Embodying Critical Engagement - Experiments with politics, theatre and young people in the UK and Chile

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my Dad, David John Elliott (1951-2008). Whilst he will never know the impact he has had on my practice and politics, these words are as much his as they are mine.

Abstract

This study is focused on three case studies, seeking to explore the possibilities for developing a critical, agonistic and politically aware theatre practice with young people. I begin by conducting research in to the political and historical contexts of the community theatre movement in the UK and Chile. I consider the development of neoliberalism in the UK and Chile and its negative effects on critically engaged theatre practices. The thesis also determines that youth theatre practice, in its historic and contemporary forms, has been dominated by a focus on theatre skills and aesthetics. Informed by Paulo Freire's work on critical education and Chantal Mouffe's political theory of agonism, I develop a critical youth theatre framework that questions the possibilities of practice engaging in political action.

My contextual analysis and theoretical framework are explored by a comparative model, analysing two projects from the UK and one from Chile. The three practice as research case studies are; the use of Legislative Theatre practice with Collective Encounters Youth Theatre in collaboration with the Youth Parliament in Liverpool, UK; work in a juvenile detention centre using theatre games to support popular education programmes in Santiago, Chile; and a collaboration with Cockburn School to explore how theatre can support student voice initiatives in Leeds, UK. Video documentation of the Legislative Theatre performance (October 2016) and the performance of *Future Routine* at Cockburn School (July 2017) forms part of this practice-led submission. Video documentation was prohibited at the detention centre in Santiago, therefore in this case transcripts of interviews are appended to this thesis.

I conclude that a critical agonistic theatre practice with young people can be realised. The development of allies, understanding mechanisms of change and issues of responsive practice were the main areas of learning. The study also demonstrates the challenges I experienced in conducting my case studies and reflects on the learning from these. Overall my findings show that, although it is fraught with challenges and obstacles, a critical agonistic theatre practice can develop political action with young people.

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Chapter One - Context

Between Santiago and South Leeds

> …a foreign land to which we were giving ourselves in such wise that it was receiving us in a way that the foreignness was turning into comradeship, friendship, siblingship. Homesick as we were for Brazil, we had a sudden special place in our hearts for Chile, which taught us Latin America in a way we had never imagined it.
>
> I visited Chile twice during the time of the Popular Unity government, and used to say, in Europe and the United States, that anyone who wanted to get a concrete idea of the class struggle, as expressed in the most divergent ways, really ought to pay a visit to Chile.
>
> (Freire, 2014:27/28)

I first visited Chile in 2009. Solidarity, class struggle and comradeship were distant and almost unknown concepts to me. My first encounter with the thin strip of land on the Southern Cone was one born out of intuition as opposed to judgement or knowledge. The four week placement took place after attending a lecture given by Penelope Glass in 2008 as I was undertaking my first year of training as a facilitator and director at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. The lecture discussed the work of Teatro Pasmi (who have since disbanded) and their work in Colina 1 prison in Santiago. The idea at the centre of this work was continuity. The practice being undertaken in Colina 1 prison was not a six week or a six month project but a continuous process from the late 1990s into the present day. It was a process that was developed in dialogue with the participants, fusing the worlds of theatre and critical education together in a way that appeared seamless. The practice appeared different in comparison to the UK prison theatre sector that I had been researching at the time and in which I would work in for several years following my interaction with Penelope. Inspired and curious, I packed my naivety and travelled to Chile. The long term political efforts of the practice in Chile were radically different to the short term behaviourist approaches in the UK. The work of Paulo Freire and his ideas of critical engagement with the world were restricted to the pages of books until I embarked on a collaborative journey with Penelope, and in recent years with the work of Colectivo Sustento; a theatre collective based in Santiago that formed from a 'fusion of long-term community theatre and activist experiences' (Colectivo Sustento, 2018).

An anecdote may demonstrate how these experiences had a profound impact upon my own practice and ideas for the exploration of critical education within theatrical practice. After the initial visit in 2009, several projects and collaborations have taken place on an annual or bi-annual basis, this included the production of the 2013 practice as research report *Exchanging Engagement: alternative arts engagement in Latin America* (Elliott, 2013)*.* Whilst attending the 2011 ENTEPOLA festival, Fenix e Ilusiones (the prison theatre group established in Colina 1) performed *Manos Arriba!* The participants were led under armed guard from the prison to the amphitheatre in Pudahuel, a deprived *poblacion* (municipality) on the periphery of Santiago. Upon arrival the group were able to rehearse and subsequently perform under the observation of guards in the wings. The performance by serving prisoners was a statement of resistance against the injustice of the Chilean prison system and the negative representation of prisoners.

The inspiration for this performance was the San Miguel prison fire which killed 81 prisoners in December 2010. San Miguel was built for a prison population of 1000 inmates. At the time of the fire the population was 1900 (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The politics and aesthetics of the performance by Fenix e Ilusiones was enveloped in power and agency. It received a standing ovation from the approximately 2000 strong audience formed by members of the local community. Fenix e Ilusiones finished the performance with the statement - 'We are human!'. On stage there was a 'scream of refusal' and resistance (Holloway, 2010:1) whilst in the wings the armed guards were waiting. Such an experience provoked a range of questions for me at the time but one has remained; how was it possible to develop and deliver a performance of political agency and critical reflection in the face of such brutal and overt oppression?

Colectivo Sustento frequently discuss the concept of the 'circle of reflection' within their practice inside and outside of the prison. I have been fortunate enough to witness this process on numerous occasions and also to witness the development of such reflection into action, the actualisation of praxis as Freire would define the relationship. My own practice had been developed in a manner that focussed entirely on the details of the workshop plan. I would conform to the strict timings I had planned for exercises regardless of unplanned or interesting incidents that happened in response to the exercises or games. The potential for utilising conceptual approaches or creatively

responding to a process was absent. The observation of, and participation in, the Colectivo Sustento process was an example of a process that would be determined by the ethical principles of dialogue as opposed to institutional agendas. The work in Chile provoked me to reconsider my own ideas and beliefs regarding prioritisation of efficacy.

From the amphitheatre in Pudahuel to the workshop space in Liverpool. In parallel to the collaborations with Teatro Pasmi and Colectivo Sustento I began undertaking a range of projects in the UK, specifically within the criminal justice system. The work aimed to create better relationships between prison institutions and the communities in which they were located in. An example of this was *The Really Big Society* (2011), a short film made in response to the Conservative – Liberal Democrat Coalition's Big Society policy. The film formed part of an installation at the Bluecoat Art Gallery, Liverpool and invited members of the general public to complete a questionnaire in response to the questions raised in the film. These included; *Is the Big Society A Hidden Agenda to Dismantle the Welfare State? Will The Big Society Reduce The Cost of Living?*

 Whilst developing this practice, I undertook the role of Youth Theatre Director at Collective Encounters in 2013. Collective Encounters are a theatre for social change company based in Liverpool. As I began to modify my practice from the confines of prison walls to youth centres in Merseyside, it became clear that a diversification of my methodology wasn't always necessary. The need for critically engaged theatre practice applies to all community groups and demographics. The youth theatre programme was based on a core and outreach structure. The outreach section of the model aimed to engage marginalised young people within their own communities via short term projects. The core section of the model is a long term project that engages young people on a weekly basis. The aim is for young people to join the core group by engaging in an outreach project. The model is commonplace for theatre companies in the UK and is an amalgamation of the outreach initiatives of the early community arts movement and the long term continuous engagement of companies such as the National Youth theatre (Jackson, 2007:131).

For a period of three years, numerous projects were delivered and several shows were produced with the youth theatre. The work delivered during this period was engaging, empowering and powerful. The end of year report (2012/13) to Children in Need showed that the project reached 709 young people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds including young people with experience of homelessness, young carers and looked after children. The report demonstrated how theatre was utilised to support young people to become 'more active citizens' as well as youth theatre members developing self-esteem and communication skills (see appendix A).

However, during this positive and motivating experience that was developed and delivered in collaboration with young people, I always had an interest to extend the possibilities of the work. I believe there were two distinct experiences within these three years that led to the need to challenge and question my existing practice. The first was the development of *The Centre* (2015). This was a process where the youth theatre had the benefits of continuity on their side. The core group had been working together for approximately three years and this provided weight to the chosen subject matter of austerity and the theatrical form the performance utilised. The result was an immersive dystopian experience in response to the recent local authority cuts. As the audience were guided around four floors of an office block and experienced the absurdities of an envisaged world with no public sector, the young people were emboldened by the responses given and their own ability to challenge audiences with their critical understanding of austerity as something other than economic necessity. The questions after the show by the young people were; *'When can we do it again? How can we develop this?'*; the answers were, we won't be doing it again and we won't be able to develop the idea. The project was not supported financially from the core funder and the application to renew the youth programme had been unsuccessful. It was an experience where fiscal realities met ethical and political aims. Fiscal reality ruled and the project was shelved.

The second example was an outreach project that took place with Local Solutions, a charitable organisation that offers support to young homeless people in Liverpool. The project took place within an unused office space with four to five participants who claimed they had no interest in drama. However, there was an interest in understanding the causes of homelessness and their own life experiences. By

employing a responsive approach to the project, utilising animation, music and film, a short film was created that interviewed workers from Local Solutions in relation to their own perceptions of homelessness. At the end of the project, a range of participants discussed their own transformational experiences and the positivity of participating in the project. But as with *The Centre*, the project could not sustain engagement nor would any of the participants actively join the youth theatre due to their negative preconceptions about what 'youth theatre' entailed. Attempts were made to continue the work, funding applications were processed but unsuccessful, there was manoeuvring within the framework of the project but again the relationship and engagement eventually stopped. The ethics of continuity in Santiago felt like a distant experience. It is worth stating at this point that I make no claim to being unique in having such experiences within the community theatre sector nor do I lay blame at the door of Collective Encounters or the partner organisations. There was a collective disappointment at the discontinuity of the work. However, there were questions to be asked such as; how can we better support participants transition from outreach to core groups? How can we negotiate the political interests of the participants alongside the demands of funding criteria? And, most importantly, how can we sustain a dialogical and ethical relationship with participants for a continuous and protracted period? I argue these issues should, but too often appear not to, concern those who determine cultural policy and develop models and frameworks that socially engaged arts companies are expected to abide by.

The experiences above inspired my understanding and employment of the following statement by Freire (2014:24):

> A more critical understanding of the situation of oppression does not yet liberate the oppressed. But the revelation is a step in the right direction. Now the person who has this new understanding can engage in a political struggle for the transformation of the concrete conditions in which the oppression prevails.

My experiences with youth theatre practice in the UK have demonstrated that such 'revelations' have had enormous transformative effects for the participants. However, the practice has consistently fallen short in transforming such revelations to enabling meaningful engagement in political struggle. How might facilitators, directors and participants transcend initial critical revelation and engage in political struggle? This is

the question that provoked the proposal for a practice as research thesis to explore the political development of youth theatre practice in the UK in comparison with Chilean experiences.

The thesis structure is rooted in three practical case studies facilitated and directed by me. Two projects took place in the UK (Liverpool and Leeds) and one was conducted in Chile. This thesis is not qualified to make suggestions or criticisms of practice undertaken in Chile but aims to utilise the learning from the practice as a tool to interrogate and develop possible ideas for practice in the UK. This is the reason for the weighting of the case studies. Prior to presentation of the practice undertaken during the thesis, the historical and political contexts that inform community theatre practices in Chile and the UK are explored. A theoretical framework is also developed discussing the theories of Paulo Freire and Chantal Mouffe in relation to theatre practice with young people and thinking about how these can inform thinking about issues of critical engagement.

One ideology, Two Countries – Neoliberalism in the UK and Chile

Margaret Thatcher sat with Augusto Pinochet whilst he was under house arrest in 1999. There was an exchange of words that described their admiration for one another as former heads of state. Pinochet began the exchange with the following 'Thank you for all your kindness, all the love and all that you have bought Senator Pinochet and his family'. Reciprocating the compliment, Thatcher responded 'thank you…I know how much we owe to you for your help during the Falklands campaign and for beginning a new era in Chile, one that is founded on true democracy' (Associated Press Archive, 2015). The dominant narrative to explain such a relationship between the two is given by the first part of Thatcher's statement: the Falklands War. This was a similar statement which she presented in the following speech to the House of Lords:

> Though I shall not go into the details, I can say that without President Pinochet's considerable practical help in 1982, many more of our servicemen would have lost their lives in the South Atlantic. The country thus owes him a great debt. (Hansard HL Deb., 6 July 1999)

The Falklands war had a major role to play in regards to the development of the relationship between Chile and the UK. However, I would argue that the reason for the

strength of the relationship is made explicit by Thatcher's other remark regarding Pinochet's role in Chile developing a 'true democracy'. There is a similar line in her address to the House of Lords where she states 'Chile has seen the establishment of a thriving, free-enterprise economy which has transformed living standards and made Chile into a model for Latin America'. It is such statements that demonstrate a relationship based on a joint ideological project as opposed to the dominant narrative of military support. The bond between Chile and the UK, embodied by Pinochet and Thatcher, was strengthened and reinforced in the joint enterprise of implementing and cementing neoliberal hegemony.

Neoliberalism from an objective economic perspective adopts five main conventions; 1. Privatisation - the sale of state-owned assets. 2. Liberalisation – free market initiatives in trade and capital. 3. Monetarism – control of inflation. 4. Deregulation – reduction of restrictions on business and labour markets. 5. Marketisation – private and public partnerships for commodification (Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010:5). Nevertheless, the reality of neoliberalisation differs from its purely economic aims. Brown (2015:9) argues that there needs to be an understanding that neoliberalism is an ideology that 'transmogrifies every human domain and endeavour'. This thesis is in agreement with existing scholarship that argues neoliberalism is not a neutral economic concept but an ideological hegemonic project (see Harvey 2005; Giroux, 2004; Chomsky, 1998; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001).

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss what political tactics and strategies were utilised to achieve the aims of the neoliberal political project. There were radical differences in regards to the implementation of neoliberal ideology but a need to understand the similarities in regards to effects, specifically inequality and democratic deficit. It is a contention of this thesis that from military brutality in Chile to the ballot box in the UK, neoliberalism has led to clear limitations of the possibilities for citizens' critical engagement in political life.

Neoliberalism in Chile: 1973 – present day

In 1992, Milton Friedman stated that 'Chile is by all odds the best economic success story of Latin America today' (Friedman cited in Trebach and Zeese, 1992). More recently, Chile has received similar acknowledgements from major international institutions. The World Bank describes Chile as 'one of Latin America's fastest growing economies' and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) celebrates the continued growth and rapid recovery of the economy following the 2008 financial crisis (World Bank, 2012; IMF, 2011). The cost of such success was a period of unrest, human rights violations on a grand scale and brutal authoritarianism.

On 11th September 1973, a military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte violently ousted the elected socialist Unidad Popular government of Salvador Allende. General Pinochet maintained power until the re-democratisation of the state in 1990 (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:138/142). Within this period, there were approximately 3,000 cases of disappearances and killings, 30,000 recorded human rights violations and 400,000 instances of political exile (United States Institute of Peace, 2003; Stern, 2010: xxiv).

The regime implemented radical free-market policies which transformed the Chilean economy into a flagship 'development model' and a distinctive example of the prosperity which free market reforms can deliver. The transformation became known as 'the Chilean miracle'. The policies included the privatisation of government owned companies and services, deregulation of private companies and the removal of protectionist tariffs (Collins and Lear, 1995:4/5). Chile also became known as a neoliberal experiment. The experiments with liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation in Chile became a foundation for asserting neoliberalism's dominance in the global political economy. However, the example of economic success and its relation to human rights abuses exemplifies the neoliberal paradox; the use of political authoritarianism to ensure economic liberalism.

Milton Friedman (1982: ix) claimed:

> Only a crisis--actual or perceived--produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.

Friedman's statement became associated with a form of shock economic tactics. Shock economic treatment is a 'rapid fire transformation' of the economy which encompasses privatisation, tax cuts and reduction of social spending. The speed and abruptness of the economic shifts created a psychological response within the Chilean population that 'facilitated the adjustment' (Klein, 2007:7).

The coup was a response to political developments in Chile. In October 1970 the Chilean Congress declared Salvador Allende the president of Chile. Allende represented the *Unidad Popular* coalition which was an accumulation of socialist, communist, radical and centralist social democrat parties. The election stimulated fears within the Chilean ruling class and the US government that a communist takeover was going to occur in Chile. A military radio broadcast on September 11 1973 stated the army's intention to 'prevent our country falling beneath the Marxist yoke' (Ensalaco, 2000:3). As the elites were confronted with a policy set which could potentially see their individual profit and power reduced, the ruling classes employed tactics such as withholding domestic goods and collaborating with right wing media outlets. A process of economic destabilisation (1970 -73) created the perfect milieu for the military coup (Verdes, 1995:16).

From 1957-70, over 100 Chileans achieved postgraduate degrees in economics from the University of Chicago in a joint agreement with the Universidad Catolica de Chile, Santiago. The education of the students was aimed at modernising the Chilean economy and transferring the Chicago School ideology of 'neo-classical orthodoxy' to Latin America. The majority of the students were taught by Milton Friedman. The US government funded the universities' relationship (Verdes, 1995: 13/14; Klein, 2007:7/60). When the Pinochet regime took power, the 'Chicago boys' aligned themselves with the military as a means to pursue a neoliberal agenda and instruct a military which had no economic understanding (Klein, 2007:79). The destabilisation of

the Allende government enabled the implementation of shock economics by the Pinochet regime.

The benefits of the shock economics were experienced by a minority at the expense of the majority; 'if you were outside the wealth bubble, the miracle looked like the great depression' (Klein, 2007:87). The myth of the model was preserved by international praise from bodies such as the IMF (Collins and Lear, 1995:4). The Chilean economy had not in fact delivered the economic miracle supporters extolled. It encountered two severe economic recessions under Pinochet's rule, in 1975 and 1982. The 1975 recession witnessed a 16.6% fall in Chile's GNP and several industries were lost. Unemployment rose to 18.1% compared to a high of 4.7% under the Allende government (O'Brien and Roddick, 1983:63; French-Davis, 2002:7).

The dissolution and loss of democratic, accountable institutions demonstrates the methods by which shock economics were sustained in Chile. The ironically titled *Constitution of Liberty* (1980) exemplifies the neoliberal state that Pinochet and the military developed from 1973. The constitution preserved the ideas of minimal state influence with 'authoritarian control over democratic processes' and the privileged status of the military. It 'enshrined the virtues of the free market economy' with private property safeguards and provided courts with additional powers to preserve free market mechanisms (Angell, 2007:142). The wide ranging reforms by the Pinochet regime ensured that the shocks implemented were not only sustained but were intended to be irreversible (Klein, 2007:6).

Since democratisation in 1990, the governance of Chile has seen the dominance of the left wing *Concertacion* coalition, with the exception of Sebastian Pinera's period of office from 2010-2014 and his re-election in 2018. Angell (2007:139) states that regardless of political belief there is a 'widespread consensus' that minimal state intervention in economics is adequate for the development of Chile and that social equity will not be achieved by challenging the model. Pinochet's project has been realised; neoliberalism persists in Chile. The Chilean neoliberal project is a perfect example of measures taken politically and militarily to ensure that the class divide was restored and power returned to the economic elite.

Neoliberalism in the UK: 1979 – present day

In 1987, Margaret Thatcher said:

> There is no such thing as society. There is living tapestry of men and women and people and the beauty of that tapestry and the quality of our lives will depend upon how much each of us is prepared to take responsibility for ourselves and each of us prepared to turn round and help by our own efforts those who are unfortunate. (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 2016)

Thatcher's statement epitomises the epoch of the individual, a concept which was radically redefined during the 1980s. The individual became positioned as superior to traditional collectivism with the focus on consumer choice and the 'political ethos of the house owner'. Public culture became focused on the individual (Black, 2004:11). Neoliberal ideology believes the individual should 'have the opportunity to live their lives as they wish'; the role of the state is to enable this to happen with minimal interference (Weeks, 2015:152). Neoliberalism enabled the individual to seek identity via consumerism as opposed to political citizenship; as citizenship became besmirched, consumerism became popular (Munck, 2005:65). Munck (2005:65) describes this as the success of neoliberalism; 'articulating neoclassical economic theories with a liberal individualistic conception of freedom'. As opposed to the brutal force witnessed in Chile, Thatcher and the Conservative Party utilised the idea of the individual as the selling point to voters in their initial election campaign of the 1970s and throughout the '80s.

They had the same aim as Pinochet of entrenching neoliberal ideology within society, but the bullet was replaced with the ballot. The appeal of the 'individual' proved to be a powerful force that generated support amongst people who would not have voted Conservative before. For example, the 'Right to Buy' initiative developed popularity amongst the electorate with 40% of council home owners voting Conservative in the 1987 general election (Evans, 2004: 27). Similar to the Chilean project, the success of the UK project was based on myths. The 1980s saw a range of social and economic crises including Black Monday in 1987, record unemployment levels and increased measures of inequality. Unemployment rose to over 3 million by 1986, the highest level since the great depression in the 1930s and the economy was in recession with output rates falling to 2% by 1990 (Seldon and Collings, 2000:66/67). However, the

Conservative government continued to fulfil its neoliberal vision by reducing public spending by 4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 44% to 40% by 1990 (ibid.).

As evidenced in Chile and the UK, the aim of neoliberal hegemony is not to simply implement but to entrench. The change of government in 1997 to New Labour had minimal effect on neoliberal hegemony in the UK but ensured its continuation under the guise of 'Third Way' politics. Instead of the aggressive tactics of the state being 'rolled' back demonstrated by Thatcherism, the state was reformed for the purposes of the market. The state was utilised as a means to enable deregulation of the economy as opposed to its former roles of intervention and control. A strong state is required for the purposes of neoliberal implementation to 'preserve the dominance of markets over social control' (MacEwan, 2005:172).

For example, where the welfare state once acted as the 'safety net' for vulnerable individuals and families, now it is the 'trampoline' that bounces people back in to employment (MacLeavey, 2010:134). Individual rights and responsibilities are prioritised with a focus on employability as opposed to full employment (MacLeavey, 2010:141). The era of New Labour demonstrated the shifting shape of neoliberalism in order to maintaining its essential tenets. The attempts of electoral politics (regardless of party politics) to shift and change existing neoliberal discourses have failed, state power has only reproduced neoliberalism in different forms.

After the 2008 financial crisis, New Labour was in political disarray and their economic record damaged. This led to the resurgence of the Conservative Party with a five-year coalition with the Liberal Democrats followed by a narrow victory in 2015 (BBC News, 2015). In the 2010 emergency budget speech, George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated 'In this Budget, everyone will be asked to contribute. But in return, we make this commitment: everyone will share in the rewards when we succeed. When we say that we are all in this together, we mean it' (Hansard HC Deb., 22 June 2010).

The UK national debt as proportion of GDP rose dramatically after the financial crisis of 2008. In 2006, the UK debt was 43.4% of GDP, by 2010 it had reached 78.4% and continued to grow to 89.4% in 2014 (Trading Economics, 2016). The framework of

self-regulating markets had been 'shattered in to pieces' and created a legacy that led to the worst financial crash since the great depression (Griffith-Jones, Antonio and Stiglitz, 2010:2). However, the determination to maintain neoliberalism led to the New Labour government supporting the banks with a £1162 billion bailout (National Audit Office, 2015). The bailout effectively demonstrated another paradox of neoliberalism; the use of state intervention to maintain an ideology that believes in reducing the size of the state. The Conservative government undertook an austerity plan that has claimed to have made £98bn of savings with the 2015 spending review outlining a further £20bn. The UK state will be smaller than the US as a proportion of GDP by 2019 (Toynbee, 2015); signalling the success of the neoliberal aim to 'roll back the state'.

Democracy Damaged

Neoliberal hegemony has developed a democratic deficit whereby the general population are 'excluded entirely' from decision making processes, specifically those regarding economics (Chomsky,1999:44). This is an issue that effects both the UK and Chile. Neoliberal hegemony has developed ways and means to maintain control and restrict the possibility of political alternative. Chomsky (1998:43) argues:

> The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum – even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that free thinking goes on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate.

The effects of such a limited political spectrum is evident in Chile with a 49% turnout for national elections in 2013 compared to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) global average of 68%, signifying a lack of trust in the political process. Chile also scored lowest within the category of 'consultation on rule making' in the OECD survey, demonstrating that there is little to no transparency when government is drafting regulation (OECD, 2016). Trust in the UK government has been in decline for the past decade and there has also been a deterioration of support for parties since the 1980s (Houses of Parliament, 2015). I argue that there is an urgency to develop counter hegemonic struggles in order to restore a healthy and vibrant democracy based on agonistic disciplines. This thesis is

not the first to make such claims however I aim to provide nuance to existing arguments through discussion of young people's agency within community theatre practice.

It is worth stating that this thesis is not claiming to develop revolutionary practices or the complete overthrow of neoliberal hegemony. Nevertheless, it is aware of the possibilities regarding resistance and disruption within existing dominant paradigms. As evidenced above, neoliberalism is a global force that endeavours to maintain control and will do so by a range of means. However, such forces should not diminish the hope and commitment to developing critical engagement with young people that has been evident within my own experiences and the community theatre sector as a whole.

Community Theatre in Chile: Dictatorship to Democracy

In the autumn of 1987 Hector Noguera, a theatre worker and Professor at the Universidad Católica de Chile, wrote a letter to Eugenio Barba describing the process of creating social and political theatre under the Pinochet regime since 1973. Parts of the letter discuss the acts of subversion undertaken by practitioners, other elements describe the precarious nature of the military's censorship. Given the political context of this letter and the ethics of representation, it is appropriate to quote the final portion in its entirety:

> Dear Eugenio, maybe you think that this letter is too optimistic because I only talk about the good in our adversity. There is another side of the coin: the daily despair that losing thousands of battles brings; the loneliness; the feeling that the job at hand is smashed by the minute, forcing one to give up territory rather than winning it; the feeling that nobody appreciates your work and, as a consequence, you lose the ability to react against the brutality and the pain that are always present; that you live only what they allow you to live; that the theatrical work bogs down and sometimes nothing happens for long periods of time; that you become exhausted by permanently being at the edges of hope and despair; that you feel tempted to stop and do nothing for a long time; that everything you do falls into a pattern of repression because your actions are under constant surveillance. (Noguera, 1990:264/265)

Noguera's testament describes not only the significant challenges presented to theatre makers working under the dictatorship but provides a clear example of the dehumanising effects of autocracy. However, as Noguera utilises the analogy of the 'coin' within his testimony, it is relevant to understand the need and desire to continue creating theatre when faced by such acts of cultural and political oppression. It is also necessary to understand such determination when discussing contemporary community theatre practice in Chile.

In an interview conducted with Noguera after the 1990 plebiscite that saw democracy restored in Chile, he said that the interrelation between politics and theatre in Chile preceded the military junta and that it was an obligation for theatre makers to have a political stance (Noguera cited in Watson and Epstein, 1995:43). It is the notion of long term relations between theatre and politics in Chile that this section will discuss. At present there is limited scholarship surrounding community theatre practice in Chile, a factor which has affected the writing of this section. I argue that the reason is the academic focus on 'professional theatre' (Ehrmann, 1970) in the country and its perceived superiority to other theatre forms. Community theatre work is not deemed of similar value, as is evident within the existing literature and from fieldwork undertaken. The majority of historical theatre scholarship available in both English and Spanish is based on the record of 'professional theatre performance' or the mounting of plays by Chilean writers (see Watson and Epstein, 1995; Noguera, 1990; Cozzi, 1990; Boyle, 1988). These papers do allude to community theatre practice but do not call it by its specific title. To overcome this lack of documentation, interviews I conducted with Chilean theatre practitioners will be utilised as an attempt to account for gaps in historical scholarship and evidence.

Dictatorship and Theatre

Inspired by the Spanish actress Margarita Xirgu, The University Theatre movement would dominate the cultural and artistic scene in Chile from its inception in the 1940s through to the 1960s. However, the development of modern Chilean theatre was not without problems. In parallel to the development of the theatre, the Chilean middle class began to emerge. The historical binary between landowning aristocrats and the peasant workers slowly fragmented when Pedro Aguirre Cerda was elected President in 1938. The ownership of the theatre trickled down from the upper classes to the

newly formed middle class (Ehrmann, 1970:77/78). One noticeable element of this transition is the failure for the theatre to be inclusive of the working class, commonly referred to as 'peasants' at the time.

Ehrmann (1970:78) argues that the new and professionalised Chilean theatre would aim to reach out to working class communities, but work that travelled beyond the theatres of Santiago was 'few and far between'. As well as the 'lip-service' that was paid to making the theatre inclusive of all Chileans, there were also a range of issues with the artistic content itself. The democratisation of a middle class culture was the dominant aim of the University Theatre movement, as opposed to a cultural democratic approach. Ehrmann (1970:82) continues his critique of the movement's cultural paternalism with an example of a Teatro de Ensayo production in 1968:

> For four years it toured from five to eight of Santiago's *poblaciones* (slum areas), with a different play each season but it makes little sense to take plays grounded in middle-class values to workers whose lives are based on different problems and standards. Here one returns to the problem of bourgeois playwrights who do not know how the other 80 percent live.

Nevertheless, the dominance of the University Theatres does not mean that work with working class communities did not take place. Cozzi (1990:119) affirms that prior to the coup in 1973, a political theatre movement did exist within the *poblaciones* and was led by the 'left-wing intelligentsia'. This practice was produced autonomously and by 'non-professionals'. The work was characterised by its agit-prop style and propagandistic messages. These early examples of Chilean theatre demonstrates Noguera's statement that Chilean theatre was intertwined with politics. However, it is also a clear documentation of the cultural hierarchies that existed regardless of similar political ideals and beliefs.

The 1973 coup would bring an end to the divisions between the bourgeois left of the University Theatres and the working class agit-prop groups. The University of Chile's Drama School was shelled as part of the military takeover and artists were detained and tortured. Some were murdered by the military regime, the most famous being the Chilean folk singer Victor Jara. The immediate aftermath of the coup was an obliteration of both the mainstream and autonomous political theatre movement.

Silence ensued in the years immediately after 1973 but the longstanding relationship between theatre and politics would find new ways to express itself. As Cozzi (1990:119) states 'out of those ashes and wrecked dreams a new political theatre would slowly begin to emerge'.

The violent and brutal oppression delivered by the junta would halt the activities of agitational left wing theatre troupes. However, the unique factor of the Chilean dictatorship and its theatre policy was that it did not have a strict or clear censorship protocol. The attack on the theatre community was much more subtle and unpredictable. For example, as opposed to banning certain plays the military junta initiated a 'theatre tax' that economically crippled independent groups. The tax was imposed in 1974 and declared that all box office takings would be subject to a 22% VAT rate. The only exception to the tax would be when the military decided that a production was of a 'high cultural value' (Boyle, 1988:210). Other examples of attacks include power cuts in performance spaces and sporadic police interventions that usually resulted in violence (Noguera, 1990:262).

In response to this approach by the dictatorship, theatre makers adopted an aesthetic of subversion. The use of allegory and symbolism was employed by a wide range of practitioners as a means to expose the horrors of the authoritarian state. The work relied on the ability of its audience to decode messages, as the theatre made and performed became a process of 'saying without saying' (Cozzi, 1990:120). I have no space here to provide a detailed overview of the aesthetic developments of political theatre in Chile. It is worth pointing out that not all practitioners utilised allegory and symbolism to develop political comment within their work. There were a range of developments within the movement, with dramatic literature paying specific attention to the work of playwright Juan Radrigán. Radrigan would use his plays to present marginalised sectors of society. Protagonists would usually be sex workers or the homeless, the representation of such characters within absurdist contexts would be utilised to tell the 'story of life in a dictatorship' (Boyle, 1988:219).

The work during the period of the dictatorship is an example of how theatre makers courageously sought to enable freedoms for their audiences despite explicit forms of oppression. Such a desire led to a multitude of strategies to evade and circumvent the

forces of the dictatorship. It is also worth noting that such desires also came with the costs of disappearances, imprisonment and torture. Noguera (1990:263) recalls the process of gaining freedom within the theatre:

> We got here by struggling day after day, by slipping between the interstices and seams of our reality, tricking it, appearing and then hiding, gradually becoming more and more skilful at the process until it has become habitual.

Democratisation and Theatre

Patricio Alywin (1918-2016), the first democratically elected president of Chile since 1970, stated that Chile 'doesn't want violence or war, it wants peace' and the return to democracy was the opportunity for Chileans to 'build the country we dream of' (Alywin cited in Christian,1990). The reality of Alywin's statement is that the re-democratisation of Chile was not necessarily built by Chileans but guided by the invisible hand of the United States. Organisations such as the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED) founded under the Reagan administration believe in an ethos where 'American assistance on behalf of democracy efforts' is beneficial, both for the US and for countries struggling for 'freedom and self-government' (NED, 2013). The NED provided $1.8 million to Chilean democracy groups in 1988 to deliver a 'simple strategy' to 'get as many voters registered as possible and convince them to vote against continued Pinochet rule' (Carothers, 1991:158). Pinochet's brutality had fallen out of favour with the Reagan government and US advocates of neoliberalism. Rocamora and Wilson (1993:8) argue that the concept of US assisted democratisation hindered progressive democratic reform. With support from initiatives such as the NED, democratic states were provided with new customs of 'political freedoms' but also assumed new 'hardships' and a 'compromise of economic sovereignty'. Chilean democratisation did not protect populations from the insecurities and inequalities that constitute neoliberal governance.

How Chilean theatre responded to this process of democratisation is an interesting point for my thesis as changes in content and style reinforced the existing 'middle class problem' (Ehrmann, 1970) as opposed to offering alternatives. The return to democracy did not lead to a burgeoning of cultural democratic processes but laid bare the class and cultural divide that exists within Chilean theatre. Mainstream theatre has

maintained its hierarchical position whilst community theatre continues to struggle for recognition.

From my own experience of working in Chile, the divergence between 'mainstream' theatre and community theatre is represented in the form of festivals. On one hand, there is the Santiago a Mil festival that dominates Santiago city centre for the month of January. The festival charges for performances and seeks to display the 'artistic excellence' of contemporary Chilean Theatre (Fundacion Teatro a Mil, 2018). My colleagues would state that the festival is exclusive in its audience reach despite claims of accessibility. On the other hand, there is the ENTEPOLA International Festival of Community Theatre that takes place in the Pudahuel region of Santiago. The festival is completely free for audiences and performers are offered free accommodation and daily meals. The festival boasts a regular audience of 2500 people in the Pudahuel amphitheatre throughout the ten-day programme. The ENTEPOLA festival is not guaranteed support from central government or local authorities. Each year the festival is met with the challenge of how to overcome the financial precariousness it encounters. I will now provide two examples of performance and practice that have taken place at both festivals.

