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**Toward the Heart and Art of
Peacebuilding: The Role of Engaged
Theatre in Post-Conflict Transition
in Northern Ireland**

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For the Degree of
DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

By

Suzanne Helène Foy

Irish School of Ecumenics

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Declaration

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Summary

This research is grounded in the exploration of the theoretical and practice-based connection between artistic practice and peacebuilding. With Northern Ireland as the context, it focuses on a study of theatre-centric projects through the lens of conflict transformation theory. This thesis' research questions investigate the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding through the creation of cultural spaces where difficult discussions around a challenging past can be had in a period of post-conflict transition. The ancillary objective of this research is to explore the potential of engaged theatre's use of digital media to contribute to social change.

The theoretical framework of this thesis draws extensively on the work of conflict transformation theorist and practitioner John Paul Lederach. Lederach is a vocal advocate of creative and artistic approaches to building peace in divided societies that view local people as stakeholders in, and active agents of change. He describes the faculty required for the creative transformation of conflict as moral imagination. A set of four disciplines mobilises this kind of imagination: envisioning a web of relationships that includes enemies, practicing paradoxical curiosity, providing space for creative acts and willingness to risk. The study of engaged theatre offers one avenue of a cultural intervention providing insight into why Lederach views peacebuilding as an art rather than just a technical exercise.

The investigation of how theatre engages conflict and opens up space for the moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition is realised through the adoption of an ethnographic-based methodology. This methodology entails a mix of observational fieldwork, documentary sources and semi-structured interviews. The analysis of datasets collected between January 2014 and June 2015 focuses on two professional artist-based theatrical productions written, staged and performed to act as a catalyst for post-show discussions around unseen and unresolved residues of the past in the context of Northern Ireland. Case Study 1 focuses on the *Those You Pass on the Street* project initiated by Healing Through Remembering in collaboration with Kabosh Theatre Company. Written by Laurence McKeown, this play explores difficult issues around loss, grief, survival, and the ripple effect of small steps taken to move forward with one's life that

challenge family, community and political loyalties. The analysis pays particular attention to the behind-the-scene minutiae of imagining a space that will help audiences step outside their everyday lives and conflict-habitation patterns, as one answer to Lederach's call for the exploration of the creative process as a central line of inquiry in peacebuilding. Case Study 2 focuses on the Verbal Arts Centre's *Crows on the Wire* (COTW) project centred on the emotive issue of the role and legacy of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) from the perspective of those who wore the RUC uniform. The analysis explores the impact of the play written by Jonathan Burgess on audiences' pre/post-show attitudes about the RUC. It also surveys the conversion of the COTW script into a digital graphic novel and educational resource aimed at encouraging post-primary school pupils to engage with and form their own opinions about Northern Ireland's past.

This thesis' study of how artistic practices engage creatively with the idea of conflict transformation reveals people's curiosity about innovative theatrical work that gives a voice to individual experiences often overlooked in the aftermath of conflict. The findings suggest recognition of the capacity of engaged theatre to create a space for difficult discussions to be had through fictional narratives. However, they also point to the need to gauge communities' ability to embrace, be comfortable with, and see value in engaging with theatricality and to consider the needs of those who may not yet be ready to take part in discussions in the presence of the 'other'. These points stress the importance of conducting single-identity and cross-community work that can influence and contribute to transformation.

As well, community and cultural sector organisations are exploring creative ways to extend the reach of their work through digital media. An initial review of two theatre-centric digital practices of the moral imagination – the *Crows on the Wire App* (2014) and the *Streets of Belfast App* (2015) – suggests affinities with the long-term vision and generational aspects of building peace in line with conflict transformation theory.

This research contributes to knowledge in the area of theatre arts and peacebuilding, with the artistic continuum now extending to a range of digital elements designed to record and increase the peacebuilding potential of engaged theatre work in societies in transition.

Acknowledgements

**I came to Northern Ireland very much an outsider ...
I came to listen, learn, bear witness, connect, and, I hoped, help
to give voice to some of the hidden stories.**

T. Sepinuck (2013) *Theatre of Witness: Finding the Medicine in Stories of Suffering, Transformation, and Peace*, p. 153.

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Abbreviations

B-Specials	Ulster Special Constabulary (1920-1970)
COTW	<i>Crows on the Wire</i> (project/play/mobile application)
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party (Northern Ireland)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (European Union)
HTR	Healing Through Remembering (Belfast-based)
ICAN	International Culture Arts Network project – The Playhouse (Derry-Londonderry)
ICAF	International Community Arts Festival (Netherlands)
INCORE	International Conflict Research Institute (Derry-Londonderry)
IRA	Irish Republican Army
Kabosh Theatre	Kabosh Theatre Company (Belfast-based)
LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland (2001 to date)
PUL	Protestant/unionist/loyalist
REACT	Reconciliation, Education & Community Training (community initiative based in Armagh)
Research Ethics Committee	Trinity College Dublin’s Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Ecumenics Research Ethics Committee
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary (1921-2001)
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body
UDA	Ulster Defence Association (Northern Ireland)
UDF	United Defence Force (Northern Ireland)
UDR	Ulster Defence Regiment (infantry regiment of the British Army, 1970-1992)
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
VAC	Verbal Arts Centre (Derry-Londonderry)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

While none of the artists I feature sees art or culture as single-handedly responsible for social change, they do see their work as capable of playing a significant role. And they extend themselves beyond conventional notions of art in the pursuit of such goals.

J. Cohen-Cruz (2010) *Engaging Performance: Theatre as Call and Response*, p. 13.

In March 2012, Derry-Londonderry's The Playhouse – International Culture Arts Network (ICAN) project and the School of Creative Arts at Queen's University Belfast hosted the *Nine Tenths Under: Performing the Peace* international conference. The conference explored how the arts can stimulate discussion "on the hidden face of peace" in societies emerging from a history of conflict, including South Africa and the Balkans, as the city of Belfast prepared to observe the one hundredth anniversary of the sinking of the RMS Titanic, designed and built in that city's shipyards (O'Neill, 2013, p. 33; also The Playhouse Theatre, 2012). In the conference flyer, the organisers evoked the fact that the Titanic's nemesis was a massive body of floating ice, only about one tenth of which is visible at the surface, is an apt portrayal of Northern Ireland's current state of post-conflict transition:

Above the surface is the public face of the peace, but what of the great mass of untold and often problematic stories hidden beneath the official version? (The Playhouse Theatre, 2012, n.p.)

This thesis takes up this question by examining the role assumed by theatre in peacebuilding through the lens of conflict transformation theory, in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland. The focus is on how engaged theatre can be used to explore and address the unseen and unresolved residues of the past in the context of Northern Ireland.

While the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 alongside the St. Andrews (2006) and Hillsborough Castle (2010) Agreements helped lift Northern Ireland out of its violent, protracted conflict through the creation of new modes of political action and cross-community power-sharing governance, the benefits of peace remain to be fully realised in the period of post-conflict

transition.¹ The proposed Panel of Parties in the Northern Ireland Executive political agreement on the issues of parades, flags and dealing with the past, known as the *Haass Report* (2013) states:

Northern Ireland remains constrained by its past. The various agreements in taking on the huge and important work of building new political institutions, did not give society the tools or venues to fully grapple with the pain and anger that are inevitably the legacy of generations of violence and conflict. (p. 19)

Unlike South Africa, Rwanda, Peru and Argentina, for example, there has been no provision for a formal truth commission, commission of inquiry, or tribunal “designed to engage appropriately with the issues unique” to Northern Ireland (White, Owsiak & Clarke, 2013, p. 253; also Bell, 2002; Lundy & McGovern, 2008; McEvoy, 2006). The peace process in Northern Ireland did not address the issue of how to deal with the past and later efforts like the Consultative Group on the Past (2009) and the Haass/O’Sullivan negotiations (2013) did not secure political consensus on how to address it either. Various academic and voluntary sector studies are addressing the social, political, psychological and cultural legacies of violence “inflicted and undergone in the course of conflict” (Dawson, 2007, p. 5; see Hackett & Rolston, 2009; Hamber, 2006; HTR, 2002; Livingstone, Keane & Boal, 1998; McGrattan & Meehan, 2012; Shirlow, 2003; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). As well, civil society organisations including theatre companies are actively engaging with the past in ways that enable the articulation, exploration and recognition of hidden and overlooked stories and experiences of the conflict, as will be discussed in this thesis.

Theatre has played a significant role in society, across many cultures and traditions, “over time we can trace patterns and instances of groups of people using the stage as a space and place to tell their stories and their lives” and work towards respect for ‘otherness’ (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009, p. 7; also van Erven, 2001). As well, academic interest in the relationship between drama and conflict is not a new phenomenon:

¹ The *Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations* in Belfast on April 10, 1998 is referred to as the Belfast Agreement or the Good Friday Agreement as it was signed on Good Friday in that year in the Western Christian religious calendar (O’Leary, 1999, p. 1629; Murphy, 2013, p. 201, n.6).

Every conflict has an inherent drama. This holds true whether we apply the word “drama” toward the lived experience of individuals struggling with conflict or we simply consider the intrinsic nature of conflict. (Lederach, 2011, p. x)

Indeed, conflict viewed as a form of human interaction can be seen as a story with actors, plots, entrances and exits and that is performed on local, regional, national and international stages (see Goffman, 1959).

The theoretical framework for this research is founded in conflict transformation theorist John Paul Lederach’s (2005) idea of the moral imagination, which proposes that achieving constructive social change in divided societies requires both technical expertise and the capacity to imagine, generate and build projects that transcend the cycles of violence while still living in these settings (p. 5). This kind of imagination is present through the practice of four disciplines: envisioning a wider set of relationships, embracing paradoxical curiosity, providing space for creative acts to emerge and give birth to the unexpected, and risk-taking (ibid., pp. 34-40). Arai (2011) argues that to the extent that peacebuilding is “a sustained, ever-evolving search for ways to discover, activate, and realise the full potential inherent in each individual and society, its ultimate goal is, I believe, one and the same as that of art” (p. 238). Therefore, exploring artistic processes should not be thought of as “a tangential inquiry, but as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace” (Lederach, 2005, p. 5).

The hypothesis explored in this thesis is that theatre-centric projects contribute to peacebuilding by mobilising the moral imagination necessary to conflict transformation in a society in transition. By enabling the reimagining of relationships, encouraging curiosity about others and providing space for the unexpected and risk-taking to occur, engaged theatre can be particularly helpful in dealing with a contested past.

In keeping with the research topic and the theoretical framework, the concept of socially engaged theatre-making or engaged theatre is used to describe the range of theatrical practices discussed in this thesis. In her work *Engaging Performance*, Cohen-Cruz (2010) explains that:

The term “engaged” [with its historical connotation of commitment] foregrounds the *relationships* at the heart of

making art with such aspirations, and dependence on a genuine exchange between artist and community such that the one is changed by the other. (emphasis in original; p. 3)

This concept of engaged theatre is part of an artistic continuum covering “everything from primitive ritual to avant-garde socio-political engagement, and from participant-driven to professionally executed work” (van Erven, 2013, p. 15; also Henderson, 2004). In the digital era, that continuum now extends beyond live theatre to include a range of digital elements, as this thesis will show, with reference to how civil society organisations are expanding their activities into these innovative modes of expression.

The remainder of this introductory chapter provides the necessary background to understand the conflict and peace efforts in Northern Ireland and the role of engaged theatre – internationally and locally – within a broader peacebuilding spectrum. It will also guide readers to the central and ancillary research questions and the structure of the thesis to come.

1.1 Historical Background to Conflict and Peacebuilding Efforts in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a society in transition after a violent, protracted conflict. Known as “the Troubles”, the period of 1968 to 1998 claimed the lives of “around three thousand and seven hundred people with over ten times as many injured in countless bomb and gun attacks” in a region with a population of around one million and six hundred thousand based on the 2001 census (Edwards, 2011, p. 7; also McKittrick et al., 1999). Many victims were ordinary people, of Protestant and Catholic backgrounds, going about their daily business that got caught in the crossfire (see McKittrick & McVea, 2012). Tonge (2006) remarked that this conflict was deemed “the worst in Western Europe since the Second World War” (p. 1). While the violence was confined mostly to Northern Ireland, it spilled over into the Republic of Ireland, England and in Gibraltar, a British Overseas Territory and peninsula located on Spain's south coast.

1.1.1 Overview of the History of the Conflict in Northern Ireland

There are many readings of the “Northern Ireland problem” (see e.g. Boal & Douglas, 1982; McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Ruane & Todd, 1996;

Tonge, 2006). Its complex origins go as far back as the Norman invasion of 1169 that led to the “loose establishment of British colonial rule” in Ireland (Tonge, 2006, p. 9). In the early 1960s, this was followed by the arrival of thousands of Scottish and English Protestant families who settled on lands in the north-eastern part of the island (Ulster province) confiscated from the tribal Gaelic Irish chiefs under the reign of King James I, known as the Plantation of Ulster (see e.g. McCavitt, 2005; Ruane & Todd, 1996). Many Irish Catholics resented the import of a new religion – Protestantism – and interference with their land governance, language, and social and political structures (see Shanahan, 2009; Tonge, 2002, 2005).

The next centuries are defined by the “fermenting and attempted management of division” between, broadly speaking, two powerful narratives: one unionist/loyalist and Protestant focused on preserving Ulster within the United Kingdom and the other, nationalist/republican and Catholic striving for an independent united Ireland free from British control (Tonge, 2005, p. 9; also Dawson, 2007).² Agitation for home rule from the 1800s onward and a republican movement for independence in the early twentieth century resulted in the partition of Ireland instituted by the British Parliament in 1920 and restated in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. This Treaty created unionist-dominated six-county province of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State with jurisdiction over twenty-six counties which became the Republic of Ireland in 1949 (see Boal, 1980; Tonge, 2005;).

The Protestant majority in Northern Ireland remained suspicious of the Catholic/nationalist minority that found itself within the confines of this new state (see Tonge, 2005, pp. 9-30).³ In the early 1920s the unionist government formed the Ulster Special Constabulary (or B Specials), an

² Regarding terminology used in this thesis, the two main traditions in Northern Ireland are referred to as Catholic nationalist/republican and Protestant/unionist/loyalist. The term nationalist describes someone who aspires to the reunification of Ireland through constitutional means whereas the term republican generally refers to those who seek to end British rule in Northern Ireland through physical force if necessary (e.g. Irish Republican Army); and the term unionist refers to someone from Northern Ireland who identifies with Great Britain and prefers to use constitutional means to defend the Union whereas the term loyalist describes staunch unionists and those willing to employ or advocate the use of physical violence to defend the Union (see e.g. Dixon, 2008; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006; Tonge, 2002).

³ For an example of how this suspicion played out in later decades refer, for example, to Livingstone, Keane and Boal’s (1998) seminal study on attitudinal variation between/among churchgoers in areas of Belfast showing that eighty percent of Protestant denominational groupings believe that the status of Northern Ireland should not change and cited fear of “the power of the Catholic Church would have in a united Ireland” and of “losing British identity” as objections to a united Ireland (p. 156).

auxiliary armed corps that could be called out in times of emergency, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) tasked with local security matters including preventing armed subversion; with the majority of both forces drawn from the Protestant/unionist community (see e.g. Doherty, 2012; Ellison & Smyth, 2000; Farrell, 1983; Mulcahy, 2006; Nagle, 2010).⁴ Unionists began to equate their “own dominance over local politics, society and culture with the survival of Northern Ireland itself” (Edwards, 2011, p. 16). This dominance extended to institutionalised discrimination against Catholics namely in the areas of employment, housing, and voting rights (see e.g. Bew, Gibbon, & Patterson, 1996; McGarry & O’Leary, 1995).

By the late 1960s, in the context of international civil rights movements, a primarily Catholic movement – the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) – began the peaceful pursuit of equality for all in Northern Ireland (see McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Purdie, 1990; Tonge, 2005). Unsure of how to address this challenge to its authority, the unionist government deployed the RUC and the B Specials to repress NICRA marches (see Bew, Gibbon & Patterson, 1996; Ellison & Smyth, 2000; Tonge, 2005). The summer of 1969 saw some of the worst rioting in Northern Ireland’s history partly due to the actions of security forces that now included the British Army (see Ryder, 2000; Shanahan, 2009).⁵

From 1968 to 1998, Northern Ireland experienced the longest and most violent conflict of its turbulent history.⁶ By 1970, the state’s “increasingly repressive and brutal” reaction to peaceful civil rights protests contributed to resurgence of the desire for an united Ireland with nationalists divided into two broad camps: participatory constitutional forces via the Social Democrat Labour Party (SDLP) founded in 1971 and the Provisional IRA (PIRA or IRA) representing the “physical force tradition which had always existed in Irish republicanism”, and its political wing Sinn Féin (Ellison & Smyth, 2000, p. 57; Tonge, 2006, p. 39). There was the

⁴ Disbanded in 1970, the work of the B Specials was taken over by the RUC and the Ulster Defence Regiment, an infantry regiment of the British Army (1970-1992). The British government hoped that it would attract Catholics. The IRA intimidated many of them into leaving the UDR and stepped up its attacks on UDR personnel (Edwards, 2011 pp. 46 & 51-53; also Ellison & Smyth, 2000, pp. 138-141).

⁵ The British Army’s Operation Banner lasted from August 14, 1969 to July 31, 2007 (see Edwards, 2011).

⁶ For academic debate about the nature of the conflict, see e.g. Boal, Murray and Poole (1976), Ellison and Smyth (2000), Hayes and McAllister (1999), Ruane and Todd (1996), and Tonge (2006).

rise of loyalist paramilitaries within working-class areas, including the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and its militant wing the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) as “Protestants saw the attacks on the RUC and the B Specials as a direct attack on *their* state” (emphasis in original; Edwards, 2011, p. 29).

Seminal events of this period included the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971; Bloody Sunday in January 1972 where fourteen civil rights protesters were shot dead by British soldiers in Derry-Londonderry; introduction of direct rule by the British government in March 1972; the Bloody Friday concerted series of explosions in Belfast’s city centre by the IRA in July 1972; and the general strike across Northern Ireland in May 1974 organised by the Ulster Workers’ Council – a body involving Protestant trade unionists as well as loyalist paramilitaries – in opposition to the first attempt at power-sharing resulting from the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 (see e. g. Aitken, 1972; Ellison & Smyth, 2000; O’Leary & McGarry, 1996; Mulcahy, 2006; Shanahan, 2009).⁷ In the late 1970s to early 1980s, republican political prisoners in the Long Kesh/Maze Prison refused to wash or slop out their cells (dirty protest) or to wear prison uniform (blanket protest) and many began hunger strikes, including L. McKeown who wrote the play *Those You Pass on the Street* which will be featured in chapter 5 (see e.g. McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Shanahan, 2009; Thompson, Hughes & Balfour, 2009). The death of hunger striker Bobby Sands in May 1981, elected to Westminster under the ‘Anti H-block’ banner one month earlier, led to a rise in popular support for the republican movement nationally and internationally (see McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Tonge, 2005). An “Armalite and the ballot box strategy” was pursued by the IRA and Sinn Féin until 1992, when the latter decided that the electoral/political route offered a broader “continuing outlet for republicanism as the politics of protest, and appeared a more viable route than militarism” (Dixon, 2008, p. 12; Tonge, 2006, p. 128; also Edwards, 2011; Shanahan, 2009). The evolution of the long road to the construction of an alternative to the violence is outlined in the next section.

⁷ Internment without trial was backed by the *Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922* (12 & 13 Geo 5 c. 5). By the time the last prisoner was released in late 1975, close to two thousand people had been detained, of which “approximately one hundred were loyalists” (Page, 2011, n. p.).

1.1.2 The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland

Since 1969, successive British governments sought to build a centre-ground consensus between moderate voices within Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism to the exclusion of those with close ties to paramilitary groups on both sides (see e.g. Dawson, 2007; McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Ruane & Todd, 1999; Tonge, 2005, 2006). A first attempt at power-sharing resulted from the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, however, this collapsed as the politics of the conflict became more polarised between the two incompatible goals of the continuance of Northern Ireland as a political entity (part of the United Kingdom or as a sovereign state) and of the reunification of Ireland (see e.g. McKittrick & McVea, 2012; Tonge, 2005; White, 2013). The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 formalised cooperation between the British and Irish governments and gave the latter advisory input into Northern Ireland's governance while also confirming that no change in status would occur in the North unless the majority of its citizens agreed to join a united Ireland (see Ruane & Todd, 1999; Tonge, 2005, 2006; White, 2013). Although strongly opposed by most unionists, the Agreement planted the seed that perhaps it was time for Northern Ireland's political parties to "rethink, reconstruct, and ... realign their policies" (Hazelton, 2013, p. 55). Also known as the Downing Street Declaration, the Joint Declaration on Peace (1993) issued by the British and Irish governments broke new ground in the search for peace by setting out the terms on which parties with ties to paramilitary groups could enter negotiations (see Mitchell, 1999). The Declaration was the result of a collaborative strategy for conflict resolution devised by these governments based on the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985), back-channel talks between British government officials and the IRA, and the Hume–Adams Initiative (1993) – joint statements outlining a roadmap toward a viable political settlement (e.g. Dawson, 2007; Mitchell 1999; Tonge, 2002).⁸

By the 1990s the political climate was changing and the tone of the new proposal provided enough grounds for the declaration of ceasefires by

⁸ Secret talks between SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams since 1988 pointed "to the potential strength of an alliance of constitutional nationalists and republicans" (Ruane & Todd, 1999, p. 5; also Mitchell, 1999; Tonge, 2006).

the IRA in 1994 (and 1997) and by loyalist paramilitary groups in 1994 (see e.g. Mitchell, 1999; Tonge, 2002, 2006). The Good Friday Agreement signed on April 10, 1998 was the outcome of a “combination of changes in republicanism, greater inclusivity, political balance and war-weariness” (Tonge, 2005, p. 34; also Dixon, 2013; Ruane & Todd, 1999).⁹ The Agreement contains a commitment to democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues ... [and] opposition to any use or threat of force ... for any political purpose” (Declaration, section 4; see also Dawson, 2007; Mitchell, 1999; Todd & Ruane, 1999). It is built around three main elements: Strand 1 addresses the creation of new democratic political institutions – a devolved Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive – founded on power-sharing and cross-community collaboration. Strand 2 deals with cross-border North-South cooperation between the governments of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland whereas Strand 3 covers British–Irish relations. The Agreement also focuses on constitutional issues around the status of Northern Ireland (present/future), rights, safeguards and equality, decommissioning of arms, demilitarisation, release of political prisoners and policing and justice (Art. 6-10). In May 1998, the Agreement was ratified by huge majorities in popular referenda held in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Yet, the elections to the power-sharing Northern Ireland Assembly the following June, confirmed deep divisions within unionism (see Elliott, 1999; Hayes & McAllister, 2001).¹⁰

The future of policing in Northern Ireland was one of the most divisive issues in the aftermath of the paramilitary ceasefires as thirty years “of internal war intensified already deeply etched fissures and suspicions” (Ellison & Smyth, 2000, p. ix; also Doyle 2010; Mulcahy, 2006; Ryder, 2000; Tonge, 2002). It is important in this introductory chapter to give some further background on this particular issue as one of the case studies (chapter 6) deals with the issue of the role and legacy of the RUC. Among unionists the RUC had been regarded largely as the “upholder of law and order whose officers sacrificed their own safety – and lives – to defend

⁹ The *Northern Ireland Act 1998* (c. 47) gave legislative effect to the terms of the Agreement.

¹⁰ When Sinn Féin joined the multi-party talks in September 1997, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the small (and now obsolete) United Kingdom Unionist Party withdrew in protest while the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the largest unionist party at the time, remained (see Mitchell, 1999).

decent people against the threat of republican terrorism”, however, for Irish nationalists even those opposed to the IRA “the police were part of the problem ... and could not provide a normal post-conflict policing service” (Dawson, 2007, p. 24; Doyle, 2013, p. 150; also Ellison & Smyth, 2000). The Agreement provided for the creation of the Independent Commission on Policing (the Patten Commission). The *Patten Report* (1999) proposed “a radically different view of policing” that included changing the name to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), its organisational structure, culture, ethos, badge and symbols, adopting a human rights-based policing approach and a recruitment policy to address the religious imbalance in the organisation, and enhancing accountability of the force through a Policing Board to include Assembly members drawn from the parties represented in the Northern Ireland Executive (Ellison & Smyth, 2000, p. 189; also Doyle 2010 & 2013; Tonge, 2002). While the Irish and British governments welcomed the report, unionist politicians, serving/retired RUC officers and families strongly condemned it claiming that policing had unfairly become part of a post-Good Friday Agreement “bargaining process between the UUP and Sinn Féin” (Tonge, 2005, p. 225; also Mulcahy, 2006; Ryder, 2000). The award of the George Cross to the RUC in 1999 did little to assuage the “deep sense of hurt” associated with the plans for the new force (Ryder, 2000, p. 483; also Tonge, 2002). Nationalist and republican parties in time accepted the reconstituted police force and a role on the Policing Board and insisted on a full implementation of the *Patten Report* (see Tonge, 2005; Doyle, 2010). Despite unionist and RUC officers’ opposition “to transform the symbolic world of the RUC”, the latter transitioned to the PSNI on November 4, 2001 following the passage of the *Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000* (c. 32) (Ellison & Smyth, 2000, p. 151). The impact of this “abrupt transition should not be underestimated, nor should the bitterness with which it was resisted” by many of the police officers who wore the RUC uniform, as will be examined in chapter 6 (Murphy, 2013, p. 22).

As exemplified by the policing issue, the impact of decades of conflict endures, “Northern Irish society remains deeply segregated, bound to competing territorial ideologies and still struggling to incorporate some sort of coherent narrative of the past into the present” (McDowell & Shirlow,

2011, p. 700).¹¹ Despite the political settlement along with the St. Andrews (2006) and Hillsborough Castle (2010) Agreements, the working of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive remains problematic and political life is ever more polarised (see Dixon, 2013). While the moderate Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the SDLP played key roles in the brokerage of the consociational power-sharing governance model, from 2003 onward electoral results reveal a political drift to “the so-called political extremes of unionism and nationalism” – the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin (Nagle, 2010, p. 42; also Dixon, 2008; Graham & Nash, 2006).¹² Dixon (2008) argues that the growing disillusionment with the Good Friday Agreement especially within the unionist community has played a part in this reversal: in May 1998 unionist support for the Agreement stood at fifty-five percent and dropped to thirty-two percent by the end of 2002 (pp. 287-292). Discord persists around the issue of how to deal with the past as reflected in the failure of the political parties and the government to endorse initiatives intended to chart ways towards dealing with the past such as the *Consultative Group on the Past Report* (2009) and the collapse of the 2013 Haass/O’Sullivan talks (see Murphy, 2013).

All of this reveals the limits of peacebuilding efforts primarily led by political elites and raises questions about how other approaches and civil society agents can be essential to building sustainable peace in a society in transition. In Northern Ireland, the cultural sector has been exploring alternative mode of engagement within single identity communities and in cross-communities contexts for decades. At a public lecture at Queen’s University Belfast in 1986, playwright Stewart Parker (1986 cited in Roche, 2009) provided insight into his vision of the role of artists¹³:

¹¹ For examples of studies discussing the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland see e.g. Boal and Douglas (1982), Boal and Royle (2006), Doyle (2010), Hancock (2013), Jarman and Bell (2012), McGrattan and Meehan (2012), Shirlow (2008), and Shirlow and Murtagh (2006).

¹² Consociationalism is a political governance arrangement designed for divided societies (see Lijphart, 1977). Its main features – cross-community power-sharing, proportionality, communal autonomy and equality, and minority protections – aim “to harness ethno-national rivalries within a cooperative framework which recognises the equal validity of ethnic traditions rather than attempting their dilution” (Tonge, 2005, p. 2). For an analysis of consociationalism in Northern Ireland, see e.g. Doyle (1999), Little (2004), McGarry and O’Leary (2004), O’Leary (1999), Taylor (2006), Tonge (2005), and Wilford (2001).

¹³ The question of the role and responsibility of theatre-makers during and after conflict is discussed, for example, in Format231 (2013), Jennings (2010, 2012), Sepinuck (2013), and Thompson (2014).

If ever a time and place cried out for the solace and rigour and passionate rejoinder of great drama, it is here and now ... The politicians, visionless almost to a man, are withdrawing into their sectarian stockades. It falls to the artists to construct a working model of wholeness by means of which the society can begin to hold up its head in the world. (p. 161)

This statement informs the presentation of examples, in the next section, of the role that engaged theatre has assumed in peacebuilding internationally and in Northern Ireland during and in the aftermath of violent conflict.

1.2 The Role of Performance Arts in Conflict/Transitional Settings

In his reflection on arts and peacebuilding, Arai (2011) suggests that “artistic experiences activate different senses that transcend logical, analytical thinking ... [and] open up a humanising space that invites authentic expression and engagement” (p. 237). For his part, Lederach (2005) expands on the notion of authentic engagement:

Authentic engagement recognises that conflict remains. Dialogue is permanent and requires platforms that make such engagement at multiple levels of the affected society possible and continuous ... Genuine constructive change requires engagement of the other. And this is not just a challenge for leaders – we must encompass and encourage a wide public sphere of genuine human engagement. (p. 49)

As shown below creative acts hold the potential to “break the silence, mainstream the voices of the voiceless ... and give full expression to the moral imagination of divided communities” (Arai, 2011, pp. 237-238).

1.2.1 Examples of the Use of Performance Arts in Peacebuilding Efforts in Other Conflict Affected Societies

Theatre practitioner-scholar Varea (2011) argues that the capacity “to continue on with the construction of meaning after traumatic violence is a founding principle of theatre, ritual, and also of peacebuilding” (p. 154). The range of ritual, community and artist-based theatrical work carried out in places of violent conflict and war is discussed in a growing body of academic writing including Cleveland (2008), Cohen, Varea and Walker (2011a), Cohen-Cruz (1998), Haedicke and Nellhaus (2001), Rush and

Simić (2014), Stan and Nedelsky (2015), Thompson, Hughes and Balfour (2009), and van Erven (2001). This subsection offers examples from two conflict/transitional settings – the former Yugoslavia and Peru – that “we know as scenes of upheaval and tragedy” and where the role of theatre in peacebuilding has already been explored (Cleveland, 2008, p. 2).

The former Yugoslavia did not have a tradition of independent theatre groups as it had been ruled by communist leaders for decades, including President Josip Broz Tito (1943-1980), and its citizens enjoyed little to no political freedoms: “theatre and art in general were state-supported and thus state-controlled” (Milošević, 2011, p. 25). The first independent theatre groups were born as a result of the political manipulation of old, unresolved conflicts between Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims that led the country “deeper and deeper into an abyss of nationalism, hatred, and destruction” in the 1990s and early 2000s (ibid., p. 24). Theatre artists of varied ethnic background sought “a different kind of theatre, culture, and society, and quested for real democracy, freedom, tolerance, and justice” (Panovski, 1996, p. 6; also Furlan, 1996; Milošević, 2011). Belgrade’s DAH Teatar (DAH) was created by Dijana Milošević and Jadranka Anđelić in 1991, around which time the President of the Serbian Republic Slobodan Milošević became a dominant political force¹⁴:

DAH Theatre [has] tried in myriad ways —organizing street and bus performances, anti-war performance events, workshops— to address what they believe are the fundamental or essential questions of theatre. “What is the role and sense of theatre?” “What is the responsibility and duty of the artist in ‘dark times?’” ... The answers were their performances, such as *This Babylonian Confusion* [1992], based on the anti-war songs of Bertolt Brecht. The play was performed outdoors in downtown Belgrade at a time when talking about involvement in the war was a topic forbidden by the Serbian government. (Panovski, 2006, p. 72)

While performing in Belgrade’s Republic Square was risky, Milošević (2011) “felt that they had to take the risk because they had the privilege of a public voice” (pp. 31-32). People came up to the actors to thank them as they

¹⁴ The word ‘Dah’ means “breath, spirit, movement of the air” in Serbo-Croatian; also “to gather strength, to persevere, to be spiritual and to create” (Milošević, 2011, p. 29; <http://www.dahteatarcentar.com/aboutus.html>)

had heard publicly some things “they knew and felt to be true, but that was officially denied and was forbidden to mention ... [DAH] realised that [it] could oppose violence and destruction by creating sense” (ibid., p. 32).

The “need to break the silence and talk about things that were happening” informed the theatre company’s post-conflict work around the issues of “accountability, truth, past war crimes and reconciliation” (Simić & Milošević, 2014, p. 101). For example, DAH used A.P. Chekov’s *Three Sisters* (1900) as a dramatic foundation for *The Story of Tea* (2006) exploring the creation of space “that allows memory to live in its full dignity – memory that opens the way for the truth to be heard again, and gives voice to the ones who cannot be otherwise heard” (Milošević, 2011, p. 43). The play draws together historical events including the 1993 massacre of nineteen civilians abducted from a train in Bosnia by Serbian paramilitaries as part of a campaign of ethnic cleansing (ibid., pp. 37-38). It unfolds among the spectators who are sitting facing each other as they would in a train compartment: nineteen of them are offered a cup of tea while actors discuss the history of tea and, in the final scene, place a candle in each cup “creating a vigil and mourning space for all who died from that train and for all who died in the wars” (ibid., p. 38). This shows theatre’s ability to “inscribe the present with tangible marks and traces of the past and to ensure that remembering ... is understood as an ongoing and indispensable cultural process” (Simić & Milošević, 2014, p. 111). According to Milošević (cited in Simić & Milošević, 2014), “dealing with the past is an essential prerequisite for healing and transformation to take place” (p. 102).

Peru has an even longer and rich history of politically engaged theatre, which has also proven to be a means to deal with legacies of the Peruvian Civil War of 1980-2000. Many of the victims of the Civil War were “Quechua-speaking native peasants” from the Peruvian Highlands (Varea, 2011, p. 158; A’ness, 2004; Milton, 2007; Taylor, 2001). In 2001-2003 Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission invited Lima-based theatre collective Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani (formed in 1971) to serve as mediator between the Commission and these rural populations, acting as a conduit to

the public hearings, and producing works marking the transitional period.¹⁵ Yuyachkani was chosen for its known ability to combine cultural imaginary and symbolic languages from different parts of Peru – especially indigenous areas of the Andes – with classical and contemporary theatrical forms such as “the political theatre aesthetics of Bertolt Brecht and the anthropological theatre approaches of Augusto Boal” (Varea, 2011, p. 167). Outreach work was done in the communities where public hearings were to be held, using workshops, plays, street art installations and site-specific interventions to create “an impromptu forum in local streets and plazas where local villagers and peasants would share with them, and with each other, the testimonies offered in the formal structure of the TRC” (ibid., p. 168). This forum became “a place of ritual reflection and healing” meant to help communities get through this difficult period of transition (A’ness, 2004, p. 399).

Yuyachkani believes that violence is the result of deep-rooted prejudices, social and political segregation and neglect, and ignorance:

Their work continually asks audiences ... to think beyond the traditional binaries and facile stereotypes that have defined the country and its various populations – coast/mountain, European/Indian, Spanish-speaking/Quechua-speaking, literate/illiterate, victim/agent – xenophobic assumptions that have prevented most Peruvians from ever knowing or fully understanding each other. (A’ness, 2004, p. 401)

In this context, Yuyachkani explored different relations to the past, present and future through “specific characters, performance forms and motifs, [that] revived the dead and missing and let them speak to audiences in ways that represented hope for a better future” (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 212). This is embodied in *Adiós Ayacucho* (1990), adapted from a short play by Julio Ortega.¹⁶ This one-man show tells the tale of an indigenous farmer Alfonso Càpena who, when the play starts, has just been murdered, dismembered, and ‘disappeared’ by the military and who “is forced to act as a sole witness to his own victimisation” (Taylor, 2001, p. 318).¹⁷ Rising from the ditch where his body was left, he decides to travel to Lima to

¹⁵ ‘Yuyachkani’ is a Quechua word meaning “I think/I remember/I am your thought”; it conveys “the idea of memory as a dialogic site for reflection and inter/intracultural understanding” (A’ness, 2004, p. 401).

¹⁶ This drama along with *Rosa Cuchillo* (2002) were performed at the Community Arts Lab Festival (June 20-21, 2013) in Utrecht, Netherlands (see Appendix A; Vrede van Utrecht, 2013).

¹⁷ Actor Augusto Casafranca delivers the lines using two voices: that of Càpana, who speaks Spanish, and that of a ritual dancer who speaks in Quechua and is possessed by Càpana’s spirit (Varea, 2011, p. 170).

reclaim his bones for burial and to take a letter to the President denouncing the crimes of the state and demanding justice for himself and other 'disappeared' in Peru (see A'ness, 2004, pp. 403-404).¹⁸ For Varea (2011) this drama exposes the layers of "personal, societal, and mythical trauma involved in the disappearances. A person is denied his bones, and a whole people are denied inclusion in the *body politic* of the nation" (emphasis in original; pp. 169-170). In the final scene, the actor portraying a mystical Andean dancer possessed by the spirit of Cànpena loses his ceremonial costume and mask and reveals the humbly dressed farmer who has been "ritually *re-membered* on stage" (emphasis in original; *ibid.*, p. 170). In effect, spectators become "witnesses of a crime that is rarely seen" which places them "in a position of latent political agency through a symbolic transfer of knowledge" (A'ness, 2004, p. 403; also Taylor, 2001, 2003).

