activity.
[376] See appendix 4 for samples of these storybooks.
[377] Bettelheim. *The Uses of Enchantment.* 1976. p.5

Although the participants have not used the term "power and control", my observation is that in both of the events described, the storyteller experienced elevated status and a sense of power and control in the telling and creation process. This sense of power and control over their own lives has not always been available to them….Firstly, the tellers own their stories and the way they choose to present them in this context. Again, and in particular for this participant group, "having ownership" over their own narratives had been absent in the past. Some had been denied knowledge about who they or their parents and siblings were.[378]

Life-story work

Life story work helped young people to create a sense of identity and personal history within a context that objectifies young people through clinical forms of record keeping. These techniques sought to find ways for young people to communicate a counter narrative and better develop a sense of self within systems that do not allow for individuality. Within Main-place we worked together to each create a 'memory box' of photos, letters and things that helped the young people to create a sense of history and identity. These were something that the young people could personally add to and share with others if they wished to. As a *counter* to the *hi*s-stories created by reports written *about* them, the memory boxes helped the young people to *tell their own stories in their own ways*. As with Smith's ideas about reclaiming 'authorship and authority', life-story work *and* techniques like the mini-mes acted as a way for young people to regain control and influence over their definitions of self.[379] The use of art and visual aids became something that young people could manipulate and influence. These processes of *conscientisation* within groups actively tried to disrupt dominant *regimes* of truth that treat these young people as beings for others.[380]

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[378] Bundy. 'The Performance of Trauma'. 2009. p.238
[379] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.60
[380] See appendix 5 for an extract of a letter written by Katherine in relation to work that helps to explore your own world.

Individual Pieces

Julie's piece highlights the potential for this practice to *further* individual processes of conscientisation for the purposes of educating those who are related to the specific sources of oppression they identify. As with TfD models my work has focused on developing relationships between the community of participants within the immediate settings as well as outreaching to those who make up the specific frameworks of power and influence surrounding them. The work is designed to identify issues / barriers within settings and find ways to facilitate changes in attitudes towards these issues / problems / dominant practices. Julie* was new to Main-place and was very withdrawn. After I explained a bit about the type of work we had been developing at Main-place Julie asked if I could help her to create something that would explain to the rest of the home how she was feeling. After a brainstorming of ideas we wrote a poem together that was then turned into a short film piece. Watching Julie's piece helped both staff and young people to understand Julie's perspective and the pressures she was feeling to have to talk all the time. They were able to better respect her need for space and solitude and some of what she had experienced in the past.

> My name is Julie
> And sometimes you don't understand me
> Sometimes I try to speak and I can't find the words[381]
>
> I understand Julie more from watching that than I have done in the last 18 months of working with her.[382]

In this example the whole group within Main-place were the audience of Julie's piece, with the making of the film facilitating a process of self determination as well as functioning as a means for Julie to 'produce and distribute messages' to those relevant to her wellbeing and recovery.[383] Julie had ownership over the medium, message and the

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[381] Extract of Julie's poem/individual piece.
[382] Feedback from Ted (a member of staff at Main-place) after seeing Julie's piece.
[383] Mda. *When People Play People*. 1993. p.2

audience. This example demonstrates the potential for the practice to mediate between groups and develop relationships within the immediate settings, as well as reaching out to the wider contextual frameworks and broader representatives of oppression as a long-term use, as Mda helps to unpack:

> The process of conscientisation, therefore, involves the active participation of the people in transforming themselves by engaging in a dialogue through which they identify their problems, reflect on why the problems exist, and then take action to solve the problems.[384]

Relationship Building; Critiquing Contexts and Collaborative Research

Other techniques created opportunities for the young people and staff members to work together in ways that challenged normal cultures within the homes. These included full-group workshops, film making and 'creative challenges' set between staff and young people's groups. Joint pieces created by key workers and their 'key children' as well as exercises that prompted them to interview each other were also used. By engaging staff and young people through exercises where no *one* group or individual was in sole control, the roles and power imbalances inherent within these settings were realigned to create participatory, collaborative activities, two-way communication channels, and shared experiences. These activities allowed groups to work together, communicate and interact in ways that were not normally possible. As a *team* they were engaged in activities that helped them to use their skills and knowledge regardless of age or conventional statuses. This reflects Mead's observations of the place and purpose of Balinese children within communal activities.

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[384] *Ibid.* p.45

Creative, Collective Encounters

Within Main-place the young people set the staff the challenge of taking part in a dance workshop on the university campus. This evolved into the staff making a version of *Grease*, the film, which was later screened to the young people from the university campus as a surprise. Other examples of these shared experiences included a full-group dance workshop for the staff and young people from Cross-stones during which they were all taught a dance routine and different break-dancing moves by a tutor. These types of shared experiences helped staff and young people to step out of the frameworks that create cultures of divides and power imbalances between them. The whole group were able to have fun, with the young people able to see the staff as *people* as opposed to 'administrators' of power and control.[385]

As well as creating new opportunities outside of the normal conventions of the homes I tried to build on and champion existing 'good practices' within these settings. I learnt that within Cross-stones each young person can choose something to do with their key worker before bedtime as a one-to-one activity. I asked the group whether they would like to work on something together, as part of this time, to show back to the rest of the group. Each young person and their key worker produced different pieces in different styles that reflected their relationships with one another. These processes of *interfacing* within these settings helped to highlight how the work can be used to enhance and promote existing positive practice within social care and capture genuine examples of 'partnership working' *in-action*. In this example the work helped to champion 'the caring emotional elements of social work activity' and document what this can look like.[386] I was able to celebrate and capture examples of the good work that does happen in residential settings, as further explored below.

Leaving Videos / Critiquing Cultures within the Home

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[385] Foucault in Foucault, Dreyfus and Rabinow. *Michel Foucault.* 1986. p.112
[386] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.28

The making of 'leaving videos' symbolised another example of capturing, building on and enhancing the evolving cycles within these settings. Leaving videos became a significant part of my work within Cross-stones and Main-place. As members of staff moved on and young people were relocated, we began to create pieces to mark the association. Leaving videos and presentations soon became an integral part of the cultures within the homes. I was invited back to Cross-stones after we had finished working together to attend a presentation evening that had been coordinated entirely by the young people and the staff. The making of these films created an opportunity and a framework through which the young people and the staff were able to research, critique and reflect on life within the home and their relationships with one another. Within Louisa's leaving video the young people interviewed the staff members about what they would most miss about Louisa and asked them for tips they would give to Louisa for life after Cross-stones. These interview opportunities helped to counter the inherent power imbalances between staff and young people, with the young people asking the questions and owning the agenda; as well as creating a space within the normal routine of the home to develop a critical awareness of the home and the relationships within it. The making of Karen's leaving video within Main-place meant that everyone was engaged in a film-making project from the planning/story-boarding stages to the performing stages. One part of the film involved staff members and young people spelling out 'we will miss you Karen' letter by letter with their bodies on a large play mat as I filmed on a step-ladder from above.[387] These processes created contexts where statuses were equalled and both staff and young people were involved in a shared mission full of negotiations and team-working. The work therefore becomes a 'vehicle for community dialogue and decision-making'.[388]

Within Louisa's leaving video the young people acted as collaborative researchers of their own worlds by interviewing staff members on how they saw life within Cross-stones and what they will most miss about Louisa. This helped to involve the whole community within the home in a process of shared critical reflection and dialogue. Even

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[387] See DVD. 5, clip 4 for a snap shot of the making of this film.
[388] Mda. *When People Play People.* 1993. p.73

Louisa became part of the film-making process when she was interviewed in role as her own social worker talking about how 'Louisa' felt about the move. Louisa, as Louisa, also spoke about each member of the home and left a message for each of them via video. These techniques helped to enable the young people to become part of the evolving life-cycles from which they are normally disconnected and excluded by being treated as passive recipients of things that happen to and around them. The making of Karen's leaving video in Main-place created a similar opportunity for the whole community to make something together. For an entire evening everyone became an active participant in story-boarding and performing within a film that critiqued and celebrated aspects of their shared culture and environment and in doing so created opportunities for positive and proactive interaction and play.

> Critical drama and video processes can provide opportunities for people to explore existing representations of themselves and the culture that/we live in and engage in deconstructions of it. …In considering practices that counter such marginalisations, opportunities exist for forms of representations to be placed in the hands of those who are normally spoken about [the young people and front-line staff]… Within such a process representations can be created that allow those marginalised to speak rather than to be silenced, countering the 'culture of silence' that dominant truths create (Freire 1970).[389]

Forum Theatre: Redbrick House

Other uses of the work used fictional frameworks to explore less positive cultures and realities within the home, contrasting with the use of the work above. The making of the film 'Redbrick house' created opportunities for the young people to explore less positive perceptions of a 'fictional' children's home and the power-relations, roles and representations within it. As O'Toole explains:

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[389] Preston, S. *Theatre for Development in Context, Exploring the Possibilities and Contradictions of Visions of Theatre and Development within the Action of Community.* King Alfred's College: Unpublished thesis, 2000. p.122

In drama there must always be some congruence between real context and the fictional context…whether subversive or reinforcing of contextual values and attitudes[390]

Through this film the young people depicted bullying and feelings of neglect and disregard from the internal management. There was the added intricacy of the 'bullied' in *real* life playing the 'bully' within the film. This example looked particularly at critiquing the cultures and relationships within the care home and the counter perspective of what happens on the ground, day-to-day. In one scene the young people improvised a scenario where a young person tries to tell the manager of the home that they are being bullied. The young person playing the manager asks the question:

'what did you expect **me** to get out of you coming here today?'

and uses the expression:

'some people want the icing on the cake but you don't even get to the marzipan'

The young person playing the manager was the 'top-dog' in the *real* setting demonstrating here her own experience and knowledge of institutionalised bullying from management onto the young people.[391] This film explored the power relations between the young people within the home and used the film as a means for forum theatre where the young people devised, directed and performed within different parts of the film. It represented the potential for this work to *merge the gap* between rehearsal and performance/fiction and reality and the ways in which a fictional framework can create a safe place to explore real experiences. These uses reflect Boal's ideas about 'rehearsing the revolution' whilst bearing witness to Bundy's concerns that those growing up in these settings often do not have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences within them.[392] Boal states:

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[390] O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* pp.51-52
[391] See DVD 5, clip 5 for extract of this scene
[392] Bundy. 'The Performance of Trauma'. 2009. pp.233-240

Maybe theatre in itself is not revolutionary, but these theatrical forms are without a doubt a *rehearsal of revolution*. The truth of the matter is that the spectator-actor practices a real act even though he does it in a fictional manner…[393]

Critical Reflections

This work demonstrated the potential for applied theatre work to be used as art in residence to change the dynamics in the home settings and engage young people and staff through a range of creative experiences. Other pieces of practice were more subtle, but had equal significance, such as making cards and writing letters to young people who had been sent to LASCHs or STCs.[394] By marking particular cycles of residential life with card-making I sought to counter the cultures of fragmentation and common trends of not acknowledging past residents once they had moved on.[395] During other visits we just played games and I was reminded of the importance of play in its most simple form and the ways in which looked-after children are often denied opportunities that feature as a fundamental part of normal childhood and growing up.

This practice revealed the potential for this work to liberate both the young people and residential staff by creating fissures within which to *re-humanise* these groups and enable their innate skills, personalities and unique contributions to act as a driving force for development. The role and foci of Social Pedagogies was realised by reframing relationships within these closed institutions and providing creative spaces for young people and staff to interact in these ways.

My attempts to introduce this type of work as a specific methodology to wider social care frameworks were limited to small pieces of commissioned work and heavily overshadowed by resistance from Hampshire County Council to allow this work to

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[393] Boal. *Theatre of the Oppressed.* 1979. p.141
[394] LASCHs = Local Authority Secure Children's Homes.
[395] In one home young people were banned by the manager from visiting or making contact once they left even though they had grown up there.

become anything other than a series of one-off, promotional events.[396] On the basis of the positive response from managerial teams at the first Main-place event, I continued to try to demonstrate the significance of this work and the messages emerging from it in a bid to *translate* this practice in relation to the dominant rhetoric that framed these settings. I had been assured that the senior management wanted to take the work 'on tour' but was now met with a lack of genuine support in helping this to happen.

For a short time I was invited to work with the Care Action Team (CAT), a group established by Hampshire County Council to 'evidence' the participation of LAC and careleavers. This was my first experience of a user group whose heavily *managed* involvement reflects Hendricks' ideas of limp-wristed tokenism and hooks and Goffman's of definitions of native informers and pet-inmates. I watched as the leaders of the group were moulded into mini-politicians whilst other young people were bribed with pizza and vouchers to attend these meetings. The desire of the young people to change things was circumscribed by agendas, minutes, false acts of generosity and a lack of imagination on behalf of those who could not see these young people as 'beings for themselves' but rather as instruments to administer *their* dominant agendas. On one occasion a display I made with the young people was destroyed because it was taking up 'too much room' in the CAT meeting space. I would later learn that the manager of the group resented my work because he was supposed to be leading on the participation of LAC in residential care and our work within the homes was creating an unwelcome distraction from his efforts.

Chapter 7 will continue to examine the specific resistances I experienced when trying to move *upwards* and *outwards* from the children's homes into relevant frameworks and the ways in which these experiences helped to illuminate the specific contradictions inherent within these arenas as well as between applied arts and social care models. As I entered into different paid and funded capacities it became increasingly difficult to practice in

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[396] Where possible I tried to use ethnographic material and pieces of work produced by the young people to disseminate the practice to various professionals. I tried to demonstrate what *we* had been developing thus far and its significance in terms of their emerging 'buzz words' such as empowerment, consultation, participation and partnership working.

ways that reflected the framework we had developed within the residential children's homes. I was expected to work in ways that directly contradicted this ethos and I struggled with the ethics of these demands. I finally left Hampshire at a point when I had reached the bar of what I was able to do in this setting. I had arrived at the end of what had been an insightful yet disturbing journey. The methods and pedagogical models that were formulated through my practice within the homes continued to act as a foundation for my ongoing practice in other settings.

Chapter 6

The Adaptation and Expansion of Applied Theatre

on Inner City Estates

within the Context of a Housing Association

My experiences of working in London for a housing association revealed the potential for this work as a tool for intervention and development on a broader scale within related social care contexts. I will be forever grateful for my experiences working in this context and, in particular, to my line manager who believed in me and the practice. She created a culture of humility and hard work within our team and allowed me to work in ways that had been rejected and squashed in other frameworks. The young people and adults I worked with on the estates taught me about their realities, took hold of the practice and used it to represent their worlds. I met many beacons of hope struggling to make a difference on their own estates.

I was employed as a 'Community Development Officer' for a large housing association in London, with the brief to manage the community development on a number of estates. Work within housing associations revealed the same types of divides between service providers and service users / welfare recipients as well as illuminating how ingrained relationships of dependency and institutionalised disempowerment can be. As within the children's homes the dynamics on the estates were often fraught with tension, power-battles and resentment. The culture within the organisational frameworks of the housing association with regards to how those 'on the ground' were perceived echoed the same types of fragmentation and othering that characterised the care system frameworks. Methods of consultation and resident involvement in the development of services heavily relied on tokenistic activities and closed questions. The development of communities was perceived as something that could be *managed* through the establishment of Tenants Associations, as a user group like the CAT team, which were encouraged on all the estates, comprised of secretaries, treasurers and chair persons with the general idea that

they could help to develop activities on the estates by applying for funding and/or by mediating between the housing association and the wider estate community. These associations created internal hierarchies on the estates and *officialised* the community members' wish to make a difference. Corporate cultures of meetings, agendas and varying statuses meant development became an abstract concept caught up in a game of power and control. As with the restrictions placed on the residential worker and the social worker, the Community Development team were issued a minuscule annual budget and expected to manage the community development on approximately six large estates, each with the main expectation of their role revolving around overseeing tenants associations and the community centres on each site. The community development team had a low profile within the organisation and were often viewed as, and referred to as the 'fluffy people'. With our minuscule budget we were expected to provide the odd fun day and evidence resident involvement via questionnaires and/or arranging meetings during which residents were paid to attend. Of the meetings that took place within the organisation I witnessed crude techniques to manipulate residents into agreeing with proposals presented by higher management. As with the participation agenda set by the Children's Act 1989 and other policies in the care system, the housing association was framed by 'resident involvement' rhetoric that was equally distorted and curtailed by power techniques.

In the time I worked there the housing association grew from a small, independent group into a much larger consortium. With this growth came very apparent culture shifts from where the organisation was based to the new regimes introduced as a result, such as 'clear desk policies' and corporate conduct. These types of growths reflect the ever expanding trends of big businesses amalgamating into super powers.

The Case Study Examples

The following three examples from my work in this setting over a two year period will examine the ways in which the liberatory pedagogy and praxis established primarily within the children's homes was adapted to work on inner city estates and within the

organisational framework of the housing association. These examples represent a broadening out of scale from the core groups of LAC to a larger number of focus groups of young people and adult participants. These examples highlight the dominant cultures of research, development and service provision infiltrated through the housing association onto the estates and the impacts of these cultures on those at the receiving end of these interventions.

The 'Fairway estate open day' examines the use of my practice to engage community groups through collaborative, creative encounters and the reframing of young people as active participants in their communities. This work echoed TfD models and Jellicoe's community based work as well as reflecting notions of research and representation that celebrate multi-cultural diversities. The 'Hayward Easter scheme' examines how my practice sought to reframe the use of an on-site community centre as a creative space from which young people on the estate could better represent their worlds, skills and abilities. This project looks at how provision and research can be reframed to enable young people to own these processes to reflect their real rather than perceived needs. This project explored the potential to change cultures within the organisation towards development and provision so that this is more than managing and containing groups. 'Summer in Da City' demonstrates the use of a large scale TfD model across a number of estates to research the real worlds of young people living on the margins as well as critiquing the use of applied theatre as a tool for development through skills-based workshops. This project examined new ways of uniting fragmented groups by bringing to voice the counter narratives of young people silenced by dominant theory and disrupted relationships within organisational structures. This project developed new techniques in the research and representation of young people's world views and narratives of hope through collaborative research processes and context-specific modes of representation through different media. These examples also represent a broadening out of scale from core groups of concentrated numbers within the residential care home setting to vast numbers of adult and young people participants across different estates.

Fairway Estate's Open day: Localising the struggle

One of my first tasks was to help the tenants association on Fairway estate to complete a research project that had been externally funded to research the wider community's views about the community centre in an attempt to increase the attendance within it. I was soon to discover that Fairway estate had a deeply entrenched history of divides within the community that were somewhat emulated through the ongoing power battles over the *ownership* of the on-site community centre. I began to realise that the tenants association also represented the key players in the estate's feud, some of whom refused to speak to one another. I was instructed by the housing association to assist them in concluding the project and summarising the findings of the research. This research had involved a door-to-door survey asking the community what they would like to see happen in the community centre and whether they were even aware that it was there. The results 'proved' that people were largely disinterested in the community centre.

I began attending tenants association meetings where the stand-offs between the members regularly resulted in long silences and refusals to work together. The young people from the youth club were blamed for anti-social behaviour throughout the estate whilst the women who ran the crèche were apparently responsible for all sorts of acts of sabotage. I found myself, much like at times working within the children's homes, stuck in the middle of power battles and acts of deviation to *win* me over. To them the ownership and influence over the community centre represented power and control with both sides fighting for a bigger slice of the pie; As Freire reminds us:

> It is rare a peasant who, once promoted to overseer, does not become more of a tyrant towards his former comrades than the owner himself. This is because the context of the peasant's situation remains unchanged.[397]

The community centre, as with the battles within the children's homes, represented a beacon of power for which the tenants association fought between themselves and

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[397] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p.28

competed with one another. They bullied each other and told tales about the bad behaviour of the other. By making them employees, the housing association was able to maintain a degree of control and ownership over them. By making them officials and the decision-makers for the wider community they became the 'sub-oppressors'.[398] The association criticised the lack of involvement and support from the wider community and, in doing so, alienated themselves from them further. By introducing corporate and clinical practices of meetings, agendas, minutes, the tenants association had become disconnected from the real aim and instead played power games between themselves. They were good people who genuinely cared about the young people they worked with, and making their estate a better place. By asking them to become another tier of the power structures within the organisation they internalised these imbalances and fought for more control than the other. Carmen distinguishes these false acts of generosity as 'participulation'.[399] The young people in the CAT group and the tenants association remained easily controlled and monitored by power bodies through the intrinsic rules and cultures that render these types of groups necessary. This mirroring of oppressive trends and cultures was ever present in the roles and representations played out by the tenants association. 'In truth the boss was inside them'.[400] This extract from Prentki helps to frame my role as the facilitator working within this particular site of practice:

> In those nations or sections of nations where people have been victimised…into thinking that their culture is second-rate or worthless, it is naïve to suppose that a move to self-empowerment and autonomy can always be made without the external involvement of a decolonising agent such as the facilitator of an applied theatre process. The people may have the will to decolonise but the generations of oppression have robbed them of the means.[401]

The research project on the estate had revealed that no one was interested in the community centre and therefore it was deemed that there was little point in trying to

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[398]*Ibid*. p.27

[399] A theme discussed by: Carmen, R. *Autonomous Development: Humanizing the Landscape – an Excursion into Radical Thinking and Practice*. London: Zed Books, 1996.

[400] Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 1996. p.46

[401] Prentki. 'Introduction to Intervention'. 2009. p.182

involve anyone else. I was told no one ever attends the tenants association meetings and everything had already been tried in terms of estate events and parties but that these were always unattended and an embarrassment to the effort that went into organising them. I proposed that we find an interesting way of presenting back the results of the research project by compiling this statistical data into a visual form and opening the doors of the community centre to the wider community. I was told this was pointless.

The Open Day: Collective, Creative Encounters

Fairway estate Open Day acted as a catalyst to involve the whole community in a positive event. It aimed to counter the negative, despondent and divided atmosphere on the estate by bringing the community together in a celebratory, inclusive way. Through a 'creative, collective encounter' it sought to raise the status of those who believed they were alone in caring or working for the development of the community.[402] I wanted to help celebrate the diversity of those living on the estate and promote the range of activities that ran from the community centre. As well as a crèche and a youth club there was a Saturday School and English language classes for adults held there. I wanted to create a sense of *equal* ownership over the centre by organising something that enabled each group to feel proud of their individual and specific contributions to a shared product. I hoped that this would help to mirror a sense of equal ownership over the centre itself.

I was concerned that the young people were seen as 'bad', on the estate, by their immediate community and within the wider contextual frameworks of the housing association that issued ASBOs (anti-social behavioural orders) and paid for repairs caused by vandalism. These negative perceptions seemed to compound the young people's own perceptions of self as they huddled in corners on the estate looking fierce / lost. I approached the youth club and asked for their help researching the different activities that ran from the community centre and representing these activities through an exhibition. The young people became co-researchers and organisers of the event. Part of

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[402] Thornton, S. 'The Complexity and Challenge of Participation' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. 2009. p.163

these preparations involved the challenge of getting as many members of the community as possible to make a 'mini-me' out of clay. As 'small human beings' the young people helped the wider estate to create an abstract army of smaller representations of themselves; helping them to integrate within the community and to have a means through which to do so.[403] We would later write to the community, as their mini-mes, inviting them to attend the open day.[404]

We began making a documentary about all the different groups and activities that ran from the centre. These groups were interviewed and assisted by the youth club to create an exhibition piece that represented what they did and how people could get involved in their activity. This included the young people interviewing a local M.P who ran surgeries from the community centre. These collaborative research processes helped the young people to interact with the wider community in positive ways. As with Mead's ideas they became central to the organisation of the event and thus, active participants in their community. By giving them these roles of responsibility the 'fear of the delinquent child' was challenged as they were reframed as a core aspect of the work and as an integral part of the community's development.[405] As Prentki helps to highlight:

> the interventions of applied theatre practitioners appear as very small beer, yet they constitute an important contribution to the antidote of the counter-culture. As a participatory, collective form of artistic and social engagement, theatre resists the isolating, passive modes of the dominant forms[406]

The tenants association were caught up in a whirlwind of preparations. They became refocused on best presenting their activities and working towards a shared goal of making everyone look good. Preparations for the open day created an opportunity to harness their innate skills and specific interests rather than treating them as officials. The whole community became involved in representing themselves and their diversities as opposed

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[403] Small human beings is a theme explored by Mead. 'Children and Ritual in Bali'. 1963. pp.40–44;
[404] The idea for an exhibition of mini-mes, as a development of this particular method, was inspired by Gormley's 'Field for the British Isles' as cited in *The Independent*, 26 November, 2004. p.13
[405] As discussed in chapter 4 and by Dekker. *The Will to Change the Child.* 2001. p.115
[406] Prentki. 'Introduction to Intervention'. 2009. p.182

to being in competition with one another. Much like the shifts that occurred when preparing the individual pieces within Main-place for the pilot project, they began working together and assisting each other because they all had an investment in a shared, final product, the open-day.

I discovered that the community centre had been built by residents and used old photographs archived by the housing association to show this history. The theme of 'past, present and future' was used to underpin the open day, showing the origins of the community centre, the community centre 'today' and, through different research activities, consulting the wider community on what they would like to see happen in its *future*. This theme also hoped to move the tenants association away from a place of difficulty by focusing on positive change. The consultation/research activities included 'Big Brother diary rooms', a post-box for feedback and new ideas, as well as taster sessions from different providers. These activities helped to reframe research as a participatory process whereby everyone could contribute to the creation of shared meaning.

The event day was launched with a parade around the estate involving fire engines, an African drumming group and everyone who had been involved 'calling out' to those in the tower blocks to come and join us. In the doorway as you entered in the community centre we constructed a huge display with instant Polaroid pictures to show the "faces of Fairway" which were taken by the young people as different people arrived. In the first corridor the results from the research in the form of over-sized pie charts and graphs were presented back. The young people were given a platform from which to demonstrate their talents and skills and performed dance and rap pieces to a packed, multi-cultural and intergenerational audience. The community centre and the atmosphere within it were changed into a creative, progressive and positive space. Amidst all of this the women began to speak, their feuds forgotten in the mayhem of trying to organise the event.