The first to be discussed is *El Año en que Nací (The Year I was Born)* (2011) by Lola Arias. The performance is well documented and was revered when it debuted as part of the Santiago a Mil festival (Lopez, 2015; Ripp, 2014). It was developed as part of the festival in 2011 and 'used the tools of Bio-Drama to recreate the personal stories of 11 performers who grew up under the military regime' (Lopez, 2015:288). The piece was part of the testimonial theatre movement that has become prominent since democratisation in Chile. The art form has become an 'attractive locus' for artist's work (Ripp, 2014:92). *El Año en que Nací (The Year I was Born)* presents an interesting nuance in my argument that Chilean theatre is still hindered by a class divide. The content is essentially political and deals with the atrocities of the dictatorship and its effect on Chilean citizens. But, the division in Chilean theatre does not derive from artistic content but in socio-economic context. Irrespective of content, the context of Santiago Mil is inaccessible for disadvantaged communities in Santiago and Chile in general. The prioritisation of this form and the Santiago a Mil festival is also evidenced in in contemporary scholarship. Such performances are celebrated and thoroughly

documented in English language journals as well as Spanish (see Lopez, 2015; Ripp, 2014).The absence of Chilean community theatre practice in theatre scholarship is only one aspect of its historical and contemporary struggle.

In opposition to the practice that takes place at Santiago a Mil, I would like to provide an example of the community theatre work that frequents the ENTEPOLA festival. Talita Cum are based in the port city of San Antonio. As part of my fieldwork for this thesis, I observed and participated in a range of Talita Cum workshops within schools and in the community. They have worked continuously with children and young people in San Antonio since 1987, directed and developed by Claudio Pontigo Guzman. The work is an example of continuity within Chilean practice similar to that shown by the work of Colectivo Sustento. Talita Cum work specifically with young people due to a belief that 'transformation must start from a base'. The aim is that the young people will continue transformative acts in to adulthood, as opposed to adults who may have entrenched ideas and behaviours; 'a crooked tree is hard to straighten' (Pontigo Guzman, 2016).

During an interview Claudio regularly referred to long term work with participants who began accessing the Talita Cum workshop from childhood and continued to perform in shows through adolescence and in to adulthood. He described this process as a way of working with participants to create *el camino* (the way), alongside the idea that the work must 'transcend the stage'. Throughout the interview and my observations of the work in San Antonio, it was evident that the aim was not to be isolated or detached from the wider workings of the San Antonio community, but to exist in relation to them.

Talita Cum's binding concept is dialogue. The company hold annual *jornadas* where the core group of young people meet to discuss contemporary social and political issues. From these *jornadas* Talita Cum decide on their programme of work. Claudio states that 'Talita Cum doesn't follow fashion' and 'they make their own lifestyle' (Pontigo Guzman, 2016). Although the work sounds almost utopian with its longevity and participant led ethics, there are challenges present. Claudio cites a range of issues such as lack of funding, fear in families of their children engaging in 'social commentary' and ironically, given the extensive amount of work, a lack of recognition

from local authorities. The marginalisation of the work is a point of interest to end this section.

From dictatorship to democracy, Chilean theatre practice has been unable to overcome its entrenched inequalities. As there is no clear solution or possibility of change in regards to this, community theatre will continue to appear secondary to the mainstream theatre practice. I conclude with a positive attribute to the marginalisation of the work. The invisibility of the practice affords autonomy which can present new possibilities, as hooks (2015:149) contends:

> …these statements identify marginality as much more than a site of deprivation; in fact I was saying just the opposite, that it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance.

From my experiences in Chile, the marginal position and its possibilities of resistance are evident within the community theatre movement. It is such a position that enabled Colectivo Sustento to present *Manos Arriba!* at ENTEPOLA and supported Talita Cum to develop such dialogical practice for over 30 years. Nevertheless, the experience is two-sided. The marginalisation of the work also results in the struggle for recognition and financial precariousness. The energy and motivation of resistance is met with the logistical quandaries of financial sustainability.

Community Theatre in the UK: Politicisation to Depoliticisation

In 1968 a group of activists with little or no theatre experience prepared to perform at the Trafalgar Square Festival in London. The main reason for performing was not aesthetic but political. The group saw this as an opportunity to utilise theatre as a tool of political propaganda – 'the main impetus was political rather than theatrical' (Hoyland in Itzen, 1980:43). The Agitprop Street Players (later to be known as Red Ladder) were one of many groups during the late 1960s to adopt theatre as another tool within their arsenal of political activism. The important concept this thesis foregrounds is the inseparable relationship between theatre and politics that such companies represent.

John McGrath, the founder of 7:84, exemplifies this with the following statement:

> I can see no way of discussing contemporary theatre, or the way reality is mediated, without the participants in the discussion declaring, or at least being aware of, their political position. A minimal statement of my own position might be summarised as follows: ours is a class society, and, notwithstanding the welfare state, nationalisation, the TUC and the Labour Party, the class which owns, controls or manages private capital and state capital is a coherent social entity with immense power. (McGrath, 1996:20)

The theatre as a political tool utilised by socialists and left wing activists bears similarity to the theatrical work undertaken by workers in Chile as discussed in the previous section. Albeit over 7000 miles apart, there is a clear resemblance between workers emboldened to create theatre to contribute to the development of a socialist society. The difference between the two countries is how the socialist struggle was terminated. After a brief span of socialism under Allende from 1970-1973, in Chile the rule of bomb, bullet and force was utilised to suppress left wing activism and its relation to theatre. In the UK, the historical relationship between politics and theatre is radically different. The manipulation of state apparatus, ideological supremacy and compromise led to the development of a depoliticised theatrical process in the 1990s. It is the aim of this section to chart the journey from politicised community theatre to depoliticised applied theatre.

Community Theatre and Politicisation: 1968 - 1990

The provocative and challenging nature of early community theatre work produced from the late 1960s was set against a background of social and political upheaval and radical educational innovations. Examples of these events included the publishing of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the development of Deweyan theories in UK schools by the late 1950s and the political events of 1968 (anti-Vietnam War protests, Paris riots, Civil Rights movement) (Jeffers, 2017:36). The events of 1968 and the subsequent sit-ins, strikes and protests led people to believe in the feasibility of a socialist revolution. Community theatre practitioners in the UK supported this idea by rejecting principles of managerial hierarchy, traditional venues and the 'dull conventionality' of mainstream theatre aesthetic. These were all traits that practitioners felt were representative of dominant right wing theatre in Britain (Gooch, 1984:41).

The rejection of mainstream right wing theatre was not coincidental, nor was the community theatre project born out of altruistic acts but a targeted ideological social movement. As Itzen (1980:x) argues 'they were not, for the most part, just socially committed, but committed to a socialist society'. The left wing and socialist ideology of the early community theatre movement is acknowledged by a range of scholars and practitioners (see Kershaw, 1992; Gooch, 1984; Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017). The acknowledgement of the ideological principles are not without criticism. Jeffers (2017:9/10) argues that although left wing politics dominated, the movement covered a broad spectrum and was often fractured and chaotic with influences ranging from Marx, Gramsci and the general Labour movement. The broad and diverse range of influences led to infighting and an inability to organise effectively.

However, the community theatre movement had shared ideological influences and aims. This is particularly evident within the theatre in education (TIE) movement and its strong relationship to the progressive educational ideas of Paulo Freire (Jeffers, 2017:8). Although practitioners envisioned different modes of communication and strategies, there was a shared political interest to utilise theatre as a 'medium to agitate and proselytize' against the dominant capitalist structures (Wooster, 2016:29). The acknowledgement of the relationship between theatre, community and progressive politics illustrates the unique epoch of the British community theatre movement of the 1960s and '70s. I argue that this epoch is a result of the interdependency of collectivism and class consciousness.

It is this consciousness of wider economic frameworks that led to a politicisation of the youth population during the 1960s and '70s. Post-war economic growth did not deliver a sense of complacency but led to a development of class consciousness. Itzen (1980:3) states that young people of both middle class and working class backgrounds 'saw that their very standards of living were at the direct expense of the sub-standards of the imperialised third of the world'.

A critical consciousness of capitalism's exploitative practices led to application of socialist and Marxist theatre practices. The rejected, dominant practices of capitalism were replaced with an envisioned socialist system of production representative of the 'people'. Theatre practice was envisaged as a process of struggle, in solidarity with

the working class population, to tell stories from different perspectives than those of the ruling classes (McGrath, 1996:22).

The development of mass critical consciousness was intertwined with the social identities of the population. Although there were material gains for the working class, they still believed there was a polarised society and a 'division between 'us' and 'them' (Cannadine, 2000:147). The negative attributes of such a polarised society contained positive elements regarding notions of collectivism. The notion of an 'us', a collective form of identification usually relating to means of production or the socio-economic status of a community, is deeply embedded within ideals of socialist principles of solidarity and collective action. The subsequent prioritisation of the 'individual' and the implementation of neoliberal ideology in the 1980s aimed to weaken the collective basis for action (Furlong, 2013: 218).

Kershaw (1992:102) claims that elements of collectivism played an enormous role within the origins of the community theatre movement. In response to the hierarchical nature of production, 'anti-hierarchical and egalitarian working methods' were employed by most companies. The ideal of collectivism was utilised within this period to undertake and align with the political ideals of an anti-capitalist/socialist project. However, it is necessary to recognise the problematic issues that arose during this period of collective working. The principles of collectivism could not overcome inherent hierarchies within a creative process. There was also a dislike of collective working by legal and logistical overseers such as the Charity Commission and funding bodies (Wooster, 2016:136).

The efficacy of the community theatre movement from the 1960s - 1980s is contestable and subject to debate. The measurement of the political and social value of the movement has been conducted in retrospect and is based on general assertions as opposed to evidenced claims (see Kershaw, 1992; Jeffers, 2017). Nevertheless, the strong identity and popularity of the socialist theatre was punctured with the election of a Conservative government in 1979 who introduced and implemented the most advanced forms of capitalism in UK history. The drive for socialism was met with the implementation of neoliberalism. In this case, Kershaw's (1992:253) argument is apt; 'socially and politically, the movement has left hardly any marks at all: it is just a

small footnote in the textbook of history'. The renewed energy of the 'bourgeois theatre' in the 1980s did not result in the demise of community theatre but did lead to its compromise.

Applied Theatre and Depoliticisation: 1980s -2000s

The late 1980s and early '90s marked a change for the development of community theatre. The movement had developed a dependency on state organisations which led to limited possibilities of resistance (Kershaw, 1992:252/253). The process of neoliberal implementation left the movement in a form of existentialist crisis. As Nicholson (2009:36) argues:

> Perhaps most significant to theatre-makers who had built their practice on socialist principles was that the changing socio-political climate in the 1980s was accompanied by a crisis in the political Left….the subsequent demise of Communism meant that the Marxist narratives and principles that many educational theatre-makers had lived by were plunged into uncertainty.

Utilising Nicholson's quote as stimulus, this section will discuss the development of the community theatre movement from the 1980s to the present day. From the direct approach of Thatcherism to the subtleties of Blairism and the recent resurgence of the Conservative Party, I am arguing that community theatre practice, in its original form as a socialist project, became compromised and depoliticised. The process of compromise began with the challenge of funding cuts and legislative acts. The change in the political climate in 1979 delivered a reduction in public funding and the introduction of commercialisation within the arts. Margaret Thatcher's term as Prime Minister began with a 4.8% cut to arts funding and a clear aim to instil key foundations of neoliberalism in the arts sector. Community theatre practice became susceptible to the demands of marketisation and ideas of competition. An example of this was the demand for companies to seek 'diversified sources of funding', mainly support from businesses (Billington, 2013; Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010:5).

The sustainability of community theatre during the Thatcher government was questionable early within her term as harsh inequalities between mainstream theatres and the community theatre movement emerged. Kershaw (1992:137) argues that the era demonstrated 'a widening of the gap between the have and have-nots in the British theatre system'. Utilising funding statistics from a range of historical Arts Council of

Great Britain Annual Reviews, by 1980/1 the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company accounted for 43% of Arts Council funding for theatre. In comparison, 'touring companies' (predominantly community theatre companies) accounted for 12% (ibid.).

The movement did not dissolve instantaneously but became more confrontational during the early 1980s. As the gap widened economically and pressures were applied by the Arts Council of Great Britain, practitioners and companies perceived the onslaught of neoliberal policies as a form of cultural conflict that needed to be resisted. This resulted in the strengthening of socialist ideological principles alongside an emergence of new companies that sought to resist Thatcherism (Kershaw, 1992:170). The work was enabled through support from regional borough councils. However, the resurgence in ideologically committed theatre in the early 1980s soon became undermined due to a range of policies that sought to dismantle the networks that supported the socialist theatre movement. The most important of these was the Local Government Act 1985, which abolished county councils such as the Greater London Council which had offered a range of support to artists (Bianchini, 1987:103).

The numbers of new companies emerging dwindled as the 1980s continued and Thatcherism became entrenched with the victory of a further two elections (1983 and1987). For example, Nicholson (2011:72) affirms that the radical and progressive notions of education that had characterised the TIE movement were completely 'incompatible' with the notions of conservative education and monetarism of the Conservative government. The Arts Council aimed to manufacture a new culture of theatre makers within the parameters of neoliberal hegemony. The notions of collective working were belittled as the Arts Council coerced companies to adopt a hierarchical structure by appointing an artistic or executive director in 1990 (Hanna cited in DiCenzo, 1996:75). A range of companies adapted to the Conservative's cultural doctrines, but others found that staying true to ideological principles became unsustainable and resulted in disbandment. For example, 7:84 England, Cast Productions, Belts and Braces (Unfinished Histories, 2016).

The 'funding masks' were donned and many companies assembled the appropriate 'survival kit' of administrators, management structures and business plans

(MacLennan, 1990:2). The entrenchment of neoliberalism was a successful project within Thatcher's period in office (1979-1990) and was continued by her successor of John Major (1990-1997). By the mid-1990s, the socialist nature of the community theatre project ceased to exist as practitioners and companies alike began a process of reimagining purpose and potential.

The changing economic and political contexts in the UK throughout the 1990s led to the development of new terminologies and methods which consigned traditional community theatre practice to historical scholarly interest. The terminology that defines this change is 'applied theatre', an expression used as an umbrella term to encompass a range of practices whilst not explicitly stating political intentions. In this section I am not aiming to provide a chronological overview of applied theatre practice, nor to discuss specific examples. I will instead consider the foundations of applied theatre practice and question its emergence and subsequent developments. My argument is that applied theatre practice is not based on political or ideological values, but came into existence in response to social and cultural policy initiatives. Subsequently, this led the practice to succumb to forms of instrumentalism. The political and economic spheres of applied theatre have therefore been co-opted since its inception by cultural policy and neoliberal economics. The contemporary practices of applied theatre are very distant from its roots in radical and socialist community theatre practice.

The definition of applied theatre has inspired scholarly debate and numerous publications since its origins in the early 1990s, from Thompson's *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* (2003) to Hughes and Nicholson's *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre* (2016). For the purposes of clarity, I utilise Prentki and Preston's (2009:9) definition that applied theatre 'describes a broad set of theatrical practices…that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre'. The basis of the practice is work that is developed 'with, for and by' the community (Prentki and Preston, 2009:10). I agree with this definition, as it maintains the same methods and forms as the community theatre movement. My contention is not that practice has changed in its physical form and structures, but that the intentions have become dubious.

This claim leads me to Nicholson's argument on the origins of applied theatre:

> The terms 'applied drama', 'applied theatre' and 'applied performance' emerged in universities, and gained currency during the 1990s, as students, academics, theatre practitioners and policy makers used them as a kind of shorthand to describe forms of dramatic activity that are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies. (Nicholson, 2005:3)

The quote shows that the terminology of applied theatre derived and gained currency from an institutional base including universities and government departments. The very beginnings of the practice were formed from a hierarchical and institutionalised standpoint that led to a top-down approach, leading to claims of applied theatre as an 'exclusionary' discourse (Ackroyd, n.d.). The strong relationship between the state and cultural policy is a main reason for the development of dubious and questionable intentions in applied theatre practice. The marketisation of the state under New Labour led to neoliberal ideas becoming the foundations of social and cultural policy, this inevitably influenced the growth of applied theatre practice. Neelands (2007:313) identified this relationship in the 2000s by arguing that the New Labour government shaped the applied theatre industry with its social inclusion agendas. However, these cultural and state initiatives did not necessarily lead to politicised or 'social' approaches, but more often to the entrenchment of therapeutic and individualised modes of change. This argument is clear in Taylor's (2003:xxi) description of applied theatre as presenting a possibility for 'healing psychological wounds or barriers'. I argue that the applied theatre sector signalled a shift in focus from societal issues to individual behaviours.

The proximity of applied theatre practice to the social and cultural policy of the New Labour government had detrimental effects on the sector's ability to engage with the 'political'. Community theatre practice, which had earlier argued vehemently against notions of capital and monetarism, transitioned to an economised applied theatre. Practice in this period was no longer defined by seeking political change, but was demarcated instead by its economic and social contribution as 'publicly funded arts organisations needed to justify their value in terms of a social benefit' (Mullen, 2019:29). The economisation of applied theatre led to practices which many, including myself, have deemed as frequently instrumental. The need for practitioners to justify their work by providing evidence-based transformation has meant that companies

envisage change within a limited framework, predominantly on behavioural change. Instrumentalist practice envisages transformation and change as concepts that are practical and can be clearly measured.

The instrumentalist narratives of applied theatre practice limited political possibilities and, in some cases, provided weak links between individual change and social change. The limitations of identifiable individual effects like developing self-esteem and confidence became clear as the practice developed under the New Labour government. Thompson's (2003) critique of his experiences with TiPP (Theatre in Prisons and Probation) and their employment programmes in the prison service are an example of this. Thompson (2003:99) argued 'a rise in self-esteem was not a property that once possessed could be taken with the prisoners wherever they went'. Mullen (2019:33) argues that the instrumentalist approaches and focus on 'tangible outcomes' was part of a process of neoliberalisation for the arts, in which applied theatre played a crucial role.

It would be reductive of me to claim that applied theatre practice has maintained such instrumental or institutionalised processes without challenge or question. Also, there were examples during this formative period of companies who managed to continue critical and socialist practices within the instrumentalist framework of applied theatre (Hesmondhalgh et al, 2015:109). However, these were a minority whose practices could not affect the dominant forces of economisation and institutionalisation inherent in applied theatre practice.

As New Labour governance gave way to the Conservative Party towards the end of the 2000s, a varied and more nuanced discourse appeared concerning applied theatre. The instrumentalist and behavioural approaches that defined the early applied theatre movement had begun to demonstrate their limitations. The role of social and cultural policy in such practices also came under criticism during this period (see Neelands, 2007). I argue that Thompson's *Performance Affects – Applied theatre and the end of effect* (2009) was a crucial text in mounting a challenge to instrumentalist and effect-led practices. His writing on affect and the notions of joy and beauty presents a clear challenge to outcome-based practice. However, the impact such criticisms have had on grassroots delivery is unclear and lacks evidence.

As Thompson (2003) and Nicholson (2005) identified, the development of the applied theatre term was instigated and welcomed by higher education institutions. The continued relationship between the sector and higher education institutes is evidenced by the growth of undergraduate and postgraduate applied theatre courses in the UK. Such growth has received attention from historically mainstream theatre outlets such as The Stage (2016), publishing articles such as *What do you get from an applied theatre course?* The questioning of instrumental practices and the new direction towards *affect* is predominantly led by applied theatre academics as opposed to practitioners. The work of Thompson (2009), Hughes and Nicholson (2016) and Prentki (2015) are examples of the argument that new discourses are led by academic research as opposed to practice. Without negating the credibility or importance of this work, I am unconvinced by how such criticisms influence grassroots delivery or cultural policy. The hierarchical structuring of the applied theatre sector is paradoxical; emerging and progressive discourse for applied theatre practice is problematically not led by practitioners themselves.

The development of *affect* led discourses has not necessarily ended instrumentalist or effect-led practice. An example of the continued economisation and instrumentalism was the report *Unlocking Value: the economic benefit of the arts in the criminal justice system* (New Philanthropy Capital, 2011). An extensive study was undertaken to prove the economic benefit of the practice of companies such as Clean Break, who specialise in creating theatre with women in criminal justice settings. The report enabled claims to be made that for every £1 invested in a Clean Break programme, '£4.57 of value is created for society over one year' (New Philanthropy Capital, 2011:2). From a cultural policy perspective, the economisation of practice and its focus on the individual are also unchanged. *The Culture White Paper* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2016) by the Conservative government affirms that its indicators for access to the arts are 'improved subjective wellbeing' and an 'increase in the number of 16-18 year olds in education or work-based learning'.

Before I finalise this argument, I would like to clarify that I am not claiming that all applied theatre practice is instrumental. There are a range of examples that engage with the political and work beyond the dominant forms of individual change. Cardboard Citizens recent production of *Cathy* and its impact on the Homelessness Reduction

Bill is one example (Cardboard Citizens, 2017). The performance had a direct impact on national legislation and enabled productive dialogue between participants and decision makers. The use of performance to influence decision making on a national level transcends applied theatre's dominant model of individual change. Such examples of social and systemic change align with the intentions of my thesis. However, these practices occur in the interstices of cultural policy and justifying economic impact. The institutionalised context of applied theatre and its dominant discourses of instrumentalism and economisation do prevail. The challenge that remains is to deconstruct the hierarchical foundations of the sector, whilst reclaiming the criticality of the early community theatre movement.

Towards a Critical Youth Theatre

I was in a unique position at the beginnings of my practice as a youth theatre director. I worked for Collective Encounters, a theatre for social change company who believe that the theatre process should be 'inclusive, creative, challenging, empowering, responsive and developmental' (Thornton, 2012). The company is based on a structure where research and practice are interwoven and influence the development of each project. This approach enables a politically informed practice subject to extensive evaluation. The evaluation informs the ongoing research undertaken by the artistic director, Sarah Thornton (see Thornton, 2012; Thornton, 2015). The overall ethos of the company is aligned with my own practice and ideals of using theatre as a method of critical engagement with marginalised communities. These ideals formed the foundation of the youth theatre programme and the performances mentioned above.

However, in my naivety I initially assumed that all youth theatres worked with similar ideals of social change. The development of the Merseyside Youth Theatre Forum in the late 2000s laid out the myriad of pedagogies and aesthetics at play within the sector. During this period, I began to understand that instances of youth theatre as critical engagement were not the norm within the established youth theatre sector. The undertaking of this thesis gave me an opportunity to interrogate the historical context of the sector and its dual histories. The main aim of my enquiry is to question the

absence of the political and the social within contemporary youth theatre discourse, including practices that make claim to criticality and social change.

To define the practice of youth theatre alongside its underlying principles and ethics is an enquiry packed with complications. Bennett (2005:244) defines the practice simply as 'Youth theatre: Young people performing a play'. However, this simplistic definition resulted from two historical movements. Bennett (2005:27) argues that youth theatre practice within contemporary society has 'two branches', one influenced by companies such as the National Youth Theatre (NYT) and the other by the TIE movement. The two branches are youth theatre as 'art form' or as 'educational force'. Hughes and Wilson (2004:62) also identify these two approaches as follows:

> Theatre arts - the 'reason for being' of this model is to provide access to professional quality drama and theatre processes. Personal and social development outcomes may be a by-product of this work but the driving force is to create theatre and performance.

> Applied theatre - the 'reason for being' is to address specific issues and deliver non-arts related outcomes using theatre as a tool.

From my experiences at Collective Encounters, I agree that youth theatre practice can be divided by the two aims of art form or educational use. I extend this argument by identifying that there is a dominant and subordinate relationship between these two forms. Youth theatre as art form held the dominant position historically and continues to do so in contemporary practices. Youth theatre as education and in its 'applied' form is subordinate to such practices. As demonstrated in my earlier argument, such applied practices are accompanied by a range of issues and challenges including economisation and instrumentalism. To demonstrate the hierarchical relationship between the practices, I will provide a short overview of the two forms. My argument concludes with identifying the issues that the subordinate form of youth theatre as 'educational force' continues to encounter, whilst questioning the possibilities of developing critical engagement within the existing models of practice.

Firstly, I explore youth theatre as art form. As Bennett identified, this model of practice was influenced by the NYT. The NYT was founded in 1961 by the writer Michael Croft and his work with students at Alleyn's public school in the 1950s (Richardson, 2015:11; Masters, 1969:1). The early stages of the NYT process were dominated by the

production of Shakespeare plays, producing theatre within renowned cultural institutions such as the Old Vic, with a programme that was solely focused on theatre producing seasons (Masters, 1969:4). Masters (1969:7) enthusiastically concluded his introduction to the NYT by claiming that the work encouraged 'young people to appreciate the arts of the theatre' and it provided an 'exceptional insight into the practical workings of theatre'. Aesthetic principles were the priority in these processes. He also concluded by claiming that NYT 'set alight the Youth theatre movement…for which the NYT holds the torch!'.

The founding of the NYT inspired a range of other youth theatre initiatives during the 1970s and 1980s. These included the National Festival of Youth Theatre and the inception of the National Association of Youth Theatres in 1982. A range of regional theatres established education departments and 'specialist young people's companies' during the same time period. The development of the sector was in an *ad hoc* manner, motivated by a number of 'committed and hardworking individuals' and principally focused on notions of 'recreation' (England, 1990:28; Hill cited in Drama Online, 2018). Developments during this period were also recognised by the Arts Council, with such reports as the *Young People's Theatre Enquiry Report* in 1966 and the 1986 report *A Policy for Theatre for Young People*. The focus of such enquiries in the 1960s and '70s were predominantly based on the idea of 'quality', contrary to the community theatre movement that actively sought to 'disrupt the notion of quality and the canon' (Kings College London, 2014:11/12).

The financial recognition of youth theatre as art form reinforced concepts of 'quality' and a clear focus on aesthetics. The foundations of the NYT, with its stagings of Shakespeare and residencies at the Old Vic, became an inspiration and example for other youth theatres to aspire to. The focus on high quality performance qualities has been maintained to the present day. For example, NYT (2018) continues to affirm that they 'inspire, nurture and showcase exceptional performers'. Such aesthetic aspirations are accompanied by favourable financial backing from the Arts Council. NYT were awarded National Portfolio status by Arts Council England in 2017 and guaranteed an annual grant of £305,769 each year (2018-2022). This amount represents 10% of the company's annual turnover (NYT, 2017). Another indicator for the dominance of youth theatre as art form is the range of youth theatre literature that

focuses on performance. Numerous publications are solely or predominantly focused on practicalities such as workshops, performance skills and staging of youth theatre productions (see Greig, 2008; Masters, 1969; Helling Croteau, 2000; Richardson, 2015; Doyle, 2003; Clifford and Herrmann, 1999).

As the 'first youth theatre in the world' (NYT, 2018), NYT laid the foundations for youth theatre as art form. The historical and contemporary examples of its practice have evidently inspired other practitioners whilst influencing the emphasis on 'quality' within cultural policy. Aesthetics and high quality production values are of the highest priority and any form of individual or social development is a bi-product. This is best evidenced by Helling Croteau (2000:xiv) and her examples of staging Shakespeare to 'serve the students well throughout their academic careers and lives'. Whilst I have no issue with the focus on high quality in youth theatre practice, I question to what extent the examples above hinder the development of other important factors such as pedagogies and politics.

The growth of youth theatre as educational form is not as straightforward to describe. The chronology begins with TIE practice, a form which is not recognised as following or attempting to adhere to youth theatre conventions. The TIE movement began in 1965 with the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry delivering a range of projects to 'develop proactive relationships with the broader community' (Jackson, 2013:22). The TIE movement had the same socialist aspirations of the wider community theatre movement which I discussed earlier. As Romy Baskerville (1984:8) argued, the purpose of TIE was to engage working class children in socially conscious theatre, to resist middle class domination. The important aspect of this early work for my thesis is that the early TIE movement actively cited critical pedagogy as a key influence. The work of Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich and John Holt generated debate amongst practitioners whilst encouraging companies to 'experiment with form' (Jackson, 2013:27).

The ideological and pedagogical formation of the TIE movement was also aligned and supported by educational authorities, with both sides seeking to create a radical and progressive means of engaging young people. Local Education Authorities (LEAs) committed considerable amounts of money to TIE companies and some LEAs even established their own companies (Jackson, 2013:25). The influence and support of

the LEAs was fundamental to the TIE movement from the 1960s to the 1980s. The TIE movement, in its original and critical form, ceased to exist in the late 1980s. TIE practice met a range of challenges that were 'brutal and damaging' during this period, most importantly the 1988 Education Reform Act that centred on a new national curriculum and 'teaching to pass tests' (Cooper, 2013:42/57). The aim of entrenching a conservative education system was realised by the end of Thatcher's term. There was a 'return to the supposed rigours of disembodied knowledge and skills' as more progressive notions aiming to 'relate learning to the life of the child or their society were seen as deficient' (Wrigley, 2014:21). Similar to the community theatre movement, TIE was dealt a range of blows in the late 1980s and early 1990s that forced practitioners and companies alike to rethink how they could be sustainable within a developing neoliberal economy.

The development of applied theatre practice appeared to address the loss of TIE practice during the 1990s (Jackson, 2013:32). A range of TIE companies developed into youth theatres and the perception of TIE practice shifted within the agendas of cultural policy makers. Wooster (2016:254) argues that 'Arts Councils have fallen out of love with TIE and to them 'participation' has become a synonym for 'performance' in youth theatre'. The TIE convention of actors performing for children and young people became replaced by the young people devising and creating their own performances. One example of a shift from TIE practice to youth theatre is the Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre (GLYPT). The company vision is as follows:

> We use the power of the arts to enrich the lives of young people and audiences and seek to enable, empower and challenge participants through delivering work of artistic excellence. (GLYPT, 2019)

Founded on the long history of TIE and its own experimentations with youth theatre practice in the 1970s, GLYPT have developed a child centred pedagogy to their youth theatre practices. Their practice is based on the traditional community theatre concept of 'theatre for, with and by young people' (GLYPT, 2019). The rhetoric of the GLYPT is radically different from the aesthetic led NYT, as notions of high quality and excellence are replaced by terms such as 'relevant, inclusive and challenging' (GLYPT, 2019). Youth theatre as educational form derives from ethics of accessibility, inclusion and empowerment. The aim for GLYPT also encompasses critical

aspirations, with theatre 'that explores the world in which young people live' (GLYPT, 2019).

However, there is a need to understand why such forms are subordinate to their 'art form' equivalent. I think there are two main reasons for this; resources and recognition. The NYT boasts a long history that has inspired and influenced a range of practices and is resourced to deliver workshops nationally, as well as to produce high-budget performances. Applied youth theatre practices such as the GLYPT cannot compete with such large scale activity and they solely focus on working within their locality. Also, such work predominantly takes place outside of mainstream and conventional theatre spaces and places an onus on the educational process, as opposed to performance product. The rejection of mainstream arts environments and performance-based outcomes creates a discord with traditional cultural policy initiatives of 'quality', that have underpinned how the Arts Council have perceived youth theatre since its inception.

I conclude this section by situating my own practice in relation to the two forms that have been described. My background and experience in developing theatre for social change with young people at Collective Encounters positions me in the latter and subordinate category of youth theatre as applied theatre practice. I do not reject the high-quality production values of companies such as NYT but such work can be anti-dialogical, as the theatrical process is not always developed from the perspectives of the young people they work with. However, my thesis is not mounting a challenge to this dominant form. The reason for identifying the two forms is not for one to eradicate the other, but for me to identify the position of applied youth theatre practice within the broad terminology of youth theatre. By doing so, I can recognise the flaws and challenges within the applied youth theatre form which I practice.

I do not seek to repeat my criticisms of applied theatre from the previous section, but I must clarify that whilst applied youth practice can provide opportunities for critical engagement, it also suffers from the same forms of instrumentalism and individualism that burden the sector as a whole. The rhetoric of the 'individual' is utilised in a range of publications with a focus on the 'development' of the young person (Richardson, 2015; Doyle, 2003; Clifford and Herrmann, 1999; Hughes and Wilson, 2004).

Mirza (2005:270) contends that 'attempts to change the individual's emotional life reflects a limited framework of expectations regarding social change'. As evidenced above, applied youth theatre practice works within a limited framework of social change. The dominant presence of 'individual development' within applied youth theatre literature denotes the absence of interest in community, society and politics within the practice.

Jackson (2013:38) argued the following about TIE transitioning in to new forms of practice:

> The challenges must now be to ensure that the particular qualities and characteristics of that earlier practice – above all, the harnessing of the art form to progressive notions of learning, and resisting their all-too easy separation – continue not only to survive but to nurture and sustain new forms of TIE and TIE-related applied theatre practices in the future.

In response to Jackson, I argue that contemporary applied youth theatre practice, with the exception of a few cases, does not actively seek to 'harness' theatre practice as critical and progressive education. Neelands (2007:316) argues that 'applied theatre can make a difference to the lives of others by affording them 'minutes of happiness' whilst 'offering the chance to participate artistically and socially in the practice of freedom'. I argue that for youth theatre practice to offer chances of participation in social and artistic freedom, it must rediscover its radical roots within TIE practice. I hope the following case studies can contribute to this debate about how to enable critical engagement within youth theatre practices, whilst re-engaging with the political foundations of community theatre.

The Theoretical Framework: Towards a Critical and Agonistic Theatre

To explore the development of a critical theatre practice, it is necessary to establish the theoretical framework. By establishing the framework, the political and intellectual position of this thesis is presented. The position taken responds to the developments outlined above and the demand to create a theatre with young people that achieves critical engagement. To employ Zizek (2000:199), the theatre practice presented 'is not simply something that works well within the framework of the existing relations, but something that *changes the very framework that determines how things work.'*

The theoretical and practical framework of this thesis is based on a hybrid of concepts, amalgamating Paulo Freire's critical educational practice and Chantal Mouffe's political thought on the ideas of subversion, agonism and radical democracy. By combining the two principles of critical pedagogy and agonistic politics and applying these throughout the three case studies, the thesis aims to reflect on the possibilities of establishing a critical and subversive theatre practice.

Paulo Freire – Critical Education as Liberation

The impact of Freire's work has spanned several decades and has impacted upon a range of prominent scholars including Ivan Illich, bell hooks, Henry Giroux and Michael Apple. hooks (1994:18) recalls her involvement with Freire:

> my experience with him restored my faith in liberatory education. I had never wanted to surrender the conviction that one could teach without reinforcing existing systems of domination.