These two examples offer valuable insight into drama's ability to "create spaces, moments and visions of peace" (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 191). They reveal how engaged theatre has created space for the moral imagination to take hold in conflict/transitional settings by stressing the importance of relational interdependency, moving beyond traditional binaries, giving birth to the unexpected via creative acts, and risk-taking. These are all key aspects of the theoretical framework, based on Lederach's (2005) idea of the moral imagination, as will be developed in chapter 3. As explored in the next section, theatre-makers in Northern Ireland also engage with conflict through "imaginative foresight, the use of different registers, explosive gestures and visionary scenarios" (Urban, 2011, p. 13).

1.2.2 Overview of the Role of Engaged Theatre during the Conflict in Northern Ireland

As with the former Yugoslavia and Peru, there is a history of the use of engaged forms of theatre in Northern Ireland during the conflict and its aftermath as will be explored further in chapter 4 (see e.g. Byrne, 2001; Dolan, 2005; Grant, 1993; Maguire, 2006; McDonnell, 2008; Upton, 2011). This thesis adds to this literature by focusing on the study of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding in the period of post-conflict

¹⁸ Thousands of the murdered Andean peasants never received a birth certificate from the state and were not officially declared dead after their disappearance (Varea, 2011, p. 170; also Milton, 2007).

transition, through the lens of conflict transformation theory.

In the context of providing necessary background to the chapters to come, this subsection focuses on two theatre companies – Field Day and Charabanc – instrumental in the creation of an independent theatre sector in Northern Ireland and who “influenced the younger companies and new playwrights who came to the fore in the North” in the 1990s onward who have contributed to the creative transformation of conflict as will be studied in chapters 5 and 6 (Roche, 2009, p. 211; also Byrne, 2001). Field Day Theatre Company (1980-1992) was founded by playwright Brian Friel and actor Stephen Rea and supported by a board of director that included poet Seamus Heaney and writer/academic Seamus Deane (see Byrne, 2001; Roche, 2012).¹⁹ It was based in Derry-Londonderry which helped to reverse “the trend whereby the sources and settings of Irish drama were often in remote rural areas but where staged in the metropolitan centre, whether Dublin, Belfast or London” (Roche, 2009, p. 179). Field Day’s first production – Friel’s play *Translations* (1980) about “identity, language, and dominion” – was performed in the historic Guildhall as the city had no formal theatre then (Rea & Pelletier, 2000 cited in Maguire, 2006, p. 81; also McGuigan, 2015).²⁰ Use of the Guildhall embodied a symbolic appropriation of the city from its history of unionist domination (Roche, 2009, p. 179). At the premiere of the play in September 1980, most political perspectives were represented in the audience

from Sinn Féin and the SDLP on the Catholic side through various shades of Unionists on the other. Entering from the war zone of their divided communities and frisked on the way in by the British Army, they were entering and sharing the same space. (Roche, 2012, p. 151; also Byrne, 2001)

Rea (cited in McCormack, 2013) reflected on the fact that during the “appalling suffering of the Troubles, we ... offered language as some kind of

¹⁹ Born in Omagh (Co. Tyrone) Brian Friel (1929-2015), from a Catholic background, grew up and worked as a teacher in Derry-Londonderry until 1960 when he became a full-time writer, his family moved to the nearby border county of Donegal at the start of the conflict (see Roche, 2012, p. 5; also Byrne, 2001). The Field Day Theatre Company resumed its activities in 2012 as part of the Derry-Londonderry City of Culture 2013 celebrations. See the company’s website: <https://fieldday.ie/>

²⁰ The play is set in the fictional Irish town of Ballybeg (small town) in the 1830s. Its inhabitants face language barriers and teaching problems as Irish usage begins to fade away in favour of the English language as shown by the “imperialist enterprise of mapping Ireland” (Ordnance Survey 1829-1842) involving the English translations for local place names (Maguire, 2006, p. 82; also Byrne, 2001).

way out ... I think something adjusted in some minds because of that” (n.p.). To reach audiences who did not have access to professional theatre or normally attend theatre, Field Day toured across the island that “set an influential pattern for cross-border cultural activity” (Roche, 2009, p. 179). This has carried through to initiatives supported by the European Union’s Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and administered by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) set up under the Good Friday Agreement (see Bush & Houston, 2011; Jennings, 2012).²¹

Another major development was the founding of Belfast’s Charabanc Theatre Company (1983-1995), a collaborative venture between actresses from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds – Marie Jones, Eleanor Methven Carol Moore, Brenda Winter and Maureen McCauley – due to the lack of acting work and strong roles in Irish theatre for women (see Byrne, 2001; Harris, 1996; Lojek, 1999).²² They wanted to help people “imaginatively experience other points of view available in contemporary Ulster” especially those of women (Byrne, 2001, p. 90). Charabanc mostly created and produced works based on interviews with women and extensive research about “elements of the Belfast community that had been relatively voiceless in the past” such as the stories of Catholic women living in the nationalist area of West Belfast (Lojek, 1999, p. 95; also Harris, 2006). Written by Marie Jones, *Somewhere Over the Balcony* (1987) is set on the anniversary of the introduction of internment in a tower block similar to the nationalist/republican Divis Flats in West Belfast. It explores the “bizarre kind of existence that passes for normality when people are trying to live their lives in a crazy, incomprehensible, uncontrollable situation” through three female characters “who had undergone another kind of internment after the seizure of their husbands/men” and observe the world from the balcony of their flats (Harris, 2006, p. xliii; Roche, 2009, p. 178; also Byrne, 2001; Maguire, 2006). Audiences are made aware of the off-stage presence of soldiers

²¹ The selected theatre-centric projects analysed in chapters 5 and 6 were supported, in whole or in part, by this funding programme. Since 1998, SEUPB has delivered Peace I (1998-2001), Peace II (2001-2007) and Peace III (2008-2014) and the start of Peace IV (2014-2020) was delayed by a year. For more information about this Programme, see e.g. Bush & Houston (2011), Jennings (2010, 2012) and http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuid=FTU_3.1.9.html

²² Marie Jones left Charabanc in 1990 and co-founded DubbelJoint Theatre Company in 1991. She wrote plays for Tinderbox Theatre (referenced in chapter 4). Carol Moore has been involved in a number of Kabosh Theatre productions including *Those You Pass on the Street* discussed in chapter 5.

watching these women from their post on the top of the tower block.²³ This presence provokes “resistance in terms of the verbal defiance the women hurl at their observers and even more by the surrealistic verve with which they re-imagine the conditions of their daily lives” (Roche, 2009, p. 178). The fact that women from a nationalist stronghold agreed to share personal and previously unheard stories about life’s hardships with Protestant women and have them “portray Catholic voices, bodies, and stories on stage” reflected Charabanc’s status as an “integrated group allowing them the legitimacy ... to include stories from both communities in their repertoire” (Coffey, 2016, p. 85; also Byrne, 2001).

Charabanc productions were toured across Ireland and presented in venues “designed to cross the notorious theatrical class divides” (Roche, 2009, p. 178). The company performed in conventional theatres and travelled to loyalist and republican areas to perform in non-traditional theatre venues – “safe spaces where families could go without fear of violence” such as community and leisure centres and parish halls (Coffey, 2016, p. 87; also Harris, 2006). For many spectators the fictional accounts and viewpoints staged by Charabanc were a rare “opportunity to witness a conversation with the other side that was not entirely partisan” (Coffey, 2016, p. 89). Many of their plays stressed the cyclical and generational nature of conflict in the hope that audiences would recognise “these historical patterns [and] be empowered to change them” (Coffey, 2016, p. 88; also Byrne, 2001). Charabanc invited audiences to move beyond the “identification with a single character to understanding what shapes several characters at a particular moment in time”, with the usual play closure “of marriage/death/victory/defeat giving way to an almost anti-closure in which the ending seems a beginning as well” (Lojek, 1999, pp. 91-92; also Maguire, 2006). Dramatic forms that are “open-ended, metaphysical, stretching the psychic journeys of characters and audience alike” continue to be explored in the period of post-conflict in Northern Ireland, examples of which will be presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6 (Foley, 2003, p. 144).

From a peacebuilding perspective, it is interesting that Field Day and

²³ The British Army had a very visible observation post on the roof of the Divis Flats as part of its ever-present surveillance work in the area. The soldiers’ presence was greeted with “stones rather than scones” by Catholics since 1971 (McFadden, 1987 cited in Byrne, 2001, p. 90; also Mulcahy, 2006).

Charabanc had similar assumptions about the power of drama, its connection to contemporary reality and the need to reach out to new audiences – North/South, rural/urban, working/middle class (see Harris, 1996; Lojek, 1999). Individuals and communities, with or without prior experience of theatre, are curious to see how theatre-makers go about breaking the “code of silence that has been inherent in the North and find new ways of addressing past trauma, violence, injustices, and prejudices that have often been taboo subjects” through plays giving a voice to untold stories of the conflict and creating spaces where discussions around a challenging past can take place, as will be explored in chapters 5 and 6 (Coffey, 2016, p. 254). The fact that these groups toured in places like England, Scotland, the former Soviet Union, Germany and North America also speaks to the universal appeal of engaged theatre and an interest in how artists are “imaginatively engaging with sectarian conflict, and exploring the possibility of an understanding between diverse communities” in Northern Ireland (Urban, 2011, p. 19; also Byrne, 2001).

The background to the conflict in Northern Ireland and highlighted on-going divisions, related specifically to legacies of the past and political elites’ failings has been set out above. The potential of engaged theatre as a form of civil society peacebuilding has been introduced and exemplified with reference to international and Northern Irish examples. The next sections state the research questions emerging from this background and the structure of the thesis to be presented in the coming chapters.

1.3 Research Questions

As will be clear from the background provided above, the questions at the heart of this research concern the role that engaged theatre can assume in cultivating moral imagination and, in doing so, the creative transformation of conflict in societies in transition. With Northern Ireland as the context, the central questions are as follows:

- What is the role of engaged theatre in relation to conflict transformation?
- On the basis of case studies in Northern Ireland, how do theatre-centric initiatives create space for the moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition?

Since theatre has evolved from mainstream staged events to include newer forms that involve the use of digital media for peacebuilding purposes, the thesis also explores an ancillary research question:

- How might digital elements contribute to the peacebuilding potential of engaged theatre projects?

Peacebuilding is essential to the transformation of violent, protracted conflicts in divided societies. As evidenced in this chapter, this thesis aims to analyse the role that engaged theatre can assume in the creation of alternative spaces of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland. In doing so, the thesis will contribute to literature by focusing specifically on the study of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding. This research is in line with ongoing efforts to locate, document and shed light on different approaches to peacebuilding theatre and, in particular, the work of theatre-makers answering the call for the practice of moral imagination through projects like *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict* (2005-2010). That project evolved from a series of symposiums and discussions between practitioners and academics in the fields of peace and performance studies. This led to Cohen et al.'s two-volume anthology focusing on "the possibilities of performance as a kind of peacebuilding practice" (2011b, p. 13).²⁴ While this anthology offers a collection of case studies from many regions of the world on the use of theatre and ritual during and after conflict, it does not include any from Northern Ireland.²⁵ This thesis seeks to fill this gap.

The ancillary objective of examining uses of digital media as potentially transformative practices within a broader peacebuilding spectrum is viewed as an extension of the investigation of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding. Build Up, an enterprise aiming to integrate technology, civil engagement and peacebuilding, held the first *Build Peace* international conference in 2014.²⁶ This attracted technologists, activists, artists, and conflict resolution scholars wanting to share experiences about the development of effective peacebuilding tools in

²⁴ See <https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/actingtogether/index.html>

²⁵ For a discussion of wide ranging approaches used in other conflict affected societies see e.g. Boon and Plastow (2004), Formaat231 (2014), ICAF Rotterdam (2015), van Erven (2013), Vrede van Utrecht (2013).

²⁶ See the conference's website (<http://howtobuildpeace.org/>); Kahl and Puig Larrauri (2013).

conflict and post-conflict settings. Puig Larrauri (2014a) noted a discussion thread weaving together themes of creativity, arts and peace:

One of the reasons that peacebuilders turn to technology is that digital spaces can allow for new narratives to emerge and new identities to be explored. This kind of creativity is central to arts for peace projects, which use various artistic tools to deliver small, transcendent moments to people who live in conflict. (para. 8)

This is in line with Lederach's (2005) belief that the art of peacebuilding is about "innovative ways of building social change" that expand people's sense of "what in the world is possible" (p. 39; also Puig Larrauri, 2014b). Using digital media to support change in divided societies is a relatively new area of academic inquiry (see e.g. Kahl & Puig Larrauri, 2013; Letouzé, Meier & Vincz, 2013; Mancini & O'Reilly, 2013; Puig Larrauri, 2013a; Young & Young, 2015). The identification of arts-related digital elements in chapters 4 and 6 will offer insight into ways in which "technologies of engagement" can inform and educate others interested in the use of digital media within the arts for peace movement (Puig Larrauri, 2013b, para. 1).

The findings of this thesis can therefore both demonstrate how moral imagination for peacebuilding is cultivated through theatre and how the addition of digital elements to theatre-centric projects can expand the peacebuilding potential of engaged theatre. As a result, the findings of this thesis should be of use to academics and to practitioners seeking to understand theatre's potential in conflict transformation and to those looking to explore the innovative possibilities of the use of digital technologies for peace and social change in transitional settings.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Following this introduction, chapter 2 sets out the research methods use in this thesis, detailing the ethnographic-based approach adopted for the investigation of the role of engaged theatre as a peacebuilding tool in Northern Ireland. The chapter includes a brief review of literature on the development of ethnography relevant to this research as well as a survey of the case study selection criteria, an account of key aspects of the two small-scale theatre-centric projects analysed in chapters 5 and 6, together with a

discussion of data collection methods and analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations to the research. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that frames the exploration of ways in which engaged theatre contribute to the creative transformation of conflict. The chapter briefly reviews the development of the field of conflict resolution and the evolution within it of conflict transformation as an alternative approach for dealing with post-Cold War violent, protracted conflicts that stresses the need to address relational aspects of these conflicts. The attention then turns to Lederach's (1997) conceptual framework favouring elicitive approaches to building peace over the long term that prioritise local knowledge and culture and the development of a "peace constituency within the setting" (p. 94). Elicitive forms of social transformation include the practice of what Lederach (2005) calls the moral imagination consisting of four elements – relational webs, paradoxical curiosity, creativity, and risk – which, this thesis argues, are also defining features of well-devised engaged theatre work (p. 34).

Chapter 4 acts as a bridging chapter between the theoretical framework and its application to the case studies analysed in chapters 5 and 6. It begins with a more in-depth examination of connections between engaged theatre and elicitive social transformation. It then examines developments in the field of engaged theatre in Northern Ireland around the time of the Good Friday Agreement that point to interesting avenues of inquiry about what has yet to be imagined in transitional settings including the use of digital media as part of theatre-centric projects. Chapters 5 and 6 present findings of the case studies carried out between January 2014 and June 2015. They follow a similar structure, with a synopsis of the play at the start of each chapter, and an analysis of how the script, staging, performance and audience engagement encourage the rise of moral imagination in single-identity and cross-community audiences.

Chapter 5 centres on Belfast-based Healing Through Remembering's collaboration with Kabosh Theatre, *Those You Pass on the Street* project (2010-2015). This chapter answers Lederach's (2005) invitation to consider the "creative process itself" as a central mode of inquiry (p. 5). It is done by paying special attention to the script and the minutiae of the creation of an imaginative space conducive to the discussion of difficult issues around

loss, grief, survival, and the right to move forward with one's life. This is followed by a review of post-show audience engagement from a conflict transformation perspective. Chapter 6 focuses on Derry-Londonderry's Verbal Arts Centre's *Crows on the Wire* project (2013-2014). The analysis covers key aspects of this project through the lens of the four elements that mobilise the moral imagination. It identifies the script's key themes that bring to light the human side of policing during the conflict in Northern Ireland. It studies adult post-show discussions and written adult and pupil feedback providing valuable insight into pre and post-performance perceptions of the RUC and views on theatre as an effective medium to explore unheard stories. It also examines VAC's conversion of the play's script into a digital graphic novel *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) offering insight into what Lederach refers to as the "messiness of innovation", a keystone of the art of peacebuilding (2005, p. viii). Chapter 7 offers summative research conclusions linking back to the overall line of argument set out in this thesis' introduction. This is followed by a reflection on the methodological approach utilised for this research and a survey of the limitations of this thesis, future research directions and recommendations.

1.5 Conclusion

With an emphasis on the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding in a period of post-conflict transition, the introductory chapter offered a survey of the history of the conflict and of the long road to peace in Northern Ireland. It also gave examples of how theatre supported peacebuilding efforts in other divided societies as well its role in engaging creatively with conflict in Northern Ireland. This chapter then set the stage for the analysis to come by stating the research questions to be answered as well as outlining how this analysis will be structured in this thesis.

The next chapter describes the research methodology devised for the analysis of two theatre-centric case studies centring on marginalised, unheard, and often overlooked stories around the residues of conflict in Northern Ireland. The adoption of an ethnographic-based approach entailing a mix of observational fieldwork, desk-research, and interviews, enabled the collection of data between January 2014 and June 2015.

CHAPTER 2

Research Methodology

We are aware that performance is a contingent event that exists only momentarily. The approach here is to attempt to work with the traces of the 'original', including practitioner narratives, audience responses and scripts. While the presence of these performances cannot be recreated through these documents, we hope that the richness of the experiences will filter through.

J. Thompson, J. Hughes & M. Balfour (2009) *Performance in Place of War*, p. 18.

Introduction

This chapter describes the ethnographic-based research methodology utilised for this thesis' investigation of the role that theatre, including related digital elements, can play in peacebuilding during a period of post-conflict transition, with Northern Ireland as the selected context. To this end, the lines of inquiry and findings are grounded in a theoretical as well as a methodological approach. The discussion of the latter is divided into five sections. As the overall approach is ethnographic, this chapter starts with a brief review of the evolution of ethnography and how it is being used in this thesis. This is followed by a survey of the case study selection criteria as well as an account of key aspects of the two selected theatre-centric projects relevant to this thesis. The second section details the data collection methods used within each case study, including observational work, documentary sources and interviews. The third section focuses on ethical considerations related to the fieldwork, including safeguards employed in the conduct of this research. The fourth section discusses the data analysis approach used to make sense of the data collected during the fieldwork. The choice of a thematic analysis approach, based on the themes of Lederach's four practices of the moral imagination, was designed to explore Lederach's (2005) contention of the need for peacebuilders to explore connections between artistic practices and the art of building constructive change in divided societies (p. 5). This chapter ends with a discussion of the parameters and limitations of this research.

2.1 The Ethnographic Approach

Given the areas of interest set out in the introductory chapter, an ethnographic approach was adopted for this thesis. Ethnography is one of many approaches to the practice of qualitative research; the latter referring to “a blend of empirical investigation and creative discovery” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. xiv). Originating at the turn of the twentieth century, ethnography involves understanding “people’s actions and their experiences of the world” typically through immersion and observation in naturally occurring situations (Brewer, 2000, p. 11; also Silverman, 2006; Vidich & Lyman, 2003). Examples of early anthropological ethnographers, who focused on relatively small groups in societies usually very different than their own, include Boas (1911), Evans-Pritchard (1940), Malinowski (1922), Mead (1928), and Radcliffe-Brown (1948). In the 1920s and 1930s, the work of the Chicago School in the United States then specialising in the field of sociology contributed to the knowledge of urban industrial society with an emphasis on groups “living in relative degrees of visibility from the vantage point of educated, mainstream American society” (Seale, 2004, p. 103) ranging from street gangs (Trasher, 1927), taxi-dance halls (Cressy, 1932) to Polish immigrants (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918).²⁷ Ethnographers also began to study how people behave in public spaces. Part of the second Chicago School, Goffman (1959) offered a dramaturgical analysis approach to everyday human social interaction rituals between individuals, groups and institutions (see Punch, 2005, p. 178; Adler & Adler, 1994, pp. 383-385). This sociologist used the imagery of theatre to portray the social world as made up of a multitude of different performances by a vast number of actors for different audiences, in a variety of public and private settings (see Atkinson, 2004b, pp. 94-96). Lederach (2011) draws parallels between Goffman’s approach and mediation processes:

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* he [Goffman] shows how we prepare for our “roles”, conduct “performances”, create “front and back stages” with ... “exits” and “entrances” on our constructed stages ... The process of mediation and the professional role of mediator have all the elements of orchestrated theatre, which if you

²⁷ For an overview of this school’s work see Bulmer (1984), Faris (1967), Kurtz (1984) and Ocejo, (2013).

watch carefully repeats itself over and again [regardless of the context]. (p. x)

The work of drama scholar-practitioners like Hughes (2011), Thompson et al. (2009), and Urban (2011) illustrates the multiple realms in which performance plays a part in human conduct and reality-construction including "military performance, staged dramas and the performances of everyday life" in conflict and post-conflict settings (Hughes, 2011, p. 5).²⁸

Brewer has conducted many ethnographic studies dealing with sensitive topics in Northern Ireland (see e.g. 1990; Brewer & Hayes, 2015; Brewer & Magee, 1991). In his book entitled *Ethnography*, Brewer (2000) distinguishes between "ethnography-understood-as-the-qualitative-method" and "ethnography-understood-as-fieldwork", the latter denoting a way of doing qualitative research (p. 18). The second view of ethnography was adopted to answer this thesis' research questions:

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not in the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally. (ibid., p. 6; also cited in David & Sutton, 2004, pp. 103 & 105; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3; Silverman, 2006, p. 67)

As this definition suggests the principal task of ethnographic research is to capture and convey a detailed account of life within a given setting be it cultural, institutional or occupational, such as Atkinson's (2004a, 2004b) study of the work of producing operas. For this reason, "a degree of immersion in the field is the touchstone of ethnography" (Bryman, 2008, p. 443; also Barbour, 2014; Punch, 2005). This typically takes the form of observational fieldwork ranging from direct non-participant to participant observation, though most researchers usually "move back and forth across the spectrum at different times" (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 108). For this research, I assumed a "peripheral role" (Adler & Adler, 1987, pp. 36-49):

Researchers who adopt *peripheral* membership observe and

²⁸ Hughes' (2011) book entitled *Performance in a time of terror: Critical mimesis and the age of uncertainty* contains an analysis of how performance was employed as part of counterinsurgency operations during the war on terrorism (or the Troubles) in Northern Ireland.

interact closely with the people under study, and thereby establish identities as insiders, but they do not participate in those activities constituting the core of group membership. (emphasis in original; Angrosino, 2007, p. 55)

The field activities for this research were conducted between January 2014 and June 2015. They ranged from attending play rehearsals, performances and post-show discussions to public speaking events where the selected theatre-centric projects were discussed, as detailed in Appendix A.

While observational work as a data gathering method can be used on its own, it is often combined with other techniques such as interviews and documentary sources as is the case here (see Brewer, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Punch, 2005). Silverman (2006) specifies that today's ethnographers do not always conduct direct observation (p. 68). Instead, "they may work with cultural artefacts like written text or study recordings of interactions they did not observe first-hand" such as reports and short films produced for or by the organisations involved in the selected theatre-centric projects (ibid.). Here scripts, post-show transcript and evaluations, Tweets and semi-structured interviews were used to complement the observational fieldwork listed above, ensuring a multiple methods approach was adopted to collect data in a systematic manner.

This thesis' ethnographic investigation is conducted through two sample case studies focusing on the identification of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland. Use of an ethnographic case study approach for this research offers "great scope for exploration" of what people really do as opposed to what they say they do, though the conveying of a researcher's experience in the field "always involves selection and interpretation" as will be discussed later in this chapter (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 104).

2.1.1 Selection of Case Studies

Using the broad approach outlined above, this research explores two case studies as settings in which the potential of engaged theatre as a site of peacebuilding could be researched. In selecting settings "to act as a case study in which to conduct an ethnographic investigation" I developed the following criteria (Bryman, 2008, p. 405). The selected projects use

drama/theatre as a creative way to generate informed discussions around challenging issues facing a society in transition. The sample case studies should involve locally-based, small-scale and time-limited projects run by community and cultural sector organisations with a history of engagement around storytelling and dealing with the past in Northern Ireland. The search for a sample case study never focused on finding organisations that were well versed in John Paul Lederach's theory and approach to conflict transformation. However, prior to selection, potential case studies were reviewed with regard to whether they could assist in gaining a deeper understanding of Lederach's (2005) call for the practice of moral imagination in divided societies. Thus, the selected cases should be theatre-centric projects stemming from:

- Belief in the power of story/drama to transform lives;
- The desire to give a voice to unheard, marginalised or often overlooked stories within and across communities;
- The intent to challenge dominant narratives that "reduce history into dualistic polarities" (Lederach, 2005, p. 35);
- An interest in using varied audience engagement modes including post-show discussions and written feedback;
- Commitments to finding ways to extend the project's reach.

The projects chosen which met these criteria were: *Those You Pass on the Street* project (Case Study 1), a project initiated by the cross-community peacebuilding organisation Healing Through Remembering (HRT) in collaboration with Kabosh Theatre; and *Crows on the Wire* (Case Study 2), a project undertaken by the Verbal Arts Centre, an educational charity dedicated to the development of the verbal arts and literacy. These projects illustrate the diversity of work, practices and processes centred on building mutual understanding and constructive social change. The case studies draw out key contrasting elements of the approach taken by these organisations as part of their mission to bring unheard voices to the forefront, although these narratives may be difficult to hear and to acknowledge in the aftermath of the violent, protracted conflict.

The stated ancillary objective of this research was to explore the potential of digital media as a site of learning and change in an "ever-

evolving search for ways to discover, activate and realise the full potential inherent in each individual and society” (Arai, 2011, p. 238). The goal was to find at least one project incorporating a digital element and this emerged in the mobile application *Crows on the Wire App* (VAC, 2014b) developed as part of Case Study 2 project. While the Case Study 1 project did not include a similar digital element, Kabosh Theatre has begun doing work at the nexus of theatre, digital media and cultural tourism leading to the launch of the *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a) to be discussed in chapter 4. These digital practices provide additional insight into ways in which theatre creates space for moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition.

The sub-sections below provide background information on the two theatre-centric projects and initial insight into challenges and limitations of this research, some of which will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.1.2 Case Study 1: *Those You Pass on the Street* Project

The *Those You Pass on the Street* project was initiated by Belfast-based Healing Through Remembering (HTR) as part of their mission to explore different ways of engaging interested individuals and groups in conversations on the issue of how to deal with the legacies of the past in order to build a “future that is peaceful, politically stable, and benefits generations to come” (2013, p. 2). This HTR project took four years (2010-2014) to bring to fruition largely due to difficulties in securing European Union Peace III funding (K. Turner, personal communication, February 23, 2015; also Bush & Houston, 2011; HTR 2010, 2014a).²⁹

In 2010 HTR commissioned its first full-length drama “for use with community groups to stimulate discussion on dealing with the past” (HTR, 2010, n.p.). HTR wanted a play that would act as a catalyst for facilitated discussions held immediately after a performance or as part of ongoing and future HTR’s dialogue workshops (ibid.). As will be explored in chapter 5, the play *Those You Pass on the street* written by L. McKeown tells the story of four very different characters – Elizabeth, Ann, Frank and Pat – whose

²⁹ Since 1995, the European Union has provided funding for peacebuilding purposes in Northern Ireland the border counties in the Republic of Ireland as mentioned in the introductory chapter (see Bush & Houston, 2011; Jennings, 2010, 2012).

lives were profoundly affected by the conflict. Elizabeth's visit to the Sinn Féin constituency office as a result of persistent anti-social behaviour around her house sets off a chain reaction that breaks longstanding silences for each character and tests family and political loyalties. The development stage of the play took two years. In the fall of 2012, HTR in collaboration with Kabosh Theatre, organised separate closed readings of the play for members of the HTR Board of Directors who were not briefed in advance about the storyline, and for two distinct community groups – one from West Belfast and another from North Belfast (see HTR, 2012, p. 11; also K. Turner, personal communication, February 23, 2015; P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). The playwright then revised the script based on the feedback received from these groups (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). In interview Kabosh Theatre's P. McFetridge explained that the chief motivation behind this lengthy development process was to try to get the "message right, that it would be heard by people that weren't receptive to it because there's no point doing work like this if you're only preaching to the converted" (ibid.).

In late 2013, HTR secured Peace III funding for the delivery of performances of *Those You Pass on the Street* and Kabosh Theatre was successful in its bid to produce the play (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015; HTR & Kabosh, 2014a). Rehearsals were held in January 2014 and four performances were delivered from January 29 to February 1, 2014, at different venues in Belfast. Figure 2.1 shows a photograph of a meeting in January 2014 that includes the cast and crew, HTR's K. Turner and the researcher. While HTR and Kabosh Theatre collaborated in the delivery of performances and post-show discussions for the initial run, the latter was solely in charge of revivals of the play from March 24 to 26, 2014 and March 23 to 28, 2015 (Foy-fieldnotes, January 29, 2014). There was no discussion of pushing the project's legacy further: while HTR found the *Crows on the Wire App* (VAC, 2014b) an innovative legacy output, HTR did not seek to develop the play in this manner, reasoning that their role is in enabling conversations and "about encouraging other people in their realms to do what's needed rather than us" (K. Turner, personal communication, February 23, 2015).

Figure 2.1 Director P. McFetridge shares her vision of the staging of the play *Those You Pass on the Street*



Note. P. McFetridge (standing) talks about the script and rehearsals for the initial run of *Those You Pass on the Street* in January 2014 (Kabosh, 2014a).

The fieldwork for Case Study 1 took place from January 2014 to June 2015. This period covered the initial (January 2014), second (March 2014) and third run (March 2015) of the play, the latter run extending the play's reach to both urban and rural areas in Northern Ireland as will be detailed in chapter 5. The observational work primarily focused on the initial and third run of the play including rehearsals, performances and post-show discussions while documentary sources and interviews were used to examine the second run of the play.

2.1.3 Case Study 2: *Crows on the Wire* Project

The *Crows on the Wire* (COTW) project was initiated by Derry-Londonderry's Verbal Arts Centre (VAC) as part of its mission to promote all forms of written and spoken verbal arts (Crows on the Wire, 2014, n.p.). VAC views itself as a "conduit for stories" not told, deliberately ignored or marginalised in the public domain and brought into "the cultural space for discussion and dialogue" (J. Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014; Burgess, 2014, Author's Note). This project focused on the position

that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) held within Northern Irish society “and the pressures and responses which that position created for individual officers” during the conflict and as a result of the transition of the RUC to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in 2001 (Crows on the Wire, 2014, n.p.).

VAC received Peace III funding for a two-year period (2013 and 2014) and put together a two-person team to oversee the project (see Fearon Consulting, 2014). The Centre also set up a Steering Group made up of individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise ranging from academia, the RUC and PSNI, former Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Royal Infantry Regiment, to local community peace and reconciliation initiatives, as detailed in Appendix B (VAC, 2013a, n.p.). Republican ex-prisoner and now playwright L. McKeown shared some telling insight about his involvement in this group during the research-related interview:

I imagine ... it did no harm to have someone from a very different background, my background in particular, on their panel ... I suppose I was initially surprised ... that the panel behind the whole project, more or less in terms of the former RUC officers, that they would be okay with me being on it ... So I thought it was a very positive development in terms of society and where everybody was that I could be involved. (personal communication, February 25, 2015)

The group supported the project through networking and the development of links between the themes of the *Crows on the Wire* play and the wider community and interest groups, proposing local performance venues and being part of post-show discussion panels (Crows on the Wire, 2014a, n.p.). Figure 2.2 shows COTW Steering Group members’ L. McKeown and former RUC/PSNI officer R. McCallum being interviewed together about this project. VAC partnered with Derry-Londonderry’s Blue Eagle Productions, an independent theatre and production company under the direction of playwright J. Burgess, for the development of the play and performance tour and with Belfast-based Blacknorth Studio, specialising in animation and interactive digital products, for the making of an educational resource.³⁰

³⁰ For more information on Blue Eagle Productions see McDowell (2013, p. 331, n. 50); for Blacknorth Studio go to: <http://kris-kelly.squarespace.com/>

Figure 2.2 Attesting to the diversity of the COTW Steering Group membership



Note. Cameraman (standing) and journalist (next to cameraman) get ready to interview R. McCallum (far centre) L. McKeown (far right) about the COTW project (VAC, 2013d).

The COTW team took a two-phase approach to this project. The first phase (2013) centred on the development and production of the *Crows on the Wire* play. The play explores the “sense of disillusionment, betrayal and resentment” of serving RUC officers at the time of the transition to the PSNI (November 2001) through exchanges between three main characters: Jack, a thirty-year veteran of the RUC; David, a brash rookie with high hopes for the new police service; and Ruth, a former RUC officer who worked with Jack (Burgess, 2014, Author’s Note). The performance and discussion tour across Northern Ireland and border counties (Republic of Ireland) took place between November 6 and 29, 2013 (Crows on the Wire, 2014, n.p.; VAC, 2013a, n.p.). It was preceded by community engagement programmes aimed at community groups and post-primary school pupils in and around Derry-Londonderry as part of “on-going work towards a peaceful and normalised society in Northern Ireland” (J. Kerr cited in Verbal, 2014c, n.p.). The second phase (2014) focused on the launch of VAC’s *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) as part of the educational legacy aspect of the project. The script was converted into an interactive digital

graphic novel to assist post-primary school pupils (aged thirteen to sixteen) in understanding the conflict and reflecting on how the past influences the present as will be explored further in chapter 6.

The fieldwork for Case Study 2 took place from June 2014 to June 2015 at the VAC offices in Derry-Londonderry and other settings across the island of Ireland, with the majority of the work conducted between June and December 2014, when the COTW project came to an end. Observational work mainly focused on the second phase of the project while documentary sources and interviews were used to examine the projects' first phase as I did not attend rehearsals or performances of the COTW play.

As outlined above both theatre-centric projects fulfilled the criteria for selection and had different phases as well as lasted over varying lengths of time. As I could not be involved at every stage of the projects, the next section charts the various ethnographic-based approaches that were used at different points in each project's lifecycle.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

This section focuses on the qualitative data collection methods selected for the investigation of how the case studies "engage conflict, nurture constructive change, and build peace" in Northern Ireland (Lederach, 2011, p. xi). The methods used to "extend and complete the possibilities of knowledge production" were observation, desk research of written, audio and visual documentary material and semi-structured expert interviews (Flick, 2009, p. 445). This multi-method approach considered the field access points for each case study as well as the stage, scope and timeframe of each project. While these methods are laid in a sequential manner in this chapter, ethnographic research is best "envisaged as a series of actions that are coordinated in a flexible manner" (Brewer, 2000, p. 57).

2.2.1 Observational Fieldwork

While observation is an inherent part of many types of qualitative research, the observation of people and activities in their natural setting forms "the guts of the ethnographic approach" (Spindler & Spindler, 1992 cited in Punch, 2005, p. 181). The goal was to observe how two cultural

sector organisations – Kabosh Theatre and Verbal Arts Centre – go about creating space for the moral imagination to take hold and that invite people to take part in difficult discussions around the legacies of the past in Northern Ireland. None of the observed activities – rehearsals, performances, post-show discussions (Case Study 1) – and public events such as the COTW App launch event (September 2014) and COTW project-related talks to varied audiences (Case Study 2), were “contrived for research purposes” (Punch, 2005, p. 179). Moreover, overt observation was conducted with the knowledge and permission of the case study gatekeepers: Kabosh Theatre’s P. McFetridge (Case Study 1) and COTW Project Coordinator M. Sutherland (Case Study 2). The sub-sections below detail the nature, scope and recording of the observational fieldwork.

2.2.1.1 Case Study 1: *Those You Pass on the Street* Project

Observational fieldwork was the central method of data collection employed for Case Study 1. I conducted intensive observational fieldwork in January 2014 and in March 2015, coinciding with the initial and third run of the *Those You Pass on the Street* play. I observed rehearsals, performances and post-show discussions with Kabosh Theatre’s permission and university ethics approval (see below). The goal was to collect first-hand data on the behind-the-scene minutiae that go into the conception of a play, creation of an imaginative space and delivery of performances that, taken as a whole, invite individuals and groups to engage in difficult discussions around a challenging past. Observation of the artistic process was extended by attendance at events listed in Appendix A that focus on the arts and peacebuilding where P. McFetridge talked about this project and other projects with a digital element (see chapter 4).

Rehearsals

Rehearsals of the play *Those You Pass on the Street* were held at the Great Victoria Presbyterian Church in Belfast’s city centre. I observed rehearsal processes that took place Monday to Friday between January 6 and 28, 2014 for the initial run of the play and from March 2 to 6, 2015 for

the third run of the play.³¹ The initial rehearsal process consisted of detailed breakdowns of the script to explore it for meaning, subtext, and motivation, and delve deeper into the relationship between the protagonists Elizabeth, Ann, Frank and Pat, and each character's relationship to the onstage physical space they would be in, enter and exit. This was followed by run-throughs of specific scenes and of the whole play, combined with production meetings and discussions with the playwright. The core team consisted of director P. McFetridge, four professional actors, a stage assistant, and a small production team. At times playwright L. McKeown and HTR's K. Turner attended rehearsals.