Fairway Estate Conclusion

Fairway estate Open Day helped to create a positive focus for the tenants association by 'localising the struggle' and building on their specific skills and passions.[407] It created something real and culturally appropriate within the community by enabling the tenants association to use their innate skills and resources to build on their work rather than relying on enforced corporate practices and mechanisms *owned* by the housing association to research and develop the community. The project enabled the young people on the estate to be core to the development of the event and thus, the community. It experimented with the use of arts-based practice to engage people, represent the cultural realities of groups and develop relationships within the community. It empowered the community beyond the centralised control of the organisation by using 'manpower and resources from within the community'.

> Participation therefore becomes a central element of liberation…Kidd and Byram (1981) refer to theatre-for-development as both method and goal. As a method it mediates development messages; as a goal, its very creation involves the community members in a process that is central to active participation in development.[408]

As my first project with the housing association I was able to explore how the TfD / community drama model could be used in this context. By applying the same core concepts from previous work, I tried to create something that would involve the *whole* community and required cohesion to make it happen. As the facilitator-researcher I tried to create a context whereby the tenants association could see beyond their internalised frustrations and believe again. This project echoed Jellicoe's work in the 1980s and the 'enormous amounts of small contacts [that] are made'.[409] Fairway helped me to realise the ways in which a large-scale community event can work in these ways and for the sense of ownership to be maintained by creating 'pockets' within its structure for people to represent themselves and their ideas.[410]

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[407] Theme discussed by Mills, S. *Michel Foucault.* London and New York: Routledge, 2003. p.38
[408] Mda. *When People Play People.* 1993. pp.37-39
[409] Anne Jellicoe cited in Kershaw. *The Politics of Performance.* 1992. p.176
[410] See appendix 6 for newspaper cutting about the open day.

Hayward Easter Scheme: Developing Existing Cultures of Provision

> If development activities are initiated and conceived by the people they are more likely to correspond to their needs and desires.[411]

The Hayward Easter scheme helped to demonstrate the importance highlighted above of culturally appropriate methods of intervention and development to the internal frameworks within the housing association, thus beginning to bridge the gap between the 'providers' and the 'receivers'. This ten day scheme was able to show how person-centred and creative methodologies can engage the young people in activities that are relevant to them and can keep them off the street.

I was asked to help manage and coordinate the scheme using £500 of funding that the Hayward tenants' association had as an under-spend for youth provision. Events and schemes that had run from their community centre had always been poorly attended, with a high level of anti-social behaviour on the estate which escalated over the school holidays. I visited the estate during an organised funday and witnessed young people being fed low-budget sugary food and made to sit through a magician act which was dated and dull. I asked the young people what their interests were and what they might like to spend the Easter holiday doing. They listed riding their bikes, art, drama, graffiti and football. With the help of the tenant's association I began to design a scheme that aimed to build on their interests to transform the disused community centre into a 'creative space' where the young people could produce work which could then be shown back to the wider community and the housing association.

One of the biggest challenges was convincing senior management that commissioning a graffiti workshop would be a good idea. The fear was that this would be actively encouraging vandalism and 'tagging' which was in direct conflict with the priorities of the housing association. By bringing in another youth provider whose remit was to work specifically with young offenders and providing them with space to host their own

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[411] Mda. *When People Play People.* 1993. p.37

graffiti workshop, I was allowed, rather hesitantly, to schedule the graffiti workshop into the programme. This meant that this workshop would mix young people living on Hayward and those attending the workshop as part of the young offender's scheme.

The 'Hayward Easter scheme' ran for ten days in total and included bike repairing workshops, film making, drama, sculpture as well as a trip off-site. During the graffiti workshop I briefed the young people on the significance of being allowed to do graffiti and the housing association's reservations about it. I encouraged the group to think of themselves as artists and to use this as an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and the importance of graffiti to them. At the end of the scheme we invited the whole community and staff members of the housing association to view an exhibition of the young people's work. We created huge backdrops on which we displayed pictures of what had taken place day-to-day. A film the young people had made was screened along with a documentary of the whole scheme in action. I had filmed the young people's participation in activities and their critiques of these experiences. This included the interviews from the young 'critiquing' graffiti as an art form. We also created a 'graffiti-garden'.

The Hayward Easter scheme evoked a fundamental shift in attitude towards 'skills-based' activities as an appropriate and relevant part of *community development* on the estates. By critiquing the scheme through video and photography staff members from the housing association were able to see 'participation' in the pure sense of young people doing and being active participants in the creation of pieces of work and experiences rather than being treated as *passive recipients* of provision. The graffiti garden showed the skills of the young people as artists and helped the audience to *enter into their worlds* through these images and by better understanding the culture of graffiti through their eyes. The relationship between the young people and the on-site caretaker was altered after he became an integral part of helping the scheme to operate. The young people forged a new found respect for someone whom they had previously viewed as an authoritarian figure.

Hayward helped to create a space for the housing association to better understand what is relevant and important within the young people's worlds. The young people who visited

the estate from outside spoke about how these types of workshops can bring them together and help issues of rivalry that have become such a prolific and devastating trend between the young people in inner city areas. By allowing them to participate in activities they were interested in and giving them ownership over the space and context, the young people were able to *be* together in a positive and safe place.[412] As Mead helps to encapsulate:

> Thus…the ritual world of art and theater…is not a world of fantasy, an endless recurrent daydream, or a new set of daydreams woven from the desperations of the gifted of each generation. It is rather a real world of skill and application-[413]

Summer In Da City (SIDC); Re-framing Young People

The Hayward Easter scheme provided the opportunity to develop this work further. There was a shift in attitude from senior management as to what community development might mean and a new interest in how this work could be approached. Historically, the community development team had given small sums of money to different tenants associations to provide activities on their own estates over the summer. This had sometimes created problems due to the politics on many of the estates that resulted in certain young people being excluded because of family feuds between groups. I was asked by the team manager how we could create a large-scale summer programme running across a number of the estates, building the type of practice I had been developing so far.

My initial proposal for SIDC reflected a traditional TfD model that would first engage and consult the young people on each of the estates and work towards creating an event to showcase the young people's views and ideas. I proposed that a key element of the programme should involve the *'creative consultation'* of the young people through collaborative, practical research activities. This strand of the programme would be called 'Round Our Way' and would focus on enabling the young people to critique their worlds

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[412] See DVD.6, clip 1&2 for short interviews about the scheme and its significance.
[413] Mead. 'Children and Ritual in Bali'. 1963. p.48

and inform relevant audiences of things that could be improved in their areas. All too often I was told that there was only so much that the Housing Association was responsible for in terms of the provision they could offer. As with the central TfD model I wanted to give young people a chance to define their own needs and determine relevant audiences to hear their messages. I wanted to create a context where other services, such as the council, youth providers, the police, funding bodies could meet and speak with the young people on each of the estates and bridge the gap between their needs and the responsibilities of those who should be working with these groups. I proposed the whole scheme should conclude with a show-back event. As part of this event each estate would have their own exhibition area within which they could represent their realities and cultural identities. I wanted to help them to be active participants in their own development. As with the TfD model, these exhibitions could target and inform relevant services and enable this audience to *enter into their worlds* and find solutions to the issues on the estates in partnership with them. This model encompassed the key techniques and approaches I had developed within Hampshire in terms of raising the status of young people, developing culturally appropriate activities with them and helping them to identify their specific sources of oppression and *real* rather than *perceived* needs. By uniting different groups of young people through a positive, equally owned event I hoped that they would be able to come together, as they had done through the Hayward workshops.

Processes of Negotiation

My proposal for a mixed estate celebration and show-back event was refused by the senior management, who feared that it would create havoc in terms of inter estate rivalry and violence. I protested that a film should be made to document the scheme so that we could capture the views of the young people and the workshops in action. I saw this as an alternative way of bringing all the estates together in film form so that relevant audiences could be educated about their needs and they could see the other young people on film to break down the divisions between them. The film was deemed pointless by the senior manager because 'no one ever watches those'. I believe the event as something that could

bridge the gap between relevant providers may have been seen as potentially detrimental to the housing association because it could highlight the short-falls on each of the estates. I realised that although there had been a shift towards *development* as being something young people could actively participate in through skills-based workshops, the housing association was not yet ready to hand over all the ownership by allowing the young people to define what they needed in terms of long-term solutions and assistance. This echoes Smith's theories about

> the young person's perspective com[ing] into play, but the power to define the 'problem' and the form of intervention remain[ing] elsewhere'.[414]

'Where you live' Research Project

I was met somewhere in the middle by being allowed to create a *booklet* with the help of the internal communications departments that would present evidence of the scheme in action and give the young people the chance to share their ideas about their areas, in written form. I could not help but feel disappointed and subjugated in producing something that could be neatly filed away rather than having an emotive impact.

I designed a research programme that used arts-based, collaborative research techniques to provide the young people with as many malleable tools as possible to explore: *What is good about your area? What is bad about your area? What are your ideas as to how it could be better? What do you think of the workshops in SIDC?* I toured around the different sites whilst the activities ran across the estates to document the work in action and consult the young people and communities involved. I used photo-voice and filmed interviews to collect as much ethnographic material that could be used within the booklet, as possible. The 'Where you Live' research element of the SIDC programme found ways for the young people to critique their experiences of the scheme and comment on their worlds through filmed interviews, photography, plasticine models and art-work. Photo-voice, as cited by Boal, was used to help the young people capture images, through

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[414] Smith. *Social Work with Young People.* 2008. pp.45-46

photographs, of the 'good and bad' aspects of their worlds along with their suggestions of how things could be improved. [415] Some of the younger children chose to make plasticine models of things they would like to see improved in their areas such as the playground facilities. Other techniques used photography to create a series of pictures like a story-board of what the estate was like, in some cases showing bullying. Other young people took photos of the pollution on their estate or needles in the hallways of the blocks. As Boal states:

> The use of photography may help also to discover valid symbols for the whole community or social group. [416]

This research programme ran alongside a cross-estate programme that sent dance tutors, film-makers, football coaches, basketball coaches, circus-skills facilitators, drummers and artists to eight of the sites providing skills-based workshops in the *heart* of the estates. A football programme worked with three of the estates and brought these young people together through a football competition. This event helped to unite the young people through a collective encounter and prove the potential for events like this to bring groups together. These three estates had a history of inter-estate rivalry. One young person reflected on the significance of this experience:

> 'I think we should do more uniting the estates events more often…it stops rivalry because now that we've come together and we don't do that very often…and we will become friends rather than enemies and we will see each other as one big society…it will stop fights as well because if we get to know each other then we will understand each other.. ..it was fun and interesting and there were no fights, we were a community, I reckon we didn't even have to try to get on we just did…I like the way even though we won they still cheered for us.' [417]

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[415] Boal. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. 1979. p.124
[416] *Ibid.*
[417] See DVD.6, clip 3 for footage of this interview.

The Exhibition and Films

We concluded SIDC with an in-house, internal exhibition that invited all the teams from within the association as the audience. We transformed a formal meeting room into a colourful exhibition area full of pictures and pieces of art work created by the young people. Representatives from various departments came to visit and spent time looking at the pictures of those whose faces they rarely saw.

Against the instruction of the senior management I made two films, both of which were screened at the internal exhibition. The first film presented a fast moving montage of all the workshops involved in Summer In Da City and the young people participating in them. In between footage of them 'doing' and participating I interspersed interviews from the young people critiquing the impact of the workshops on their estates and what life was like for them living on each of the estates. The film focused on the young people's skills as artists and performers as well as their critiques of their worlds and realities. This exhibition helped to further bridge the gap between the service providers in the office and the young people on the ground. Working within the restrictions placed on the work the film, booklet and the exhibition gave the young people an opportunity to *tell their own truths* and to counter dominant perceptions of them as vandals, delinquents and the other. Many of the departments dealt with issuing ASBOs, evictions and dealing with repairs and rent arrears. These media helped to show 'the problems of young people as opposed to young people as the problems'.[418] Through these media and frames the young people were able to educate audiences on their realities in their physical absence from the event.

The second film interwove a mass of footage and photography I had captured throughout my time working with the community development team to better educate the housing association whilst we had them as a captive audience. This film used snap-shots from different projects and events to show the diversity of the community development team's work and the different people they work with. Through this film I sought to raise the

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[418] Smith. *Social Work with Young People.* 2008. p.38

profile of the team within the frameworks of the housing association, to 'show the artistry of social work' from a front-line perspective and to champion aspects of good practice. [419]

After taking some time off work I returned to the office amazed to see the pictures used in the exhibition all over the walls of the large, open plan office. The Managing Director had only weeks prior sent an email outlining a new 'clear desk policy' in the office criticising people who used their work space as a *shrine* to their families and demanding that the office had a more corporate and professional feel. The community development team had independently chosen to use our photographs as tools to continue to bridge the gap between the office and those on the ground. We were never told to take the pictures down and were regularly visited by different teams and external inspectors who would ask questions about the pictures and where they had been taken. This trend of bringing the forgotten faces of the young people on the estates into the physical space of the organisation was powerful and symbolic of the shifts in culture this practice can provoke.

Critical Reflections of the Use of Applied Theatre Practice in the Housing Association Context

This work and the films we created proved to have a dramatic impact on the community development team in terms of their representation within the wider housing association. [420] The films were used at numerous events during and after my time with the housing association, including at a regional Christmas conference. The community development team received a bigger annual budget as a result and the SIDC programme was repeated and developed over the next five years as well as being replicated in another housing association by a member of the team who left to become the manager of *their* community development team. After moving on to new employment I was invited back on a commissioned basis to work on SIDC in its third year and to develop 'Stars in Our Yard' for A2 Dominion Housing.

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[419] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.28
[420] See DVD 6, clip 4 for short clip of one of these films.

The methods of research developed through the 'Where you Live' project and the use of skills-based workshops were continued. This model grew over the next five years, in my absence, with a mixed estate celebration successfully introduced in year 2. SIDC demonstrated how providing activities that were useful and culturally relevant to the young people, could help them to develop existing and new skills and caused them to be treated as artists, performers and active participants rather than just keeping them occupied through bouncy castles, magicians and free ice-cream. The statuses of many of the young people were raised as they had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and talents.

The Booklets

One of the mechanisms by which I tried to leave knowledge behind was through the booklets.[421] The booklets represented a new technique in capturing the counter narratives and world views of young people in ways that could be used to infiltrate the organisation. The first SIDC booklet was produced with individual pages dedicated to each estate.[422] I used direct quotes, photographs of the young people and evidence of their art-work that told a story. Part of this booklet was also dedicated to deconstructing the research methods I had used in an attempt to explain the core concepts behind this approach. By creating something produced by the housing association that detailed these techniques I tried to frame this ethos as something that was already accepted and embedded within the housing association.

SIDC was repeated over the next 3 years but became somewhat stuck in the process of consultation without real change taking place in light of what the young people highlighted as problems on their estates. This reflects the need for a multi-disciplinary audience, as with my original TfD proposal, that could bring a range of service providers to hear their voices, as with the Family Group Conference model, to alter fundamental power relations.

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[421] See appendices 7, 8 and 9 for all 3 booklets that I developed for the different Housing Associations, as an outcome to practice-based research in these contexts.
[422] See appendix 7 '*Summer In Da City and Where you live, Compilation of Young People's Stories and Views*' booklet. Ealing Family Housing Association, 2005.

When asked to return and work on a freelance capacity in year 3 of the scheme the agenda for the research had been predetermined around the theme of 'respect'.[423] This meant the research agenda was no longer open or owned by the young people in the same way but had been defined by a top-down restrictive window of enquiry. During this project I encountered difficulties in trying to enable the format of the booklet to reflect each of the estates, as with the first booklet. Working alongside the communications team I experienced techniques of trying to commercialise the research by formatting the photos and quotes from the young people in a way that was not authentic to what had been said or from whom these narratives had come from.

Other techniques of silencing and reclaiming the young people's contributions were magnified at a regional Christmas conference when the sound was turned down during the screening of a film on a particularly evocative quote from one young person who was speaking about the fights that take place on the estate because there is nothing to do.

Further and On-going Estate based work

'Stars in Our Yard' was developed by a team member who had worked on SIDC and left to manage the community development team at another housing association. I was asked to help develop the first phase of this project that involved a creative research project across 11 estates running alongside a range of skills-based workshops. This project built towards an event that created a space for the young people to perform and interact with each other as well as hosting an exhibition of their worlds made up of work produced by my research workshops with them. This project model meant the young people could identify with their shared and specific needs and see their worlds represented back to them through their combined and specific pieces of work.

'Stars in Our Yard' has been developed for the last 2 years by a friend and fellow student of the BA Drama, Theatre and Television Studies and has focused on targeting services relevant to the young people's specific needs. This has meant the booklet, the film and

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[423] As was a current political agenda around this time.

ongoing work with the young people has continued to identify new and relevant audiences rather than the work being a one-off consultation process. Stars in Our Yard was about raising the profile of young people and celebrating and engaging with their skills as well as using their voices and resources to try to bring about ongoing change to their worlds.

Forches Estate, North Devon

Later work on an estate in North Devon focused on reframing young people in what was known locally as a 'bad' area within the wider community. This work sought to engage the young people through a number of projects that enabled them to represent themselves to audiences who culturally and historically held negative assumptions about young people living on Forches estate. We worked with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon to construct an exhibition which used boxes to construct an exhibition created by the young people as mini-representations / sculptures of their worlds and their *real* interests and skills. By outreaching to a varied audience of professionals and community members this work aimed to educate negative assumptions about these young people using public spaces and local media to highlight their work.[424] The creation of these boxes as declarations of identity and representations of their home worlds evolved as a new practice technique to research and represent the narratives and languages of young people. This project has introduced new theories as to how to outreach to wider audiences that culturally demonise young people.

Chapter 7 will examine the resistances I experienced when trying to work in liberatory child welfare contexts and the use of applied theatre practice to illuminate the inherent contradictions between arts based practice and corporate, capitalist cultures of practice.

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[424] See appendix 10 for local newspaper coverage of these projects and their impacts.

Chapter 7

Clashes, Contradictions and Critical Reflections:

Illuminating the Frameworks of Practice

Setting the Scene

My experiences of working for two different child welfare organisations revealed the polar ideological starting points between social care paradigms and applied theatre/TfD models. These examples highlighted the representation of this work within these types of settings, the challenges of trying to develop models of practice which contradict dominant ideas and agendas and the 'pragmatic tools' I needed to adapt as the facilitator-practitioner working within these areas.[425] These examples resonate with Thompson's particular analysis of the *act of applying* theatre work in relation to the work as both opportunity and disruption to existing 'neat lines of understanding'. He states:

> The problems that emerge when theatre practitioners enter an arena without a conscious recognition of the specificity of the practice that they meet provide important lessons for the field. Applied theatre's ability to recreate itself for a context, in comparison to its needs to maintain clarity of principle and intent, is therefore a balancing act[426]

These 'lessons' are the central focus of this chapter that works towards constructing a critical analysis of my experiences working on an employed basis within the *frameworks* of two organisations framed by liberatory rhetoric. My research is concerned with the merging, inter-meshing potentials of applied arts work within social care paradigms/frameworks. This chapter examines the collisions, contradictions and resistances I experienced when trying to introduce my pedagogy and praxis within these specific settings. After exploring the potential for the practice as an empowerment tool working directly with young people and front line staff in the children's homes, these

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[425] As explored by McAvinchey. 'Is this the Play?' 2009. p.281
[426] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. pp.44-78

experiences highlighted the representation of this practice within the broader contextual frameworks that surround the immediate setting of the children's home.

Fundamental to these experiences was my realisation that these organisations, who championed themselves as 'alternative' and 'radical', mirrored the same (internal) hierarchies, discriminations and bureaucracies as institutionalised interventions and systems. As the researcher-practitioner it was these blatant contradictions that featured as my stumbling block when trying to make sense of these experiences. I was wholly unprepared at this stage of my research journey for what would emerge as intrinsic, prolific patterns of disempowerment *throughout* the matrix of child welfare organisations. By working *for* organisations *committed to* the participation and empowerment of young people and yet struggling to work in person-specific and collaborative ways I was able to examine the cultures that prohibit genuine liberation from happening and see these trends in their 'material play'.[427]

My limited understanding and naivety of these worlds meant I somewhat represented 'the fool' in my happening upon these 'parodies, ironies and contradictions'.[428] Unaware of the significance of my practice and/or my representation as an arts practitioner within these settings I learnt from reactions to me and the resistances to my practice how this type of work creates *disruptions* and challenges to conventional structures. As Nixon helps to assert:

> the idea of empowerment is overlain by contrasting and often conflicting aims and expectations. As a result, the burgeoning literature on the topic is characterised by considerable conceptual imprecision.. .Its use is largely linguistic and rhetorical, relying on taken-for-granted meanings that need more careful scrutiny.[429]

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[427] Foucault, M. 'Power and Sex, discussion with Bernard-Henri Levy' in Kritzman, L. (ed.) *Michel Foucault Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984.* London: Routledge, 1988. p.119

[428] The theme of 'the fool' is explored by Prentki, T. in The Fool *in European Theatre, Stages of Folly.* United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan. 2011; 'Parodies, ironies and contradictions' are discussed by Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.115

[429] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.8

Using *practice as research* throughout this field, entering into a multitude of different, yet related settings I have scrutinised 'empowerment' within this arena and, as Chapter 8 will pull together, constructed a more precise practice-based perspective of these 'conceptual imprecision's'. What emerged from the settings within this chapter is the point of conflict between the *liberation* of the child and the *self preservation* of the organisation. These trends relate back to patterns within 19th century children's 'charities'. The *potential* for applied theatre work to offer an alternative conceptualisation of participation and empowerment relies on the negotiation skills of the facilitator-practitioner, as the visitor within the field to establish trust between the gate keepers of these contexts. This chapter will examine my various successes and failings in realising this. As I discovered, the tight-rope walk of the facilitator becomes even more precarious when ensuring you do not fall victim to colluding and commodity tactics and begin to mirror and morph into all you set out to act against.

Site 1: the Children's Fund / Connexions Secondment, 2003

In 2003 I was working within Main-place children's home and involved in pieces of commissioned work for Hampshire County Council. On the back of the first project with Main-place I was fighting for support from Social Service departments to develop this practice as a methodology in other areas, as discussed towards the end of Chapter 5. Whilst working with the CAT team I was asked to develop a consultation day commissioned by Hampshire Children's Fund to explore 'preventative measures' with LAC. I researched the Children's Fund whilst designing the event and realised the potential for them to act as a long-term funder for my work. I was encouraged by their liberatory rhetoric and submitted a detailed report and process video to introduce this type of practice. The mini-me event was well received as was the supporting evidence and I was asked by the Chair to present to the commissioning board for the Children's Fund at their next meeting.[430]

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[430] See appendix 2 for details about this piece of commissioned work.

The Presentation as Part of the Practice

Using ethnographical evidence of the work within the children's homes I introduced specific examples of the practice *in action*. I explained the potential efficiency of this practice and the opportunities it can create for the empowerment of individuals and the development of services based on the Main-place pilot project. I remember being terrified by the number of business people who sat looking at me, waiting to hear what I could offer. This was my first experience of presenting in this type of context and I suddenly felt drastically out of place in comparison to them and the setting. Rather than preparing a power-point presentation I had come armed with examples of work and laminated pieces of luminous coloured card to represent the 'Rainbow model' and its various stages.[431] In the absence of a board to attach these pieces of card I stuck each 'phase' of the model to the walls around the room. This meant the model literally circumnavigated them and their arrangement of tables in a square. At one point I had to climb under the squared tables to lay out the large photos of the Main-place project in action as this was the only space available to do so. I became aware of the change of atmosphere in the room as I presented. When I had entered it had felt stuffy and reserved. There was a nervous tittering from the board members and an apprehensive shuffle to their feet as they peered over their desks to see the photos on the floor. They became animated as I passed around the 'goblins' (trolls) and their story booklets and introduced plasticine as one of the *tools* we had been using.[432] This presentation echoes Thompson's ideas about meetings, promotions and demonstrations being all part of the practice and 'the actual act of translating the work to the new discipline'.[433] The board's reactions demonstrated the types of impact I could potentially have within these settings in terms of altering oppressive, stifling atmospheres.

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[431] See Chapter 1, Fig. 3 for the *Rainbow model.*
[432] See Chapter 5 and appendix 4 for the storybooks.
[433] As discussed in Chapter 3; Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003.p.34

The bid was successful. The Children's Fund needed to evidence work with 'socially excluded' young people whom they had dubbed 'hard-to-reach' and my practice seemed to fit the bill. I was required to write a 'Service Specification' and 'Assessment Framework' detailing how my work would be organised which I did in collaboration with the Chair. Within the frameworks of these official forms I outlined a robust proposal for a large-scale project that would build on the Main-place TfD project model. This work would engage different groups of young people living in difficulty and enable them to tell their own stories in their own ways.[434] I specified the involvement of a *core group* of young people to act as collaborative researchers and co-facilitators, as those I had already worked with in Main-place and Cross-stones. I envisioned the core group developing pieces of work that could outreach to others 'like them' to generate more stories, establish appropriate audiences and present to those relevant to their messages. The Chair was enthused by my ideas and informed me that I would be a central part of developing their participation and crime prevention strategy. I was confident that hard to reach groups are not 'hard to reach' if they are reached in the right ways as I testified within my written proposals:

> Young people of all **"hard to reach"** groups will be engaged throughout the process and will maintain equal ownership over of the development of the project. …The project will strive to re-introduce excluded groups to their surrounding community groups and the wider society by enabling them to represent themselves through positive, powerful and proactive forums.

Objectives:
- The 'core group' will use their work to reach 'others like them'…... The core groups' work will be used as a model to encourage responses from other young people, establish support groups and instigate other projects following the same model. 'Focus groups'

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[434] As explored in depth by Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.28

will be identified as the next wave of young people to be engaged in longer term projects.[435]

This proposal saw self determination as a research agenda; it was concerned with the use of critical drama and video processes to *counter* the culture of silence through different counter narratives.[436] It resonated with the core philosophies underpinning this research that embrace person-centred learning by entering into the worlds of young people and 'the right …of society to control its own destiny'.[437] I saw this as a golden opportunity to evolve the work I had developed so far to enable it to be more widely accepted and understood, thereby

> changing the institutions which deal with people [as opposed] to changing people to fit into the structures.[438]

I was excited about all that now seemed possible and the large-scale project model that we could create with a generous budget, an actual wage and the support of a widely recognised funding body.