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator who came to be regarded as the leading advocate for critical pedagogy due to the progressive and radical ideas outlined in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In the seminal text, Freire outlines his principle idea of education as emancipation as opposed to the dominant form which he calls 'banking education':

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift 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. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. (Freire, 1996:53)

In opposition to the oppressive functions of education, Freire advocates for:

> Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to education as the practice of domination – denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from the people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it. (Freire, 1996:62)

By outlining the oppressive functions of education and its main form 'banking education', Freire enables a reformation of the relationship between student and

teacher. To provide clarity, the oppressor/oppressed terminologies are utilised within this thesis to acknowledge Freirean terminology and should not be interpreted in a literal manner where a teacher or educator exercises clear and direct force over a young person. The 'dialogical' is pertinent to this work in not only creating a new relationship between student and teacher but also between the student and the world – a process entitled 'conscientisation'. The process of conscientisation is described by Freire (1996:17) as 'learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality'. Conscientisation is also referred to as critical consciousness within my thesis. Thus, education is a process where students seek liberation via their own transformation from object ('those who are known and acted upon') to subject ('those who know and act') (Freire, 1996:28).

I do not provide an overview of Freire's ideas but focus on specific elements that reinforce my practical and intellectual position. In continuation of Freire's ideas on the dialogical, I believe in the notion that progressive education must begin with the 'knowledge of living experience' that young people possess (Freire, 2014:74). The practice conducted within this thesis is in relation to Freire's idea that within a revolutionary struggle:

> …we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that human beings in communion liberate each other.

The adoption of Freirean principles is also utilised to avoid reinforcing dominant banking discourse and construct meaning in dialogue with young people. The employment of oppressive practices is a result of the underestimation of 'wisdom that necessarily results from sociocultural experience' (Freire, 2014:75). The dominant 'anti-dialogue' perpetuated by the dominant classes 'does not communicate, but rather issues communiques' (Freire, 2013:43). By acknowledging the importance of sociocultural experience and the emphasis on working *with* students as opposed to *for* dominant ideologies, a dialogical relationship can be formed based on the matrices of hope, love, trust and criticality (Freire, 1996:72; Freire, 2013:42).

As well as conscientisation and the dialogical relationship, the framework pays specific attention to Freire's discourse regarding praxis. Freire (1996:68/69) defines praxis as the interdependency between two elements – action and reflection. He argues that

viewing the two concepts in a dichotomised relationship as opposed to a dialectical one is detrimental to the establishment of dialogue and emancipation.

He states the following on the practice of reflection without action:

> When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed to idle chatter, into verbalism, into an alienated and alienating "blah".

And, the following on the practice of action without reflection:

> …if action is emphasised exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into activism. The latter – action for action's sake – negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible.

The understanding of the dialectical relationship between the two concepts results in the idea of praxis. Freire contends that praxis is not only a pedagogical approach but is essential to an individual's ontological vocation of humanisation – to deny praxis is to deny human activity. To embody a humanising pedagogical approach, the idea of praxis is central to the practice undertaken in this thesis. As Freire (1996:106) said 'human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world.'

Through praxis a dialogue is possible between teacher and student, in the case of this thesis, between facilitator and participant. The adoption of Freirean praxis enabled me to undertake open and responsive approaches to delivering the projects discussed based on ideas of mutual respect, proposition and concrete reality. Freire (2016a:7) describes a similar process whilst developing educational programmes for the newly formed Government of Guinea Bissau in 1975:

> In our baggage we carried no saving plans or reports semi-prepared. As a team, we had talked in Geneva about the best way to see and hear, inquire and discuss so that the plan for our contribution might result – a plan for a program that would be born there, in dialogue with the people of the country, about their own reality, their needs, and the possibility of our assistance. We could not design such a plan for them in Geneva.

The final aspect of Freire's work that is to be considered within this framework is the negation of neutrality. The critical pedagogical project is political in nature and derives from 'traditional perspectives of Marxism and socialism' (McLaren and Giroux cited in McLaren, 1995:33). By identifying the political project, Freire negates liberal ideals of

neutrality and objectivity within political discourse, as his discussion in *The Politics of Education* explains:

> "Washing one's hands" of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral. Alongside the neutral attitude, there are more subtle and more attractive means of serving the interests of the powerful while appearing to favour the oppressed. Here again we find the naïve and the shrewd walking hand in hand. (Freire, 1985:122)

In agreement with Zizek and Mouffe, the concept of neutrality has dominated politics since the emergence of 'Third Way' approaches or 'centrist' parties. This has led to an absence of ideology or political position within political discourse which has advertently affected applied theatre practice. By negating the notion of neutrality, my practice seeks to enable young people to critically engage with corresponding ideologies and constructs that have an effect upon their lives.

Mouffe – Agonism and Subversion

In continuation of Freire's rejection of the possibility of political neutrality, my framework employs the notion of agonistic politics and subversion as discussed by Chantal Mouffe. She identifies the need for agonism to contest the dominance of post-ideological politics:

> …as a consequence of the blurring of the frontiers between left and right and the absence of an agonistic debate among democratic parties, a confrontation between different political projects, voters did not have the possibility of identifying with a differentiated range of democratic political identities. (Mouffe, 2005:69)

To understand Mouffe's utilisation of the word agonism, an overview of etymology and definition is required. The word 'agon' derives from Ancient Greece. The definition states 'a painful struggle, *esp.* a psychological one; a conflict, fight, competition' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012).

The idea of struggle is pertinent to Mouffe's (2013:17) advocacy for agonistic politics:

> According to the approach that I am advocating, the domain of politics is not and cannot be the domain of the unconditional because it requires making decisions in an undecidable terrain. This is why the type of order which is established through a given hegemonic configuration of power is always a political, contestable one; it should never be justified as dictated by a higher order and presented as the only legitimate one.

The difference between Mouffe and Freire in this respect, is the lack of 'revolutionary' fervour within Mouffe's discourse. The idea of agonistics is set within the established liberal democratic system and does not aim to overthrow or replace dominant systems. This is related to the idea of struggle and the necessity for an opposition in order to establish a 'vibrant democracy'. Prior to an argument regarding who wields political power, it is a pre-requisite to understand that those who wield power can be contested. As opposed to the abolition of the political opposite, the struggle for hegemonic power is based on the understanding of political actors as adversaries who 'do not put into question the legitimacy of their opponent's right to fight for the victory of their position' (Mouffe, 2013:7).

Mouffe's focus on reforming the existing liberal democratic system contrasts the developments of autonomous Marxism and the model to 'withdraw from all state institutions' (see Holloway, 2005; Hardt and Negri, 2000). Mouffe's argument claims that such autonomous arguments advocate for the eradication of antagonisms, therefore hindering the possibilities of forming radical and vibrant democratic discourse.

As argued earlier, Mouffe's approach is interlinked with the contextual understanding of the 'post-political' era that emerged in the 1990s due to a dominance of consensus and the 'liberal principle of neutrality' (Mouffe, 2005a:23). I would argue that the promotion of neutrality as a means to entrench neoliberal hegemony ultimately led to the depoliticisation of the community theatre movement. The utilisation of Mouffe within this framework is to acknowledge the possibility of community theatre participating in a counter hegemonic struggle within an agonistic political framework. Alongside Mouffe's contribution regarding agonism, she also offers a discussion on arts and social change in *Agonistic Politics and Cultural Practices* (Mouffe, 2013:85).

Mouffe focusses particularly on the use of arts to establish critical public spaces. The idea of critical public space has been challenged by neoliberal ideology, a threat that has drastic consequences for the development of critical citizenship. The privatisation or closure of public spaces such as libraries and museums since the 1980s has limited the autonomy of the citizen to question dominant hegemonic discourses (Giroux, 2004:130). Mouffe (2013:92) develops her argument by aligning the idea of critical public space with the agonistic approach:

> According to the accepted view, the public space is the terrain where one aims at creating consensus. For the agonistic approach, on the contrary, the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation.

It is within the frame of an agonistic critical public space that the arts, community theatre in the case of this thesis, can 'contribute to unsettling the dominant hegemony' (Mouffe, 2013:91). The aim of unsettling hegemony is far from overturning or overthrowing as Mouffe's ideas posit themselves within the realms of subversion as opposed to revolution. By aiming to 'subvert the existing configuration of power', Mouffe (2013:99) asserts that a practitioner should not be under the 'illusion to believe that artistic activism could, on its own, bring about the end of neo-liberal hegemony'. The practice advocated by Mouffe is one of 'disruption', practice should disturb the 'smooth image that corporate capitalism spread', by doing so theatre can reveal capitalism's 'repressive character' (Mouffe, 2013:98). For example, she cites the work of Alfredo Jaar and his utilisation of advertising boards to present 'counter-information' to the general public (Mouffe, 2013:94/95).

The Mapping of Freire and Mouffe – Critical Agonsim

The theoretical and pedagogical framework of this thesis is based on an amalgamation of Freire's and Mouffe's principles, theories and practices. The mapping of Freire's educational principles and Mouffe's political philosophy is related to the participant demographic. The framework of critical agonism is based on two key principles - opposition and dialogue.

The dominant principle of the practice outlined in this research is opposition. As outlined by both Mouffe and Freire, neutrality is not an authentic concept within political

arenas nor does it support the development of a vibrant democracy. I argue that this concept also applies to community theatre practice with young people. As argued in the previous chapter, the depoliticisation of community/applied theatre practice resulted from indoctrination into wider state apparatus in the UK. The development of instrumentalism restricted the political agency of theatre practice with young people. The practice outlined in the following chapter aims to divert from this dominant discourse by utilising the principle of opposition which Freire and Mouffe outline. The main concept draws on the understanding that education and other provisions young people engage with are part of a political project. The failure to acknowledge this leads to reinforcing the conventions and traits of neoliberal hegemony.

However, I am also aware of the context in which this opposition must take place. Similarly to Mouffe, I refute arguments of autonomous activists such as Hardt and Negri (2000) and contend that counter-hegemonic struggles must take place within existing hegemonic structures as a means to establish a new hegemony. This is particularly pertinent within the contexts where young people live, as their lives are determined by relations to wider state institutions such as schools, youth services and the criminal justice system. This is the primary reason for the case studies taking place in a youth offender institute, a school and a youth theatre. The framework is conscious of its contradictory position of utilising neoliberal apparatus to facilitate and explore possibilities for counter hegemonic struggles. However, as argued by Mouffe, I cannot claim that my practice exists outside of existing hegemonic structures whilst aiming to contribute to the development of a new hegemony itself. Through opposition, there is no aim for final reconciliation; instead there is an understanding of the ethical principle of agonism and struggle. My case studies seek to explore how one might embody these concepts in youth theatre practice.

The second part of this framework is dialogue. The concept of the dialogical is envisaged as the ethical, moral and pedagogical centre of the practice as research. The practice undertaken has a clear aim to evade the pitfalls of dogma and didacticism that can occur when community theatre practice adopts an ideological position.

The practice is influenced by the approach of Jana Sanskriti:

> We can have our ideology but we should not be slaves of an ideology. Dogma cannot create relationship. Let us debate not to destroy the ideas of others but to understand others and ourselves. (Ganguly, 2010:xi)

The adoption of Freirean dialogical principles ensures that the practice undertaken is not an effort to impose my own ideology but is developed in communication with the participants of the separate case studies. The absence of one particular theatrical style within this framework is a result of this dialogical position. The Legislative Theatre with Collective Encounters Youth Theatre, the theatre games utilised in CIP San Joaquin and the ensemble based devising in Leeds were the results of a dialogical process with the young people involved.

As a means for theatre with young people to act as an authentic form of agonism, a practice based on praxis must be developed. The reflexivity of such practice is to be understood as fluid and evolving, as evidenced in the case studies. Critical agonism as the framework for this thesis invokes a practice that prioritises pedagogy over theatrical style, lived experience over research criterion and dialogue over dogma.

The Situated Researcher

Prior to the discussion of the three case studies, I will take the opportunity to situate myself in relation to the practice I undertook for this thesis. I believe that an understanding of my own background, experiences and beliefs will inform how the reader will engage, critique and reflect upon the practice.

Since training as a facilitator and director at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (2008-2011), my interest has predominantly been in the political ideologies that motivate practice, as opposed to the aesthetics of specific forms and approaches. As a result, my work is informed by a multitude of practices, as opposed to being defined by one singular theatrical method. Some of these influencing practitioners are commonplace in the community theatre and applied theatre movement; Brecht, Boal, 7:84, Welfare State International. Whilst undertaking postgraduate study in theatre and global development at the Workshop Theatre, University of Leeds (2012-2013) my practice became emboldened by the influences of other theatre practitioners and

political thinkers. The opportunity to work with Jana Sanskriti enabled me to understand the pitfalls of dogma alongside the potential of theatre as sustained political action. Exposure to the works of Naomi Klein, John Holloway and Amartya Sen supported my existing interest in activism and politics. These readings bolstered my existing appreciation of, and interest, in the work of Paulo Freire. My academic reading was accompanied by my continued practice with Colectivo Sustento in Santiago, Chile. Most importantly, these writings enabled me to contextualise my early experiences of practice and the social context of the communities I had engaged with. The scholarly research into the detrimental effects of neoliberal economics became intertwined with my practical experiences.

It was from these experiences that I began to envisage and regard my practice as political. I still regard my practice, whether it be in a prison or a youth theatre setting, as a political act that seeks to challenge and resist the dominant political discourse of neoliberalism. I do not want to provide a singular specific definition for the politics of my practice as I argue it traverses a range of definitions that could be determined as socialist, working class, anti-capitalist or even Marxist. Broadly, my practice is determined by left wing thinkers and activists. Whilst identifying with left wing ideologies, I also recognise the historical difficulties and issues that are inherent in left wing practice and ideology. Specifically, the issue of dogmatism and power that has not only laid bare the flaws within certain left wing theatre practices, but left wing social movements as a whole.

Accompanied by the idealism of my political perspectives are the realities of the wider contexts which my practice engages with. The advocacy of political practice within a depoliticised political and cultural climate presents numerous challenges, some of which are unsurmountable. Prior to undertaking this PhD I began to find that regardless of political intention, my practice became depoliticised within the context of the applied theatre sector. As I stated in the opening of the thesis, the depoliticisation was rarely due to the companies I worked with, but to the frameworks bestowed onto them by cultural policy and funding agendas. Not all of my practice was depoliticised. There were moments that were critical, political and engaged. However, these occurrences were exceptions to applied theatre's foundations of depoliticisation, individualisation and economisation. These experiences of depoliticisation led me to

interrogate the possibilities of a politically informed and critically engaged theatre practice with young people. This process inevitably led me to explore the possibilities of practice as research.

A crucial reason for highlighting my political values and how they have impacted upon my practice, is to make a clear differentiation between enabling moments of criticality and enforcing my own views on to the young people I work with. Whilst I have my own political beliefs and the theories of critical pedagogy are part of a wider socialist context, I am not aiming, nor have ever aimed, for the young people I work with to subscribe to these views. In agreement with agonistic political theory, my projects and processes have benefitted enormously from an array of opinions and beliefs within the workshop space. I identify a separation between the macro-political efforts of my practice and the micro instances of participation within workshop processes. I have also become acutely aware of the complexities and unique characteristics of participant groups. A dialogical process can lead to discussions and stimuli from numerous sources which do not fit in to clear and recognisable political frameworks, or have any connection to political causes. The concepts of criticality in my thesis do not always necessarily equate to determining clear political beliefs and values.

As a result of my scholarly and practical experiences, I have become determined to question and interrogate the possibilities of how theatre with young people can be a source of dialogue, agonism and criticality. For my practice to engage with praxis, there was a need to undertake a practice as research thesis. The projects laid out in this thesis span two continents and three different participant groups who each encounter the practice in radically different contexts. The comparative model is a necessity to understand the diverse contexts where theatre can take place with young people, whilst enabling an opportunity for continued action and reflection.

Chapter Two – Action

Young People as Legislators – Legislative Theatre and Youth Parliament

I am arguing that the UK political system has minimal interest in the involvement of young people within formal democratic processes. Philip Davies, the Conservative MP for Shipley, makes the case for me:

> In my view, the argument that many 16 and 17-year-olds ask very intelligent, very searching questions and are able to engage in a sensible debate is not a sufficient argument for giving them the vote.
> (Hansard HC Deb., 24 January 2013)

Since 1999, there have been fourteen bills and amendments in the House of Commons and the House of Lords that were directly aimed at reducing the voting age to 16. None have been successful. The bills and amendments were in addition to a range of enquiries led by organisational bodies including the Electoral Commission. All mainstream political parties, apart from the Conservatives, have expressed support for reducing the voting age and each devolved assembly has voted in favour of allowing 16-year-olds to vote (Votesat16.org, 2016).

The State of the Nation 2013 report by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2013) claims that, 'for the first time in over a century there is a real risk that the next generation of adults ends up with lower living standards than today's generation'. Young people today encounter an unprecedented mixture of challenges including job insecurity, decreasing home ownership and a potential £50,000 student debt. As living standards and opportunities decline for young people, their civic rights and political agency develop a significant importance. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified by the UK in 1990. In Article 12 it specifically says that; 'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child' (United Nations, 1990). In accordance with Article 12, I argue that the UK government is abrogating its responsibility to ensure young people have the right to engage in formal democratic processes. Young people should have the right to influence decisions that directly affect their future. This chapter aims to explore

whether a critical agonistic theatre can develop young people's political agency within the existing framework of the Youth Parliament scheme.

The exploration of the question centres around my experience of a Legislative Theatre project with young people, delivered by myself and the Youth Theatre Director at Collective Encounters, Ben Mellor. The project was a collaboration between Collective Encounters, Youth Focus NW and Youth Parliament. The aim of the collaboration was to utilise Legislative Theatre to enhance the Make Your Mark scheme, a youth democracy initiative that enables young people to vote on issues to be discussed by Members of the Youth Parliament. The project intended to utilise this initiative to create a space where young people could influence a decision-making process with MPs present.

The project took place throughout the summer and autumn of 2016 and was delivered in three sections; 1. Legislative Theatre taster workshops for youth councils and youth theatres throughout the North West. Twelve workshops took place reaching 209 young people. 2. Creation of a Legislative Theatre performance with young people. Two groups totalling 15 young people created performances focusing on two separate issues on the Make Your Mark ballot. The issues covered were body image and mental health. Ben Mellor managed and directed the performance based on mental health. I facilitated and directed the body image performance, which will be the focus of this section. 3. Performance at the regional meeting of Youth Parliament at Lancashire County Hall to an audience of 126 people, predominantly made up of young people and youth workers.

The project was identified when I was working as the Youth Theatre Director at Collective Encounters (2013-2016). Youth Theatre participants expressed the desire to create a performance that aimed to engage with MPs. This derived from creating performances (*Dog Eat Dog (2014); The Centre (2015))* for audiences that usually consisted of friends, families or members of the community. The young people were aware of 'preaching to the converted' or having their voice heard by those with limited political capital. These young people's experiences provoked a question; to what extent would MPs engage with young people if invited to a youth theatre performance? This question was related to wider research regarding the lack of mutual engagement

between young people and elected members of parliament (Furlong, 2013; Sloam, 2007; O'Toole, Marsh and Jones, 2007).

The questioning led to working with the following partners;
Collective Encounters: a theatre for social change organisation based in Liverpool who 'use theatre to engage those on the margins of society, telling untold stories and tackling the local, national and international concerns of our time'. The work of the company is based on four areas: participatory programmes, productions and events, research and training (Collective Encounters, 2016).

Youth Focus NW: a youth advocacy organisation based in St Helens that works with young people throughout the North West. Their mission is to 'improve the lives of young people by working with them to enable each individual to reach their full potential and become active citizens' (Youth Focus NW, 2016). Youth Focus NW works in collaboration with local council's children's services throughout the North West to deliver UK Youth Parliament schemes such as Make Your Mark and the election of Members to the Youth Parliament (MYPs).

Make Your Mark: 'the biggest annual referendum of teenagers in the UK', is an opportunity for all young people to vote on a range of issues that they think MYP's should campaign for. The process happens in three stages on an annual basis; MYP's vote on a range of issues to decide the ten Make Your Mark issues. The ten issues are put to young people from all over the UK who vote for their top five issues. The results of the ballot are debated by MYP's in the House of Commons and a decision is made to campaign on two issues via the youth select committee and lobbying campaigns. The two campaigning issues decided by MYP's for 2016/17 were votes at 16 and a 'curriculum for life'. For 2016, 978,216 ballots were cast nationally and the North West had the largest share of votes with 194,091 votes. The process is managed by the British Youth Council (British Youth Council, 2016a; Youth Parliament, 2016).

It was intended for the performance to take place within the second stage of the Make Your Mark process, which would enable the young people to debate two of the ten issues prior to casting their vote. However, due to a logistical error by the British Youth

Council (BYC) and the date provided to Youth Focus NW, the young people had already cast their votes prior to viewing the performances, therefore rendering them futile in their primary aim. The creative teams were made aware of this a week prior to performance day. In addition to this, no MPs or councillors attended the performance. This presented an example of applied theatre practice's vulnerability to the influence of social, cultural and political 'landscapes' when intending to contribute to 'wellbeing and social change' (Preston and Prentki, 2009:14). The understanding of these contexts and their influence on the efficacy of the performance is of significant interest for the thesis. The problematic engagement with formal participatory structures such as Make Your Mark hindered attempts to form a critical and agonistic practice. The project illustrated the vulnerability and precarious nature of theatre's relationship with formal youth civic engagement.

Legislative Theatre – A logical choice

Boal (1998:16) describes Legislative Theatre as follows:

> We do not accept that the elector should be a mere spectator to the actions of the parliamentarian, even when these actions are right: we want the electors to give their opinions, to discuss the issues, to put counter-arguments, we want them to share responsibility for what their parliamentarian does. Our mandate's project is to bring theatre back in to the centre of political action – the centre of decisions – by making theatre as politics rather than merely making political theatre.

When determining which performance form to employ, that would actively engage young people with MPs, the logical decision was Legislative Theatre due to its 'mandate'. Boal argues that the process of Legislative Theatre is where the 'citizen is transformed into legislator' (1998:15). This was the sole reason for using Legislative Theatre within this project; to realise a theatrical space where young people could enter in to dialogue with MPs and engage in a formal political structure. Ideally, the aims of Legislative Theatre fortified the aims and structure of the Make Your Mark scheme.

Boal's claim to bring theatre back in to 'the centre of decisions' is complex when observed in relation to young people. Young people do not have the right to vote in the UK – they are not regarded as 'electors' (Boal, 1998:16). They could not therefore

be placed 'back' in to the centre of decisions. Kershaw (2001:219) argues that Boal's claim of transforming citizens into legislators differs substantially from his practical accounts and likens Boal's assertion to 'proclaiming that a net-maker is a fisherman even though he never goes to sea'. He observes that the closest citizens got to being 'legislators' in Boal's own practice was 'to suggest…that some laws might be more welcome than others'. Kershaw's observation likens Boal's work to a process of public consultation on a predetermined agenda, as opposed to direct influence on legislation. I argue that the criticisms of a predetermined agenda are similar to those I experienced with the Youth Parliament scheme.

I will utilise two performance anecdotes to discuss these issues. The performance was devised in an episodic manner with three stories presented to the audience regarding issues of body image. The audience at the Make Your Mark event were then given the opportunity to decide on a story which they wished to forum. The audience chose to discuss Leanne's story with its subtitle – '*edit me*'. Leanne's story focused on a young woman's ambitions to be a model and the manipulation of her image by modelling agencies and fashion outlets. As Leanne arrives for a casting, the photographer orders her to stand in a range of positions and stances that Leanne needs correcting on. *Let's start with one hand on your hip please,* Leanne follows accordingly. The photographer orders *A bit sharper.* The process repeats itself until the photographer innocently remarks *I am just going to see what I can do with the photos.* Leanne, led by her insecurity, enters the office and sees the photographer working over a manipulated image of herself where her thighs, stomach and face are all being pulled and pushed in to new directions. She confronts the photographer *that's wrong, you can't do that, it's false advertising!* The photographer simply responds *you either get used to it or there is the door!* Leanne responds *just…edit the photos.* Her inability to have any effect over the representation of her own body leaves her feeling frustrated and hopeless. The scene arose from discussions regarding legislation on mis-representation of models and how this false advertising can have detrimental effects on young people's self-esteem and mental health.

Can we come to a compromise? The young female audience member opened the forum session with this question to the photographer. The photographer responded that if she does not manipulate the images, she will lose her job. The forum appeared

to be terminated, the antagonist's use of her own vulnerability presented a considerable challenge to the audience member's approach. However, after a short hesitation the audience member returned with *as long as you don't do it in a disrespectful way, that's fine.* The forum opened again and the audience member began a conversation based on compromise, where she will be ethically represented in the photograph and the photographer will not be at risk of losing her job. The novice antagonist, who was only introduced to the forum process over the duration of the project, is stumped and agreed. The audience cheered, the solution offered was unanimously welcomed and the foruming of Leanne's story came to an end.

(Image 1: Introduction to forum, 8 October 2016. Credit: Collective Encounters)

There was a short period of time available following the forum, during which several audience members showed the desire to discuss Abby's story. The story explores the experiences of a young girl who has undiagnosed bulimia. The effects of the condition are recognised by a member of staff at school and a meeting is held with Abby, her father and the teacher. Similar to the forum process with Leanne's story, there were two interventions, the second built upon the first and a consensus was reached. The limited time slot allotted to forum the work and the tendency for the audience to easily develop consensus limited the efficacy of the performance. The pressure of time on

the forum was clearly evidenced as I was forced to rapidly close the performance and thank the organisers. 60 minutes was allocated for two forum performances.

The allotted time for the forum work raises questions regarding the logistics of developing a critical dialogue, as well as the organisers' understanding of the practice. There is no clear rule for forum work that declares a specific time should be allocated to enable dialogue but the examples above show that one hour is not sufficient for two pieces of forum theatre to be meaningfully and critically interrogated. The process of forum theatre is 'continuous' with no 'single intervention being judged ideal' (Babbage, 2004:69). In the case of the performances discussed, I envisaged my role as the joker being to question and challenge any consensus that was quickly agreed upon by the audience. The limited time meant that the problematisation or development of interventions was impossible. The multitude of ideas expected in a forum process was absent whilst the acceptance of a single intervention became the norm. This was due to the limited time available for problematisation of interventions from the audience.

The performances were positioned between a number of other activities scheduled as part of the regional meeting of Youth Parliament at Lancashire County Hall. My input was limited in the planning of the day as the performances were perceived as separate from the other activities planned by the youth service. This led to all organisation being undertaken by Youth Focus North West and Lancashire Youth Services who were hosting the event. The allocation of one hour for two performances demonstrates the lack of knowledge and understanding from the youth agency partners regarding the structure and form of forum theatre. The logistical issue and its effect upon the performances demonstrated to me that assumptions shouldn't be made regarding a partner organisation's understanding of theatre form and its requirements. In retrospect, me and Collective Encounters should have aimed to be more involved in such matters as logistics rather than solely focusing on the intervention itself.

The idea of Legislative Theatre is for such an intervention to inform the piece of legislation being discussed. The suggestion of regulation regarding manipulation of images was popular during the forum and seemed a realistic proposal for legislation. However, the absence of MPs and the organisational setup of the Make Your Mark scheme were explicit challenges to the 'legislative' part of the process. The

performance's inability to engage with any form of legislative output meant that it ceased to be Legislative Theatre. Although the use of forum theatre without its legislative aspect can have multiple benefits, there are also a range of issues and dilemmas.

My main concern with the use of forum theatre is how it can potentially reinforce individualist notions of activism and has the potential to:

> …stimulate feelings of self-empowerment in those participants who make seemingly effective interventions, but for these to remain at the level of transitory and largely personal experience. (Babbage, 2004:64)

Whilst I have no issue with and support the empowerment of young people via artistic and theatrical processes, the aim of this project was to go beyond the personal and engage with the political. The notion of self-empowerment aligns with individualist approaches to citizenship which are advocated by youth agencies such as the BYC. With this in mind the forum theatre and its unintended outcome of individual development was sufficient to satisfy the organisation. However, my aim had been to develop a theatre piece that understood the protagonist's 'social and material objective reality' as a means to develop social empowerment (Davis and O'Sullivan, 2000:293). The incompetence of the national organising body, the BYC, led to the development of an individualised 'self-empowerment' narrative. The absence of MPs and the restricted timings of the performance enabled the individual narrative to dominate. This was a process that was welcomed by the BYC but caused a range of challenges for the development of critical engagement.

The divergence between process and product

Vicky (appendix B), who was a new member of the group said:

> …we have to look at the future as something that is not concrete and is not already formed so there is a chance for us to change it. It is not already fixed. You need to think about what you can do individually, find other people and mould that future for yourself rather than accept what is already there for you.

Vicky's statement reflected the feelings of hope, optimism and empowerment shared by the group at the end of the five-day rehearsal period. These feelings were represented in the group interviews undertaken during the devising and rehearsal

process (see appendix B and C). This was a unique mix of young people whose primary motivation for participating in the project was either theatrical or political, using theatre to engage their political interests or employing their politics to inform a theatrical process.

Five days were scheduled during the summer of 2016 to decide on one of the ten Make Your Mark issues, deliver forum theatre skills and create a 'rough' performance. This intensive process was defined by the requirement of a Legislative Theatre performance in October. This also met the traditional conventions of youth theatre practice with its focus on a performance outcome. The nature of the project contradicts Thompson's assertion that 'applied theatre should concentrate on the mechanics of the process' (2003:xxi). While I agree with Thompson that process is of major importance within applied theatre practice, to separate process and product in such a way negates the inseparable relationship between the two as well as the political efficacy that performance can have. The idea of a performance to MPs had stimulated an ethos of commitment as the young people were aware of the performance's potential importance. As Sam said, 'If they don't do nothing it will show to us and other youth theatres that they don't care' (appendix B).

The positive and empowering sense of engagement was also recognised by many of the young people who believed that their expectations were 'exceeded in terms of the quality of work that we produced'. Vicky said, 'I expected to create something that could hopefully promote positive change and I think that is what we have done' (appendix B). The responses during the process exemplified Neelands' (2007:316) description of applied theatre as 'offering the chance to participate artistically and socially in the practice of freedom'. This was also a process that represented an example of 'good' youth theatre practice in that it aimed to support 'social, personal and creative development' (Richardson, 2015:13). The positive and critical experiences in the rehearsal and devising process realised my aspirations for the practice undertaken as part of this research.

(Image 2: Rehearsal of selfie scene, 5 August 2016. Credit: Matthew Elliott)

These positive feelings and experiences could not transition from process in to product. The desired impact and parameters of the project did not solely rely on the young people's participation but also on participation by the MPs. Process and product were interdependent. A positive and critically engaging theatrical process for 12 young people did not guarantee the attendance of MPs and councillors at the final performance. As no MPs attended the performance, a substantial break was established between process/intention and product/outcome. The reason for the MPs absence was unclear as a majority of invitees did not respond. However, those who did respond stated they had prior arrangements for other events. The artistic and social participation in the practice of freedom during the process became the denial of a role in the practice of formal politics when it came to the performance.

Freire (1996:26) identifies the idea of false generosity as a tactic adopted by oppressors to dehumanise the oppressed:

> Any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their 'generosity', the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well.

The development of internationally agreed children's rights and youth advocacy means that the paternalism of state mechanisms cannot be expressed in explicit and direct actions. I argue that the control and restricted agency of young people has led to the development of subtle and discursive forms of oppression. The development of schemes such as Youth Parliament, in my experience, illustrate the notion of false generosity that Freire discusses. As the lead researcher and liaison with the partner organisations, there were no examples of false generosity whilst working with colleagues from various youth services across the North West. This was a positive and engaging experience for the research. The youth workers wanted to support the development of critical dialogue between young people and MPs, a joint ambition between theatre practitioner and local agencies.

However, in our positions as theatre makers and youth workers, we had little influence on the overarching national structure that the BYC develop and distribute. An example of this was when the date was changed. I was contacted by Youth Focus North West who understood the significance of the date in relation to the vote and the performance. A long conversation was held and we agreed that it would be ethically wrong on the young people for their performance to be cancelled, but there was also acknowledgement that the activity would be pointless. In retrospect, we were co-opted in a mechanism of false generosity.

The BYC has a 'particular position in the political system', as the co-ordination of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs enables a close relationship with MPs and youth policy, but at the same time they have no formal decision-making powers (Rainsford, 2017:795). It could be argued that the BYC act as 'extension agents' of the oppressive culture manifested by government paternalism towards young people and ideas of critical citizenship. By appearing to enable young people to have a voice, they are manipulated into believing they are acting as political agents.

As Freire (2013:101) argues 'manipulation inculcates into the invaded the illusion of acting or their acting within the action of the manipulators'. It was at the point of performance that we can see the project shift from engagement with critical educational ideals to manipulation.

Freire extends his ideas on false generosity by discussing what he calls antidialogical action. There is an attention to detail regarding the subtleties of control that the oppressor can adopt when faced with potential forms of resistance from the oppressed. Freire (1996:129) argues:

> When the oppressed are almost completely submerged in reality, it is unnecessary to manipulate them. In the antidialogical theory of action, manipulation is the response of the oppressor to the new concrete conditions of the historical process. Through manipulation, the dominant elites can lead the people into an unauthentic type of 'organisation', and can thus avoid the threatening alternative: the true organisation of the emerged and emerging people.

The control of national agendas over local practice was an example of the 'unauthentic' organisation Freire discusses. It was also a clear example of how practice can become isolated and almost self-indulgent within the workshop space. Although there is a tendency to place the onus on organisations such as the BYC in this process, I am also conscious of my own role. I could have been more cautious as to the intentions of dominant structures and how these can be radically different to the context of the workshop space.

The intersection of local and national agendas and the effect on the political efficacy of the project was not foreseen, but proved an interesting point of analysis. Williams, Goodwin and Cloke (2014:2799) argue that the relationship between neoliberal hegemony and localism can be viewed as an opportunity for charitable organisations and public bodies to create sites of resistance. Their argument is opposed to the accepted critique that concepts such as the Big Society coerce local organisations to undertake activity to reinforce the neoliberal agenda. They conclude that 'latent spaces of possibility are being opened up by changing political architectures of localism and the Big Society' (Williams, Goodwin and Cloke, 2014:2811). Although Williams, Goodwin and Cloke (2014) argue there are instances of progressive acts of resistance within the neoliberal restructuring of localism, this project is not a

demonstration of such an act. National organisations ultimately held the power within the relationship.

I am aware that my recognition of such structures came too late within the project. I found that the multitude of responsibilities I had to balance and co-ordinate within the project were demanding and predominantly based in action as opposed to reflection. It is my learning from this project that when balancing agendas whilst aiming to create a critical theatre practice, the 'cultural remnants of the oppressor society' will endeavour to disrupt and occupy authentic acts of political agency (Freire, 1996:140).