As a researcher I was mindful that I was joining a close-knit social unit composed of individuals who are used to working together as the professional theatre arts community is relatively small in Northern Ireland. Given the cultural sector setting and its members, my involvement can be summarised as follows: "to be there when the action takes place and to change that action as little as possible by [their] presence" (Spindler & Spindler, 1992 cited in Punch, 2005, p. 181; also Adler & Adler, 1987; Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2003). Once I became more familiar with the group dynamics and daily routine, I participated in tasks ranging from tea making to occasional door keeping at venues. This is in line with Adler & Adler's (1987) idea of membership roles in observed settings: the advantage lies in "[group] members' recognition of the researcher as a fellow member; this allows the researcher to participate in routine practices of members, as one of them, to naturally experience the members' world" (p. 34). Presence at the January 2014 rehearsals gave opportunities for observation of exchanges between HTR, Kabosh and the playwright on topics such as whether to hold facilitated discussion after every performance, which is referenced in chapter 5. The March 2015 rehearsals involved the same cast and crew and I also assumed an observational role, while doing small supportive tasks on the periphery of the group.

³¹ I was unable to attend rehearsals, performances/post-show discussions for the second run of *Those You Pass on the Street*: audience feedback analysis is based on tweets posted by Kabosh Theatre during post-show discussions and semi-structured interviews.

Performances and Post-Show Discussions

I attended pre-performance meetings involving the play's director, cast and crew and most of the performances and post-show discussions during the initial and third run of the play in late January 2014 and March 2015.³² This enabled me to be part of the aesthetic experience between actor and audience and reflect on how engaged theatre invites audiences to experience "a kind of softening and relaxation, and an increased openness to another point of view ... [and] find a little space within themselves to accommodate the humanity" of the characters and their worldviews (Salas, 2011, p. 98). In the context of research centred on the transformative potential of theatre, I felt it was important to witness first-hand the stories of audience members, observe non-verbal responses and emotions stirred by the play's characters and storylines as part of this research's fieldwork.

Recording of Observations

Observation of rehearsals was recorded through detailed note-taking in full view of cast and crew, though whenever possible I tried not to draw too much attention to this activity by physically positioning myself in such a way as to not interfere with the artistic process. The note-taking had four intersecting data collection objectives that were communicated to P. McFetridge (Foy-fieldnotes, January 16, 2014):

1. Identify the play's themes;
2. Trace each characters' back-story;
3. Identify elements of the artistic process including set and actor's positioning that animate the aesthetic experience of the audience;
4. Gain insight into Kabosh Theatre's vision of the contribution that theatre can make "to the complex and multifaceted work of transforming conflict". (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 10)

The notes included such details as location; date and time; who was present on the day; what scene was being discussed or rehearsed; production meetings and related activities like costumes and set adjustments; what prompted certain exchanges on, or clarifications of, text and staging. As

³² During the initial run of the play, I was unable to attend the last performance held in Belfast and the performance in Derry-Londonderry during the third run of the play.

soon as possible thereafter, the notes were reviewed namely to identify issues and exchanges requiring elucidation or additional context and the best method for follow up.

Attendance at performances and post-show discussions was recorded through handwritten notetaking. I recorded anonymised comments capturing key exchanges between the audience and the panel. These notes included details like location, estimated number of audience members and post-show discussion attendees; audience composition if known; age bracket; my sense of audience response to the play; names of facilitator and panel members; and points raised by the play's director at pre-performance meetings. These notes were typed up in the form of a chart divided by date and venue and were shared with Kabosh Theatre. Given the play's subject-matter, memories and emotions it might bring back and the varied spaces used for post-show discussions, the use of a tape-recording device would have been more obtrusive and less conducive to the sharing by attendees of their experiences of the conflict.

For documentation purposes, I employed photography as a visual adjunct to my fieldnotes and to supplement the presentation of the data analysis. These images were taken at the rehearsal hall and performance venues when the actors were not rehearsing; none were taken during actual performances or post-show discussions. Kabosh Theatre gave me permission to use images they posted on various social media sites.

2.2.1.2 Case Study 2: *Crows on the Wire* Project

Due to the stage at which I undertook the COTW case study, it was not possible to attend performances. However observational opportunities in relation to this project arose at the following events listed in Appendix A:

- Workshop on the COTW project at the International Community Arts Festival in Rotterdam (Netherlands) – March 26-30, 2014³³;
- Public launch of the *Crows on the Wire App* held at the VAC offices – September 15, 2014;
- *COTW Narratives of the Unheard* symposium held at the VAC offices – October 2, 2014;

³³ Attendance at the festival facilitated assessment of the COTW project's suitability as a case study.

- Digital Arts and Humanities Institute 2014 held at University College Cork (Republic of Ireland) – September 4, 2014;
- *Accounts of the Conflict: Digitally Archiving Stories for Peacebuilding* conference hosted by INCORE/University of Ulster in Belfast, panel – *Thinking of the next generation: engaging young people through the use of personal Onarratives of the conflict* – November 18, 2014;
- *A Place, A Border – Different Stories, a Bridging Ages* Conference (2014) held at the County Museum Dundalk (Republic of Ireland) – June 4, 2015.

Presence at these events facilitated the observation of reactions to the project, discussions and questions raised by audiences ranging from local community activists, community arts practitioners to scholars and students in various academic fields. The data was augmented by discussions with persons involved in the project at events, interviews, and documentary products including e-mail exchanges with COTW's M. Sutherland.

Attendance at these events was recorded through fieldnotes with the full knowledge and verbal consent of the case study gatekeeper. The notes are not a verbatim transcript of the presentations or discussions that followed. The researcher recorded anonymised comments using numbers to keep track of key exchanges between the presenter and attendees unless that individual was an invited speaker, panel member or otherwise involved in the COTW project. The notes included details about location, speakers and panel members, estimated number of attendees and audience composition, and COTW project elements emphasised in presentations. VAC provided me with some photographs and gave permission for the use of photographs and illustrations retrieved from various social media sites.

2.2.2 Documentary Sources of Data

Historical and contemporary documents form "a rich source of data for social research" (Punch, 2005, p. 184). While documentary product is usually associated with written text, it extends to visual artefacts like short films, photographs and video-recorded interviews "which coexist with [written] words ... and sometimes replace them" (Silverman, 2006, p. 240). In this thesis the term documentary refers to data "consisting of words and/or images which have become recorded without the intervention of a

researcher” (ibid., p. 153). Table 2.1 lists key documentary products in accordance with Scott’s (1990) two-prong typology – by authorship and type of access (pp. 10-18).

Table 2.1 Key documentary sources of data by case study

Case Study 1 – <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i> project		
Type of Document	Authorship: created for/external to project	Access (general public)
▪ Script	L. McKeown	restricted – unpublished
▪ Audience Feedback Forms Summary (initial run of play – January 2014)	HTR (used their generic form)	Restricted
▪ Audience Feedback Forms (third run of play – March 2015)	Kabosh Theatre (form created by company)	Restricted
▪ Twitter posts (second run of play – March 2014)	Kabosh Theatre	Tweets – open (@KaboshTheatre)
▪ Kabosh Theatre Newsletter (April 2015)	Kabosh Theatre	Semi-open (e-mail subscription)
▪ Call for Tender (e.g. script, delivery of performances)	Healing Through Remembering (HTR)	Open – archival (HTR website)
▪ News release about the play (January 2014)	HTR/Kabosh Theatre	Open – archival (via HTR/website)
▪ Blog interviews with P. McFetridge on productions, creative process or related to academic presentations	Various – external to project (cited in thesis)	Open – archival though some may no longer available due to shut down of websites (funding cuts)
▪ Filmed clips from play used as promotional tool	Kabosh Theatre (2015)	Open – available through YouTube
Case Study 2 – <i>Crows on the Wire</i> project		
Type of document	Authorship: created for/external to project	Access (general public)
▪ Script	J. Burgess	open – published in 2014
▪ <i>Crows on the Wire App</i> (VAC, 2014b)	Verbal Arts Centre/Blacknorth Studio	Open – available via Apple Store and Google Play ³⁴
▪ Audience feedback forms (adult/pupil)	Verbal Arts Centre	Restricted
▪ Post-show transcripts (identified in chapter 6)	Verbal Arts Centre	Restricted ³⁵
▪ Call for Tender for the creation of the <i>Crows on the Wire App</i>	Verbal Arts Centre	Closed
Reports including McMurray (2014a) and Fearon Consulting (2014)	Commissioned by the Verbal Arts Centre	Restricted
▪ Newsletters/leaflets	Verbal Arts Centre	Semi-open – e-mail subscription/at events
▪ Short films uploaded to YouTube as project legacy	Verbal Arts Centre	Open – see Appendix C

Concerning restricted or closed documents, I was given access to these

³⁴ The *Crows on the Wire App* was registered on the Apple Store by the Verbal Arts Centre (2014a) and on Google Play by Blacknorth Studio (2014).

³⁵ For the reader’s information, details of the available transcripts are found under VAC (2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013e, 2013g).

documents by the respective case study gatekeeper.

The collation of audience written feedback was important for the purposes of this research. Concerning Case Study 1, HTR used a generic feedback form to gather data about what they thought about the play for the initial run of the *Those You Pass on the Street* play (January 2014) and prepared an audience evaluation summary that was forwarded to Kabosh Theatre (personal communication, February 5, 2014 & January 12, 2015). No feedback form was used during the second run of the play (March 2014). Kabosh Theatre devised a feedback template that was used for the third run of the play (March 2015). It captures a wide-ranging set of data intended to inform their approach to future theatre projects around dealing with the past. I was granted access to these feedback forms at Kabosh Theatre's office in Belfast and created a summary of the answers by date, location, and audience type. A copy of this summary was given to Kabosh Theatre and the analysis of Case Study 1 written feedback is presented in chapter 5. The data collection also makes use of anonymised audience questions or comments posted on Twitter by the theatre company during post-show discussions for the second run of the play (March 2014) to reconstruct what was said during these discussions for knowledge-production purposes.

While neither HTR nor Kabosh Theatre tape recorded post-show discussion, the Verbal Arts Centre (VAC) recorded a limited number of adult-oriented post-show discussions around the issues raised by the *Crows on the Wire* play. The COTW team provided me with a copy of those transcripts (M. Sutherland, personal communication, April 28, 2014). It also devised a project-specific audience feedback form to be filled out by adult and pupil attendees. This form collected data about pre and post-performance perception of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and views on theatre as an effective medium for exploring challenging issues. I was given access to this data at the VAC offices in Derry-Londonderry and compiled the answers by date, location, and audience type. The analysis of audience engagement is presented in chapter 6.

Contrary to HTR and Kabosh Theatre, the COTW team did not use Twitter during post-show discussions. Instead VAC documented the various stages of and key events around the COTW project through the use of short

films available on YouTube and which are listed in Appendix C. Of particular interest in terms of gaining insight into the reasons behind the COTW project and the different motivations of various actors in the conflict see the promotional video entitled *Crows on the Wire* (Crows Verbal, 2013a).

2.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviewing

The observational and documentary fieldwork was coupled with semi-structured interviews. The aim was to gather a more well-rounded collection of information for analyses around the question of “artistic process and product understood as potential sites of relationship-building, learning and transformation” (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 7). A total of eleven interviews were conducted with individuals directly involved in the case studies; each interview lasting around one hour. Purposive sampling was used to recruit interviewees in a “strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed ... [and] differ from each other in terms of key characteristics” (Bryman, 2008, p. 415). As shown in Appendix D, the interviewees included theatre practitioners, directors of the organisations who initiated the projects, the COTW project coordinator and members of the COTW Steering Group. L. McKeown was the only person interviewed for his knowledge of and involvement in both case study projects. The interviews were conducted in Derry-Londonderry and Belfast between September 2014 and February 2015.

I prepared an interview schedule intended to elicit contrasting and complementary responses to a mostly predefined set of baseline and focused questions centred on the role that engaged theatre is playing in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland. These questions were grouped into four broad topic areas: (1) theatre as a tool for looking beyond the presenting situation in a society in transition, (2) script/performance as a catalyst for informed discussion about the legacies of the past, (3) impact of project on interviewee’s work or views on exploring creative ways of effecting constructive change and (4) other (comments/questions). The choice of questions germane to both case studies was inspired by the framework for planning, documenting and assessing engaged theatre work proposed by Cohen and Walker (2011a, 2011b). Table 2.2 lists the baseline

questions developed for Case Study 1 and Case Study 2.

Table 2.2 Baseline interview questions by topic used for both case studies

Interview topic areas	Baseline questions developed for each topic
A. Theatre as a vehicle or platform for change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you see yourself as a peacebuilder? ▪ What should be the role of theatre in a post-conflict society, specifically Northern Ireland? ▪ What is the importance of inviting individuals and communities to look beyond the presenting situation in the wider context of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland?
B. Play/performance as a catalyst for informed discussion/change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did you come to be involved with this particular project? ▪ What were the strengths and risks associated with the play and project? ▪ Do you see this drama as a catalyst for informed post-show discussions? If so, why?
C. Impact of project on approach to community-based theatre (broadly defined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has your involvement in this project impacted your approach to, or perception of, community-based theatre or your own work? ▪ What do you think professional actors bring to the performance of this type of work?
D. Other (bringing the interview to a close)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anything that the respondent would like to bring up, revisit or ask about before ending the interview.

Every effort was made to ask all the baseline questions using similar wording, adapted as necessary to fit an interviewee's background or expertise and to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from interviewees (see Bryman, 2008; Rapley, 2004). I also prepared a list of focused questions as shown in Appendix E. The latter reflected the background or expertise of the interviewee or a certain aspect of the project. A copy of the interview schedule was given to interviewees.

The interviews were recorded with the aid of audiotape recorders and note-taking with the verbal consent of interviewees. Two audiotape recorders were used after equipment problems occurred during the initial and follow-up interview with the first interviewee. The recordings were transcribed by a third party with experience in doctoral research-related transcription.³⁶ I checked the transcripts against the tape and my notes

³⁶The initial interview with M. Jennings (Case Study 2) was conducted on September 30, 2014. A follow-up interview took place on October 2, 2014 to expand on specific points raised by the interviewee. Due to a recording problem during that interview, I relied on my fieldnotes for data analysis.

and then only the recording used for transcription purposes was kept. I did not send a copy of the transcripts for their approval for the following reasons. Firstly, the provision of a copy of sample research questions formed part of the research ethics approval institutional approval process and interviewees were given an opportunity to revisit a question or answer at the end of their interview, all of which will be further detailed below.³⁷ Moreover, none of the interviewees requested to review the transcripts. Secondly, my note-taking and interview schedule together with the overall quality of recordings yielded consistent transcripts. There was only one case where the researcher contacted an interviewee by e-mail (as per instruction on consent form) to clarify a few difficultly audible words that were deemed important in the context of the discussion. Finally although the transcripts were not reviewed by the interviewees, key informants such as Kabosh Theatre's P. McFetridge and COTW project's M. Sutherland, as case study gatekeepers, provided comments on an early draft of relevant sections of this thesis as did HTR's K. Turner. All relevant documents are stored in a dedicated folder on my password protected computer along with a backup copy in a file hosting service (Dropbox).³⁸

After having outlined the data collection and recording methods, the focus shifts to a discussion of the ethics approval process and ethical safeguards employed in the conduct of this research's fieldwork.

2.3 Ethical Considerations and Institutional Approval

In the conduct of ethnographic fieldwork involving observation, ethical considerations form the basis of the research strategy which

³⁷ There were two cases where, during the interview, the expert interviewee asked that a particular comment not be quoted in the thesis (in one instance it related to an upcoming theatrical production not yet finalised). While I offered to stop recording the conversation and remove those comments from the transcript, both stated that it was not necessary. These requests were discussed with my supervisor and did not affect the research findings presented in chapters 5 and 6.

³⁸ It should be noted that since undertaking this thesis' data collection and write-up of research findings, the regulatory framework has changed around data storage following the coming into force of the European Union's *General Data Protection Regulation* (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) on May 28, 2018. As a result, researchers should now familiarise themselves with institutional repositories and data storage management strategies to ensure compliance with new institutional and regulatory principles and rules. As of the date of submission of this thesis, Trinity College Dublin had not issued new regulatory principles regarding the storage of research data. However, data from the interviews is stored on a password protected computer accessible only to the researcher and will no longer be stored on e-mail or Cloud (this data is being removed from Dropbox and being backed up on an external hard).

“legitimises the whole enterprise: it permeates research design and project organisation; and extends to minute and momentary decisions” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 66). The fact that Northern Ireland is “one of the world’s most researched societies” and that many of its civil society actors have been involved in or are the object of countless academic studies does not lessen the level of care to be taken when conducting fieldwork in the period of post-conflict transition (Brewer, 2001, p. 779; also Schubotz, 2005). This level of care includes attention to issues such as confidentiality, minimising the risks of doing harm to individuals or communities, and participation based on informed consent.

Prior to the start of this research’s ethnographic fieldwork, I submitted two separate applications for research ethics approval by Trinity College Dublin’s Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Ecumenics Research Ethics Committee (Research Ethics Committee). These applications contained four documents: an initial and further checklist for research ethics release, an application for a Certificate of Ethical Approval detailing the proposed use of observation, proposed document collection methods including an interview questions template, and the informed consent form for interviews that is reproduced in Appendix F.

The application for ethical approval relating to Case Study 1 was submitted to the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee on December 31, 2013 after learning that the delivery of performances of the play *Those You Pass on the Street*, originally planned for the spring of 2014, had been moved up to January 2014 (P. McFetridge, personal communication, December 21, 2013). As the rehearsals were scheduled to start on January 6, 2014, the Chair granted provisional approval to proceed with fieldwork as outlined in the application (personal communication, January 2, 2014).³⁹ Kabosh Theatre’s P. McFetridge was advised of the approval by e-mail to which she responded: “I am ... happy for you to sit in on rehearsals and engage with this project in its entirety” (personal communication, January 2, 2014). There was no formal written observation protocol negotiated prior to observing rehearsals in January 2014 and in March 2015. Rather at

³⁹ The final Certificate for Approval was issued by the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at a later date (Chair, personal communication, April 23, 2014).

the start of the former, P. McFetridge introduced me to the cast and crew and provided a verbal summary of the study and data collection methods (Foy–fieldnotes, January 6, 2014). She also noted that the researcher may not be permitted to take notes in some circumstances due to the sensitivity around the discussion of certain events or stories (Foy –fieldnotes, January 17, 2014). This only occurred once (ibid.). Playwright L. McKeown and HTR’s K. Turner were informed of the research project including the observation of rehearsals, performances and post-show discussions (ibid.). The same protocol applied during the third run of the play in March 2015.

The application for ethical approval regarding Case Study 2 was submitted to the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee on May 8, 2014, and subsequently approved (Chair, personal communication, June 11, 2014). Prior to this submission, the researcher had preliminary discussions with VAC about the possibility of including its *Crows on the Wire* project as a case study. In an e-mail exchange, COTW Project Coordinator M. Sutherland indicated that VAC’s Executive Director J. Kerr had agreed to the Centre’s participation in this research (personal communication, April 28, 2014). The Research Ethics Committee did not request any additional documents, forms or further clarifications regarding either case study.

The informed consent form found in Appendix F was used for the conduct of both case studies’ interviews. The content and purpose of this form and of the research project was discussed with interviewees prior to the start of the interview. They were informed of their right to refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time and to withdraw their participation in this doctoral research at any stage. They were invited to add details or conditions regarding data collection and dissemination of findings in a space provided for that purpose on the form; these ranged from asking for a copy of the relevant thesis chapter to stating that in some cases there may be a need to consult their board of directors regarding publication projects.⁴⁰ As well, the majority of interviewees stated verbally that their full name, background and/or occupation could be used in data collection, analysis and dissemination of findings whereas a more generic identifier was used for two Case Study 1 interviewees – Actor 1 and Actor 2.

⁴⁰ HTR, Kabosh Theatre and VAC each have a voluntary Board of Directors.

Two copies of the form with identical handwritten notes were signed by the interviewee and by me for our respective records.

Given the use of photographs for documentation purposes and to supplement the presentation of data analysis throughout this thesis, it is necessary to discuss related ethical considerations. The informed consent form asked interviewees to confirm whether they agreed to have photographs included in this thesis and other research-related publications. The interviewees were free to agree to (or refuse) any of the publication options listed on the form found in Appendix F. There was a further reference under the section dealing with confidentiality and data protection and in the one dealing with the right to withdraw at any time from the research project including refusal, at any stage, to be photographed or of the use of photographs that could lead to their identification by a third party. Through this form, all of the interviewees agreed to the use of their photographs in the thesis. HTR's K. Turner and Kabosh Theatre's P. McFetridge asked to review in advance materials that might be used, and the same principle was applied to materials related to VAC's COTW project. Photographs with people – including those showing members of the general public – were taken by or on behalf of the respective organisations, in the latter case generally by a professional photographer.⁴¹ I did not independently seek or use photographs posted by third parties. The vast majority of these photographs were reproduced by Kabosh Theatre and VAC (COTW Team) a number of times on their social media accounts (website, Facebook, Twitter) and paper/e-mail subscription newsletters, leaflets and the like. Moreover, there were additional discussions with Kabosh Theatre and VAC about the use of photographs (and App screenshots) in the context of research-related academic article publication projects. Except for those in this chapter, the photographs were taken at public events like the COTW App launch (September 2014) or Kabosh Theatre theatrical walking tours discussed in chapter 4 and public performances of the plays analysed in chapters 5 and 6. These photographs were taken and became part of the data collection and write up of research findings prior to the coming into force of the European Union's *General Data Protection Regulation*

⁴¹ The only such photograph I took was one of a student whose face was hidden by an Oculus head gear at the launch of the COTW App at the VAC offices, a copy of which was given to VAC.

referenced earlier. Finally, in light of separate requests to either attribute quotes from post-show discussions made by panel members or identify actors involved in the key productions documented in this thesis, I made the decision to name those who fell under these categories in the captions under the photographs in this thesis.

Having reviewed ethical practice considerations for the conduct of this ethnographic research, the attention turns to the data analysis method applied to gain theoretical insight into the role of theatre in building peace.

2.4 Data Analysis

This section describes the approach employed for the analysis of qualitative data collected in the manner described in the previous section. Gibson & Brown (2009) suggest that “analysis is, in many respects, about storytelling and as any novelist will attest themes are a useful device for narrative construction” (p. 129). The choice of the qualitative analysis practice referred to as theoretical thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) was driven by the more deductive approach adopted for the exploration of engaged theatre as a site of peacebuilding through the lens of the theoretical framework for this research founded in conflict transformation theorist John Paul Lederach’s (2005) idea of the moral imagination which will be outlined in chapter 3.⁴² The analysis’ aim was to produce “a meaningful account of the phenomenon that addresses key aspects of the research question” around connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 278). It was based on the initial thematic framework built around the four predispositions identified by Lederach as essential to peacebuilding: (1) acknowledging relational interdependency, (2) cultivating paradoxical curiosity, (3) making space for creative acts, and (4) risk-taking, all defined in the next chapter (2005, pp. 34-39; also Cohen et al., 2011b; Gibson & Brown, 2009; Spencer et al., 2014). This thematic approach was designed to explore Lederach’s theoretical propositions concerning the potential of the moral

⁴² The selected data analysis method has a much longer history than could be covered in this section. For an overview of the history and conceptual foundations of content analysis as a research technique for social research that informed this important aspect of the research methodology utilised for this thesis see Krippendorff’s (1980) work *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*.

imagination to inspire conflict transformation in a transitional setting.

The decision to devise an initial thematic framework and then identify links with the themes listed above, if any, within and between datasets was made after careful consideration of the following factors:

Much will depend on the research question or the aims of the study, the context in which it is being conducted, the volume and complexity of the data, as well as the timescale and research resources. (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 286)

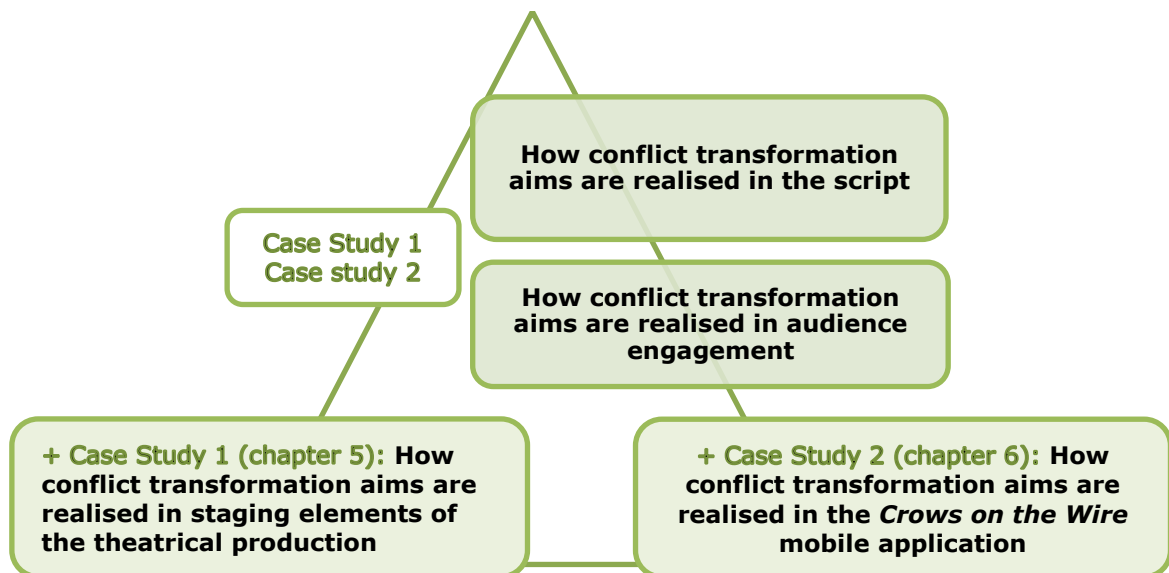
By working systematically through each type of data (e.g. fieldnotes, transcripts, documentary evidence), I manually identified patterns and clusters of meaning within the data: “the repetition of an aspect of experience that was already mentioned in other passages takes on weight and calls attention to itself” (Seidman, 1998, p. 109; also Braun & Clarke, 2006).⁴³ Here the main task was to explicate the ways in which cultural sector project initiators, theatre-makers and those witnessing the stories of fictional characters “come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage” difficult issues around a challenging past in Northern Ireland (Miles & Huberman, 1994 cited in Punch, 2005, p. 142). A number of factors helped to shape or inform the patterns of data. Given the timing of interviews conducted as part of the fieldwork, the interview schedule could incorporate “issues arising in the field and give the researcher the opportunity to probe” and assess their relevance in relation to the research questions (Barbour, 2014, p. 220). The structure and similar purpose of each case study project also informed the clustering of data. For example, while there were variations in the use and content of audience feedback forms, the latter sought to draw out pre and post-performance perceptions of the difficult issues raised in the drama and views on theatre as a useful way to explore unheard stories from the past. To a certain extent, therefore, there were elements of predictability within each case study that facilitated the cross-sectional analysis of data within and across the two selected case studies. Moreover, since deductive and inductive processes “are not mutually exclusive”, the reading and analysing of datasets were

⁴³ Given the small-scale and time-limited nature of the selected theatre-centric case studies, I concluded that the data analysis could be done manually as the amount of collected data was manageable and in most-cases already sufficiently structured to yield reliable data interpretation.

“open to redirection in the light of on-going analysis through the various rounds of data collection” (Gray, 2009, p. 15; also Gibson & Brown, 2009).

The presentation of research findings resulting from the thematic analysis of the data sets is structured around particular concepts linking the theoretical framework to the research questions and to the empirical data. Figure 2.3 displays the structure devised for chapters 5 and 6 which focuses on common elements between the case studies and a unique element to each case study, with the pre-set themes above forming an integral part of the analysis presented in these chapters.

Figure 2.3 Presentation of research findings in chapters 5 and 6



Here, this is done through exemplification, that is “by showing the *type* of data related behaviours to a particular concept” and mapping the diversity of linkages “between experiences, behaviours and perspectives, or between expectations and outcomes” that reflect the meanings evident in the data as a whole (emphasis in original, Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 196; Spencer et al., 2014, p. 285). Google maps and photographs were used to create “a richer impression of the empirical domain being examined” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 198). An early draft of research findings was given to the respective case study gatekeeper for review who provided feedback via e-mail or annotated text. While this input helped in the clarification of the text and references to past and present public figures, organisations and events which have shaped the history and legacy of the conflict in Northern

Ireland, it did not impact my ability to conduct independent analysis.⁴⁴

Before moving to the next section, it is important to acknowledge that “the act of analysis is an interpretation, and therefore of necessity a selective rendering” (Fielding & Fielding, 1986 cited in Silverman, 2013, p. 286). In the case of an ethnographic-based approach to research, the process of selective rendering involves the concept of reflexivity. This concept is used “to describe the relationship between the researcher and the object of research”; it draws attention to the fact that a researcher is seldom a neutral observer (Gray, 2009, p. 498). Part of that statement relates to the personal values, attitudes, beliefs and aims that filter through to the construction of knowledge. In relation to my values and aims it is therefore important for me to acknowledge my own positive inclination toward peacebuilding theory and belief in practices that recognise the long-term needs of conflict affected societies and prioritise the relational aspects of conflict transformation. As such my analysis of the theatre-centric projects under study in this thesis needs to remain open to recognizing the limits as well as the potential of these practices. Another thing to be cognisant of is that the perspective presented in this thesis is not formed by direct personal experience of the conflict; it is that of an outsider-researcher. I do not come from a country that has a long history of violent, protracted conflict with the exception of the still fragile relationship between Aboriginal First Nations and those who settled on their lands and adopted legislation like the *Indian Act* (R.S.C. 1985, c. I-5) first passed in 1876 that defines how the Government of Canada exercises control over more than six hundred First Nation bands in Canada including land and resources which contributed to the Oka crisis (1990).⁴⁵ However as I was born in the late 1950s in the province of Quebec, with a French-Canadian Catholic background, I experienced discrimination on linguistic grounds when my family moved to an English speaking province prior to the passage of the

⁴⁴ Conversely, participant organisations were able to tap into my academic knowledge and network. For instance they saw benefit in getting an outsider’s perspective on project elements such as the development of Kabosh Theatre’s audience feedback form (see chapter 5) and the identification of opportunities to present their work in an academic setting as was the case for COTW’s M. Sutherland who did a presentation during the Digital Arts and Humanities Institute in 2014 (see Appendix A).

⁴⁵ While the *Indian Act* has not been repealed, the *Constitution Act, 1982* (Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), c. 11) namely enshrines the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the constitution including the recognition of “the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada” (s. 35).

Official Languages Act in 1969 (R.S. C., 1985, c. 31 (4th Suppl.).

Therefore, in order to produce a credible analysis of the role of engaged theatre in peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, I spent considerable time, at the start of my doctoral research, building trust with people on all sides of the conflict that, in time, was greatly facilitated by events' organisers, academics in theatre departments in Northern Ireland and further abroad as well as the case study gatekeepers. Consistent attendance at arts and peacebuilding events and the preparation of a well-crafted interview schedule adapted, as needed, to the background and expertise of each interviewee enabled me to gain further insight into different community perspectives on the role and value of theatrical productions as a peacebuilding tool. Its importance is illustrated by a comment made by playwright J. Burgess at the end of our interview:

It's nice to have the opportunity to speak to people, where people have any interest in the work. I mean ... that to me is a success, that someone like yourself has come along and wants to look at the work and the context, because I know that you could sit in Northern Ireland from now, for the next twenty years, and you'll not have the same conversation as you've just had with someone from the Loyalist community because I know there isn't anybody out there to do it. So if I hadn't done *Crows on the Wire* you wouldn't have got my opinion. You would have come here ... and you wouldn't have known about this. Through no fault of your own, but you wouldn't have known about these people over here who just do not communicate. And which is fundamentally the working class Protestant people of Northern Ireland.
(personal communication, October 18, 2014)

Not unlike Ganiel (2008), I expected that 'outsider versus insider' boundaries would play more of a role based on a preconceived notion that "clear binaries ... actually exist, or that the research participants conceive relationships in these terms" (p. 167). In reality I never felt that anyone assumed favour or partiality on my part. In his article on the sociological paradox of Northern Ireland, Brewer (2001) referred to an axiom that I have heard often since moving to Belfast in 2011, "unless you're from the place you can't begin to understand it" (p. 779; also Ganiel & Mitchell, 2006). In contrast, however, in my view it is possible that an outsider's perspective can allow for a degree of objectivity in studying the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding in a society in transition.

Having described key elements of this research's design, it is also necessary to discuss its boundaries.

2.5 Parameters and Limitations of this Research

A case study can be loosely defined as "a study of a bounded system, emphasising the unity and wholeness of that system but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time" (Stake, 1994 cited in Punch, 2005, pp. 144-145; also Yin, 2003). This account suggests that difficult decisions have to be made before, during and post-data collection based on issues such as research needs and timeline, the scope, stage and lifespan of each project under analysis as well as an organisation's ability to assist me during and after the fieldwork stage. The iterative decision-making process prioritised aspects of Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 that would shed light on ways in which theatre contributes to the creative transformation of conflict in Northern Ireland.

In relation to this thesis' overall research strategy it was not feasible to adopt a longitudinal case study approach. This is partly due to the timing of the doctoral studies begun in 2011. At the start of this research process, Northern Ireland was caught up in the global financial crisis which had significant consequences to community and voluntary sector funding as well as to arts funding (see Coffey, 2016, p. 251; Foy, 2015a, 2015b). Moreover, by 2013 the European Union's Peace III funding was nearing the end of its five-year cycle (see Bush & Houston, 2011; Jennings, 2012). This meant that groups engaged in peacebuilding work might no longer be funded or might have to cut or leave positions vacant, put current and proposed community outreach projects on hold and few of them would have time to invest time and resources in a researcher. Focusing on local, small-scale and time-limited projects initiated and delivered by established cultural and community-based organisations became a more viable option.

With regard to the *Those You Pass on the Street* project (Case Study 1), it became clear early on in fieldwork that the scope of this research could not extend to the potential use of the play's monologues in HTR facilitated dialogue workshops on dealing with the past. The introduction of an outsider to ongoing dialogue processes facilitated by external HTR

consultants who have a long-standing relationship with the communities they work with might have impacted their work, not to mention the ethical issues this raised. Moreover, around the time of the fieldwork, HTR was operating on skeletal staff and there were no internship opportunities.

Despite an interest in the use of social media within theatre-centred peacebuilding work, Kabosh Theatre's use of Twitter during post-show discussions was sporadic throughout the three runs of the play. I explored whether there were any discussions on social media about the *Those You Pass on the Street* production as a result of Twitter posts initiated either by HTR, Kabosh Theatre or from other accounts during her fieldwork. While there may have been some missed opportunities in terms of data gathering in this regard, the initial scan did not reveal sufficient digitally generated discussion of the play to warrant further inquiry.

With regard to the *Crows on the Wire* project (Case Study 2), the abundance and systematic generation of documentary products by the COTW team meant that not all strands of the project could be covered in this research. While the project included two community engagement strands, I prioritised the young people's engagement programme that delivered different activities across the span of the project. Given the ethical considerations around working with young people, however, I focused on feedback forms completed by pupils after school performances because I could not suitably reconstruct the context and content of the pre-performance workshops or sufficiently validate data collected by VAC through other means such as formal interviews with pupils.

There were limitations to the type and scope of analysis of theatre-centric digital elements that could be carried out in this research. Firstly, unlike the COTW project there was no digital element generated through the *Those You Pass on the Street* project. Instead I looked at recent work undertaken by Kabosh Theatre in the area of cultural tourism as outlined in chapter 4. Secondly, in terms of the COTW project there were no opportunities for first-hand observation of the process around the conversion of the *Crows on the Wire* script and its themes into an interactive digital product in the form of a graphic novel as part of a new generation of VAC generated educational resource packs for post-primary

schools in and around Derry-Londonderry. Moreover, while VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* was launched in September 2014, the COTW ended in December of that year. The COTW project funding application did not address the issue of the collection of data regarding App users, and to my knowledge, there were no significant discussions within VAC about conducting a user analysis at a later time (M. Sutherland, personal communication, December 16, 2014). The sole aim was to publicize the existence and purpose of the COTW App in schools in and around Derry-Londonderry as will be explored in chapter 6. For these reasons user studies on digital elements created by Kabosh Theatre and by the Verbal Arts Centre were not possible within this thesis' timeline. Rather chapters 4 and 6 present alternative emerging models of digital storytelling and learning in Northern Ireland as part of this thesis' ancillary objective of exploring uses of digital technology "in ways that are transformational" in as much as they can assist peacebuilders in "increasing their reach and impact, overcoming both resource and operational barriers" in conflict affected societies (Puig Larrauri et al., 2015, p. 2).

The discussion of this research's parameters and limitations stresses the importance of the preparatory stages of research and of the ongoing decision-making that should take place during ethnographic fieldwork.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented this thesis' qualitative research strategy centred on an ethnographic-based methodology to answer the research questions set out in the introductory chapter. It started with a brief literature review on the evolution of ethnography and how it was applied within the context of research exploring the role that engaged theatre, and any related digital elements, assumes in a society in transition. Specifically, it identified the selection criteria for the two theatre-centric projects centred on plays acting as a catalyst for discussion about difficult issues around how to deal with the legacies of the past in the context of Northern Ireland. This included a survey of key aspects of the selected case studies that will inform the reading of research findings in later chapters.

This chapter detailed the data collection methods – observation, documentary data and semi-structured interviews – and explained how each dataset was collected, recorded and stored.⁴⁶ As the use of mixed methods involved observational fieldwork and interviews in a conflict affected society, the discussion shifted to ethical considerations including the institutionally approved consent form found in Appendix F. It then focused on the data analysis approach used within the context of research designed to explore connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding through the lens of conflict transformation theory. The choice of a thematic analysis of datasets reflected the more deductive nature of this research. This chapter closed with a survey of research parameters and limitations, some of which will be revisited in the final chapter of this thesis.