Without my own company I needed to find an organisation to channel the funding through. I rejected an offer from Hampshire Social Services to manage the budget in the fear that this may be perceived by the young people as *colluding* with those whom I thought to be the 'enemy' at this point. It was eventually arranged that South Central Connexions would manage the work whilst also contributing to a percentage of my project costs. Rather naively I failed to recognise that this secondment and financial backing would come with its own expectations and underlying agendas.

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[435]See appendix 11 for extracts of this 'Service Specification' for the Children's Fund April 2003.
[436] Themes explored by Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.37; Preston. *Theatre for Development in Context.* 2000. p.122; Freire. *The Politics of Education.* 1985. p.72l; Bouchard. *Language, Counter-Memory.* 1977. p.209
[437] McGrath, J. *The Bone Won't Break: on Theatre and Hope in Hard Times.* London: Methuen, 1990. p.142
[438] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.147

Site 2: Voice, 2006

I discovered 'Voice' three years after the Connexions/Children's Fund experience. I was working at the housing association and my confidence in the work had been re-energised through the developments of practice within this setting, see Chapter 6. After a friend's recommendation I researched Voice and discovered that, as an advocacy agency, Voice specialised in 'giving a voice' to young people within the care system, both those looked-after and those locked up. I believed I had finally found *the* organisation with which to *launch* and develop this type of work specifically with looked-after children as my original focus group. Voice's mission statement expressed an explicit commitment to 'empowering children and young people in public care' and 'campaigning for change to improve their lives' as well as being dedicated to promoting 'the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child'.[439]

Blueprint and Start with the Child, Stay with the Child

What excited me most about Voice was a landmark project the organisation had led in the previous year called 'Blueprint':

> The aims of Blueprint were to take an independent view of what the current care system in England looks like and offer a vision of what it *could* look like. The objective was to identify the barriers that prevent the systems from being child-centred, and to suggest a route for *how* to get there[440]

This eighteen month *practice-based* research programme had used collaborative workshops and events to research the experiences of looked-after young people, care leavers, front-line workers, managers and policy writers within the care system. It had trained 'core groups' of young people to act as co-researchers/reporters and had produced a document called 'Start with the Child, Stay with the Child' which drew on the direct

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[439] Key slogan and tag line from all Voice literature in Voice's Annual review (2003/4). p.2
[440] *Start with the Child, Stay with the Child.* 2005. pp.5-6

quotes from each of the participants to detail the importance of *individualised, child-centred* approaches.

I was confident about the links between Blueprint and my own research agenda. It seemed that the Blueprint project had laid the foundations to continue to develop applied arts practice and specific TfD projects with LAC groups within an organisation committed to developing the care system. Voice's rhetoric claimed to be the antidote for oppressive bureaucratic systems and practices and advocated for the need for a creative approach within social care systems. Their work had gone beyond just *stating* this commitment by demonstrating this pedagogy through the praxis used within Blueprint as this extract from Start with the Child, Stay with the Child testifies:

> a child-*centred* approach means challenging negative ideas about children and young people, while developing positive ideas about them, seeing them as experts in their own lives, with an attempt to see the world through their eyes..[441]

After applying to work as a freelance visiting advocate for Voice I was also offered the job of 'Participation Development Officer'. As with the Children's Fund commissioning board, those who interviewed me at Voice seemed enthused by my practice examples and I was confident this was finally *the* setting within which to *launch* all that I had been attempting to develop on a larger scale since the Main-place pilot project.

Connexions and the Conference; the Dominant Assumption of the Practice as a Commodity

As I attempted to revisit the young people I had been working with and spread the word about the funding I found myself obstructed by persistent requests to attend meetings about a regional young people's conference. It soon became apparent that I was expected to coordinate this conference which would be headed up by Connexions as a county wide event. In effect I had been 'bought in' as someone who could get the hard to reach kids

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[441] *Ibid.*

involved in work that could 'tick the boxes' of inclusion and 'participation' and put on a 'good show'. I was there to make sure young people got involved without any regard or interest in the processes that were paramount to this practice. Instead I found myself railroaded into an event that directly contradicted the models underpinning applied arts based practice by maintaining and reinforcing the power relations, imbalances and techniques inherent within these institutional arenas.

Everything about the design of the conference conflicted with my original proposal. Planning was not something that involved an organic process whereby ideas were generated and gradually formulated but something underpinned by meetings and milestones. The steering group was made up of Social Services managerial representatives, some of whom had blocked and destroyed pieces of my work in the past. They had already interviewed and selected a core group of young people as co-organisers of the event who were to receive a bursary for being involved. Part of my role would be to train them. The vision for the event involved sourcing representatives from schools and young people's groups to deliver speeches to adult professionals.

Bewilderment

Thompson uses the term 'bewilderment' to describe the 'unsettling process of having opportunities restricted and denied' in relation to both community groups and the arts practitioner working in specific settings.[442] This, as a concept, helps to frame the impacts of the expectations imposed upon me and my slow realisation of where I has arrived in terms of developing my praxis in the context of the Children's Fund/Connexions opportunity. The vision and tightly managed coordination of the conference represented a manifestation of all I wanted to create an alternative to, and as a result, I became frustrated and resentful in being forced to be a part of something which replicated one-way processes of communication and top-down dictatorship. I failed to see why I was expected to be a part of something so at odds with what I had presented to the board and written in my proposal and was particularly troubled by the expectation to bring hard to

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[442]Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.23

reach groups into these contexts. The whole culture of the conference reflected the oppressive practices I wanted to counteract. To ask the young people in the children's home to attend more formal meetings and to plan a corporate event seemed absurd. There was no space for the vision of the conference to be owned by the young people with

> the forms and processes of participation remain[ing] dependent on dominant sources of power [to] determine the **context** and **content** of any input from young people.[443]

Ill-equipped and inexperienced in conducting myself in formal meeting settings I struggled to communicate with the management committee my reservations for their way of approaching the event. In an attempt to better explain what I saw as contradictions in our approach and ideals I drew pictures to try to depict what I was seeing in terms of the young people acting as mini-politicians and the ways in which an event could instead enable professionals to enter into their worlds.[444] I was told, in no uncertain terms, to 'put the pictures away'. As Etherton helps to explain, the way in which applied theatre practitioners approach work and attempt to communicate in these settings can seem rebellious and disruptive when their understanding is that *you* are there to do as is told:

> The difficulty…..is that TfD can seem unable to compromise with institutional corporate requirements. Some …organisations…therefore tend to buy in drama expertise on a commercial rather than a collaborative basis. Because they are paying, they dictate the product and ignore the process.[445]

These were all crucial, yet painful lessons in my research process to examine the potential for this work and the context specific cultures that define relevant spaces and pragmatic methods in translating and transferring applied theatre practice within them.

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[443] Smith. *Social Work with Young People*. 2008. p.45
[444] See appendix 12 for extracts of these sketches
[445] Etherton. 'Child Rights Theatre'. 2009. p.358

The (Un)Training of the Bursary Group

As relationships between me and the Connexions manager began to waiver I was told that I would no longer be needed at the steering group meetings and that my involvement in the conference was to take a shift of focus. I was instructed to 'train' the bursary group in preparation for their visits to other young people to promote the event and mobilise their involvement in it. I was then to return to develop work with my hard to reach groups to *feed into* the event. Using all I understood at this point and unintentionally trying to disrupt the working order of this operation I designed a training programme that built on my practice to date. I incorporated techniques we had developed within the children's homes around 'identity' and 'voice' and facilitation approaches from my teaching of undergraduate Drama, Theatre and Television Studies students in preparation for their project work with others.

The training sought to enhance the confidence and consciousness within the bursary group and to help them to see themselves as active participants with unique and specific skills.[446] We wrote 'wish lists' for the conference and shared what we wanted to achieve for ourselves and others through it. I focused on their 'inner resourcefulness' and innate skills and the ways in which they could use these as a basis to work with other young people. [447] We discussed *who* they would like to involve and *how* these groups might be able to contribute to the event. We devised methods for researching the ideas and world views of other young people and specific efficiencies for different media to do so. Throughout the training we designed decolonising methodologies for engaging other young people and through these processes the bursary group were liberated in developing a critical consciousness of their own positioning in the conference agenda.

I began to warm to the bursary group and realise that they too were oppressed by the expectations placed upon them to have *all* the answers for *all* young people. As the

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[446] DVD.7, clip 1 for footage of the training sessions with the bursary group
[447] See appendix 13 for examples of these 'wish lists' and 'things that make me sad/happy/angry' sheets; Brian Way explores the theme of 'inner resourcefulness' in Way. *Development through Drama.* 1967. p.5; Etherton discusses the innate skills of young people in Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.117

'articulate children' they were treated as native informers and shrouded with false acts of generosity and tokenism through invites to special meetings to feed back to the adults on the needs of young people within the county. Their involvement as a user group was used to evidence the participation of young people in decision-making; a trend used throughout social care settings. Our workshops began to unpack these themes as we collectively became more aware of our positioning within these frameworks.

The Training Weekend

For the final part of the training period we were booked into a four star hotel for an intensive training weekend. This setting highlighted the contrasts between corporate and creative worlds and was further emphasised when I was shown to our planning room within the hotel. The room had been arranged much like the Children's Fund commissioning board, with tables in a large square with each place set with notepads and pens. My first exercise set the challenge of transforming the space into an 'ideas and inspiration membrane'. We set about making the room into a creative space and using it as a backdrop to represent our *journey* in developing a 'workshop book' of consultation activities. We moved the tables back and spent the weekend decorating the walls with suggestions and questions so that the whole space came to represent our *process*. I invited Morris, an African TfD practitioner, to help me deliver the 'training'. He ran drumming workshops and told stories about projects he had worked on in Africa that had helped professionals to better understand the needs of different groups. Through the drumming we were inspired about how to work collaboratively, yet on something specific, to create a whole piece. The group began to invent their own ideas as to how different activities could help them to inspire other young people and translate the aim of the conference. They began to see how their existing interests and skills could equip them when working with other groups and started to formulate person-specific techniques in presenting ideas and working with others, building on their inner resources and innate skills.

The management's response to the training programme sharply curtailed this process and illuminated the real expectations from the bursary group's role in the conference as well

as the purpose for the training. I was heavily reprimanded for failing to provide the group with a script which I was told had rendered them useless. Snap-shots of a filming exercise during which the bursary group interviewed other young people in a local shopping area outraged the manager as did other footage that documented their critical reflections and ideas for the event. I was told that I would no longer be involved in the conference and was advised to resign from my secondment with Connexions with the assurance that I would be able to redirect the Children's Fund funding through a different stream. As Preston helps to highlight, my work was seen as threatening to the dominant power structures and ideals within this setting:

> the power of theatre processes to enable self reliance, creativity and 'healthy, democratic communities' is seen as threatening to repressive governments and often the safety of liberation activities is threatened. [448]

In my naivety and inexperience I failed to realise that I had been seen as someone who could 'put on a good show' and get the kids who normally refuse to participate, present. The lack of a pre-existing framework of reference to help explain this practice resulted in me being seen as being uncooperative and insolent by the management whilst I viewed them as hypocrites and felt endlessly shocked and alienated by how they conducted what they actually referred to as 'participation'. I was totally unprepared for how entrenched and entwined trends and cultures of oppressive practice are within the *matrix* of child welfare settings. I experienced on an immediate and personal level how it feels to be at the mercy of the institution. People began to morph into puppets of power, places of acceptance and support quickly became settings of intimidation and rejection. I was excluded for not being prepared to play *their* game and for refusing to collude with their ideals and visions of righteousness.

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[448] Preston. *Theatre for Development in Context.* 2000. p.34

Critical Reflections, Site 1

Participation in this context had meant the bursary group becoming another tier to the existing power structure of the organisation. They were wanted to make decisions on the venue, food and the colour of flyers. They could decorate the event and 'participate' in closed decision-making processes within restricted areas but this is where their sphere of influence ceased. My attempts to develop work that encouraged 'self-awareness, self-reliance, independence, maturity, creativity and peer networking' were seen as threatening and detrimental to the overall plan. [449] As *employees* of Connexions both I and the bursary group were expected to deliver the agenda of the organisation, as determined by the management committee, through the mechanisms they had established. Developing a critical consciousness and researching *real* stories threatened the desire for the event to act as a safe and promotional tool for the county that could demonstrate the involvement of young people and imply that young people were being listened to without any disruptions to the dominant order. This theme of an event being used to reinforce existing power systems whilst being presented as 'participatory' is echoed by Thompson within his analysis of a piece of prison theatre. He observes here that an event 'bound down and defined' by the particular context becomes an instrumental part of a particular belief system rather than 'a critique or [an] alternative to it'. [450] This definition helps to illuminate the differences between applied arts work as a radical tool and the conference as a specific technique to maintain dominant power relations.

Due to my limited experience of working within these frameworks I had yet to understand how the practice can *adapt to* and *negotiate within* the restrictions placed upon the work to achieve an acceptance and understanding of the practice. At this point I could only see one way of working and, without realising the significance of my defiance, I created a bigger problem than I realised. I had trained the bursary group to be facilitators and researchers of their own truths and narratives of others when this was

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[449] Ackermann, L., Feeny, T., Hart, J. and Newman, J. *Understanding and Evaluating Children's Participation. A Review of Contemporary Literature.* (Paper) for Plan UK / Plan International. October 2003. p.15
[450] Thompson. 'From the Stocks to the Stage'. 2004. p.73

unrealistic given the restrictions placed on their role and the vision for the work. As Preston explains:

> a crucial issue affecting action and sustainability within these contexts is whether power can be transferred within the time frame available, and within the dynamics operating, to the community group concerned, so that the group become the activists in the process.[451]

In the case of training the bursary group my approach represented defiance and disruption resulting in rejection by the management committee. Although the individual may be momentarily 'empowered', the spaces within the contextual framework have not been altered and therefore the young people were quickly put back in their place. Paul Moclair reminds us that:

> Participatory methodologies are about empowerment, not finding a cheap, quick-fix solution. That takes time.[452]

The management committee saw the participation of young people as being something that could be organized and *managed* through the 'articulate children' and structured to ensure control was maintained over the messages that emerged. They wanted to outreach to other articulate children and help them to write neatly presented speeches at the conference. Their visions reflected the idea that power is something that is enforced from one group onto another. By trying to create an event whereby the young people spoke 'at' and 'to' an audience of professionals they were replicating these models and making their selected group of easily controlled young people *just like them*. My attempts to generate ownership over the media, form and content of the messages within the conference were met with resistance because they challenged and threatened this managerialist culture.

During the training period the bursary group had begun to become more vocal and critical within the meetings they had previously politely sat through. I was informed that the

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[451] Preston, S. taken from a handout given whilst I was on the undergraduate Drama, Theatre and Television Studies degree.
[452] Moclair, P. 'Altogether Now? Reconsidering the Merits of Participation in Child-rights Theatre' in Prentki and Preston. *The Applied Theatre Reader.* 2009. p.161

Chair of the bursary group had spoken up about the unrealistic expectation for them to have *all* the answers for *all* the young people as well as highlighting that alterations to the policy are only changes in language if no one actually gets on and does it. It would seem I had created a rebellion within the ranks.

 Blueprint in Practice, Site 2

In dramatic contrast to all that Blueprint had pioneered in terms of collaborative practice that is 'less bureaucratic….creative and draws on new technologies' I was met with the same cultures at Voice as those I experienced at Connexions. [453] Almost immediately the managing director, made daily demands for me to 'rustle up' articulate young people for promotional purposes and would shuffle around my desk until I could give him a list of names.[454] I was expected to *provide* and *supply* young people for various bits of work with the justification that these duties were part of Voice's *existing* Participation Policy. I spent most of my time cold calling young people from a data-base asking them if they would like to be paid to come into the office to sit on interview panels, to present speeches at fund-raising events or to attend parliamentary meetings. It soon became apparent that to the management of Voice these young people's 'stories' were a commodity and a marketing tool with the examples of how Voice had helped them acting as an endlessly replaying record to evidence how 'good' Voice was. Participation was not envisioned as a means to enable the young people to move on but instead was about young people *feeding back into* the organisation. This strongly resonates with Freire's ideas about false acts of generosity.

Voice's 'participation policy' specified the involvement of young people within their existing policy agenda rather than this being concerned with a liberatory process *beyond* the realms of the institution. By re-living their experiences and reasserting the ways in which Voice had aided them, the provider-receiver relationship was being kept firmly in

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[453] Recommendation from *Start with the Child, Stay with the Child.* 2005. p.73
[454] The interest in 'articulate' young people was a reoccurring theme throughout both these settings. My work, in contrast, was interested in finding languages and tools to help those not deemed articulate or most like the professionals to be able to communicate.

place. Policy was used as something we had to adhere to and as a means of justifying our actions and decisions. It was hidden behind and used to obscure and excuse the need for any re-evaluations around the ethics of our practice. As the contradictions within this extract from my job description help to highlight participation is seen as something that should be led by the agenda of the organisation. As participation development *officer* I was viewed as someone who should be *enforcing* participation rather than developing it. This was written between the lines of my job description:

> to develop an accessible and engaging participation programme <u>for</u> children and young people <u>to follow</u> the aims of VCC's policy agenda and the Blueprint Implementation Project (including the Alliance for Child-Centred Care) [455]

Rather than empowering young people on an individual and person-specific basis Voice's head office were looking for articulate and marketable children to decorate their existing agendas. This culture of young people being seen as 'possessions' and 'beings for others' rather than *beings for themselves* was exemplified in both settings through the treatment of young people as *instruments* rather than as *individuals* by the senior management teams.[456] These cultures were no more evident than within the design and delivery of the next phase of Blueprint.

Blueprint, Phase 2

Rather revealingly this second phase was named the 'Blueprint Implementation project' (BIP) and was to be managed internally by the policy team. The vision was to take the messages from the 'Start with the child, Stay with the child' report and *implement* them. Those in charge saw the natural progression of the first stages of the Blueprint work as turning this research into a policy and enforcing this policy through an 'alliance' made up of representatives from different social care agencies. Once again the 'army of experts' were considered the most qualified to distribute these messages through conventional

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[455] Extract from my job description as Participation Development Officer at Voice (my emphasis).
[456] Freire. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p.78

frameworks and organisations of power and control.[457] Step by step action points outlining how we were going to achieve *child-centred* care within social care systems were drawn up by the project manager; someone I was to work closely with. S.M.A.R.T targets, as explored in Chapter 4, and 'GANT' charts were used to map the route towards the implementation of the messages underpinned by strict time scales. Child-centred care it seemed, would be enforced and managed through *systematic* and *scientific* approaches to the development of social care practices, irrespective of 'Start with the Child, Stay with the Child's' testimonies for the need to radicalise *systematic* and *scientific* ways of working. I struggled with these contradictions and the ways in which they did not seem to be obvious to anyone else.

The Management of Participation and Finding a Slogan for Child Centred Care

'Participation' was given its own column within the ever more definitive plan. This column was to specify what I was to do with the young people and by when. Rather than participation being seen as an integrated approach it was confined to a list of tasks and procedures. In the scramble to be seen to be leading on the agenda for 'child-centred care' the management totally ignored and overlooked the meaning of this concept and, in doing so, negated all they claimed to stand against. [458] The contradictions between their rhetoric and their practice cultures were short-sighted and bizarre, and were further magnified in their response to my first workshop with young people.

One of the mounting tasks listed within the participation column specified coming up with a quote / tag-line with young people to define 'Child Centred Care', to be presented at the next Alliance meeting. Desperate to escape the confines of the office and the ever explicit 'things to do' lists I designed a workshop around this theme and booked a space to work with two different groups of young people. Within the workshop we explored what child-centred care *is*, what it *isn't* and *how* to do it and produced a canvas and a booklet to represent this work. The canvas presented a synopsis of what the groups

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[457] Key theme throughout Foucault. *Discipline and Punish.* 1979.
[458] As was the focus of leading social care policy at this point.

thought child centred care is, isn't and *where* and *how* it exists and the booklet was used to show the process behind the workshops. This is an extract from the canvas:

> *It Isn't….*
> Speaking over them
> No eye contact
> Leaving their input till last
> Talking about them as if they weren't there
> Not allowing young people to have an opinion/make decisions
> Not allowing the young people to have any control of the review / meeting [459]

We presented the work at the next Alliance meeting and were met with a mixed response. To my amazement one of the adult professionals challenged the young people on what they had written on the canvas with regards to feeling like things never change for LAC. He argued that this was not true and had been proved by recent research that evidenced an improvement. The act of the professional prioritising scientific data over the lived experiences and truths of the young people was particularly poignant. After our allotted time slot in the agenda the meeting continued around us as we sat in silence, highlighting the exact examples the young people had presented as non child-centred practice. Back at the office I was criticised by the project manager for not producing a succinct quote which was needed to pin onto other material. What was required was a slogan, not something as intangible as young people's real and specific experiences.[460]

Policy and Praxis

In time, I established the history of the first phase of the Blueprint project. It had been facilitated by a group of practitioners who had created a storm 'on the ground' but had also threatened the control of the inner organization whilst the work was developing. When these practitioners were deemed surplus to requirement their knowledge of collaborative, holistic practice had left with them. The managerial and policy teams who

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[459] See appendix 14 for extracts of the young peoples' preparation for this meeting.
[460] This theme is further explored by Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1996. p.76

were now back in charge of the Blueprint work appreciated the value of Blueprint phase 1 in terms of it raising the profile of Voice but had no understanding *or* regard for the cultures of practice that had been used to generate this type of impact. For them, the next logical stage was about *implementing* the messages from Blueprint in isolation from the participatory practice trends that had underpinned this work. By gathering the 'top people' from different organizations to create an 'Alliance' for child-centred care, those with the power could now decide on how to best implement and enforce the messages from Blueprint through their respective spheres of influence. Any of my attempts to ensure collaborative and developmental work with the young people were deemed as going backwards and treated with suspicion.

The active exclusion of the young people I was employed to help participate revealed the ways in which Voice and Connexions viewed the role and purpose of the young people's involvement. These trends reflect what happens throughout the institutionalisation of child welfare initiatives. The power is taken back from the ground and condensed into policy and practice standards; power and knowledge is taken away from the 'experts' on the ground and handed to the decision-makers who, in turn, claim the authorship and authority over the lives of those at the bottom of these hierarchical structures. The young people and the front-line staff are thanked and paid off for their time, their sound-bites and quotes and are excluded from the next part of the process. Research, consultation and development are seen as separate activities. Participation is seen by management teams as something that has to be *proved* with little regard as to what makes this a genuine process. Genuine development is viewed as only something that only the policy-makers and decision makers are capable of taking forward. The participants have played their part, as with Blueprint phase 1, it is now time to do the serious task of implementing the messages in the absence of those living these realities:

> This is a top down model: policy is expected to be informed by research, practice to be informed by policy.[461]

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[461] Everitt. 'Research and Development'. 2002. p.115

These trends were exacerbated in my attempts to run a workshop with the young people on Voice's data-base to get them back on board with the next phase of Voice's work. I proposed this workshop could inform the young people about the next phase of Blueprint and the type of spaces available for them to participate in Voice's work, as well as developing ideas for other pieces of project work. I did not want to have to continue cold-calling different young people to 'sell' sitting on interview panels, visiting parliament or presenting at charity dinners. I wanted to meet these young people face-to-face and present a menu of options that were available. This way I could explain the varying degrees of involvement that were on offer as well as trying to develop some collaborative project work. The workshop was met with a refusal from my manager who told me this type of activity was entirely unnecessary because the 'plan' had already been formulated. I was told over and over again that a workshop of this type would be unmanageable and that it was time to look forward instead of backwards with regards to the Blueprint project's progression.

The Artist in the Office

It is a dangerous thing when, as an arts practitioner, you become trapped within these types of frameworks. You can become so far removed from all that stimulates and reinvents your practice that a part of you begins to die. In non-creative, oppressive contexts it is difficult to remember the essence of the work. Kept separate and trapped in the 'ivory towers' from those the work is supposed to be *for, with* and *about* it is easy for the young people, and their realities, to become an abstract concept. The ethos of a liberatory approach is something almost impossible to 'fit' into a scientific proposal or to translate through written form. Within Voice and Connexions I was trying to fit an organic, developmental process into a dominant scientific framework that was seen as linear and compartmentalised. Both of these projects were defined by targets, timelines and milestones. The products and the visions of what would determine 'success' had already been decided by the expert adults. *How* we were going to reach these predetermined goals had also been mapped out, prioritising the authorship and authority of management teams and decision makers with the *decoration* of young people along the

way. There was no space for anyone other than the selected few, to genuinely *own* any part of this process. The young people were welcome to colour(in) particular stages of these plans, to be used as promotional tools at events, to be worn and to be seen smiling at opportune moments but not to alter these fixed frameworks. My attempts at slowing down these snowballs and trying to point out these patterns of oppression and exclusion were seen as disruptive and detrimental to the mission. Notably one of the changes that was made after my protests at Voice was the re-branding of the Blueprint Implementation project to 'Blueprint *in Practice'*. It seemed the policy writers were happy to change the rhetoric but less so to address the contradictions of their practice. This highlights rather well how these frameworks as a whole operate.