So close yet so far – A starting point for civic engagement

Although I have been critical of the process as a whole and the challenges it presented to the development of a critical agonistic theatre, I would not like to undermine the process' efficacy entirely. Babbage (2004:30) argues that the unique context of Boal himself being a council member in Rio de Janeiro (1992-1996) enabled a lot of the Legislative Theatre experiments to gain direct access to legislators. However, in other projects where the access to decision makers is not definite, as demonstrated by my project, Legislative Theatre can act as the 'production of purely symbolic laws'. She further contends that 'symbolic authority should not be so quickly dismissed' because:

> If Legislative Theatre changes the way participants see their society and their own role within it, and then – crucially – begin to *act* from that changed position, then symbolic power might yet have real consequences.
> (Babbage, 2004:30)

A majority of the audience said that they enjoyed the performance very much (80%) and thought that the subjects were well handled (82.86%) (see appendix D). Members of the audience also made comments such as 'It gave me different ideas of how to manage things', 'I know about these issues - but it made it real for me' and 'I felt more involved in the issues - made me think more about it' (appendix D). In response to the question *Tell us one thing about the performance/s that surprised you*, an audience member cited the use of forum theatre:

> The ability to improvise/adjust the scene according to audience suggestions. Thank you very much! You gave me a really deep appreciation of each issue you covered, and I am extremely grateful for that. (appendix D)

Damian (appendix B) also expressed similar feelings:

> In terms of making a positive social impact on our lives I think it has. For me, I feel like I have gained a roomful of friends here. I think that this is a life changing experience and it isn't something that I am going to forget in a hurry.

Within the paradigm of the Make Your Mark scheme, the 'consequences' were minimal as neither 'Body Image' or 'Mental Health' reached the final ballot. The project failed to create 'real consequences' in the paradigm of Youth Parliament. However, the impact outside of the Youth Parliament paradigm was evident and theatre as a possible route to the conscientisation of young people was apparent.

From the responses provided by the young people, it is evident that the project had an *effect* and offered an opportunity to enhance critical citizenship. Instead of feeling disheartened, the project led to ideas and provocations of self-determination. As Molly passionately said 'what we want for our future is up to us. So, if we are unhappy with the way things are going then it is up to us to act now' (appendix B). The use of theatre was pivotal to this process taking place, as forum theatre presents an alternative and practical method to debate and discuss issues; 'because it was a play and drama, it wasn't just speaking about an issue it was actually acting and showing... so it could widen people's imaginations.' (Sebastian, appendix C). These elements of the performance enabled a space where participants and audience members made suggestions and discussed 'plans for change' (Boal, 2008:98).

(Image 3: Forum performance, 8 October 2016. Credit: Collective Encounters)

It was at this point that I needed to reflect upon whether the ambition of employing theatre as a medium of change within the Youth Parliament context was unrealistic. The evidence from the young people, participants and audience, proves that theatre can act as an opportunity for young people to critically engage with social and political issues. Whilst individual forms of critical engagement can lead to wider social change is unclear, I do not believe that the 'individual' should be excluded from the process of social change. The work of Jana Sanskriti and their projects at the Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in India discuss this idea at length. The work is based on the dialogical relationship of revolution, one which consists of the 'internal' and 'external', as Ganguly (2010:142) argues:

> Coming back to the individual is essential. The journey towards a collective creates a journey towards the self, this two-way journey helps people to experience internal revolution and creates the aspiration for the external one. The simultaneous movement between collective and individual within a person is what can be called the combination of politics and spirituality.

In retrospect, the aims of the project were over-ambitious and necessitated two separate projects. The first project would be based purely on the process of critical development for the young people involved. This may allow the time and space for an 'internal revolution' to form, to develop aspiration for social action as the work of Jana Sanskriti advocates. Such a process would not necessitate a performance but could be solely based on the exploration of political, historical and social contradictions. This also differs from the individualist forms of self-empowerment that I critiqued earlier. The second project would be the action for the 'external' revolution, the identification of the desired social action and the adoption of performance to fulfil said action.

The attempt to develop both critical consciousness and political action within one project was a difficulty. For example, although the project acted as an alternative way to discuss political issues and had demonstrable effects on the civic development of individuals, the possibilities for action were limited due to the uncritical youth citizenship frameworks. To reiterate Freire's argument (2014:24):

> A more critical understanding of the situation of oppression does not yet liberate the oppressed. But the revelation is a step in the right direction.

I argue that although the practice appeared to be making a 'step in the right direction', it was a failure in terms of direct political action. If I wish to develop a practice that aims

for political action, but ends up only supporting the development of 'critical understanding', should I and the practice I advocate be content that we have made a 'step in the right direction'?

Conclusion

> ME: What does politics mean to you? Any changing thoughts about politics?
>
> Sarah: My original thought was that it is bullshit, nobody takes people into consideration, even though change is to help people.
>
> ME: And you still believe that?
>
> Sarah: Yes.
> (appendix B)

The quote shows that the project did not reach its intended aims of engaging young people in a political process. Sarah said that the project did not lead to her altering her views on politics. I do not believe that the young people involved in the Legislative Theatre project are responsible for this disengagement. The problematic working relationship with organisations such as Youth Focus NW that formed the foundations of this project should be held accountable for the practice's failure. Despite initial assurance to the contrary, I was positioned as a 'client' as opposed to a partner by the youth service and Youth Focus NW. My practice was perceived as a service that could be momentarily installed to satisfy the requirements and targets of the North West youth service provision rather than as embedded contribution to artistic or political agency for young people.

I want to look at why theatre practitioners working for large scale organisations often end up feeling helpless or used, regardless of shared social and political aims. Thomspon's move to studying affective practices (see Thomspon, 2009) came about as a result of his long history of working with large state institutions such as prisons and their focus on creating 'effect' and adhering to social policy. The work with such organisations did not only result in 'drying out the artistic content of the work' (Thompson, 2000:102), but also limited the practitioner's political agency. The practitioner became a vehicle for achieving the aims and 'impact' agendas of the larger organisation. Documented experiences such as Thomspon's and other debates on

effect and impact led by Etherton and Prentki (2006) establish that the practitioner can easily become subservient to the demands of the organisations and institutions they 'partner' with. Unfortunately, the Legislative Theatre project delivered by me and Collective Encounters was another instance of this unfair and imbalanced relationship that negatively impacted not only on me and the young people I worked with but on the entire espoused agenda of youth political empowerment.

This conclusion is mainly a chronology of issues and experiences that took place which proved that my practice was regarded as the work of a 'client'. The starting point for this discussion is the differentiation between the rhetoric of partnership and the reality of being a client. The initial communication between myself and Youth Focus NW in March 2015 utilised terms such as 'joint working' and enthusiastic statements such as 'we are fully behind the partnership' (Youth Focus NW, 2015). The rhetoric was welcomed and reciprocated by me and the positive tone led me to believe we could achieve meaningful partnership. The notion of fair partnership is something I aspire to and aim to achieve, and which I am comfortable in claiming that my colleagues within the applied theatre sector also aspire to. However, the outcome of the project in October 2016 made a mockery of the vaunted partnership, as the theatre makers found ourselves operating as mere components within the wider youth service mechanism. This was a process I had no influence over. There were three significant experiences that acted as warnings for how the project developed. My agency to foresee or act upon these warnings was limited as I maintained belief in the 'joint working' we agreed upon at the beginning of the project.

The first warning sign was the issue regarding taster workshops and the agency of Youth Focus NW. 12 taster workshops for youth councils were agreed in the setup of the project and only three were delivered specifically for local youth service providers. As part of the partnership, I expected support with arranging these workshops and contacting youth services. Instead I received a list of email contacts from Youth Focus NW. At this point, it became apparent that Youth Focus NW had no power or influence over the management or delivery of youth services. Their role was one of signposting or developing links and their agency stopped at this point. Youth Focus NW commented on how they also had numerous struggles when engaging with youth services. The fact that a well-established bridge organisation such as Youth Focus

NW had issues with the youth services left me with little hope for a positive and engaging collaboration.

The second warning came when trying to establish contact with the various youth services. After numerous failed attempts and no responses via email, Youth Focus NW arranged for me to talk at a regional meeting of youth service providers. This did not necessarily lead to youth services taking advantage of my offer. Most organisations were unaware or had limited knowledge of the project or had limited interest. This resulted in utilising connections with fellow youth theatres such as Burnley Youth Theatre and Contact in Manchester. The attitude of the youth services showed a lack of belief in both the arts and in the development of their own potential provision for political engagement. The exception to this rule was one youth council which signed up immediately after I made contact and the young people from this group went on to form part of the performance group. The interest from this one youth council demonstrated the differences between the two performance groups discussed in the introduction. My group had an adequate number of young people due to the particular youth council's engagement. The other group led by Ben Mellor had three young people involved who had become interested in the project due to a taster session at a youth theatre in Manchester. The concept of theatre as political engagement for young people always appeared distant and alien when aiming to engage youth services. From an early stage the project's struggle was getting the practice recognised outside an explicitly youth theatre environment.

The final point to establish is the breakdown of joint working and how this was evident in the logistical organisation of the project. It was the following series of events that delivered the most significant impacts to the validity of the practice. The venue for the performance was moved on numerous occasions which caused a range of issues with organising the young people, as well as problems with the basics of staging within the performances. Time was spent by my colleagues and I arranging site visits at multiple venues. More energy was expended in organising the practice than in delivering the performance. The array of logistical errors culminated with the date of the performance being moved to after the Make Your Mark vote had taken place. The performance therefore had no effect on the vote and the single hour provided was not sufficient for effective forum practice. I had no influence over the decisions that were made in

regards to programming the event. At this point, all of my work and that of the young people had been disrespected and made meaningless. Understandably, some young people left and those who remained were aware of the performance's futility.

As the equipment was packed away on the 8th October 2016, a range of youth workers complimented me on how the performance engaged the young people and how it would be a good idea to use theatre for future youth parliament work. The form of engagement the performance offered was evidently different from youth service provision. It was an annoyance that such recognition arrived so late in the process. The recognition was also another example of how little the potential of theatre was understood by the youth service. The short and ephemeral product was celebrated whilst there was no interest in the complexities that the process entailed. I do not deny that there was enjoyment and engagement from the audience and the young performers. The young people who participated in this process demonstrated a willingness and commitment to the ideals of the practice and their own critical engagement. However, our efforts did not remedy the flawed foundations of the relationship between me and the youth service providers. There was no partnership and no effect. As Sarah (appendix B) said, from her perspective our work had not changed her perception that politics is 'bullshit' and the clearest outcome of this project was the continued political disenchantment and disempowerment of the young people who participated.

My aim of developing a meaningful partnership with youth agencies laid bare the reality of the client relationship which was proven to be unable to provide artistic and political engagement for young people. This UK model of working was not feasible for developing critical and agonistic theatre practices. The experience made me move on to explore whether working in other cultural environments would offer the dialogical and collaborative partnership I aspired to.

We play as we mean to resist - Theatre games as political participation

There are 25 of us standing in a circle. One person stands in the centre. The majority of participants are young people accompanied by theatre workers, educators and co-ordinators. A young person frantically runs between his peers in the circle and shouts *¡Yo necesito un espacio!* (I need a space) to which another participant responds *Pregunta mi amigo* (ask my friend) and points to someone else. As the young person dashes around the circle, other participants need to exchange spaces with only the consent of eye contact. The aim of the game: not to become the person in the middle. Bodies almost collide, the young people invent their own rules and the stakes are raised with an array of new playing tactics. The focus is exceptional and the only thing to disrupt attention is the laughter, jokes and enjoyment that are shared by all members of the group. This experience embodied Johnston's (1998:5) description of play as:

> …directed activity, engendering liveliness, interaction, imaginative excitability and the reduction or removal of conventional spatial and temporal boundaries, in an exercise which is releasing and rewarding, often merely for its own sake.

The discussion of play within the unique context of this case study requires an understanding of the contemporary state of the Chilean penal system. The participants of the project were detainees of CIP San Joaquin, a juvenile detention centre based in the San Joaquin *poblacion* (district) of Santiago, Chile. The centre accommodates male teenagers aged from 14-20 years, who have either been convicted or are on remand. It is operated by the government department of SENAME (national service for minors). Due to the legal issues of photo and film documentation within the centre, only audio interviews were possible with the young people.

Prior to the centre detaining young people, it was used as one of the many camps to detain and torture 'dissidents' under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. In recent history a legacy of brutal oppression and deaths endures within SENAME and its numerous detention centres. A freedom of information request found that 865 children died whilst under the care of SENAME from 2005 – 2016. 'The reported causes of death included infants and young children drowning in their own gastric or respiratory fluids, suicides, and delayed medical attention to injuries' (Human Rights Watch,

2017). Pinochet's legacy truly inhabited the walls of CIP San Joaquin. The revelation of SENAME's negligence sits against a backdrop of damning statistics and attitudes towards incarcerated persons in Chile. In 2010, a fire in San Miguel prison whilst it was operating at 280% of its capacity, led to the death of 81 prisoners (Human Rights Watch, 2010). In the wider prison population, reports of 'violent abuses by prison guards are common' and the prison system has been operating over capacity since 2007 (Human Rights Watch, 2017; World Prison Brief, 2018).

My case study is analysed against the backdrop of children's rights abuses by SENAME. The project included the employment of drama exercises and games, for two months on a weekly basis, with a range of groups across the detention centre. I led on the playing of theatre games, which was part of a bigger scheme of work designed by educators from Tierra de Esperanza. Tierra de Esperanza are a national NGO who provide educational support for young people in centres such as CIP San Joaquin. The educators deliver an annual festival called *'CIP a Luca'* in partnership with the young people. *Luca* is Chilean slang for 1000 pesos, the festival name being a pastiche on the inaccessibility of the international arts festival Santiago a Mil. The festival culminates with a performance from a local band and the sharing of food. Early in the process a set of 'assemblies' are held with the young people to begin discussions on organising the festival. It was agreed with the educators that theatre games would be utilised within the assemblies as a means for young people to explore collective participation and to 'simply have fun'. The offer of fun formed an interruption to the dehumanising and oppressive narratives of CIP San Joaquin. The main aim of the project was for the young people to learn about children's rights and political participation via the organising of the festival. This was a radical opportunity within an environment of overcrowding, excessive medication and violence.

(Image 4: Outside of CIP San Joaquin, 17 November 2016. Credit: Matthew Elliott)

Prior to discussing the three main elements of the case study, I will explore two contextual matters which inform the reading of this section. The first of these is the historical and social context to the relationship between critical pedagogy and Latin America. The second is the presentation of the original research plan for this case study and the changes that had to be made due to a range of political events that took place in Chile prior to the research beginning. Once the contextual background has been explained, the case study will explore three main elements of the project. These are; the benefits and problems of 'play', the complexities of creating autonomy and resistance from within state institutions and the relationship between effect and affect. The playing of drama games worked effectively within the affective register as opposed to focusing on effect. As a means to discuss the concept of affect, I will employ Thompson's definition from *Theatre Affects* (2009). He defines affect as 'the bodily sensation that is sustained and provoked particularly by aesthetic experiences. It is the force that emerges from attention to pleasure, astonishment, joy and beauty' (Thompson, 2009:135).

I argue that the playing of drama games worked within the affective register and acted as a form of resistance by disrupting the narrative of oppression orchestrated by SENAME. My argument explores how affective ideas of beauty and joy are related to dialogical educational processes and how context determined the autonomous approach to political action.

Critical Pedagogy, Popular Education and Latin America

In initial discussions before the project took place, I was surprised to hear that all the educators at CIP San Joaquin specialised in critical pedagogy. From previous experience of working in Chile, I had understanding of the strong left-wing political ideologies and resistance practices evident within cultural and political discourse. This is an underlying reason for employing a comparative model for this thesis. However, the employment of such discourse within official policy and documentation of Tierra de Esperanza surprised me, as it is an organisation supported by public funds.

The history of critical pedagogy within Latin America is extensive, preceding Freire and his works. There is a need to make the distinction between the terminologies popular education and critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is a term that has been adopted by academics in the Global North, whereas *popular education* is utilised throughout Latin America (Choules, 2007:160). The difference between the two is significant as the former is not generally applied beyond academic literature, whereas the latter is based on 'lived experience', used in general educational discourse and is more practical in its approach (ibid.).

The popular education movement was greatly influenced by socialist movements throughout Latin America. Prior to the work of Freire, a range of projects had been taking place since the early 1900s. These included the indigenous schooling experiments in Warisata, Bolivia in the 1930s, the Mexican socialist project of the same era and the literacy campaigns undertaken after the Cuban revolution in 1959 (Gonzalez Gaudiano and de Alba, 1994:124/126). Freire's work had an enormous impact upon popular education in Latin America as evidenced by the employment of his ideas and theories by the educators I worked alongside. Puiggros (1994:169)

argues that Freire's contributions enabled a break with 'modern pedagogical discourse' that has altered Latin American thought.

Popular education is clearly embedded within Chile's cultural and political history, a context in which Paulo Freire developed his texts; *Education as the Practice of Freedom* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Although I accept it would be impossible to replicate the popular education movement of Chile in the UK due to the profound cultural and political differences, I argue that the project presents pedagogical and political approaches that are transferrable. The idea that the struggle for humanisation is universal and applies to young people in the UK and Chile was the mutual agreement between me and the educators. The aim of the project was to explore the implementation of a humanising pedagogy deriving from the 'lived experience' and practicality of the Chilean educators, developing my own understanding of Freire which had been predominantly based in academic study.

The change of plan

As referenced in the opening chapter, the aims and inspiration for the comparative element of this thesis arose from the work of Colectivo Sustento. My original intention was to work alongside Colectivo Sustento for three months and to support the delivery of their projects in juvenile detention centres in Santiago. The projects were developed by the prison theatre group established in Colina 1 *Fenix e Ilusiones* and Colectivo Sustento. The idea of serving prisoners employing their lived experience of the penal system to promote desistance to young people was piloted in 2013, with a performance of *Modecate* at a Special Youth Intervention Program in Santiago. *Modecate* discusses issues of 'humanity in a controlled society' (Colectivo Sustento, 2018a). The pilot project was successful and led to a further tour in 2014, when *Modecate* toured to three SENAME detention centres. These performances were accompanied by theatre games and discussions led by members of *Fenix e Ilusiones.* The aim of the programme is:

> …playing an active role in short-circuiting the so-called "normalized prison culture" that entraps many poor families, caught up in the day-to-day grind of prison visits, organizing the entry of food and other items, arranging lawyers and attending trials, etc. (Colectivo Sustento, 2018a).

Whilst the performance and workshop project continued in 2016 with the *Lysistrata: No to Gender Violence Tour,* a range of *Fenix e Ilusiones* members were granted release from Colina 1 prison and expressed a desire to continue working with young people in detention centres on a sustained basis. Agreements were reached with two centres on the periphery of Santiago – San Bernardo and Callera de Tango. Regular theatre and gardening workshops were founded to work with the young people at both centres. Members of Colectivo Sustento worked alongside former *Fenix e Ilusiones* members in these workshops, where theatre and gardening are seen as a 'pretext' to creating social change with young people (Colectivo Sustento, 2018a). My intention was to work in Calera de Tango and San Bernardo with Colectivo Sustento, to explore how popular education was used and its relation to theatre practice with young people.

However, the original research plan failed to come to fruition. The chaotic and unpredictable nature of SENAME meant that Colectivo Sustento's work in the detention centres became unfeasible shortly before I arrived in Chile to conduct my research. Colectivo Sustento worker Penelope Glass (2017) explained:

> They (SENAME workers) were on strike for three months and never told us what the strike was about, we heard about it from somewhere else. There was all this weird stuff that was going on. That's why I say it is even more ineffectual, chaotic and useless than the adult prison which is useless. Totally doesn't work. The youth detention centres are a nightmare.

Penelope was responding to an incident that took place where the participants from the San Bernardo centre were moved to an adult prison and Colectivo Sustento were not informed. She also discussed a range of issues with workers in individual '*casas*' (similar to a cell block) who would actively seek to sabotage the sessions or advocate for the young people to be highly medicated as a means to avoid any potential violence (Glass, 2017).

From a political perspective there was an understanding that the work must not cease to happen as a result of the obstacles presented, but that alternative ways were needed to continue to create critical interventions. Colectivo Sustento began to work with young people in community-based settings as opposed to the 'closed' centres, although they still experienced issues of mistrust regarding ex-prisoners working with young people in a positive manner (Glass, 2017). It was the responsive and reflexive

nature of Colectivo Sustento's work which enabled them to overcome the range of challenges and obstacles presented to them by SENAME.

The logistics of Colectivo Sustento's response and a wariness regarding SENAME's volatility caused a re-evaluation of my own practice and its relation to existing work. It was agreed that the collaboration with Colectivo Sustento would not be possible in terms of practice related work. But, there would be support in identifying other practice that included popular education and theatre (or the arts) as a means to create social change with young people. Therefore, the new project would still meet the aims of this thesis; the exploration of a critical agonistic theatre.

Penelope supported me through this process by arranging a meeting with educators working at another detention centre in Santiago – CIP San Joaquin. This was my first experience of meeting with the educators from Tierra de Esperanza and a discussion took place regarding the agenda of my research and the needs of the organisation, whilst maintaining the popular education/critical pedagogy principles we both advocated. This meeting resulted in the agreement that I would devise and deliver a range of drama games and exercises to support the *Cip a Luca* festival.

The writing of this case study is an example of documenting the messy and chaotic process of practice whilst having to ensure its clarity for dissemination (Nelson, 2013:10). From prior experiences of the Chilean penal system, I was aware of its volatile and unpredictable nature. I therefore planned to be responsive to the challenges and obstacles that arose once I arrived in Chile. Admittedly, I was not expecting such developments to stop the long-standing collaborations between Colectivo Sustento and myself. But, the open nature of this research and the absence of a strict formulaic research methodology enabled me to respond to context. As illustrated by this chapter, the reflexivity in my practice/research led to a range of discoveries benefitting the enquiry of this thesis.

The potentials and problems of play

'¡Yo soy Pollo!' I exclaimed as I jumped out of my chair. The young men of *casa 8* fell about the floor laughing hysterically and pointing at me. The laughter continued for several minutes whilst I tried to make sense of what had happened. The game being

played entailed one member of the group trying to sit in an empty chair whilst the rest of the group who were seated prevented him from doing so. By simply occupying the vacant seat, the young person was prevented from sitting down, but a new chair would become vacant which the participant would try and sit in. The game continues until the young person manages to sit in the empty chair. In the UK, I play a clowning version of the exercise where the person standing would usually be referred to as the 'chicken' and walk with their knees together. I asked the young people 'who would like to be the chicken?'. No-one responded. To simply begin play, I volunteered to be the chicken – '¡Yo soy Pollo!'. Laughter ensued until one of the young people explained to me that to label oneself or someone else as an animal is a playful insult in Chilean culture. My cultural ignorance had given much joy to the young men in *casa 8*, whilst it also led to the game being played with a renewed energy. No one wanted to be the 'chicken' which raised the stakes of the game. A lengthy time of play followed with strategies, jokes and words of encouragement ricocheting off the walls of *casa 8*. The moments of joy and happiness occasioned by playing games offered a freedom from the reality of the detention centre. However, such freedoms would only be ephemeral, as a return to the reality of the centre was an unfortunate certainty. From this experience, I argue that there is efficacy in affective theatre practice, but there are limitations and its relation to critical consciousness is unclear as it depends on the particular context of any given project.

Initially, I will focus on the positives and freedoms enabled by play in CIP San Joaquin. In his writings on play, Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) places the concept of 'freedom' in the centre of his analysis:

> Here, then, we have the first main characteristic of play: that it is free, is in fact freedom. A second characteristic is closely connected with this, namely, that play is not "ordinary" or "real" life. It is rather a stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own. (Huizinga, 1949:8)

Huizinga's observation on the relationship between freedom and play is reflected amongst a range of theatre practitioners and directors. Spolin (1999:6) claims that 'the first step towards playing is feeling personal freedom. Before we can play (experience), we must be free to do so.' Barker's experiments with games in formal actor training led him to conclude that play was 'associated with pleasure, and often

delight, and that was free from anxiety' and that when playing 'pressure is released, and the human being is to some extent made free' (1977:64).

In relation to the practice, there is little to contest when applying the statements of Huizinga, Spolin and Barker to playing theatre games in CIP San Joaquin. In the limited interviews that took place (due to a range of restrictions on the research both direct and indirect), Fernando said that playing enabled an opportunity to transcend the oppressive nature of the detention centre; 'it frees us' (appendix G). This sentiment was echoed by Juan who said that the process of CIP a Luca was 'like you were transported to another place, out of here' (appendix G); a 'stepping out of real life' as identified by Huizinga (1949:8).

From the young people's perspectives, the games resonated with Thompson's definition of affect. The use of the term 'affect' derives from his argument that applied theatre is weakened by its focus on effect – 'identifiable social outcomes, messages or impacts'. Thompson (2009:6/7) states that 'by failing to recognise affect – bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasure – much of the power of performance can be missed'. Thompson's initial research and argument into the area of affect had a strong influence on the applied theatre sector with a range of practitioners and scholars making equal claims to Thompson's. For example, Soyini Madison (2016:227) also argues that 'attending to affect allows us to honour embodied ways of engaging worlds of experience that exceed meaning, interpretation and conceptualization'.

I argue that the experience of the young people in CIP San Joaquin could be used to further advocate for the affect model that is commonly being adopted and utilised by practitioners within the sector. The educators and the young people recognised the 'power' of play and the bodily responses and sensations it provided. Play acted as an opportunity for the young people to reclaim aspects of their life they felt they had missed due to their involvement in crime. Many of the young people described in the group interviews how they had 'skipped childhood'. Gabriel elaborated on this by saying 'we lost this stage because we were forced to seek what we needed' (appendix G). The element of play was an opportunity to participate in activities and ways of being that wasn't afforded to them *en la calle* (on the street), a term the young people

used to refer to life outside of CIP San Joaquin. It is in these moments that play had power within the project, making a clear case for the affect model of applied theatre practice. The sensory, cognitive and emotive engagement with the aesthetics of play enabled the young people to 'construct meaning' and led to moments of reflection (Cohen, Varea and Walker, 2011:6).

I am not seeking to wholly deny the empowerment of the young people afforded by the affective register. However, the elements of freedom and emotive engagement presented by play are problematic when placed in relation to the development of a critical agonistic theatre practice. The momentary 'freedom' that play offers is a radical act in the context of CIP San Joaquin. But its relation to the prison system problematises such elements of play. For example, Balfour (2004:11) contends that the use of theatre within prisons 'can be put to use' by the prison authorities themselves. He cites how drama practitioner's use of cognitive behavioural therapy has been welcomed by prison authorities as it enables 'political retribution' whilst discussing criminal behaviours (ibid.).

Within the example of CIP San Joaquin, the elements of play and joy that drama games provide could be perceived on some level to serve the dominant agenda of containment. In tandem with the discussion on childhood and play, the young people would refer to the playing of games as a 'distraction'. For example, Javier commented 'yeah, it is good, because it is a distraction from the routine, because doing the same thing all the time is boring' (appendix G). I argue that the playing of games may have acted as a form of appeasement to SENAME management through distraction. To appease the young people's grievances about the centre, time is made available for such 'distractions'. In the case of the workshop timings, these were limited to one hour per *casa*. The limitation of one hour per workshop did not provide sufficient time to develop advanced discussion or play. If discussed from a Foucauldian perspective, the prison and its regime is a means to develop and create 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1991:138). The earlier stages of the project which focussed on the element of play were complicit in the function of creating the docile body. The ephemerality of play and the freedom it offered was not able to counter the dominant narratives of CIP San Joaquin. However, the playing of games within the affective register enabled an

emotive and sensory engagement with the young people. The dualist nature of my practice as resistance to, and reinforcement of, dominant agendas was present again.

As well as complicity in the prison agenda, the second point to raise regarding the focus on affect is the binary between the individual and social. From her practice with homeless young people in Canada, Gallagher (2016:244) observed:

> …applied theatre practices navigate the vital relationship between large socio-cultural systems and individual, personal, experiential narratives; the micro-political work of applied theatre is always challenged by this uneasy asymmetry.

Gallagher claims that the 'micro-political' and the individual can address structural and systemic oppression. She further argues that there needs to be a 'blurring' of lines between social-structural analysis and individual emancipation (2016:234/235). The reason for obscuring such boundaries is to provide 'methodological sophistication' as well as demonstrating their 'important mutuality'. When making comparison to my experiences of CIP San Joaquin, I contest the motion of blurring lines between individual and social and their mutuality. I believe the context of the prison necessitates a different set of questions. The dominant model of prison theatre practice has a clear and dedicated focus on individual change and examples of practice that actively seek to challenge the prison itself or discuss wider macro-political subjects are an exception (Keehan, 2015:393). In addition to Gallagher's identification of the individual/personal and social/political (ibid.), I would question the absence of community. Although it is difficult to define, for me the concept of is positioned between the binary of individual and social. Snyder-Young's (2013) work clearly demonstrates the lack of efficacy theatre practice has when challenging macro political issues. But, for applied theatre practice to work solely within the realm of the individual negates notions of systemic oppression. The localised efforts of community enable a space between individual and political. Therefore, the efficacy of the practice is related to local impact. However, the prospect of establishing community within CIP San Joaquin was unrealistic because of the strict punitive model adopted by SENAME.

As exercises were played and their *affect* became clear through the practice and group interviews, I began to question whether working in the affective register assisted notions of individual change, which are favoured by the prison. Thompson (2009:118)

argues that applied theatre's 'attention to affect…can, in fact, become a generator of its radical intent'. He claims that the radical nature of the work is due to how affective practices can 'create an ethical demand on a person that is both specific and general', a process that is neglected in work focussed on effect (Thompson, 2009:176). Affective practices such as playing games entail a collective responsibility that limits the autonomy of the individual, the process of developing 'responsibility' can be an 'energising source' to the process of social change (ibid.). However, the ephemeral modes of freedom enabled by affective practice contradicts the reflexive process of acquiring meaningful freedom described by Freire. The process of conscientisation is defined by a 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Freire, 1996:17).

The difficulty for the practice was to transition from moments of ephemeral freedom to a continuous process of critical interrogation based on the concrete reality of the young people. As explained earlier, Juan described the experience of participating in games as feeling 'like you were transported to another place, out of here' (appendix G). How to develop a practice with such an aesthetic engagement as play whilst enabling a critical reflection on lived reality was a question raised with the educators and formed the basis of a range of discussions that sought to provide solutions to the problems addressed above. The discussions were based on logistics as well as pedagogies. The placing and timing of the games in the session was of great importance to me. The need to identify critical development was also of great importance to the educators. The playing of games created the moments of freedom that many scholars discuss and alludes to Thompson's idea that 'hedonism is a bunker' that 'protects people from the worst of the situation' (2009:2). However, I argue that there are instances where hedonism is a 'distraction' that can become complicit in the agendas that my practice is seeking to oppose.

Joy as resistance? At the crossroads between affect and effect

The study of affect and beauty within applied and community theatre scholarship has become prevalent in recent years (see Thompson, 2009; Hughes and Nicholson, 2016; Winston, 2006). While I argue that the playing of games demonstrated the impact of affective practices within CIP San Joaquin, there are also a range of

problems and issues associated with such practices. To avoid reductionism at the start of the process, I was wrestling with how to develop effect whilst the practice was firmly positioned in the affective realm of games. The collaboration with the educators from Tierra de Esperanza was central to this process. The discussion of the relationship between affect and effect came to prominence through the absence of effective practices when solely playing games.

Here I provide an example of how the relationship between the concepts was realised within the planning and delivery of sessions. Due to the multiple *casas* within CIP San Joaquin and the need to work with all young people, I spent the entirety of the day at the centre based in the Tierra de Esperanza offices. This was contrary to my prison experience in the UK and in adult prisons in Chile, where time spent within the prison walls was solely for workshop delivery. The short-term intervention in the UK was always on the terms of the prison as opposed to those of the artist, most probably as a way to maintain control of prison activity. The emphasis on co-planning with the educators was particularly important in understanding the connections between affect and effect. The educators of Tierra de Esperanza, trained in popular education, insisted upon the co-planning meetings to which I agreed. There was a resistance to the work becoming replicable for each *casa* we worked in, time was allocated each day to be responsive to the developments of the project. Time was also allocated to discuss the political and philosophical contradictions and dilemmas that occurred, for example the affect/effect binary.

Each day began with an hour or two-hour planning meeting with the educators. This was an opportunity to share and discuss ideas regarding the aims of the project. The educator's aims were pre-identified, as the *Cip a Luca* festival had run successfully the previous year and had raised issues experienced by the young men regarding individualism, machoism and the lack of 'fun'. These issues led to a lack of group work and engagement taking place on an individual level. This was where the discussion of games and exercises began, through a need to address the lack of 'joy' or affect within the programme as well as engaging participants in a collective manner. I initiated conversations by proposing a range of participatory discussion exercises I employ in my practice which are borrowed from TIE or Boalian frameworks. The educators pointed out that such an approach might not work due to the participants' reluctance

to discuss ideas because of their ambivalence towards authority figures. Also, the young people had an awareness of institutional agendas. The educators feared that their responses might be superficial as a means to appease dominant discourses regarding crime and desistance. There was a need for the young people to purely 'play'. The discussions shifted from suggestions of image theatre to high-energy warm-up games such as fruit bowl, zip zap boing and *¡yo necesito un espacio!*

I was sceptical as to how this would work and whether the use of theatre games would be of any use to the participants or the educators. Nevertheless, as the process developed it became clear that the use of games did have an impact on the young people. For example, when we arrived in a *casa* to conduct a workshop, the young people would be on their own or based in small cliques. The playing of games deconstructed such elements of exclusivity within the *casas*. The game would not be introduced or discussed, but instructions were provided to enable play to unfold. What followed were all the descriptions provided above enabling the creation of; joy, happiness and collective identity.

Nevertheless, the efficacy of such an approach was limited, which was recognised by both me and the educators. It became clear that play could not lead to clear moments of critical interrogation. After many planning sessions, the educators proposed an experiment of delivering sit-down discussions immediately after the playing of games had been completed. There was an interest to see whether the experiential and kinaesthetic learning of play could be transposed to discussions on Children's Rights or other subjects chosen by the young people. The discussions were heavily influenced by popular education and akin to Freirean culture circles. Freire (2013:40) described the early experiments of culture circles in his text *Education for Critical Consciousness:*

> In the culture circles, we attempted through group debate either to clarify situations or to seek action arising from that clarification. The topics for these debates were offered us by the groups themselves.

The idea of a student-led and participatory education was absent from the centre and SENAME's practices prior to the arrival of the educators, as a worker from Tierra de Esperanza (2017) commented:

> ...the appraisal for a participatory programme was important to see how the *casas* worked. I wanted to understand how the *casas* work with the adult world and the world of the young people. And then I realised that they never asked them anything. The concept of participation didn't exist.