The lines of inquiry of this thesis are grounded in a methodological as well as a theoretical approach. The next chapter details this research's theoretical framework based in the conflict transformation school of thought that seeks to address contemporary violent, protracted conflicts in a more holistic manner with a particular emphasis on the relational aspects of conflict. Within that approach, the work of conflict transformation theorist John Paul Lederach is one of the most articulated frameworks for the building of sustained peace in divided societies that includes creating space for the practice of the moral imagination to take hold in these settings.

⁴⁶ As stated earlier, since undertaking this thesis' data collection and write-up of research findings, the regulatory framework has changed around data storage after the coming into force of the European Union's *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) in May 2018. As to how the GDPR would change the manner in which I would handle data, future research projects will be guided by any revised institutional research ethics requisites concerning the collection and storage of data including the clarification around the use of photographs of people in academic publications. I am confident that, as set out in this chapter, sufficient measures were taken in the conduct of the fieldwork and write-up stages to preserve and protect collected data through the institutional research ethics approval process including the detailed informed consent form devised by the researcher (see Appendix F) and frequent exchanges with case study gatekeepers/theatre-centric project initiating organisation as issues arose during this research, including the opportunity to comment on an early draft of specific sections of this thesis and academic publication projects (including permission to use photographs taken by/on behalf of Kabosh Theatre and VAC). Those wanting to replicate the research methods utilised in this thesis should familiarise themselves with their institutional repository/data management strategies to ensure compliance with new institutional and regulatory rules and evaluate the impact of collecting and storing personal data relative to people and organisations located in a member state of the European Union even if the researcher and/or their institution is located outside of the European Union.

CHAPTER 3

Conflict Transformation and the Practice of Moral Imagination

When creative spaces are illuminated by the moral imagination – in particular by the embrace of paradox and the commitment to interdependence – points of intractable conflict gradually become unstuck, and relationships can begin to be transformed.

C. Cohen with R. G. Varea & P. O. Walker (2011) Permeable Membrane and the Moral Imagination. In: C. Cohen, R. G. Varea & P. O. Walker (eds.) *Acting Together: Creative Transformation of Conflict* (Vol. II), p. 193.

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework utilised to explore this thesis' research questions concerning the role that engaged theatre can assume in a period of post-conflict transition and peacebuilding. A theory concerning the relationship between artistic practice and peacebuilding is constructed through the lens of the conflict transformation school of thought, specifically the work of contemporary conflict transformation theorist and practitioner John Paul Lederach.

The idea of conflict transformation within the field of study of conflict resolution arose from a search for more adequate language and theoretical thinking to reflect the rapidly changing landscape of contemporary conflicts of the post-Cold War world. These conflicts have been described "as 'deep-rooted conflict' (Burton, 1987), 'intractable conflicts' (Kriesberg et al., 1989) and 'protracted social conflicts' (Azar, 1990)" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, p. 50; also Gawerc, 2006, pp. 436-437). Within this school of thought, the work of John Paul Lederach is particularly helpful for this thesis, as he is a vocal advocate of the exploration of "how social change merges with art" in protracted conflict settings (2011, p. x; also Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Schirch, 2004). In *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Lederach (2005) invites fellow conflict resolution professionals to envisage their work "as a creative act more akin to the artistic endeavour than the technical process"

and to embrace the “actual messiness of ideas, processes, and change” (pp. ix & x). He defines the practice of moral imagination as “the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist” in divided societies (ibid., p. ix). For Cohen et al. (2011b) this ability to stay grounded in the present while imagining and working toward “a more balanced, nuanced, complex, vital and beautiful reconfiguration of elements, including relationships, ... narratives, and infrastructures” is a value shared by performance studies and peace and conflict studies (p. 10). It is therefore helpful to think about how this idea of moral imagination assists in the study of the role of engaged theatre in relation to a conflict transformation paradigm and, in particular, how theatre-centric initiatives create space for the moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition, with Northern Ireland as the context. Examples of drama/performance practices developed in the former Yugoslavia and Peru presented in the introductory chapter served to illustrate different manifestations of the creative transformation of conflict.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first provides a brief overview of the development of conflict resolution as an academic field and highlights differing views on the breath and scope of its interdisciplinary approach to the study of peace and conflict in the 1960s to late 1980s, which in turn led to the development of a conflict transformation school of thought. That latter school called for a greater focus on the analysis and ways of addressing the dynamics that generate violent, long-standing and difficult to resolve conflicts thought to be “irresolvable” (Ryan, 2007, p. 22). The second section focuses on John Paul Lederach’s approach to conflict transformation and his call for the practice of moral imagination in divided societies. To put this discussion in context, it begins with an exploration of key aspects of Lederach’s earlier body of work including his views on the importance of relational connections to conflict and peace; the longer-term vision of the time required to achieve sustained peace in conflict affected societies, the use of dialogue, including through theatre, in generating constructive engagement of issues and of people, as well as the promotion of local knowledge and culture in peacebuilding work. This sets the stage for a review of the four central elements of the moral imagination –

relationships, paradoxical curiosity, creativity, and risk-taking – which Lederach (2005) claims form the essence of this kind of imagination and make sustainable peace possible in conflict affected societies (p. 34). After reviewing some critiques of this aspect of Lederach's conflict transformation theory, the chapter ends by reiterating the usefulness of his theory as a means to analyse this thesis' research questions.

3.1 From Conflict Resolution to Conflict Transformation

Over the years since the Second World War it is possible to discern a spectrum of academic and practitioner approaches to peace and conflict ranging from resolution to transformation. This section gives a brief account of these developments, showing why thinking about conflict resolution has evolved in ways which go beyond conventional approaches to ensuring peace between nation-states toward understanding peace as requiring the engagement of people at many levels of the affected society.

The formation of peace research and the conflict resolution movement gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s particularly due to the threats of nuclear confrontation and the global reach of the Cold War that "seemed to threaten human survival" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, p. 4; also Harty & Modell, 1991; Kriesberg, 2003). Growing concerns about the escalation and polarisation of war and conflict and finding ways to prevent or reduce these worldwide phenomena served as an impetus for the emergence of conflict resolution as a distinct field of theory and practice (see Ramsbotham et al. 2011, pp. 42-55). Until then the study of conflict had been mainly the domain of the field of international relations where "war was seen as an exemplification of the power of the state, through the use of force and military technology to serve the interest of the states in defence or expansion" (Fitzduff, 2005, p. x). This new field also owes much to non-violence and pacifist traditions and practices, like those contained in the beliefs of Mennonites and Quakers, that "have cross-fertilised with academic enterprise to enhance understanding of violent political conflict and alternatives to it" through the pioneering work of Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Adam Curle and John Paul Lederach (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, p. 41; Sampson & Lederach, 2000).

An early site of development of this new field of inquiry arose in the late 1950s at the University of Michigan in the United States (see Harty & Modell, 1991; Kriesberg, 2003). With an emphasis on interdisciplinary research, its Center for Research on Conflict Resolution focused on the development of a comprehensive scientific theory on and formal methods of analysis of the causes and prevention of war and other types of human conflict as well as the establishment of a conflict resolution profession that could provide strategic advice to policy and decision-makers (Harty & Modell, 1991, p. 730). In this early phase the problem of the maintenance of peace was viewed as “one of conflict control”: research efforts should focus on the development of a knowledge base comprised of a wide range of social, political and economic data designed to identify social temperature and pressure and take action before situations “become unmanageable” (Boulding, 1961, p. 23; also Kerman, 1974; Ramsbotham et al., 2011).

Around the same time, sociologist and pacifist Johan Galtung led the European conflict resolution movement at the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (Norway). Galtung viewed peace research as reaching out far beyond the enterprise of war and conflict prevention: “having experienced two devastating wars, Europe is home to a tradition of peace studies that looks into the structural causes of conflict and searches for remedies” (Beriker, 2015, p. 18). Central to Galtung’s extensive body of work is his theoretical thinking on the relationship between conflict, violence and peace (see e.g. 1969, 1976, 1990, 1996). Galtung (1969, 1990) devised a threefold typology of violence: direct violence involving actual physical harm; structural violence denoting the societal structures which cause harm; and cultural violence as the ideological, artistic and cultural norms used to legitimise acts of direct and structural violence in society (also Ramsbotham et al., 2011, pp. 10-11). This expanded conceptualisation of violence called for a more nuanced understanding of peace: negative and positive peace (see Galtung, 1969, 1990). The former refers to the absence of direct violence while positive peace is more emancipatory in nature as it seeks to overcome all three types of violence and holds the potential to address both the short-term and longer-term needs of conflict settings (Galtung, 1969, 1990; also Ramsbotham et al., 2011).

By the mid-1960s former Australian diplomat and expert on international affairs John Burton wanted to explore ways of analysing and addressing the more intractable conflicts at the time. Then teaching at University College London, he tried out problem-solving processes in the context of the conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia over the latter's incorporation of large areas of Borneo into its national territory (Burton, 1969; also Mitchell, 2004; Sandole, 2006; Wallensteen, 2007).⁴⁷ This experimentation in facilitated discussions between participants from key levels of parties to a conflict led Burton (1979, 1990a, 1993, 1997) to articulate a theory of conflict centred on the relationship between frustrated basic human needs and violent, deep-rooted conflict (see Sandole, 2013). Drawing on the work of Maslow (1954) and Sites (1973), he developed a model that views human needs as an emergent collection of human development necessities sought simultaneously at the individual, group and societal level (*ibid.*). Burton argued that some human needs such as identity or sense of self based for example on ethnicity, religion, ideology, geographical location, human security, participation, and recognition, cannot be socialised away, traded or bargained away (1984, pp. 23 & 32; Avruch, 2013, pp. 42-43; also Burton, 1979, 1990b; Azar, 1985, 1990; Sandole 2013). Therefore, when "unfulfilled, suppressed, or otherwise disregarded by authorities or institutions" these needs become drivers of human behaviour including prolonged and often violent conflict (Avruch & Mitchell, 2013, p. 4; also Azar, 1985, 1990; Burton, 1993; Sandole, 2013). Consequently, Burton revised his practice-based approach to one that invites parties to a conflict to identify and address suppressed human needs as part of his call for a new political philosophy "which moves beyond episodic conflict resolution to a new order marked by 'provention' [*sic*]" – the promotion of conditions that create collaborative relationships within societies and help control behaviours (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, p. 49; see Burton, 1990b, 1997; Burton & Dukes, 1990; Sandole, 2006, 2013). This "theory of positive social change" is not unlike Lederach's transformation

⁴⁷ Among others Azar (1985, 1990), Doob (1970), Kelman (1991, 1992), Mitchell and Banks (1996), and Fisher (1997) adapted Burton's method to facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution in the case of protracted conflicts including in the Middle-East, Israel and Palestine, Cyprus, the region of the Horn of Africa, and Northern Ireland (see e.g. Avruch & Mitchell, 2013, pp. 2-3, 10-11; Kriesberg, 2003, p. 245-246; Fisher, 1997).

approach (to be introduced below) as both theorists recognise the complexities of deep-rooted conflicts including their human dimensions and the need for a long-term vision of building peace in conflict affected societies (Dunn cited in Sandole, 2013, p. 25; also Burton & Dukes, 1990; Gawerc, 2006; Lederach, 1997; Simmons, 2013).

From the above, it is clear that the early peace research was increasingly multi-disciplinary and advocating for multiple levels of societal engagement in conflict resolution (see Avruch & Mitchell, 2013). The complexity of contemporary conflicts – particularly the ethnic and religious conflicts of the post-Cold War world – would persuade the new generation of scholar-practitioners that definitive resolution of conflicts is hard to achieve. A better approach should consider the multiple causal factors and dynamics of these conflicts stemming from the “long-term nature of the conflict groups’ animosity, perception of enmity, and deep-rooted fear” and focus on the transformation of conflictual relationships in protracted conflict settings (Lederach, 1997, p. 14; also Azar, 1990; Paffenholz, 2013; Ramsbotham & al., 2011; Rupesinge & Anderlini, 1998; Wallensteen, 2007). Moreover, there was the failure of the United Nations and the international community to support sustainable peace in places like Somalia, Rwanda, and the Balkans in the 1990s followed by the collapse in 2000 of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that had led to the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords (see Ramsbotham et al., 2011, pp. 193-196). This led many actors in and observers of contemporary conflicts to call for a reorientation of the debate in peace research and practice along two axes: finding more effective ways of conducting peacebuilding and the rebuilding of states after wars, and reconceptualising peacebuilding to make it more relevant to contemporary conflicts (see e.g. Annan, 2000; Lederach, 1997; Paffenholz, 2015; Ramsbotham et al., 2011; Wallensteen, 2007). The latter point is embodied in the emergence of the transformation approach within the field of conflict resolution focusing attention on protracted and destructive contemporary conflicts (see Azar, 1985; Paffenholz, 2015).

In general, the conflict transformation school of thought views peacebuilding as a more comprehensive concept that involves “a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace

accords" centred on the redefinition and restoration of broken relationships within those settings (Lederach, 1997, p. 20). In this sense, it represents a natural extension of the work of scholars like Galtung (1969, 1990, 1996), Curle (1971, 1990), Azar (1990), Kelman (1992), Fisher (1997), and even that of Freire (1972) who viewed the oppressed as active subjects in their own struggle and liberation (see Curle, 1971; Lederach 1995, 2005; Paffenholz, 2013). For instance, in later work Galtung (1996) identified transformation as a focal element of academic research by redefining peace as "non-violent and creative conflict transformation" (p. 9). In 1993, he devised his own approach to conflict transformation by peaceful means known as the Transcend Method or Galtungian method.⁴⁸ It centres on a mediation method involving three steps: confidence building with and between parties to the conflict; improving reciprocity relations through the unpacking of legitimate and illegitimate goals and human needs of the parties; and bridging gaps between legitimate yet often contradictory goals through the exploration of solutions that embody creativity, empathy and non-violence in a conflict affected society (see Galtung, 2004; Galtung & Jacobsen, 2000; Ramsbotham et al., 2011). These aspects of Galtung's approach to creative conflict transformation are present in Lederach's (2005) idea of the practice of the moral imagination.

Curle's work also built on Galtung's synthesis of the relationship between conflict, violence and peace and in particular the focus placed on the "relationship between conflicts and larger conflicts embedded in the structure of world society and the world economy" (Miall, 2004, p. 4). In his work *Making Peace*, Curle (1971) traces how asymmetric relations can be transformed through a progression from un-peaceful, unbalanced relations to peaceful and dynamic ones namely through the pursuit of change around how the conflict is expressed (violent/non-violent actions), how concerns are addressed, and in time the development of more peaceful human interactions (see Lederach, 1995, 1997; Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Later, Curle (1994, 1995, 1999) broadened his concept and practice of transformation to include the "empowerment of individuals and civil society groups in a wide variety of roles and developed, along with John Paul

⁴⁸ For more information see <https://www.transcend.org/>

Lederach and others, new approaches to peacebuilding from below” in order to address the nature and scope of residues of conflict within societies (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, p. 54 & pp. 233-236). Curle’s body of work informed Lederach’s (2005) articulation of his conflict transformation theory including the need for a broader understanding of, and longer-term approach to, building peace in divided societies (pp. 12-15).

Lederach (2003a) argues that conflict transformation “is a reorientation so fundamental that it changes the very way we look at and respond to social conflict” (p. 29). As part of his search for a greater understanding of human conflict, Lederach outlines his thinking on differences between resolution and transformation as compiled in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Survey of Lederach’s analysis of meaning/implications of resolution and transformation terminology applied to the art of peacebuilding

Criteria	Conflict resolution approach	Conflict transformation approach
View of conflict	A disruption (imbalance) in the natural flow of everyday life to be resolved; the focus is on de-escalation of conflict and diffusion of crisis (event/issues).	Conflict is normal in human relationship and acts as a motor of change; transformation may involve de-escalating and even pushing a conflict out in the open (escalation) to pursue constructive change.
Guiding question	How to end something not desired, causing pain/difficulty.	How to end a destructive situation and build something that is desired.
Focal length of lens	Content-centred: the focus is on immediate/recent issues.	Relationship-centred/Content-centred: conflict embedded in the system of relational patterns.
Intended Outcome	Getting an agreement or finding a solution, including use of de-escalation methods to immediate issues or crisis.	Promoting constructive change processes that include and go beyond the resolution of the presenting issues.
Process orientation	Targeting immediacy of the relationship crisis where symptoms of disruption arise.	Targeting broader context: presenting problem is seen as a chance to address immediate issues (episode) and the epicentre of conflict that provides a history of lived episodes.
Time horizon	Short-term crisis-driven: negotiation of solutions to presenting problems - may not consider deeper underlying causes/patterns in conflict.	Mid to long-term: Crisis-responsive rather than crisis-driven: above-ground issues seen as an opportunity to transform relational patterns at the root of the conflict.

Source. Compiled from Lederach (1995, pp. 17-19; 2003, pp. 28-33); Lederach, Neufeldt and Culbertson (2007, pp. 17-18); Mitchell (2002, pp. 19-20); Ramsbotham et al. (2011, pp. 9-10).

While this table highlights key differences between the two schools of thought, they do not necessarily work “in opposition; rather, conflict resolution represents a set of skills within a wider framework” (Lederach, Neufeldt & Culbertson, 2007, p. 18; also Gawarc, 2006; Ramsbotham et al.,

2011). Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2011) view transformation as the deepest level of the conflict resolution spectrum which they depict in the shape of an hourglass: “as the space [in the hourglass] narrows and widens, different responses become more or less appropriate or possible” (p. 13). These responses fall under three broad categories: (1) conflict containment made up of preventive peacekeeping, war limitation, and post-ceasefire work to create space for a wider realm of peacebuilding activities; (2) conflict settlement relating to elite peacemaking activities like mediation and negotiation conducted among the main parties to a conflict with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement; (3) conflict transformation – “the deepest level of structural and cultural peacebuilding” (ibid.).⁴⁹ Lederach (1997, 2003a, 2005) argues that the potential for constructive change is equally present where there is significant past relationship and history and where there are repeated and deep-rooted cycles of conflict, though in every setting “the decision of whether to pursue all the potential avenues of change must be assessed and weighed” (2003a, p. 69).

As has been seen above, the work of John Paul Lederach fits within the developing field of conflict transformation, which stresses the long-term importance of transforming conflictual relationships to build sustainable peace at societal level. One contribution that Lederach makes to this field is the development and praxis of moral imagination, which suggests how conflict can be transformed through creative engagement between divided communities. The arts are central to cultivating the moral imagination, making his theoretical framework of particular relevance to exploring this thesis’ research questions. The next section focuses on elements of this approach that are central to this thesis’ theoretical framework.

3.2 John Paul Lederach’s Approach to Conflict Transformation

Lederach’s (1997) peacebuilding framework focuses on building sustainable peace in protracted social conflict settings. He views protracted conflict as “a system and focuses [its] attention on relationships within that system” (Lederach, 1997, p. 26; also Arai, 2013). Miall (2004) explains the

⁴⁹ Ramsbotham et al. (2005) acknowledge that that not all scholars agree with their vision of conflict transformation, these include Vayrynen (1991); Rupensinghe (1995); Jabri (1996); Francis (2002) and Lederach (2003) who consider transformation as distinct from resolution (pp. 8-9).

emphasis put on the relational aspect of human conflict:

Relationships involve the whole fabric of interaction within the society in which the conflict takes place ... Poor relationships between groups are all too often a trigger for conflict, and remain a critical hindrance to peacebuilding efforts following the cessation of violence. (p. 8)

A central theme of Lederach's transformation approach is "that any given immediate intervention is connected to movement toward a longer-term goal" of sustainable peace (1997, p. 75). In this thesis, the use of the term sustainable denotes a concern for the creation of a process "capable of regenerating itself over time – a spiral of peace and development instead of a spiral of violence and destruction" (ibid.). The need to think about the "healing of people and the rebuilding of the web of their relationships in terms relative to those that it took to create the hatred and violence that has divided them" is not always well received by those living in conflict affected societies (ibid., p. 78). However, Kabosh Theatre's P. McFetridge (cited in Jackson, 2014) understands what Lederach is getting at:

We have to ask difficult questions and be prepared to answer difficult questions and we don't know what is going to happen, but if you go through forty years of conflict, it is going to take at least eighty years to get over it. It's long-term work and the rest of the world isn't looking at us anymore and they think we're sorted. 'Oh look at them, aren't they good, they've got peace.' As if we're an example to the world. That's not happened. (para. 16)

This account speaks to the complexity of building sustainable peace in conflict-ridden settings and the need to "imagine possibilities that might exist beyond the seemingly intractable realities of the moment" (Kurtz, 2010, p. 17). Sociologist and peace activist Elise Boulding (1991) put forth the idea of "imaging [sic] a responsible future" based on an understanding of "the heights and depths of human experience in the past" and the "aspirations and cultures of others" (pp. 528 & 530). Positive images of the future can inspire action in the present: "we have the challenge to imagine the further evolution of attitudes, behaviours, and institutional patterns" (Boulding, 2000, p. 212; also Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Boulding situates this evolution within a "200-hundred year present": a social space within which people "can move around directly, in [their] own

lives and indirectly by touching the lives of young and the old around us” (1990, pp. 3-4; 2000, pp. 211-212). This idea of a social space reaching into the past and into the future and the need for social imagination intended to promote wider participation in processes of engagement permeates Lederach’s articulation of the need for the practice of moral imagination in divided societies (1997, pp.76-77; 2005, p. 22).

For Lederach (2005) the longer-term goal is to transform the “flow of human interaction in social conflict from cycles of destructive relational violence toward cycles of relational dignity and respectful engagement” (p. 42). However, as suggested earlier, the complexities of dealing with the deeper epicentre of the conflictive relational context are complex where there are “long histories of deeply damaged relationships with seemingly unending recriminations” (ibid., p. 46). Lederach (2003a) proposes dialogue as one of the essential ways of generating constructive engagement of issues and of people in divided societies:

Processes and spaces must be created so that people can engage and shape the structures that order their community life, broadly defined. Dialogue is needed to provide access to, a voice in, and constructive interaction with, the ways we formalise our relationships and in the ways our organisations and structures are built, respond, and behave. (p. 22)

Dialogue processes are not limited to those taking place in safe, private and confidential settings: “appropriate exchange may include dialogue through music, the arts, rituals, dialogue-as-sport” (ibid., p. 59; also Lederach & Lederach, 2010). This expanded view of potential sites for relationship building and change is shared by Sepinuck (2013) who introduced her community-based Theatre of Witness performance model in Northern Ireland (2009-2013) through Derry-Londonderry’s The Playhouse:

We were bringing what is often done in private out to the public setting in the form of theatre. Our intention was for audiences to bear witness to the stories of trauma and transformation, humanise the perceived enemy, and be moved and inspired to cross the cultural divide. (p. 185)

Lederach and Sepinuck share a deep understanding of the need to create safe spaces that support “the constructive engagement of people who have been historically divided and who are or remain in significant levels of

conflict” based on elicitive social transformation (Lederach, 2005, p. 48).

Lederach has been one of the leading exponents of the importance of creative approaches to peacebuilding that draw on and empower local knowledge and practices (see Cohen et al., 2011b; Maiese, n.d.; Paffenholz, 2015). He called on the international community to adopt a new mind-set:

We [need to] move beyond a simple prescription of answers and modalities for dealing with conflict that come from outside the setting and focus at least as much attention on discovering and empowering the resources, modalities, and mechanisms for building peace that exist within the context. (Lederach, 1997, p. 95)

This call was informed by his experience in and analysis of violent, protracted conflict settings in the 1980s and 1990s (see Lederach, 1995). Lederach (1995) concluded that local actors’ understanding “of that setting and of themselves comprises the pipeline to discovery of important categories of thought, meaning-in-context, and creative action” (p. 32). His integrative approach to peacebuilding advocates the need for processes of change “which cut across the levels and populations affected by the conflict” otherwise peace will remain under severe stress and in constant danger of collapse (Lederach, 2005, p. 48). Specifically, he conceptualises conflict transformation as involving three core peace constituencies needing to operate simultaneously: (1) elite leaders and decision-makers associated with “top-down” efforts to build peace; (2) the middle societal level composed of leaders from nongovernmental organisations, church groups, the health, cultural, education and business sectors, among others; and (3) grassroots level consisting of the largest number of people affected by the conflict and where community leaders and activists have expert knowledge of local social and political realities and divides (Lederach, 1997, pp. 37-55). The main focus of Lederach’s approach has been on the potential of the middle level (ibid., pp. 41-42). This “middle-out” approach assumes that nongovernmental organisations, church groups, the health, cultural, education and business sectors, among others, have more flexibility for action and movement between and across the grassroots and top levels (ibid.). Lederach (2005) later renamed it the “web approach” to reflect the fact that it was more “about explicit strategic networking, one that creates a web of relationships and activities that covers the setting” as is the case

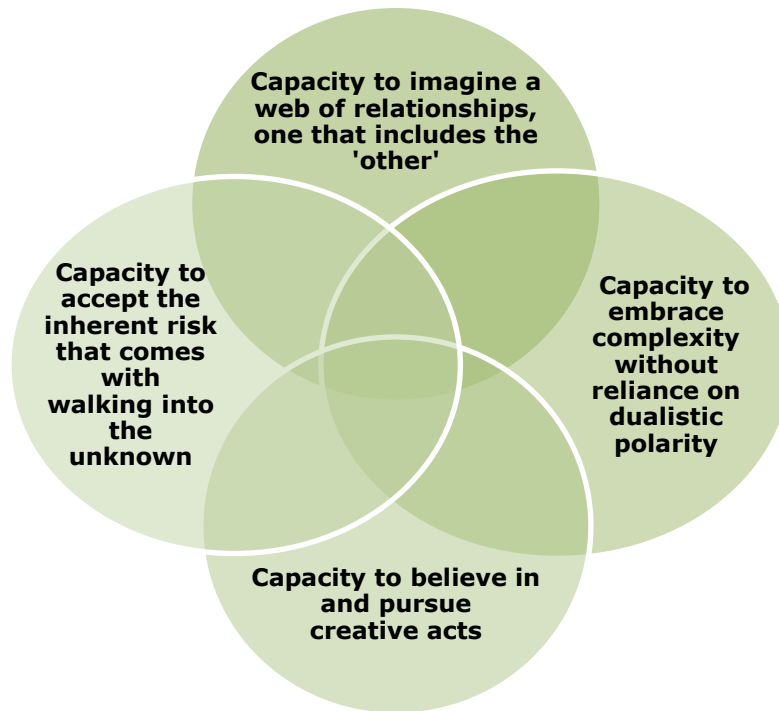
with the projects discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 (p. 80).

Lederach (2005) stresses the potential for innovation in protracted conflict settings, one that “expends an equal amount of time supporting people in trusting and developing their capacity to invent and create adaptive processes responsive to real-world situations and shifts” (p. 124). This elicitive approach to peacebuilding was influenced by the ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire best known for his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) which is one of the foundational texts of the critical pedagogy movement. In it, Freire reprises the oppressor-oppressed dualism founded on the belief that the system of dominant social relations creates a culture of silence that instills a negative, silenced and suppressed self-image into the oppressed (pp. 27-56). In order to recognize that the culture of silence is created to dominate, the oppressed must develop a critical social consciousness (“conscientization”) and become agents of change (pp. 57-74). For Freire, no truly liberating pedagogy can remain “distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors” (ibid., p. 39). Lederach (1995) refers to this as the process of building “awareness of self in context” meant to produce individual empowerment and social change in divided societies (pp. 19-20; also Curle, 1971).⁵⁰

The development of innovative responses to destructive conflicts requires the capacity to imagine and generate something that allows “individuals to simultaneously stay grounded in the troubles of the real world and be open to the possibilities of a better one” (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 11). Lederach (2005) calls this faculty the moral imagination (p. 5). As shown in Figure 3.1, he argues that four key disciplines make peacebuilding possible: seeing conflict and change as relational webs, embracing complexity over dualisms, exploring creativity, and risk-taking (ibid.).

⁵⁰ As will be discussed in chapter 4, Freire’s theory shaped the development of Augusto Boal’s (1979) Theatre of the Oppressed, a radical education movement through theatre, and Boal’s techniques continue to be used in community outreach programmes (see Foy, 2013d, 2013e; Ross, 2011).

Figure 3.1 Four synergetic dimensions of Lederach's concept of moral imagination



Source. Adapted from Lederach (2005, pp. 5, 34-39 & 169).

His work has become significant within the theory and practice of the arts as an aspect of conflict transformation as shown in Cohen et al.'s (2011a) anthology on performance and the creative transformation of conflict (also Schirch, 2004). His idea of the moral imagination which is explored in that anthology lies at the heart of this study's theoretical framework. A review of the thinking behind Lederach's call for greater moral imagination in human affairs and, in particular, of the four disciplines forming the essence of peacebuilding is helpful in understanding why theatre "has a unique role to play in peacebuilding" (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 11).

3.2.1 The Moral Imagination – Envisaging Peacebuilding as Something Akin to an Artistic Endeavour

Lederach (2005) argues that peacebuilding approaches to social change have become too linear, "too cookie-cutter-like, too reliant on what proper technique suggests as a frame of reference" (p. 73). This is where the moral imagination can supply a possible remedy:

What if reconciliation were more like a creative artistic process than a linear formula of cumulative activities aimed at producing a result? (ibid., p. 159)

This idea is founded on the belief that sustainable peace arises from a capacity “to imagine and generate constructive responses and initiatives that, while rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence, transcend and ultimately break the grips of the destructive patterns and cycles” (ibid., p. 29). New opportunities and unexpected potentialities require “a creative act, which at its core is more art than technique” (ibid., p. 73). Lederach argues for an “integration of skill and aesthetics” that creates genuine connections between observation, lived experience and intuition as part of the art of building peace in divided societies (ibid., p. 70). The theatre-centric projects studied in chapters 5 and 6 represent one avenue of a cultural intervention offering insight into why he regards peacebuilding as an art rather than a purely technical endeavour:

The artistic process cannot be understood as something that mostly deals with the head. Intellectual rationality is but one element of the human experience that most wishes to control the others. The artistic process initially breaks beyond what can be rationally understood and then returns to a place of understanding that may analyse, think it through, and attach meaning to it. (ibid., p. 160)

Lederach is not suggesting that peacebuilders become professional artists. It is about rediscovering the sense of art – intuition, imagination and creativity – that exists beyond the “intellectual journey, the cognitive processes of getting the analysis right and developing the technique that facilitates the management of the change process” (ibid., p. 162; also Smithey, 2007). This will help them think beyond the repetition of what already exists and open a space for “a critically important alternative lens through which one might more clearly visualise the scope and essence of a conflict” (Benjamin, 2005, para. 6; also Arai, 2013).

Moral imagination is about the messiness inherent in the pursuit of innovative ideas about and ways of generating constructive change as shown in the decision “to take a risk with what was considered a delicate addition” to a conference’s agenda (Lederach, 2005, p. 152). Lederach (2005) recalls the *Remember and Change* conference that he attended in October 1996 at the Killyhevlin Hotel in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland (pp. 152-154). This hotel was the site of a bombing in July of that year which “set off fears that intensifying reprisals might soon kill the peace effort and

return Northern Ireland's 1.6 million people to the dead end of full-fledged strife" (Darnton, 1996, para. 4). The organisers presented a performance involving a cross-community Catholic-Protestant group of young women dancing to a 1985 song called *The Island* by Irish musician Paul Brady (1986/1999). This song was considered controversial during the conflict as it raised questions about the motives behind and logic of escalating violence and those who justified it on all sides of the conflict (see Bailie, 2012). During the performance, photos of the conflict appeared on a large screen without comments or captions. Police officers, politicians and others from different sides of the divide in Northern Ireland were reduced to tears: it was as if "the whole of the Irish conflict was held in a public space, captured in a moment that lasted fewer than five minutes" (Lederach, 2005, p. 153). The effect of this creative act within the long, slow process of moving from destructive to constructive engagement should not be underestimated:

The artistic five minutes, I have found rather consistently, when it is given space and acknowledged as something far beyond entertainment, accomplishes what most of politics has been unable to attain: it helps us return to our humanity, a transcendent journey that, like the moral imagination, can build a sense that we *are*, after all, a human community. (emphasis in original; *ibid.*, pp. 153-154)

This example suggests that if change is to be sustained it must "bring into relationship sets of people, processes and activities that are not like-situated nor of similar persuasion" (*ibid.*, p. 86).

As noted above, Lederach suggests there are four disciplines necessary to realising the moral imagination – seeing conflict and change as relational webs, embracing complexity over dualisms, exploring creativity, and acceptance of risks. What each of these disciplines entails and how they contribute to peacebuilding are examined in the sections below.

3.2.1.1 Imagining Relational Webs that Include the 'Other'

The purpose of the idea of the moral imagination is "to envision the canvas that makes visible the relational spaces and web of life where social change is located" (Lederach, 2005, p. 86). Exercising moral imagination asks peacebuilders and those who form the fabric of divided societies to

examine relationships “through the lenses of social crossroads, connections, and interdependence” (ibid., p. 78 & pp. 101-111). People are invited to imagine themselves in relational webs that include their enemies in order to break patterns of self-perpetuating violence (ibid., p. 34). This calls for the capacity to imagine “a relationship with the other that transcends the cycle of violence while the other and the patterns of violence are still present” and the capacity of people to understand that they are part of that “historic and ever-evolving web” (ibid., pp. 62 & 35). For Lederach (2005) the key to constructive change is to link people “who are not of common mind” and not like-situated socially, politically or economically (p. 84). This can be done by looking for social spaces that already exist like coffee shops and youth clubs and those created like performance and discussion tours (ibid., pp. 86 & 96). The aim is to create a quality of relationship across the lines of conflict that will support transformation of the society as a whole. Moving away from fear, division and violence toward new modes of social interaction requires “awareness, action, and broad processes of change” that refuse to frame “life’s challenges, problems and issues as dualistic polarities” (ibid., p. 89 & 62).

3.2.1.2 Practicing Paradoxical Curiosity

Patterns and cycles of violence in protracted conflict settings are often driven by requirements “to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that attempt to both describe and contain social reality in artificial ways” (Lederach, 2005, p. 35). Choices about how to respond to situations are forced into either-or categories, for example: you are either with us or against us. The practice of paradoxical curiosity, the second discipline of the moral imagination, requires people to rise above these polarisations and “to develop and live with a high degree of ambiguity” (ibid., p. 37). It refers to people’s ability to exhibit the type of curiosity that respects complexity and facilitates a permanent state of inquisitiveness extending “beyond the immediate arguments and narrow definitions of reality” and yet capable of co-existing with different and often opposing viewpoints (ibid.). For Lederach (2005) this involves accepting people at face value and suspending judgment in order to explore contradictions that arise, for example as they witness overlooked stories through fictional dramas, and

uncover new angles and unexpected windows of opportunity:

It is built on a capacity to imagine that it is possible to hold multiple realities and world views simultaneously as parts of a greater whole without losing one's identity and viewpoint and without needing to impose or force one's view on the other. (ibid., p. 62; also pp. 36-37)

Insights on how this practice can manifest itself in a society in transition are offered in the case study analyses presented in chapters 5 and 6. Building and sustaining processes of change also calls for creativity, constant innovation, and flexibility. It is essential to "adapt to, respond to, and take advantage of emerging and context-based challenges" such as the search for creative ways of dealing with the past (ibid., p. 85).

3.2.1.3 Providing Space for the Creative Act

Making space for creative human action is the third discipline of the moral imagination. Lederach (2005) argues that:

The moral imagination takes form and expression through an act. While we might initially think of the space where *moral* and *imagination* meet as a conceptual exercise, in reality we cannot know this kind of imagination outside of concrete human action. (emphasis in original; p. 38)

He contends that creativity is permanently within human reach and always accessible, "even in settings where violence dominates and through its oppressive swath creates its greatest lie: that the lands it inhabits are barren. Artists shatter this lie" (ibid.; also Cohen et al., 2011a; Thompson et al., 2009). Lederach cites the *Petals of Hope, Rays of Light* project undertaken in the aftermath of the Real IRA (dissident cell) car bomb in Omagh on August 15, 1998 that killed thirty one people less than three months after the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement (2005, pp. 157-158). To address the issue of what to do with the floral tributes left at the scene of the bombing, artist Carole Kane transformed them into paper and art work with the help of over one hundred and fifty schoolchildren and volunteers from the local community to honour the trauma endured (O'Doherty, 2014, n.p.). The arts for peace project recognised the need to create space for hope and transformation to emerge, as C. Kane noted to people gathered for a lunch time talk in Derry-Londonderry in 2014:

I had [previously] done a few peace and reconciliation workshops and I was able to see how the creative process was very much a tool or a medium for people to come to terms with different things over a period of time. And just ... giving the brain – the mind – space to be able to be silent sometimes or to be able to enquire also helped them with other things they were working with. (City Centre Garden of Reflection, 2014, 5:04:00 min)

This speaks to the potential for transformation that can be achieved through the practice of the imagination of risk, the fourth discipline of the moral imagination (see Lederach, 2005, pp. 157-158).