Falling off the Tightrope: The need for Reflexivity

The impacts of my early experiences with Children's Fund/Connexions had a profound effect on me. I lost all sense of self and became quite ill. I began to over-identify with the young people in the children's homes in terms of feeling voiceless and powerless. I was haunted by an overwhelming sense of responsibility and regret in failing to bring to light the voices of those I had been working with. I put myself in a dangerous position by not taking the time to reflect on all that was happening and why. Instead I kept going, exhausted and disillusioned. I kept *fighting* for something I had made a personal battle. Rather than better recognising these trends and cultures and the ways in which power and decision making processes are organised, I criticised individuals for being wholly hypocritical in what they claimed to be doing and the reality of their actions. I failed to surmise that these structures, systems and cultures of practice present a very different way of working, of approaching projects and maintaining power and control over the vision and the determination of that vision. Thompson echoes the need to step back from the immediate situation to make sense of it. He states:

> It is hard to see the boundaries of something when you are immersed in it. Without seeing the edges, we can forget that lines around a field both shape and constrict it.[462]

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[462] Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.44

Without these processes of reflexivity I lost all clarity on what I was doing and my role as the 'facilitator' of this work and instead became bitter and desperate. Without any distance the tragedies within these settings weighed heavy. Like the many burnt out social workers who have gone before me I was saturated with sad stories and overwhelmed by how much the young people needed to be listened to, feel in control and be creative and yet I felt helpless and responsible for not managing to make this happen. The pressure and oppression began to close in like a dark cloud and I could no longer gain any sense of perspective. I had well and truly fallen off the 'tightrope'.[463]

Once I had submitted my letter of resignation to Connexions, those whom I had upset blocked my attempts to hold onto and re-channel the funding through a different stream. I was too inexperienced to realise that by writing a rather strongly worded resignation letter I had effectively thrown the funding away. During a second presentation to the Children's Fund commissioning board, something I was required to do to hold on to the funding, I was exhausted and actually delivered most of my presentation on the floor. Failing to realise that the manageress of Connexions also had a place on the Children's Fund board I was devastated to see her sat in the front row when I entered the room and too burnt out to convince anyone, least of all myself, of the potential for the work. I was forced to leave Hampshire with no way of maintaining myself financially.[464] This was an important insight into the 'webs' of these different agencies, their lack of autonomy and deep-rooted interdependency on each other.

Cultures of Silence and Power Techniques

At Voice I would stay on late at the office to draw diagrams and write proposals in the attempt to *translate* the importance of their approach within their project plans and agendas. I would have repetitive discussions with the Blueprint project manager where I

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[463] I return here to Prentki and Selman's use the analogy of the 'tightrope walk of facilitation' in Prentki and Selman. *Popular Theatre.* 2000. p.157

[464] See DVD.7, clip 2 for an extract of a film I created in an attempt to conclude my work with the Main-place group and say 'goodbye'.

would try to explain the contradictions of their approach whilst she made requests for me to create a feedback form with which we could measure how empowered the young people felt from 1-10. In both settings the power techniques and forms of resistance seemed to compound daily. At Voice my phone line was redirected through the BP manager's so that I could no longer receive any calls independently. I was told that any other work that I wanted to do with the young people had to be accredited; meaning my time was spent trying to squeeze a developmental project model into an accredited criterion. Colleagues working on the project were promoted around me in a bid, I believe, to bring home *who* was in charge.

Processes of Colonisation, Ivory Towers and Distortions

In contrast to cultures of exchanging ideas I clearly remember the Participation Strategy meetings that I was made to attend as part of my duty to the Children's Fund. Held in the 'heart' of the County Council buildings professionals would be locked into these settings to compete as the experts battling with long words and fashionable rhetoric. It was a competition to be seen to be *in the know* whilst I struggled to understand what they were actually proposing to do and why I was there at all. These cultures of removed decision-making processes, meetings and the drafting of new policies directly impacted on my own ability to practise. I became embroiled within these cultures and structures and experienced first-hand what it feels like to lose sight of the purpose of your work. It affected my clarity and my relationships with the Main-place group as I morphed into what I saw as being 'the professional' in my conduct, attitude and appearance. I began to enter into the home with a pre-set agenda and felt myself trying to coerce the group into things that I had been asked to do rather than being led by them. I was being colonised. In the eyes of the Children's Fund I was valuable as a 'wordsmith' to contribute to new strategies and provide the right type of rhetoric whilst I became more divorced from the reality of what these concepts meant in practice. I experienced first-hand how these structures impact on *development* and the development worker. As I was shoved about and manipulated I realised the ways in which these cultures were affecting me, my faith and confidence in the practice and my ability to 'see' and visualise an alternative by

being blinded by agendas, timelines and hierarchical frameworks. The 'organisation of the organisation' closes in and fills up the space to think creatively or be free enough to conceive a collaborative, developmental model.[465] This is what keeps front line workers and social workers stuck in these myths of procedurally correct practice through the colonisation of the mind and imagination.

Illuminating the Contradictions between these Practice Paradigms

These experiences highlighted the fundamental differences in approach to 'participation' 'empowerment' and 'development' between the corporate care agency and applied theatre genres. These paradigmatic collisions and my reflections on them have helped to deepen my understanding of each area's dimensions and dynamics when confronted with each other. The event for Connexions highlighted the spiralling and circular shaped applied arts models to facilitate development, both in terms of the individual and in preparation for an event. In contrast Connexions and the Blueprint plan looked at sequential ways of working towards an aim. This 'ladder-like continuum' reflects the organisation of power and control within these frameworks and the managerialist cultures on which priorities are borne and decisions are made.[466] Rodger Hart's 'Ladder of Participation', as one of the key tools/instruments within these settings, is crucial in understanding how participation is perceived by these frameworks.[467] Applied arts practitioners, in contrast, have developed models that show how frameworks *surround* contexts; they have used *rainbows* to define processes of liberation and have drawn *trees* to demonstrate growth and development.[468] Social care paradigms, in contrast, are structured conceptually and literally by successive, hierarchical models. As arts practitioners we see development as spiralling processes which revisit and regenerate initial ideas through experimentation, discussion and reflection. *How* we develop performances, exhibitions and installations is *how* we perceive the development of

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[465] As explored by O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* 1992. p.58
[466] Nixon and Lupton. *Empowering Practice?* 1999. p.35.
[467] See appendix 15 for the 'Ladder of Participation' designed by Rodger Hart.
[468] See O'Toole's diagrams depicting the frames that surround contexts in O'Toole. *The Process of Drama.* p.52; The analogy of the rainbow is central to: Boal. *The Rainbow of Desire.* 1995; Trees are cited by Heathcote in Johnson and O'Neill. *Heathcote: Collected Writings.* 1984. p.124

people. Mead and Way, in particular, help to make these distinctions.[469] As arts practitioners we are concerned with process and person-specific responses to situations. TfD models are concerned with power sharing and the significance of applied theatre processes in exploring what development is and how it should be supported and approached. 'Theatre for development *is* itself a methodology' and because of this it has powerful connotations attached to it in relation to *where* it places itself. [470] It provokes shifts in how things are done, how people are seen and what 'development' actually means because of what it represents within these places and the parodies and contradictions it can illuminate.

The *(un)*training of the bursary group and the representation and exclusion of young people from the Blueprint stage 2 reflects how young people continue to be seen and treated within social care frameworks even when involved in supposedly radical, young-people led work. As with the young people in children's homes, the prisons and on the estates these young people, although 'dressed up' as participants and decision makers, continued to be on the receiving end of dominant ideas and agendas. Managerialist and maintenance cultures and 'zero-sum' notions of power limit and restrict what is possible, relevant and appropriate within these settings.[471] The *web* of welfare services squash and subjugate any alternative view of what empowerment, participation and development might mean. These frameworks are literally suffocating the opportunities for participation and empowerment to be genuine and progressive.

Policy and Practice, Pedagogy and Praxis

Nixon refers to the ambiguity of policy as one of the central causes for ineffective, inconsistent and contradictory approaches to children's rights and empowerment. Etherton describes this as:

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[469] Mead states: 'the conception of the nature and place of the child is different from that of the West. The whole of life is seen as a circular stage', Mead. 'Children and Ritual'. 1963. pp.40–44; Circular notions of development are also demonstrated by Way's 'Consider a Human Being' model in Way. *The Development of Drama*. 1967. p.13.

[470] Preston. *Theatre for Development in Context.* 2000. p.29

[471] Zero-sum explored by Davis, M. *The Essential Social Worker,* Third Edition. Aldershot: Arena, 1994

a lack of interest among development managers and policy writers in the *artistic endeavour* that empowers young people to claim their rights[472]

The complexities of human responses to oppression get left out and objectified by policy and law and therefore praxis is needed to ensure genuine development. Liberatory *rhetoric* is not enough. With Connexions and Voice just stating a commitment to the empowerment of young people or employing someone to act as a walking buzz word (me!) or, as with Voice, critiquing the problem but failing to address it within the material play of their own organisation – is useless and arguably more dangerous. Claiming to be the antidote to oppressive practice and bureaucracy whilst continuing to work in these ways will create a perpetuating culture of blame and ignorance.

Voice's work on the ground, delivered by advocates was of a high standard but was largely unsupported, misunderstood and contradicted by the attitudes and decisions made by those leading the organisation. There are a number of reasons why these types of 'radical' agencies are trapped in these conventions, one of which is the relationships of co-dependency that are rife throughout the webs that keep them in place. Voice was contracted by the Youth Justice Board to provide advocacy services within the secure estate; meaning that the institution within which they claimed to be the radical intervention were paying them to provide this service. Statistics around the number of restraints and complaints made within the STC I worked in were dumbed down in an annual report to the YJB by Voice. The ability to fight 'in and against' institutions is therefore heavily circumscribed, as I experienced first hand by being the *employed* worker.[473] Perhaps more predominant is the inability to think of services as anything other than a provision and young people as any other than 'service users'. This means 'participation' is always, only ever about *service development* and critiquing and approving minor changes to existing systems rather than being able to redefine the experience and/or the power relations within these frameworks. 'Radical freedom' and

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[472] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights Theatre'. 2006. p.99
[473] *Ibid.* p.12.

narrative therapies serve no purpose because these agendas cannot be owned or influenced by a dominant institution.

The Arts Practitioner as the Alien

Throughout these experiences I felt like an alien speaking an entirely different language, coming from a place that was 'upside down' in comparison to the ideals and rationalities within these settings. These experiences of resistance highlight the contradictions both between TfD and social care paradigms but also those integral to the working order of social care paradigms. I entered into these contexts under the written agreements that underpinned these organisations and determined my role within them. By not being allowed to, and in some cases punished *for,* trying to enable young people to be integral to the work, these resistances illuminate the conflicts of interest within these arenas. It is not enough to produce literature, written strategies and policies when the understanding of these terminologies remains fragmented, ambiguous and lost. 'Start with the child, Stay with the child' was clear in championing the participant's message and keeping young people at the centre. What was lost was the understanding of *how* to do this and the de-stabilisation of frameworks this poses in practice. The expert culture has made it unacceptable to question what participation and empowerment means. Instead these concepts are tidied away much like any other pile in the 'in-tray'.

As with the 'emperor's new clothes' I represented the kid who pointed out their nakedness and short comings and was bundled off as a result so that I could not continue to disrupt the myth or undermine their professionalism in the field. Within TfD and applied arts practice ongoing dialectical processes are integral. Within social care paradigms these are limited to written critiques by the 'experts' within books. In practice there is no space for shifts and changes in approach or plans. These are seen as fixed 'blueprints' which should be met stage by stage; once established they cannot be revisited. Etherton draws comparisons between these cultures of inflexibility and NGOs (non government organisations):

NGOs as institutions find it very difficult to commit the very core of their work to such extreme dialogical processes....Adult NGOs have their own agendas, be they in development or emergencies or in human rights. They have to say what they are going to do; and then do it. Many would find it impossible to raise funds if it were otherwise.[474]

The *potential* for this work as *research in practice* exists within the opportunities to highlight these parodies, contradictions and paradoxes through a new frame of reference that enables others to articulate and 'see' these trends. At the time I felt desperately confused and disillusioned by my experiences. What is now apparent, in light of reflection and research, is the value of these experiences in deepening my understanding of the boundaries and frames that construct child welfare webs. In order to fully experiment with the potential of this practice as a tool for the empowerment of looked after children I needed to better understand, from the practice-based perspective working within frameworks 'committed' to this ideal, what constricts this philosophy from being realised. The table below demonstrates how my work within these frameworks has generated a clearer understanding of both disciplinary fields of practice in relation to my research.

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[474] *Ibid.* pp. 116-118

Fig. 4 The Contradictions Between the Two Central Paradigms

Applied-Arts/TfD	Social Care
Models of Development	
Spiralling	Ladders
Circular	Successive
	Hierarchical
Participation *in what*? Practice and Context	
Process based	GANT charts
Action-research	Milestones
Hermeneutic cycles	Targets
Core groups	Steering groups
	Funding proposals detailing outcomes
Practice-based	Policy-driven
Fluid / organic / holistic	Fixed
Skills development	Training
Coloured models / diagrams	Participation Strategies / Policy
Images / Pictures	Reports / text
Workshops	Meetings
"Beings for themselves"	Service users / "articulate young people"
	Fragmented, top-down decision making
Collaborative learning	Expert Culture
Individualism	Uniform
Media as tools of research and representation	Media as marketing tools / promotion
Stories / counter narratives / reclaiming histories	Stories for fund-raising / promotional purposes
Participation in own development and self determination	Participation in service development / existing frameworks
Events to enable young people to define their realities and needs and to enable adults / professionals to "enter into their worlds"	Events that maintain conventional structures, message-laden performances
Role of the "development" worker	
Facilitator / collaborator	Social workers
	Managers
	Front-line workers
To facilitate ideas	To deliver an agenda / an employee of and extended arm to the organisation

New Understandings and Practice Development

These contrasts and contradictions have informed more specific ideas about how these paradigms differ and what my approach and techniques are and seek to offer. At Voice, as I felt increasingly frustrated by what I saw as tokenistic practice I focused my efforts on defining my practice, the different scales of work possible and the types of 'events' that can emerge. These 'methodology pages' built on the 'consultation model' I designed whilst at Connexions to define how the work can engage different groups for different time periods and yet remain 'child-centred and child-led'.[475] At Voice I also designed a participation pack in the attempt to identify what genuine and tokenistic practice is, in action.[476] At Connexions I designed models for an event to counter the types of cultures that troubled me within the conference planning that could represent an equal relationship between the young people and the provider.[477] As Kershaw explains below, in places of formalised power I was able to 'create currently unimaginable forms of association and action' and use these to better understand my own practice, theories and motivations in contrast and relation to these contexts. This is what he calls 'the transcendent sense of the radical'.

Methods of Transferring Practice: Fissures and Moments of Awe

> in any system designed by some to control others, there will almost always be a space for resistance, a fissure in which to forge at least a little freedom.….we should see them as crucially constituting the dramaturgies of freedom….That is why creative work which produces and exploits them is customarily an unwelcome challenge to authority, an unpredictable disruption of norms, a kind of playing with fire.[478]

Much to my surprise the development of applied arts practice within these frameworks became about creating *moments,* fissures within which to try to introduce a different way

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[475] See appendix 16 for the methodology pages; See appendix 17 for the consultation model; See appendix 18 for extracts of the participation pack; See appendix 12 for notes / sketches of this type of event
[476] See appendix 18 for extracts of the participation pack
[477] See appendix 12 for notes / sketches of this type of event
[478] Kershaw, B. 'Pathologies of Hope in Drama and Theatre' in Balfour. *Theatre in Prisons.* 2004. pp.35-36

of thinking and realise an alternative to dominant organisations of power. These 'moments' were brief and fleeting and demanded a clambering over different barriers, resistances and diversion tactics set up by those who felt the need to silence and stop me, because of what I represented. Within these moments there *were* changes, like a brief unveiling, a heightened awareness of where we all stood before the curtain once again dropped. O'Toole discusses the 'moments of awe' when the audience understands the significance of the experience in terms of its connections to the wider contextual frameworks and complexities of the roles and relationships engulfing these moments.[479] Working within these settings these 'moments' helped to unveil and reveal the realities of these contextual complexities. I realised that the work is about creating these 'fissures' rather then trying to find *the* context from which to launch the practice because the nature of the work is to respond to these types of resistances and work with them. These cultures are ingrained throughout British welfare systems and much wider as opposed to being contained within specific Social Services departments as I originally believed. The work is about researching, through practice, and negotiating change within each context through the moments that are created. This is an ongoing process whereby we learn more about the nature of oppression and the potential for this work as a tool of empowerment. It becomes a relationship of equilibrium as Kershaw helps to explain in the above extract.

The Alliance Meeting / Workshop, Engaging the Adults, Sculpting Roles

One of these fissures was created within the last Alliance meeting that I was involved with at Voice. This was one of the most effective experiences I had at communicating the importance of genuine, participatory practice. At this stage I was exhausted but wanted this meeting to try to demonstrate different ways of working. We held the meeting in a beautiful space. On arrival each of the professionals were asked to make a small sculpture to represent their role within the organisations they worked for and what they could offer to the Alliance. This proved to be an effective way of separating the role of the professional from the individual and unpacking how each of these individuals contributed to the frameworks within which they worked. Rather than just introducing your name and

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[479] Heathcote cited by O'Toole. *The Process of Drama*. 1992. p.233

title this exercise prompted a further analysis of 'what it is that you do' and how to effectively represent that through a constructed piece. These sculptures were left on a table as an 'offering' to the meeting; Their 'creators' were then free to join in on the meeting as individuals as well being prompted to be more critically aware of their relationship to the systems within which they worked. This technique adapted the declarations of identity developed in the children's homes and on the estates through mini-mes and by using sculpture to enhance a deeper awareness of *role* as the administrators of a wider-webbed arena.

Drama Games

I asked a friend and experienced drama practitioner to facilitate games between the adults and the young people before the meeting agenda officially started. Beautifully introduced and effortlessly changing from one to the other we played games that subtly required the sharing of power, trust and negotiation. We just 'did' these exercises and never stopped to analyse them or unpack their purpose. This workshop was one poignant moment during my time at Voice that I believe had a genuine impact on their understanding of participation and shared ownership. Some comments below from the adult participants help to illustrate the impact of these experiences:

> **Q. Please let us know your thoughts on today…**
> A. I haven't been to a meeting for a while and this was so much better combining fun and a more focused approach to the business.
>
> **Q. What did you get out of the session / what did it mean to you?**
> A. That it is possible for young people and adults to work together in a really constructive way [480]
>
> **Q. Please let us know your thoughts on today…**
> A. I came with serious reservations about the games etc. – <u>BUT</u> thoroughly enjoyed it and I think it helped more through business <u>effectively</u>
>
> **Q. Did you learn anything new? If so, what did you learn?**

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[480] Written feedback from Nicola Wyld, Policy Development Manager and my supervisor at Voice.

A. Yes…Not to be afraid of games

Q. What did you get out of the session / what did it mean to you?

A. Pleasure of working collectively…..[481]

This experience highlighted the importance of engaging higher management teams as 'the gate keepers' in collaborative, creative ways in order for the efficiency of the practice to be understood.[482] Other attempts at Voice had been less successful as explored below.

The Pillow of Power

When previously trying to explain the sharing of power at Voice I ran an internal workshop with the Blueprint in Practice team and other members of staff during which we played a game I named 'passing the pillow of power'. It was set-up much like pass-the-parcel. A parcel was passed around the group and unwrapped to reveal that it was a pillow labelled 'power'. My hopes were to demonstrate this as sharing / passing around *the power*. The message was lost when those involved saw the pillow as a 'prize'. At one point I had to rescue the pillow from a professional's handbag who wanted to take it home with her. In a context where power is seen as zero-sum this exercise proved to be an ineffective way of *transferring* the process and the ethos of the practice. As Etherton highlights, in the process of transferring these messages we cannot afford to replicate them:

> NGOs are very much addicted to 'messages'. If we are to link creativity to rational analysis we need a Rights-based TfD which is the opposite of 'message-laden' drama.[483]

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[481] Written feedback from Ian Vallender (NCVCCO).
[482] See appendix 19: for photographs of this meeting/workshop.
[483] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.116

At Connexions I tried to translate models and proposals for the conference in written form which seemed to further infuriate my line manager resulting in her binning these proposals in front of me. A brief 'fissure' *was* created when she came to visit us at the hotel during the training weekend. Entering into the 'ideas and inspiration membrane' she seemed shocked to discover the disarray within the room and confused by the presence of Morris and fifteen large African drums. I had created a huge coloured circular model on the floor to demonstrate to the group the different 'levels of consultation' we could engage young people within – in preparation for the conference as a way of gathering and collecting their stories.[484] I moved between each level/layer as the group offered ideas as to who we could work with, where and how. The manageress began to better understand the concepts I had been trying to translate in the written proposals and join us in these discussions. By presenting a collaborative, developmental model in this way she was able to understand and 'see' what was lost through the pieces of paper. Due to the ambiguity and opposing ideas as to what core concepts such as consultation and empowerment can mean - the reliance on this language alone to effectively communicate practice and approach is lost. Processes of translating this practice need to be participatory and empowering for it to be best understood.

Managing Expectations

This need to experience the work was realised within the context of the housing association. The community development team were able to experience the work directly, resulting in a lack of resistance or sense of threat. Their understanding 'grew' with the work and/or the work grew with them. I did not enter into the housing association with the same expectations from myself or the organisation as I did with Voice or Connexions and, as a result, the work began to emerge in the places it *could* arise from. It worked *with and within* the frameworks of the housing association and I was able to negotiate new spaces and acceptance from a place of practice based evidence. In Connexions and

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[484] See appendix 17 for this model.

Voice I expected to 'launch' my practice and believed that these organisations were dedicated to the same ideals and ethos that I was. I was particularly disappointed by, and critical of, what I witnessed at Voice because of their status within the field of child welfare and their arrogance about ethical practice. I was critical of their lack of critical consciousness in claiming to be a radical intervention into statutory service provision. Blinded by this disappointment I failed to be reflexive in my own approach to working with them and began to mirror their same cultures of moral indignation rather than 'starting from where they are at'.[485] When working for Connexions I believed I was there solely to develop my model and proposal and was outraged when this was not what I was wanted for. The horror of what emerged as dominant practice trends and the criticisms, restrictions and distractions to prevent me from working in this way evoked anger and disgust.[486]

Frames of Reference and Reflexive Practice

My shifts in understanding regarding these frameworks and where I sat within them has revealed that this research is not about empowering LAC by getting social care worlds to adopt these practices by making me an *expert* in doing them, but that this idea of young people 'versus' statutory services is more complex. The potential for this work was bound and defined by 'where' I was sat and issues of sustainability in terms of negotiating/facilitating an acceptance and understanding of these models as a relevant practice by those with an influence on practice development within existing welfare systems. There are not the divisions and differences I anticipated in terms of statutory services and children's rights agencies. Fundamentally, as with Etherton's observations of NGOs, they are all governed and controlled by the same socio-political history and ideologies about children 'in need' and welfare as a *provision*.[487]

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[485] Heathcote testifies for the importance of this when working with young people, I believe the same approaches are needed with adults.

[486] See appendix 20 for diary entries logging my despair; this particular theme is echoed by hooks who critiques her 'profound despair' when her work was dismissed by colleagues: hooks. *Teaching to Transgress*. 1994. p.72

[487] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. pp.97-121

Reflexive strategies in understanding these intricacies have enabled a gradual liberation from my own grievances that has given way to a deeper understanding of the possibilities. My awareness has been heightened in regards to the pragmatic tools and strategies required in generating a better understanding and acceptance of this work in these settings. Etherton discusses 'institutional and personal reflexivity' as a means of negotiating 'institutional transformation' from the starting point of the development worker within these frameworks. [488]

The significance of educating those working within these systems from an *experiential* view point is the potential liberation of their own ideas. There was no sustainability with the Blueprint project from the first phase onwards because the internal management did not understand and therefore were unable to *own* the work. They felt threatened and excluded from it and were therefore suspicious of this happening again. There needs to be more support to develop practice, without this being overlooked in the bid to stick to 'safe' yet crippling conventions. Most examples of 'participation' in these settings are simply replicating hierarchical models and scientific/clinical techniques with the novelty of young people 'sitting in the seats' of the professionals. Young people are being professionalized and colonised through these approaches. In the bid to be *useful* they are transformed into smaller versions of the 'oppressors'.

In contrast TfD work presents possibilities for young people to *be* young people and build on their innate skills, interests and concerns to participate in ways that are appropriate and relevant to them, as well as pursuing avenues of 'self development' in 'ways un-recoupable' by the system / the organisation and/or the agenda of the participation programme. Experiencing these models and approaches can be the only way of realising the potential for this type of work to help professionals, decision-makers, social care workers to realise what participation and empowerment can mean from a person-centred perspective. Adapted in the right way this work has the potential to help professionals to think more radically and creatively about what is relevant as well as thinking more critically about what approaches and methods assume and perpetuate power imbalances

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[488] *Ibid.* p.114

under the guise of liberation and empowerment. Without any real examples there are limited frames of reference for these cultures to shift because no alternative has been presented or is able to be conceived. I know only too well how working within these systems can blind you to the possibilities. Professionals need too to be liberated from 'professional helplessness' and able to understand and trust in the *fluidity* of this type of work. [489]

As a strategy, what is needed when attempting to develop arts based practice in these settings is a clear frame of reference understood by the agency. These settings are driven by a culture of fear, anxiety and competition and the need to attract funding and demonstrate usefulness, professionalism and expertise. If TfD and applied arts work is to work effectively *with* and *within* these areas, agencies need to be made to feel safe and able to recognise the relevance between their policies and this practice. In order for there to be a sustainable and long-term shift in practice, those who are seen to be leading on practice development, empowerment and participation need to feel able to own this type of work. This means they *too* have to experience it directly and be helped to make connections between its paradigms and their own areas of expertise and agendas. It was perfectly clear to Ted, from Main-place, how what we had done within the home directly related to 'Every Child Matters'. After I had lost the funding he attended a mandatory workshop on the green paper 'Every Child Matters' and was informed that, as front line workers, this must be adopted in their practice. He called me, frustrated by the links between what we had been doing in Main-place and this agenda. The workshop had been delivered by the Chair of the Children's Fund board who had given up on me and moved on. I needed to be pragmatic and patient in helping those within the broader frameworks to understand these ways of working and their potential efficiencies. This workshop was one example of many where the front-line workers are preached *to* about practice they struggle to realise within the restrictions of their role and examples of which they are assumed not to know.

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[489] As explored throughout Braye and Preston-Shoot. *Empowering Practice*. 1995.

Conclusions

I learnt that facilitation is something that does not stop when leaving groups of participants, but something that is integral to negotiating within these frameworks of power and influence and keeping the 'doors open' to opportunity. As Thompson explains 'it is all practice'.[490] 'Where' you sit in terms of your placement and your representation within these frameworks dramatically effects the types of resistances, challenges and problems you are faced with and the types of negotiations and techniques that are needed to evoke reflexivity, critical consciousness and *context-specific* development. In the children's homes this was about being able to be individual and celebrating identity as well as negotiating better relationships and forms of communication between groups. As this work interfaced within the homes a new culture started to emerge and was reflected in how groups interacted with one another. Working on a broader, institutional level what was important was the facilitation of the decision-makers' ideas, agendas and egos to help them accept and better understand democratic practice. They wanted the pieces of work I had presented to them from the children's homes but needed to understand the symbolism of this practice and its relationship to their own positioning in these frameworks, as did I.