After the initial proposal of combining the playing of games with discussion, I was sceptical as to how such a process would work. I had reservations regarding the dramatic change in energy and whether the young people would be able to focus on verbal discussion immediately after a round of high-energy exercises. These questions were raised with the educators but there was an agreement between us to experiment. I was surprised as to how the combination of the two approaches developed an environment where the young people discussed issues with the educators which previously they may not have felt comfortable with. At this juncture the principles of Freirean pedagogy became prevalent as the young people critically engaged with their lived reality. These moments of critical participation align with ideas of effect and 'identifiable social outcomes' as described by Thompson's critique of applied theatre (2009:6). An example of the project's effect was in the awareness of rights, as Luis from *casa* 8 said 'We have the right to have an opinion, it is one of our rights. And, it is taken into consideration in the assemblies' (appendix H).

However, the efficacy of the outcome-based educational approach was limited without the foundations of affect, which the games offered. To me, the prospect of using play to create an environment for critical reflection was a notion bordering on the absurd at the start of this project. But the *Cip a Luca* process proved that the sense of individual and collective freedom enabled by play fostered an environment for critical awareness and skill development. Winston (2006:45) contends that moments of joy and beauty advance 'an aspiration towards social life as we would ideally live it - fair, just and joyful'. In the case of CIP San Joaquin, I would like to extend Winston's statement through inclusion of effect. The mapping of games and culture circles developed a realisation as well as an aspiration; the participants' critical realisation of their concrete reality, alongside the aspiration towards a more 'just' and joyful' way of being.

It could be argued that affect is related to arts-based practices and effect is paired to education in this project, observing the two elements as separate entities. However, the games and human rights education were planned and delivered in tandem, demonstrating the interdependency of the two elements. Here I concur with Franks' (2014:206) argument that learning is 'an active dialectical process of production and reception'. The strength of the project and its ability to act as a critical intervention, was due to recognition of the interrelationship of affective and effective practices.

Prior to concluding this section, there is a differentiation to be made between the instrumental use of effect in the UK and its political role in Chile. Snyder-Young (2013:5) argues that the dominance of community theatre practice based on effect results from practitioners' 'anxiety' regarding evidencing the value of their work, a pressure which stems from funding bodies and policy makers. Whilst I agree with this argument in relation to my UK practice, in Chile to focus on effect was a political decision. I argue that the difference between the imposed effect agenda in the UK to the political focus of effect in Chile is ownership. I, the educators and the young people had an ownership over the effect of the project at CIP San Joaquin. For young people to negotiate opportunities for humanisation within the oppressive environment of CIP San Joaquin there is a need to develop awareness and skills. The ephemerality of play does not provide such prospects. There is a tangibility to effective practices which is absent from the affective register. The unique position of the educators as employees of an NGO as opposed to SENAME, enabled elements of effect to act as resistance, without succumbing to the 'strategic manipulation' of the host institution (Thompson, 2009:41).

I will conclude with an example of the relationship between affect and effect. The festival culminated with a visit from a local band and the sharing of food within the detention centre walls. For an hour, the band played through a set of ska and punk whilst the young people jumped and danced unreservedly. *Italianos* (Chilean hot dogs) were consumed and jokes were shared. The young people even instigated a game of *¡Yo necesito un espacio!* which everyone, including the band, had to participate in. Although the *gendarmes* (guards) could oversee all of this from their viewing tower, their power was absent. A circle of reflection took place to finalise proceedings, where everyone was invited to discuss their experiences of the project. The young people

discussed with eloquence their own journey, their heightened awareness and their enjoyment of the project. I argue that these moments can only be described as a form of 'chaotic critical joy'. My experience demonstrates the need for a dialogical discussion between affect and effect, as opposed to a dichotomised framing of the terminologies. For this project to resist the unpredictable and hostile nature of the detention centre, the beauties of affective practices were required, alongside the effective elements of critical education.

The Invisibles – To resist from within

As we arrived at *Casa 4* for the afternoon workshop on Tuesday 6th December 2016, the young people were not present at the gate. Their presence was a usual part of the routine when we arrived to start the workshop. Upon questioning, the *casa* co-ordinator said that they had been locked up in their cells for the afternoon. This violated basic principles of practice within the detention centre, as the young people should only be confined to their cells at night. The explanation for this? There was none. The co-ordinator appeared nonchalant about our questioning. The cells were unlocked and the young people entered the main space disgruntled, tired and stressed. The workshop was cut short because of the co-ordinator's actions. This experience formed part of a wider picture, including stories of co-ordinators stealing clothes and items from young people that family members had provided during visits. The arts-based and education engagement, regardless of critical intention, was constantly met with challenge and confrontation from *casa* co-ordinators and senior members of SENAME staff. To advocate dehumanisation by punishment and control was the priority in the centre as evidenced by multiple incidents similar to the one in *Casa 4*. The manoeuvring, subversion and rebellion of the educators was a prerequisite for our practice, any more rigid or procedural approach would have rendered the project impossible.

I argue that the possibility for criticality in the face of such oppression was due to the educator's alignment with the autonomous socialist and Marxist movement. Holloway (2010:9) describes autonomous resistance with the analogy of the 'crack':

> The method of the crack is the method of crisis: we wish to understand the wall not from its solidity but from its cracks; we wish to understand capitalism not as domination, but from the perspective of its crisis, its contradictions, its weaknesses, and we want to understand how we ourselves are those contradictions.

The autonomous approach to social change is based upon the idea that for a truly emancipatory process to take place, it must be independent of the state. Autonomous modes of change believe that the state is embedded in a 'web of social relations' relating to labour and that its anti-capitalist potential is limited because it is itself a 'system of capitalist organisation'. The state is more than an instrument wielded by the capitalist class but is fully integrated in to the 'network of capitalist social relations' (Holloway, 2005:13/14). A range of scholars have recently brought the autonomous approach to prominence (see Holloway, 2005, 2010; Hardt and Negri, 2000).

The autonomous movement in Latin America has a long and well recorded history. Movements such as the Mexican Anarchist Federation (1941) and the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (1956) laid the foundations for more contemporary movements such as the Zapatistas in Mexico (1994) and the Piqueteros in Argentina (2002). Such movements believe in principles of autonomy as well as 'horizontality, self-management and decentralism' (Lopes de Souza, 2016:1293/1294). In relation to community theatre practices in Latin America, Prentki (2015:54) argues that 'community theatres have been accustomed to adopting an oppositional stance in relation to the prevailing government', with the exception of Cuba where community theatre was utilised to support the government.

In relation to the practice at CIP San Joaquin and autonomous change, the workers employed the following term to describe how they envisaged their own work – *the invisibles*. I would liken this approach to de Certeau's '*la perruque'.* De Certeau (1984:25) states that '*la perruque* is the worker's own work disguised as work for the employer'. Thompson (2009:18) employed the same term when describing his experience of facilitating a theatre project at the Bindunewewa camp in Sri Lanka. By

finding allies within SENAME staff, the educators found that they could undertake work that would not be possible under standardised programmes. The allies demonstrated that there were major differences between the ideologies of individual SENAME workers and SENAME management. The workers from SENAME who supported the project and its ideas were predominantly project facilitators and did not hold managerial positions. It was this nuance that enabled the educators from Tierra de Esperanza to strengthen their efforts at developing popular education programmes.

There is a clear argument from the educators - where there are discernible violations of children's rights there is a need to challenge the causes of such violations. The discovery of a common adversary led workers from SENAME and Tierra de Esperanza to develop a collaboration:

> …as a result of this evil dynamic of running the detention centres, we began to talk to each other and to understand that we have many points in common. We talked in parties, reflexive discussions, and we ended up understanding that our political and social base was very similar and was very close to what we understood as our work on a social level, and we began to generate spontaneous actions. (SENAME worker, 2017)

It is the logistics of performing *la perruque* or forming *the invisibles* that is of significance to this thesis. The overriding point to be discussed is one of managerialism and bureaucracy. The management of the centre was chaotic and unpredictable. The exploitation of this chaos enabled *the invisibles* to deliver critical education programmes. The centre had a three-tiered management and provision system. Gendermaria, who are responsible for managing the adult prison system in Chile, managed the security of the building. SENAME were responsible for programme delivery and management of the '*casas*'. Meanwhile, Tierra de Esperanza delivered their educational work in conjunction with SENAME's projects and the security logistics of Gendermaria. The triangulation of the three organisations had detrimental effects on the practice on numerous occasions, with one branch exerting its authority over the other organisations. Generally, no explanations were provided for the actions undertaken by any one department. However, amidst the negativity that such chaotic systems inevitably produce, there were also a range of positives. Glass (2017) discussed these structures regarding Colectivo Sustento's work in Colina 1 prison.

I believe that her observations resonate with the experience in CIP San Joaquin:

> They may have this brutal neoliberal system but there's this chaos on a micro level where people are just fucked off and don't want to do their job and how good is that in terms of being a little crack in the system.

It was clear from my experience of CIP San Joaquin that the chaos of such systems enabled the work of the educators to become *invisible.* An interview described how:

> …in theory we say one thing, but in practice, we do another. And always with the precaution that our work does not create suspicion between our superiors. Because if that happens, we will be summoned to the bosses office and they are going to ask 'what's happening?' (SENAME worker, 2017)

An example of the chaos was in the confusion regarding my research project and the centre manager's response. At the start of the process, I was asked to send a CV to the educators to gain authorisation. I completed this request and the work began the following week with authorisation granted. In the final week at the centre, I was asked to provide an authorisation letter from the University of Leeds, as management had held a meeting to discuss the purpose of my work and questioned several Tierra de Esperanza workers on the authorisation of the project. The workers responded that authorisation had been granted at the start of the process. The management of the centre were clearly distressed by my research role. I was advised by the educators to send the letter to the management in English, as they must forward it to a different department for translation. I was informed that it could take up to six months for the translation to take place. This enabled the research to continue and be completed without further harassment from management. The oppositional and autonomous approach ensured the continuity of the practice. Conformity to the centre's agendas would have had a detrimental effect on the practice and the possibility for critical education. Such an approach dances precariously with the volatile nature of SENAME's practice. On the other hand, such rebellious acts are rewarded with the permanency of dialogue and humanisation.

(Image 5: Floor plan of CIP San Joaquin, 15 December 2016. Credit: Matthew Elliott)

It is at this stage where I must address the discontinuity of this project in relation to my own framework. As presented in Chapter One, Mouffe expresses uncertainty at the autonomous approach due to the belief that it can eradicate hegemonic practices. Mouffe (2018:71) emphasises the importance of the state:

> What I want to underline is that the hegemonic struggle to recover democracy needs to start at the level of the nation state that, despite having lost many of its prerogatives, is still one of the crucial spaces for the exercise of democracy and popular sovereignty.

Cultural context is the determinant for the practice that took place at CIP San Joaquin. When applying Mouffe's contention that the state is 'one of the crucial spaces' for democracy to the Chilean political context it encounters numerous difficulties and challenges. The entrenchment of neoliberal ideology in the Chilean constitution has ensured the dominance of free market economics in state governance, regardless of which political party governs. The legislative nature of the constitution also presents multiples complications when aiming to develop a new hegemony such as Mouffe advocates. This was evidenced by President Bachelet's (2006-2010 and 2014-2018) failed attempts at constitutional reform during her two tenures (Legrand, 2015). The consensus that neoliberalism is the only alternative within formal political structures limits any possibility for the formation of agonistic politics. I argue that the direct and explicit forms of neoliberal power in Latin America, specifically in Chile, explain the

continuation of oppositional politics within theatre and pedagogical practices, as well as the determination for autonomous modes of change. As evidenced by the work in CIP San Joaquin, the possibility to meaningfully engage with state departments such as SENAME to develop critical agonistic theatre would be difficult or impossible.

On reflection of my experiences, if SENAME were open to developing critical theatre work I would be cautious as to where this put me in regards to the acts of dehumanisation they administer. I would not want my own practice to be perceived as providing support, or being complicit in the explicitly oppressive and dehumanising practices of SENAME. For clarification, I argue there is a great difference between working in an institution and working with an institution. In this case, the moments of conformity with the institution's security and logistical procedures did not equate to acts of complicity. The educators' definition of themselves as *the invisibles* is a clear demonstration of this argument.

The project created a paradigm shift for my research whilst in Chile, from a model of critical agonism to autonomous critical antagonism. Mouffe (2013:7) identifies that conflict in agonistic politics is based on the opponent as adversary as opposed to seeing them as an enemy. The use of 'enemy' is a term associated within antagonism and doubts the 'legitimacy of their opponent's right to fight for the victory of their position' (ibid.). Given the dehumanising and oppressive treatment of the young people by SENAME, it would have been difficult to perceive them as adversaries. While there are a range of criticisms regarding the autonomous approach, the project illustrates an example where practice is 'mediated' by 'realities of the place, time and society' (Plastow, 2009:301). The Chilean political context necessitates a political position of antagonism and opposition. Mouffe's notion of 'engagement with' state institutions entails a level of complicity which was not deemed ethically or pedagogically appropriate by myself or the educators. To effectively develop a critical engagement with the young people imprisoned at CIP San Joaquin, an alternative and autonomous approach was required.

Conclusion

My experience of the practice at CIP San Joaquin demonstrated the significance of dialogue and ethics. The relationship led me to the important decision of prioritising ethics over youth theatre aesthetics and to considering the importance of a dialogical pedagogy in making such judgements. Dialogue was at the centre of this project. The anti-dialogical nature of the institution emphasised the necessity for dialogical artistic practice. The experience at the centre evokes the following anecdote by Freire (2016:59):

> My friend had come to hear that, in spite of everything, my hope and my optimism are still alive. His question increased my responsibility because I realised that, in my hope, he was seeking support for his. What he may not have known is that I needed him as much as he needed me. The struggle for hope is permanent, and it becomes intensified when one realises it is not a solitary struggle.

As Freire said, the concepts of hope and struggle are inseparable. My experience in Chile made me understand how meaningful collaborations cannot only transcend educational expectations but provide hope in an environment that exists to dehumanise and oppress young people. This was a unique experience of hope and dialogue.

Collaboration with non-arts organisations or agencies is crucial to community theatre practice in the UK, specifically youth theatre. Regarding my own practice, I have worked with schools, youth agencies, NGOs, housing support services and local children's services. After my experiences with the Make Your Mark programme I started to question the politics of such collaborations. The depoliticisation of community theatre and the rise of instrumentalism has changed the nature of arts collaborations in the UK. Working relationships are usually based on the mutual interests of achieving governmental and institutional agendas as opposed to the needs and concerns of the young people. My practice in Chile with the educators at CIP San Joaquin proved that a collaboration can be re-framed to focus on politics, pedagogies and ethics. The collaboration was founded on this set of mutual ambitions and led the practice to become a form of political action.

I am not arguing that all UK practice is devoid of political action. However, I am arguing that the political efficacy of youth theatre practices could be advanced through

conversations motivated by the political and the ideological as opposed to the instrumental. The explicit political position of the Chilean educators enabled me to have an open and honest conversation about the politics of this thesis. I believe it is this mutual understanding that led to our practice challenging the atrocities and adversities of CIP San Joaquin. There was a very specific cultural context at play within this project, but I contend that this learning can be usefully brought back to the relatively depoliticised space of UK youth theatre.

In tandem with the dialogical principles of the project, the question of ethics was prominent from the beginning. As the centre was a site of oppression and unethical treatment of young people, there were questions as to how theatre and education could act as a means of ethical intervention. The dehumanising context of the project required me to question the conventions of my own practice. Therefore, this conclusion focuses on how I can include a case study that involved little conventional youth theatre practice. The unjust nature of CIP San Joaquin inevitably presented limitations for my practice. There was no final performance, no creation of performance material and no specific development of theatre skills. The project diverged from its original political intention of agonism as well as artistic practice as youth theatre. To deny the young people arts engagement due to the circumstances at CIP San Joaquin or coerce them in to following the aesthetics of traditional youth theatre practice would have been unethical. The context necessitated a practice that was led by the ethics of humanisation, dialogue and justice as opposed to aesthetic and performance conventions.

I aim not to overdramatise the environment at CIP San Joaquin, but the living conditions for the young people I witnessed breached domestic and international law. Should I simply have said that I could not see the possibility of creating youth theatre practice within such an environment, or was it preferable to make the choice I did and aim to explore alternative means of engagement? I chose the latter based on my ethics of hope and struggle, a terminology borrowed from Freire. In contrast to the other projects undertaken for this thesis, where such decisions were not necessary to make, the work in Chile presented a moment where I questioned my own practice in relation to the ethical context of the young people. Prior to the practice in Chile, I had been denied the possibilities of political efficacy and engagement. The Legislative Theatre

project prioritised youth theatre conventions as a means to meet the agendas of Youth Parliament. I claim that such a prioritisation ignored the political and ethical needs of the young people involved.

Freire (1998:38) argues that the process of 'educational praxis…cannot avoid the task of becoming a clear witness to decency and purity'. The affective practice of play in tandem with the effective work of critical discussions demonstrated the humanising and ethical possibilities of praxis within a dehumanised context. Therefore, I hope that by discovering solidarity with the educators at CIP San Joaquin and being responsive to the challenges presented, my practice in Chile adhered to the principles of ethical decency.

Future Routine – Youth theatre practice and schooling

Four days prior to the 2017 UK General Election, Hilary Benn MP entered a classroom of Year Nine BTEC drama students on a Monday morning. The location was Cockburn School in South Leeds. He asked what was required of him. I asked him 'to participate as an audience member in a rehearsal of *Future Routine'*, to which he responded, 'Oh, I love a bit of improvisation'. The young people and I, who were surprised with his enthusiasm, set up the first scene. As the Year Nine students navigated their way through a range of devised and under-rehearsed sketches, Hilary Benn participated and even attempted to lead the characters in a revolt against an ultra-authoritarian teacher. The rehearsal was followed by a participant-led interview, during which each of Benn's responses finished by his asking the young people; 'What do you think?' The questioning by Benn enabled a dialogue between the young people and a government decision maker. The young people could disagree and question further, situating them as creators of their own political agency. As opposed to the absence of MPs in the Legislative Theatre project, this final case study enabled a participatory dialogue to be held between the young people and a Member of Parliament. The understandable apathy expressed towards MPs by the young people in the first case study was countered by the experience at Cockburn School. I argue that such moments demonstrated that a critical agonistic theatre practice is possible with young people. However, other moments evidence how the project struggled at times, particularly where attempts at critical dialogue were unsuccessful and reinforced dominant narratives.

(Image 6: Hilary Benn rehearsal visit, 5 June 2017. Credit: Matthew Elliott)

In critical education theory, Ivan Illich argues (1971:11) that schooling does not promote justice and its purpose is to assign 'social roles' to students. The experience with Hilary Benn is one example of many moments within the project which create points of disagreement with Illich's argument, as it demonstrated possibilities for criticality within the schooling system. However, I also strongly agree with Freire's contention that schooling is dominated by topics which are 'alien to the existential experience of the students' (Freire, 1996:52). The tension between critical education theory and the examples of dialogue in the project are something I aim to discuss as part of this section.

This case study is a product of my learning from the earlier practice undertaken in Santiago, Chile and Liverpool, UK. Those two projects demonstrated the array of challenges inherent in constructing a critical agonistic theatre practice with young people. For example, the false generosity of youth engagement strategies in the Legislative Theatre project did not result in any engagement with decision makers, although the organisations involved made claims that they would. On the other hand, the project at CIP San Joaquin was underpinned by the critical pedagogy of the educators but the practices were developed in an explicitly oppressive institution which presented no interest in fostering young people's critical development. In both cases, albeit radically different, the practice was met by limitations imposed by the parent institution or organisation. The aim of *Future Routine* at Cockburn School was to identify how practice with young people might be able to engage with an institution, whilst maintaining an oppositional and critical pedagogy. This part of the project was an opportunity to explore the extent to which practice could present a 'new hegemony' (Mouffe, 2013:71), whilst engaging with existing neoliberal hegemonic structures.

I am conscious of the apparent contradiction in the use of the term 'youth theatre' to describe practice that took place within a school. The reasons for this choice are twofold. Firstly, my own practices and discipline developed from youth theatre practice as opposed to TIE or drama in education (DIE). As the practice to be discussed did not explicitly focus on the 'place of drama in the curriculum' (Jackson, 2007:3), the employment of a DIE perspective is not appropriate. The element of critical pedagogy did share similarities with the TIE movement, yet the project did not position the young people as audiences but as active participants and theatre makers in their own

performance (Jackson, 2013:22). Secondly, this project represented an opportunity to experiment with the informal and participatory nature of youth theatre practice within a formal educational setting. From my experience in the Legislative Theatre project, it was clear that the possibilities of critical political engagement are strongest when in informal engagement settings such as the youth theatre workshop space. For the practice at Cockburn School, I sought to question whether the criticality afforded in informal workshop spaces can occur and have efficacy within formal education structures.

These considerations led to the delivery of my final practice-based research project. This was a six-month youth theatre programme with Year Nine BTEC students at Cockburn School in Beeston, Leeds. The group consisted of 12 young people who had a diverse range of abilities and educational needs. Their reasons for undertaking drama at BTEC level were also varied, some were there by choice and others by subtle coercion. Some of the students mentioned that they had been advised to choose the BTEC as it could help them achieve better grades although they had no interest in drama. The diversity of the group was best represented in their approaches to developing theatre. The combination of introverts and extroverts with the mixture of intuitors and thinkers made the workshops an ever-changing space of exploration and discovery. From my past experiences and those I had at Cockburn School, I contend that an asset in any participant group is its diversity. The Year Nine class at Cockburn School were the epitome of this argument. The project culminated in an immersive performance, titled *Future Routine,* with an invited audience of school council members and senior teaching staff. The performance was based on a range of issues decided by the participants, focusing on their schooling experience. The process was also informed by interviews undertaken by the students with decision makers, such as Hilary Benn, MP for Central Leeds, Beeston ward Councillor Angela Gabriel and Mr Russell, head of Drama at Cockburn School.

To maintain the ethical principles of my own practice and the wider aims of applied theatre projects to work with 'participants who are marginalised socially, culturally and/or economically' (Preston, 2016:5), a decision was taken to work with young people in the Beeston area. Cockburn School is situated within the Beeston and Holbeck ward. The school itself is situated in the Leeds 101C Lower Layer Super

Output Area (LSOA) which ranks 947 out of 32,844 LSOA's on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, meaning the school is situated within a neighbourhood in the 10% of the most deprived areas in the country (communities.gov.uk, 2015). Education attainment within the ward is below the general average for Leeds, with 40.9% of students completing Level 2 qualifications as opposed to a city-wide mean of 47.6%. The ward also has a larger number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to the city average, with a rate of 6.6% (Leeds City Council, 2017). I am wary of employing abstract statistics to wholly characterise the social and individual behaviours of the participants in this research. The information above is therefore intended to provide the reader with an overview of the social context of the research project.

The school was very open to the notions of practice as research. Formerly known as Cockburn High School, Cockburn School converted to an academy in 2016 (Gov.uk, 2018). The conversion to academy status has been proven to have positive effects on grade achievement where '57% of students achieved a minimum of five A* - C grades' in 2016 compared with 48% of students in 2014 (Cockburn Multi Academy Trust, 2016). The school was also awarded a SSAT Educational Outcome Award in 2018 for being in the top 10% of schools nationally for progress (Morton, 2018). Cockburn School is a performing arts specialist school that has a 'long running tradition of excellence within the Performing Arts' (Cockburn School, 2018). The ambition of the school and its investment in the performing arts proved to be an advantageous combination for the implementation of my practice.

This section is structured around three significant moments of the case study. The first is an analysis of the negotiations that had to take place for the project to happen. The discussions undertaken aimed to identify the relationship between the agendas of my research and those of the school. The second point of analysis discusses how the strict educational frameworks of Cockburn School were utilised and inverted to address possibilities of social change. The final moment to be discussed is the tension between entrenchment and deconstruction in relation to the teacher/student hierarchy.

Negotiating the possibilities of dialogue

'This sounds like a really interesting project and one I would be keen to hear more about it'. This was the response I received from Russell, former head of the drama department at Cockburn School, when I made my initial approach via email (see appendix E). A Skype meeting was conducted as I was in Chile during the setup. The project was met with enthusiasm and Russell signposted me to Miss Piggott, a drama teacher, who was also supportive. The initial enthusiasm expressed by both staff members at the start of the project was maintained throughout the process. The experience of the previous two case studies had affected my perception regarding the possibilities of collaboration with state institutions or large youth organisations. The work in Chile was explicitly hindered by SENAME through a range of manoeuvres, the educators also had to adhere to the wider remit of Tierra de Esperanza. The collaboration with the British Youth Council revealed the divergence between critical rhetoric and tokenistic action. The 'gatekeeper' has a fundamental role within practice as research and often has negative connotations. Lund, Panda and Dhal (2016:281) argue that gatekeepers can restrict 'the scope of analysis' or lead efforts towards 'limiting access to data' when working with NGOs or large charitable organisations in development contexts. In relation to working with young people, access can potentially become restricted due to issues of consent and the designated hierarchy between adult and child. Hood, Kelley and Mayall (1996:120) contend that gatekeeping decisions made by adults are often determined by 'possibility of risk' as opposed to the benefits for the young person.

Upon reflection regarding *Future Routine* I disagree with absolute criticisms about the role of the 'gatekeeper'. From my experience of negotiation with Cockburn School, I contend that the collaboration between me and the school demonstrated that a dialogical and open relationship is possible between artist and supporting organisation. Nevertheless, such a relationship is complex and significantly nuanced. Our relationship was defined by a range of unique factors which were completely dependent on context and time which are not replicable or measurable. It would be naïve to claim that the formation of the collaboration was simple and lacking a need for negotiation. The process of creating a dialogical relationship encompassed several

matters including honesty, individual personalities and the openness of the BTEC curriculum.

The first stage of the relationship challenged my own preconceptions and involved thinking through the difference between critical educational theory and the realities of Cockburn School. My own prejudices had been heavily influenced by my reading of Balfour's (2009:357) argument:

> The point of entry is where competing ideological values interplay with each other, some are articulated, whilst others are deeply subterranean within the practitioner, the institution, or group. Even in a theatre of small changes, these permissions may be used and appropriated for diverse ideological outcomes.

As well as the notion of 'competing' ideologies, I was aware of the depoliticisation of the community theatre movement in the 20th and 21st century due to the dominance of instrumentalist initiatives. I was cautious of my practice falling victim to notions of tokenism and false generosity, as evidenced in the Legislative Theatre project. From my literary research, I understood schooling and curriculum as tools to legitimise 'the interests of the dominant social order' (Giroux, 1997:87) and my theoretical framework advocated for students to 'awake the conscience…to the injustice of the concrete situation' (Freire, 1998:75). The combination of my empirical and literary research had developed a sense of scepticism towards schooling and its intentions. I had formed an idea that I needed to be strategically and tactically prepared to combat the practice falling victim to potential instrumentalism. I was expecting to make a range of compromises and adjustments to the original intention of the practice. I had not taken sufficiently into account that individual teachers have a form of autonomy and may be open minded to a range of approaches within their own practice. The coming together of joint ideals between myself and Piggott demonstrated that fruitful collaborations can take place even if the dominant educational narrative is illiberal.

The initial meeting with Russell and Piggott debunked many of my own prejudices. The enthusiasm and willingness of the staff at Cockburn was contrary to the critical rhetoric of educationalists such as Freire and Illich. The meeting demonstrated that I could be open and unguarded regarding the nature of the research. This was evidenced in a series of open and clear discussions regarding the intentions, politics and pedagogy of my practice. The preliminary conversations were predominantly

based on the ethics and pedagogy of the project as opposed to predetermined aims and logistical measures. 'Competing' ideologies were absent within these meetings as we were able to work as collaborators in developing a project in the interests of the young people concerned as opposed to the agenda of the school or a funding body. The basic principles from my perspective were that the material had to be participant-led, embody principles of democracy and aim to contribute to student voice initiatives in the school. At that stage of the process there was no discussion of theatrical style or aesthetic and the possibility of performance was still debatable. It was agreed that the project would go ahead in a responsive manner.

Piggott's curiosity and openness is an example of the nuance described earlier. She explained that she was interested in the practice due to her prior training as an actor and her understanding of critical interrogation. Although our relationship did not align with the negative discourse regarding the role of the gatekeeper, there was an awareness of the hierarchy that existed within schooling systems. The preliminary meetings were very open about the binaries and tensions between the idealism of teachers and the realities of schooling systems. Piggott explained:

> I have hope. There's always this idea of idealism that we do things and we don't hide them…You have wonderful people who do try to make a difference but then as we all are aware, we have our boundaries and our limitations. So, we are all kept within certain limits. (Piggott, 2017)

Piggott's articulation and support for the project demonstrated how the teacher can act as a political agent within the school. The awareness of her own boundaries enabled Piggott to amplify her agency within the limits of her position. For example, the adaptation of the curriculum to meet the interests of the young people in *Future Routine* was a process Piggott had undertaken several times previously. I argue that the awareness of such limitations did not hinder the practice but acted as an enabler. The relationship between idealism and boundaries was inescapable within the project and highlighted Holloway's (2005:146) analysis that 'we-who-scream are also we-who-acquiesce'.

An example of this agency was Piggott's response when asked about what procedures had to be undertaken at the school to make the project happen. She said that she was 'lucky' in the space she was given by the head of the drama department (Piggott,

2017). There was no need to justify the research in writing or to make claims regarding the effects of the work. The space provided by Russell as the head of drama enabled Piggott an autonomy over class time and session planning which proved beneficial in the initial setup. Upon entering the school, I was made aware that a range of senior teaching staff were from a drama background and ambitious for the school to represent best practice. The relationship with, and enthusiasm, from the school appeared to resemble a relationship between artist, teacher and student from early TIE practice where all parties were 'empowered to ask questions, exercise choices and make new, often subversive, meanings that had been previously denied to them' (Pammenter, 2013:90).

The open ways of working and teacher agency were not exempt from hegemonic forces. Hegemony is ambiguous and focuses on developing 'consensual social practices' as opposed to direct, concrete exercise of force over a population (McLaren, 2003:77). Cockburn School itself is positioned in a hierarchy according to hegemonic forces; although the school has a form of autonomy, it is subject to guidance and legislation by considerably more powerful organisations. However, hegemony is not an explicitly oppressive force, therefore it contains ambiguities and contradictions which were exploited within the project. The exploitation of such ambiguities and contradictions can constitute a form of resistance within the schooling system and enable autonomy for a practitioner or teacher (ibid.). An example of such exploitation in the case of the project was the adaptation of the curriculum. Piggott informed me that the outline of the BTEC curriculum offered the freedom of participant-led devising approaches. As opposed to GCSE drama examinations that simplify the complexities of drama to a range of technical skills (Davis, 2005:165), the BTEC enabled a responsiveness to content developed by the participants, whilst still achieving the curriculum outline. The classroom became a workshop space as the role of the curriculum shifted from hindrance to helper.

The examining body Pearson (2016) state the following regarding the success of BTEC qualifications:

> BTECs embody a fundamentally learner-centred approach to the curriculum, with a flexible, unit-based structure and knowledge applied in project-based assessments. They focus on the holistic development of the practical, interpersonal and thinking skills required to be able to succeed in employment and higher education.

It was the aspect of 'project-based assessments' that enabled the diversification and responsiveness described above. The unit which applied to the project was *Developing Skills and Techniques for Live Performance*. This unit included components such as; 'understand the role and skills of a performer', 'develop performance skills and techniques for live performance' and 'review and reflect on development of skills and techniques for live performance' (Pearson, 2016). The learning aims for these components included development of skills such as characterisation, gesture and use of space. These are all basic stagecraft concepts included in my own directing and facilitation of youth theatre practice. It was agreed that students would be given time at the end of the session to make notes in their logbooks to reflect on such skills, facilitated by myself or Piggott. The political discussions formed the basis of the scenes where the elements of stagecraft were practiced. The lived experience of the participants was the vehicle by which the BTEC criteria was met.

The importance of lived experience was demonstrated throughout the project. In the first session, I asked a series of questions to initiate discussion. One of the questions was 'Why did you want to study drama?' A sample of answers were as follows: 'I got told to', 'Someone said it would be easy for me' and 'I had no other choice'. Some of the young people explicitly or implicitly made it clear that they had no real desire or urge to study drama. Given the schooling context, the participants had no other choice but to attend the sessions. However, as opposed to following strict curricula or project aims, there was the freedom to develop practice based on the concrete reality of the young people. For example, numerous sessions at the start of the process were based on discussion techniques and not theatre skills. During one such session the discussion developed beyond its original intention and left no space to develop dramatic content. The opportunity to discuss and debate their experiences of schooling took priority over students' need to play or perform in that session. The

discussions led to an enthusiasm that developed the central tenets of the performance; immersive performance and dystopia. The openness of the BTEC enabled time and a possibility of dialogue which subverted dominant results-based approaches. Unsurprisingly, the development of certain student's abilities to perform effectively within an ensemble or debate issues in the post-show discussion was commented on positively by a range of teaching staff after the performance. I believe this was a result of the participants being able to engage in drama and theatre in a way that was based on their lived experience, agency and ideas.

The autonomy exercised in the collaboration between me and Piggott in the classroom could not overcome some illiberal elements of the schooling structure. My initially intended age for the participant group was 15-18 to maintain consistency with the age groups of the participants from the previous two case studies. It was made clear that this would not be a possibility with the pressure of exams for year 10 and 11s. A Year Nine BTEC drama class was offered and it was proposed that an available session every Monday morning from January to July could be utilised for the project. Upon reflection, such decisions benefitted my practice and the school. The allocation of Year Nine students also enabled the opportunity to run a six-month as opposed to a six-week project due to the absence of final examinations. In developing a dialogical pedagogy with the participants, the quantity of time was intrinsically linked to the quality of pedagogy. From my experience, I reflect that limited time constraints placed on projects lead to a mechanistic, uncritical pedagogy. Such a pedagogy makes it 'impossible to understand what occurs in the relations prevailing between oppressors and oppressed' (Freire, 2014:96). The opportunity to interrogate the relationship between time and dialogical pedagogy was fruitful. The negotiation process resulted in satisfying the existing hegemonic structure whilst enabling space for me and the group to participate in counter-hegemonic practices.

Here I return to my original contention for this section; a dialogical relationship is possible between the researcher/practitioner and gatekeeper. The unique blend of individual personality and experience of Piggott, the allocation of Year Nine students and the amenability of the BTEC curriculum offered very clear possibilities to develop the critical theatre practice I am advocating in this thesis.

Realities of change and the complexities of criticality

The introductory workshops were based around a range of exploratory exercises that sought to discuss social and political issues raised by the students. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the students had a very clear desire to discuss issues involving 'school'. This was not a problem as the process aimed to be democratic and youth led, however I was aware of the potential facilitation dilemma as 'popular positions and ideas are not necessarily progressive' (Snyder-Young, 2013:40). The focus on schooling issues was complex, as Holly (appendix L) observed:

> I think at first it started off quite hard as we couldn't quite wrap our heads around all the things that people want to change. As I was on the school council the year before I knew there was things we couldn't change, so it was a bit weird to hear people say certain things but when we started to make the scenes we started to have a lot more fun with it.