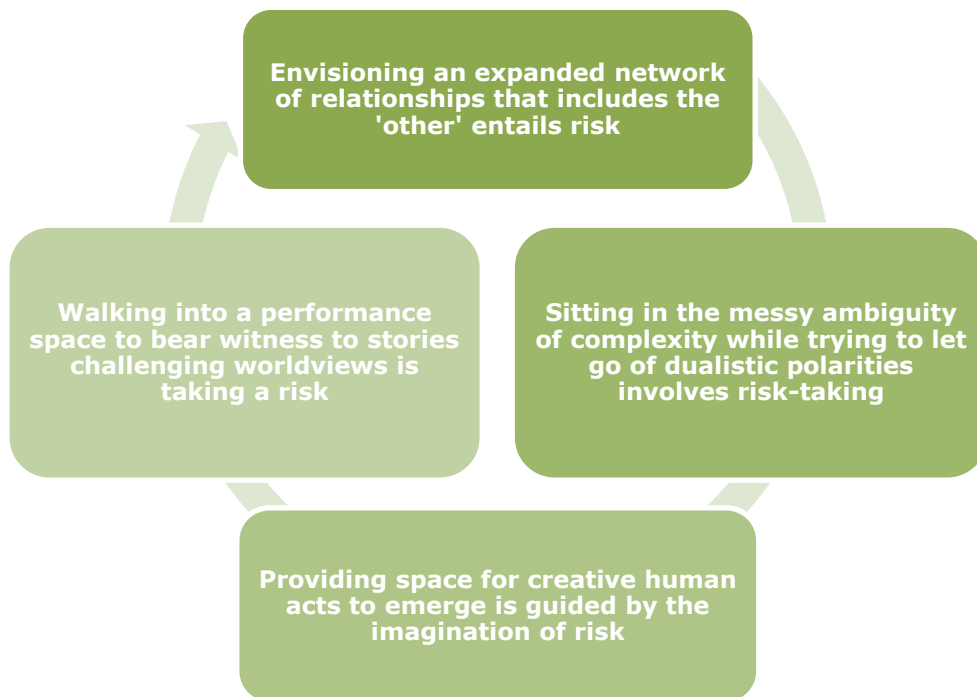
3.2.1.4 Exhibiting a Willingness to Risk

The fourth discipline of the moral imagination asks people to enter “the mystery of risk that takes the step beyond violence and into the uncharted geography of relationship with the enemy” (Lederach, 2005, p. 169). The capacity to generate and sustain the moral imagination requires individuals, organisations and communities to both think and live outside the box by exhibiting the willingness to risk (ibid., p. 62). Brewer (cited in Lederach, 2003b) explains what this means in the Northern Ireland context:

In our context of thirty plus years of the Troubles, violence, fear and division are known. Peace is the mystery! ... Peace asks you to share memory. It asks you to share space, territory, specific concrete places. It asks you to share a future. And all this you are asked to do with and in the presence of your enemy. (p. 265)

The act of stepping outside the “far too familiar landscape of violence” is quite demanding as it asks individuals and communities “to venture into lands that are not controlled or charted” (Lederach, 2005, pp. 5 & 39). Those who practice this kind of imagination must “understand the deeper implications of risk” (ibid. p. 39). On the use of drama and theatre as catalysts for discussion of challenging post-conflict issues, P. McFetridge (cited in Thompson, 2014) talks about being aware of her responsibility as an artist: “there is a time to tell a story; a time to challenge; a time to simply give a voice” (n.p.). Taking risks entails great vulnerability and awareness that stepping outside “known cartography” carries no guarantee of success or safety (Lederach, 2005, pp. 163). Figure 3.2 illustrates how risk-taking forms part of each discipline of the moral imagination.

Figure 3.2 Four types of risk associated with the practice of moral imagination



Source. Adapted from Lederach (2005, pp. 5, 31-40, 62-63, 149, 152-154 163-165, 169).

As stated in the introductory chapter the research questions at the heart of this thesis concern assessing the potential that lies in creative, theatre-centric approaches to conflict transformation (including emerging digital elements in this practice) especially in relation to dealing with the contested historical legacies of the past in a society in transition. Within the broad field of conflict transformation which emphasises the centrality of human relationships to peacebuilding, Lederach's theory of the moral imagination and its component disciplines, provide a clear framework for exploring and answering these questions. The framework offers a way of understanding and analysing the peacebuilding potential in creative work. However, the moral imagination framework has drawn criticism from other scholars and it is important to acknowledge and consider these critiques before bringing this chapter to a close.

3.2.2 Central Critiques of Lederach's Moral Imagination Framework

From the literature, two central critiques of Lederach's idea of the moral imagination emerge. The first criticises the framework for its ambiguity, the second queries whether its Christian roots problematize its usage in diverse contexts.

Lederach's (2005) work is not a technical manual "on how the creative act manifests itself or on how we, as peacebuilders, solve violent conflict" (Magellan, 2012, para. 1). Rather it exposes the evolution of this conflict transformation theorist's "ideas, approaches, and revisions and specific references to how these developed since the writing of *Building Peace* [1997]" (Lederach, 2005, p. viii; also Smithey, 2007). As such, in his review of Lederach's text on the moral imagination, Magellan (2012) observes that some may find it is "far too abstract and far too reliant on the same poetic prose that so deeply guides its implicit logic" (para 1). Having said this, Magellan himself still defends the concept for its offering of new ways to look at human relationships and conflict spaces through "the art of re-imagining complex situations" (ibid.). George (n.d.) takes up this criticism of vagueness in referring to Lederach's reliance on analogies taken from nature like how spiders build their webs to explain interdependent relationships instead of providing "more practical, contextual examples which would have made the theory more relevant and viable" (para. 10). She contends that Lederach's work provides insufficient information on how to locate strategic anchor points that could support processes focused on generating and sustaining linkages between not like-minded people and constituencies in conflict-ridden societies (ibid.). George, however, concedes that the need for peacebuilding to transcend reality and imagine what could be while remaining grounded in everyday realities does call for a degree of abstractness as each situation requires creative action that moves beyond what is known in a given setting (ibid., para. 11).

In his analysis of peace processes from a sociological perspective, Brewer (2010) discusses this concept of moral imagination which has become popular in peace studies (pp. 2-3). He wonders why Lederach primarily targets fellow conflict resolution professionals as his primary audience for this book as the moral imagination is a quality required by all: "bystanders, victims and ex-combatants also need to rethink and reformulate, to risk-take and develop a new set of moral precepts for living together with their former enemies" (ibid., p. 3). However, Brewer's primary concern about this idea of the moral imagination is its development around a moral framework, seen as another "in a series of ideas within

peace studies that deploy quasi-religious discourse" (p. 2; also Benjamin, 2005). While he agrees that peace processes are too focused on reaching political agreements rather than restoring broken relationships, Brewer argues that "placing social change within Christian eschatology" is problematic in the context of engagement between people who have been historically divided along religious lines (2010, p. 3). He contends that Lederach's own convictions arising from his Anabaptist/Mennonite religious-ethical framework infusing his writings are present through the use of language such as "healing, reconciliation, forgiveness, ... hope, 'truth', ... love" (ibid., p. 2). Brewer calls for a "secular eschatology within which the moral landscape of transitional societies as a whole can be discussed" and offers Delanty's (2006) idea of "cosmopolitan imagination" as an alternative even though referring to the latter idea "in situations where groups bear rights to cultural citizenship is not without its critics" (ibid., pp. 3 & 7). Ward (2007) argues that Lederach draws on his religious roots "in a way that can be heard within the largely secular academic discipline of Peace Studies" (p. 64). For his part, Lederach (2005) accepts that his use of the term moral in the context of building social change in and around the "geography of violent human conflict" may prompt criticism (p. 24). However, he insists that calling for greater moral imagination in human affairs has little in common with religious inquiry, morality, dogma or ethics (ibid.). Its essence lies in the need to move beyond what exists while still living in complex conflict settings, something Brewer would consider a valuable contribution to the search "for better ways to manage the after-effects of communal violence" (2010, pp. 1-2).

Neither of these lines of criticism is fatal to the utilisation of Lederach's idea of the moral imagination as this thesis' theoretical framework. If the main critiques are that Lederach's transformation approach is too abstract and might only appeal within a Christian framework, this thesis will address both of these by looking at concrete cases examining the moral imagination at work through the study of the role that engaged theatre and digital elements can assume in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland.

One of the most compelling arguments for the adoption of this

theoretical framework resides in the collection of experiences and reflections of artists who have used theatre before, during and after conflict in different regions of the world presented in Cohen et al.'s (2011a) anthology on performance and the creative transformation of conflict referenced in this chapter. Another is the work of Kahl & Puig Larrauri (2013) and Puig Larrauri (e.g. 2013a, 2013c, 2014b) around technology for peacebuilding discussed in the introductory chapter. Their work is shaped by Lederach's call for the cultivation of greater moral imagination in conflict affected societies as evidenced by Puig Larrauri's (2014b) contention that:

New technologies empower local peacebuilders to do what was previously impossible and can be effective tools of the moral imagination, shifting future trends in peacebuilding toward more local, impactful, and imaginative implementation. (last para.)

Specifically, Puig Larrauri (2013a) argues that the four elements identified by Lederach as central to the practice of moral imagination are embodied through the functions that these technologies can have in peacebuilding:

- New communications tools help us reach out to those we fear [centrality of relationships and interdependence].
- Data processing technologies allow us to touch the heart of complexity [paradoxical curiosity].
- With games we imagine beyond what is seen [creativity].
- And technology-enabled engagement allows us to risk vulnerability one step at a time [risk-taking]. (p. 4; also Kahl & Puig Larrauri, 2013; Young & Young, 2015)

This thesis' focus on the exploration of the role that engaged theatre can assume in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland will identify connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding in support of a more expansive view and application of this transformation approach.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter set out the theoretical framework utilised for the exploration of this thesis research questions concerning the role of engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding in a period of post-conflict transition. Specifically, the chapter explained that this thesis' theoretical framework was constructed through the lens of the conflict transformation school of thought within the field of conflict resolution. This chapter pointed to the

diversity of approaches in the field of conflict resolution by discussing the contribution of prominent scholars including K. Boulding, E. Boulding, J. Galtung, J. W. Burton and A. Curle. To investigate possible connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding, the focus was placed on the work of conflict transformation theorist John Paul Lederach in this area because since the 1990s, Lederach has produced one of the most comprehensive accounts to date of how to build sustainable peace in violent, protracted conflict settings (see Miall, 2004, p. 6). This includes the practice of what Lederach (2005) refers to as moral imagination that views the art of peacebuilding as something more akin to an artistic than a linear technical process (p. 5). Prior to examining the idea of moral imagination, this chapter briefly reviewed key aspects of Lederach's earlier works that were relevant to the research questions stated in this thesis' introduction. The analysis then turned to the four elements that Lederach identifies as the essence of peacebuilding – embracing relational interdependency, practicing paradoxical curiosity, pursuing creative acts and risk-taking (ibid., p. 40). These form the foundation of this thesis' theoretical framework. While this chapter acknowledged that the moral imagination framework has drawn criticism from some academics, the coming chapters will present concrete cases that examine the moral imagination at work through the study of the role that engaged theatre and digital elements can assume in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland.

The next chapter acts as a bridge between this thesis theoretical framework and its application to the case studies analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. It identifies key points of convergence between Lederach's elicitive social transformation approach and the role that theatre can play during and in the aftermath of a protracted conflict. It then surveys innovative drama and theatre models developed in Northern Ireland with a focus on work produced in the early transitional years and more recent alternative modes of engagement that include digital technology-enhanced efforts.

CHAPTER 4

Engaged Theatre and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland

I think war is mostly a collapse of the imagination ... and theatre is about conflict: how we deal with conflict, with my desires that are different to your desires ... Theatre engages the imagination, is a laboratory, as I understand it and I practice it ... to explore alternatives, not to avoid conflict ... It's about asking that question: "What else?" ... Is this a binary or can we engage on another way, on a third way, that cannot be here or here? ... Imagine what is not in the room yet. And that is the work of art.

H. Aristizàbal, Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner, *Panel for Peace -Dialogue on Peace and Theatre* (June 2013) – Rotterdam, Netherlands (Formaat231, 2013, 1:28:05).

Introduction

This chapter acts as a bridge between this thesis' theoretical framework in chapter 3 and its application to the case studies presented in chapters 5 and 6. To create this bridge, this chapter offers reflection on how engaged theatre can be a site for the moral imagination and provides background to how this practice has evolved in Northern Ireland. Together chapters 4, 5 and 6 contribute to a richer scholarly articulation of how theatre-makers are engaging with social change, namely by tapping into local knowledge and culture, enabling the building of webs of relationships across divides and proposing new avenues of inquiry about what has yet to be imagined in the aftermath of conflict. Lederach (2005) argues that what is at stake in divided societies is to engage the "source that generates [repetitive and destructive] energy while creating processes that move it toward constructive expression and interaction" (p. 149). Artistic work that invites and supports people "to attend to memories, questions, emotions, dilemmas, fears, and hopes" suggests a strong affinity between artistic practice and elicitive social transformation (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 166):

If we [artists] can find a way through performance to create little moments of clarity, then people might be able to see the relationships between themselves and those moments. Maybe then we might be able to work our way through the mess we've made. (O'Neal, 2011, p. 157)

These little moments can reveal alternate avenues for exchange, reflexion and experimentation that can contribute to the building of constructive change through the practice of moral imagination in a society in transition.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the convergence of theatre and peacebuilding as the latter field requires “tools that are as diverse and complicated as the human spirit [and] the arts emerge as a logical ally” (Shank & Schirch, 2008, p. 218). The second section focuses on the role and power of community and artist-based theatrical work during the conflict in Northern Ireland and its aftermath through a range of innovative approaches that have shaped contemporary Northern Irish theatre. It also raises the issue of loyalism’s attitude toward theatrical activity. The final section extends this discussion to the study of two community engagement projects involving Kabosh Theatre that led to the creation of the *Streets of Belfast App* (2015) as part of an exploration of work at the intersection of theatre, cultural tourism, and the practice of live and virtual modes of the moral imagination in Northern Ireland.

4.1 Theatre and Elicitive Social Transformation

As discussed in chapter 3, Lederach (1995) argues for a move toward elicitive, culturally responsive approaches and methodologies to conflict transformation. Shank and Schirch (2008) contend that “the arts work well within this value system” (p. 231). Augsburg (1992) explains that the arts are a medium that understand that conflict “is universal yet distinct in every culture; it is common to all persons yet experienced uniquely by every individual” (p. 18). The *raison d’être* of theatre is to expose “the mysteries of human relationship” including its types, pathways, cycles and patterns (ibid.). This thesis contends that engaged theatre can make significant contributions to peacebuilding through the creation of a “deeply humanising space in which individuals and communities affected by conflict use their symbolic representations to gradually come to terms with their identities, histories, and future possibilities” (Arai, 2013, p. 149). A brief international sample of this connection between artistic practice and peacebuilding was offered in the introductory chapter with reference to examples in the former Yugoslavia and Peru, as well as earlier work in

Northern Ireland by two pioneering independent theatre companies – Field Day and Charabanc. Why engaged theatre practices can open up spaces for conflict transformation and the moral imagination to take hold will firstly be explored below.

Reich (2012) argues that the rebuilding of relationships across former conflict lines, and within communities, requires “the active creation of a space accessible to the members of the different sides of a conflict in which they interact, share experiences and reflect” (p. 3). These spaces can take various forms. For example, in community-based theatre such as the Theatre of Witness model, the story-holders perform their own lived experience of the conflict (see Sepinuck, 2013; Grant & Jennings, 2013; Upton, 2011).⁵¹ Elsewhere, in artist-based theatre models like the one used by Kabosh Theatre professionally trained actors tell a story through well-defined characters and a storyline steeped in local culture and knowledge. Whatever model is employed the aim of well-devised artistic work is to:

Engage multiple faculties of their audience members ... including their intellects, senses, emotions, and spirits, through the use of symbols – words, gestures, movements, ... objects, etc. – that are resonant with meanings, designed to support and challenge, soothe and provoke, and combine in various ways the reassurance of the familiar with the wonder at the new. (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 169)

The local cultural resonance evoked by artistic practice distinguishes theatre from what is often seen as “purely rational and formulaic peacebuilding techniques that draw on valuable scholarly theories but often fail to honour local knowledge and culture” (ibid., p. 165; also Augsburg, 1992; Lederach, 1995; Shank and Schirch, 2008). The power of performance comes from its immediacy, the exchange of energy “among those who journey together through a composed moment in space and in time” (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 167). Cohen et al. (2011d) argue that what is needed to achieve a meaningful exchange of energy is presence viewed as “the texture of the moral imagination that animates the permeable membrane between peacebuilding, performance and society” (p. 170).

Well-devised imaginings can elicit from audiences what Reich (2012)

⁵¹ To get a better sense of the nature and objectives of the Theatre of Witness model see Foy (2013a) and the short videos produced by Krownbergs Productions (2014) and Playhouse Derry (2013a).

refers to as “the art of seeing” (p. 9). The latter includes:

- Nurturing an “empathic gaze” that furthers understanding of social systems at play via identification of observed scenes to the viewer’s own lived experience. (ibid.)
- Sensing small instances of change in the interaction among a theatre productions’ characters, “not just what is, but what might become” through full use of visual, hearing, feeling faculties. (ibid.)
- Moving from judgemental to non-judgemental view of behaviours/actions (ibid.; Lederach, 2005, pp. 36-37).
- Realising that the act of bearing witness requires attentive and present observation just like the moral imagination takes form and expression through concrete human action. (Reich, 2012, p. 9; also Lederach, 2005, p. 38; Sepinuck, 2013, p. 228)

Reich discusses the art of seeing in the context of more interactive forms of theatre like Augusto Boal’s forum theatre model where audience members are invited to stage an intervention thus becoming “spect-actors”, an example of which is presented in the next section (2012, p. 6; also Boal, 2006, pp. 4-6). This capacity to see beyond the presenting situation rests at the nexus of human reality (human suffering) and imagination (human possibility), the very place where artistic practice and peacebuilding intersect (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 3; also Schininà, 2004). Its praxis holds “a lot of potential for the unfolding of spaces for transformation” as the disciplines of the moral imagination outlined by Lederach (2005) are also viewed as defining qualities of well-devised artistic work (Reich, 2012, p. 9; also Cohen et al., 2011d). The effects and affects⁵² of theatre-centric efforts toward constructive change depend,

to some degree, on what issues ... are brought into the performance space; how they are recast by the creativity, moral imagination, and intentions of those involved; and the courage, creativity, and commitment with which the transformed ‘matter’ is carried back into the community or society. (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 171)

The theatre-centric projects and models discussed in this thesis are built on the idea “that different stories are given space within the performance, and

⁵² For Thompson (2009) the term affects evokes the idea of an “affective register” in relation to performance which needs to be recognised and which includes “bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasures” that lay beyond the realm of “effect” such as identifiable social or educational impact of theatrical work (p. 7 & pp. 119-120).

thus implicitly assume every story's right to exist" (Reich, 2012, p. 11).

Calling for multiple interpretations of the past is risky business in the aftermath of conflict where "the first casualty in any conflict or war is the truth ... [and] truth-seeking is paramount and central to the artists' work" (Ross, 2011, p. xvi). The notions of the right to exist and sustaining a sense of self are innately linked to the issues of ownership of stories and who has the right to tell or retell them (see Reich, 2012; P. McFetridge cited in Thompson, 2014; also Thompson, 2004). In a society affected by conflict the way stories are told, given order and meaning constitute pieces of survival realities imbedded in the bodies and minds of people and communities (see Thompson, 2004). They "are not disembodied discourse adopted or discarded with ease" (ibid., p.155). While telling stories is central to the work of theatre-makers, it is made more complex by the interface with and between people who may not be ready to acknowledge the past, let alone be part of creative ways to deal with it. Thompson (2004) cautions that in the absence of extreme care, creative acts that "dig up narratives, experiences, and remembrances can blame, enact revenge, and foster animosity as much as they can develop dialogue, respect, or comfort" (p. 151). The key to inviting audiences to practice the art of seeing stated described above rests in the theatre-maker's ability to explore patterns of meaning and interaction and expose their function as survival strategies that reduce "a complex history into dualistic polarities" and contain "social reality in artificial ways" (Lederach, 2005, p. 35). Theatre "offers a potent format" for tackling the most challenging issues confronting societies in transition as fiction creates space for the reconstitution of reality and the conversion of faceless beings into human beings (Shank & Schirch, 2008, p. 232). Lerner Febres (2011) explains that "it is through representation that a vision of the world is recuperated and the fragmented pieces can be composed to create a coherent and meaningful picture" (p. x). However, this engagement of human capacities must include ways of acknowledging and honouring, articulating, and framing embodied "repertoire" of memories (Taylor, 2003, p. 19; also Cohen et al., 2011d, pp.

176-177).⁵³ Cohen et al. (2011d) argue that unacknowledged memories “do not disappear; in fact, through silence they often intensify, resulting in ‘trans-generational transmission of trauma’ and festering resentments” (p. 177). The effect of the residues of a violent, protracted conflict on individuals and communities will be explored further in the Northern Ireland case studies presented in chapters 5 and 6.

Sepinuck (2013) argues that theatre holds the capacity to act as a catalyst for change:

One often has to go to the centre of a story in order to transcend it. As one remembers the details, colours, sights, smells, sounds, feelings, and thoughts ... often new meaning around an event can be found. (p. 230)

Shared hurts, losses, experiences along with feelings of anger, frustration, betrayal, fears and hopes speak to the universality of the human condition. Audiences are invited to co-create new imagery that will lead to a broader societal narrative namely through the process of self-reflection triggered by the stories told by fictional characters. This is what artists work towards:

The more deeply a person is moved, the more likely the performance is to reach beneath defences, provoking new insights, engender new sensibilities, and inspire action. (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 184)

The hope is that these new insights, exchanges and actions will “enter into the ongoing stream of life” imbued with the values of the moral imagination and will contribute to the creative transformation of conflict (ibid.).

As this discussion suggests engaged theatre work is about pushing people out of their comfort zone. This does not mean, however, that the expectation is that this work will instantaneously transform individuals

into something other than what they are but you would hope that it adds to their understanding of more complexity, that things aren’t black and white, they’re usually more grey and contradictory at times. (L. McKeown, personal communication, February 25, 2015)

⁵³ In her work on performance and memory in the Americas, D. Taylor (2003) studied differences between two kinds of containers of collective memory: archive and repertoire. The former forms a disembodied archival memory, i.e. a corpus of data stored in official physical or virtual spaces, whereas a repertoire is an embodied archival memory transmitted generationally namely through performance [Taylor, 2003, pp. 19-22; also Cohen et al., 2011d]. For an example of the application of this theory, see Taylor’s (2001) analysis of theatre collective Yuyachkani’s work referenced in the introductory chapter.

As more stories find a voice, more people are likely to show curiosity about what the 'other' community is thinking, what their stories are and what each other think about their respective stories: "curiosity is the antidote to judgment ... which will almost always stop the creative and trust-building process" (Sepinuck, 2013, p. 231; also Lederach, 2005, pp. 36-37). The scholars and practitioners cited in this section are saying things about the connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding that are reminiscent of Lederach's vision of elicitive social transformation described in chapter 3. Their work points to the importance of the four disciplines of the moral imagination identified by Lederach (2005) as the essences of peacebuilding: presence of relational conflict/peace webs that include enemies, need to embrace complexity and provide space for creative acts, and risk-taking.

Having considered why theatre in particular offers a potential site for the creative transformation of conflict transformation, the next section examines the connections between engaged theatre and elicitive social transformation in the late 1980s to early 2000s in Northern Ireland – picking up from the examples and period already referred to in the introductory chapter.

4.2 A Survey of Developments in the Field of Engaged Theatre in Northern Ireland

In his analysis of community-based drama and smaller-scale professional theatre in Northern Ireland from a community relations perspective, Grant (1993) identified three key benefits of this work:

1. It provides a non-competitive opportunity for personal interaction, which in the context of a full production can be of quite a profound kind.
2. It is s a good vehicle for the exploration of sensitive or difficult ideas,
3. Of necessity, it engages participants in a process that encourages them (either actively as performers, or more passively as members of an audience) to challenge and question these ideas. (p. 2)⁵⁴

⁵⁴ While there is a high degree of overlap between them, scholars and practitioners distinguish between community and artist-based theatrical work (Grant, 1993, p. 3; also Jennings, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011b). This line is less clear-cut "in a small community such as Northern Ireland" (Grant, 1993, p. 7). Many

These objectives continue to define and inform engaged theatre in a society still very much grappling with the complex and divisive legacies of its past.

Various aspects and approaches to engaging with the Northern Ireland conflict in and through theatre are well-documented in Grant (1993), Pilkington (2001), Baron Cohen (2001), Byrne (2001), Maguire (2006), McDonnell (2008), Jennings (2010), and Urban (2011), among others. Most of these studies contain extensive analysis of the work of groups that had a major impact on the community theatre movement in the 1980s and 1990s in “poor working-class areas where the struggle and violence had been most deeply experienced” (Boon & Plastow, 2004, p. 15). The latter include Ardoyne and the New Lodge areas in North Belfast, the Shankill Road area in West Belfast, Ballybeen on the outskirts of East Belfast, the Short Strand area in East Belfast, and areas in the city of Derry-Londonderry.⁵⁵ As the examples below will demonstrate, the theatre sector produced unique events delivering “social and personal outcomes for both artists and participant groups, ... engaged new audiences, [and] challenged perceptions of the aesthetic possibilities of theatre” during the conflict and its aftermath (Jennings, 2012, p. 177). However, it must be kept in mind that some communities, particularly within Protestant/loyalist areas, resist and distrust engagement with theatre, as will be discussed in this chapter.

Urban (2011) discusses some of the global dimensions of theatrical forms that have influenced artistic practices in Northern Ireland, such as “Brecht’s epic theatre, Boal’s theatre of the oppressed, meta-theatrical enactments and site-specific theatre” (p. 276). Based on the earlier discussion of theatre and elicitive social transformation, it is not surprising that artistic practices in Northern Ireland draw heavily on the pedagogy of educator and social theorist Paulo Freire (1972) as transmitted through Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed techniques first developed in the 1960s around “the idea of community theatre based on the principles of direct democracy” (Urban, 2011, p. 34; also Boal, 2006; Jennings, 2012).

theatre-makers met in the course of this research navigate between mainstream theatre, socio-political activism and engaged theatre work (ibid.; also Maguire, 2006).

⁵⁵ Magill (1996) reports that the Shankill Community Theatre Company was formed as part of a positive, “creative response” to the destruction caused by an IRA bombing on October 23, 1993, at Frizzell’s fish shop on loyalist Shankill Road (West Belfast) on October 23, 1993 (p. 124).

Boal's theatre model is characterised by the practice "of engaging the audience interactively with the performance (before, during or after the performance – sometimes all three)" (Prendergast & Saxton, pp. 10-11; also Boal, 2006). However, few community projects have delivered performances in Boal's styles of theatre. Boal instead became more of a "philosophical influence than a paradigm of practice ... [Boal's techniques] have been adapted for use as training and devising tools, but are rarely presented publicly" (Jennings, 2009, p. 106). For example, Belfast-based Community Dialogue (2013) conducted a pilot project exploring alternative dialogue methodologies that could be part of a "creative dialogues toolbox" (p. 2). The goal was to make the workshops more appealing and accessible to potential participants who may be less willing or able to engage due to fear, suspicion or lack of self-confidence (ibid.). The organisation integrated Boal's forum theatre technique into workshops attended by members of Protestant and Catholic groups and of a group of refugees and asylum seekers followed by a few public performances.⁵⁶ They concluded that the pairing of drama and dialogue (including post-show discussions) created a space where people could express "their own experiences of conflict in a critical, non-threatening way, dialogue about alternatives became possible and channels for change become more apparent" (ibid., p. 8).

4.2.1 Impact of the Conflict and the Peace Process on Theatre-Making

The introductory chapter referred to the existence of engaged theatre in Northern Ireland during the times of the Troubles. The evolution of engaged theatre during the violent, protracted conflict in Northern Ireland emerged out of what has been described by scholars as the "fervent activity and cross-fertilisation of amateur drama, political theatre, community activism and the struggle of the professional theatre sector against government censorship" (Jennings, 2012, pp. 163-164). In essence prior to 1998, "organic interventionary theatres" grounded in working-class communities were defined by the conflict and its immediate aftermath:

⁵⁶ The forum theatre is perhaps the best known and practiced technique forming part of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed tools (see Boal, 2006, p. 6). It engages "spect-ators" in the analysis of contentious issues by inviting them to become the actors and collectively explore diverse perspectives and formulate alternate responses (ibid.; also Community Dialogue, 2013; also Foy, 2013e; Ross, 2011).

They were all battlefield theatres, and their styles, contexts, modes of organisation, texts and performance strategies derived from the conditions of the war... They were *situated* theatres and derived their political authenticity from their relationship to a specific historical reality. (emphasis in original; McDonnell, 2008, p. 213)

As groups were operating without much funding or government support, Jennings observes that this movement's grass-roots activism along with its participatory and inclusive approaches "represented an independent and critical voice in the clamour for a political resolution of the Troubles" (2012, p. 163). After the Good Friday Agreement, financial support for the community arts sector became part of the policy-led peacebuilding agenda determined by public bodies at the executive level within Northern Ireland although, as Grant (1993) states, theatre "cannot be expected to fit within a policy-led agenda like jelly in a mould" (p. 57).⁵⁷ Jennings (2012) reports that many theatre-makers still manifest "nostalgia for the 'glory days' of community theatre, when government funding was limited and the peace agenda existed in opposition to mainstream discourse" (p. 164).

Playwright Martin Lynch (2004), a key figure in the community theatre movement who came from a politicised republican working-class Belfast family, states that while he is unsure what impact this movement had on political developments in Northern Ireland, he is quite certain that:

The Troubles have had a big impact on us. Some of those active in the last ten years are convinced that the turmoil, the upheaval, the searching of consciences, the unwanted confrontations, the closeness to death and tragedy, the political uncertainty — have acted as a powerful incentive for unusually large numbers of people to look for answers, to go in search of something better than what we have — through the medium of the arts. (p. 63)

This is embodied in M. Lynch's large-scale community theatre project *The Stone Chair* (1989) based in a predominantly Catholic nationalist enclave within Protestant/loyalist East Belfast known as the Short Strand area, one of the first to be segregated by a peace wall at the outset of the conflict:

⁵⁷ Many funding bodies have provided millions to the cultural sector including the European Union as mentioned in the introductory chapter; United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland state bodies, and private foundations and international funds namely from the United States and Australia (Jennings, 2012, pp. 104-105; also Bush & Houston, 2011).

This enclosure has consolidated both the community's sense of self and connection between itself and its locale as territory ... Physical containment has been matched by a sense of voicelessness within the community. (Maguire, 2006, p. 123; also McKittrick, 2011; Tonge, 2006)

This project was about empowerment of a local community "that had been silenced by its isolation from its surrounding environment" (Maguire, 2006, p. 123). The end product was a fusion of reminiscences on the experiences of the area during the Belfast Blitz in 1941 gathered through archival research, interviews with area residents and original writing by M. Lynch (see Byrne, 2001, pp. 98-101; Barton, 1989). In doing so, the theatrical event opened "itself to loyalist and unionist audiences where the shared experience pre-dated the contemporary conflict" (Maguire, 2006, p. 133):

On the night that I was there a proportion of the audience was Protestant working class watching closely as for the first time in their lives some of them saw right inside a Catholic city village and saw that the people they watched were themselves ... It's a powerful contribution to community relations. (McAughrey, 1989 cited in Byrne, 2001, p. 99)

This project also had positive impacts on local residents, many of whom resisted "the idea of using theatre as a medium" (Maguire, 2006, p. 124).

In the aftermath of the conflict many theatre-makers in Northern Ireland have actively contributed to the transition to peace by providing a creative space where people can potentially find ways of coping

with identities that remain in opposition, dealing with memories of violence, managing the grief resulting from extraordinary loss, and living with the devastating economic impact of the conflict and the more general urban de-industrialisation affecting the region. (Thompson et al., 2009, pp. 230-231)

Through their work theatre-makers enter personal, cultural and social spaces, "the feelings that performance evokes, and the responses. it provokes, cannot be taken for granted" (ibid., p. 205). In his talk entitled *I was born in the rain and soaked in conflict – theatre in conflict* given at Queen's University Belfast (May 2014), actor and writer V. Higgins (cited in Foy, 2014) stated that while it is important for people to reflect on and respond to issues raised by a performance through post-show discussions, as an actor it is sometimes difficult to hear audience members' stories

immediately after performing (n.p.). In interview, V. Higgins shared that due to the nature of the issues explored in the play *Those You Pass on the Street* (to be examined in chapter 5), he could not attend all discussions (personal communication, February 3, 2015). He really felt for people “stuck in a tremendous amount of grief. So to be able to do the play every night, [he] needed a break from it, from hearing these stories every single night” (ibid.). This testimony speaks to the complexities of engaging in theatre work in a “context where what you are ‘pretending to be’, and what you ‘are’ cannot be easily separated by an appeal to technique” (McDonnell, 2008, p. 215). For this actor is it always very important to determine “where you situate yourself” regarding a particular production and recognise “what may trigger you as an actor and a human being” (V. Higgins cited in Foy, 2014, n.p.).

4.2.2 Examples of Innovative Theatre Work Produced in the Early Period of Post-Conflict Transition

The two examples below provide insight into the range of innovative theatre and performance work around the time of the Good Friday Agreement that speak to the capacity of theatre-makers to think, live and see “beyond the parameters of what is visible”, an integral part of the practice of the moral imagination (Lederach, 2005, p. 62). As alluded to in the introductory chapter, Northern Irish theatre in the 1990s was marked by a growing independent arts sector and by the popularity of alternative forms of theatre including site-specific theatre that reframe “traditional ways of looking at and engaging with the Troubles” (Coffrey, 2016, p. 103).

In 1997, JustUs Community Theatre – an amateur-acting group of nationalist women from West Belfast interested in theatre as a form of political expression – collaborated with DubbelJoint Theatre Company on “what would become one of the most iconic and controversial productions in the post-ceasefire period” (McDonnell, 2008, p. 171).⁵⁸ *Binlids – The Story of West Belfast Resistance* was scripted by JustUs members Brenda Murphy, Danny Morrison, Jake MacSiacáis and Christine Poland (ibid.). Its title

⁵⁸ Marie Jones and Pam Brighton both involved in Charabanc Theatre Company (1983-1995), which is referred to in the introductory chapter of this thesis, founded West Belfast-based DubbelJoint in 1991 (McDowell, 2008, p. 169).

refers to “the lids of the metal bins or trash cans banged on the ground to warn of the arrival of British forces in [nationalist] areas”, a reminder of the raids on homes during the conflict (Maguire, 2006, p. 50). *Binlids* charts the history of working-class women – mothers, daughters, sisters, soldiers, activists – in West Belfast from the introduction of internment without trial in 1971 to the late 1980s as the community comes to terms with a series of attacks including one on mourners at the Milltown Cemetery:

The play had two interdependent aims. The first was to allow the community to tell its own story to itself. The second was to tell the story to outsiders in order to challenge the negative view of republicans in the world outside Ireland. (McDonnell, 2008, p. 171)

Binlids pursued a documentary drama approach that presents “actuality on the stage and in the process authenticates that actuality, and it speaks to a specifically defined audience for whom it has special significance” (Filewod, 1987 cited in Maguire, 2006, p. 54). While street rioting “complicated” rehearsals and portrayal of real life scenes in the play, V. Higgins (cited in Foy, 2014) noted that performances felt more “immediate and vital, something you don’t get when playing classic theatre” (n.p.).

By its premiere at Féile An Phobal – West Belfast Arts Festival in August 1997, the Sinn Féin party leadership had been asked by British authorities to join the peace talks and “the play offered the possibility of reviewing and testifying to the journey which this particular community had undertaken to reach this juncture” (Maguire, 2006, p. 51; also Ó Broin, 1997).⁵⁹ While *Binlids* drew sell-out crowds, it was criticised by unionist journalists and politicians for its amateurish quality, for being a one-sided portrayal of events (republican propaganda), a travesty of public funds and sparked public debate about the role of theatre within the peace process (see Byrne, 2001, p. 123; Maguire, 2006, p. 56; McDonnell, 2008, pp. 173-174; Schaefer, 2003, pp. 15-16). DubbelJoint’s P. Brighton (1997 cited in Byrne, 2001) stated that the play “was seeking a balance ... in the overall perception of what makes West Belfast tick”, its claim to authenticity arising instead from “the authority of individuals and communities to speak from and act out (of) their own experience” (p. 123; Maguire, 2006, p. 57).