The *transferring* of these ways of working has to begin at the same place of generating reflexive practice and negotiating power battles and ownership issues within these frameworks, as required when working with groups of young people. When working for Voice I was told I had 'ownership issues'. The truth was I could not 'give' them the practice because it required a transferring process that they needed to buy into rather than this being a palimpsest of my work onto their organisation.[491] Only a collaborative workshop could help to translate this effectively. When trying to bring young people with me into BIP planning meetings to speak for themselves about their ideas for the Blueprint phase 2, I was told it was 'not that type of meeting'.

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490 Thompson. *Applied Theatre.* 2003. p.34
491 Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.117

The agenda / policy of the setting and, if employed, your job description can become the 'frame of reference' within which you can begin to demonstrate practice that helps to translate and realise these concepts in their *material play*. Etherton describes this as creating 'images' rather than text. Thompson refers to this as learning the language of the setting. It is vital, if pursuing institutional transformation, which in this context is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of liberatory practice, that, as the facilitator, you are able to watch and recognise frames of reference relevant to these settings and in doing so are able to identify potential spaces and opportunities for paradigms to interface. Applied arts practice has to be seen to be relevant rather than contradictory, threatening and exposing. This is a core part of the research process that is integral to all TfD project work.

I realised that I needed to stop *imposing* my language and ideas *onto* these settings and the gate keepers and getting angry at what I saw as blatant contradictions within these frameworks. Instead I needed to meet them in a place of mutual recognition and help to generate a critical consciousness that did not feel like criticism. At times I risked acting as the 'depositor' of these messages rather than the collaborator and/or facilitator of ideas and ownership. I do not blame young people for reacting to and mirroring their own oppressions. When working with the adults, the decision-makers, I needed to be more prepared to do the same and stand by my own ethos of practice and approach by enabling them to experience it first-hand so that it was not an abstract-concept meant only for the young people. 'Reflexive practice' has allowed me to better recognise who I am, what I am there to do, how I too can be guilty of building barriers, throwing stones and professing my own expertise in the face of those who have resisted the work. As Etherton echoes:

> Expertise suggests that there is a correct way to do something. Often it then becomes the only way you can do it. An orthodoxy develops. Those who have previously worked in these areas in their own way begin to feel disempowered…[492]

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[492] *Ibid.*

Genuine TfD has to be about passing it back to the context and working towards the recognition of the innate skills that are in all of us. The potential for change on an institutional level exists within the opportunities for exchanges to take place; exchanges of ideas, areas of expertise, exchanges of power, stories and identities. As Kershaw discusses:

> one of the best places to look for some sources of radicalism is where the oppressions are at their most acute, at the heart of systems of formalised power.[493]

It is *within* the most oppressive contexts that the most radical ideas can emerge. This work has the potential to interface in ways that can create a whole new paradigm of practice as it finds ways to be of most use and impact within the multitude of areas and opportunities that could be made available. This handing over control of the process entails a deconstruction of the notion of expertise, both in 'theatre and drama expertise' and in 'development and human rights expertise'. The purpose of such a deconstruction is to transform our understanding of what constitutes expertise.[494]

This work is therefore not about preaching to social care paradigms about TfD practice or teaching them how to do it – or being hired to do it *for* them but about collaboratively exploring the possibilities for this type of practice in these paradigms and settings. As Chapter 8 examines through a proposal for ongoing work, what will make most use of this research is the further practical investigation into the potentials for this as a practice to impact on, shift, shape, develop and define how British care systems are 'delivered' and 'experienced'.

In Main-place, once the staff teams had been directly involved in the work they would come up with endless ideas and possibilities about what else we could do and what could happen next. Ted began to take hold of the process and use his own expertise and experience of the setting to invent context-appropriate ways of using the practice. He spoke about creating 'role reversal' experiences within the home and different models for

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[493] Kershaw. 'Pathologies of Hope in Drama and Theatre'. 2004. pp.36-37
[494] Etherton. 'West African Child Rights'. 2006. p.115

shared decision making between staff and young people. This work has the potential to *open up* discussion about praxis, to celebrate aspects of 'good practice' and to return back to the text with practice. As Etherton helps to exemplify in his discussions about creating a text for drama:

> We are all experts in spontaneity, once we see it in action……This perhaps explains why most improvisations go through a continuous transformation and then, at some point, they become fixed, completely stable, almost a text…It is though a moment of startling collective awareness was suddenly achieved during the improvisation process. Thereafter, the group seeks to repeat that moment of enlightenment, to capture that instance of awareness with new and different audiences. [495]

It is this focus on *exchanges* that will enable my research to make genuine changes in the search for new practice and the empowerment of looked after children.

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[495] *Ibid.*

Chapter 8

Summary of Findings and New Proposals

This research has examined the potential for applied theatre as a tool for empowerment for looked after children. Witnessing the ways in which arts practice can help looked after children to own their own stories, tell their own truths and be freed through creativity, within the first Main-place project, I have been driven and committed to developing this work so that other young people can experience these processes. With the consistent aim to build on the Main-place project and develop all that this early work revealed I have entered into a range of different settings constructed around the 'welfare' of children. In each of these settings deep-rooted patterns of deprivation, exclusion and forced interventions upon the lives and worlds of young people *in need* have illuminated harrowing and haunting trends. Learning how to make sense of these trends, to locate their socio-political and historical origins has been fundamental in understanding how applied theatre practice can make sustainable and meaningful impacts on these arenas.

Refining my skills as a reflexive practitioner has been a concurrent strand throughout my research. Knowing how to respond to and work in empowering ways with participants is one, significant part of the applied arts practitioner role, but not all. Finding ways to understand the broader political and cultural pressures on the immediate setting can enable the work to better understand 'the oppressor' and the complexities of the 'oppression'. My research journey as an ongoing action research model has continued to generate new theories and praxis around the central concern for the potential for applied theatre practice as a tool of empowerment of looked after children. *Who* these children are and where they come from has become clearer throughout my research.

Early on, I thought we just needed to keep putting on plays to better educate the 'decision makers' on what life was really like for young people living in the epicentre of institutionalised frameworks. I maintain a belief in the importance of voicing the counter narratives of these systems but my conclusions are also focused on a range of proposals

about how to impact on a number of contextual layers and audiences. This research, in its entirety, has revealed that the use of applied arts practice can create contexts for hope and radical freedom for participants and work outwards from that point to engage with a variety of boundaries and concentric frames that define the worlds of each participant. This work has wrestled with subverting relations of force, power and control so that agendas are re-centred around the individual child placing them in meaningful positions of influence.

Fig. 5 Subverting Relations of Force,
Re-centring Young People within Power Paradigms
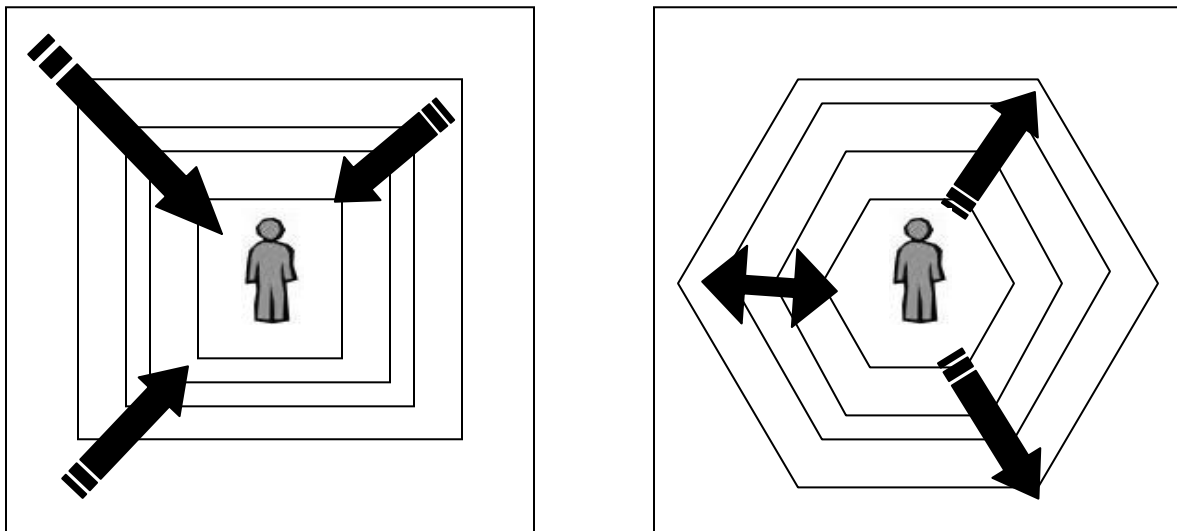
Trends of Disempowerment

As revealed by my research looked after children are locked into a system that historically views these young people as 'the problem' that needs to be repressed, segregated and contained. The contemporary care system is framed by a wider capitalist context which, as with the origins of these systems, is fixated on centralised control, global markets and domestication of expectations. The child welfare system is an arena within which the extreme contradictions between rhetoric and reality / policy and practice are played out. In the many secret settings, closed to a more general audience, the *real* attitudes and cultures of intervention and 'care' are magnified. Within the material play

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of processes used to access, categorise, 'correct' and colonise young people the 'ornamental rhetoric' of policies such as 'Every Child Matters' are exposed. The use of science, surveillance and the policing of both social workers and young people have emerged as strategic power techniques used by political apparatuses to tightly constrict the ability for either group to engage in critical thought, whole person approaches and/or the ownership of self.

My research has highlighted a complex web of de-contextualised and de-politicised procedures that continue to demoralise young people once within the care system and require a belief that these young people are 'less than fully human' in the administration of them. Extreme examples exist in the strip searching and physical restraints of young people. More subtle, but equally detrimental are procedures of tagging, dispersion acts, review meetings and complaint systems, among others. These trends emulate relations of force, cultures of silence, processes of institutionalisation and the use of myth making to justify the mistreatment of others. My research has examined the potential for applied arts practice to collaboratively research these realities and create work that is specific to the liberation of young people living within or existing on the margins of these interventionist systems. Working from the young person outwards, the *practice as research* has evolved a number of distinct applications and techniques that examine hope and radical freedom, relationships, communication, altering cultures of practice and countering dominant assumptions.

Practice as Research, Summary of Findings

My *practice-based* research has become *research through practice* in exploring current cultures within settings and examining, through ongoing practice, the potential for the work to act as a tool of empowerment. As such, the practice has existed as both 'the method and the goal'.[496] My research findings, therefore, epitomise new knowledge with regards to the role and pragmatic strategies of the researcher-practitioner working within

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[496] Kidd, R. 'Folk Media, Popular Theatre and Conflicting Strategies for Social Change in the Third World' in Kid, R. and Nat, C. (eds) *Tradition for Development: Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non Formal Education,* Berlin: German Foundation for International Education and International Council for Adult Education, 1981

these arenas, the specific uses and potentials for the work as a tool of empowerment, and the reflexive techniques in translating and transferring the practice throughout these arenas and their frameworks.

The Role of the Practitioner

The role of the practitioner, in light of my research, encompasses a number of distinct and interlocking considerations in managing the complexities of developing this work in settings where there is a lack of coherent understanding, examples or acceptance of applied arts based practice. These include: creating radical spaces, negotiating within different frameworks, learning the 'language' of the context, remaining aware of issues of commodity and colluding, being inventive in introducing new languages and forms. Each of these considerations has defined my role as the applied arts practitioner working within this arena. Without a balance of these considerations I realised the work could become too much of one thing and not reflexive enough in its ability to remain culturally appropriate and/or person and context specific. This knowledge has been informed by this research as a 12 year process of reflexive practice in collaboration with a mass of practical project work. A critical understanding of how each of these considerations forges an ongoing dialectical relationship is what enables this work to remain ethical and unfixed in its assumptions and techniques. As a 'critical teacher' the practitioner needs to be able to demonstrate this approach in order to represent and define a more specific, critical and reflexive way of working. My research has informed how I needed to work in order to *represent* an alternative practice culture as well as being able to develop applied theatre practice.

New Languages

Throughout my research I have developed a range of new techniques to help manage my personal responses to these settings. Diary writing, sculpting and drawing have featured as specific tools to enable me to make sense of and see the boundaries, frames and new potentials for the practice. Faced with complex and contradictory arenas my return to a

basic conceptualisation of the participant groups, the relevant audience/s and culturally appropriate modes and forms for communication has enabled me to remain rooted by TfD models. New languages and forms for the practice have been developed collaboratively with young people. It has been particularly important for me to stay abreast of new trends, such as graffiti, animation and break-dancing to ensure the work remains *current* with regards to new youth cultures and languages. This echoes Hughes' assertions for the need for the work to be imaginative and relevant.[497]

As the practitioner I have experimented with new tools, frames, performance contexts and mediums to enable this work to remain culturally appropriate and context specific. An early example within one of the children's homes taught me never to assume one project will take the shape of another. Sometimes the 'relevant audience' is not 'the professional' but the community within the home; sometimes a 'show' takes the form of an interactive experience whereby the audience walks amongst the worlds of the young people rather than being spoken *to* or performed *in front of;* sometimes the work is a private and personalised process of inner discovery requiring no audience at all.[498]

Potentials for my uses of Applied Theatre as an Empowerment Tool

My research has examined the potential for applied theatre as a tool for empowerment for looked after children and, in interrogating this central aim, has illuminated the specific frameworks of power / disempowerment that surround them. This has resulted in a number of new ideas as to what 'empowerment' for looked after children means both as personalised process of radical freedom and through work that outreaches to relevant audiences requiring cultural and attitudinal shifts. My work has developed specific strategies to enable young people in care to 'come to voice' as well as examining *who* needs to 'hear' these voices and *how* these testimonies need to impact on and alter current cultures of practice and dominant theories.

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[497] Hughes. 'Made to Measure?' 2009. p.223
[498] Nadeau, R. 'Using the Visual Arts to Expand Personal Creativity' in Warren. 2008. p.48

My work within children's homes has examined the use of applied theatre to enable young people to take ownership and control over the development of pieces of work and, in doing so, regain authorship and authority over processes of self determination and declarations of identity. By reframing rigid, non creative contexts as radical, creative spaces, looked after young people have been liberated through play, open-ended agendas and processes within which they can mould and shape meanings through new and person-specific languages. This use of the work has addressed experiences of loss of control and loss of identity.

My practice has examined the potential for applied theatre practice to create spaces for the innate skills and inner resources of young people to act as a central impetus for practice. In collaboration with young people I have developed a number of games and processes that focus on enabling young people to create 'declarations of identity', such as the 'mini-mes' sculptures, to celebrate the diversities of people and help young people to better understand themselves as a counter to processes of homogeneity and dehumanisation. Through practice this work has explored how applied arts praxis can re-train and equip young people with a better sense of self and resilience by valuing their innate skills and complexities as people.

My practice has framed young people in positions of influence to counter closed decision making processes inherent within these settings. In contexts that prevent them from engaging in critical reflective processes *we* have developed activities to research their worlds and project their individual theories and narratives through new and specific aesthetic frames. My work in children's homes created opportunities for young people to consider and celebrate who they are. By asking young people what they would like to change, what's good about where they live and what's not so good, this adaptation of applied arts practice has enabled participants to engage in processes of critical reflection and identify their specific sources of oppression.

Through narrative therapy based work I have helped young people to regain authorship and authority over their histories and stories as a counter to procedures that strip them from their identity kits and treat them as *beings for others*. This practice has examined the potential for play, escapism and the creative process as a site of resistance within the rigid setting of children's homes. The practice has created opportunities for young people to better understand their own narratives by hearing their own voices and introduced a range of languages through which to do so. By creating new spaces for play and experimentation young people have been able to regain control over space and time and their own bodies and reconnect with childhood explorations. In this context, with this group, this practice has represented radical freedoms and hope by dismantling apparatuses of repression and re-centring young people at the heart of the work.

Relationships, Communication

This work has demonstrated how, by enabling young people to have ownership over their unique marks and processes of critical consciousness, the group dynamics within home settings can be greatly improved. By creating the space for young people to construct understandings of their complexities as people the webs of inter-relationships are realised to enhance a vision of how we are different and similar to others, as opposed to these settings being fuelled by peer competition, suppression and resentment.

By engaging communities within the home through collective, creative encounters, staff and young people were brought together through play and shared missions. By reframing spaces as creative contexts and re-centring work around *talents* and *skills* staff and young people were able to work collaboratively beyond the roles that distort and disrupt their interactions. By using the practice to collaboratively research, critique and represent back the life cycles, cultures and 'good times' to the home, this work has demonstrated how practice can create spaces of personal and collective reflexivity as well as capturing and championing examples of good practice.

In the contexts of the estates, creative, collective encounters brought fragmented and segregated groups together both within and between different estates and between the estates and the decision-makers of the housing association. On the estates the young people functioned as researchers and collaborators central to specific projects, helping to reframe them as pivotal, rather than excluded and segregated, from their communities. Other projects united groups of young people from different estates through events that celebrated their unique and specific skills, as well as providing opportunities for them to reflect on their shared and specific worlds and realities. Within the internal structures of the housing association photography exhibitions and show-back events helped to re-humanise young people perceived as 'the problem' and develop relationships between 'provider' and 'receiver' based on their real, rather than perceived needs.

Practice Cultures, Research and Representation

My work has altered practice cultures both within the children's homes and on the estates. In Hampshire, collaborative work with young people and staff demonstrated new possibilities and I witnessed new cultures of practice emerging as a result. Special evenings to mark the moving on of residents, poetry presentations from members of staff to the young people, photo-montages of residents and staff, past and present, and fancy dress parties were some of the small, but significant changes, that began to independently materialise. Once a 'radical space' had been created within the regime of the home the confidence and inventive use of performance and theatre based approaches grew organically.

Within the housing association setting shifts in practice cultures remain evident, as a result of the 'Summer in Da City' and 'Stars in Our Yard' projects, across a number of estates. My practice recreated the concepts of *development, research, intervention* and *provision* by demonstrating the efficiency of skills based workshops and TfD models. This use of the work altered practice cultures that previously treated young people as *recipients* of paternalistic and tokenistic provision by demonstrating the efficiency of arts practice to engage young people in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways. Using

presentations within the frameworks of the wider organisation I have attempted to counter dominant theory and 'expertise' by demonstrating grass-root, context specific *praxis*. This adaptation of the work was initiated by community development team films and has been further contextualised through workshops with foster carers and 'designated teachers'.[499]

Through the development of a plethora of new techniques that are creative, collaborative and relocate the young people into positions of influence my practice-based research has adapted the original pedagogical model and methods designed by the children's homes for use on a number of different sites. Mini-mes, photo-voice, sculptures of worlds, big brother diary rooms have demonstrated the creative explorations of narrative therapies as context specific tools.

Wider Cultural Views, Countering Dominant Assumptions

My work has revealed the potential for this practice to impact on and alter wider societal views of looked after children and other marginalised groups. In the Romany Gypsy project a varied audience watched their play with the post performance discussion opening up new lines of communication between the Romany Gypsy community and the wider world. The young people, and their families who sat within the audience, were able to answer questions and educate misconceptions starting from a place of pride and liberation.

In the first Main-place project the show-back event united a room of disparate and compartmentalised departments that work on fragmented aspects of child welfare in one place representing, through these aesthetics, 'a whole-person approach' with the narratives of the young people re-positioned as their central focus. The event re-humanised the young people from an abstract concept of numbers, stock, statistics and budget demands into real people, children with *individual theories* and unique needs.

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[499] These are teachers within schools with the specific responsibility for overseeing the LAC who are attending that setting.

Work on the estates expanded on these themes by bringing the faces and voices of the young people on the estates into the organisational framework through photography and film. The use of in-house exhibitions provided the wider teams with a visual reminder of those often considered as 'the problem'. In more recent work my practice has explored the potential to educate wider, cross cultural audiences through events that re-instated the ownership of public spaces to young people. These practice examples illuminate the potential of the work to project counter narratives and the real world views of excluded young people through creative public spectacles.

Translating, Transferring Techniques and Strategies

New strategies in how to best *translate* and *transfer* this work within these arenas have informed new theory as to what constitutes the culturally appropriate translation of practice at varying contextual layers. Booklets and films have helped me to carry evidence of the work into new settings to inform commissioners of the work. These booklets also enabled the *faces and voices* of young people to remain visible within the sub concentric frames of immediate settings and for this type of practice to be framed as something they do and adhere to.

Work within Voice, as a particularly resistant and suspicious setting, highlighted the need for trust-based and power-sharing games to help the 'gate keepers' to *experience* this type of work. The process of *translating* needs to use the same languages of the practice in order for the work to be best understood. In the same way, the *language* that frames the setting in terms of dominant policy, practice standards and organisational agendas needs to be met with examples of practice to assure gate keepers and commissioners that the work is relevant. There is no *one* way of translating, transferring and/or transcending the practice. My research revealed the need to consistently engage different audiences and concentric frames of power and influence to help these bodies to understand the significance of the practice. This is an integral part of a reflexive cycle in adapting this work as a sustainable influence.

When 'just' impressing the commissioners but failing to effectively share the work with line managers, the practice got lost and fell victim to the ever-encroaching arm of the dominant agenda that demanded the work feature as a commodity and promotional tool. In the process of *translating* the practice, the practitioner needs to remain vigilant to relevant audiences and context-appropriate ways of enabling border crossings. In the process of *transferring,* professionals have to feel in control of new, emerging practice trends. By engaging them in person-specific ways, starting with a process that liberates them, they will be able to understand the potential of the practice to liberate others.

New Proposals; Capturing and Translating Existing Examples of Praxis

My research has revealed a culture of *deskilling* and *disempowerment* through top-down directions of theory reinforced by research as something *done to* others. There is a wealth of knowledge as to 'what works' that is silenced and curtailed by scientific and systematic cultures of practice. I believe we need to capture the examples of good/ethical practice that happens within this field and use these examples to translate and define abstract theory through a model of praxis.

I am reminded of the youth worker, working alone and isolated with feeble resources under the consistent threat of cuts, who creates a safe space for young people, against the odds. These are the real experts who, by listening to and engaging young people in culturally appropriate ways, help young people to make sense of their lives and nurture the internal resources in a climate that seems intent on stripping these from them. A research project that could create a space for these workers and young people to define what constitutes 'empowering practice' could begin to translate a vision of pedagogy and praxis from grass-roots perspective rather than top-down directions of theory.

The artistic endeavour that is overlooked by policy makers and assumed through abstract theory needs to be re-politicised and contextualised. The lack of vision and frames of reference about what constitutes genuine, empowering practice needs to be radicalised through grass-root examples. There are many multi-disciplinary examples of good

practice and not enough emphasis on the pedagogy of these projects. By championing and translating this work we can begin to alter top-down reactive cultures that destroy and disrupt 'whole-person' approaches.

Creative Partnerships, Social Pedagogies

Using the Social Pedagogies model as an established frame of reference, applied arts practice needs to be developed across Social Work training contexts and within residential children's home settings. The work that developed organically within the children's homes demonstrated the potential for an *artist in residence* model to enhance these often oppressive, rigid and formal settings. This work, as witnessed by my research, can impact on the well-being and recovery of LAC as well as improving relationships and constructing a 'critical practice framework' to enable creative, reflexive practice to evolve.

Partnerships between arts workers and residential children's homes can continue to develop multi method *research through practice* to demonstrate child-centred pedagogy and praxis. We need to avoid front-line workers feeling patronised and dictated to by yet another theory. Project work in these settings needs to consider culturally appropriate ways to transfer applied theatre based approaches and models to enable staff to take hold of this type of practice. Applied arts within the context of children's homes can liberate both young people and staff to re-engage with their innate skills and inner resources, helping to create contexts within which development and care can become processes owned and defined by young people and their carers. Work within these settings can create cultures of exchange between practitioners, staff members and young people to demonstrate and realise two-way communication methods and fluid procedures.

O'Connor's multi-disciplinary project work across a number of different schools demonstrates this proposal for a partnership between arts practitioners, social workers, front-line workers, teachers and parents. Through these partnerships applied arts

paradigms and social care workers can continue to exchange knowledge and begin to develop context specific approaches towards child centred practice.

Estate based work, Conflict Resolution

My work on and across inner-city estates highlighted how deprived these young people are of opportunities and spaces to play and develop positive relationships. These young people are neglected by parents, systems and society and left to struggle in dangerous and hostile environments. My use of TfD models and skills-based workshops has demonstrated the potential for this work as a tool for conflict resolution within inner city areas. Further work across different estates that focuses on uniting rival gangs and creating safe spaces for them to make sense of their worlds is vital in combating existing territorial wars. By enabling young people to engage in critical, creative practice, inter-relations between those previously deemed as 'the enemy' can be made. These young people are trapped without the opportunity to critique their worlds, be children or feel in control of their situations. They are stigmatised and demonised; they therefore look for acceptance and protection in gangs.

> It's about who's more powerful than who. That's why people kill each other….
> I got out of it because I was given a chance. I was raised all my life to think I was
> worthless…A lot of middle-class people think that gangs are untouchable and youths are
> unreachable, but that's not the case-these 13 and 14-year-old boys are scared, they are
> looking for guidance and they're going to anyone who can provide it, whether that's a 30-
> year-old gang leader or a 20-year-old church member [500]

Their power battles reflect the wider relations of force and capitalist cultures of competition and violence that surround and define their exclusion from the wider world. Projects such as 'Big Fish' and 'Kids Company' need to be broadened and replicated with a specific focus on projecting these counter narratives to illuminate structural and

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[500] Extract from interviews with ex gang members in England: de Castella, T. 'They Put a Gun to the Back of my Head. I Heard them Cock it. It Jammed'. *The Guardian Weekend.* 24 November, 2007. pp.27-34

cultural oppressions.[501] There needs to be critically conscious arts based practice that creates radical spaces for young people to engage in reflexive project work and enables them to become active participants against their specific and shared sources of oppression. The youth riots of August 2011 demonstrated a coming together through a shared aim that crossed over normal territorial lines and gang perimeters. TfD models need to harness this potential and power in ways that liberate these young people living on the margins beyond acts that collapse back into capitalist constructions.