Holly continued to say that discussions around areas such as the tying of tie knots, the colour of socks and permitted hair styles for students were very popular amongst the group. She argued that the focus upon such rules was futile due to previous campaigns led by the school council which had not led to any changes. From my perspective, the discussion of the rules on socks or hairstyles did not engage with the wider power relations at play between student and teacher or the school institution itself. Two questions underpinned this project. Firstly, as the young people knew what they could not change, could our performance be directed towards areas and issues where change was possible? Secondly, could the interrogation of such issues critically engage with wider power relations?

Future Routine was an antithesis of the Legislative Theatre project undertaken with Collective Encounters and Youth Parliament. The tokenism of the Youth Parliament work did not lead to any forms of political change, nor did the scheme have political capital in relation to the wider political UK framework. The grand scale of the issues addressed and the national approach distanced the project from the reality of the young people's lives. In comparison, the process at Cockburn School worked on a localised level and this ensured clarity in the changes for which it advocated. The young people's agency and political capital were enhanced by a clear framework of the school and it was the group who decided to work within this framework. The young people therefore knew what they could and could not change. This enabled the

practice to focus on areas of potential change which were of interest to the young people and decision makers (MPs, Councillors and teachers), as opposed to developing a performance that could be easily ignored or have no bearing on the schooling framework.

Snyder-Young (2013:135) contends:

> It can be easier and safer to do things that *feel* like interventions, mobilization, and action but, in reality, provide more catharsis for those participating than *actual change in the real world*. (Italics in original)

It was the localised and clear recognition of agency within the group that enabled the young people to identify tangible possibilities of change - '*actual change in the real world*'. For example, the parody of teacher discipline which formed the opening scene of the performance explored the young people's relationship with their teachers. This led to interest and attendance from senior teaching staff, as it concerned them directly and met the aims of student voice initiatives. As the content reimagined a shared daily experience of the young people and the teachers, a dialogue could take place. However, aside from the interviewing of Russell and the engagement with Hilary Benn MP and Councillor Angela Gabriel, the dialogue with decision makers was confined to the performance.

Throughout the process, the complexities of enabling a dialogical and critical view occurred frequently. Although the limitations for real change were recognised by the young people and me, communicating theatrically and critically within such a paradigm was a challenge. I adopted experimentation with ensemble-based devising and notions of dystopia to overcome this challenge. This approach was taken due to my concern that the creative process could take the form of an uncritical, naturalistic re-enactment of the young people's lives. I was committed to developing an advanced aesthetic whilst still communicating the social and political issues of the young people. To distance the young people from a theatrical re-creation of their daily lives, I posed the following question; *What will Cockburn School be like in 2057?* The theatrical aim of this approach was to develop a critical distance from the young people's lived experience of schooling. Employment of the alienation technique, developed by Brecht, was an opportunity for the young people to see the familiarity of their own experiences in an unfamiliar form, to develop 'critical detachment' (Willett, 1977:177).

The dystopian aesthetic countered the young people's initial uncritical engagement, whilst having a considerable effect on the performance aesthetic. The reconstruction or imitation of teachers who attended the performance could have damaged its potential efficacy. The critical detachment afforded by the alienation technique was beneficial, both for the young people during the devising process and for the invited audience during the performance.

I would also like to emphasise that such aesthetic decisions were made and developed in a co-intentional manner. Although a common misconception, the purpose of a dialogical relationship between a facilitator and a group of young people is not simply to allow all questions of content and form to be answered by the young people alone. The approach of '*it's up to the young people, they can decide everything*' is not dialogical in principle. The 'revolutionary leader' should not 'deny praxis to the oppressed' nor should he/she deny praxis to themselves by believing that they are a neutral body. As Freire (1996:110) clearly argues,

> The revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakeable solidarity.

The performance was a product of the relationship between the young people's lived experience and my own theatrical skills and knowledge. I argue that this dialogical relationship was central to the production of the performance *Future Routine.* The relationship utilised theatre as a tool, not only to unveil the concrete reality of schooling, but also to initiate critical interrogation. To assume that the students had the cultural capital and theatrical knowledge necessary to employ such skills as the alienation effect or ensemble-based devising would have been ill-informed on my part. This also applied to my assumptions regarding the lived experience of the young people and how those were best transposed into performance. Through dialogue we were able to develop a co-intentional relationship, based on ideas and suggestions from our respective strengths, whether those were knowledge, experience or creativity.

Returning to the notion of devising, this was informed by clear frameworks of agency and critical engagement. As the material developed, it became ever more absurdist. Content of scenes included a teacher being fired for being 'too tall', a student who

accumulated thousands of discipline marks in their school planner and a teacher who disciplined the class by locking them in the stationary cupboard. The dystopian aesthetic enabled a lot of fun to occur during the devising and rehearsal process, as the young people engaged completely with the freedom allowed. The young people's joy, from creating the scenes and experimentation with absurdism, strengthened the political effect when performed. The absurdist nature of the scenes evoked laughter from the invited audience of teachers and students. The comedic nature of the performance worked successfully within the affective register, which laid a foundation for the forum which took place post-performance.

(Image 7: Rehearsal of 'world's worst teacher' scene, 10 July 2017. Credit Matthew Elliott)

Stephanie (appendix J) discussed how the use of absurdism helped inform the subjects covered in the performance:

> I think it helped me realise that we want changes but sometimes the changes can't be made for other reasons…so food, we wanted to change to different varieties of food but obviously we have a budget of money we get given for the food.

The limits of their potential agency led to the development of specific material regarding issues the young people believed they could change. My concern was how to advance the political knowledge of the young people in relation to their lived experience. A decision I undertook was to invite decision makers to the process as opposed to the performance. The onus on the attendance of MPs at the Legislative Theatre performance was detrimental to that project's efficacy. The focus on the performance had meant that no relationship had been fostered with decision makers, nor did the young people engage with policy or formal political discourse during rehearsal. In the case of *Future Routine,* I sought to circumvent this problem by establishing contact with decision makers at an early stage of the process and inviting them to rehearsals as well as the final performance. The result of this was rehearsal visits from Hilary Benn MP, Councillor Angela Gabriel and numerous teaching staff of varying positions.

Their engagement with the process was to challenge the standard process of decision makers solely attending a final performance. My previous experience contained elements of tokenism as well as a potential for decision makers to dispel young people's views as uninformed or inaccurate. As opposed to working in a detached way for the majority of the project, the interviewing of decision makers enabled young people to employ nuanced arguments in their own process as a means to develop counter hegemonic performance. This also presented a process of action and reflection; the understanding of an array of arguments strengthened the young people's devising process, enabling them to avoid repeating their own arguments and falling victim to the pitfalls of 'verbalism' – *action for actions sake* (Freire, 1996:69).

In reference to the process of engaging decision makers, any school is a site of political capital that can be regarded as a commercial or political interest for politicians and businesses since the development of neoliberalism (Apple, 2006). I took advantage of this notion to engage decision makers and teaching staff. For example, as the issues being discussed were specific and well situated within the school paradigm, this was appealing as opposed to alienating for MPs and Councillors.

The 'engagement with' as opposed to the 'negation of' the school as a hegemonic structure is crucial to developing a critical agonistic theatre. As Mouffe (2013:104) explains:

> We should, for the same reason, find fault with the view that critical art can only consist in manifestations of refusal, that it should be the expression of an absolute negation, a testimony of the 'intractable' and 'unrepresentable', as some advocates of the sublime would have it.

Whilst in agreement with Mouffe that agonistic art is part of a 'multiplicity of sites' where the 'dominant hegemony can be questioned' (ibid.), there should be a cautiousness attached to such engagement. Preston (2016:24) contends that an interrogation of the politico-ideological environment of facilitation practice is necessary to avoid accepting hegemonic interventions as 'common sense'. My interrogation of the context led to a range of decisions which were taken to advance the critical possibilities of the practice. The interviewing of decision makers during the process and the longevity of the project are examples of these decisions.

Deconstructing or reinforcing the hierarchy? Theatre as intervention in the pedagogical relationship

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1996:54) outlined the dehumanising relationship between teacher and student:

(a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;

(b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;

(c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

(d) The teacher talks and the students listen-meekly;

(e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

(f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;

(g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

(h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

(i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;

(j) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

The purpose in quoting the entirety of these assertions is to present the multiple forms of the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student within the banking education model. At multiple points in the project, deconstructions of these relationships appeared to take place. Moments of deconstruction occurred alongside elements of construction of the oppressive relationships outlined above. It is the shift between deconstruction and the strengthening of hierarchical relationships that is interrogated in this section. I provide two significant examples of humanisation which are then juxtaposed with instances of oppression. The examples of deconstruction include the student's reflections on the process of creating *Future Routine* and the process of interviewing Russell.

Similarly to the young people in CIP San Joaquin, participants focused on elements of joy and happiness whilst discussing the process. All students interviewed utilised the term 'fun' on several occasions to describe their engagement with the project (appendix J; appendix K; appendix L). For example, Stephanie said that the three things she would take away from the project were teamwork, communication and fun. In clarification of her final point, she went on to say that what she found most interesting was the ability 'to have fun and be productive at the same time' (appendix J). Resonating with the relationship between affect and effect I observed in Chile, the practice at Cockburn School also demonstrated how aspects of 'fun' can be related to political action. In this case, the political action was in the deconstruction of the hierarchy between teacher/student. The elements of fun and joy expressed by the young people were always related to their political and social concerns. The challenge for me was to discover ways to produce nuanced and well researched performance content from these processes of joy. The opportunity to experiment with the ways in which the performance engaged with the audience was an exciting prospect for the young people. As the director of the performance, it was my responsibility to facilitate discussions with the young people for them to question the political intentions behind the aesthetic decisions they had made.

I do not aim to oversimplify our process by claiming that joy and its relation to the young people expressing opinions was an example of conscientisation. If the oppressed engage with their lived experience this does not necessarily mean that a process of critical engagement will follow.

The employment of discussions throughout the entire process from conception to performance was a means to counter the issue that Giroux (1997:225) describes below:

> To focus on voice is not meant simply to affirm the stories that students tell, it is not meant to simply glorify the possibility for narration. Such a position often degenerates into a form of narcissism, a cathartic experience that is reduced to naming anger without the benefit of theorizing in order to understand both its underlying causes and what it means to work collectively to transform the structures of domination responsible for oppressive social relations.

As I reflect on the project, I find myself questioning whether it perpetuated this 'form of narcissism' at earlier stages of the process. While the project utilised existing curricula as a framework, there were also substantial divergences from the regular weekly drama class. Such divergences included using the young people's lived experience as the basis for the devised content. I contend that the opportunity for the young people to share and express their opinions about schooling within the schooling framework itself was empowering and is associated with the elements of 'fun' described the young people. I question whether these elements of fun were simply a cathartic moment for the young people which was devoid of critical interrogation. As mentioned earlier, the challenge for me was to envisage ways where affective moments could be fostered to produce political outcomes.

However, I have been specific regarding my wording in the paragraph above. Whilst I agree there were 'elements' of catharsis for the young people, I argue that there was a development of critical engagement beyond the initial cathartic moment. Freire (2013:41) claims that critical consciousness ensures that causality is subject to analysis, as opposed to naïve consciousness that understands causality as an 'established fact'. One example is in the young people's analysis of the relationships of power within school and how these could be subverted within performance. Inverting the convention that 'the teacher talks and the students listen-meekly', the students proposed to experiment with an immersive theatre aesthetic. Immersive theatre performance encourages 'introspection' from audience members because of the affective participatory engagement with the performance (Alston, 2016:8). The immersive form also enables 'intimate liaisons' with performers that are not possible with traditional 'end-on theatre scenarios' (ibid.).

This form which broke down the relationship between audience and actor, also led to the deconstruction of the teacher and student relationship. Holly discussed how some of the teachers said 'it was quite weird' and 'nerve racking' that the roles were reversed, as students stood at the front of the class whilst the teachers remained seated (appendix L). This signified a momentary role reversal between teacher and student. In this instance aesthetic was aligned with the politics and pedagogy of the project; as Freire (1998a:56) claims 'ethics and aesthetics are intimately tied together'. In order to maintain the element of 'role reversal' the students led and facilitated their own discussion circles as part of the post-performance forum. The use of immersive theatre deconstructed the student/teacher relationship by enabling a process of introspection from audience and performer.

(Image 8: Post performance forum, 11 July 2017. Credit: Matthew Elliott)

A second example of where the project deconstructed the hierarchy between teacher and student was in the interview of Russell. The interview process was led by the participants, who undertook research in relation to the issues raised during the devised performance to form questions.

An excerpt from the interview follows:

> Participant: How was your education different? And, do you think it was better than modern schooling?

> Mr Russell: My education wasn't that different which is really sad…I remember getting shouted at a lot, you lot think I shout a lot but I got shouted at a lot, I think a lot more of my teachers were more like me and less like Miss Piggott which isn't a good thing. It was very much shut up, do this and don't argue back with us. Maybe that's why I am the way I am.
> (Russell, 2017)

During the evaluation session Holly reflected on the process of interviewing decision makers and teachers. Russell's admissions were a clear focus for Holly who said:

> Everybody kind of has this idea that Mr Russell is this kind of scary mean teacher who always shouts at people but we kind of found out that the only reason he acts that way is because the way he was taught at school.
> (appendix L)

Russell's honesty in the interview was thought-provoking for the devising process of the project. The young people said that they perceived Russell as an authoritarian teacher. The superficial perception of Russell was challenged, as he openly ascribed his teaching technique to his own schooling experience. In his honesty, he demonstrated the internalisation of his teachers, who appeared to have conducted authoritarian teaching practices. The enquiry which could not be answered within this thesis is why he acknowledges this and maintains similar teaching practices. The process and problems of overcoming the internalised oppressor was demonstrated by the young people as well. The participants were surprised to hear of Russell's experience and how he once was subject to similar teaching practices. The young people started to understand that his teaching practice was 'conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation' and the oppressed, consciously or unconsciously, can form an 'attitude of adhesion to the oppressor' (Freire, 1996:27).

Regarding the deconstruction of the hierarchical relationship, the interview was a key moment in the development of the practice. Although presented as the oppressor/oppressed binary, the liberation of the oppressed does not simply mean the eradication or overthrowing of the oppressor.

The example of Russell's observations and the student's responses demonstrates the complexity of Freire's thesis that:

> As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of the oppression. It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. (Freire, 1996:38)

The interview and its response demonstrated this recognition that the oppressors themselves are dehumanised by their own acts of oppression towards others. Furthermore, the young people understood that oppressive teaching practices usually derives from teachers having experienced such practices themselves. This aligns with Freire's argument, that the oppressed need to 'see examples of vulnerability of the oppressor' in order to develop critical consciousness (1996:46). In relation to the performance, the breakdown of hierarchy enabled students to critically interrogate the relationship between student and teacher and present such intricacies to the invited audience.

The formation of a dialogical relationship between teacher and student within the project was more complex than the examples presented above. I argue this was due to the notion of 'duality':

> The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalised. (Freire,1996:30)

The duality explains the flux between deconstruction and consolidation of the relationship between the young people and their teachers. I have taken time to demonstrate moments of deconstruction, but I now want to focus on instances of reinforcement. These were evident within the post-performance interviews. The 'stressed teacher' scene appeared to be the favourite amongst the participants and provided fruitful discussions during the process and after the performance. Daniel assumed the role of the ultra-stressed maths teacher who could not meet the demands of his class. As he inspects the papers of the students, a student requests help with a loud and resounding '*SIR!*' The teacher goes to the student. As he arrives another student with their hand raised exclaims – '*SIR!*' He goes to the student and then another '*SIR!*' comes from the other side of the room followed by another, until there

is an overwhelming cacophony of '*SIR!*' In the moment, the teacher snaps and demands everybody get in to the stationary cupboard. The students obey and enter the cupboard. The teacher returns to his chair, puts his feet up and exclaims '*This is the life!*'

The development of this scene derived from the discussions with Russell and other interviewees. Participants had discussed a range of issues regarding teacher stress, including budget cuts, demands on the teacher and excessive bureaucracy. The discussions led to an understanding that stress amongst teaching staff was a result of a multiple demands, or as demonstrated by Russell, their own schooling experiences.

The scene did not claim student behaviour as the sole cause of teacher stress. Nevertheless, Holly (appendix L) said the following in a post-performance interview:

> I think, we as students have a massive effect on teachers being stressed because we're kind of causing it in a way. Because, yeah, they have the massive workload with the paper work but us being bad in their lessons makes it a lot worse…if maybe we behaved a bit better in our lessons we could change a bit and the teacher wouldn't be as stressed and we'd have a lot more freedom in our lessons.

The interesting point is where she placed the blame; arguing that her behaviour and that of her fellow students was responsible for teacher stress. This reflection is in opposition to an earlier statement where she discussed her understandings of Mr Russell's teaching as a result of authoritarian teaching practices. I presented a range of research to the young people from the National Union of Teachers. The research stated that the major cause of teacher stress was 'excessive workload and working hours' (National Union of Teachers, 2013). The presentation led to the development of several scenes including the staff meeting scene where staff were fired for not meeting the illogical requirements of the school management. The difference between the discussions in devising and the post-performance interview necessitate interrogation. I argue this relates to Freire's argument that the oppressed have internalised the consciousness of the oppressor.

The interview with Holly took place several months after the final performance, to measure the longer-term efficacy of the project. The retrospective views differed significantly from the evidence collated during the process. The efficacy of the project

appeared as ephemeral as the performance itself, not able to sustain the progressive elements it had produced. Stephanie responded to a question as to whether the project had shifted the relationship between teacher and student – 'I guess you could say it changed but it stayed the same' (appendix J). Acts of 'self-deprecation' are a vital characteristic of the oppressed and are formed from the 'internalisation of the opinion the oppressors hold of them' (Freire, 1996:45). Even though the project gave space and time to creating shifts in the relationship, these appear to have been momentary and the absence of continuing engagement enabled elements of 'self-deprecation' to form again. Thus, the hierarchical relationship was restored.

During the workshop process the internalised oppression of the participant was critiqued, and the young people acknowledged the vulnerability of the oppressor, but such critique and acknowledgement had a limited duration and ended quite shortly after the project concluded. Snyder-Young (2013:7) contends that participants will 'make sense of the work in a way consistent with their existing worldview'. As school is a site of hegemony, the entrenchment of such oppressive behaviours will always appear to endure any form of momentary counter-hegemonic struggle. The problem of the sustainability of critical engagement is an issue that has been evident in all three case studies. The performance took place in the week prior to the summer break, I argue this had a big impact on the sustainability of criticality. I question myself in this reflection as to whether there could have been other processes that took place outside of the workshop room and the schooling calendar. The signposting to other youth advocacy services or the development of a twin project in the wider community could have enabled participant's criticality to encompass a sustained world view. In absence of such provisions it appears that in the case of *Future Routine,* the 'existing worldview' of the students seeing themselves as subordinates prevailed after the project ended.

Conclusion

I consider the project at Cockburn School as a fair representation of many of the possibilities and limitations of contemporary youth theatre practice in the UK. It was the closest example of the practice I originally aspired to embody and explore in my research process. However, although the practice can, I think, legitimately be celebrated for what it achieved in the moment, it is not exempt from criticism. I begin

with the possibilities which lie in the efficacy of informal artistic practices within formal schooling. The conventions of youth theatre practice enabled an alternative mode of engagement for the young people within the formal schooling framework. The second point of focus for this conclusion, and which forms the basis of my criticism of the practice, is a discussion regarding the factors that affect longevity and sustainability of critical engagement. My practice with the school sought to circumvent the issues of short-term participatory engagement by working for an extended period of time. However, the extended time period did not necessarily result in the practice having long-term effects.

The intersection between youth theatre practices and schooling enabled the possibilities for political action. The contrasting approaches and styles of youth theatre practice and schooling led me to initially worry that uneasiness and conflict would hinder the possibilities of the practice. I was proven wrong, both due to the flexibility of staff and as it was demonstrated that youth theatre practice enabled the young people to develop skills that informed their schooling and wider civic responsibilities. For example, the young people stated that skills such as teamwork have supported their learning into their continued studies (appendix J; appendix K; appendix L). For Daniel (appendix K) there was a profound effect upon his personal development:

> …it kind of proved to me that failure is the way to succeed. And, given that was the way, I feel like I should try over and over again. It takes a lot of responsibility and it takes a brave person to know what you have done wrong or to change something and try to get better. So, I think that it has changed me from July and I feel like thanks to that I am giving a lot more to the roles I am in.

The positive and honest relationship with the school played a major role within this process. There is also a historical relationship to be made here to early TIE practice where critical approaches enabled students to 'look at the same materials in a different way' (Adams Jr, 2013:300).

I believe my project presents a development of this approach as youth theatre practice did not only democratise the teaching style but also the content, unlike TIE models. The content of the performance was created and devised by the young people. The alignment of dialogical approaches and participant-led conventions of youth theatre practices positioned the young people as the co-creators of their own subject. The

broad framework of the BTEC curriculum enabled a freedom to the process which was suitable for the democratic principles of youth theatre practice. I argue that the relationship between youth theatre practice and schooling offers a unique opportunity for a democratic education of theatre's place within educational contexts has become mechanistic due to the national curriculum (Jackson, 2013:31), I contend that my experience is an example of an alternative that offers space for critical reflection within the traditional schooling structure. This experience also demonstrated how practice can evade the instrumentalist narratives that hindered my earlier attempts at developing critically engaged theatre practice with young people.

From celebration to criticism, I opened my thesis with the heralding of longevity in practice and the transformative possibilities it offers. The project at Cockburn School was an opportunity to apply my past experiences in to practice. The relationships between time and efficacy have been documented and conclude that for lasting change to occur theatre must 'foster long-term relationships with communities' (Prentki, 2015:122). However, the medium term (6 month) nature of my project did not necessarily result in long term effects. Whilst an extended time period offered an array of opportunities to enact or discuss certain changes, I realised that the concept of time itself cannot be solely responsible for sustained transformation. The post-performance interviews are evidence of this, it was at this point where I needed to ask what else was needed to make such changes sustainable.

I cannot fault the support of the school and the staff. Their openness and honesty enabled the practice to surpass numerous expectations. I believe I am responsible for the practice not sustaining the elements of criticality it achieved. I argue that this problem lay with the matter of political agency and the actions I undertook to develop the political capital of the practice. I became complacent with the project as it developed, as I believed that many elements felt like a radical departure from the previous case studies. The inviting MPs and councillors in to rehearsals was an example of this. However, these initiatives could have been pushed and extended to ensure a more significant influence in conversations with senior teaching staff in the final performance. The self-deprecation that the young people demonstrated was an illustration of how the project ultimately lacked transformative agency.

Snyder-Young (2013:6/7) argues that theatre will always have a limited effect as the drama workshop takes place on a fictitious level and is not a representation of the real context it aims to influence. I disagree with such an argument and claim that the practice at Cockburn offers nuance to the dichotomy of 'real' and 'fiction' outlined by Snyder-Young. The employment of agonistic political theory ensured my practice engaged with such 'real' structures. The 'fictitious world' of the drama workshop actively sought to engage with the reality of the school. The post-performance forum was devised to create dialogue between the young people and teachers beyond the realms of the performance. The forum culminated with a list of suggestions to be taken forward to the school council (see appendix N). These suggestions were passed on to the relevant staff but they had not been actioned when I followed up with the school three months after the performance. The absence of accountability in this final stage meant that elements of the young people's work became futile in the aim of ensuring their voice was heard by decision makers within the school. The extended time could not solve the absence of accountability within the framework I set out at the start of the project. The durational aspect of the project merely prolonged the political ineffectiveness inherent within the practice. I am conflicted by the practice at Cockburn School as it demonstrated the imperfections that are inherent in, arguably, examples of good practice. Whilst there were innovations, there was also difficulties. The obvious pairing of time and efficacy was clearly questioned by structural and pedagogical challenges. The sustainability of critical reflection is multifaceted and the balancing of the multiple variables is a process that is vulnerable to manipulation and contestation.

Chapter Three - Reflection

In 2013, I concluded the paper *Exchanging Engagement: alternative arts engagement in Latin America* with a provocation to the reader about the extent to which theatre can engage in social and political change. The words were not my own, but the closing monologue from the Fenix e Ilusiones performance *Modecate*. The monologue is as follows:

> I stop talking because I had too much pain in my throat. But who cares about that? Who cares what a person like me thinks? What one of us thinks? Who really cares? No one cares. I could take advantage of this moment to say important things, I could talk about world injustice, my peoples' pain but why say so many things if no one is listening and if they listen, they don't care. I am not intelligent, I am not a good person, I have nothing... but I know what's going to happen. This is going to end, and we won't see each other again. And everything will go back to normal. You will go back home, you will sleep and tomorrow you won't remember anything. And I'll still have this huge pain here in my throat. Everything that has been said did anybody hear it? Will anyone be different after this? What happens after the lights go out and the applause dies down, will depend on you. So that when someone speaks, someone also listens, really listens.
> (Fenix e Ilusiones cited in Elliott, 2013)

The paper didn't respond to the monologue but merely placed it as a provocation to the reader. In light of the practice and research conducted as part of this thesis, I would like to respond here to Fenix e Ilusiones and to questions which I raised regarding the youth theatre sector. My response will form the closing chapter of this thesis. As the practice of Colectivo Sustento and Fenix e Ilusiones were the motivation for this research and their practice opened the thesis, it is appropriate to return to their work for my concluding reflections.

The monologue beautifully captures the relationship between participatory ephemerality and political efficacy - *Everything that has been said, did anybody hear it? Will anyone be different after this?* The questioning of this relationship has long dominated discussions of community theatre practice and was a concern for me throughout the practice I facilitated.

I argue that the concepts of ephemerality and efficacy of practice in the UK and Chile relate to Freire's argument regarding critical consciousness and political action:

> A more critical understanding of the situation of oppression does not yet liberate the oppressed. But the revelation is a step in the right direction. Now the person who has this new understanding can engage in a political struggle for the transformation of the concrete conditions in which the oppression prevails. (Freire, 2014:24)

Freire's argument laid the pedagogical and political foundations for my investigation. I aimed to challenge my experiences of facilitating individual change and interrogate how theatre with young people can develop critical understanding in to political action. This concluding chapter is an attempt to reflect and interrogate my experiences of seeking to enable political action with young people via the medium of youth theatre practices.

The research engaged with a multitude of institutions as well as a large number of young people, who came from a range of diverse and complex socio-economic backgrounds. I also encountered and aimed to engage with hegemonic structures in a variety of forms. Some structures were subtler in their control mechanisms, whilst others were more vulnerable to acts of subversion. My practice shifted from Boal's Legislative Theatre, to the simplicity of play and concluded with ensemble based devising techniques. Each project required a different aesthetic approach. I anticipated change in theatre form but consistency in pedagogy and political approach. However, the notions of criticality and agonism that I brought to my thinking were significantly contested. The ideas of Mouffe could not be applied in the walls of CIP San Joaquin, but were able to be fostered by the practice at Cockburn School. A critical pedagogical approach was undermined within the Legislative Theatre project with notions of false generosity and this affected the sustainability of critical awareness from process to performance. The projects constantly challenged my initial theoretical thinking and my previous ideas about what might constitute effective or affective politically engaged youth theatre, but this has enabled a concluding nuanced comparison of the three projects involved.

As expected, no project was the same, but all shared the same political and intellectual intention. The aim of this thesis is not to develop a replicable model for youth theatre

or youth engagement practices. A standardised model would contradict the responsive approach and pedagogy I brought to my research. The intention of the following reflections is to highlight contradictions whilst comprehending potential actions to be taken forward in developing politically engaged youth theatre practice in the UK. The reflections are not exhaustive, but focus on what I think are the three most significant issues and developments that arose as a result of my research.

The three areas I focus on are as follows; 1) Processes of change. Inspired by the Legislative Theatre project and its use of broad terms such as 'mental health' and 'body image' to advocate for change, I question the extent to which the use of far-reaching and expansive terms hinders possibilities for concrete change. 2) Collaboration and Allies. A theme running through all three case studies was the process of developing collaborations with partner organisations and individuals. Collaborations were the key to enabling meaningful practice, from the subversion of the educators in CIP San Joaquin to the welcome of Cockburn School. The client-provider partnership that was developed with youth Focus NW also demonstrated how such collaborations compromised the political efforts of my practice. 3) Responsive practice. In line with Freirean principles, I aimed to constantly respond to the lived experiences of the young people. My approach was constantly met by a range of challenges. These included predetermined agendas of the collaborators and the young people's own perceptions of their concrete reality. Regardless of the obstacles, responsivity in practice was a key principle in my practice and its absence would have indicated my indifference to the young people's lived experience.

This chapter finally seeks to determine whether the case studies have been effective in forming a critical agonistic theatre practice. My attempts to promote meaningful critical dialogue will be interrogated. I will be judging my own practice by above all asking whether it has enabled an environment that *when someone speaks, someone also listens, really listens.*

Processes of Change

I am arguing that if theatre with young people is to advocate political change it should have a clear understanding of the processes and protocols of the change it is seeking

to make. A performance that simply acts as an expression of discontent towards a political or social issue cannot result in concrete change. For me, a politicised youth theatre has to point towards clear and informed actions of change. Whilst my reflection makes a clear claim, my attempt to develop forms of political action encountered a range of complications, challenges and successes.

I envisaged that the Youth Parliament project would have the greatest political efficacy but it proved ineffective and meaningless as a piece of political activism. The collaboration was flawed for two reasons. The first was the political framework of the scheme. Make Your Mark was promoted to me as strict and disciplined offering possibilities for meaningful change. The scheme also boasted of its close relations to the House of Parliament and its influence on the Youth Select Committee. The realities of the scheme demonstrated that it was structured in such a way that it was highly unlikely to create any form of concrete change. Regardless of whether MPs attended or not, the programme itself was vague and held little or no political capital. The political rhetoric of the scheme masked its simple intentions of apolitical youth engagement. Regardless of good intention and the energies demonstrated by the young people, the use of Legislative Theatre could not overcome the flaws inherent within the Make Your Mark scheme.

The second flaw was the framing of the campaigning issues. The broad issues of 'Body Image' and 'Mental Health' we were given could only result in a forum process that could promote better understanding as opposed to engaging in possibilities for change. As demonstrated in the rehearsal process for the Legislative Theatre project, the issue of body image is incredibly complex and is a cause for concern for a multitude of reasons. A nuanced approach to discussing specific subjects related to body image was my aim to counter the broad term provided. On reflection, I argue that irrespective of how nuanced the performance was in relation to the topic, the broad umbrella term of the issue significantly hindered the political efficacy of the performance. An example of this was the scene *James' Story* with the sub title *'I want to be like them'.* James struggles to compete with his three male friends who can follow all the instructions of their ultra-masculine PE teacher. His lack of 'masculinity' leads to instances of bullying from his friends and ultimately a reprimand from his teacher. The issue being discussed was toxic masculinity and its negative effects on wellbeing. The focus of

James' Story could have looked at potential forms of action against the specific effects of masculinity but such focus became lost due to the broad context of 'body image'. The result of this was the absence of political action.

Future Routine was based on a range of matters the young people wanted to address, these included budget cuts, student apathy and teacher stress. To circumvent the limitations of my first project, I aimed to avoid the use of broad terminologies and focus on the three specific subjects. I discovered that this enabled the young people to identify what forms of change could take place and what processes needed to be followed for each subject area. From the workshop discussions, it became apparent that this only applied to the matters of teacher stress and student apathy. Identifying possibilities of change when we discussed budget cuts was complex and did not lead to identifying modes of political action. I am going to provide a comparison of the two different processes regarding teacher stress and budget cuts.

As discussed, the issue of teacher stress was very clear as it was a daily experience for the young people. However, the young people's experiences alone could not comprehend the complexity of the issue they sought to address. This led me to invite MPs, Councillors and teachers to rehearsal as well as performance. I wanted to explore whether interviewing decision makers such as Hilary Benn MP could lead to developing knowledge regarding the causes of teacher stress and what approaches needed to be taken to counteract it. The interviews enabled the young people to develop an understanding of the underlying causes of the subject matter including teacher capacity, curriculum demands and Ofsted inspection. The information that was gathered from the interviews with MPs, Councillors and teachers was utilised to inform the development of the scenes. Sections from the interviews were used in subsequent workshops as creative stimulus. This enabled the young people to develop a nuanced approach to the development of content as well as developing a realistic representation of the problems experienced by teaching staff.

However, the experience of identifying actions of change in relation to budget cuts was not as simple or clear. In the final scene of the *Staff Meeting*, the participants sought to address the effects of budget cuts by presenting a scenario where staff were dismissed for absurd reasons as a means to mask the school's failing budget. Whilst

the young people identified the negative effects of budget cuts, the ability to propose realistic actions were incredibly difficult for me and the participants. The complexities of austerity economics in tandem with the convoluted school funding structure in the UK meant that identifying individuals or organisations to target for change was extremely problematic. Even though the complexities of accountability soon became apparent to the young people, there was a decision to continue with the scene and include it within the final performance. Whilst in agreement with the young people and their right to discuss the subject matter, I must question its political effect. This was a clear example of the dilemma that was the inspiration for my thesis. The young people developed critical consciousness of the political and economic contradictions but there was no progression to political action. The *Staff Meeting* scene was an example of performance that simply expressed discontent as opposed to recognising possibilities for change. However, the young people underwent a process of political investigation to arrive at their decision to play the scene as an expression of their disagreement with budget cuts. It could be argued that this raised awareness to a range of decision makers during rehearsal and performance but the direct effects are unknown and cannot be measured. Although recognising political actions may not be possible with certain matters, I am not claiming that this should restrict the young people's ability to discuss certain political or social concerns.

From the three examples presented above, I argue that a critical agonistic youth theatre practice should be focused on specific issues that have clear parameters. The clarity of subject matter can lead to recognising and proposing tangible actions for change. The issue of teacher stress is an example of this resulting in concrete suggestions for action such as a 'non-teaching day' where students and teachers undertake a range of activities that are not curriculum based (see appendix N). I am aware that the unknown and unpredictable processes of dialogical education can raise topics that are complex with limited possibilities of change, these should not be readily accepted but questioned in regard to their political efficacy.