⁵⁹ For more information on the yearly summer festival in West Belfast see <http://feilebelfast.com/>

V. Higgins (cited in Foy, 2014) judges that *convictions* (2000)⁶⁰, a site-specific production by Belfast-based Tinderbox Theatre Company, was one of the most intricate and emotionally charged projects that he has engaged in (n.p.).⁶¹ It was staged at a time “of positive political change in Northern Ireland but which was also a period of political instability” (Urban, 2011, p. 75). The play was set in the former Crumlin Road Courthouse situated between two strongholds of loyalism and republicanism areas. What happened in this building during the conflict “is part of the terrible shared history of the past 30 years” (Holland 2000, n.p.).⁶²

With P. McFetridge acting as artistic director, the aim of this large-scale project was to build a communal space emphasising “the histories of both political traditions in relation to the judiciary system and the spatial meaning of the actual building across the road from Crumlin Jail”, providing an opportunity to visit and reclaim this historic building (Urban, 2011, p. 270; also Byrne, 2001). The production explored issues “of justice, the act of passing judgement, the notion of laying to rest the past, and the anticipation of the future” from different angles (Urban, 2011, p. 75). It was inspired by interviews done with persons whose lives were linked with the courthouse such as ex-prisoners and family members, court officials, lawyers, and Royal Ulster Constabulary officers (ibid., p. 87). The building hosted seven independent short plays by seven writers, each set in a specific room, along with a series of film, visual art and sound installations: *Court No. 2* by Marie Jones, *Court No. 1* by Owen McCafferty, *Jury Room* by Nicola McCartney, *Main Hall* by Martin Lynch, *Judge’s Room* by Darmian Gorman, *Male Toilets* by Daragh Carville, and *Holding Room* by Gary Mitchell, the latter site acting as a stark reminder of the cells that prisoners were brought to by underground tunnel from the Crumlin Road Jail (ibid., pp. 79-88). Audience members from different community backgrounds in

⁶⁰ Tinderbox does not capitalise the title: “pluralised and not capitalised, *convictions* recognised the multiple and often complex beliefs that exist in Belfast and undermined the stability that the singular, capitalised ‘Convictions’ might suggest” (Harvie, 2005, p. 54; also Tinderbox Theatre, 2000b).

⁶¹ For the script see Tinderbox Theatre Company (2000b) and or an insightful look at the what inspired this production and the history of the Crumlin Courthouse, see the document prepared by Tinderbox for its outreach programme aimed at post-secondary pupils (Tinderbox Theatre Company, 2000a).

⁶² Bowcott (2006) reports that “as many as twenty-five thousand loyalist and republican prisoners are thought to have marched through the tunnel [joining the courthouse to the Crumlin Road Jail] during the course of the Troubles”; the courthouse became redundant in June 1998 (para. 4).

the Belfast area, who together created “new proximity between divided communities, achieved through theatrical performance”, were guided to the different rooms by actors playing uniformed courthouse guards (*ibid.*, p. 270). According to P. McFetridge (cited in Urban, 2011), the challenge of this dramaturgical approach was as follows:

To let the building and the three-dimensional arts installations represent the past – the history – whilst the theatrical elements explored the future. It presents more possibilities to let the past, present and future sit alongside each other and thereby provoke informed debate within each audience member. (p. 87)

For Clarke (2000 cited in Byrne, 2001) this was achieved as the audience “was continually confronted with its own associations and assumptions, and challenged in its own convictions – political, social and cultural” (p. 139).

This survey of different approaches to “the conscious adoption of creative and artistic perspectives” explored by theatre-makers in Northern suggests strong affinities with the four disciplines of the moral imagination – acknowledging relational interdependency, embracing paradoxical curiosity, pursuing creative acts, and risk-taking (Jennings, 2009, p. 107; Lederach, 2005, p. 40). Yet not all communities embrace, are comfortable with, or see value in engaging with theatricality as will be discussed next.

4.2.3 Loyalist Communities and Theatricality

A detailed study of the manner in which loyalist ideology of the conflict and the complex histories of Northern Ireland are portrayed in text and in performance and of loyalist communities’ relationship with theatre falls outside of the scope of this thesis (see e.g. Grant, 1993; Pilkington, 2001; Baron Cohen, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Maguire, 2006; McDonnell, 2008; Urban, 2011). From a conflict transformation perspective, however, it is important to recognise loyalism’s reluctance to engage with theatricality “which has historically swung between indifference and hostility” (McDowell, 2013, p. 323). Playwright Gary Mitchell (cited in McKittrick, 2008) explains that “there is a deep-rooted ignorance of the arts within Loyalist communities ...They do not trust drama ... They will tell you coldly that drama belongs to the Catholics – drama belongs to the nationalists” (para. 8; also McDowell, 2013, p. 325). For McDowell (2013) this attitude can be

linked “to aspects of embedded Protestant culture” in Northern Ireland (p. 325). Ulster Protestantism viewed theatrical activity as unsuitable and as ungodly: it encourages “lewd behaviour in both actors and audiences; and it arouses the basest instincts of the lower classes, who need strong leadership to keep them under control” (ibid., pp. 325 & 326). And even if theatre were not openly offensive, the loyalist community “regarded itself as industrious” which left little time for “theatrical fripperies” (ibid., p. 325):

The psyche of the North of Ireland is one that is about concrete things to do with certainty and belief and faith ... So ... [it] does not lend itself to creative writing, or creativity in many ways ... because creativity ... is saying ... that there are things over and above concrete and steel that are important. (Tim Loane cited in McDowell, 2013, p. 327)

Finally, there is the persistent belief “that theatre was, somehow, for the ‘other’ side” (ibid., p. 323; also Grant, 1993). Despite this, the Protestant tradition has its share of playwrights including Gary Mitchell, Marie Jones, Christina Reid, Stewart Parker and J. Burgess, and of community theatre activists exploring ways of involving their communities in the creative transformation of conflict (see e.g. Coffrey, 2016; McDonnell, 2008).

The idea that theatricality is somehow more accessible to Catholics points to the cultural significance of the staging of the play *Crows on the Wire* (2013) written by J. Burgess and the case study of chapter 6. From a Protestant/loyalist background, he sees himself as a facilitator of stories “which come mainly from [his] own community” and may have a “tangential [positive] effect” on ongoing peacebuilding efforts (personal communication, October 1, 2014; also McDowell, 2013, p. 331, n. 50). For the playwright a more pressing concern is to ensure that a complete set of voices is represented in the wider process of social change “no matter how hard those stories might be to hear” (personal communication, October 1, 2014). On the role of single-identity theatre work within loyalist areas, McDowell (2013) argues that it should be viewed more as part of an ongoing process:

If the work itself could be viewed as process rather than product, if the initial gain is not one of performance standards but of an increased community confidence, then it is possible that drama in this context can encourage engagement with new notions of identity and culture. (p. 333)

It is in that cultural space that engaged theatre can be viewed as a potential site for peacebuilding during a period of post-conflict transition.

Thus far this chapter has explored theatre as a means of cultivating the moral imagination during and in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. This revealed a history of staging dramas in unconventional spaces and styles. The next section offers a further elaboration of the use of artistic practices in the overlooked area of cultural tourism within a broader peacebuilding spectrum. The case of Kabosh Theatre's theatrical walking tours also draw attention to the increasingly inventive use of digital media, in this case a mobile application, in the range of ways theatre-makers seek to engage the public in thinking about the legacies of the past.

4.3 Live and Virtual Theatrical Walking Tours of Belfast Streets as an Extension of Engaged Theatre Practices

This section extends the study of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding to projects carried out by Kabosh Theatre in the area of cultural tourism viewed as a way of "interrogating how culture can alter local residents' attitudes towards their spaces and how [it] presents Northern Ireland to global visitors" (Kabosh, 2016, p. 2). Using theatrical walking tours as a vehicle, the company offers residents and visitors a chance to discover Belfast through a unique lens: short plays enacted by professional actors along tour routes to draw attention to "aspects of Belfast's history that are overlooked when citizens and visitors focus only" on Northern Ireland's troubled political history (Owicki, 2015, p. 230).

The analysis focuses on Kabosh Theatre's *The West Awakes* (2010a) and *Shankill Stories* (2013a), two theatrical walking tours exploring the histories that shaped the identities and politics of two West Belfast communities and that led to the creation of the *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a). These tours take place on the predominantly nationalist Falls Road and predominantly loyalist Shankill Road, two arterial roads running in close proximity to each other as suggested by the Google map combination found in Appendix G which locates the performance sites for the two live theatrical walking tours discussed below. These roads, only six blocks away from Belfast's city centre, were the site of violent incidents including the

August 1969 street fighting between Catholics and Protestants during which an entire Catholic street – Bombay Street – that abuts the Protestant Shankill Road area, was burned to the ground; loyalist gunman Michael Stone’s attack on mourners attending a service at the Milltown Cemetery for three IRA members killed by the British Army in Gibraltar, in March 1988; and the IRA bomb explosion in Frizzell’s fish shop on the Shankill, in October 1993 (see e.g. Edwards, 2011; McKittrick & McVea, 2012).

4.3.1 Putting the Theatrical Walking Tours into Context

As Cochrane (2015) states “the interplay between the site of political violence and its commodification and consumption by ... visitors is clearly complex and highly contextual” (p. 54). While the signing of the Good Friday Agreement opened up “spaces for visits and journeys, and for narratives to be told to new audiences”, Northern Ireland remains a divided society (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 241). Nagle (2010) explains that:

Most political parties mobilize along ethno-national lines; there are separate domains for socializing, schooling, separate sporting affiliations; some examples of separate forms of employment, and levels of residential segregation and endogamy are high. (p. 35)

The effects “of sectarianism, division, exclusion and trauma” resulting from its troubled history on day-to-day relationships are well documented (McGrattan & Meehan, 2012, p. 5; see e.g. Boal, 1969; Boal & Douglas, 1982; Graham & Nash, 2006; Hamber & Wilson, 2002; Jarman & Bell, 2012; McDowell & Shirlow, 2011; McGarry & O’Leary, 1995; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). The conflict has left indelible marks “on cultural landscapes, manifested physically through military installations, street murals and commemorative monuments” – spaces that normally exclude the ‘other’ (McDowell, 2008, p. 406).

Northern Ireland has been increasingly viewed as a dark tourism destination especially the cities of Derry-Londonderry and Belfast where so much of the violence occurred and “there will always be an element of tourists that want to see such landmarks [e.g. bombing sites] that reflect a turbulent past” (Boyd, 2000, p. 167; also de Sola, 2011). The term dark tourism refers to the “presentation and consumption of real and

commodified death and disaster sites" (Foley & Lennon, 1996, p. 198; also Nagle, 2010; Stone, 2006).⁶³ According to Boyd (2013), based on "what is on view to tourists in Northern Ireland [e.g. small memorials, street murals, cemeteries and interface areas], many would view this as political" rather than dark tourism (p. 189). Political tourism, however, divides public opinion (see e.g. Boyd, 2013; McDowell, 2008; Nagle, 2010; Simone-Charteris et al., 2013). Some see it as an opportunity to transform the legacy of the conflict, while others believe it may instead further entrench sectarian divisions domestically and project a "negative caricature of Northern Ireland's past rather than a more refined and complex narrative about its present" internationally (Cochrane, 2015, p. 56). This paradox is reflected in official agencies like Tourism Northern Ireland's focus on development and marketing of a specific product portfolio around key themes including wider culture and heritage offerings such as regeneration initiatives in the Cathedral, Laganside and Titanic Quarters in Belfast – prioritising the promotion of peacetime Northern Ireland in "an apolitical manner" in an attempt to foster "an image of normalcy" to tourists and residents (Shirlow, 2008, p. 74; Nagle, 2010, p. 37; also e.g. Boyd, 2013; Dowler, 2013; Cochrane, 2015; Graham & Nash, 2006; Murtagh, 2008; Shirlow, 2006). Absent from this portfolio is the promotion of dark/political tourism viewed as a niche market filled by the private sector since the late 1990s, with many of the smaller tours "clearly rooted within a republican or loyalist framing and staffed by ex-prisoners for additional authenticity" (Cochrane, 2015, p. 62; also Leonard, 2011; Simone-Charteris et al., 2013; Skinner, 2016). Notwithstanding the nature of these tours, visitors are free to process political tours for what they are: "one perspective on the conflict rather than a panoramic view of it" (Cochrane, 2015, p. 58).

This raises the issue of where the discussion of theatrical walking

⁶³ For an overview of the debate around dark tourism typology and boundaries of the term coined by Foley and Lennon (1996)/Lennon and Foley (2000) as well as examples from other war/violent conflict settings see e.g. Butler and Suntikul (2013), Stone (2006), Stone and Sharpley (2008), and White and Frew (2013). Articles offering a range of examples and views on political tourism in Northern Ireland include Boyd (2000, 2013), Cochrane (2015), Leonard (2011), McDowell (2008), Nagle (2010), Simone-Charteris, Boyd and Burns (2013), Skinner (2016), and Wiedenhoft Murphy (2010). Geopolitical scholar Dowler (2013) and theatre scholar Owicki (2015) survey *The West Awakes* theatrical tour while Thompson et al.'s (2009) study of displays of theatre and performance in places of war and aftermath of conflict offers a review of four Belfast area tours engaging with its complex histories from different perspectives including Coiste Irish Political Tours.

tours in West Belfast – “where the past is visually omnipresent in the cultural landscape” of two traditions – fits within the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 3 (McDowell, 2008, p. 411). The analysis below will show that the insertion of short plays within walking tours can “break the fourth wall and come (un)comfortably close to unspoken truths” (Jackson, 2014, para. 9). Through cultural tourism projects, Kabosh Theatre explores “alternative engagements with history, memory and territory” by presenting histories “back to communities in a way that challenge preconceptions” (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 246; Jackson, 2014, para. 5). The plays bring audiences’ attention to issues “that we ought to be asking ourselves as a society that aren’t about green [identified with Irish nationalism] or orange [identified with Ulster loyalism]” (G. Moriarty cited in Thompson et al., 2009, p. 251). Kabosh Theatre knows that projects “challenging and reshaping generations of stereotypes and distress” can cause backlash (Jackson, 2014, para. 7). Projects like *The West Awakes* built on existing political tours “bring a certain baggage, a certain confrontation and controversy that you have to be prepared to accept” (P. McFetridge cited in Clarke, 2010, para. 8). This acceptance of risk and of vulnerability shows an understanding of connections between artistic practice and what is required to “incite moral imagination” in a society in transition (Lederach, 2005, p. 169). This potential will be illustrated through the following three examples.

4.3.2 *The West Awakes* (2010)

Also known as the Gaeltacht Quarter, the Falls Road area is the centre of the Irish language and culture in Belfast. It is home to a Catholic working-class that arose from the booming linen industry in the nineteenth century and has a long association with Irish nationalism (see Connolly, 2012; Smyth, 2006). *The West Awakes* (2010a) project was devised in partnership with Fáilte Feirste Thair (Welcome to West Belfast) – a local tourism initiative; Coiste na n-Iarchimi (Coiste), an association representing republican former prisoners; and Taxi Trax (known as the People’s Taxis), a community transport system created in the early 1970s when buses ceased to be reliable in West Belfast as a result of the conflict, that offers city tours as shown in Figure 4.1 (Henry, 2012, p. 55; also Smyth, 2006).

Figure 4.1 *The West Awakes*: drama enacted at the Milltown Cemetery which holds many historical graves including that of Winifred Carney (1887-1943)



Note. Scene from *Winne William* written by Laurence McKeown. Winifred Carney, a suffragist, trade unionist and Irish independence activist, meets police officer William Barrett who was dismissed for refusing to break the 1907 Dock Strike, with Taxi Trax drivers who led some tours in the background. Photograph by M. Monaghan (Kabosh Theatre, 2010b).

This project built on the success of the existing Coiste Irish Political Tour starting at a Divis Flats tower and travelling west along Falls Road, ending at the Milltown Cemetery where hunger-striker Bobby Sands and other known republicans are buried (see Skinner, 2016). They are led by Coiste members who weave “their personal account of the British/Irish conflict into the wider history of this centuries’ old conflict” (Coiste, n.d.):

The authenticity of the tour guide and his/her personal memory provide moving, informative and complex connections with the past ... The evidence of the sites – the pock marks on the walls of schools [e.g. St Comgall’s Primary School referenced below] and churches on Falls Road, the murals ... testify to a past and a present that is both rapidly changing as well as tightly bound by its history. (Thompson et al., 2009, pp. 246-247; also Skinner, 2016)

The idea was to develop the cultural tourism aspect of the tours by working on the tone in which the stories were delivered and situating them within a wider context through a theatrical experience focusing on pre-1969 aspects of that area’s rich history and heritage (see Owicki, 2015, p. 230). Kabosh Theatre commissioned four playwrights – Laurence McKeown, Jimmy

McAleavy, Kieran Magee and Rosaleen Walsh – to write short plays about a location on the existing the route: St Comgall’s Primary School, strategically situated at the Falls and Shankill roads interface, became the frontline of the loyalist riots of 1969 cited earlier as evidenced by the bullet holes in its brick walls; the Conway Mill (1842), one of the first linen spinning mills in the area; Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, an Irish language and cultural centre based in a former Presbyterian Church built in 1896 that served a Protestant congregation until 1982; the City Cemetery (1869), located across the street from where Irish republican leader James Connolly (1868-1916) lived for a time, was the first cross-denominational burial ground in Belfast with Protestant and Catholic plots separated by an “underground [brick] wall”; and Milltown Cemetery (1869), the main burial ground for Belfast’s Catholic community (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006, p. 13; also Dowler, 2013; also Hatley, 2014a, 2014b; Northern Visions NvTv, 2010; Skinner, 2016). In between the plays, the guides resume the tour. They are “not asked to alter presentations to fit the performances” (Owicki, 2015, p. 233). Appendix H contains a Google map of the Falls Road area focusing on the performance sites along the theatrical walking tour.

Rokem (2000) argues that when “performing history”, theatre is uniquely placed to remove, or at least lessen, the sense of distance that exists between past and present by making the story become real in some way “through different forms of witnessing” (pp. xii-xiii). In the case of *The West Awakes*, this is exemplified by Kabosh Theatre’s desire to challenge audiences’ beliefs and knowledge of events through drama, allowing “a wider array of opinions to be voiced” and “different understandings of class, gender and religious identity” (Owicki, 2015, p. 233; Dowler, 2013, p. 782). Figure 4.2 shows the play performed in the front lobby of Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich (tour point 4 on the Appendix H map) focusing “on its more distant history as a Presbyterian church” (Owicki, 2015, p. 235). It tells the story of a fictional couple who once attended the church thereby reminding audiences that the Falls Road “had not always been a ‘no-go’ area for Protestants” (ibid.). As the script switches back and forth between the English and Irish language, audience members are prompted to revisit the centre’s name which contains the surname McAdam referring to a

Presbyterian businessman, Robert McAdam, who assisted in the revival of the Irish language along with Gaelic scholar Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich (see Owicki, 2015; Whyte, 2010). In doing so, the narrative “focuses on language as shared Irish history, rather than politicising language to promote rival sectarianism” (Dowler, 2013, p. 793).

Figure 4.2 *The West Awakes*: revisiting the history of the Falls Road area



Note. Scene from *Joy and Roy* written by Jimmy Magee being enacted by professional actors Antoinette Morelli and Gerard Jordan in the lobby of the Cultúrlann McAdam O’Fiach centre. Photograph by A. Monaghan (Visit West Belfast, n.d.).

In her review of the tour, local arts journalist and member of the unionist community K. Clarke (2010) wrote: “*The West Awakes* provokes a response from its audience, forcing conversation and ultimately a greater understanding of our own collective identity” (para. 10). However, Whyte (2010) questioned Coiste tour guides’ lack of self-reflexivity vis-à-vis the conflict (n.p.). Yet the existing political tour is not meant to be “a neutral event where the guide interprets both sides of the Troubles”; it explains the political and social history of Belfast from a republican perspective as part of that community’s efforts to “reclaim their history” as was the case with the play *Binlids* discussed earlier (Skinner, 2016, p. 29; Coiste, n.p.).

4.3.3 *Shankill Stories* (2013)

Kabosh Theatre's *Shankill Stories* (2013a) project revolves around the Shankill Road which straddles North and West Belfast. It is surrounded by one of the biggest and oldest the so-called peace wall erected by the British Army along Cupar Way "to protect nationalists in the Clonard and Falls areas from the armed loyalist assailants on the streets where they lived" following violent incidents during the summer of 1969 (see Dawson, 2007, p. 3). Tour point 5 on the Appendix I Google map shows the location of this particular wall which, according to Boal (2006), offers "to citizen and visitor alike a stark visual symbol of the ethno-nationally divided social fabric of the city" (p. 77).⁶⁴ This area is home to a traditionally Protestant/loyalist working-class community with strong ties to the city's nineteenth century linen industry and has suffered from deindustrialisation and regeneration of surrounding areas (see Bryan, 2012; Hart, 2006). Boal observed that in 1971 the Shankill Road area "had a population of over twenty eight thousand; by 2001 only slightly over eight thousand remained – a decline of seventy one percent" (2006, p. 62; also Bryan, 2012).

Kabosh Theatre partnered with the Shankill Area Social History group (SASH), the Shankill Women's Centre, an educational initiative and the Spectrum Centre, a multi-purpose arts, cultural and conference venue, to create a unique social history walking tour with short theatre pieces along the tour's route (see Owicki, 2015, p. 241). The organisations wanted to explore the community's relationship to industrialisation, World War I efforts, Great Britain and the monarchy (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Kabosh Theatre engaged "with the location 'owners' over a period of time to give them ownership of the production" namely by curating an oral archive of local stories and training local tour

⁶⁴ Nolan (2014) reports that most of the peace walls are located in North and West Belfast, "where they snake a path some 21 kilometres in length between Protestant and Catholic areas juxtaposed in a geographical jumble" (p. 64; also Dawson, 2007, p. 3). Shirlow and Murtagh (2006) estimate that "a third of the victims of [conflict-related] politically motivated violence were murdered within 250 meters of an interface" in Belfast (p. 72; also Bryan, 2012). Byrne, Gormley-Heenan and Robinson's (2012) study of public attitudes and opinions on peace walls by those who live adjacent to peace walls in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry and those who reside elsewhere in Northern Ireland revealed that a significant number of residents would like to see these removed, although between twenty to thirty percent of peace wall residents believe that they remain necessary and see "a direct correlation between the removal of walls, the celebration of culture and the potential for violence" (p.22).

guides (P. McFetridge cited in Thompson, 2014, n.p.). Figure 4.3 shows a guide engaging with the audience. The live theatrical walking tour was offered on July 9 and 10, 2013; it started around St Matthews Parish Church, with stops including the Shankill Graveyard, Tower Mural, Memorial Garden (see below), Shankill Road Mission (1869-2009), the Hammer area (which offers great views of the Hartland and Woolf shipyard cranes – a prominent feature of Belfast’s skyline), and ending at the Spectrum Centre near the site of Frizzell’s fish shop (Kabosh, 2015a).⁶⁵

Figure 4.3 Photograph of a *Shankill Stories* tour stop (July 2013)



Note. Guide/audience stop at the Shankill Road Memorial Gardens dedicated to the victims of the IRA bomb explosion in Frizzell’s fish shop (October 1993) and to the many community members who lost their lives during World War I and World War II (Kabosh, 2013b).

To put the guides’ first-person narrative in context, Kabosh Theatre hired Seth Linder to write four short plays to be performed at the Shankill Graveyard, one of the oldest cemeteries in Belfast (closed in 1866) where plague victims and paupers were buried in unmarked mass graves, the Shankill Library dating back to 1912, around St Michael’s Parish Church (1899) which was first founded as part of a parish mission, and the Spectrum Centre based on the site formerly occupied by the Stadium

⁶⁵ While the tour was open to the public, its target audience was local community members and others with a personal connection to the area interested in reconnecting with its history and curious about how Kabosh Theatre would tell their story (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015).

Cinema (1937-1975)(see Hatley, 2014a; Figure 4.7).⁶⁶ Appendix I contains a Google map of the Shankill Road area that identifies the performance sites along the theatrical walking tour.

Figure 4.4 depicts the play performed at the Shankill Graveyard (tour point 1 on the Google map in Appendix I) looking at the area's history through a chance meeting between a man standing guard over his father's grave to protect his from body snatchers and a woman visiting the unmarked grave of her child who died from the plague (see Northern Visions NvTv, 2014). It asks audiences to reflect on the fact that, in the end, it makes little difference which religious or cultural background people are from as love, grief, and duty are all part of the human condition (ibid.).

Figure 4.4 Scene from the *Shankill Stories* walking tour at the Shankill Graveyard



Note. Scene from the play *The Body Snatchers of Shankill Graveyard*: Two fictional characters (portrayed by actors Gerard Joran and Abigail McGibbon) tend to a loved one's grave and discuss grave robbing and medical science. Photograph by A. Monaghan (Kabosh, 2013c).

The stories collected by Kabosh Theatre inspired the production of

⁶⁶ Concerning the history of St Michael's Church and of the Shankill Graveyard see:
<http://www.stmichaelsbelfast.org.uk/history/>
<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/cemeteries/shankillgraveyard.aspx>

the play *Belfast by Moonlight* written by Carlo Gébler (2013) with original music composed by Neil Martin. As shown in Figure 4.5, the play gives voice to the tales of personal endurance of six female spirits from different periods over the four hundred years history of Belfast since the granting of its Royal Charter in 1613, who congregate as the full moon rises and bear witness to each other's stories of tragedy and endurance (see Foy, 2013f, 2013g; Maguire, 2013b; Northern NvTv, 2013). This play was staged in St. Georges Presbyterian Church (1616) located in Belfast's city centre. As an artist P. McFetridge (cited in Thompson, 2014) gets excited "when someone from the community comes to see our work ... and through trust they step outside their comfort zone and enjoy the show" (n.p.). This echoes Grant's (1993) comment to the effect that it is "worth devoting time and resources to tempt audiences into suitable venues ... [This] serves to widen the 'mental geography' of the audiences in question" (p. 49).

Figure 4.5 Scene from *Belfast by Moonlight* staged in a city centre historic church

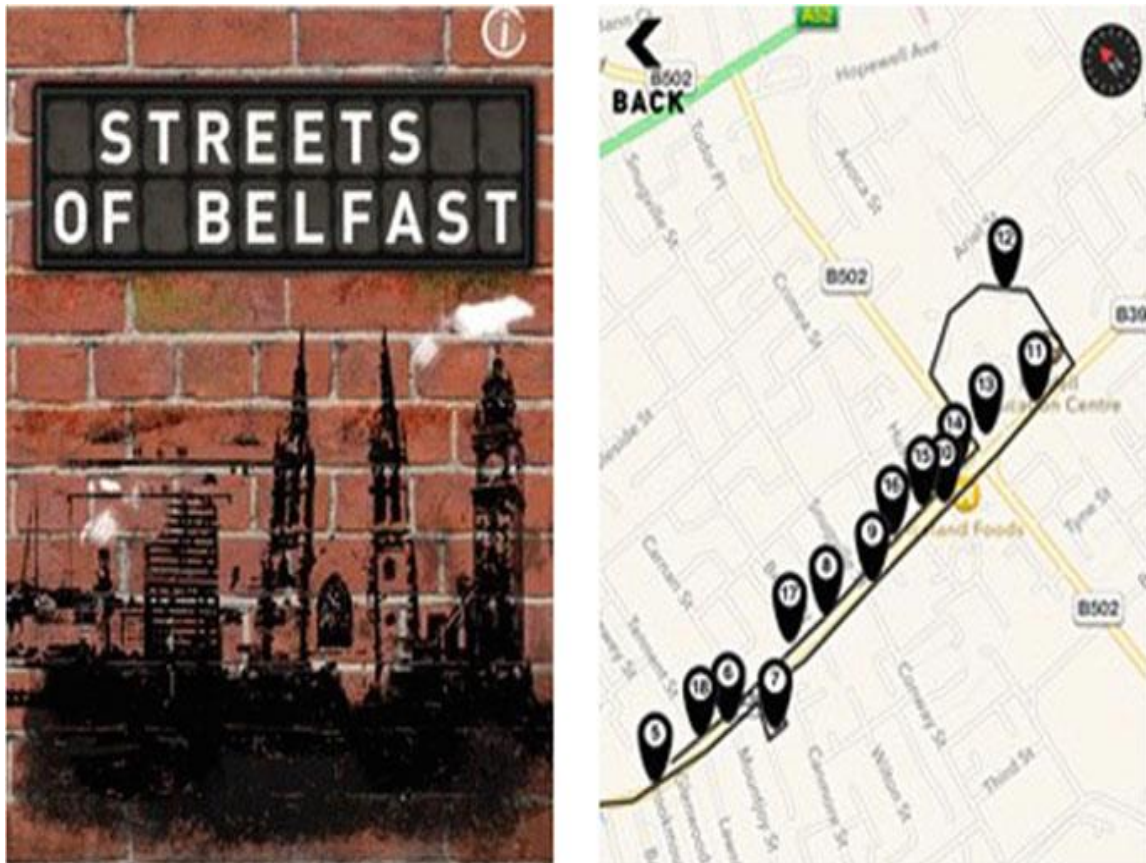


Note. Actresses Maria Connelly, Bernadette Brown, Rosin Gallagher, Laura Hughes, Carol Moore and Kerri Quinn portray spirits gathering on a full moon to tell haunting tales of Belfast's history (Kabosh, 2013d).

4.3.4 *Streets of Belfast App (2015)*

This opening up of mental geographies extends to the exploration of digital practices of moral imagination. On the strength of *The West Awakes* and *Shankill Stories* projects Kabosh Theatre launched an iPhone application called the *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a). This was intended as a “bold new step in cultural tourism which will offer visitors, and locals, a new way of learning about and interacting with the city’s heritage” (Kabosh Theatre, 2015a, Press/News).⁶⁷ Figure 4.6 shows screenshots from the App with separate portals for each street tour although they are presented “in exactly the same format” (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015).

Figure 4.6 Providing an immersive tour experience of historic streets of the city through the *Streets of Belfast App*



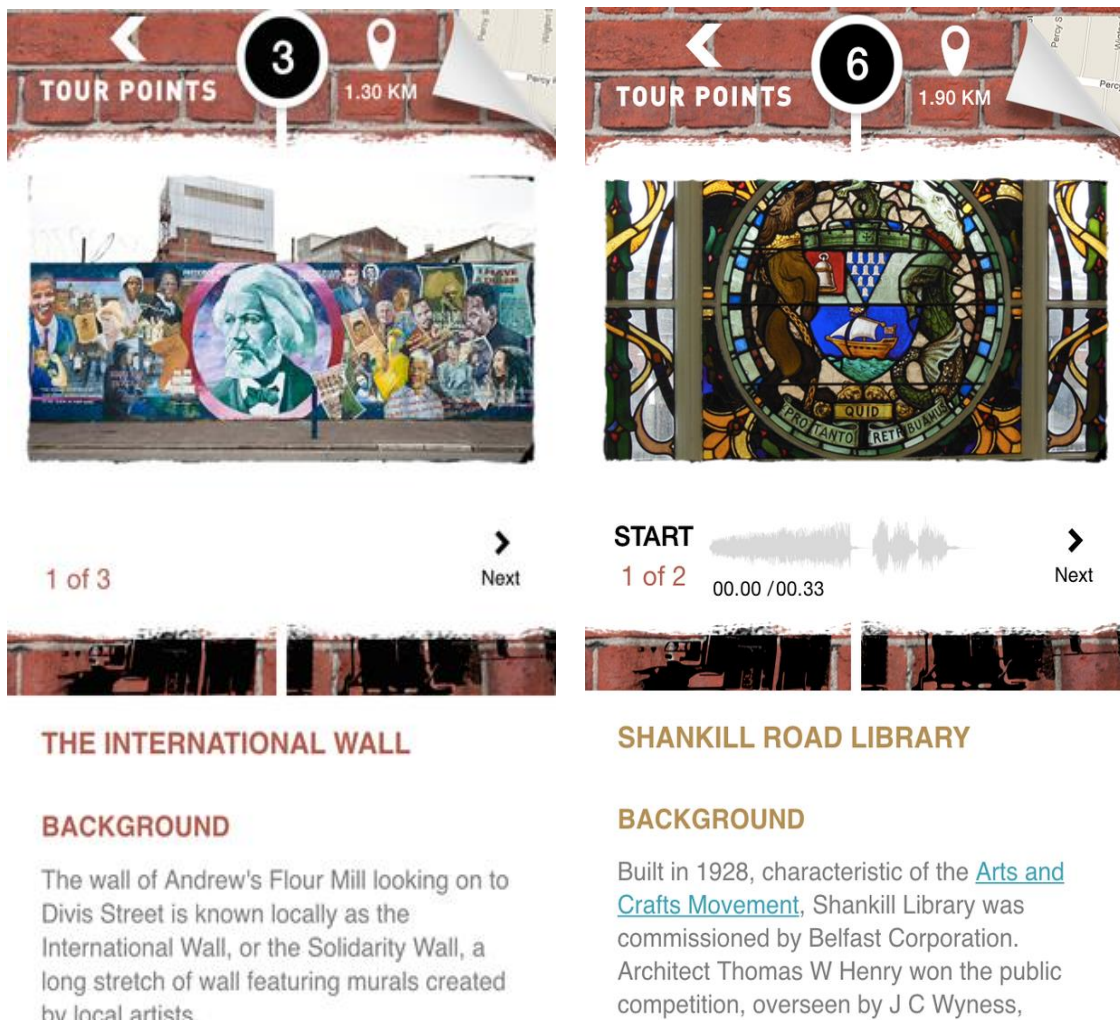
Note. Cover Shot for *Streets of Belfast App* and a snapshot of the map of the points around the Shankill Road covered by the virtual tour (Kabosh, 2015c, 2015b).

The App offers an immersive tour experience combining background information on key locations along the tour, audio clips of personal stories

⁶⁷ The App was developed in collaboration with The Design Zoo, a specialised creative digital company based in Belfast (The Design Zoo, n.d.). It was released in iTunes in February 2015.

and experiences, video excerpts of the short plays “bringing the soul of the city to life”, photographs capturing the social history of the area and links to websites and digital archives should users want to learn more about the people, issues, and history of these areas (Kabosh Theatre, 2015, Apps). Like VAC’s *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) which will be explored in chapter 6, this App is based on a strong belief in the power of tangential learning through technology (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Figure 4.7 shows a tour point for each theatrical walking tour. There are plans to add tours of other areas of the city to the App as part of the project legacy strand of Kabosh Theatre’s business plan (see Owicki, 2015, p. 241).

Figure 4.7 Points along the two tours part of the *Streets of Belfast App*



Note. Screenshot on the left shows tour point 3 of the Fall Road tour and on the right displays tour point 6 of the Shankill Road tour (Kabosh, 2015f, 2015g).

There are several interesting outcomes regarding these three theatre-centric projects. One relates to the creation of a template around

how to build and deliver live and virtual theatrical walking tours that could be used in other areas of the city and adapted further afield. Second, at the *Building Bridges* international conference (June 2015), P. McFetridge noted that the vast majority of live walking tour audiences were from the local community, many of them curious about how a theatre company “is telling their story or animating their space” (personal communication, June 4, 2015; also Thompson, 2014). Other attendees included residents who are also curious about how the ‘other’ lives and how they go about their daily existence, “people taking their friends or family home on a trip to show off their city”, former residents to the area who are curious about whether and how the area has changed since the end of the conflict and visiting tourists (P. McFetridge cited in Thompson, 2014, n.p.; also P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015; Jackson, 2014).⁶⁸ Dowler (2013) recounts a chat she had with a Protestant couple about what their experience after noting their reluctance to join the group for a drink at a nearby republican pub at the end of *The West Awakes* theatrical tour. They explained that:

They would have been uncomfortable waking up the Falls Road on their own, but they felt safe participating in the tour. For this couple these tours created a counter-space of hospitality, a place where they could come and as they put it, “learn about the issues that were absent from their history lessons”. However, a sense of hesitancy was also evident in this space of hospitality, hence the young woman’s reluctance to visit the Felons Club. Even though there was a polite negotiation between the guide and this young couple in terms of their respective senses of security and confidence, the tour did open up a space of hospitality that brought this young couple into a part of the city that they had once viewed as off-limits. (Dowler, 2013, p. 796)

This exemplifies the role of engaged theatre can assume in minimising the distances between local residents and enabling them to look “at their environment with fresh eyes” (P. McFetridge, 2011 cited in Dowler, 2013, p. 797). It also bears repeating that Kabosh Theatre undertook the second theatre walking tour project – *Shankill Stories* (2013a) – at the request of a

⁶⁸ Simone-Charteris et al. (2013) examined chief motivations for visiting dark/political tourism attractions in Northern Ireland. Based on a survey of three hundred tourists across three attractions in Belfast and Derry- Londonderry in 2008, the findings revealed that the three main reasons cited by tourists – educational interest, curiosity and empathy for the cause of a particular community and/or victims of conflict related violence – were “in line with existing dark tourism literature” (p. 70).

loyalist community that exhibited a willingness to push the boundaries of the uneasy relationship that most loyalist communities have with theatricality. Overall, this speaks to “the power and complexity of artistic responses that should not be overlooked” in divided societies further evidenced in chapters 5 and 6 (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 266). For her part, Owicki (2015) concluded that Kabosh Theatre met its artistic objectives – creating compelling dramas, educating audiences and projecting a positive image of Belfast streets – and that such site-specific projects “have the potential to transform relationships between the people of Belfast” (p. 231).

Kabosh Theatre’s *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a) represents an alternative mode of engagement creating an alternative safe space for residents who may not know the city’s streets or do not feel safe visiting other areas of the city, yet are curious about the people who live or have a personal connection to these roads and want to hear how they define their community and themselves (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). The value of digital modes of engagement should not be underestimated as “giving someone access to another’s story and/or space challenges pre-conceived ideas, promotes acceptance and breaks down barriers to engagement” (P. McFetridge cited in Thompson, 2014, n.p.).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter created a bridge between the theoretical framework of chapter 3 and the two case study chapters to come. It began by examining the question of how theatre-makers tap into local knowledge and culture by identifying core elements of the inner makeup of artistic practice and what is at stake in a society in transition. This led to the detection of linkages between Lederach’s view of conflict as embedded in the web and system of relational patterns, as discussed in chapter 3, and theatre-makers’ belief in the role of theatre as a tool for social change and in its capacity to move beyond dualistic thinking. The views of the theatre-makers echoed Lederach’s ideas that artistic practices, including theatre, can spawn the moral imagination – encouraging relationships, encounter with the ‘other’ that precludes dualistic polarity, engaging in creative acts and risk-taking.