Creative Spaces, Collaborative Classrooms

As arts practitioners and critical teachers we need to continue to create fissures, radical spaces within which to project the voices of the counter narratives, and facilitate processes of critical thought and action within social care arenas. As the myths and abstract theories continue to be constructed and driven downwards throughout these apparatuses we need to create counter-spheres created to illuminate the contradictions. Without the 'torturers' being confronted by their actions and helped to visualise an alternative culture of practice, the machine will continue to pick up speed. Conferences, training events, public spectacles, work within and on the outside of these arenas must continue to disrupt and inform neat lines of understanding and insidiously authoritarian assumptions. Boal's work and Geese Theatre Company are two useful examples of applied arts practice that continues to work in a range of settings creating critical contexts for reflexive praxis. This type of work needs to be developed in social care contexts in work with looked after children.

The Interactive Exhibition as a Counter-sphere and Radical Space

The 'Interactive Exhibition'*,* as a model, encapsulates specific strategies for individual and institutional reflexivity to 'dissolve relations of power' through the 'recognition of

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[501] See appendix 21 for an extract about my experiences working with Big Fish.

people's dignity'.[502] As a collection of person-specific reflexive processes and collaborative, creative encounters this model represents the in-context event of this research project as a whole. In many ways my proposal for this event, as detailed in full in Appendix 22, is symbolic of the event that was never allowed to happen whilst building on workshops and events which did take place.[503] It is an adaptation of the 'Labyrinth model' in 1966 and, throughout its structure it epitomises my proposals for ongoing work, in one place. [504]

> the *interactive* nature of the maze encourage[s] participants not simply to submit to that order, to become its object, but to explore its expressive potential *with* its inhabitants, to become an agent in the creation of its 'culture'.[505]

The exhibits and encounters within the exhibition draw on a range of mediums and modes of communication. As *participants* the audience will be fundamental in moulding and shaping the event. Clowning, comedy and carnivalesque performance and media forms will be mixed with real footage, photography and documentation of actual events. These multiple styles and forms demonstrate the versatility of performance-based techniques to magnify contextual contradictions whilst treating audience members as active participants in realising an alternative vision. The exhibition is concerned with *merging the divisions* within society's structures by engaging a mixed audience of social care professionals, policy writers, teachers, parents, young people, members of the public – to create contexts for 'two-way communication' and to counter media frenzied 'moral panics' by exposing the hidden realities of 'total institutions'.

At the heart of the exhibition are areas within which looked after young people, excluded groups, estates can recreate their worlds and demonstrate what life is really like for them. I am interested in bringing to light the hidden worlds of the STCs through reconstructions of these spaces and the projection of the counter narratives of the young people and staff

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[502] Holloway, J. *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today.* London: Pluto Press, 2005. pp.17-18
[503] See appendix 22 for more detailed plan of the Interactive Exhibition Model.
[504] As discussed by Kershaw. *The Radical in Performance.* pp.189-216.
[505] *Ibid.* p.211

trapped within them.[506] The exhibition is committed to reconnecting adults with childhood, creativity and the realities of those demonised by contemporary British society. This design represents the use of art as a counter-sphere to make visible and strange the dominant assumptions that control society by engaging participants in liberatory experiences and moments of awe.

> integrative critical language are fundamental to creating shared critical public spaces that engage, translate and transform the country's most vexing social problems.[507]

Where Have We Arrived?

The riots of August 2011 were significant in epitomising where we have arrived in terms of young people acting out against the oppressions they experience. Many of the accounts captured from of these young people echoed their collective hatred of the police whilst the act of looting reflected a capitalist culture of 'haves' and 'have-nots'. The riots represented a 'violent cycle of revolution and counter-revolution' and hooks' ideas that 'in all cultural revolutions there are periods of chaos and confusion'.[508] There was a deep significance in the large numbers of young people striking out at the police who have been placed at the front-line of youth intervention for the past 12 years. Kershaw's critiques of the youth riots in 1981 also help to pinpoint the concurrent trends in these 'public spectacles' 30 years on.[509]

My proposals as to how to develop this work in light of my extensive and expansive research reflect the use of drama, theatre, collective, creative encounters and the opening up of these *closed institutions* to more public, multi-disciplinary audience. It has also been particularly important for me to formulate these findings through an event proposal, to return to and re-engage with the TfD model and the idea of an 'in-context event'.

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[506] See DVD 8, clip 1 for examples of these counter narrative interviews; this link shows animations made with incarcerated young people about 'Life inside': http://www.howardleague.org/films/ produced by Howard League, www.howardleague.org on 3/01/2011

[507] Giroux and Shannon. 'Cultural Studies and Pedagogy'. 1997. p.8

[508] Prentki, T. *Making Neoliberalism History, Keynote Address for Creative Encounters Conference:* Liverpool Hope. 17 and 18 September, 2005. p.7; hooks. *Teaching to Transgress.* 1994. p.33

[509] Kershaw. *The Politics of Performance.* 1992. p.96

This research calls for a development of *practice* within welfare settings and the creation of spaces to continue to marry the worlds of applied arts practice and social care work. For this to happen there needs to be ongoing research into the potential for both disciplines to work together. Child welfare arenas are complex and the possibilities for applied arts work within them is wide-ranging. Negotiation and trust are imperative to enabling these opportunities to open-up. We therefore need to 'go gently' and 'take them with us' in understanding that these approaches can aid a more reflexive, fluid, critical practice and bring improvements to a system that is currently buckling under the pressure of unachievable and inhumane demands.

This work has looked at the potential for this practice to bring about change on an individual, collective, organisational and cultural-societal level. The macro potential exists in how arts based practice, as an approach and as a *lens,* can continue to be used to challenge globalising trends by working in person-specific ways. What has motivated me most are those I have met and worked with along the way. The criminal waste of social care workers burnt out and exhausted by trying to work in ethical ways whilst being crushed by corrupt capitalist global models was horrifying. There is so much talent wasted. Most life-changing were the world views of young people, so honest and simple in their hopes to have somewhere to play or able to speak up about what is really going on for them.

> to have our descriptions of ourselves validated, to have access to the domain within which we can control and define those images which are held up as reflections of our realities.[510]

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[510] Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* 1999. p.35

Appendix 1.a
Reflexive Sketches and Sculptures

Appendix 2

The 'Mini Me' Consultation Event

I was commissioned by Hampshire Social Services and Hampshire Children's Fund to organise a consultation event with young people in care around 'preventative measures'. In essence this brief was to consult young people in care on 'what went wrong' in their own lives so that social services teams could prevent these same mistakes happening to others.

Working with the CAT team and residents of Main-place children's home we decided to construct the day around the currently popular 'Austin Powers' film and to focus the day on creating and looking after a 'mini-me'.[511] 'Mini-me' was a character within the film and renowned at the time. As a smaller version of a main character in the film the concept of making a 'mini-me', in this example, encompassed making a smaller version of oneself though not an exact replica. The 'mini-mes' therefore provided a useful 'frame' through which we could explore specific ideas.

All the facilitators dressed up in 1960s costume and decorated the space like the inside of a lava lamp.[512] When the young people arrived we invited them to raid the dressing-up box and have their faces painted too, helping to create an immediate sense of chaos and 'protection' through costume. The first part of the day focused on using different arts based activities to encourage the young people to create their own 'mini-mes' as well as becoming familiar with different mediums and feeling at ease with each other. Different exercises were used to develop their 'mini-me's' characteristics and diversities and to build on the basic templates they had been given to humanise their 'mini-me' forms.[513]

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[511] The CAT = care action team is made up care leavers and older young people in care. The residents of Main-place were mainly older girls aged 14 – 16 years.
[512] Full title: 'Austin Powers, international man of mystery', 1997.
[513] This character development is resonant of Thompson's blag techniques.

The second part of the day presented different situations and dilemmas to challenge the young people to make decisions about how to help their 'mini-mes' within specific scenarios. The participants were presented with different dilemmas that required them to think about how to best help their 'mini-mes' relating to the areas the commissioners wanted answers on. Using role play, hot-seating, film work and discussion to explore different responses and decision making processes the young people became the carers and the decision makers for their 'mini-mes'.

This example represents ways of being inventive in exploring relevant ideas with the young people without asking them to list 'what went wrong' in their own lives. By reversing the roles of them becoming the carer we explored how they would 'look after' their 'mini-me' and what they considered as 'good' parenting and intervention. This approach reflects the use of contracts, framing and participatory research models that treats young people as the experts.

girl's learn this. That on Thursday

Language

Lecker = Don't
Roker = Say
Chuvvi = Person you
Baulers, gavers, PIGS, = police
Auving = Coming
Rocker = Say
nicksee's = nothing
morvght = Woman
mush = man
Pani = water
Awni = Deer
Shushi = Rabbit
inger = Smell
Jackell = dog
Canny = Pheasant
Packley = ~~the~~ girl
hedgehog = Hotchi
fire = yog
Horse = Grai
Dordee = Surprise
Scran = Dinner food
Kitchimer, ten = house
Runner = track
tredeler = bike
Gell = move, Go
Hawking = earning money.

umm

Her bestest dream is of swimming
with dolphins ● in america on
hoiladay.
Her favourite couler is green + Purple
because green where I found
her in (bag) purple her bed cover!
(bed-cover from around dice thing)
Her favourite story is ● goblins
in the gutter A story we both
made up together.
she is in love with ● gozzle
Another goblin in godbey house.
when shes upset she cries
+ stamps her feet. But she
calms down half hour later.
Something that no-other goblin
knows is that ● shes a
secret agent ●

CLAIRE ●●●
Sorry, this hasn't
been finished YET!!!
But I've enjoyed
it! Thankyou!
Not all the
dice questions
have been
completed
just at the
moment and
they are inside
the story.
Thankyou Again
COME AGAIN SOON PLEASE!

mC-GOZZLE

my home THE BRIDGE

Appendix 5
Katherine's* letter

09 . 1 . 04

Dear persons, my name is ███████████, im
16 in 3 weeks and i live in a
childrens home called milesdown i have lived
here for 2 years and i have known claire
for 2 years and she has really helped me , we
have done lots of workshops like drama
ones at southampton football club, we
have made a film of red brick house and
we would like to act out our film on stage
which you could be invited to, i would also
like to carry on along my photo exibition
of me and my world at milesdown which
will help me when i move on to keep
memories of goodtimes here, i fell that
us kids in care dont get enough oppertunity
to do workshops and stuff that we want
to do and all of us kids and staff think
that this is benefical for us because it
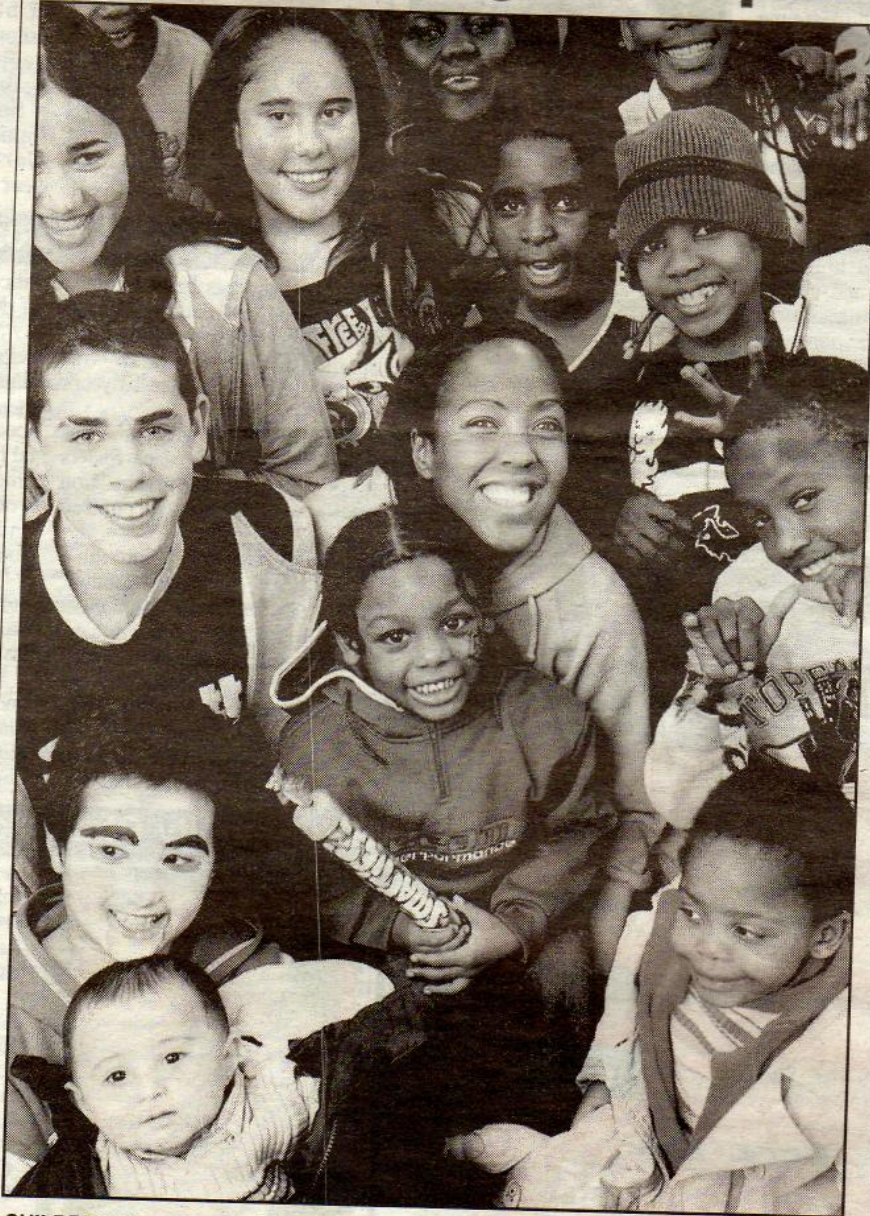helps us to express our feelings
please write back to tell me
what you think
yours sincerly
KMilly .

255

BBC's Bell brightens open da[y]

Ange[llica]
Bell a[t]
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nity C[en-]
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Pictu[re]
S[...]
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CHILDREN at a community centre open day was thrilled to discover that television star Angellica Bell was among the guests.

Miss Bell, a BBC presenter of children's programmes, laughed and joked and sat children on her knee at Friary Park Community Centre on the Friary Park Estate in Acton. The day was organised by Friary Park Community Association to get people on the estate more involved in their community.

The highlight of the open day was an exhibition and films by six groups which currently use the centre.

Appendix 10.a
Newspaper Articles about the Forches Estate Project Work

Dispelling the myths

■ IN THE MIX: Jason Quinn and Neil Lewin explain plastering to youngsters from Forches Youth Group. Picture: Rob Tibbles. To order this photograph call 0844 4060 262 and quote Ref: BNRT20110222A-006_C

YOUNG people from Forches are hoping an exhibition will help dispel the myth they are "bad kids".

Members of the Forches Youth Group will display art work at the Lighting Up The Museum exhibition in Barnstaple next month.

The theme is perceptions of young people and it was inspired by members of the youth group who say they are often misrepresented because of where they come from.

Earlier this week youngsters from the youth group attended a free fibrous plastering workshop at Petroc with senior construction tutor Jason Quinn.

Students created hand and foot prints in plaster casts for a display inspired by the Hollywood walk of fame.

Tuesday McManus, 16, from Forches Avenue, said: "The workshop has been great and we've learned a lot from Jason.

"Living in Forches can be a rough ride. As soon as you mention that you're from Forches people treat you differently and speak badly about the area.

"We want to change this with the exhibition and show people how creative we can be."

Lead youth worker Andie Scilly added: "I work with 120 young people in Forches who are interesting, articulate and awesome and we want others to see that too."

The Lighting Up The Museum exhibition takes place at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon on Saturday, March 12.

Appendix 10.b
Newspaper Articles about the Forches Estate Project Work

visit our website **thisisnorthdevon.co.uk**

what's on

Cinema

See museum in a different light

GET ready to see Barnstaple's museum as you've never seen it before. The Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon will be showered in lights and original animations as part of a play project running at the venue.

The event on Saturday, March 12 promises to be a sight to behold, as lighting effects, short films and animations, created by a group of young people and youth workers from Forches Youth Club, will be projected large-scale onto the museum building between 6.30pm and 8.30pm, with the help of Bristol's ES Projections.

In the spring of 2010, Playworkers at North Devon Museum asked multi-media theatre company Forkbeard Fantasy to help Forches Youth Club experiment with film making and animation. In a project that steadily gathered pace, AimhigherStrand 5 funding was secured which meant that the youngsters from Forches Youth Club were able to develop their animations and drawings.

Claire MacNeill of Aimhigher Strand 5, said: "We're delighted to be involved in this project – a project that ties in

with a reoccurring theme that has emerged from other work with Forches Youth Club, about how they are seen and the way in which they are perceived by the local community. The fact that the end result is to be such a public display of their obvious talents and skills as a group is just fantastic."

Penny Saunders, designer and set builder at Forkbeard Fantasy has been thrilled with the young people's creativity.

"They really threw themselves into the whole project. We've experimented with Plasticine, drawings and even getting into character with full dress and make-up for a short entitled The Haunted Museum which we're all excited about."

On Saturday, March 12 the museum will remain open from 10am until 8.30pm and there will be a display of additional work created as part of the project inside the building.

The Lighting Up Of The Museum will take place from 6.30pm. Although the project has a core group of young people from the Forches Youth Group, various other youth groups from the community have been involved with the project.

■ LIT UP: Lighting Up The Museum takes place on March 12.

From 2pm the Movie Bus will be in the Square, showing films throughout the afternoon and into the evening. One of these films will showcase snap-shots of young people through the

ages, as well as bringing this up to date with behind-the-scene images of the Forches group project. Teas, coffee and light refreshments will be available.

The entire event is free to attend and organisers are looking forward to providing the opportunity for young people to cast both themselves and the museum in a whole new, and

very creative, light.

For further information about the event phone the North Devon Museum on 01271 346747 or visit the website www.northdevontheatres.org.uk

Hollywood rom-com and action thriller

NDJ-E01-S2

Museum sees the light

By JOEL COOPER
jcooper@c-dm.co.uk

MORE than 200 spectators packed Barnstaple Square to watch the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon "come to life".

The Light Up The Museum event saw colourful video images projected onto the building on Saturday.

There was also an art exhibition in the building which took the theme of negative perceptions of young people.

All of the work was created by young people from North Devon.

The event was the idea of lottery-funded body Play UK which worked closely with the local branch of Aimhigher and the Forches Youth Group.

Andie Scilly, lead youth worker with Forches Youth Group, said: "It was a great event, very loud and colourful.

"The museum came to life as we projected model clay animations, stop motion photography and a film made with Lego characters onto the building."

Forches Youth Group member, Tuesday McManus, 16, said the event offered young people from the estate a chance to show the rest of the town how creative they can be.

She said: "We get a bad rap from a lot of people and this is largely caused by a minority of people who live at Forches.

"This event gave us a chance to show people that we're not all like that. It was great fun making the videos and even better seeing them projected onto such a large canvas."

The exhibition also featured work from students from Park Community College, Marland School in Torrington, Barnstaple Pupil Referral Unit and members of Bideford Youth Group.

The North Devon Movie Bus was also on hand to screen film work from local youngsters.

Around £5,000 of the event's funding came from Aimhigher, a Government initiative which aims to get young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into further education.

Last week the **Journal** reported that Aimhigher in North Devon was due to come to an end in July this year after having much of its funding cut from central Government. In the past year, Aimhigher has worked with more than 650 young people in North Devon.

Claire MacNeill, Aimhigher coordinator for North Devon, said: "There's no other service like this locally and events like Light up the Museum wouldn't see the light of day without Aimhigher funding.

"These cuts are ripping the belly out of society and the impact will be tragic."

Andie Scilly added: "Aimhigher has been invaluable to us and provided more than £10,000 worth of funding. The loss of Aimhigher will have huge implications for the group."

■ ENTERTAINMENT: A juggler (above) helps light up the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon along with other illuminations (top).
Picture: Rob Tibbles. To order this photograph call 0844 4060 262 and quote Ref: BNRT20110312G-005_C

Appendix 11
Extract of Children's Fund Service Specification

SERVICE SPECIFICATION:

Creative Consultation, Empowerment through Communication, April 2003

Aims and Objectives

This project will focus on the exclusion of young people and help them to identify why exclusion occurs. The project will empower young people to make positive changes in their lives and in the lives of others. By providing opportunities for young people to effectively communicate their views and translate their feelings and experiences, a better understanding for all can be achieved.

The project will incorporate all five of the Children's Fund strategic themes and use these to ensure the complexities of these focuses are equally addressed. Young people from all identified **hard to reach** groups will be engaged throughout the process and will maintain equal ownership over of the development of the project.

The project will strive to *re* introduce excluded groups to their surrounding communities and the wider society by enabling them to represent themselves through positive, powerful and proactive forums.

The project will map the young people's development throughout the programme and will implement methods of monitoring and assessing the personal and social development of all those involved. The project will focus on setting up independent, *young people led* groups which are able to regenerate sustainable influences on their lives and the lives of others 'like them'.

Aims:
- To improve the lives of young people, enabling them to help improve the lives of others
- To inform relevant agencies, wider community and peer groups of *real* the needs and concerns of young people
- To enhance the life chances of young people and prevent them from embarking on criminal activities
- To encourage supportive networks between young people and enable them to share their experiences
- To inform current models of practice and to develop 'better practices' which are informed and co-designed by young people
- To raise the profile of **hard to reach** groups and to enhance their individual feelings of self worth
- To teach new skills among the young people and all those involved in their lives
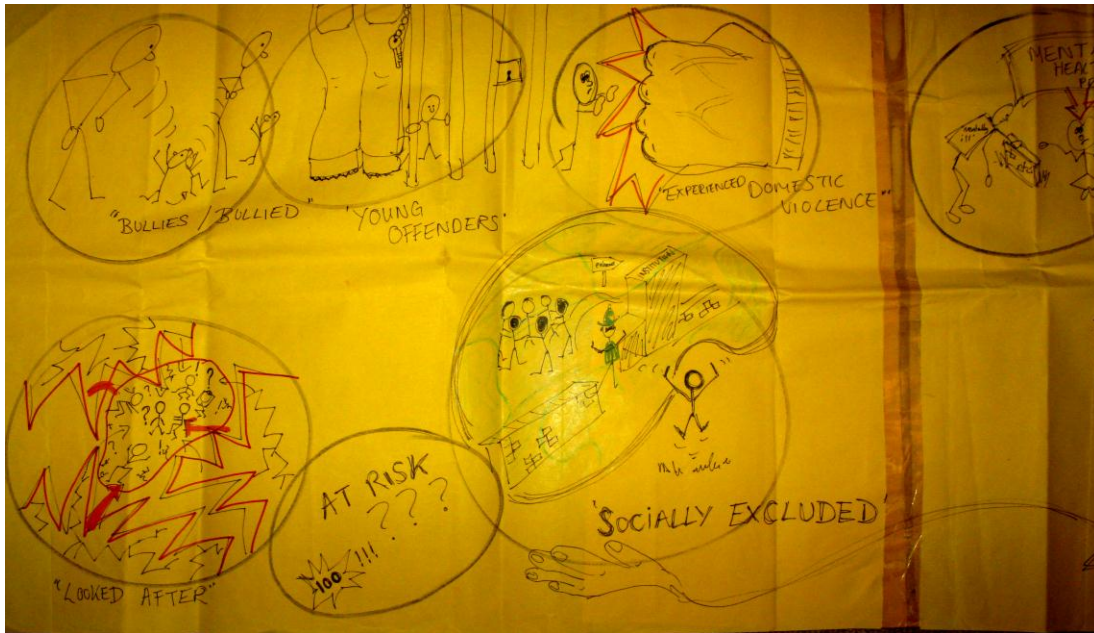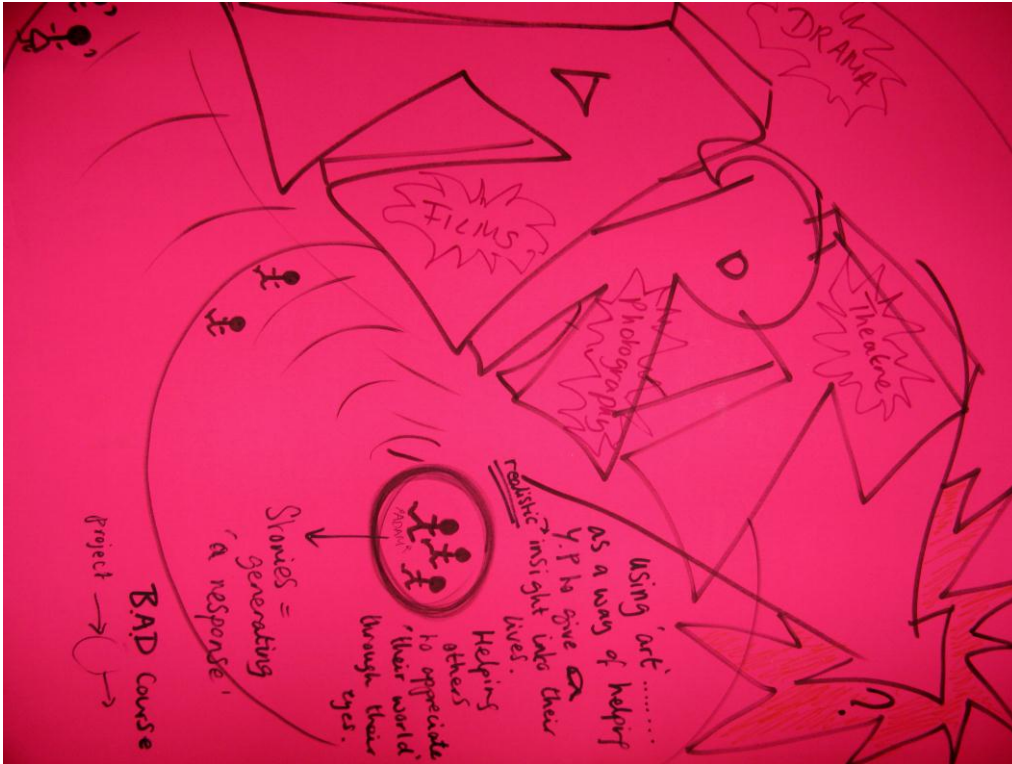
Objectives:

- To work intensively with a 'core group' of young people who are representative of each of the 'hard to reach groups'; By exploring the problems they have experienced and continue to experience, their 'stories' can be used to help others to identify with these issues and professional to better understand their realities.