Collaboration and allies

The term *allies* is used to identify the relationship that my practice had with individuals who shared the same ideas and principles of the research in spaces the collaborating organisation they worked for had a different set of beliefs and values. On reflection, I am claiming that the sourcing of allies is fundamental to the development of a critical agonistic theatre practice with young people. At the start of my research project I understood the necessity of working collaboratively but was cautious of manipulation by the agendas of organisations I was engaging with. From my literary research, specifically in education studies, I became aware of anti-democratic tendencies within organisations such as schools. The reality of working collaboratively with such organisations was very different to my expectations. I discovered that beyond the homogenous representation of organisations there are politically motivated individuals who have the ability to create openings for critical exploration. Developing collaborative relationships with such individuals in my three projects was crucial but not always possible. The sourcing of allies led to effective engagement in Leeds and Santiago but the relationship fostered in Liverpool failed to act critically or agonistically.

The first collaboration was with Youth Focus NW. A relationship was developed and a joint political aim identified of developing critical citizenship. The organisation helped organise and create similar relationships with a range of youth services throughout the North West. The joint enthusiasm for developing the project was based on the desire to enhance the well-established participation in Youth Parliament in the North West. The project enabled contact with hundreds of young people as discussed in the Legislative Theatre section. However, as explained in Chapter Two, the overall experience of the project was very detached from the initial planning and preparation. By the end of the project, I could not define the relationship as collaborative with either individuals within it nor the organisation as a whole. A client-provider relationship replaced the joint-working ideals initially discussed. The local level of engagement with the allies at Youth Focus NW was determined by the national BYC framework. The knowledge and experience of the collaborators at Youth Focus NW could not infiltrate or influence the dominant agendas of the BYC. On reflection the alliance was limited from the beginning of the project.

The collaboration at CIP San Joaquin presented a range of unique circumstances that caused me to re-evaluate the relationship between myself and those who I collaborate with. The identification of the educators as allies was simple and straightforward, as their own political and pedagogical approach aligned with my own. The work in Chile demonstrated to me that powerful and meaningful collaborations derive from shared politics. As discussed in Chapter Two, the centre itself posed numerous difficulties and problems for the practice. These difficulties provoked questions of ethics which impacted upon the aesthetic and theatrical form of my work, hence the playing of theatre games as opposed to the creation of a performance. The educators at CIP San Joaquin were clear in their resistance to the dominant oppressive practices of the centre and saw no possibility of engaging with management to present alternatives. The practice became an act of subversion, the educators demonstrated an advanced knowledge of the SENAME system which enabled them to understand when was best to develop spaces of criticality without raising attention from senior management. It was at this point of my research when it became clear that collaboration with allies benefitted enormously when I could work with collaborators with extensive and developed contextual knowledge. I allowed myself to be guided by these embedded allies, thus resulting in the development of theatre games as opposed to youth theatre performance. Whilst the project did not achieve my research aims of critical agonism, the relationship with the educators demonstrated to me the importance of responding appropriately to context. The overriding important matters in the context at CIP San Joaquin were ethics and child rights as opposed to youth theatre conventions and agonistic practices.

The learning garnered from the two case studies enabled a nuanced approach to identifying and fostering an alliance for the final project at Cockburn School. I sought to question whether an agonist approach could be developed without falling victim to dominant agendas. The collaborations established with Youth Focus NW and the educators at Tierra de Esperanza had made me highly sensitive to the importance of acquiring allies with similar political intentions. However, in both cases their relationship to hegemonic institutions and agendas had presented issues for the development of an agonistic approach. The powerlessness of the project to subvert or resist the national agenda of the British Youth Council caused issues for the

Legislative Theatre project, whilst the direct opposition to SENAME caused a re-evaluation of agonism and its applicability.

The development of my practice at Cockburn School and its ability to act as a form of critical agonism was due to the collaboration being determined by a local framework and the agency of my allies. The project was predominantly determined by the local concerns of the school and did not have to negotiate national agendas. This enabled the project to have a very helpful proximity to senior management and those responsible for decision making within the school. The allies included Russell who was a member of the senior leadership team. In addition to this, Piggott had undertaken a creative approach to adapting the BTEC qualification for the benefit of her students. The ingenuity of Piggott in relation to the curriculum demonstrated the possibilities of agonism within hegemonic structures. The collaboration with Piggott and Russell contradicted my literary research and proved that there are substantial differences between organisational systems and the individuals who inhabit them.

I argue that youth theatre practice should ultimately be aiming to create alliances with individuals when developing partnerships with organisations. In the cases outlined above, the practice was enabled by the agency a series of allies. The notion of the ally is not exempt from complications as demonstrated by the Legislative Theatre project. A crucial element to developing critical agonistic theatre practice is not only identifying the hegemonic institution itself, but recognising allies within.

Responsive Practice

I aimed to be as responsive to the concrete reality of the participants as possible within the parameters of each project. The reflexivity between action and reflection enabled the practice to respond to the young people's social and political realities. Freirean concepts of praxis and dialogue were employed throughout each of the three case studies. I believed that my employment of Freirean techniques would result in political action devised and delivered by the young people. However, each of the projects resulted in an array of different responses. Whilst my approach resulted in moments of freedom and dialogue, I found that there were no long term effects and the dominant discourse of the institutions I worked in was maintained. I am arguing that the

utilisation of Freirean practices was only efficacious on a micro level and was not sustainable.

The Legislative Theatre case study was a clear example of this issue. The structure of the programme ignored the political possibilities of Freirean practice. Aside from the complications with the collaborators as discussed in the previous chapter, the pedagogical basis of the Make Your Mark project did not encourage responsive practice. The choice of political issues on the ballot was an example of how the project could not respond to the young people's concrete reality. This was highlighted in post-performance interviews, as Nathan (appendix C) questioned:

> For the audience we had is there a specific topic that we could've discussed that we think they would've really, really liked?

Whilst I had a range of freedoms pertaining to the aesthetics of the performance, freedom to respond to the politics of the young people was impossible. From this process, I observed that the potential for dialogical practice will always be limited when it is situated within an anti-dialogical framework. For future practice I must develop methods to interrogate context or find an alternative context that fosters responsivity to the young people's concrete reality. As demonstrated by Nathan's comment, the political efficacy of the Legislative Theatre project was already determined by how well it met the BYC agenda. This was an agenda that was set prior to a single workshop taking place. BYC restricted the responses of the participants and limited their ability to respond creatively and critically whilst claiming that the process was to aid political engagement. Concepts of dialogue and praxis were and will continue to be completely futile in such circumstances.

An open and responsive practice at Cockburn School enabled the young people to define and influence their own theatrical and political process. The ability to be responsive in my facilitation enabled the project to challenge some of the young people's established opinions and to develop a critical engagement beyond superficial analysis. For example, without a responsive practice, critical engagement may have been measured by the ability for students to wear different coloured socks; a concern that was raised repeatedly in early sessions. This would have lacked critical interrogation of what such rules signify in the student/teacher relationship.

Whilst there was clear critical engagements from the young people at Cockburn School, the ephemeral and short-term critical engagement could not overcome entrenched forms of control. In regard to the unsustainable critical engagement in the longer term, I must look at my own efforts and question my agency as a facilitator. As the post-performance forum finished and the proposals were written up, I promised to hand them over to the student council for consideration at their next meeting. I sent the proposals to the school council, conducted follow-up emails and I delivered copies to senior teaching staff. I was later made aware that Piggott and Russell had moved to a partner school and it was unclear as to whether the proposals had been considered or acted on.

On reflection of this process, I must question what actions I could have undertaken in order for the project to have sustained efficacy. My experience highlighted the limitations of short term theatre practice and demonstrated the need for continuity. The experience also proved the need for me as a facilitator to develop relationships with activists as well as developing my own advocacy skills. I must concentrate the efforts of developing my practice towards ensuring that critical theatrical engagements are viewed as part of the wider critical educational offer, as opposed to a one-off or short term privilege. By doing so, the responsive practice that takes place in the workshop room could potentially be sustained and have tangible effects.

As I conclude my reflections on responsive practice, I believe the practice at CIP San Joaquin was the clearest demonstration of Freirean pedagogy in practice. The identification of Freire as a focus for our practice enabled an advanced level of reflection that I did not encounter when delivering the other two projects. The educators sought to embed me within their practice, this resulted in working at the centre several days a week and undertaking extensive post-workshop reflections. The use of responsive practice by the educators of Tierra de Esperanza represented the possibility of subversion and stability when engaging with the unpredictability of context. The project was efficacious because the educators were consistent and responsive in their practice. The constant response to the unknown or unexplained hindrances was tiring for the participants and educators which demonstrated the necessity for resilience. The effects of the approach were demonstrated by the young

people's responses in the interviews I conducted. The ability to experience freedom and play whilst developing knowledge of their broader legal rights was significant when considering the oppressive environment of the centre.

However, I must highlight the extent to which the practice could impact on the macro agenda of SENAME. The dialogical and responsive practice could only manifest itself within the micro-engagements we had with the young people. The practice was continuously successful within the micro context of the workshop space but it could not impact on the wider running of the detention centre. On the rare occasions that the practice attracted attention from senior SENAME management, the response was generally negative with access being denied for unexplained reasons or the educators being summoned to explain the Cip a Luca project to management staff. This limitation was recognised by me and the educators and I argue this was the strength of the practice and its responsive approach. Our sole aim was to work critically within the limits of the workshop space, we did not attempt to engage with senior SENAME staff.

While the projects engaged with context and the young people's critical understanding, the practice itself was clearly limited on the level of engagement it was able to achieve. The practice alone cannot directly challenge or subvert the macro context it is taking place in and will always have a limited agency when viewed on its own, irrespective of how flexible and responsive I am.

Conclusion

As I return to the *Fenix e Ilusiones* monologue to conclude this chapter and the thesis, I argue that the project at Cockburn School presented an example of critical agonistic theatre practice with young people. The project enabled an environment that *when someone speaks, someone also listens*. Alongside this, it has also provoked questions about 'Who listens?' and most importantly, 'How long do we speak and listen for?' The sustainability of critical engagement has been a constant theme within this process. The opportunity to experiment and explore the possibilities for such practice, though hedged around with significant difficulties, with the Youth Parliament and the educators in Chile were invaluable to this process. The three areas focused on above demonstrate the major learning from the projects undertaken, but the education and

experience I have garnered from this research transcends the parameters of the thesis' framework.

The practice as research model gave me exceptional freedom to experiment. Particularly this mode of working enabled an unusual level of responsivity to the young people, a democratisation of project planning and extended durations of project delivery. The challenge moving forward lies in how the learning can be adapted and applied for youth theatre practice beyond the research framework. I believe this to be an enquiry that merits further research.

The claims I make regarding the development of a critical agonistic theatre practice are not intended to equate with a model of best practice. The practice outlined in this thesis is not a model to be replicated, but a pedagogical and political approach to provoke discussion regarding the development of youth theatre practice. The recognition of its flaws and inaccuracies are numerous and are apparent throughout the documentation. The inability to identify the false generosity within the Legislative Theatre project and the reinforcement of hierarchical relationships at Cockburn School are two clear examples where the practice was incomplete and presented weaknesses for the development of political action.

How to sustain critical engagement is not a formulaic question which requires a clear answer. It is one of many elements that demonstrate the necessity for praxis in youth theatre practice. It is a process that is informed by reflexivity and should be understood as *inconclusive.* As Freire (2016:59) argues:

> If hope is rooted in the inconclusion of a being, something else is needed in order to personify it. It is necessary to accept the *inconclusion* that one becomes aware of. As one does that, one's inconclusion becomes critical, and they may never lack hope again. Critical acceptance of my inconclusion, necessarily immerses me in permanent search. What makes me hopeful is not so much the certainty of the *find*, but my movement in *search.* It is not possible to search without hope, not even in solitude. (Italics in original)

I close the thesis on the theme of inconclusion. The practice undertaken was envisaged as a political project to challenge neoliberal hegemonic discourse, by enabling young people to critically reflect and act on their lived experiences. In addition

to this, the work was specifically directed in order for such reflection and action to take place within hegemonic sites, to reflect the concrete reality of the young people involved. Creating theatre practice with young people to challenge existing hegemonic structures is an ongoing process and one which can never have a set end point.

In addition to Freire's argument on the relationship between hope and inconclusion, there is a need to identify the importance of dialogue. Dialogue with the young people and collaborators was central to this and enabled the practice to be resilient in the face of the challenges presented. To have *searched* alone in this research would have been to negate the dialogical principles that formed the pedagogy and politics of the practice. This thesis is a contribution to the development of a politically informed youth theatre practice. I am indebted to the energy of the young people who engaged with the practice in ways that exceeded my own expectations. I hope our contribution via this research will have positive ramifications in the continued struggle for young people to have political agency in the decisions that affect their lives.

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Abbreviations

BYC – British Youth Council

DIE – Drama In Education

GLYPT – Greenwich & Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LEA – Local Education Authority

MYP – Member of Youth Parliament

NED – National Endowment for Democracy

NYT – National Youth Theatre

SENAME – National Service for Minors

TIE – Theatre In Education

UN – United Nations

Appendices

Appendix A

Excerpt from Collective Encounters Children in Need reporting form (2012/13)

What You Achieved

3. What you Achieved for Children and Young People.

Please describe the three most important differences (outcomes) this project has led to in the lives of children and young people.

e.g. Difference 1: 'Young people have become more confident in putting their views across and making decisions which will help them to live more independently.'

We know that change does not happen in the same way or at the same pace for each child, but we would like to understand the degree of difference you think your project has achieved for each child. To help us, please fill in the section below.

Difference 1

1. Improve skills of vulnerable, disadvantaged and looked after young people.

How many of your disadvantaged children or young people aged 18 and under would you say...

have experienced significant progress?
42

have started to experience progress?
3

are yet to experience progress?
0

To help us understand the story behind these numbers, please tell us about the difference you have seen in the children's lives across the year. This should relate to 'Difference 1 ' described above. We'd like to know what it was like for the children at the beginning of the year, what your activities or services did to help change that, and what it's like for the children now. This is often called the 'distance travelled'. Please include small changes as well as big ones, and tell us about ALL the children you have worked with - those who

have experienced significant progress and those who have experienced some progress. You should also tell us why some children might not have experienced a difference. Many of the young people we encounter have little confidence, self esteem, have not performed before and have never taken in roles and responsibilities within a team working towards a specific goal. We offer young people a chance to do this both through out youth theatre and outreach services.

The youth theatre has developed performance skills; personal skills and project management skills.
Performance skills: some youth theatre members have picked up these skills very quickly, and others have taken a little more time. Distance traveled invariably depends on the starting point - the length of time they have been taking part in youth theatre activities and their home and family backgrounds.
Personal skills: over the last year youth theatre members have grown expeditiously in confidence, self-esteem and in the way they communicate with each other, with other members of the Collective Encounters' team, with professional theatre practitioners and with a very broad cross-section of the community including homeless people, older people, ex-service personnel and people with dementia. 15 members of the youth theatre who took part in the London residency has never been out of Merseyside before and some of them found this particular experience life changing.

Project management skills: all youth theatre members have surprisingly engaged with the project management aspects of the work we do. All attended an arts project management masterclass and all have developed skills through supporting the research for the plays; marketing the shows; finding the right venues. They have been to take on responsibilities and they have fulfilled completed the roles that have taken on.

Outreach
We delivered 4 x 10 week outreach courses with Sefton Young Carers; Activate a service for young people with learning disabilities; the Children in Care Council and Laurel Rd Residential Unit for young people in care. Courses are accredited through Trinity College's Arts Award and young people use the workshops to write poetry; make films; make music; take part in workshop games; play instruments.
The focus of the outreach is to grow confidence and self-esteem and achieve a nationally recognised accreditation.

Confidence and self-esteem: All young people taking part developed personal confidence through their Arts Award journey. They also were taught personal and self-reflection skills which helped them understand the impact of their actions. A support worker for Sefton Young Carers working closely with the group members commented that taking part in the weekly sessions had made them more active at home, keener to go to school and generally more connected and engaged.
Arts Award: 39 disadvantaged young people achieved an Arts Award accreditation by taking part in weekly workshops and attending trips to cultural and heritage sites and venues.

Accreditation: In total 42 young people have achieved the Trinity College Bronze Level Arts Award this year.

Please describe what evidence you have collected that tells you this difference has been made (such as statistics, feedback, observations etc).
We conduct regular evaluation sessions with the young people in line with our Quality and Evaluation framework. For this year these have taken place at the end of outreach courses, performances, masterclass series and the London residency. We also conduct a half year regular youth theatre evaluation session.

We use a variety markers to evaluate what people have learnt and we gather data that explores how the young people felt about the work; did they enjoy it; what could be improved; what they have learnt; what would they like to learn next; was the information explored understood.

We use a number of techniques capture and record data and these can include images games at the start and at the end of a workshop; filmed vox pops; discussion groups; Q and A; completion of forms. We also conduct informal evaluation activities with others people who are in their lives. This could a parent, a support worker, a sibling or a social worker. We ask if they have noticed any changes in the young people and also if there are ways we can improve what we do in order to better meet the needs of the young people.

We then review and analyse this data at company meetings; we make short evaluation films for the footage we have captured and show it back to the young people to make sure they have full editorial control.

Difference 2

2. Empower young people to become more active citizens.

How many of your disadvantaged children or young people aged 18 and under would you say...

have experienced significant progress?
401

have started to experience progress?
0

are yet to experience progress?
0

To help us understand the story behind these numbers, please tell us about the difference you have seen in the children's lives across the year. This should relate to 'Difference 2 ' described above. We'd like to know what it was like for the children at the beginning of the

year, what your activities or services did to help change that, and what it's like for the children now. This is often called the 'distance travelled'. Please include small changes as well as big ones, and tell us about ALL the children you have worked with - those who have experienced significant progress and those who have experienced some progress. You should also tell us why some children might not have experienced a difference.

At first, many of the young people we meet don't understand the importance of civic participation in terms of their rights and responsibilities. They don't understand the power mechanisms that are used to govern the country and how they can be used to change the things around them and as a platform to have their day. We grow the young people's understanding through the subject matter we explore during our theatre for social change workshops.

Young people attending our youth theatre have become more active citizens by a/ developing their understanding of poverty and inequality issues through two productions In Our Times and Dog Eat Dog and b/ developed their understanding of the different education and arts industry employment pathways. In Our Times explored the impact of poverty and inequality on the whole community and offered the young people the chance to work with a range of people including older people, homeless people and those with experience of the mental health system. Dog Eat Dog explored the impact of poverty and inequality from the perspective of a young person's education, employment opportunities and personal development.

We empower our audiences of young people to be more active citizens by providing them with information on how they can change things they feel passionate about. We do this at the end of each performance by offering leaflets with 'ten ways to change', through question and answer between performers, creators and audience members and through presentations from voluntary sectors organisations who use different ways to change. For example at the beginning of the In Our Times performances there was a presentation on child poverty by Save the Children's UK Policy adviser.

Through our outreach work will explore personal and social issues. So, for example the young people in care the workshops explore their stories, backgrounds, hopes and ambitions. For the young people with learning difficulties the created pieces around their limited access to public amenities and services, most notably public transport and what actions they could take to make a change. For the young carers we explored the responsibilities of caring.

Appendix B

Collective Encounters Youth Theatre group interview, 5th August 2016.

ME Change is like a bike, you keep the safety pedals on until you are willing to ride down the hill… What does that mean?

Megan What it means is that the safety pedals are the safe zone. You know, you can't fall over when you are in the safe zone? You take them off and you go down the hill and that is when you start living. That is when change happens.

ME David, are your safety pedals on or have you taken them off?

David I think they are broken at the minute. I'm going down that hill hoping that I don't fall off.

ME Fantastic. So, do we still believe what we have written?

Marcus I do.

ME Change depending on the situation can be something positive or negative as change effects people differently. So, has this week been a positive or a negative change?

Marcus I would say it was more positive because you are now more aware of the things like health and bullying.

ME Anyone written anything down that they would like to change? Sam?

Sam I said that change to me is personal but now I think that it is not just personal to me because it can effect more than just one person.

ME What has happened this week to make you think like that?

Sam Just like different peoples different opinions.

ME Perspectives?

Sam Yes.

Paul I slightly agree with what I put down.

ME Why slightly?

Paul I went for the plain, slightly bog standard and obvious definitions of change like it's an inconsistency or it's disrupting something which sounds slightly negative.

ME What does change mean to everyone else?

Louise I think it is similar to what Paul said about standard definition. If you embrace change it is normally a positive thing I see it as a positive thing even though it can be a negative thing. I see change as something to look forward to.

ME In regards to the project, do we believe that what we did might create change? Will this project create some form of change?

Louise It will leave people thinking. It will be in their minds but I am not too sure if they will do anything after it.

Milo It will contribute but might not be the direct cause.

Louise It will be a cog. It gives people the opportunity to challenge things if they have not challenged things before.

ME What does politics mean to you? Any changing thoughts about politics?

Sarah My original thought was that it is bullshit, nobody takes people into consideration, even though change is to help people.

ME And you still believe that?

Sarah Yes.

ME Would you say what we have been doing this week is politics?

Louise I don't know… a little bit? I guess with people's opinions that's politics. More issue based rather than party politics.

ME Vicky?

Vicky Politics influences your whole life. I can be going the shop or going to school and it influences everything. It is all politics. It is all a chain reaction.

ME So, in that chain reaction, where has this week sat?

Vicky It's going to influence members of youth parliament that have the opportunity to make change and bring up problems.

Milo I don't quite know why but I would add to what I wrote and say that politics can be very positive because it can bring everyone together. Politics is everything.

ME It brought us all together in this room

Milo I completely disagree. I put that it was just people arguing. I feel like there needs to be some sort of conflict for politics to be there. In an ideal world we do not need politics. It is a force for change but at the minute there is no positive change happening.

ME Fantastic.

Ruby I wrote that every issue we face is politics and I still agree with it. I also wrote that the politicians are bullies and bigots and bad people. Then I wrote .. except for Jezza C.

ME So what do you think will happen when do our show and we speak to these people who we don't have a lot of faith in? What will happen when our positive change goes in front of that? Will they listen? What will that reaction be?

Louise I think it will make people think. You wouldn't think of body image when people say politics, that wouldn't be the first thing you thought of but it is all part of it… so I think it will make people think and get that cog turning.

Sam If they don't do nothing (the politicians) it will show to us and other youth theatres that they don't care.

ME What do you envisage? Do you think that this piece might start to change a few ideas or do you think it will just reinforce that people really don't care?

Molly It depends who is watching. The piece is very media focused. Some people feel that young people spend too much time on their phones as it is so they could think as a solution if you are worried about how people look at you then get off your phone and stop looking on facebook and instagram and stuff but there could be people in the audience who think, yes, this is an issue, the media does need to start promoting more healthier lifestyles rather than the unachievable perfect lifestyle.

ME Thoughts about the future?

ME Do you think once we show our work to people then their opinions will change?

Sam It should do.

Molly I put that, what we want for our future is up to us. So, if we are unhappy with the way things are going then it is up to us to act now.

ME And do you think that that is what we are doing this week or is it more of a distraction? Where do you see our theatre piece sitting within that?

Louise It is something to show that this is an ongoing issue that needs work.

ME Fantastic. Lauren?

Lauren We need to do something but what is that something? I think that now there are a bunch of different something's that need to go on so that people can develop their ideas.

Lewis I had a thought about this. It's a hard thing to think about the future. The news often think about the negative and are influenced by the bad things that are

going to happen in the future but I mentioned about the whole case of 'maybe it will' but we don't know exactly what is going to happen. Something good might happen. Something bad might happen but we don't know. We have to try and think of the positives.

Vicky I think that everyone has looked at the negative side of the future but we have to look at the future as something that is not concrete and is not already formed so there is a chance for us to change it. It is not already fixed. You need to think about what you can do individually, find other people and mold that future for yourself rather than accept what is already there for you.

Damian I have written that hopefully the future can be compassion. Instead of everyone being so bitter and judgmental of people, instead people can be more accepting and that does start with people changing individually and changing their attitude and outlook on people. If that happens then, it's like, if you do something nice for someone then they will feel happy and they will do something nice for someone else. Then eventually everyone will start feeling a little bit better. Sounds a bit optimistic…

ME So just small changes… there is a fantastic quote by a Uruguayan writer who said 'Many small people doing many small things will eventually change the world.' Right, fantastic. Let's look at 'Why you are here?' Why did you come to this project? Sarah?

Sarah To make a change and to learn something new.

ME Has the week proved that for you?

Sarah Yes.

ME Damian?

Damian I am here to make a positive social impact in others and my own life.To share and develop the views of all including myself.

ME Have we achieved this?

Damian In terms of making a positive social impact on our lives I think it has. For me, I feel like I have gained a roomful of friends here. I think that this is a life changing experience and it isn't something that I am going to forget in a hurry.

Milo I came to vent some frustrations but in a better form than just ranting.

Lewis I come to make change in something that is relevant. I am here to learn something new. You meet people at the start and by the end you are surprised by how much you get done. I feel like I have known everyone for a long time for what we have done.

Ruby I just came along… but I have really enjoyed it.

ME What were you expecting?

Ruby I don't know. I just had nothing better to do…. but it was really interesting.

ME Expectations of the week
Deep thought, thought provoking theatre, funny, enjoyable, lifelong friendships… have these expectations come true?

Milo Some of mine have been exceeded in terms of the quality of work that we produced. I was impressed.

Gemma I wanted something new and exciting because I don't normally do drama. My thing is normally youth voice stuff but drama is a great way of showing issues rather than talking about it round a table.

Vicky I expected everyone to be really theatre. Also people who don't know much about politics are here too which interested me. I expected to create something that could hopefully promote positive change and I think that is what we have done.

Appendix C

Collective Encounters Youth Theatre peer-led interview, 16th October 2016.

ME   Okay, so an open based discussion regarding the legislative theatre project self-peer evaluation with our first question coming from Sam.

Sam   My question is: do you reckon the audience members who were there took it into consideration, and do you think they'll act on it or do anything about it?

Vicky I think the audience that we had, from knowing what they do personally, if they hadn't been involved they wouldn't have been part of that audience. I think a lot of the issues they're already campaigning on, so I think they've got some motivations to work towards them. They've got motivations towards the Make your Mark ballot, so they're already making a move towards it because they already know the issues that young people care about already.

ME   Fantastic. Did you think the theatre enhanced that? Did it help, in any way, towards that campaign?

Molly I think it brought the realness of the situation. With a lot of them, particularly with the likes of mental health, what the Manchester group did, and even with the image that we did where we had aspects of mental health in it, they campaign on these issues but they're confident people and they're involved in politics, they're MYPs and DMYPs. They haven't really had that personal experience with mental health so the chance for them to see Abi's scene and thing gave them the chance to experience it first hand in a way.

ME   To embody it, yes?

Lewis It's the same thing with the people in power isn't it?

ME   Fantastic. Has anyone- are you coming back on your own question? Do we think that this piece would've had an impact on people's actions?

Damian I think the audience…you can come in. The audience were very responsive and they were very committed to what we were doing and what we were saying, and completely agreed. It would be more of a challenge if it was someone who disagreed, and this will relate to my question later.

ME   Okay, so a thing about preaching to the converted, maybe, almost?

Amy   I think that they will act upon it because they're strong and motivated to do it in their own campaigns. But I also think if there was time to forum I think how their opinions would have come across more, and how they are actually doing stuff about those issues at the present time.

ME   So in the forum you could've done a bit more digging and stuff, okay.

Sebastian I think it will as well, because it was a play and drama, it wasn't just speaking about an issue it was actually acting and showing how it does. So it could widen people's imaginations.

ME Anymore to come on this question or shall we move on?

Megan Do you think there's an audience who might've been more suited or who might've actually resulted in more change if it hadn't been to people involved in Youth Voice and Youth Parliament? Is there an audience which you thought it might impact more?

Sam That was my question.

ME What was your question then?

Sebastian Who would be a better audience?

ME Who would be a better audience? Who would be the right audience where the piece could've had more impact?

Sam In my opinion I'd say high school students because obviously a lot of these things happen in schools. Not necessarily the gym scene and stuff but definitely Abi's story, and maybe not Leanne's but it's always there, especially with social media and stuff. So I think that this would've been a good performance to perform in different schools around the country.

ME Okay, fantastic. Maybe bring it into that younger audience with people who might not be members of Youth Parliament.

Sebastian As well as older… I don't mean 50 year olds but teachers and parents so they understand their own children and their students so they can deal with it better if they know someone who's dealing with these issues.

ME Fantastic.

Damian I'd actually say the people who had the issues as well. For body image people who try to be too skinny and stuff, if they could see that we're actually doing plays on it and it's actually being taught around it could help them a lot as well.

ME Absolutely, and a bit more of an informed audience and something there to influence that debate. Fantastic.

Sam I think people in power. If the purpose is to create some change then the people in power would be the best group. Going back to what Megan said about bringing it back to the reality of the situation, it would be quite interesting to have Iain Duncan Smith for a scene about the job centre and stuff like to try and make what's being discussed in Westminster relevant to what's happening in reality.

ME To young people in Preston, to bring some power… It would be nice to have that mix almost of high school students and people in power.

Sam And to see who deals with it better.

ME See who deals with it better, will the two listen to one another? Fantastic

Nathan For the audience that we did have does anyone think that there was a certain topic which we never discussed in the forum that the audience we performed to-

ME That needed to be discussed? Okay. Are you talking under that umbrella of body image?

Molly Or any of the Make your Mark issues.

ME Okay.

Nathan For the audience we had is there a specific topics that we could've discussed that we think they would've really, really liked?

Vicky Can I come in on this one?

ME Yes, of course.

Vicky I think one of the issues that was on there was sexual harassment in schools. I think that's such a taboo subject that people don't want to talk about, that if we had talked about it would've been appreciated. I know, particularly for my school I've the results from Make your Mark already and it wasn't a high scorer, many people didn't realise it. I don't think people realise what sexual assault is and things like that, so had we focused on that issue it might've been a little bit more…
I think mental health, for the powers that be it's probably not seen as big but for young people it's been a campaign for the Youth Parliament for the last two years I think, so everyone knows about it already, at least a little bit. So had we focused on a topic that's less talked about it might've had more of an impact.

ME Fantastic, very interesting.

Megan Can I elaborate on Vicky's and then my own? Like Vicky said, because people don't talk about it much I feel like we're not taught about it and educated about it much, like she said. I feel like if we did do a performance on it it would educate people because sometimes the victims of sexual harassment don't actually know that they're being sexually harassed, they think that someone is just having fun or…

ME A bit of banter, yes.

Megan I don't think people realise what sexual harassment actually is. I think even for us, as the actors, we should discuss it because I don't think all of us know enough about it. I think Vicky is right about that.
The other one I was going to say is bullying, definitely. I know that it's talked about a lot.

ME It's on the Make your Mark scheme isn't it, bullying? I believe it is.

Megan I think it can come under a couple of different categories, it wasn't a specific issue that would be voted on. I know that it's talked about a lot but even then I don't think that it has that much impact. When teachers just tell you, "Don't bully people because this is the effect of it", I don't think that's enough because it's still going on and it doesn't stop the bullies. So I think that we could've come up with a performance as a way to make people realise what it can actually do, instead of just saying, "Don't do it."

ME Just a quick thing, the following topics will appear on the ballot: votes at 16; a curriculum to bear us for life; body image; transport; first aid education for all young people; mental health; fund our youth services don't cut them; stop the cuts that affect the NHS; tackling racism and religious discrimination particularly against people who are Muslim or Jewish and; raising awareness of sexual harassment in schools.

Female I'm sorry, I didn't realise.

ME No, it says-

Vicky Those are all the possible issues, that's why I highlighted sexual harassment because I knew the issues.

ME That's interesting though, what happens if something we're talking about in the Make your Mark issues aren't addressing those issues that might be under that thing. That's a very interesting point.

Appendix D

Legislative Theatre audience questionnaire responses. 8th October 2016.

Q1 About the performances

Answered: 35   Skipped: 0
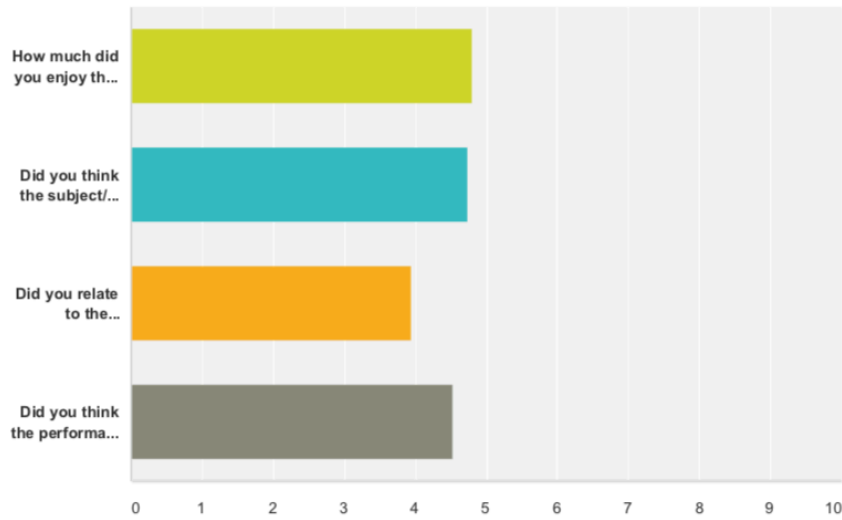
	Not at all	Not very	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much	Total	Weighted Average
How much did you enjoy the show?	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 7	80.00% 28	35	4.80
Did you think the subject/s were well handled?	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.57% 3	8.57% 3	82.86% 29	35	4.74
Did you relate to the characters and the story?	0.00% 0	5.88% 2	29.41% 10	29.41% 10	35.29% 12	34	3.94
Did you think the performance of high quality?	0.00% 0	2.86% 1	2.86% 1	31.43% 11	62.86% 22	35	4.54

Q2 About the issues

Answered: 35   Skipped: 0
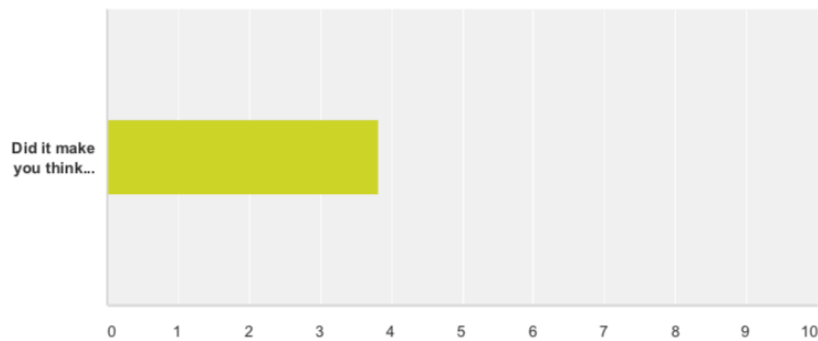
|	Not at all	Not very	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much	Total	Weighted Average
Did it make you think differently about the issues?	2.86%	8.57%	25.71%	28.57%	34.29%		
	1	3	9	10	12	35	3.83

#	If so how?	Date
1	About mental and body image issues	10/19/2016 3:02 PM
2	Some of the issues was a little bit too much	10/10/2016 2:33 PM
3	Felt more involved in the issues - made me think more about it.	10/10/2016 2:31 PM
4	Helped me to empathise with characters	10/10/2016 2:28 PM
5	Some people can't talk about their issues so they need help.	10/10/2016 2:24 PM
6	How to tackle the issues	10/10/2016 2:23 PM
7	Thought about tackling these issues.	10/10/2016 2:21 PM
8	Helped me to empathise with individuals experiencing the issues.	10/10/2016 2:13 PM
9	By actually thinking about what I say.	10/10/2016 2:09 PM
10	Never really thought before about some of the issues around body image.	10/10/2016 2:07 PM
11	Because I have been through a phase of not eating.	10/10/2016 2:03 PM
12	I know about these issues - but it made it real for me	10/10/2016 1:54 PM
13	It gave me different ideas of how to manage things	10/10/2016 1:49 PM
14	How important inner confidence and self worth is.	10/10/2016 1:48 PM
15	How to resolve it	10/10/2016 1:46 PM
16	Made me realise it doesn't matter what others think, the only opinion that matters is yours	10/10/2016 1:44 PM
17	Made me view things in a different light	10/8/2016 2:34 PM
18	Solution focused around metal health and yp being able to make change in narrative	10/8/2016 2:33 PM
19	The performances were able to introduce multiple perspectives of mental health is addressed and body image.	10/8/2016 2:28 PM
20	Made me more open to how they effect young people	10/8/2016 2:26 PM

Q3 Forum Theatre

Answered: 35   Skipped: 0
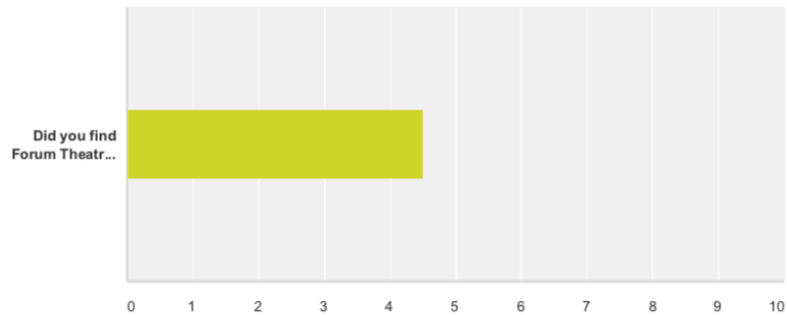
Did you find Forum Theatre a useful tool for discussing the issues?	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.57% 3	31.43% 11	60.00% 21	35	4.51

Q4 Tell us one thing about the performance/s that surprised you.