This chapter then reverted to the case of Northern Ireland to explore how theatre-makers coped with and sought to produce, represent and use alternative spatial patterns to transcend existing divided and contested spaces around the time of the Good Friday Agreement. This was achieved through a survey of the role and power of community-based theatre in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, that offered examples of artistic processes bringing people together “to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe or capture fleeting intimations of a better world” (Dolan, 2005, p. 2).

This chapter also referred briefly to the global dimensions of the belief in the potential of theatre as a democratic force within communities that resonates with Paulo Freire’s (1972) concept of conscientization that influenced Lederach’s approach to transformation as detailed in chapter 3 and the theatrical methods of radical performance theorist Augusto Boal. In this context, the role of theatre is viewed as one that initiates “a new level of awareness, a compassion which may later and perhaps indirectly allow the spectator to ‘act’ in a different role” in the ongoing stream of everyday life (McDougall, 2000, p. 129). This was exemplified in the sampling of community and artist-based theatrical work undertaken in the early stages of the period of post-conflict transition that show the diversity and creativity of theatre-makers in Northern Ireland. While the potential effects and affects of dramaturgical models on the transformation of conflict should not be underestimated, the challenge of overcoming loyalist communities’ resistance to theatricality remains. However, the growing scholarly documentation of and critical reflection on the role played by theatre within a broader peacebuilding spectrum also suggested changes in the nature of dialogues facilitated by theatre-makers in Northern Ireland.

The chapter ended with a presentation of more recent work exploring points of intersections between theatre, digital media and peacebuilding involving Kabosh Theatre in the area of cultural tourism. The theatrical walking tours – one located in a nationalist and the other in a loyalist area of West Belfast – allowed local residents to discover or revisit the history of Belfast streets. The *Streets of Belfast App* offered an example of how digital elements of theatrical productions are being used in the peace

process in Northern Ireland. The curiosity exhibited by residents about how others go about its daily lives will be explored further in the next chapters.

The following chapters, presenting the case studies of this research, will build on the methodological and theoretical approaches developed in chapters 2 and 3 and will be applied to the analysis of the theatre-centric projects presented in chapters 5 and 6 and this chapter's discussion of connections between engaged theatre and elicitive social transformation. This analysis will focus on answering the research questions concerning the role of engaged theatre in conflict transformation through this form of theatre. Chapter 5 examines the *Those You Pass on the Street* project initiated by Healing Through Remembering in collaboration with Kabosh Theatre. It will study how this project sheds light on the importance of well-crafted theatrical work focused on creating a space where people are invited to gather, listen and experience fictional stories of loss, grief and survival during the conflict and its aftermath and to reflect on how they address unresolved residues of the conflict in their lives and communities.

CHAPTER 5

Case Study 1: *Those You Pass on the Street* Project

Elizabeth

I don't want to be rude but I don't think you would know how it feels. To live amongst people and wonder if one of those you pass on the street, maybe who speaks or smiles or waves to you was the person who set your husband up, gave the information, pulled the trigger.

Frank

You're right. I didn't mean to...

L. McKeown – playwright, *Those You Pass on the Street* (2015), p. 15)⁶⁹

Introduction

This chapter presents an examination of the thesis' research questions concerning the role of engaged theatre in conflict transformation, through an analysis of the *Those You Pass on the Street*, a project initiated by Healing Through Remembering (HTR) in 2010.⁷⁰ The project revolved around a play written by Laurence McKeown which explored drama as a way of remembering the past and as a catalyst for difficult discussions around the challenges facing a society coming out of a violent, protracted conflict. Kabosh Theatre delivered performances of the initial run of the play in January 2014 and became the sole producer of the March 2014 and March 2015 runs in Northern Ireland, the three tours covered by this case study.

This chapter uses the writing and staging of this drama as well as post-show audience engagement to explore this study's research questions regarding the role of theatre in building peace through the practice of moral imagination in divided societies. It analyses how peacebuilding praxis can be approached as "something that approximates the artistic process, imbued as it is with creativity, skill, serendipity, and craftsmanship" (Lederach, 2005, p. 29). Through its focus on locating connections between "the pursuit of the creative act" and peacebuilding, this analysis also offers insight into the other three practices mobilising moral imagination –

⁶⁹ All quotes are taken from the March 2015 unpublished script provided by Kabosh Theatre.

⁷⁰ HTR is a cross-community organisation with the aim of exploring and documenting various models and options for dealing with the past in Northern Ireland in a more open and public manner (HTR, 20002, p. iii; Hamber, 2001, para. 4 & 14).

relational interdependency, paradoxical curiosity and risk-taking (ibid., p. 5). As outlined in Chapter 2, the findings are based on fieldwork conducted between January 2014 and June 2015 including first-hand observation of rehearsals, performances and post-show discussions.

Following a synopsis of the play, the first section of this chapter explores key elements of the script through the lens of conflict transformation, in particular the importance of the characters and audiences coming to see themselves “in a web of relationship even with their enemies” (Lederach, 2005, p. 34). The second section examines the mechanics of theatrical production through an analysis of how Kabosh Theatre created an imaginative space that is both accessible and challenging for those who bear witness to the characters’ stories and collective journey. It draws out links between artistic process and Lederach’s (2005) vision of paradoxical curiosity inviting individuals and communities to reflect on how their responses to situations are shaped by personal beliefs and preconceptions about people and events (pp. 35-37). The final section presents an analysis of post-show discussions and written feedback that offers valuable insight into audience views about the role of theatre as a site for social change, in particular the implications for characters and audiences of “stepping into a place where [they] are not sure what will come or what will happen” related with the risk-taking element of the moral imagination (ibid., p. 163).

Synopsis of the Play

Those You Pass on the Street takes place in the present day, in a small town somewhere in Northern Ireland. The play delves into the less visible connections between people, places and events through four central characters – Elizabeth, Ann, Frank and Pat – whose lives were profoundly affected by the conflict. Encounters between the characters set off a chain reaction that breaks long-lived silences for each of them, challenges personal beliefs and perceptions and tests family and political loyalties.

Elizabeth, from a Protestant background, walks into a Sinn Féin constituency office seeking help after the escalation of anti-social behaviour around her house. There she meets Frank, the junior office worker, who promises to look into it, as shown in Figure 5.1. He has recently returned

to Northern Ireland. At age sixteen he lost his older brother Gerald, an Irish Republican Army (IRA) volunteer, who was shot by the IRA after becoming a police informant.⁷¹

Figure 5.1 Opening scene of *Those You Pass on the Street*: Elizabeth tells Frank her reason for her visit at the Sinn Féin constituency office



Note. Scene from *Those You Pass on the Street* where Frank promises to look into anti-social behaviour problem around Elizabeth's house as he lives nearby (Kabosh, 2015d).

Pat, the Sinn Féin Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly for that constituency, spots Elizabeth as he enters the office. He tells Frank that she is the widow of Michael Farrell, an "English Catholic" and a Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officer killed by the IRA and warns him to tread carefully (McKeown, 2015, p. 33). A former IRA volunteer and a republican ex-prisoner in the late 1980s, Pat was once interrogated by RUC officer Farrell. Pat was also a close friend of Gerard and helped Frank when he got into trouble after his brother's death.

At her family home, Elizabeth and sister-in-law Ann are planning their annual trip to Scotland when Frank drops by to give her an update on her case. Ann worries that this help might come with political strings

⁷¹ As a result of a covert war involving the recruitment of informants by security forces (RUC and British Army), the IRA killed a small number of its members/former members and some non-members thought to have passed on information (see McKittrick et al., 1999, pp. 1531-1532; also Bew, Frampton & Gurruchaga, 2009; Edwards, 2011; Ellison & Smyth, 2000; Mulcahy, 2006).

attached. In the final scene, Pat calls at Elizabeth's home to inform her that Frank died suddenly from a heart attack. This encounter leads to a mutual realisation of their complex stories and sufferings. At the sound of Ann's car horn, Pat offers to go out the back way. Elizabeth decides to leave the house publicly with Pat, implying a willingness to move on from the past.

5.1 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in the *Those You Pass on the Street* Script

As part of the focus on theatre and the creative transformation of conflict, this section surveys key elements of the script. It offers examples of how the script invites audiences to look beyond the presenting situation and attempt "to redefine both the moment and the relationship" (Lederach, 2005, p. 40). Protagonists Elizabeth, Frank, Ann and Pat each carry a lot of baggage from the past. By engaging audiences in each character's story, one aim is that audiences will become conscious of the residues of the conflict in their own lives and communities. Audiences are asked to situate and recognise themselves as part of destructive and constructive patterns:

Patterns of violence are never superseded without acts that have a confessional quality at their base. Spontaneous or intentionally planned, these acts emerge from a voice that says in the simplest of terms: "I am part of this pattern. My choices and behaviours affect it." ... If there is no capacity to imagine the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of that historic and ever-evolving web, peacebuilding collapses. (ibid., p. 35)

This points to the transformative potential of having people sit in a performance space and come into contact with the 'other' through fictional characters: "I think that there are particular things in post-conflict society that theatre can help. You can say things on stage that people can't say in real life" (Actor 2, personal communication, February 3, 2015).

The script is a fiction based on a true story: an RUC widow did walk into a Sinn Féin office in similar circumstances (L. McKeown, personal communication, February 25, 2015). To ensure that the story was "incredibly true to life, it felt real", the playwright and Kabosh Theatre took great care in crafting the play's context by reviewing dates, events and local references in relation to each character's stories and biographies

(Anonymous–feedback, January 30, 2014). Here the 1980-1981 hunger strikes by republican prisoners in the Long Kesh/Maze prison and the 1994 ceasefires served as key reference points for “constructing a shared history of events that took place long before the action of the [play] itself, and creating a rounded biography for each of the characters” as shown in Appendix J (Atkinson, 2004a, p. 154; also Foy–fieldnotes, January 7, 2014). This process enables the audience to focus solely on the narrative.

The major themes within the script concern “dealing with the past, ... personal ownership of history”, recognising relational interdependency even in conflict settings, and “what steps a person can or cannot take in order to move forward” (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). These issues invite audiences to “place [themselves] into that narrative and decide what [their] voice would be if [they] were in the same situation” as the three following examples will show (ibid.). The first one is taken from scenes involving Elizabeth and sister-in-law Ann which “sort of flags up who lives in the past versus those who lives in the present” (L. McKeown, personal communication, February 25, 2015). After learning the reason for Frank’s unsolicited visit to Elizabeth’s home, Ann asks her why she asked “*them* [Sinn Féin] to help” (emphasis in original; McKeown, 2015, p. 11). While Elizabeth had considered going to the police – as her husband Michael was “one of their own” – she tells Ann that if the constituency office can “sort it, that’s fine with me” (ibid., p. 12). Her pragmatism speaks to Lederach’s (2005) point about the fact that in divided societies, “people from different sides of the divide interact on a daily basis out of necessity for one reason or another” (p. 96). Yet Ann is troubled by this encounter:

I love her to bits ... but there are times she just doesn’t think ... I should have known it [antisocial behaviour] was troubling her. I should have kept a closer eye on things, took the initiative. (McKeown, 2015, p. 13)

Elizabeth understands the impact of her actions on her husband’s family. Yet some twenty-two years after Michael’s murder, she realises that wallowing in familiarity – her grief and that of his family – and living her life accordingly is not a good place to stay for the rest of her life (Foy–fieldnotes, January 8, 2014). She confides to the audience that maintaining the status quo is like re-reading an old book (McKeown, 2015, pp. 25-26).

There is something comforting and safe about revisiting a book: “you know the plot, you know the characters, and most of all, you know the ending” (ibid., p. 25). Whereas a new book begets a sense of excitement and risk associated with stepping into the unknown “without any guarantee of success or even safety” (Lederach, 2005, p. 39):

[With a new book] you won't know the full story until you read it ... [It] might take you to a world you never thought existed; challenge your beliefs, your view of the world, your assumptions. Your prejudices. And then what do you do with that? (McKeown, 2015, p. 26)

Brewer (cited in Lederach, 2003b) explains that for those who have lived through the conflict in Northern Ireland “violence, fear and division are known ... People are frightened of peace; it is simultaneously exciting and fearful” (p. 165). For the playwright, peace is about small steps taken by those choosing to deal with the residues of conflict in their lives and see the ripple effect on others around them who are not ready to “have a normal conversation with friends of those who killed” their loved one (McKeown, 2015, p. 31; L. McKeown–post-show discussions, January 29 & 31, 2014).

The second example explores the developing friendship between Elizabeth and Frank. Here the script invites the audience to suspend judgment “in favour of exploring presented contradictions ... for the possibility that there exists a value beyond what is currently known that supersedes the contradiction” (Lederach, 2005, p. 36). At her request, Frank pays her a second visit at her home during which she asks that her request for assistance not become public knowledge. What starts as a stilted conversation turns into an exchange between two people who have to come to terms with the murder of a loved one as a result of the conflict and may not have been able to openly talk about it.⁷² Elizabeth carries her own grief along with that of her two grown children (who have moved abroad) and of her husband’s family while Frank could not talk about his brother Gerard who was killed by the IRA. Gerard’s actions – being caught by the police with some marijuana and given the choice of being charged and run the risk of being thrown out of the IRA or becoming a police informant brought shame on his family: “Wakes in Ireland are well-known

⁷² Parts of this exchange between Frank and Elizabeth are captured in a video (Kabosh Theatre, 2015b).

for their craic and stories about the deceased.⁷³ Gerard's was silent" (McKeown, 2015, p. 31).⁷⁴ His perception of the courage it took for her to walk into the Sinn Féin office suggests knowingness and a desire to find a common experience of grief and survival (Foy-fieldnotes, January 17 & 20, 2014). Elizabeth reveals how much she has suppressed when she tells Frank: "people assume they know how your life is and they don't" (McKeown, 2015, p. 15). However, she soon realises that he understands and that they have something in common: they both long for the solitude offered by the early hours of the day before "you put your mask on, when you are at your truest of self, and where you can do what you want to do" (P. McFetridge, personal communication, December 19, 2014). Elizabeth enjoys having a cup of tea "with a saucer on a tray and a read of my book" whereas Frank likes having "one round of toast, a boiled egg and half a pot of coffee" (McKeown, 2015, p. 16). The discovery of commonalities between two people with very different stories and backgrounds invites audiences to reflect on the rarity of such moments in their lives and ask themselves why it is so difficult to "treat each other as human being" (Anonymous-post-show discussion, January 29, 2014).

The third example centres on the final scene. Pat goes to Elizabeth's house to inform her of Frank's death, as he sensed that Frank's meetings with her stirred something in both of them, "a catalyst for change or at least to a more reflective state" (P. McFetridge in Foy-fieldnotes, January 9, 2014). Shaken by the fact that he had been too busy to take Frank's last call, Pat opens up about Gerard, Frank's older brother and Pat's best friend, and the guidance he offered Frank as "he ran a bit wild after Gerard's death" (McKeown, 2015, p. 32). The expression of shared grief between Elizabeth and Pat brings to the surface residues of the conflict around the circumstances of her husband's murder. She gets the abnormality of having a normal exchange in her home with someone who might have set up her husband or know who killed him. This issue

⁷³ Craic is an Irish spelling for the word crack; within the context of the play it refers to news, gossip, fun, entertainment, and enjoyable conversation (see Collins English dictionary online, n.d.)

⁷⁴ The structure of the IRA was based on the British Army model including companies, battalions and brigades; it had an internal Code of Conduct (Green Book) which warned that "any Volunteer who brings the Army into disrepute by his/her behaviour may be guilty of a breach of his/her duties and responsibilities as a Volunteer ... and may be dismissed" (cited in Edwards, 2011, pp. 24-25).

highlights Brewer's (cited in Lederach, 2003b) view on post-conflict reality:

[Peace] asks you to share space, territory, specific concrete places. It asks you to share a future, and all this ... with and in the presence of your enemy" (p. 165).

For Elizabeth the challenge with sharing space includes trying to deal with "her husband being killed, and yet she lives in an area that, as she says, she's probably passing those on the street" that may know who killed him and finding ways to "engage with the present day" (L. McKeown, personal communication, February 25, 2015). She seizes the moment and asks Pat: "did you know my husband?" (McKeown, 2015, p. 32). Tensions mount as he tells her that he did and proposes that they meet up at a later date. This encounter raises key issues of dealing with the legacies of the past like whether Pat is ready to get to the truth of what happened, whether she is ready to hear it, and what happens "if an explanation's not enough ... if they need to hear it from the one who pulled the trigger" (ibid., p. 20).

This private encounter is interrupted by the outside world when Ann sounds the car horn as she arrives to collect her sister-in-law. While Elizabeth realises that many things remain unvoiced, she faces a more immediate dilemma: how to explain Pat's presence in the house she shared with her husband to his sister. Pat offers her an out: "I'll go out the back", drawing attention to the significance of going out the back door, both politically and culturally in a divided society (McKeown, 2015, p. 34; Foy-fieldnotes, January 13 & 16, 2014). Elizabeth must decide whether there is a way to get beyond this situation and preserve the untold prospects linked to Pat's invitation to meet again (Foy-fieldnotes, January 21, 2014). She finally tells Pat, "You're a guest in my home. You should walk out the [front] door with me" (McKeown, 2015, p. 34). The audience is left to reflect on their level of comfort with Elizabeth's decision and how they would balance family responsibility in similar circumstances. The script asks people to rethink their perception of the 'other', as "the choice of response that gives rise to the moral imagination requires the acknowledgment of interdependency" even with enemies within and across communities (Lederach, 2005, p. 35).

Having suggested how the script encourages audiences to exercise

moral imagination, the next section reviews key performance practices used by Kabosh Theatre to peel away layers of preconceptions that perpetuate dualistic polarities and hinder authentic engagement “of issues and of people” in the public sphere (Lederach, 2005, p. 49). This analysis illustrates the potential “to combine artistic excellence with a carefully honed sense of social purpose and responsibility” (Levitow, 2011, p. xvii).

5.2 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in Staging

The process of creating powerful artistic work is seldom revealed to the audience. The meaning of the work generally resides in the interaction between the characters and the audience bearing witness to the transformative quality of the narrative and of the aesthetic experience, yet:

Using the full range of formal elements – including lighting, sound and scenography – as well as skills of professional performers ... artist-based performances ... invite audiences into experiences ... that are transcendent ... and open them to feelings and questions. (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 8)

The analysis in this section focuses on the minutiae of the creation of an imaginative space that makes room for the moral imagination to manifest itself. It explores the creative ways Kabosh Theatre uses elements of stage design such as set and positioning of actors on and off stage to bring audiences to look beyond the presenting situation, empathise with the characters, bear witness to a collective story of loss, grief, survival, wanting to preserve the memory of a loved one and explore “the world of possibilities beyond the immediate arguments and narrow definitions of reality” (Lederach, 2005, p. 37). The analysis is in line with Atkinson’s (2004b) call for greater attention to staging as part of performing arts-related ethnographic research (p. 96; also Cohen et al., 2011b).

As illustrated in chapter 4, Kabosh Theatre prioritises the use of non-conventional venues and spaces to reach communities, especially those who may have never seen a professional theatre production before (Foy-fieldnotes, January 6 & 13, 2014). Here the venues reflected different traditions in Northern Ireland’s divided landscape including the Skainos Centre shown in Figure 5.2, developed by East Belfast Mission as part of an

urban regeneration project in predominantly Protestant East Belfast.

Figure 5.2 Setting up for the first performance of *Those You Pass on the Street*



Note. Audience chairs facing the performance space in the Skainos Centre (Kabosh, 2014b).

Other venues included Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, the Irish language and cultural centre on the predominantly Catholic Falls Road (West Belfast) also featured in chapter 4; and Barron Hall, a former Presbyterian school converted into a shared community space in Glengormley with a strong Protestant presence. In using such spaces Kabosh Theatre wants to stress that theatre does not have to be “a big production, something requiring a lot of technical stuff and staging” (Foy–fieldnotes, January 13, 2014).

One of the first challenges lay in how to create two clearly defined spaces: a Sinn Féin constituency office where Pat and Frank work and Elizabeth’s living room in the house she shared with her late husband Michael. To focus on the unusual contexts leading to encounters between the four central characters, Kabosh Theatre decided to create a space where the invisible could become visible by using drainage pipe fittings found under sinks (visible) and running up and down inside offices and house walls, as shown in Figure 5.3 (Foy–fieldnotes, January 13 & 23, 2014).

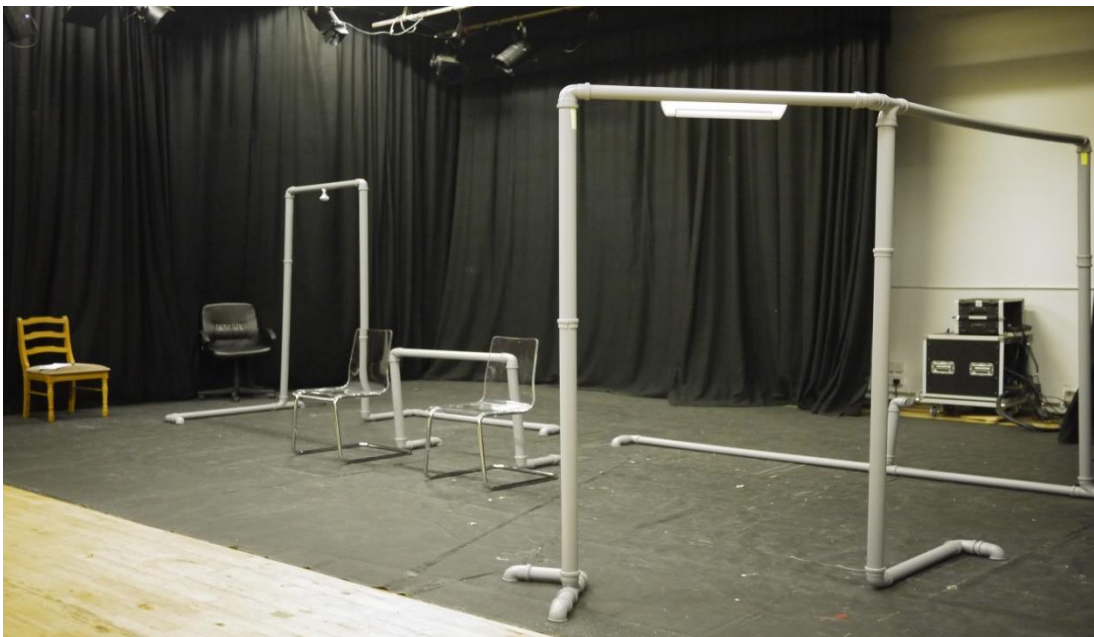
Figure 5.3 Creating an accessible yet challenging space out of plumbing materials



Note. Photograph taken by the researcher at the rehearsal hall showing different pieces of the set designed to create a fluid performance space (January 27, 2014).

The fluid delineation of the performance space captured in Figure 5.4 heightens the script's strong thematic undertow: the ebb and flow of grief and less visible connections between people, places and events, some of which remain buried while others rise to the surface as the action unfolds.

Figure 5.4 Delineation of space inviting audiences to construct their own meaning



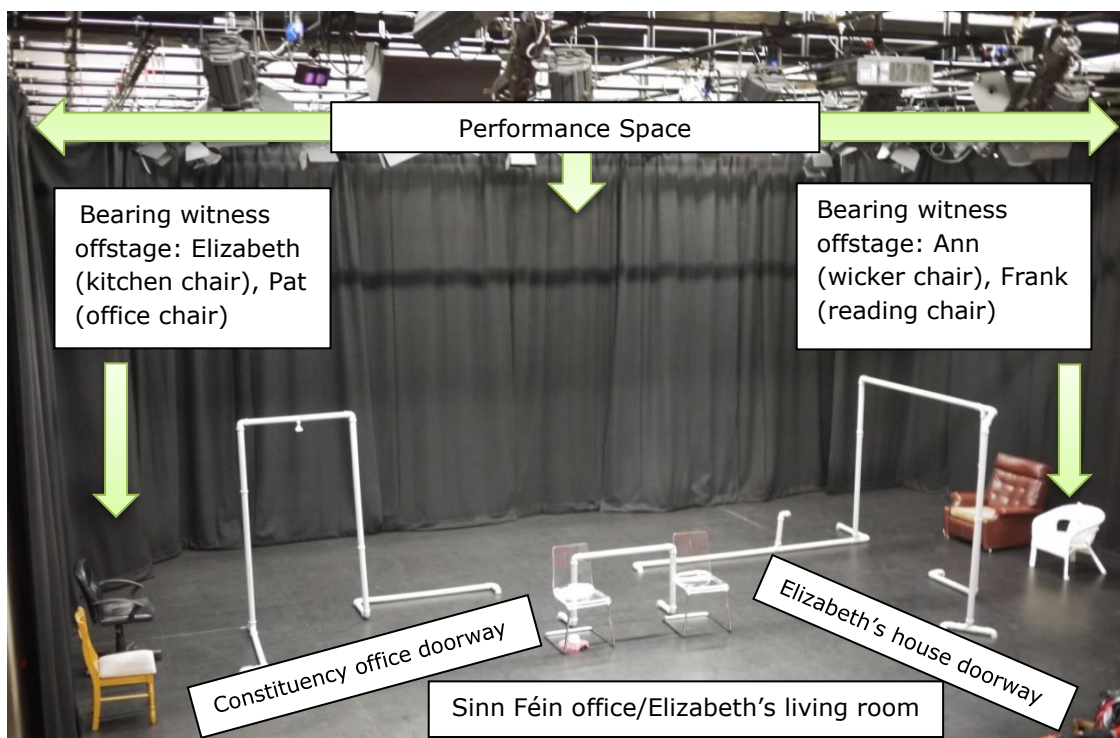
Note. Photograph taken by the researcher at the Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich centre (West Belfast) showing the dual-purposed set – office and living room (January 30, 2014).

The look and feel of the set that houses an office (far left entryway) and a home (front right entryway) also dictated when, where, and how the actors “make an entrance, cross the stage ... or react to another’s actions” (Atkinson, 2004a, p. 152). The objective of this creative process is to help audiences realise that things are not always what they seem:

The kind of style that the piece is set it’s slightly Brechtian in that you think you know a character but then they move into the next scene and you get another bit of information about them that changes your perception of them from the previous scene ... So each wee layer you get makes you question your initial perception of an individual. (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015)

To “play with that idea of personal prejudice”, Kabosh Theatre created a stark performance space stripped bare of usual props – doors, phones and family photographs (ibid.; Foy-fieldnotes, January 13 & 23, 2014). The minimalist use of stage props – chairs, stark lighting over entryways and car horn sound effect – invites audiences to look at creative acts as something that entails “moving beyond the parameters of what is visible, what currently exists, or what is taken as given” (Lederach, 2005, p. 62). Figure 5.5 presents key staging elements for *Those You Pass on the Street*.

Figure 5.5 Combined effect of set features giving audiences a comfortable yet uncomfortable sense about the performance space and narrative



Note. Photograph taken by the researcher at The Mac theatre space (January 31, 2014).

The use of chairs offers one example of how carefully crafted staging can be employed to strengthen an audience's receptivity to a "narrative that comes across as being quite simple" and yet has so many contexts, and subtexts and layers to it (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). At the centre of the main stage there are two identical see-through chairs acting as the constituency office and Elizabeth's living-room seating area. Their translucent quality adds to the play's focus on the need "to look at others and at ourselves, our attitudes" in a period of post-conflict transition (Anonymous-post-show discussion, January 29, 2014).

Given the need to have a set that could be recreated anywhere, it was decided that actors would remain onstage at all times (Foy-fieldnotes, January 13 & 15, 2014). An offstage area was added at each side of the main stage in full view of the audience as shown in Figure 5.5. For Kabosh Theatre, "the minute you had them [characters] in the public eye, you've got then to decide what are they sitting on?" (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). Seen as a chance to reinforce the characters' backstories, Kabosh Theatre decided that when not involved in a scene the actors would sit on a chair serving as an extension of their character (ibid.). Going back to Figure 5.5, the left offstage area shows a kitchen chair for Elizabeth who enjoys having a proper cup of tea as part of her daily rituals and an office chair for Pat who is now an elected political representative. The right offstage area has a wicker chair for Ann, the kind found in a house conservatory, and a comfy old leather chair for Frank living in a small bungalow. This gave "another lens by which [to] see the play and experience the narrative" that was not lost on viewers: "the stage arrangement was excellent" and "the setup of the characters "was very creative" (ibid.; Anonymous-feedback, February 1, 2014).

The presence of this other lens also addresses another concern: how to summon a sense of collective listening around four very different characters' voices, worldviews and journeys (P. McFetridge-post-show discussion, January 29, 2014). Figure 5.6 shows Pat and Ann bearing witness to Elizabeth and Frank's initial encounter at the Sinn Féin constituency office, "a turn up for the books" Pat tells Frank after she leaves the office (McKeown, 2015, p. 4).

Figure 5.6 Opening scene from *Those You Pass on the Street* revisited (2014)



Note. Offstage Pat (far left) and Ann (far right) bear witness to Elizabeth and Frank's initial encounter at the Sinn Féin constituency office. This photograph taken by J. Baucher (Kabosh Theatre Company, 2014) features the original cast: actors Laura Hughes (Elizabeth), Paul Kennedy (Frank), Vincent Higgins (Pat) and Carol Moore (Ann).

One of the actors explained that the use of this device means that there is nowhere to hide both for the actors and the audience:

We [actors] were not supposed to be pulling focus by having a reaction to what was happening in a scene that we were not in, but the very nature of ... the play meant that even just to physically be sitting in the view of the audience, meant that they [audience] saw you as a witness to it. So ... as they were watching, for example the two Sinn Féin guys [Pat and Frank] talking ... They knew in their mind the RUC widow was watching that. Now I think that gives them another layer of how they might feel about that. (Actor 1, personal communication, February 3, 2015)

By having the actors there all the time, the audience is invited to exhibit willingness to risk and embrace complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity, two central aspects of the practice of the moral imagination. The characters' presence encourages audiences to practice observation skills that make true listening, seeing what exists or could exist and learning about themselves and the 'other' possible (Lederach, 2005, pp. 103-106).

The analysis of key script and staging elements demonstrates how a

theatrical production can be understood as encouraging the manifestation of moral imagination in a period of post-conflict transition. The next section explores the impact of these artistic processes on post-show engagement, delving deeper in the study of the role of theatre in conflict transformation.

5.3 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in Audience Engagement

During rehearsals, the actors were reminded that this theatrical production was “all about the experience of the audience, how they receive what you present”, however it is never possible to fully anticipate an audience’s reaction (P. McFetridge in Foy–fieldnotes, January 22, 2014; also Simić & Milošević, 2014). As an ethnographic observer, at the premiere of the play on January 29, 2014, I noted that both during and after the performance the presence and quality of silence was palpable. It was as though the audience had taken a collective deep breath before the opening scene and had not exhaled until seconds after the end of the play (Foy–fieldnotes, January 29, 2014). In interview one of the actors stated:

If there’s silence, what you’re grateful for as an actor, is that people are listening, and if there is that thick silence ... then they’re really listening. And often it tells you that there is maybe something disquieting about what you’re saying, or the scene that’s taking place, and that it’s just touching people very closely and because it’s touching people closely they are not free to relax into it. (Actor 1, personal communication, February 3, 2015)

Milošević (2011) believes that “sometimes, it is more important just to be present, in silence, than to act” (p. 42). The kind of silence that “opens space and mind” can be linked to the practice of moral imagination (ibid.):

In the geographies of violence, noise and busy-ness [sic] dominate our immediate senses. The moral imagination, if it is to penetrate and transcend ... [requires] that we make our way to the voices behind the noise ... that we feel the rhythms marking steady pace in spite of the cacophony. (Lederach, 2005, p. 103)

The quality of listening that stems from bearing witness to a story through the creation of “an imaginative space into which the audience may write themselves” exposes the potentially transformative qualities of a script supported by innovative staging (Ehn cited in Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 3).

Beyond immediate audience reaction, this section offers an analysis of the various modes of post-show engagement including facilitated discussions observed by me, anonymous feedback forms, and Twitter posts. Particulars of the research methods used to collect and analyse the data are detailed in chapter 2, including the fact that there are no audio recordings or official transcripts of any of the discussions for the January 29 to February 1, 2014, March 24-26, 2014, and March 23-28, 2015 runs of the play. Appendix K lists performance date and venue, post-show panel members and audience engagement modes and Appendix L situates these performance venues on a Google map of Northern Ireland. The panels were led by community dialogue facilitators and academics, and the play's director P. McFetridge and writer L. McKeown often also took part. This analysis studies how a creative space became a "learning space where ... people of all ages can develop their intercultural skills, learning from each other how to push their existing abilities to the next (or proximal) stage" as an application of moral imagination (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 174).

5.3.1 Post-Show Discussion and Feedback Analysis of the Initial Run of Play

Table 5.1 gives key audience engagement numbers for the initial run of *Those You Pass on the Street* that took place from January 29 to February 1, 2014 in Belfast. For this run, audience engagement was led by Healing Through Remembering (HTR) in partnership with Kabosh Theatre.

Table 5.1 Overview of audience engagement during the initial run of the play

Date	Venue	Number of attendees	Number of post-show discussion attendees	Number of feedback forms
January 29, 2014	Skainos Centre (East Belfast)	40	25-30	18
January 30, 2014	Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich (West Belfast)	65	40	28
January 31, 2014	The MAC–Upstairs (city centre)	98	35	36
February 1, 2014	The MAC–Upstairs (city centre)	114	-----	46

Source. Researcher's fieldnotes and Kabosh Theatre's performance reports; the form count is taken from HTR's performance feedback summaries.

Some of the most poignant reactions to the play shared during post-show discussions provide valuable insight into the trueness of themes explored in *Those You Pass on the Street*. For example, a woman spoke openly about her fight for truth “for herself and her children” around the murder of her husband in the early 1990s (Anonymous–post-show discussion, January 30, 2014). An academic in the audience explained that “anyone who has dealt with loss, grief, knows that you can’t move on without the truth” as is suggested by protagonist Elizabeth’s journey (ibid.). One of the most positive responses came from a young woman who arrived early with friends as they were ostensibly keen to get “a good seat” (Foy–fieldnotes, January 30, 2014). In fact they were seeking “more exposure to the other side, to other people’s stories”, and saw this play as a way forward (Anonymous–post-show discussion, January 30, 2014; HTR, 2014c). Figures 5.7 and 5.8 illustrate the close proximity of panel and audience during post-show exchanges on January 30 and 31, 2014 in Belfast.

Figure 5.7 Panel discussion at the Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich centre



Note. Left to right: facilitator M. Snodden (standing), P. Coyle (broadcaster), Paula McFetridge, Laurence McKeown, HTR Board member Claire Hackett (HTR, 2014b).

Figure 5.8 Panel discussion at The MAC–Upstairs theatre space



Note. Left to right: facilitator L. Macauley (standing), J. Austin (a Sinn Féin constituency office manager), B. Hamber (HTR Board), L. McKeown, P. McFetridge (HTR, 2014d).

While these positive reactions to the play emerged in the exchanges between panels and the audience, it is interesting to note that HTR also paid attention to the possibility that post-show discussions can be counter-productive. There was no facilitated discussion after the February 1, 2014 performance at The MAC because HTR Board members wanted to be mindful of individuals and groups who expressed interest in the play yet would not attend “dramas where there’s discussion ... because they want to be in that safe contained space” (K. Turner, personal communication, February 23, 2015). This may be due to uneasiness “about who else will be in the room ... [and] how difficult this conversation can be because it feels risky” (ibid.). HTR’s decision speaks to Lederach’s (2015) caution about the task of bringing about change: “in settings of deep-rooted conflict, judging change is a reiterative process, accumulated and built slowly over time, and one that is easily destroyed with a single wrong move or action” (p. 57).

As well as post-show discussions, HTR used the generic feedback form found in Figure 5.9 to gauge audiences’ receptivity to the use of theatre as a catalyst for discussions about the past, rather than a project specific one as was the case for the project to be studied in chapter 6.

Figure 5.9 HTR audience feedback form

1. Was this? [tick one box]
Good
Indifferent
Bad
No answer
2. What did you think of it? [blank space provided]

Table 5.2 gives a breakdown of responses under the first question based on the numbers indicated in the feedback summaries prepared by HTR (Kabosh Theatre, personal communication, February 5, 2014 & January 12, 2015).

Table 5.2 Compilation of responses to question 1 of HTR feedback form

1. Was this?	
Good	119
Indifferent	2
Bad	1
No answer	6
Total:	128 feedback forms out of 317 attendees

Ninety-three percent of respondents felt that the play was 'good'. This suggests receptivity to "the role of the artist" in inciting "a wide public sphere of genuine human engagement" in a divided society (Lederach, 2005, pp. 38 & 49). Table 5.3 offers a sampling of comments in response to the second question around the impact of theatre as a catalyst for what one respondent describes as "uncomfortable conversations" needed about the legacies of the past (Anonymous-feedback, January 31, 2014).