- The project will use a range of media resources and creative processes to help the young people formulate their 'stories' into films, exhibitions, plays and presentations. These outcomes will be used to reach other young people, professionals and community groups to address these problems and work together to find solutions.

- The project will teach new skills and encourage young people to discover their 'hidden talents'. The project is creative and practical and focuses on raising self esteem through the sense of self achievement. The young people act as the artistic directors of their *individual pieces* and events.

- The 'core group' will use their work to reach 'others like them'. By visiting schools, hostels, residential homes, youth groups, YOT teams etc. *other* young people can be inspired and engaged in the development of the project. The core groups' work will be used as a model to encourage responses from other young people, to establish support groups and to instigate other projects following the same model. 'Focus groups' will be identified as the next wave of young people to be engaged in longer term projects.

- 'Events' on varying scales will ensure the necessary and culturally appropriate impact is achieved. Professionals from relevant agencies will be invited to help formulate 'action plans' which meet the needs of the young people on reflection of the issues presented and discussed at events. Young people-led workshops with professionals will help both parties to explore issues in a practical and appropriate way. The project seeks to improve the working relationship between young people and professionals by providing forums for effective communication and partnership working.

- The project will focus on raising awareness and educating the misconceptions that can often contribute to exclusion. By involving community groups throughout the projects' progress and as audience attributes the project will strive to strengthen communities by improving relationships, creating support systems and presenting 'the realities' behind perceived difficulties.

- The project will give young people the opportunity to effectively express themselves through mediums with which they feel comfortable. By exploring their own concerns in their own way young people are encouraged to better 'understand themselves' so that others can better understand them also. The process of creating a personalised documentary or a photography exhibition can enable and benefit both the creator and the observer. Young people categorised as 'hard to reach' are often misunderstood and misrepresented. The project seeks to create opportunities for young people to have a voice via a language which is understood by all.

- The project will improve the technical abilities of participants from camera work to editing whilst creative processes will improve the self awareness, confidence and presentational skills of participants.
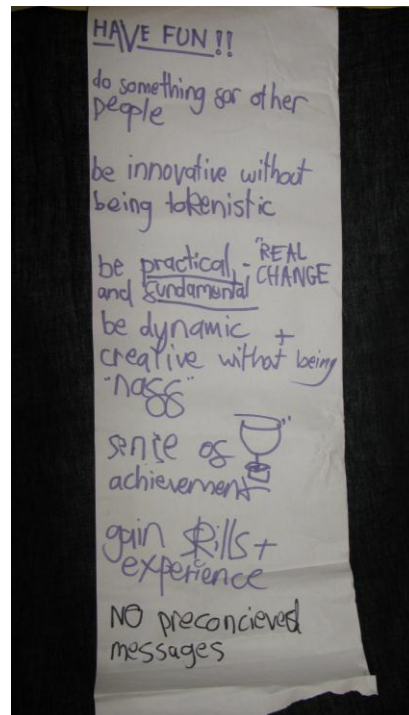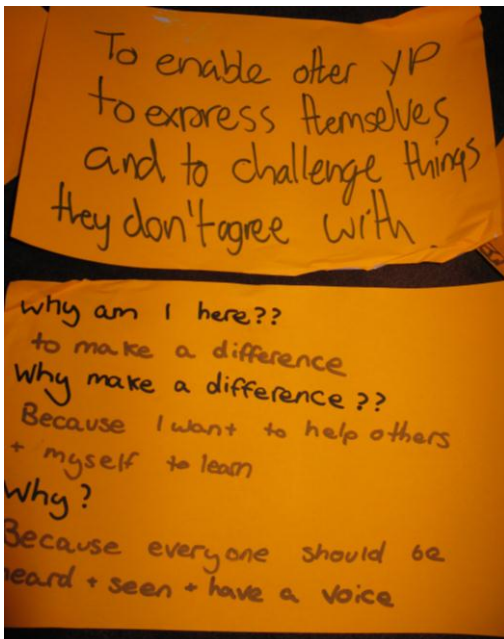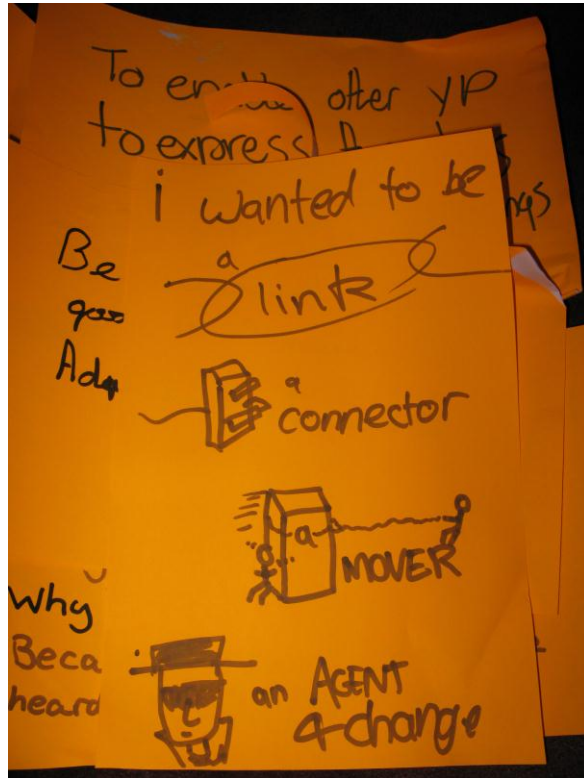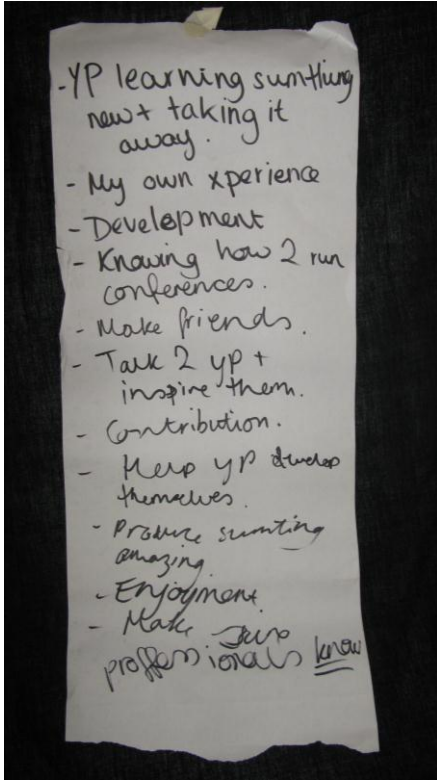
Appendix 12.a
Sketches about the conference and the alternatives

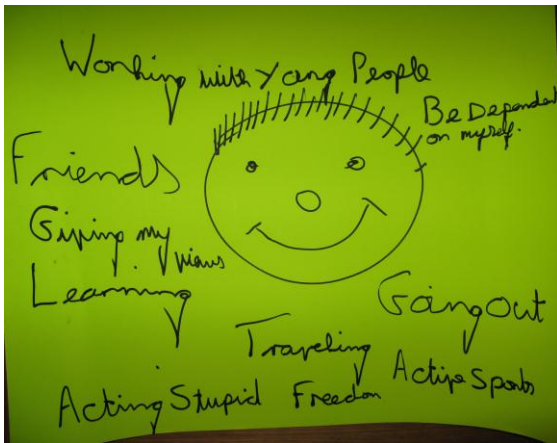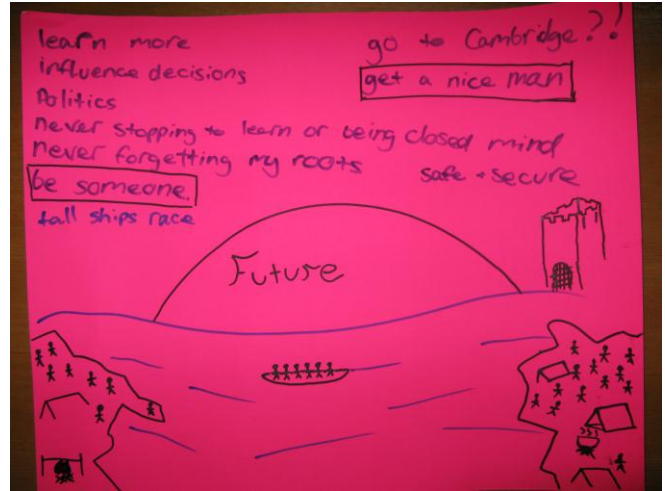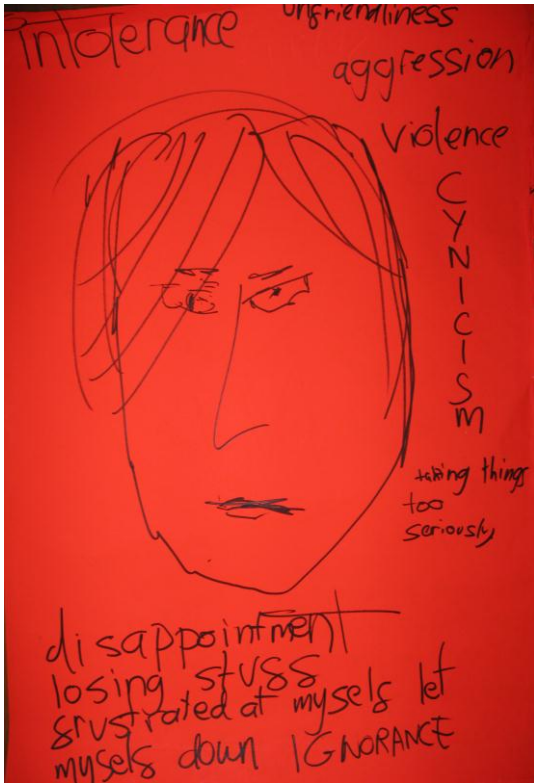# Appendix 12.b
Sketches about the conference and the alternatives

- YP learning sumthing new + taking it away.
- My own xperience
- Development
- Knowing how 2 run conferences.
- Make friends.
- Talk 2 yp + inspire them.
- Contribution.
- Help yp develop themselves.
- Produce sumting amazing.
- Enjoyment.
- Make sure proffesionals <u>know</u>

To en... other YP to express...
I wanted to be
Be a <u>link</u>
Ada
a connector
a MOVER
an AGENT 4 change
Why Beca heard

To enable other YP to express themselves and to challenge things they don't agree with

why am I here??
to make a difference
Why make a difference??
Because I want to help others + myself to learn
Why?
Because everyone should be heard + seen + have a voice

<u>HA</u>VE FUN !!
do something for other people

be innovative without being tokenistic

be practical - "REAL CHANGE" and fundamental

be dynamic + creative without being "nasg"

sense of achievement

gain skills + experience

NO preconcieved messages

Appendix 14
Alliance Meeting Preparation with the Young People

Key quotes from the sessions:

"They didn't ask me what *I* wanted…they just told me"

"Your theology is revealed by your methodology. How they are in practice gives away a lot about their attitudes, values, ethics"

"It's so bad that you *have to* fight – what if you are five years old?....how do you fight then?"

"Kids are developing; it's hard to muster the trust again once you've been treated badly"

"Young people really need stability, an anchor"

Child Centred means to……….
Treat people how you would like to be treated
Treat them like people!
Make them feel comfortable
Talk to them about things they are interested in, not *just* care – get them doing things
Kids are intelligent – they know when adults are being genuine – treat them with respect
Working gradually towards something

New Placements, NOT Child-Centred: "This is your new family….goodbye!"

New Placements, Child-Centred:
Spend time with the young person / child, help them to get used to it
They should ask the young people where they want to stay
Introducing them properly, telling them about: the area, the people, what they are like
Give them information – they have to feel safe
Ask them what they think – it should be about them
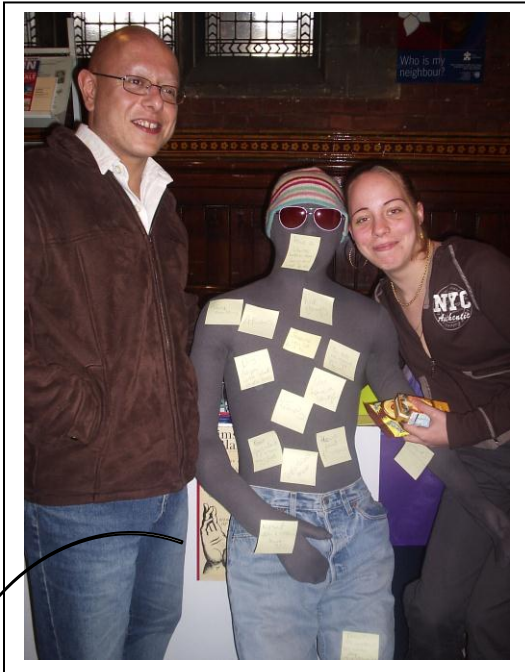"Opinions are always made beforehand and are based on reports written by someone else, about you"
"It's hard to trust – hard to let the guard down"
"Younger kids have been let down by too many adults often there's no trust left"

What is a 'Child-Centred' Review / Meeting like?

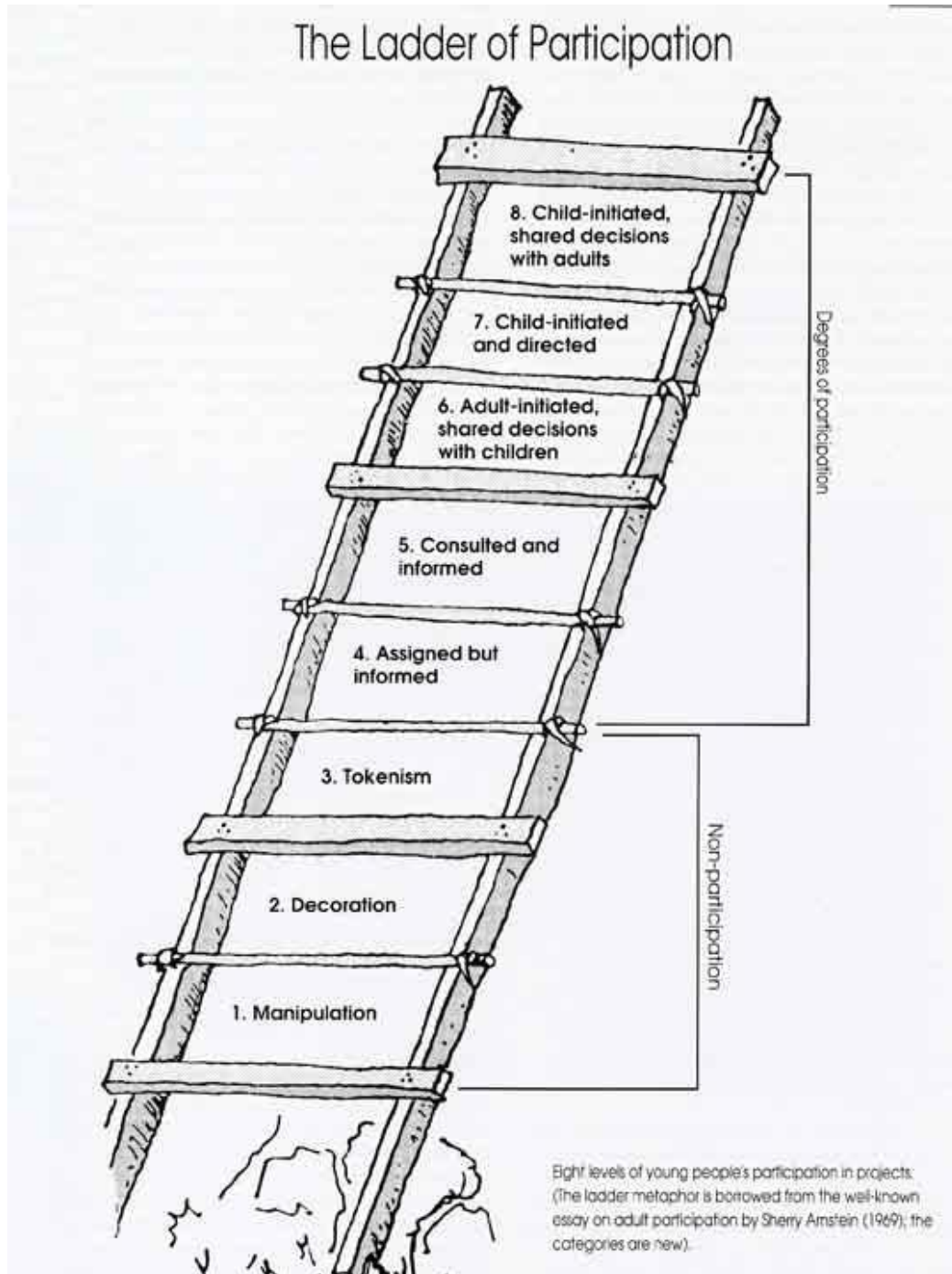| __Is__	__Isn't__
Looking for and keying into the positives Listening Asking them first what they (y.p) think first Asking them first what they want to talk about Yellow and Red cards (Blue Print – 'Try a different way' idea) Making clear decisions WITH the young people Not blocking Welcoming Including young people as active participants We are innocent, until proven guilty!	Speaking over them No eye contact Leaving their input till last Talking about them as if they weren't there Not allowing young people to have an opinion/make decisions Not allowing the young people to have any control of the review / meeting

What is a Big Friendly Giant / a 'Child-Centred' worker?

Is	Isn't
Someone you can have a laugh with	Someone who repeats what you say and doesn't listen
Someone you can talk to	Someone who asks deep questions too soon: "So tell me about your life?"
Friendly	
Digs deeper into what you say	
Hears your point of view	
Understands more	
Cares about young people and how they feel	
Doesn't ask questions / too many deep questions too soon	
Trust worthy	
Does activities	
You have a choice rather than being told what to do	
Not grumpy	
Friends	

Appendix 15
The Ladder of Participation, Rodger Hart

The Ladder of Participation

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults

7. Child-initiated and directed

6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children

5. Consulted and informed

4. Assigned but informed

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

Degrees of participation

Non-participation

Eight levels of young people's participation in projects: (The ladder metaphor is borrowed from the well-known essay on adult participation by Sherry Arnstein (1969); the categories are new).

'Individual Pieces'

This involves one-to-one work with a young person to create a piece which is specific in style and content to their 'message'.
The young person has the choice to use this work to inform and educate others they feel are relevant / need to know or/and understand them better.

The young person decides:
- **What** they want their piece to be about (the message)
- **How** they would like to develop the work (the process)
- **What** creative tools / media they would like to use in their piece (Style and content)
- **Who / if** others need to see their piece (the audience)

Outcomes:
Participation all areas and at all levels of the work. The produced piece. Empowerment throughout the process. Better understanding of oneself. Better understanding from those who see the work. Improved relationships. Developed confidence. Raised self esteem.

"I understand Jodie more from watching that (her DVD) then I ever have done over the last 18months of working with her" (Young Person's Key worker)

'Developmental Project Work'

Working within a specific time period, normally 4-5 months, the group develops work around their identified issues of importance.
The group develop their skills and ideas through practical sessions.
The group engage those who are appropriate and relevant to their 'cause'.

The group decide through a facilitated, ongoing process of group negotiation:

- **What** they would like the project to be about (ideas / issues of importance)
- **How** they would like to develop their ideas (process)
- **Which** creative tools they would like to use (methods)
- **What** training they would like to build into the project (skills development)
- **Who** they want to involve in the work (Involvement-Participants)
- **Who** they would like the work to further outreach to (Involvement and Outreach -Audiences)
- **What** their ideal outcomes are (impact)
- **How** they are going to monitor and evaluate the project (evaluation and monitoring)

Outcomes: Participation in all areas and at all levels of the work.
Potential for multi-media performances to a large, varied audiences.
Raised self esteem. Raised sense of self awareness.
Empowered to 'have a voice'. Improved group dynamics.
Enhanced feelings of self worth. Informed audiences.
Platform from which to campaign for change. Improved confidence. Skills development.
The ability to articulate issues specific to the group to those relevant to their message. Ownership of projects' process and products /outcomes.

Creative Workshops
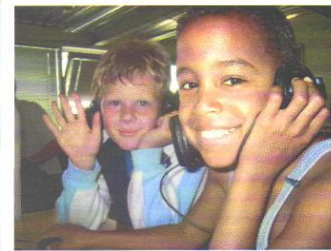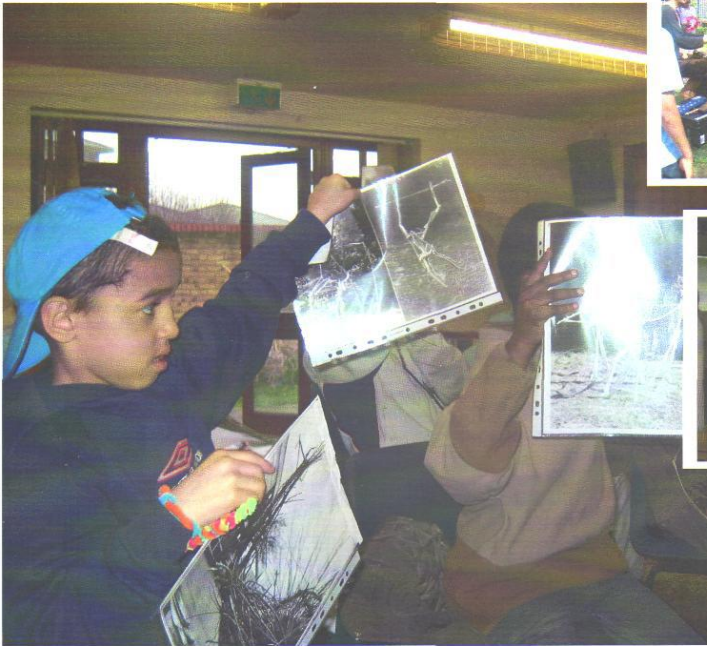
The workshops' aim may be to interrogate a specific idea by actively involving participants in problem solving and sharing their experiences / perspectives.

Workshops focus on enabling participants to demonstrate their ideas creatively. Workshops ensure the participants consider the answers they give.

Workshops are designed to ensure the participation of all those involved. Participants may be of mixed backgrounds and status. By working together towards a shared aim the partnerships between these groups are strengthened and they are able to effectively communicate with one another.
Workshops are also fundamental in developing new and existing skills and ideas

This work: Strengthens relationships, unites groups, empowers groups to effectively communicate with one another, increases overall participation in practice and policy development, Creates shared learning experiences, develops new and existing skills.

"Workshop's like these make you think about the answer you are giving rather than just giving an answer"
(Ashley Connexions Bursary Group member)

'Events'

Events can take the form of:
- Interactive Exhibitions
- Presentations
- Multi-media performances
- Plays
- Film / documentary viewings
- Conferences / Festivals   and / or a combination of these styles

Events are usually used to present back **all** developmental project work.
Events are also used to present back and unpack the outcomes of creative consultation tours and creative workshops. Young people's individual pieces are also, if the young person chooses, presented back at an event.

Events are the beginning step towards positive change………….

Events act as a way of informing audiences of the works' process (what was done to develop the work) and of the works' key messages.

As with all this work the style and content of the event is *specific* to: the group and the messages within their work.

Purpose of events:
- To inform audiences of the messages and issues if importance to the group/s involved in the work
- To act as a platform from which the group / individuals can educate, inform and influence relevant audiences
- To act as a platform from which to campaign for change
- To create contexts for young people and adults to work collaboratively together to design plans of action which ensure and support positive changes
- To share the practices and processes that have underpinned the work to inform others of participatory and empowering ways of working
- To empower groups to inform wider audiences / those appropriate to their messages, about their worlds / concerns / ideas and ideals

Outcomes: the overall purpose of any event linked to this work is to: inform and educate audiences, to campaign for change, to empower groups and individuals to project their messages to those who need to hear them, to deconstruct practice methodologies, to strengthen support networks / relationships between relevant groups, to develop practice and policy in direct relation to these identified needs and realities.

Events act as a 'launch pad' towards positive change. As well as a celebration of the work and an empowering experience for those involved, events are about bringing these messages forward and embedding them into future practice **with the participation of all to make this happen**. Events incorporate the development of action plans to ensure the work is sustainable. With the combination of a relevant audience to the messages within the work events act as a direct way of acting on these messages.
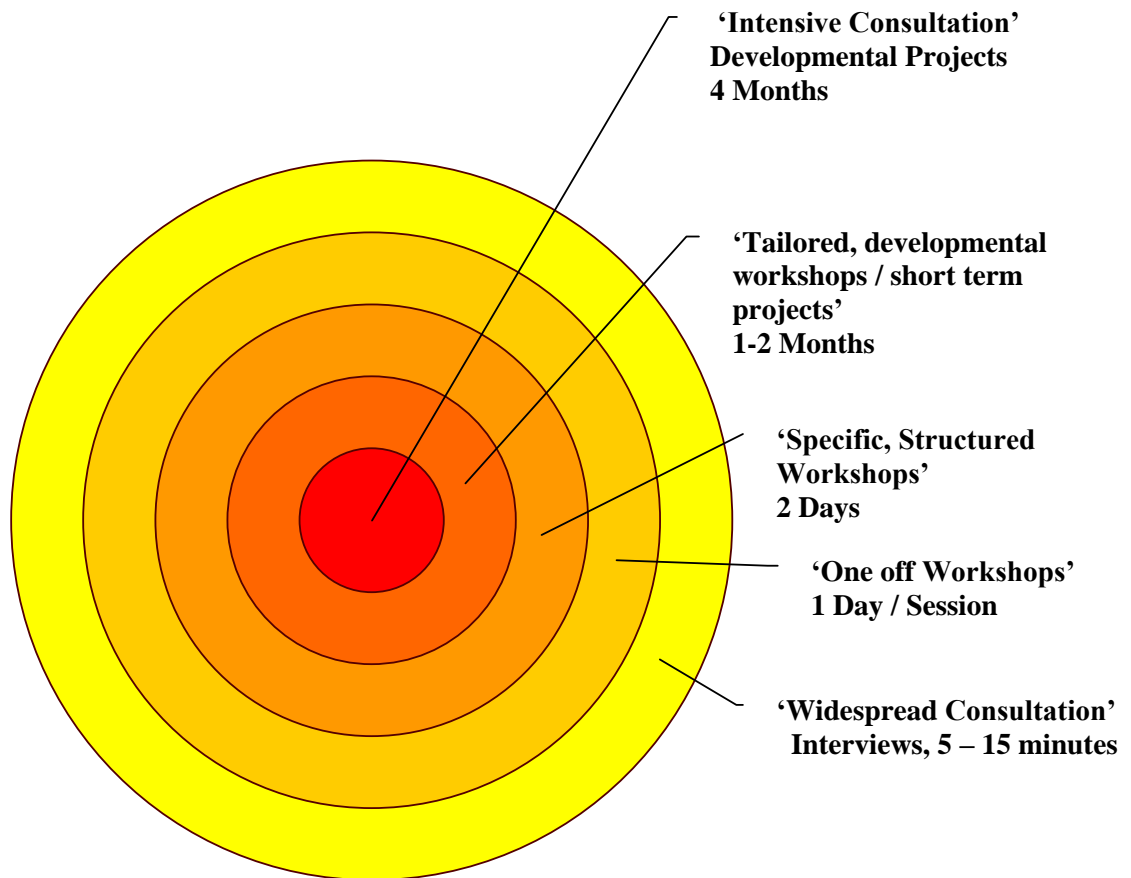
Widespread Creative Consultation

This work takes the form of touring, creative consultation exercises which are used to research and capture the views of participants.