Answered: 35   Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	The performance surprised me because of how mental health issues were dealt with.	10/19/2016 3:02 PM
2	Jess should of said something to the three people.	10/10/2016 2:33 PM
3	It was very engaging	10/10/2016 2:32 PM
4	Very Hight quality!	10/10/2016 2:31 PM
5	n/a	10/10/2016 2:30 PM
6	n/a	10/10/2016 2:29 PM
7	Quality	10/10/2016 2:28 PM
8	How well the actors performed.	10/10/2016 2:28 PM
9	n/a	10/10/2016 2:27 PM
10	n/a	10/10/2016 2:26 PM
11	Audience interaction	10/10/2016 2:24 PM
12	The effectiveness of the music	10/10/2016 2:23 PM
13	Very engaging	10/10/2016 2:21 PM
14	n/a	10/10/2016 2:13 PM
15	They were inclusive	10/10/2016 2:11 PM
16	How it engaged the audience.	10/10/2016 2:09 PM
17	Way in which audience engagement/participation was used to further examine and evaluate issues.	10/10/2016 2:07 PM
18	Body Image	10/10/2016 2:04 PM
19	The fact that lads think that they need a [good] body to get a girl.	10/10/2016 2:03 PM
20	I got goosebumps the whole way through! Very well done, I loved it and would definitely love to see more and possibly work together in the future? :-)	10/10/2016 1:56 PM
21	The ability to improvise/adjust the scene according to audience suggestions. Thank you very much! You gave me a really deep appreciation of each issue you covered, and I am extremely grateful for that :-)	10/10/2016 1:54 PM
22	The interaction	10/10/2016 1:49 PM
23	n/a	10/10/2016 1:48 PM
24	n/a	10/10/2016 1:46 PM
25	The boys insecurities	10/10/2016 1:44 PM
26	The way it was performed	10/8/2016 2:34 PM
27	People wanting to get involved	10/8/2016 2:33 PM
28	Na	10/8/2016 2:33 PM
29	The audience reactions	10/8/2016 2:31 PM
30	The audience reaction	10/8/2016 2:31 PM
31	The deptgh of the skill for each actor, truly amazing	10/8/2016 2:28 PM

Appendix E

Email Correspondence with Mr Russell, Cockburn School. 9th November 2016.

From: Matthew Elliott <en12mde@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: 08 November 2016 23:10:20
To: Russell, A
Subject: Theatre for social change with young people

Dear Andy,

Hope you're well.

Sarah Westaway from artforms passed your contact details on to me.
I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds, researching into how theatre can engage young people in social change. The research is covering Liverpool, Santiago (Chile) and finishing in South Leeds. It has worked with youth parliament North West and will be working with community collectives in Santiago. The sole aim of the research is to explore the most effective ways for young people to be engaged in decision making through theatre.

I am aiming to start a project with young people in South Leeds next February to finalise the practical part of the research. I was wondering whether it would be possible to arrange a meeting?

It would be great to discuss whether the research could have any relationship with the performing arts department at Cockburn High School and the students undertaking drama/theatre studies.

Thanks in advance,

Best wishes

Matthew

HI Matthew

This sounds like a really interesting project and one I would be keen to hear more about.

What sort of availability do you have to meet regarding this?

Thanks
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Appendix F
Interview with SENAME worker and Tierra de Esperanza worker. Santiago, Chile. 7th

January 2017.

ME So, the first question it is about what it is "CIP a Luca", what is the purpose, why are you doing it?

Tierra de Esperanza Worker CIP a Luca born 3 years ago because the ASR Team that used to focused on tutoring.

Translator ACR Team?

Tierra de Esperanza Worker ASR, Psychosocial Assistance to the Educational Reintegration, it is a project outside SENAME. It is part of "Tierra Esperanza Foundation, and they were working just doing tutoring, so they only dealt with individual cases. A long time ago their wanted a chance to work with groups, but they focused exclusively in doing workshops. To them, the principal aim wasn't the socio-educational workshop, they actually wanted to rise the number of caseloads. They wanted be seen with a better statistic. Well, so, with this aim they called to a public bid via their website. The call said: "we looking for a tutor in a jail for young people". Then, I applied for the job and got it. But the responsibilities of my job position were unclear, because it was a new position. Usually when you get a job, you know what to do, or they tell you what to do. But in this case, we had to create everything. I started to work at the end of November. Just at that moment Ada was in USA, so they had another person in charge. Lucia greeted me. But she wasn't the deputy, it was Jose. And in that moment, we started to discuss about the way in that we go to work. I have an experience working in the street doing community work. To me it was like to transfer that knowledge to my new job in jail. That was my focus to work. What I really do is lead a groups processes, it means that I teach people how to organize themselves and how they could learn to cope with their needs. The development of self-management and organization, like one community.
At the beginning the answer for everything was no. You can't do that. At that time Lucia told me, "I want to work with a group, How can we do to work with a group?". So to solve this problem and to see how the centre is working we did a participatory appraisal. And in that moment was born the idea of "CIP a Luca". To me the participatory appraisal was important to see how the houses were working. Understand how to work the house with the adult world and the young world. And then I realised that they never asked them, anything. The concept of participation didn't exist. We started with a Human Rights workshop. It was developed in 3 houses. The next was solve how to do it for all of the houses if we have only one tutor, just me and nobody else. In a technical meeting I put together the idea of "Santiago a Mil" with "CIP a Luca". The question was, how can we transition the work in the street to the young people inside CIP? We are talking about experiences such as repression, punishment or mistreatment. This was a common situation, without any change in the time. And also I saw a damage in the adults world. So, I asked my colleagues: can we bring art and culture? And they told me "we cant do it". "Yes we can", I replied to them. "Yes, we can. At least we can try it, and if we cannot do it, well, we given up". Me and

my colleagues started to create this, and at first, we have to solve how to summon people into this project. Suddenly we came to the name "CIP a Luca". Three of us started to contact people from the street. But we knew that we should follow a few rules. First, we could not mix the houses. And second, we needed to solve how to turn this process in to an educational one in order to answer to the main project. Hence, I said, "we need to put an socio educational focus in all workshops". So, to promote an interaction, our first challenge was to find eight musical bands -one for every single house-, plus eight theatre plays, dances groups and audio visual plays. And so, we turned into our Facebook pages and we started to called people into it: "hey, we going to do this and that". We made contact with different organisations and invited them to joined us. We began to schedule meetings and we informed them what we want to do.

Translator And when did this happen?

Tierra de Esperanza Worker This happened at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014. The first CIP a Luca was in January, 2014. Well, we were against time, because CIP a Luca should have started in January. Finally Lucia and all the rest joined us in the task to contact people. In less than fifteen days we managed to get our eight musical bands, theatre plays, a circus, and an audio visual project. Well, we brought people into it and we gave them our social political speech about it. Actually, that is what the call was about. Not all bands or plays were suitable for us. We had to select them. So, we started to work from a social political focus with all who joined us. That year we did the participative diagnosis. Since the begin of this process, we have had colleagues who are not agree with this kind of dynamic kind of interaction

Translator From Tierra de Esperanza?

Tierra de Esperanza Worker Yes. Though, a group of colleagues. There were many discussions about "CIP a Luca". I told them: "CIP a Luca" has come to stay, and I stood for it, until we strengthen the project. That year during winter break we kept inviting more organisations. But this time they were grassroots organizations. They were workshops facilitators with different views: libertarian, anarchists, non political organizations. All of them want to share with the kids, to gave them something. Since then we made a series of workshops, for example, and all this was made under a political and social conscience.

Translator So, SENAME had an interest in the systematisation of the project?

Tierra de Esperanza Worker SENAME wanted to, at least, see that part of the project systematized. But there was nothing in common between the tutors! The only thing in common was the view about the group work, that we were already doing it bringing bands and all of that. We systematized last year, but we never discuss the outcome with the team. At that moment, Ada, our manager, and the Foundation, they went through a harsh relationship, hence, we hadn't any chance to discuss it. So, I took the systematisation and I turned it into "CIP a Luca" but now I added the assemblies with an educational purpose. Since then I started to work with David, my partner here, and Lucia. The rest of the team are just operators managers who perform the activities but they didn't get involved in

the educational issue that systematisation demanded. We needed to go deeper into the pedagogical part. And now give birth to this this new "CIP a Luca" with a different process. So, to us, the idea was that SENAME joined to our work, because we always think that "CIP a Luca" should belong to all of us, not just ACR. That was our view. We wanted to open it to outside. But just this year we could delivered to our colleagues and build it up between all of us. In 2016 we made a joint work with SENAME, specially with our co-workers. This project flows through the bond between our co-workers more than from institution, and that is because we have a good vibe among us and we have a similar logical thinking.

Translator So there are just a few of you…

Tierra de Esperanza Worker Yeah, it is willingness, because this it work not because that the institution said so it is worked for them, for a co-workers joint effort. To me, this year is marvellous, because we are more people working on the project and we could open "CIP a Luca" to other people who are show them more interested in the project instead of the institution. Working with people who has a commitment to create in an space like this.

Translator I don't know if you want to add something from SENAME side

SENAME Worker Yes, yes. Sure. It has been a long process, in the case of the Foundation. A funny phenomena took place during 2015-17 with the approach between "the invisible" faction from the centre. I think I can use this concept, I take responsibility for that. We finally have the misplaced from very distant places, and as a result of this evil dynamic of running of the reclusion centres, we began to talk to each other and to understand that we have many points in common. We talk in Parties, reflexive discussions, and we ended up understanding that our political and social base was very similar and was very close to what we understood as our work in a social level, and we began to generate spontaneous actions. Our boss, who didn't know that she was doing did us a great favour, she didn't know that this was going to be something dangerous for "the establishment" of the centre SENAME, and, well, the party started. The assemblies start, where the girls or us generate this kind of reflection invitation from the young people, which involves knowing their rights, and also involves that, not because they aren't free they should accept disrespectful treatment, aggressions, punishments and a set of practices that, we don't agree with. So, It began a very interesting phenomena. From us, like adults that we are, we started to break this kind of adult-centric vision, with all of this ideas that come from adult world that are imposed on to the young people, and started to generate the idea that young people have rights, and they must exercise those rights, and be responsible for their own decisions and for all what they want for the future that they go on to build, here in the centre or when they recover their liberty.

Translator Knowing that this project is similar to the work that we are doing in Colina, promoting a critical reflection, humans rights, and knowing that this could clash with Institution ideals and goals. How do you negotiate with the institution and deal with the challenges? SENAME talk about popular education, critical-pedagogy...

SENAME Worker Yeah. But no. That doesn't exist. We do community education work; we do critical-pedagogy work; but, when they tell us something "Hey, you are saying that let's to do that", "but, why now?" they complain. So, we are fighting all the time with an Institution who have speak a version, a public position, a statement, something like that but, in reality, it fails. We have a speech, we do what the practice says what we must do, what must be done by the rules, but we tell SENAME another thing. We don't lie. We change the language. About SENAME, as an Institution, there are always under the public eye, or, is widely known because they don't do their work well, and they don't abide with what their work demands, specifically about guaranteeing to protect the vulnerable boys and girls from our country. But, in view of the most recent events, SENAME are back on the table of public opinion, the question about how real is the educational, social and reintegration scope of the institution to which I belong. A funny anecdote happened when I applied to my current job. My boss at the time, she confirmed me, that two details let me got my job. One, I went to a Paulo Freire lecture about popular education; and the second, I studied psychopedagogy, without a degree in education, and I obtained a degree in "Universidad Catolica de Chile". This background were sufficient to get the job in this public service. Why I said this? Because, at the end, and to complement what was said earlier, we, the people who don't share or agree with what we sometimes see in the day-to-day running of the Centre, and in many SENAME Centres. In theory we say one thing, but in practice, we do another. And always with the precaution that our work does not create suspicion between our superiors. Because if that happens, as like happens with kids, we will be summoned to the boss office and they going to asking "what happens?".

Appendix G
CIP San Joaquin, group interview with participants. Santiago, Chile. 13th January 2017

ME And, first question. This question is about you assemble experience. How has it been for all of you the experience of the assemblies in which you have been taking part in?

Fernando It's good

Javier It's good, because that distracts us. Because we always do the same routine, every day… and we get bored doing the same, and then somebody else comes and take us to do a different work…and things. It takes you away from the mood of the centre.

Gabriel Sometimes when we are feeling trapped, this kind of thing distract us. I think it's good because it takes us off from the routine for a few hours of the day.

ME why is it good?

Fernando Because… take off all the young people from other things, in their minds...it moves us to do other things. It frees us. In other jails, you see this and you become crazy.

Juan Yes, look where we are

Javier yeah, it is good, because it is a distraction from the routine, because doing the same thing all the time is boring.

ME to you, the idea of assembly, the festivals are different to other things in jail, for example, the assembly, the games, vote, in compare to the lessons of Spanish or maths? It is different?

Javier It is different, because is entertaining. Because nobody like to study. This is like a school of fun, something like that. Or not?

ME Fun. Ok. Somebody else?

Luis When you are in the festivals it is like you are in the street. It is like you are going to a festival. It is like going to a party.

Juan it is like you were transported to another place, out from here Yeah, to the street. When we are here it is not like to be in a jail but just in our minds. Not in body, just in spirit.

ME But, when I said the word participation, what does it mean to you?

Gabriel And take part [in it], because you come from, I do not know where you are coming from, but you are coming with disposition to take us out from the mood . Therefore, we cannot say no to that. It is better to say yes. Because no one

comes here from England, to Chile, and even more he comes just right here, to say things and do work with us.

ME I want to ask something about the same question. Do you understand the difference between the activities we propose to you, and when we talk about participation, do you feel that your opinions are considered to carry out the activity? Do you feel that?

Luis Yes, because in all the activities our opinions are taken into consideration. You feel that. You feel that you are listened to.

ME What does it mean, the concept of human rights to you? It is a real concept or strange? Do you feel that you have rights?

Juan Yes, because we are persons too, like the rest of the people. Yes, all people have rights. But other people aren't interested in our rights.

ME I have two more questions. We play games in the assemblies. It is important for you to play games, or it isn't interesting, or what?

Fernando It is something good that we can play. It's distract us, because at the end, we are children. Like they told me: we skipped the childhood, like the teacher told to us, I'm right or not?

Luis Yeah, we skipped that age. To be a child and play We are grown ups. Why? Because we are stealing things, we contribute with money to our homes and we believe that we are grown ups now. We were taught to think in that way, we skipped our childhood. We skipped that stage of playing and studying.

Gabriel We lost this stage because we were forced to sought what we needed. Here we can go to study and play. We can play football and do many things that one cannot do in the street.

ME And for example, do you remember the last game that we play on the last assembly?

Fernando You talk about the "yes; no; I do not know; I do not like" game Yes.

ME Having that in mind, do you think that kind of game it is make easier the activity?

Fernando Yes, it makes the activity more enjoyable. Yes, because sometimes when we feel gloomy, thinking in our families, you show up and turn around our mood

Appendix H

CIP San Joaquin, group interview with participants.Santiago, Chile. 16th January 2017.

ME So, my first question is what do you think about last Friday?

Juan Fabulous! Fabulous!

Javier Was fun!

Luis It was ok. Fabulous. We enjoyed a lot.

ME Yeah? Why?

Luis We left the confinement.

Fernando It was fun and amusing. We had a good time. We broke the routine. It was good.

ME Another opinion?

Gabriel I think the same

ME It was a good experience?

Gabriel Yeah, it was good. It was good. Was a good experience. We broke the routine for a while

ME Was it different from routine?

Luis It was a great atmosphere. The BBQ. The atmosphere it's not the same as the centre. Also the Salsa music it is more cheerful than what we listened all day

ME Next Thursday we have to complete this process…the Assembly, the Band, what do you think about the whole process? From the beginning with the assembly until what happened last Friday? What do you think? Do you feel confused about that or it was Ok?

Juan It was Ok

SENAME worker Did you remember guys that we had an assembly and even you picked the musical group that you wanted to come here? What do you feel about the whole process, from the assemblies until the end?

Gabriel Tranquillity, happiness .We were anxious for the arrival of the Salsa group. We were anxious for that day to arrive. We want to be in party

ME What do you think about vote? It is necessary or unnecessary?

Luis It is good. It is good because in this way they listen to us. They listen to our opinions. That is, the opinion of everyone of us.

ME Ok. Do you see a connection between your rights and the activities, assemblies and "CIP a Luca"?

Gabriel Yeah, because we are heard.

Luis well… we have the right to have an opinion. It is one of our rights. And that was take into consideration in the assemblies.

ME Is it important for you that your opinion can be heard? Why?

Javier Because is a good thing that we are heard. It is good that they care about our opinions.

ME In CIP, where you are locked in, are your opinions taken into consideration?

Luis Sometimes

ME Is it normal that they ask you 'what do you want to do'?

Luis It isn't. They generally don't ask for opinions here

Appendix I

Miss Piggott Interview. Cockburn School. Leeds, UK. 20th July 2017.

ME So, my first question is what were your kind of thoughts on the project? Break it down in to process and product.

Piggott Initial reactions, Interesting, interesting. From my perspective, I'm different from most of the drama teachers. I think that's because I come from an actors background and you can't go through that process without having some political interest and wanting to change things. So, for me as an educator I found that is really important, so it was the idea of asking young people their opinion, I thought 'ah ok' I was a little apprehensive. I was thinking will they be able to handle this and will they have the capacity to understand what is going on and yeah, they have. And, I think actually it has reflected on me because it made me think I should have greater expectations, maybe I was putting them in a box when I shouldn't have and I didn't like that. I don't like putting people in boxes.

ME What did you think of the performance? Was the performance a good example of engaging young people? Did it reach its objectives?

Piggott Yeah I think it did. I think it definitely did it asked questions it was provoking, it achieved a certain level. I think both of us as practitioners would want them to go that one step further but that comes doesn't to the students and their ages and understating. And, I think if we were talking about process, you would have to extend that a lot more and keep working on it. So, within the timescale being able to get the responses that you did and get the students thinking about changes within this school and what the student council can do and having a voice generally, especially with that cohort is a result. It is a really successful result. Again, practical head on, you would want to take it much further. It's that perfectionism isn't it.

ME What were the challenges then from your perspective?

Piggott The challenges, I think when you.. I think it's always going to be the students. I think both of us really not knowing how much they know about politics, how much they have engaged with things before and broaching that and trying to keep it engaging. I can't take credit for that, you did that. You did that wonderfully, you did that really really well. Erm, but they are a group who are diverse and their needs…there is a massive spectrum of differences but you did get them thinking. Some of them in a way that I thought was never possible for them. The challenges of dealing with students with autism and

thinking 'are you really going to get the political issues?' but you proved that they do and also can have suggestions to make change.

ME Do you think the project will have an effect? What do you think will happen next?

Piggott I hope it will. I have hope. There's always this idea of idealism that we do things and we don't hide them, we say yes. In an ideal world we would love to create this, this and this but ultimately we might not change anything. The people sitting at the top are those ones that drip it down to the schools with league tables and that's how we do things here. You do have wonderful people like Rob and Dave who do try to make a difference but then as we all are aware, we have our boundaries and our limitations. So, we are all kept within certain limits. I like to think that the effect is on the man we just talked to, Rob, will think about it as head of this school and how the arts can change things. How can we have a voice to change things within school but externally. Edinburgh festival, brilliant. Let's get some kids up there. Although it might not have a monumental effect in terms of we're rolling out across Leeds and we're doing this and we're going down to London. It has had an effect in the school and that's successful. I don't think a man like that would've talked about that would have talked about the fringe or the arts like that before.

ME What was interesting for me although we did all the theatre stuff and the politics stuff, what I thought was unique was the idea of the interviews with people like Hilary Benn and Mr Russell. I wondered what you thought about that experience?

Piggott Absolutely loved it. I would have liked to sit down with Hilary Benn again and challenge this idealism. Like when you watch Prime Ministers questions, you think that's great but 'you're in the opposition now' and put that in to reality 'how are we going to make a change?' and 'how are we going to make a difference?' I do feel like saying that sometimes, 'what are you actually going to put in place that something happens'.

ME I thought it was very interesting the week after when Holy spoke about it and said 'I really enjoyed meeting Hilary Benn but I didn't quite understand what he was saying and some of the words he was using'.

Piggott I think where we achieve something really valuable in the arts and in the theatre that we have a massive vocabulary and we can engage with that vocabulary. We struggle with English and we struggle with maths in deprived areas, if you look at the league tables it's where we drop. But surely if we have more projects like this where verbally we are using extensive vocabulary and putting it in to a context. We will help them improve across the board. I think you have done that in this project, not only have you raised political and social

awareness, you have also ticked boxes. I hate tick boxes. But, you have ticked boxes in literacy and engaging them generally. I do understand that she is saying she doesn't understand but she's been made aware of it so she can begin to understand it.

ME If you think there was any limitations to the project, what do you think they were?

Piggott Again, time is an unfair one because the time that we had and what you achieved is amazing. So, that's unfair for me to sit here and say time. Ideally we would want to extend it and see what comes out. Yes, the structures and me personally, I have to jump through 500 hoops and tick boxes. They are things that are necessary within the school system but they are also subjects we are touching on which is saying does this help and is this needed, is it a timewasting exercise that doesn't help young people. You will have a conversation with me and me having to go off and speak to about 500 different people, a lot of box ticking.

ME I don't work here and you do. It was just interesting for me to hear how that process was for you.

Piggott I have been lucky in the fact, that although I am not in name as Andy is head of drama, I technically run it. I just say I am going to do this and he says ok. So, I am lucky in that respect. It's just when you have to go above and above. But, I think compared to other schools. So, within the drama department, I had an assistant head, I had a head of zone working as extended SLT and then, me.

Appendix J

Excerpt from an interview with Stephanie. A participant from Cockburn School. 17th October 2017.

ME What were you trying to say with the scenes you made?

Stephanie That people are unfair, I guess. Maybe social class or the way people present themselves but people aren't fair. If people are more scruffy, they are like, whatever or if they are smartly dressed they pay more attention, make sure they get what they need first.

ME We finished in July, so if you had to take three things from the project, what would they be?

Stephanie I would take teamwork, that was really good. Communication and telling everyone your ideas and getting everyone involved. And, I don't know if this would be one but remembering that you can have fun at the same time. What we did was we had fun but we did it. We didn't do just boring 'do this', 'do that'.

ME So, the play was what change we would like to make in school and what change we would like to see. Would you say the play helped you think about school in a different way?

Stephanie I think so, yeah. It made me realise we want changes but sometimes the changes can't be made for other reasons. So, food, we wanted to change the varieties of food. But obviously we get given a budget for the food and we also have to have foods that everybody would like, we couldn't just have vegetarian something because not everybody is vegetarian.

ME Do you think the play made any change?

Stephanie Maybe, if we had more heads of department in the play. I think it made a difference with the teachers that saw it. Seeing it from the students point of view. But maybe not as much as the headteacher didn't see it, the deputy teacher saw it but it may not have had a huge impact on them.

ME Ok, so if there was more powerful people. But, it was interesting for teachers to see how students thought and had opinions.

Stephanie Yeah, because we were students and teachers at different times when we were acting. We did different scenes and went from teachers to students

that not only helped us understand their point of view but helped them understand our point of view.

ME How do usually see a teacher in different classes such as maths? Or, PE?

Stephanie They stand at the front of the classroom and they teach us and then they give us exercises to do. Unless, they're like a dance or PE teacher which is more physical.

ME Who do you think has the power in that relationship?

Stephanie The teacher.

ME Would you say the performance we made recreated that relationship?

Stephanie I guess you could say it changed but stayed the same at the same time. Of course the teachers can't just let you do whatever you want because of health rules and stuff. But, I think it helped them realise that maybe we should have some fun and be practical at the same time.

ME What did we do after the performance? When we sat in little groups?

Stephanie We had the people who the school invited and who you invited and we asked them different questions. We told them about us and the different things… the questions we came up with like 'how was school, when you as at school?' 'how do you thing we should change this and that?'

ME How did you find that process?

Stephanie Interesting because we got to see different peoples points of view. Obviously there was all the people and there's us as students, so we got to see what their school was like and how they thought it was different from the one we have now.

Appendix K

Excerpt of interview with Daniel. A participant from Cockburn School. 17th October 2017.

ME So, we did the performance in July, what would you say have been the long term effects of the project?

Daniel I guess when we started and when you came. At the start we were getting nervous. We sometimes get nervous but we decrease that feeling because we feel like we are doing a bigger performance and its getting better. When we rehearse, we're learning the line and that. So, it changes by the nerves we're feeling and how scared we were in January and how in July we kind of just nearly lost it. I am not saying that losing nerves is a good thing but sometimes a little nerve… you would prefer to have a little confidence. That's what I would say is a change. And we were a bit more serious when we went through and we became more concentrated on the lines and made sure we didn't mess anything up between the lines. And, even though we didn't talk to anyone, we somehow when we did it the first time we talked to the audience as our character. It kind of felt new but natural. That's what I feel.

ME Do you think it has had any change on you personally?

Daniel I would say that It has because I have more confidence about performance. I now know that I can because I performed to the council. And, it will never be forgot because it would have been a thing I never imagined that acting in front of the council, the people and it's kind of given me a lot more confidence. And, its gave me, I would normally feel like it's gone terrible but for this performance it kind of proved to me that failure is the way to succeed. And, given that was the way, I feel like I should try over and over again. It takes a lot of responsibility and it takes a brave person to know what you have done wrong or to change something and try to get better. So, I think that it has changed me from July and I feel like thanks to that I am giving a lot more to the roles I am in. I don't feel nervous about my characters like I used to be in January.

Appendix L

Interview with Holly. Participant at Cockburn School. 17th October 2017.

ME   As we created a performance to talk about issues. How did you find that process?

Holly I think at first it started off quite hard because we couldn't quite wrap our heads around all the things people wanted to change because there are things that people wanted to change, but as I was on the school council the year before, I knew we couldn't really change them. So, it was a bit weird to hear people say that but when we were talking about it and adding it in to the scenes it made a lot more sense. We started having a lot more fun with it.

ME   What kind of things were people asking to change?

Holly There was the sock rule which was funny. There was the tie knot being too small. Silly rules like uniform came up, hair rules and things like that.

ME   We talked about a few issues including teacher stress, budget cuts, history class. Did you think what we were talking about were unchangeable?

Holly I think in a way they were and in a way they weren't. The teacher stress one, Daniel's scene, we as students have a massive effect on teachers being stressed. We are kind of causing it in a way. Because, yeah, they have the massive workload with the paper work but us being bad in their lessons makes it a lot worse. So, I think that was a massive one, maybe we behaved a bit better in our lessons we could change a bit and the teacher wouldn't be as stressed and we'd have a lot more freedom in our lessons.

ME   How was it for you as a student to discuss teacher stress and then perform back to a teacher your concerns about their stress levels?

Holly Like I think they kind of understand. I don't think the teachers notice that we see it. You can tell sometimes teachers are acting stressed. I think because they've noticed we noticed it. They kind of understand we notice it and we could behave a lot better in their lessons. We behave a lot better now. We understand now that if a teacher is stressed, you don't mess about in the lesson.

ME   Were you nervous?

Holly Yeah, a massive part of it was just because our scene came first and I was asked to bring everybody in. It was quite embarrassing as I had to talk to the teachers. It was like really scary to talk to teachers you don't talk too much

because they are a lot higher up. It was quite shocking. The people in our school council, I could speak to them. It was a bit easier to talk to them than the teachers you know and the students were easy to speak to.

ME   Why were you nervous? Was it because you see teachers as more powerful?

Holly I think it is because they are powerful. They have a higher authority over students. I think speaking to them sometimes can be quite nerve racking and scary because I am quite short, so you don't feel like you have much power over them. I stutter when I speak and get scared, so when I was talking to the teachers and they noticed they said 'ok, calm down', 'you don't have to be nervous'.

ME   Did the authority still exist when you performed?

Holly I think we definitely broke it down. Because Mr Stevens or Mr Russel said to our group it was quite weird watching it because he was used to being at the front of class and being in charge and when we were moving around they were just sat watching the scenes. It was quite nerve racking for him as a person.

ME   How did that feel to swap roles?

Holly I think it was weird but it was also quite fun and refreshing. You don't often have that authority over a person that is like a teacher. So, when we did get to speak to them it was quite fun. We were ahead of everything and we knew what was going to happen and they didn't.

ME In October 2017, would you say that the project created any form of change in the school? Or, within you personally?

Holly I think within the school, it made the students understand the teachers more. But, I also think personally it had a change. If a teacher is a bit stressed, if people are messing about in the lessons I will say don't mess about, the teacher is stressed. They are going to shout if you're messing about. I don't often think that students understand why they are shouting but I am like 'you are stressing them out, you're going to make it worse for yourself'. I think I definitely understand the teachers a lot more and I find it quite funny. There are students who don't behave in our year, and with our scene if the students didn't behave, seeing how the teachers reacted to that. It was quite funny to hear the teachers say 'we didn't pay attention in high school'. Because you don't expect them to mess about in high school. You would think they would be really good students. Everybody kind of has this idea that Mr Russell is this kind of scary mean teacher who always shouts at people but we kind of found out that the only reason he acts that way is because the way he was taught at school.

Appendix M

Young person led interview process with Mr Russell. Former head of the drama department at Cockburn School. 12th June 2017.

Participant   How was your education different? And, do you think it was different to modern schooling?

Russell My education wasn't that different. Which is sad to a certain extent. I grew up in a very similar place to you and a very similar background to you. My school was in a similar, sort of, demographic. It was just outside a different city. I think what goes on inside is incredibly different. My school was one of those horrible, old falling down building schools and you have this wonderful facility. And in terms of what we got to study was different, we never had that much choice. We were given two options and I had to choose one. I had to choose between history and geography. I had to choose between woodwork and food technology. There wasn't much free rein. I think there was a lot less of this stuff. A lot more of sat in front of a teacher and a board, copy this down.

I even remember doing my A levels and basically my A level tutor, who was terrible, read out his dissertation to us whilst we all kind of wrote down any notes we wanted. And, that was in preparation for an exam. So, in that sense it was much worse. I don't think it was vastly different in the matter that you could have a day in my school and recognise the subjects. But, I think one of the big things now is that you get a say. We never had head boy or head girls, we never had school councils, we never had any of those things. It was all 'this is what you are going to get', what I got is very similar to what my brother got and he is seven years older, things hadn't changed. Whereas I think what we get around here changes on a yearly basis. It does change every year. It is hard to say whether it is better or worse, if you want me to be honest I don't know. For two reasons, one is my memory is rubbish, the second thing is you look back and things change in your mind. I remember getting shouted at a lot, and you lot think I shout a lot but I got shouted at a lot. I think lot more of my teachers were a lot more like me and a lot less like Miss Piggott which is a good thing now rather than then. It was very much 'shut up, do this and don't argue back with us'. Maybe that's why I am the way I am, which is quite sad to admit isn't it. I am just passing that on to other generations.

But, I think there was a lot less conversations between students and teachers, there was a lot more where the teacher said ' this is going to happen' which is much better now. I think a lot of the time you get a chance to converse with your teachers. You get an input in what is best for you. We never knew what learning styles were. We didn't know that some people suited having a debate about

things and others people suited doing them and others suited writing them down. We were just told to do this and that was it.

Appendix N

List of proposals suggested by teachers and students at Cockburn School in a post-performance forum to be forwarded to the Student Council.

<u>Future Routine - List of proposals for Student Council</u>

The following proposals and ideas were collated as part of a forum that followed a performance of *Future Routine* by year 9 Btec students. The student devised performance focused on a range of issues including teacher/student relations, stress and budget cuts. May the following proposals be taken under consideration for the next student council meeting –

1. More senior figures attend school council meetings including the Head teacher, Head Boy and Head Girl.

2. More options to tackle teacher and student stress. These include ideas such as a 'stress room', a 'non-stress day' or optional attendance on a certain day of the term.

3. Devise a 'non-teaching day' or a 'chill out day'. A day where students and teachers participate in a range of activities that aren't curriculum based and are decided by teachers and students collaboratively.

4. A student led curriculum. Students in collaboration with teachers help to plan and organise elements of the curriculum and at certain intervals throughout the year, students lead the class.

5. Student opinion as influence for student appearance. In line with the above two points, students in partnership with staff have influence and decision making powers regarding uniform and appearance.