The work outreaches to a widespread of participants to ensure the research is thorough and representative of a varied 'voice'.

By using methods which ensure participants are able to meaningfully participate; this work collects 'data' which is genuine and well thought through.

Appendix 17
The 'Creative Consultation' Model

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ 'Creative Consultation Model'            │
│   Varying Degrees of Interaction / Intervention │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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'Intensive Consultation'
Developmental Projects
4 Months

'Tailored, developmental
workshops / short term
projects'
1-2 Months

'Specific, Structured
Workshops'
2 Days

'One off Workshops'
1 Day / Session

'Widespread Consultation'
Interviews, 5 – 15 minutes

Participation

What it is:

- People actively involved in the doing of something
- People actively contributing in ways which are appropriate (person/group-specific) to them
- People sharing the ownership of the agenda, processes and outcomes of an activity
- People having an equal status with all others involved in the activity
- People being able to communicate in ways which make sense to them
- People being able to communicate in contexts which make sense to them
- People feeling and being empowered through meaningful processes
- People be able to use their own knowledge, experience and expertise to contribute within activities
- People being able to share their views, thoughts and ideas in a 'safe' place
- People being made feel comfortable and confident to ensure they are able to share and effectively participate
- Activities being **for, with** and **about** participants and designed and delivered for, with and about participants
- People being integral to the **generating** of ideas and the **delivery** of these ideas
- People working together towards a shared aim / ideal

What it isn't:

- People being in a room / just being present
- People being asked closed questions in order to prove they have been involved at some level, in some way
- People being used to demonstrate / evidence they have been involved at some level, in some way
- People being repetitively consulted without any further involvement in the 'actioning' their views and ideas
- People being seen as numbers / relevant groups to evidence they have been involved at some level, in some way

- People being paid to be involved where they wouldn't otherwise get involved
- People not owning the work / activity / outcomes
- People being forced to do things under other people's agendas
- People being patronised
- People being 'forced' to do things in ways and within contexts which they do not understand / feel comfortable in
- People feeling (and therefore being) unable to communicate and / or meaningfully contribute
- People feeling intimidated by others
- People being asked to **comply** in an inflexible structure which does not allow for their views and ideas to have any real impact
- People not being valued as people and unique individuals and allowed to use their identities as an integral part of how and why they are participating
- People being 'inserted' within a rigid and closed agenda
- People being asked to perform tasks which have no relevance / meaning to who they are and why they are who they are
- People being seen as decorations
- People's ideas and insights' being 'blocked' by others because 'they do not fit' with their existing theories
- People's ideas being 'stolen' from them without any recognition / further involvement in them

How to 'do it':

- By facilitating the group / individuals involved in the work
- By ensuring the group / individuals feel comfortable in the ways in which they work
- By listening to he group and responding positively to their ideas
- By ensuring those who are involved in the work understand the frameworks within which the work is placed and what their participation in the work will mean
- By being flexible to the groups / individuals' needs
- By making the space a 'safe place' within which to work and share ideas
- By maintaining contact with the groups / individuals within the work and letting them know about the developments of their work
- By caring
- By being honest
- By being interested
- By sharing a sense of 'self' with the group / individuals' you are expecting to do the same with you
- By being open
- By believing and having confidence in the group and their abilities

- By motivating, enthusing and inspiring the group
- By working in ways which are appropriate to the group / individuals
- By creating contexts within which the group / individuals feel comfortable and confident
- By being flexible in your approach and ways of working with the group / individuals
- By asking the group whether they like what you are doing and are O.K with the work
- By being critical and reflexive of your work and finding new ways to adjust and develop it
- By monitoring the development of the work personally collaboratively, with the group and encouraging them to do the same
- By being dedicated to the work, the needs, interests and ideals of the group
- By working as a team and creating a sense of 'teamship' amongst the group and between yourself and the group
- By doing things which are interesting, culturally appropriate and engaging with the group
- By developing the skills of the group and building on their existing skills and ideas
- By treating the group like 'colleagues' and ensuring equality amongst the group
- By developing work in an appropriate pace with the group
- By planning with the group and enabling them to map the scope of the work, how they want to work and what they would like to work towards
- By ensuring the work is something that inspires the group
- By celebrating the groups' achievements
- By valuing the relationships the group have with one another, you, others and the work
- By being sensitive to the groups needs
- By encouraging the group to 'aim high' and believe in their dreams / talents / abilities and skills
- By supporting the group in ways which are appropriate to them / to the work

Why Creativity?

- Because it empowers people to participate
- Because it allows participants to have ownership of the work / outcomes
- Because it documents processes and produces sustainable work
- Because it creates work which can be use to present and project messages to wide audiences – acting as a tool with which to campaign and change existing ways of working / bad practice / negative views
- Because it is person / group / context and 'cause' specific

- Because it engages on a deep and emotive level
- Because it impacts on participants and audiences on a deep and emotive level (haunting those who see the work)
- Because it is inclusive
- Because it empowers participants to share their ideas
- Because it strengthens relationships and develops communication between those who need to **work together**
- Because it creates contexts for (real) development
- Because it deconstructs key concepts and empowers groups / individuals to understand and be involved in developing these ideas
- Because it is developmental and organic – allowing all to have ownership of the agenda
- Because it contrasts with existing ways of working and the problems these more systematic approaches cause in allowing people to effectively participate (in policy and practice development)
- Because it can create contexts for shared learning experiences

Creative approaches and this work

- Pieces of work created by young people and professionals to inform and influence relevant audiences
- Interactive Exhibitions of work
- Presentations of the <u>realities on the ground</u> (involving those who live and work in these contexts / who need to work more proactively together)
- Research into existing practice and problems (creative consultation tours)
- Case studies / captured 'stories' (long term evidence basis).
- Contexts / opportunities for: young people / professionals to participate, OWN and develop the work
- Work which empowers groups to own the work and be involved in developing the practice – so that it continues after we have gone

Blue Print

The first wave of Blue Print was groundbreaking because if the way in which it was done. We cannot take these messages and 'implement' them without the genuine involvement of those this work is 'for, with and about'. For this to be effective and reflective of the Blue Print messages it has to be delivered in an inclusive way. Blue Print was about a call for new ways of working / developments in practice.

Appendix 19
Photos of the Alliance Meeting, Voice

Appendix 20
Diary entry logging my journey

11 January, 2004

I feel so sick, when you are younger it all seems so possible, dreams can become reality and 'the light' is never that far away. Age doesn't seem to bring wisdom anymore, only a harsh insight into reality. I used to believe, I used to know where I was going and how I was going to get there, now I feel as though I can see it all but there's no point in trying to get there because those who can bring about change don't want change to happen. Key analogies ring through my head and again I don't know which one to grasp. I really thought I was over the worse of it but it seems this new wave is stronger than those that came before. It's all just so ugly and wrong and it is making me incapable of believing in change again. I know what I have to do but don't know if I can do it. It's not even feeling incapable, it's more about feeling so disheartened that I want out of it. My head tells me to believe in art and them and that the answers will come……. My only 'rocks' have to be art, the kids and creativity. I suppose we're back to the question, can I continue to 'practice' and reflect whilst I'm practising? Perhaps the only answer is to try. I don't want to let them down…. I want them to be at the heart of what I do but I don't know if I have the heart to do it. I hate where I've place myself, I hate what I've seen…. I'm confused all over again. 'Playing the game' doesn't seem to suit me and I can't keep rebelling when really I'm hurting myself. It sounds horrible but I'm so disappointed in life. I'm so saddened by what I've seen. I want to help and I don't know how. Those in charge don't care and I only hope I can make them care by bringing them the voices they can't ignore.

Appendix 21

Big Fish, 2007

In the summer of 2007 I worked for an arts-based company who work with young people on the margins called 'Big Fish'. It was incredibly refreshing to not have to *prove* the value of performance and creative processes but to start from a place where this was the premise of the work and the underpinning philosophy to it. The project worked with young people from rivalling inner city areas before they started at local secondary schools together using a timetable of different workshops, T.I.E performances and collaboration to work towards a performance that concluded the project and integrated the young people through these experiences. The young people attended on a voluntary basis, although many of them had been 'referred' onto the programme by different professionals; and every day it was packed with otherwise 'hard to reach' young people.

Each morning issues that had emerged from the programme (stealing, peer pressure, gang culture, bullying) were built into T.I.E. performances and presented back to the group by the practitioners. Discussions between the young people as a whole group and the adults supporting the programme were used to explore these emerging issues as a circular, reflexive process rather than a culture of 'new rules' being introduced as a closed, non negotiable response to these problems. Instead of alienating young people from the decision making and the opportunity to critique these issues, thus preventing them from learning about their impacts, these discussions happened *with* them in a safe, yet removed way. The Big Fish programme represented a world governed by an ideology poles apart from the young people's realities on the street. By transporting the group to a safe place where they were able to project their ideas, engage in expressive, performance based activities and *be* young people they were integral to developing a new culture where they were not at war or victims of their social status, but able to engage in creative and reflexive processes.

Appendix 22

The Interactive Exhibition

The 'Interactive Exhibition' will present the specific outcomes from the research in a way that suggests these findings are not conclusive. By creating spaces for further discovery, exploration and dialogue it will stand against polished performances and well-written speeches delivered by 'articulate children' to neatly summarise their experiences - by opening up the debate and these 'closed institutions' to a wider group of audience/participants; thus shifting and sharing power. This model aims to help people to better understand the efficiency and versatility of 'creative praxis' (applied theatre and arts) by enabling them to experience it.

The exhibition will be organised into different zones with each zone presenting different ideas and provoking different reactions. The following are summaries of each zone and their themes in relation to my research. The 'Interactive Exhibition' is the 'in-context' event for the research as a *whole* up until this point. In many ways it is the event that was never allowed to happen and draws on aspects of those which were. The 'Interactive Exhibition' defines my research conclusions and proposals, translating these into live-art form.

Zone 1: The Scream!

> And yet none of the things which made us so angry to start off with have disappeared. We have learnt, perhaps, how they fit together as parts of a system of social domination, but somehow our negativity has been erased from the picture. The horrors of the world continue. That is why it is necessary to do what is considered scientifically taboo: to scream like a child[514].

This zone will challenge the notion of *objectivity* within scientific research processes and the desensitisation of *real* experiences within social care contexts. It will depict aspects of

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[514] Holloway. *Change the World.* 2005. p.3

my research journey and my personal history as the researcher-practitioner. Through flashes of images, sounds and 'sets' it will *introduce* those who were integral to forming the theories within this thesis and the journey that underpinned our process of *interfacing*. This zone is concerned with countering objectivity and the culture of silence. It will aim to evoke reflexivity amongst audience/participants by asking them to consider the essence of 'who they are' by reflecting on their own childhoods through different stimuli and the sculpting their own 'mini-mes'.[515]

Zone 1 is designed to destabilise notions of homogeneous groups and 'objective' approaches to research and development through processes of self determination and the exploration of childhood/s. It will capture the chaos of my research journey and the moments of 'darkness and light' / despair and hope which defined it. As an introductory experience Zone 1 will be intense, and in places disturbing but it is this emotion and these 'screams' that are all too often muffled and filed away. By employing the 'mini-me' technique at this introductory stage the audience/participants will experience this method first-hand and be encouraged to consider 'who they are' and why they are who they are.

we are all around you but you just can't see us [516]

As the audience begins to move out of this zone into the next the lights will dip to darkness to gradually be lit up again by lots of little boxes showing the voices and faces of those involved in the research. Gradually a whole tunnel-like passage will be full of still and moving images of all those who contributed to the research, thus *surrounding* the audience/participants and helping them to see who influenced this research - making the invisible, *visible*. This zone represents ideas around identity, childhood and the culture of silence within social care cultures and contexts.

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[515] See Chapter 5 about the mini-me sculpture technique; these sculptures will later form a part of an exhibition to demonstrate the *individual* within the organisation of people: see the 'Gallery of Work', Zone 7 below.

[516] McAvinchey. 'Is this the Play?'. 2009. p.282

Zone 2: The Problem

> Institutionalisation, a classic sociological notion, is the process which causes individual human acts to take on a standardised collective form: the form of institutions[517]

Zone 2 will highlight the disempowerment of front-line workers and social workers, the trends of institutionalisation and co-dependency within systems and the cultures of stigmatisation and demonisation. Through interactive experiences the audience/participants will become part of a 'Review meeting' and a 'Strategy meeting' where they will witness representations of these cultures and contexts being 'played out'. The use of repetition and the manipulation of scale and size will be executed to evoke feelings of frustration and disorientation within the 'review meeting' and designed to put the audience in the 'shoes' of the LAC. [518] Using exaggerated size and scale and alien language, the scene will be scripted to draw on actual words shared by young people involved in the research and their distinct descriptions of how these meetings can feel. Much like the tea party within 'Alice in Wonderland' the Review Meeting will increase with speed and absurdity as actors bat about 'blame and responsibility'.[519]

Within the 'Strategy Meeting' agendas and the reliance on science will be made visible. Actors will enter into the arena and parade around proudly as graphs, charts and 'ladders of success' whilst they are admired and employed as tools by other actors playing the professionals within the 'Strategy Meeting'. Other actors representing the hidden agendas as undercurrents of meetings will move around the room in exaggerated, secretive ways draping themselves around the necks of those playing the professionals and, in doing so, altering the course of their conversations. These scenes will make visible the hidden power games within these contexts, as explored in Chapter 7.[520] My diary entries from this time detailed 'the invisible, visible men' as actualisations of the 'hidden' agendas and

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[517] Dekker. *The Will to Change the Child*. 2001. p.129
[518] This idea draws on the experience of Louise Bourgeois' 'Maman' displayed at the Tate Modern as part of *The Unilever Series* in November 1999. This huge nine metre high spider reversed the sense of scale and power between the spider and the human.
[519] A game of 'bat and ball' using 'blame' as the ball will be part of this scenario.
[520] See Chapter 7

exchanges of power within settings that prohibit honest and open communication and transparency. Zone 1 will be concerned with sharing these observations.

The problem with tragedy is that it isn't tragic enough [521]

As the audience begins to exit Zone 2 another sequence of encounters is enacted. Using dance and clowning techniques we will see the front-line worker *trying* 'to do' and 'get to / reach' a young person. 'Blockades' in the form of actors dressed as budgets, procedures and paperwork create a dance-like/wrestling sequence with the social worker. We see the social worker juggling, being weighed down and gagged, bound and carried off by 'agendas' and 'demands'. In another sequence the child presented as a 'building block' is 'stacked' to strengthen a swaying structure that is 'the institution'. In another area, we see 'the child' slowly transforming from child to monster as head-lines are projected onto the walls around him/her and extracts of reports are heard as radio broadcasts. These sequences represent the lack of opportunity for the young person to counter negative definitions and the power of media to criminalise and demonise young people. The social worker sequences represent the struggles and obstructions that front-line workers face.

Zone/s 3: Fissures, the Games Rooms

The role of theatre as a democratic medium – in which the audiences play an active role in medium programming, and therefore in producing and distributing messages…..
"Participation in Freire's terms means total involvement even at the level of conceptualising the vehicle of articulation"[522]

'Games rooms' will act as fissures within the broader framework of the event. It is within these spaces that the *potential* to merge paradigms of practice by creating relevant frames of reference to exchange ideas will be experimented with. Theatre practitioners, front-line workers and managers will be invited to work in multi-disciplinary ways to explore new

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[521] Philosopher Levinas cited by: Salverson. 'Clown, Opera'. 2009. pp.34-35
[522] Kamlongera, C. *Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia.* Bonn: German Foundation for International Development, 1989. p.241.

knowledge, to celebrate existing examples of good practice and to develop a practice-based perspective. 'Games Rooms' will be reoccur throughout the 'Interactive Exhibition' so that, as spaces for reflection, discussion and practice development they are integral and 'pop-up' throughout the experience.

'Games Rooms' are multi-functional spaces. Some 'Games Rooms' will focus on games and exercises which are underpinned with symbolism and power-exchanges.[523] Other games rooms will teach specific facilitation skills in more explicit ways and share some of the methods and techniques that evolved from my research. In some cases this may mean audience/participants entering into the room to find different 'missions' to recreate the use of the work within my sites of practice.

As a whole, these areas represent a culture of creating spaces within existing frameworks to develop practice and to champion the knowledge and expertise of practitioners/front-line workers by utilising their innate skills as individuals. These versatile, high energy spaces will be inspiring and non-threatening, where all participants are equal and where new skills are taught and existing knowledge bases are developed. These hubs act as central cores in exploring the possibilities for the *merging* and interfacing of applied arts and social care paradigms. Due to their placement within the network of Zones that constructs the exhibition, these areas will enable participants to critique and reflect on their experiences of the 'Interactive Exhibition' and respond to it with action and ideas. Therefore, a culture of reflexive practice and practice-led responses is nurtured throughout this experience. .

In some 'Games Rooms' missions will be left within boxes for the group to work 'independently but alone' on creating something, whilst within others full group activities will be facilitated. Activities will include representations of self, communication and partnership working, shared leadership, explorations of identity and new visions. The audience/participants experience the potentials for different mediums as tools and how to experiment with 'framing'. There will be an emphasis on how they can develop their own

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[523] As with the last Alliance meeting at Voice, see Chapter 7

'tool boxes' of new skills and practical approaches in work with others. New workshop ideas and practical solutions will be developed within these spaces for work 'on the outside'. These rooms will pop-up within the Exhibition structure to demonstrate the versatility and impromptu possibility of this type of practice.

Zone 4: Potentials and Models, Why Applied Arts?

Zone 4 will contextualise my research and disseminate the potential for this practice through concrete examples. It will use the language understood in social care paradigms to define TfD/applied-arts based practice through distinct frames of reference. To enter into the central area of this Zone the audience will travel through tunnels. Within these tunnels audio from interviews with young people and adults will be are heard, critiquing and defining 'what this work is' and 'why it is important' using interviews I have recorded which have interrogated these questions both in relation to my work and that of others.

Within the main area of this Zone the models within Appendix 17 and Fig. 5 will be 'brought to life' through an interactive exhibit. These models will be mapped on the floor and spread out underneath the audience. As they step on each level or frame different images and descriptions from case studies will be projected onto screens which surround them.[524] This zone is concerned with making explicit links between practice and theory and introducing my work, and the work of other creative practitioners, in ways that are easily understood in terms of their potential, relevance and efficiencies within social care worlds for the empowerment of young people and the development of these settings. A key concern of Zone 4 is the effective translation of applied arts practice to audiences who do not work within applied arts fields. This theme resonates with my concerns towards the end of Chapter 6 in terms of translating and sharing the practice in ways that can ensure transferral and sustainability.

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[524] This somewhat echoes the presentation of the 'Consultation Model' in the bursary group training programme, see appendix 17.

There will be spaces for practitioners and companies to demonstrate their work within Zone 4 to promote their practice and the multiple shapes and forms it can take whilst remaining vigilant and committed to 'person-centred' practice. 'Big Fish' and 'Kid's Company' are just two examples of other agencies that might occupy this space. This Zone will help *launch* the collaboration of TfD/applied arts work within social care settings. Opportunities for the audience to make requests and meet practitioners will be a significant part of founding relationships for the future.

Zone 5: Contradictions, Parodies and Ironies

Not all of the messages within this exhibition will be confined to a specific exhibition Zone. Some exhibits will roam and interact with audience/participants whilst others will be placed in communal areas and left open to interpretation. Others, such as 'Games Rooms' will be sited in numerous and *impromptu* spaces and will move around the structure of the exhibition to appear in unexpected corners to create ongoing opportunities for reflection and practice development.

In contrast to the use of footage and real sound in Zone 4*, Zone 5 will present the contradictions, parodies and ironies that my research revealed in playful yet symbolic ways. By presenting cultures and trends in exaggerated, carnivalesque forms this Zone will avert from 'typical' media exposures and formulised inquiries by highlighting these messages through visual, grotesque and extreme performance styles. This, as a concurrent objective of the exhibition, will also help to underpin the diversity and versatility of performance and media as *tools*; a further contradiction will be established by naming this Zone as the 'chill-out' area.

Zone 5 will highlight 'false acts of generosity' and the misuses of the terms 'participation' and 'development' in their material play of these settings. I will toy with these 'buzz words' to demonstrate that these are *just* words if a genuine investment in altering power structures does not back them up. This Zone is designed to create a juxtaposition of humour and realisation amongst audience/participants and underline the

reality of how prolific these trends are. I want to avoid 'lecturing' or presenting a definitive list of 'dos' and 'don'ts' by creating chaos and conviviality with a sinister undertone. Interactive performances from pantomime-styled 'ugly sisters' who cavort with audience/participants whilst 'wearing' young people whilst posing for pictures will represent the use of young people as a commodity. A pulley-system 'washing line' which stays within the confines of the institution will depict the inefficiency of the complaints system.

This Zone will combine characters, travesties and horrors I have witnessed throughout my research, and discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 6 in particular, to represent these messages and trends in a way that goes beyond provoking pity and sorrow by creating an air of danger, urgency and identification amongst audience/participants who recognise and 'know' these examples all too well.

Zone 6: Reconstructions

> By bringing politicians into direct contact with the raw, very raw, material of actual stories, cases are transformed into people and the theatrical force of empathy is let loose on those who have the power to make and unmake the legal framework.[525]

In contrast to previous media mention Zone 6 will use reconstructions, filmed interviews and simulated situations interactively to enable audience/participants to 'enter into the worlds' of looked-after young people. Some of these reconstructions will be created *with* and *by* young people; others will be exact replications of some of the settings I worked within such as Medway STC. The purpose of this Zone is to present the cycles and traps young people find themselves within and the 'revolving door' of neglect, crisis and ineffective interventions that keep young people 'stuck'.

Reconstructions of these worlds will demonstrate where these young people come from and what they experience. 'Stories from the street' will present snap shots of footage

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[525] Prentki. 'Introduction to Intervention'. 2009. p.183

from young people I have interviewed over the years on what it is like to grow up in deprivation and what the *real* causes for crime, gang culture and suffering are.[526]

This Zone will be a harsh insight into the worlds of young people as they see and experience them. This Zone is concerned with demonstrating the contradictions within current Social Care and Youth Justice systems by taking participants through the 'revolving door' of inappropriate intervention and the chaos and abuse that occurs as a inevitable result. Using the actual story of one young person these cycles will be underlined by a repetitive and frustrating sequence of encounters 'experienced' by audience/participants. Other areas within Zone 5 will place the audience/participants within exact reconstructions of settings such as a cell within Medway as well as taking them through the constructed worlds of young people who have created settings and scenes for people to see and experience.

Zone 7: Evaluation, the Gallery of Work and Action Plans

This Exhibition will be committed to ensuring it is an ongoing, ever evolving piece of work influenced by those who have been a part of it. This final area will be designed to provoke thought on the whole Exhibition as an experience and make use of it as a counter-sphere. The audience will be led into a calm, neutral space to critique their responses and then on to the final area 'the Gallery of Work'.

In Zone 7 the audience/participants will be asked to reflect on what the experience of the exhibition meant to them; if and how it can be used within their lives/work and what else they think should be incorporated. This area will provide 'blank canvases' for art work, gigantic fridge doors for written feedback and notes, spaces for discussion and networking and 'diary rooms' for more personal reflections.

The audience will discover a huge shop window of 'notices', in the style of a newsagents as a space for people to share their comments publicly and exchange contact details.

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[526] See DVD.8 for examples of these types of interviews.

People can add to or reply to requests helping to generate sustainable impacts through improved networking. This is where social care professionals could invite in applied art practitioners and vice-versa. Meeting spaces for people to chat informally will rim this area. Forum theatre and playback theatre may also be a useful method here to play about with ideas, suggestions and 'solutions'.

The Gallery of Work

The audience's 'individual pieces' created in Zone 1 as well as pieces of work/new ideas produced within the 'Games Rooms' will be displayed within the 'Gallery of Work' as the final walk-through area of the Exhibition. The central purpose of the 'Gallery' is to depict how *everyone* is integral to the growth of the exhibition and the debate and development of social care cultures and practices as a whole.

This area will be full of 'individual pieces' created by those who have been involved in the work, from participants of years ago to each audience/participant of the Exhibition. The room will be dedicated to the representations of each individual contributor and will treat each piece with equal importance. This area is concerned with the importance of individual theory and the mobilisation of the audience/participants to believe in and act on their ideas for change rather than relying on the 'myth' of oppressive regimes. By surrounding the audience/participants with their specific and unique contributions in sculpted/live-art form the 'Gallery' will represent their active-participation in the culture of change and demonstrate this as an ongoing collaborative process involving us all.

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