Table 5.3 Sampling of responses to question 2 of the HTR feedback form

"I actually don't like theatre, but I thought this was brilliant" (January 30, 2014); the "characters looked like anyone you can meet daily on the street" (February 1, 2014).
"Overall the performance was very moving and transformative, potentially and should be shared even more widely"; "ended with a hint of optimism" (January 30, 2014).
Worked as a drama to reflect on theme of dealing with the past; "Am I as open-minded as I thought?" (January 29, 2014)
Brave, profound, complex, "challenging and at times uncomfortable" (January 29, 2014)
Idea that associating with the 'other' side somehow "contaminates who we believe we are" needs to be challenged through projects like this (February 1, 2014).
"Got to the heart of how complex dealing with the past is; there are so many grey areas" (January 30, 2014).
"Very effective approach to dialogue" (January 30, 2014); offers "openings for the reinterpretation of the past from new understandings" (January 31, 2014).

It has “great potential for young people’s engagement with issues that undoubtedly trouble them in making sense of their community’s legacy” (January 29, 2014).

“As a foreigner I found it to be a great insight into the reality under the surface” (January 31, 2014).

Note. Comments compiled from the feedback summaries prepared by HTR (Kabosh Theatre, personal communication, February 5, 2014 & January 12, 2015).

Divergent views ranged from questioning audience representativeness particularly at the Skainos Centre in East Belfast – “would have been good to hear some views from the people in the streets nearby”, wanting additional scenes “from the Protestant and/or loyalist end”, voicing some frustration about the fact that “so many stories within it that you would like to see developed”, to stating that it was “not the sort of drama I like” (Anonymous–feedback, January 29, 30 & February 1, 2014). As the first question responses suggest, overall respondents felt that the play “worked both as a piece of theatre ... and as a space to reflect on the substantive theme of dealing with the past” (Anonymous–feedback, January 30, 2014).

5.3.2 Audience Response to the Second Run of Play

Kabosh Theatre was solely responsible for the revival of the play. Table 5.4 shows audience engagement numbers for the second run of *Those You Pass on the Street* that took place in March 2014 around Belfast. No feedback form was used by Kabosh Theatre for this run of the play.

Table 5.4 Overview of audience engagement during the second run of the play

Date	Venue	Number of attendees	Number of post-show discussion attendees
March 24, 2014	Townsend Street Presbyterian Church (South Belfast)	21	20
March 25, 2014	Barron Hall (Glengormley)	40	35-40
March 26, 2014	The Duncairn Centre for Culture & Arts (North Belfast)	16	2

Note. The numbers are based on internal performance reports prepared by Kabosh Theatre.

P. McFetridge noted that post-show discussions during this second run of the play were more heated than during the first run (personal communication, January 5, 2015). This might be due to the smaller sized venues as shown in Figure 5.10, the primarily single-identity nature of audiences and geographical location of venues used for this run.

Figure 5.10 Performance/discussion space at the Barron Hall (Glengormley)



Note. J. Blake (facilitator) and P. McFetridge engage with the audience (Kabosh, 2014o).

As Actor 2 stated in interview, “the one up in North Belfast [Glengormley] was very, very tight; they [P. McFetridge and J. Blake–facilitator] were right on top of the audience” (personal communication, February 3, 2015).

Kabosh Theatre used Twitter (@KaboshTheatre) to capture key points raised by discussion attendees for the first two performances. There were no Twitter posts for the post-show discussion held at The Duncairn Centre for Culture & Arts, likely due to the low number of attendees. The following tweets were posted by Kabosh Theatre during the discussion at the Townsend Street Presbyterian Church on March 24, 2014:

- The play really made me realise how everybody was affected by the conflict, I thought it was brilliantly and naturally acted. (Kabosh, 2014c)
- I think it was a very powerful piece tonight, I kept wanting to text politicians to say ‘I think I’m watching you in a play!’ (Kabosh, 2014d)
- These politicians from all sides sit down all together every day but they have still not managed to integrate our area. (Kabosh, 2014e)
- I would have described myself, before this play as

someone who was affected by the troubles, but now I realise I was, thank you. (Kabosh, 2014f)

The tweets reveal a palpable level of frustration around the work of politicians at the local level and in the larger context of moving forward politically, economically and socially in Northern Ireland. They also point to what P. McFetridge refers to as the “forgotten generation”, i.e. those aged between forty-five to sixty who grew up during the conflict, who usually don’t engage in dealing with the past initiatives and are starting to realise that “you can’t paint over the past” (personal communication, March 11, 2015). Kabosh Theatre also posted tweets during the post-show discussion at the Barron Hall on March 25, 2014:

- Paula [McFetridge]: yes these conversations can scare me, but I am always eternally proud of how articulate our communities are and how we keep fighting. (Kabosh, 2014g)
- Conversations need to be had in Newtownabbey too, not just east, south, north, west, and we will still walk out the door and still be friends. (Kabosh, 2014h)
- I think until we mix the children in our schools we don't have a chance in this country; it's all about our young people and their futures. (Kabosh, 2014i)
- There are a lot of young people who should be given a voice, if a young person comes up and tells me something I believe them right away. (Kabosh, 2014j)
- It's about getting people coming together in rooms, and creating space, to talk about our problems. (Kabosh, 2014k)
- If you are elected you are elected for the WHOLE [sic] community, that's how it should be. (Kabosh, 2014l)
- The problem in this country is that some people won't step over to the other side; this play has a positive message if people will listen. (Kabosh, 2014m)
- These plays are good because they give us an insight into what other people are feeling. (Kabosh, 2014n)

Overall these tweets reflect general concerns and feelings expressed at previous discussions. They reveal the need expressed by a number of attendees to expand the reach and impact of the play outside of the traditional four corners of Belfast – north, south, east and west. They also highlight another recurring theme: the need to give young people a voice

and more exposure to the 'other' so that they can make informed decisions about the future. This idea of young people's engagement with the past is a major theme of the project analysed in chapter 6.

These sets of Twitter posts suggest that attendees are looking to artists and politicians alike to "create spaces of interaction" wherein people are invited to exhibit greater moral imagination, that is the "capacity to imagine relationships, the [refusal] to fall into dualistic polarities, the creative act, and the willingness to risk" (Lederach, 2005, pp. 96 & 98).

5.3.3 Post-Show Discussion and Feedback Analysis of the Third Run of Play

This revival of *Those You Pass on the Street* in March 2015 provided an opportunity to present the play to individuals, groups, and community leaders outside of Belfast and in Belfast's academic landscape. Table 5.5 sets out audience engagement numbers including from feedback forms.

Table 5.5 Overview of audience engagement during the third run of the play

Date	Venue	Number of attendees	Number of post-show discussion attendees	Number of feedback forms
March 23, 2015	Braid Centre (Ballymena)	40	40	22
March 24, 2015	Waterside Theatre (Derry-Londonderry)	20	12	9
March 25, 2015	Navan Centre and Fort (Armagh)	20	16-20	17
March 26, 2015	An Coire Centre (Maghera)	20	20	9
March 27, 2015	Brian Friel Theatre (Belfast)	50	25-30	25
March 28, 2015	Brian Friel Theatre (Belfast)	100	45-50	26

Source. Foy-fieldnotes (March 2015); internal performance reports prepared by Kabosh Theatre.

All performances of the play were open to the general public except for the one held at the Braid Centre in Ballymena. The latter was presented to groups from Derry-Londonderry and Ballymena, who have done dialogue work with facilitator M. Snodden, an ex-combatant (United Defence Front) and loyalist ex-prisoner (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). The audience was composed mainly of men who self-identified as

republican ex-prisoners, ex-combatants/prisoners (UDF) and a woman from a republican background whose mother was shot by the British Army during the conflict (Foy-fieldnotes, March 23, 2015). They engaged constructively with each other and with the panel that included the playwright – a former member of the IRA – and the facilitator (ibid.). In general, Kabosh Theatre wanted to ensure that the panels offered different perspectives and embodied the transformative potential of listening to the ‘other’ and acknowledging relational interdependency, both part of the practice of moral imagination (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Analytic highlights in terms of themes and of people involved in other post-show discussions include the following:

- Exchanges between people with knowledge of policing during the conflict and people who did not experience the conflict such as young people and new residents;
- Members – mostly women aged forty-five to sixty-five – of Armagh’s React (Reconciliation, Education & Community Training) that encourages individuals affected “by the legacy of the conflict to move forward, through the facilitation of community dialogue and participation in development programmes” who have an established relationship with the facilitator (REACT, n.d., About us);
- One held in a more intimate setting, suggesting that people were comfortable sitting in close proximity despite holding very different social and political views;
- Exchanges between panels, university students and people involved in the arts sector including the Minister of Culture, Arts & Leisure (Northern Ireland). (Foy-fieldnotes, March 23-28, 2015)

Audience composition suggests that the play’s subject-matter resonates or is looked upon with curiosity both within single-identity communities and across communities and age groups. Figure 5.11 shows the March 28, 2015 discussion held at the Brian Friel Theatre, part of Queen’s University Belfast.

Figure 5.11 A panel–audience exchange at the Brian Friel Theatre



Note. Exchange between the audience and the panel – from left to right: M. Snodden, P. McFetridge, L. McKeown and lecturer Dr C. McLaughlin – facilitator (Kabosh, 2015e).

In addition to post-show discussions, Kabosh Theatre used their newly devised feedback form, reproduced in full in Appendix M, resulting from a reassessment of how they gather data to improve their theatrical outputs in terms of “the quality of impact” and the development “of new audiences ... [that might] come back and take a chance and experience something they would never have been receptive to before” (P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). This form primarily gauged audiences’ responses to the play’s subject-matter, the use of theatre as a medium to explore issues from the past and sought data about audience composition. Analysis of the forms submitted by one hundred and eight out of two hundred and fifty audience members offered interesting insights although respondents did not always answer all questions which made it hard for example to get an accurate gender breakdown though many more noted their age group (Foy –fieldnotes, April 2, 2015; see also chapter 2). The two most represented age groups were the twenty-six to fifty and the fifty-one to sixty-five. Contrary to the feedback for the play *Crows on the Wire* to be discussed in chapter 6, only a few respondents gave additional

comments. Table 5.6 shows the researcher's tabulation of responses about how strongly audience members felt about the statements found on the form about the impact of the play.

Table 5.6 Compilation of responses to statements on Kabosh Theatre feedback form

Following the performance, how far do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I felt challenged and provoked	29	43	21	3	4
It got me thinking about things differently	28	51	18	1	1
I felt I could identify with the story	29	42	19	6	2
I felt I could relate to the characters	31	45	17	6	1
I found the performance very moving	52	46	4	2	1
Issues raised by the play seemed relevant to my own life	18	32	30	11	6
I could identify with one character	15	28	33	17	6
A post-show discussion is a useful way to share this experience with other people	59	27	3	1	–
I will be talking about this play for some time	33	54	17	2	1
Theatre is a useful way to explore issues from our past	80	19	1	–	–
Results overview	761 (76.6%)		163 (16.2%)		71 (7.2%)

Going back to Table 5.5, sixty percent of attendees witnessed the play at the Brian Friel Theatre which meant a younger audience than in venues outside of Belfast. Many between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five and twenty-six to fifty noted that they had not experienced the conflict or were new to Northern Ireland which may explain high numbers under the 'Neither Agree or Disagree' category. However, it is worth noting that there were similar results on key statements between urban centres and small towns. Table 5.6 shows that over ninety-eight percent of respondents found theatre to be a useful medium for exploring challenging issues about the past and eighty percent felt that post-show discussions are a useful way to share their experience of this kind of drama.

Table 5.7 offers a sampling of responses to the play taken from post-show discussions and audience members' written feedback.

Table 5.7 Compilation of audience members' comments and thoughts taken from post-show discussions and Kabosh Theatre's feedback form

Post-Show Discussions	Feedback Forms
It was "moving by its simplicity"; drama is a "safe way ... of dealing with the past" though "some things still can't be talked about"; "with regard to religion, you realise that when you lose someone the pain is the same" (March 23, 26 & 25, 2015).	The actors "successfully allowed us to be 'present' in the story"; "I enjoyed seeing the multiple perspectives that were shown through the characters" (March 28, 2015).
It "brought up a lot of emotions in me; pleasant shock because after so many years we get anaesthetised"; "the fact that we are here says something, we're making our voice known" (March 28 & 24, 2015).	Play should be shown "on a big scale"; should be taken "to schools" (March 23 & 24, 2015).
"I have to open my mind"; the 'them and us' discourse shows "narrow-mindedness"; some won't engage because of "lack of knowledge and [biggest] point 'fear', we all need to take risks" (March 23, 2015).	This drama "will allow us to deal with the past"; "personally not relevant to me, I feel things have moved on - I don't feel I define people as Protestant or Catholic" (March 23, 2015).
"Need to get to an understanding of the 'other' perspective"; "some people don't want 'their' truth diluted"; "what about what's happening in the loyalist community" (March 26, 2015)?	A young person stated: "I enjoyed hearing these stories as I have not lived any of these experiences" (March 24, 2015; also March 28, 2015).
"Young people seem to be more accepting, older people seem more hardnosed"; "we have to stop passing on the legacy of our contested past to young people" (March 23 & 25, 2015).	To my age group [fifty-one to sixty five] – "This is a must see" (March 26, 2015).
Role of "dialogue could not be over emphasised ... in communicating with each other we come to a better understanding"; "don't need everybody to agree just for people to get to know one another" (March 25, 2015).	The post-show discussion "was excellent"; "I was impressed with the openness and further insight that came out" of the discussion (March 27 & 28, 2015).
"We've been waiting a long time for stuff to come from Stormont but there are things on the ground" that offer a lot more concrete and forward moving work (March 27, 2015).	"Theatre and arts are very important to reaching people and to addressing conflict and change" (March 28, 2015).

Source. Foy-fieldnotes (March-April 2015).

A significant finding is that members of different communities and political affiliations seem to agree on the fact that theatre has an important role to play in the transformation of conflict as it has "a bit more licence to push boundaries" (Anonymous-post-show discussion, March 23, 2015). And while creating spaces for informed dialogue and constructive change should also be the task of political leaders, the play left attendees wondering "what the politicians [are] doing" (Anonymous-post-show discussion, March 26, 2015). Another comment reproduced in Table 5.7 speaks directly to the main focus of this theatre-centric project: getting people to acknowledge that "with regard to religion, you realise that when you lose someone, the pain is the same" (ibid., March 25, 2015). This realisation humanises the 'other', the first step toward "genuine constructive change"

(Lederach, 2005, p. 49). While one respondent noted that she did not feel that the play resonated with her because “things have moved on and this felt like step back” as she endeavoured not to “define people as Protestant or Catholic”, others felt that the play provided a “superb platform for us to self-reflect” (Anonymous–feedback, March 23 & 28, 2015).

An integral part of the *Those You Pass on the Street* project was to ensure that people could engage in informed discussions through drama acting as “a safety net” (Anonymous–post-show discussion, March 26, 2015). While audience engagement modes varied, this analysis of three sets of data suggests a robust role engaged theatre as a resource for the creative transformation of conflict in societies in transition. At the heart of the practice of the moral imagination outlined by Lederach (2005), these capacities can facilitate the breakdown of barriers to dialogue, a deeper understanding of the ‘other’, and mutual respect of differences as evidenced in exchanges between panels and audience members, all without the need for “everybody to agree” (Anonymous–post-show discussion, March 25, 2015). Comments like the “problem in this country is that some people won’t step over to the other side” show the challenges posed by Lederach’s call for risk-taking by seeking “constructive engagement with those people and things we least understand and most fear” (Kabosh 2014m; Lederach, 2005, p. 173). Audience responses suggest recognition that it may take another “thirty to forty years” to “move as a society” (Anonymous–post-show discussion, March 24 & 23, 2015). They also confirm the need to address issues around dealing with the past in ways that are creative and engage young people, a recurring theme in the other case study to be presented next, and that make individuals revisit their belief that they were not “affected by the Troubles” (Kabosh, 2014d).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the use of drama as a creative approach to storytelling and informed discussion on the difficulties of dealing with residues of the conflict at the personal, community and political level. Using ethnographic observation and analysis of post-show evaluations, this chapter built a case study around *Those You Pass on the Street* to explore

the thesis' research questions. From the analysis it is clear that the play challenged audiences' perception of the 'other' and the notion that dealing with the past is a monolithic inter-community process. The play invited audiences to exhibit a capacity to see through and beyond the presenting situation by acknowledging the universal character of the story of loss, grief, and survival told by four very different characters – Elizabeth, Ann, Frank and Pat – and perspectives, to become conscious of the residues of the conflict in their lives and communities and of “who they are and how they see themselves in relationship with others” (Lederach, 2005, p. 165).

The artistic practices and processes employed by Kabosh Theatre exposed similarities with Lederach's perspective on conflict transformation – theory and practice. They included the creation of a safe environment leading to the discovery of an imaginative shared space where difficult questions can be asked, that acknowledge individual and community needs to make sense of the present and shed light on the universal aspects of the journey and suffering of people on all sides of the conflict. The close attention paid, for example, to the crafting of the fictional characters' backstories based on local histories, cultures and sensibilities illustrated Lederach's (1995) argument for elicitive social transformation processes that “understand language, metaphor, proverb, and story as resources, mechanisms, and approaches to conflict resolution” (p. 83).

The analysis of the script and staging revealed how the *Those You Pass on the Street* project created a platform for “engagement of deep issues and of people” around the need for truth, the right to move forward and the ripple effect of decisions on family and political loyalties (Lederach, 2005, p. 49). It was followed by a study of how this theatrical production “restored and strengthened people's communicative, self-reflective, and empathic capacities” through post-show discussions, Twitter posts and written feedback, where available (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 11). Based on the thesis that “paradoxical curiosity stimulates and provokes the moral imagination” the theatre-makers showed a respect for complexity by paying attention to the visible and less visible connections between people, places and events that invite people to find for themselves avenues for change in their own lives (Lederach, 2005, p. 37).

The varied forms of audience engagement illustrated the “messiness of innovation” at the root of the capacity “to generate, mobilise, and build the moral imagination” (Lederach, 2005, pp. viii & 5). In particular, the analysis indicated how different audiences reacted to the play’s suggestion that when it comes to dealing with the past there are no absolutes rather there are grey areas with untold potential for the “appearance of the moral imagination in human affairs” (ibid., pp. 113). Held in small theatre and community venues across Northern Ireland, performances and post-show discussion invited those witnessing this challenging theatrical production to reflect on ways in which the past shapes visible and less visible behavior in the present as captured by old and new connections both internalized and revisited as a result of interactions between the play’s characters. The analysis gave strong indications of audiences’ capacity for risk-taking and exhibiting vulnerability in their efforts to understand the many levels of loss and grief and the masks that people put on to cope with grief as portrayed by protagonists Elizabeth, Ann, Frank and Pat. At facilitated post-show discussions, playwright L. McKeown reiterated that the play was about the steps or choices people are prepared to take to move from seeing someone as an enemy to sitting next to them on a discussion panel, to labelling them a friend, to getting to the truth about a loved one’s killing – “process is as important as getting there” (post-show discussion, January 29, 2014). Overall, the examination of this project’s creative landscape, that Cleveland (2008) deems to be an integral part of “the business to making meaning”, exposed the capacity for engaged theatre to create spaces for the discussion of difficult issues around a challenging past (p. 9).

In the next chapter the focus shifts to another case study, the *Crows on the Wire* project carried out by the Verbal Arts Centre over a two year period. This chapter will explore ways in which this project that includes a digital element offers further insight into the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland through its focus on the difficult and emotive issue of policing during the conflict in Northern Ireland.

CHAPTER 6

Case Study 2: *Crows on the Wire* Project

Jack

It's over. (nodding to the clock which has just ticked beyond midnight) I'm an antique. (pause) Crows on the wire. Old farmer Patton [sic] has come out to clear the land of pests and he's levelled his shotgun into the trees and just kept pulling the trigger. And all those hit have been strung up on the wire as a warning to the rest. The price of life is very cheap to politicians.

Ruth

When you look at it Jack, it was a move that was always going to be made.

*J. Burgess – playwright, *Crows on the Wire* (2014), p. 69.*

Introduction

This chapter presents further analysis of this thesis' research questions concerning the role of engaged theatre in conflict transformation through an analysis of the *Crows on the Wire* (COTW) project undertaken by the Verbal Arts Centre (VAC) in 2013 and 2014.⁷⁵ The project explored drama as a "distribution vehicle" for stories that "are deliberately ignored ... or preferably unheard" in the public domain and as a catalyst for informed discussion around the difficult topic of policing during the conflict in Northern Ireland (J. Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014). Revolving around a play written by Jonathan Burgess, the project's first phase included a series of school and community relations group workshops (fall of 2013) followed by a performance and discussion tour across Northern Ireland and border counties (Republic of Ireland) from November 6 to 29, 2013. The second phase focused on the creation of a mobile application providing a space where awareness and discussion of the issues raised by the play can occur beyond the lifespan of the project.

This chapter explores the idea that "to transform conflict takes an imaginative leap" (J, Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014). The analysis will show how the play and its digital version furthers the practice of the moral imagination in its viewers by enabling them to envision

⁷⁵ As an educational charity, VAC promotes and encourages all aspects of the spoken and written word and facilitates access to the verbal arts through programmes, projects and events that celebrate commonality and diversity among art forms and across local communities (Verbal Group, 2015, n.p.).

relational interdependency, embrace the complexity “of the relationships and realities that face our communities”, pursue creative acts, and take risks (Lederach, 2005, pp. 173). As outlined in chapter 2, the findings are based on interviews, documentary sources and observational fieldwork (June 2014–June 2015).

Following a synopsis of the play, the first section presents an outline of the script’s key themes through the lens of conflict transformation, in particular how drama enhances audiences’ “willingness to acknowledge the full complexity of conflicts” by bringing to light the human side of policing during the conflict in Northern Ireland (Cohen & al., 2011b, p. 11). The second section offers an analysis of adult post-show discussions and written adult and pupil feedback in the manner detailed in chapter 2. This analysis explores how the play created a safe, creative and open space for audiences to reflect on, voice and question their pre and post-performance perceptions of the RUC conducive to the manifestation of the moral imagination. It also offers valuable insight into audience views about theatre as a means to explore challenging aspects of the past. The final section discusses the development of VAC’s *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) viewed here as an example of the role that could be played by digital media in building sustainable peace in conflict and transitional settings.

Synopsis of the Play

The *Crows on the Wire* play is based on real stories of RUC officers that were shared with playwright J. Burgess (2014, Author’s Note). As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the RUC was a controversial police force and its reform was a key aspect of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. The play is set at the end of a shift on the eve of the changeover from the RUC to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) that occurred on November 4, 2001. Taking place in a police station somewhere in Northern Ireland, it explores the “sense of frustration and loss, but also the sense of insecurity of what a new beginning would hold” through three central characters: Jack, a long-time RUC officer; David, a university-educated recruit; and Ruth, a former colleague of Jack’s (ibid.). Theatrical tensions invite audiences to consider officers’ experiences, views, and

rationales about the changeover and recognise that pressures impacted on all sides in the conflict.

The major storyline focuses on how Jack will react to the policing change as he ends his last shift in the RUC uniform, as shown in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Jack in the police station locker room as he finishes his shift



Note. Scene from *Crows on the Wire* where Jack tries to make sense of what the changeover means for the old guard, sacrifices made, and what the future holds for him (VAC, 2013f).

On that night, Ruth visits her old station to be with those still wearing the RUC uniform. In many ways she is caught between the present and the past despite her husband's attempts to have her cut all ties, "the only thing the old guard have left now is each other and I stand with them" (Burgess, 2014, p. 47). Carrying no baggage from the past, David supports the transition to the PSNI and has high hopes for the new policing model and his career. Ruth's exchanges with David (representing the new guard) offer insight about the human cost of policing during the conflict by exploring aspects of Jack's life that he "doesn't really open up" about (ibid.). While Jack exhibits a strong sense of duty and is proud of having served in RUC, it has cost him dearly: excessive drinking, outbursts of violence, collapse of his marriage and of the relationship with his son. He is left debating whether to take the retirement package or to embrace the new uniform that

makes David feel like a “real policeman ... I mean ... a modern policeman” (ibid., pp. 22-23). The play ends with Jack sharing how his best friend was killed by a car bomb at a time when they were “young bucks. Invincible. Untouchable” but the killers walked free for lack of evidence (ibid., p. 72).⁷⁶ That event weighs heavily on his mind as he tries to reconcile what “was lost – lives, families, husbands, wives, society” with talk about the “need for us all to forgive each other and the need for community regeneration through healing and dealing with the past” (ibid., pp. 30 & 73). The last line leaves the outcome open to interpretation: “Now, somebody press the ‘restart’ button and off we go again” (ibid., p.73).

6.1 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in the *Crows on the Wire* Script

In interview M. Jennings, COTW’s theatrical production Peer Support Writer, discussed his vision of the role of theatre in a society in transition:

Theatre can present issues in a way that is contested, and dialogical and creative and imaginative, and have emotional affect beyond the intellectual engagement with the issue ... For instance, you might find yourself sympathising with somebody who would in other circumstances be perceived as an enemy. (personal communication, September 30, 2014)

Here the aim was to invite audiences to look beyond the uniform as “the RUC was not a monolith but a collective of people who have emotions and experience life in the same ways as others” (Burgess cited in McMurray, 2014a, p. 28). The COTW narrative asks audiences to explore:

The realness of lived experience, how perceptions and meanings ... have emerged and how they might point to realities of both what is now apparent and the invisible that lies beyond what is presented as conclusive. (Lederach, 2005, p. 37)

The COTW script offers “in the public forum, a version of their [RUC police officers’] story that can be empathised with” through storylines involving protagonists Jack, Ruth and David as shown in Figure 6.2, with key aspects of their backstories found in Appendix N (Burgess, 2014, Author’s Note).

⁷⁶ A short video presenting the scene where Jack shares with the audience how his best friend died in a car bombing is included in the COTW App (2014) and can be viewed on YouTube (Crows Verbal, 2014b).

Figure 6.2 Characters Jack, Ruth and David in the police station locker room



Note. Scene from *Crows on the Wire* showing a heated exchange. This photograph taken by VAC (2013d) features the original cast: actors Gerard Mc Dermott (Jack), Denise Stephenson (Ruth) and Charlie Archer (David).

To those ends, the script explores experiences of being a police officer during the violent, protracted conflict in Northern Ireland around choices, sacrifices and losses, emotional responses to the police reform resulting from the Good Friday Agreement, and cultural and organisational identity considerations as illustrated in Table 6.1 (McMurray, 2014a, p. 35).

Table 6.1 Examples of script references to key themes and issues

Themes/Issues	Sampling of Script References
Policing during the thirty-year conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Police dispatch orders mobile patrols to be on the lookout for a car that has driven through a checkpoint (Burgess, 2014, p. 12). ▪ Jack – terrorism vs. war vs. routine policing (ibid., pp. 42-44).
Impact on officers' well-being and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overtime – 1980-1981 hunger strikes by republican prisoners, riots every night (ibid., p. 65). ▪ While Ruth left the RUC and moved away for a fresh start, she still checks her car for bombs; this job “hardens you to the world It all takes its toll” (ibid., pp. 18-19). ▪ Ruth tells David that Jack saw a friend die in a car explosion; he started having anger management issues, costing him his marriage/relationship with his son (ibid., pp. 39 & 54-55).
Policing reform implemented in 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “They helicopter us in and out of this place, and suddenly we’re expected to go biking through the streets” (ibid., p. 31). ▪ David does not see Jack and fellow RUC officers as role models: some things should be thrown away “bad reputations. Mistrust, Collusion. They wouldn’t be bad things to lose”; Jack – “don’t assume that a handful of boys who spent their time in helping

Feelings about the reform and impact on cultural and organisational identity	<p>paramilitaries speak for the rest of us" (ibid., pp. 29 & 64).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name change seen as creating a polarity: the new guard (PSNI) versus the "Neanderthals of the RUC" (ibid., p. 23–Jack). ▪ David to Jack: "You've got to embrace the change"; Jack: "get back out of that ... dog's dinner of a thing [new uniform]" (ibid., pp. 23-24) ▪ Jack: "You were two or three when the hunger strikes were on – tell me what do you remember of all that?" (ibid., p. 34) ▪ Voice over radio: "Tell me what the point of that was, when the boys that blew up the town are now being let out of jail" (ibid., p. 21).
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Source. Burgess (2014); also McMurray (2014a, pp. 48-53).

These themes invite audiences to discover the human side of policing and revisit their perception of the RUC. For VAC's J. Kerr this is done by staying with RUC stories, specifically Jack's story as much as possible, and letting the audience draw their own conclusions "without having to water the project down by trying to be everyone's friend" (personal communication, October 8, 2014). For former RUC/PSNI officer and COTW Steering Group member R. McCallum the script crosses time and space:

It's [not] just about the RUC turning into the PSNI, it's about the whole debate around change itself, about how we have to, if we are to move on, ... embrace change, whether it be in our ... personal lives or whether it be organisationally, or whether it be as society, because change is one thing that you cannot escape from. We have to be able to address it in a positive way ... [with] all the difficulty that comes with that. (personal communication, October 14, 2014).

By raising "questions rather than provide simple answers", the script engages the audience's capacity for empathy by portraying protagonist Jack as a multifaceted person who has become dehumanised through his work and life experiences (M. Jennings, personal communication, September 30, 2014). This capacity helps individuals "find a little more space within themselves to accommodate the humanity of that person and her or his perspective" and to exhibit moral imagination (Salas, 2011, p. 98).

The survey of connections between artistic practice and Lederach's vision of how to build constructive change in divided societies continues with an analysis of audience engagement. As in the case for *Those You Pass on the Street* discussed in chapter 5, the venues tended to be "smaller types of theatre or civic centre where folk could go along, observe the play, and then get involved in the discussions afterwards" as shown in Figure 6.3 (R. McCallum, personal communication, October 14, 2014).

Figure 6.3 Drama used to engage people in informed discussions about the past



Note. Premiere of the play at the Waterside Theatre, Derry-Londonderry (Verbal, 2013c).

6.2 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in Audience Engagement

This section examines two audience engagement methods used by VAC during the 2013 COTW performance tour – post-show discussions and feedback forms – targeting adult-orientated audiences and post-primary school pupils. COTW Community Engagement Coordinator M. Sutherland explained that the play was “intended to act as a catalyst ... [and] the discussion that takes place afterwards ... is a really vital part of the overall project” (transcripts, November 26, 2013). As shown in Figure 6.4, the COTW team devised a feedback form tailored to the play that sought data about viewers’ community background, their pre-performance perception of the RUC, post-performance attitudinal changes, if any, and their views on how theatre as a medium for exploring unheard narratives of the past.

Figure 6.4 *Crows on the Wire* audience feedback form

- What is your cultural/religious background?
- What was your perception of the RUC prior to the performance?
- Has your perception/opinion changed in any way? If so, why? Yes/No
- Is theatre an effective medium for exploring unheard stories? If so, why? Yes/No
- Other comments?

The analysis focuses on the exploration of connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding in a period of post-conflict transition. It reviews how the act of bearing witness to human stories behind events answers Lederach's (2005) call for practising the kind of imagination that holds the potential to bring individuals to explore opportunities "that surpass ... and break ... current relational patterns" and build constructive change (p. 37).

6.2.1 Adult-Orientated Post-Show Discussions Analysis

Post-show discussions took place after twelve out of sixteen adult-oriented performances held in Northern Ireland and border counties (Republic of Ireland) between November 6 and 29, 2013 as detailed in Appendix O. A Google map locating the performance venues in Northern Ireland and border counties can be found in Appendix P. As shown in Figures 6.5 and 6.6, the panels included local journalists and the COTW Steering Group members as was the case after both performances in Derry-Londonderry. The analysis focuses on five post-show transcripts provided by the Verbal Arts Centre for Derry-Londonderry (two performances), Coleraine, Omagh and Letterkenny (Republic of Ireland), as detailed in Appendix Q.⁷⁷ The transcripts offer a rare opportunity to piece together bits of untold stories of people who were involved in, or affected by, the conflict. It focuses on exchanges between panels and audiences like those in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 that shed light on the four elements of moral imagination identified by Lederach (2005) – relational interdependency, paradoxical curiosity, creativity and risk (p. 5).

⁷⁷ Details of these transcripts are found under VAC (2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013e, 2013g). In this thesis, references to these transcripts are presented as anonymous or under the name of the panel member.

Figure 6.5 Panel discussion following the play's premiere at the Waterside Theatre



Note. Panel: G. O'Hara (Sinn Féin politician), T. Callaghan (former RUC/current PSNI officer), M. Patterson (radio host/chair), R. McCallum (former RUC/PSNI), J. Burgess (Verbal, 2013d).

Figure 6.6 Panel discussion following the performance at the Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin centre



Note. Audience and panel get up close: the panel (far right) included M. Patterson (radio host/chair), R. McCallum (former RUC/PSNI), M. Hetherington (COTW Steering Group), and D. O'Mochain (former IRA volunteer/member of Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin) (Verbal, 2013f).

6.2.1.1 Capacity to Envision and Act on the Basis of the Existence of a Web of Relationships that Includes the 'Other'

The difficult stories finding a voice through the COTW project test Lederach's (2005) faith in the ability of individuals and communities to mobilise the kind of imagination that will help them see things differently. After the two performances in Derry-Londonderry (November 6 & 7, 2013), panel chair M. Patterson stressed that public conversations involving former RUC officers sitting alongside republican or loyalist ex-combatants in areas that were hotspots during the conflict "couldn't have happened even fifteen, certainly not twenty years ago ... If you remember 2000, 2001, when these events [changeover] were taking place ... it was a fraught time" (November 6 & 7, 2013). The post-show discussions depicted in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 show the close proximity between panel and audience, as was the case in the analysis of the *Those You Pass on the Street* project in chapter 5.

In interview R. McCallum, former RUC/PSNI officer and COTW Steering Group member, provided additional context about the significance of his presence at the post-show discussion held at the An Cultúrlann centre located in a republican stronghold area of the city (see Figure 6.6):

I felt very privileged to have been asked to be part of a panel in the BT48 [postal code] area, representing an organisation that would've got a fair amount of negative press in the past from the folk in that area ... It was also very important ... for me to listen to what the members of the community ... [were] telling me of their experiences of policing ... Hopefully we now both have a greater appreciation of each other's views ... I remember ... [someone] saying ... 'I've nearly got more respect for RUC officers than I do for the current PSNI officers, once I listened to what your point of view was'... It probably couldn't have happened even ... five years ago, but I think the play did contribute a lot towards it. (personal communication, October 14, 2014)

Lederach argues that peacebuilding requires individuals to embrace a tri-dimensional truth: "who we have been, are, and will be" (2005, p. 35). The data analysis suggests the addition of a fourth dimension: the faculty of accepting others as they are. At the end of an exchange initiated by a loyalist contributor with panellist G. O'Hara, from a republican background, the latter concluded: "I have to accept all that you believe and think and

are, and I think that people have to accept that people like me aren't going away" (post-show transcripts, November 6, 2013). The idea of accepting people as they are applies to cross-community and intra-community settings. G. O'Hara who was involved in the discussions leading to the 1994 ceasefire pointed out that even within his own community "people called people like me, who were moving forward on the peace process 'traitors' ... there's [still] a lot of work to be done" (ibid.). These views speak to the complexity of practicing paradoxical curiosity which will be discussed next.

6.2.1.2 Willingness to Embrace Complexity and Refrain from Reducing Complex History into Dualistic Polarities

The moral imagination is built on a "quality of interaction with reality" that is infused with paradoxical curiosity (Lederach, 2005, p. 36). The paradox is that conflicts marked with destructive cycles of violence often result in a reliance on 'us versus them' survival mentality (ibid.). The application of this mentality to the context of the love/hate relationship with the RUC and policing in Northern Ireland is no exception. Recognition of the stories of RUC officers does not mean that people will like what they hear or not want to challenge the information. However as surveyed earlier, the practice of active listening can awaken the type of curiosity needed to appreciate the complexities of the 'other' is coming from. One contributor equated this practice to a two-way street (Anonymous-transcripts, November 7, 2013). He wanted to hear the RUC stories and needed "them to hear how it was for us as well, and for our community ... And I don't want it to be 'them and us'. I want it to be the human stories" (ibid.).

The act of bearing witness to the accounts of 'others' creates a space holding the potential for the emergence of "untold new angles, opportunities, and unexpected potentialities" (Lederach, 2005, p. 37). This is demonstrated in the story shared by M. Hetherington, a COTW Steering Group member with ties to the RUC and involved in peacebuilding work:

When I had gone back to work, a fella from the nationalist republican community knew that I was the wife of a policeman and he said that ... [he] never even thought ... that the wife would have a story, or that there would be other stories. And that was really interesting because while some of them saw the RUC as a legitimate target, they

hadn't even thought there might be a family behind that and the consequences for the wider family. And for me to build the trust with him and then to tell my story changed both of us; my perception of him, his perception of me. (transcripts, November 28, 2013)

This story embodies the probing of presented contradictions – face value and heart value – in conflict settings (Lederach, 2005, pp. 36-37). Face value is the act of accepting things as they present themselves without assessing what else may be at play (ibid. p. 36). This is reflected in the perception of many members of the republican community that the RUC was a threat to their community and hence considered a legitimate target, as noted in the introductory chapter. Heart value looks beyond perceptions and explores the meaning in the experience of people (ibid., p. 37). As the story above suggests the inability to see beyond the uniform led to an inability to measure the impact of decisions and actions on RUC families. This speaks to the “concept of paradox suggesting that truth lies in but also beyond what is initially perceived” and necessitates creativity (ibid., p. 36).

6.2.1.3 Capacity to Envision and Pursue Creative Acts as Building Blocks for Constructive Social Change

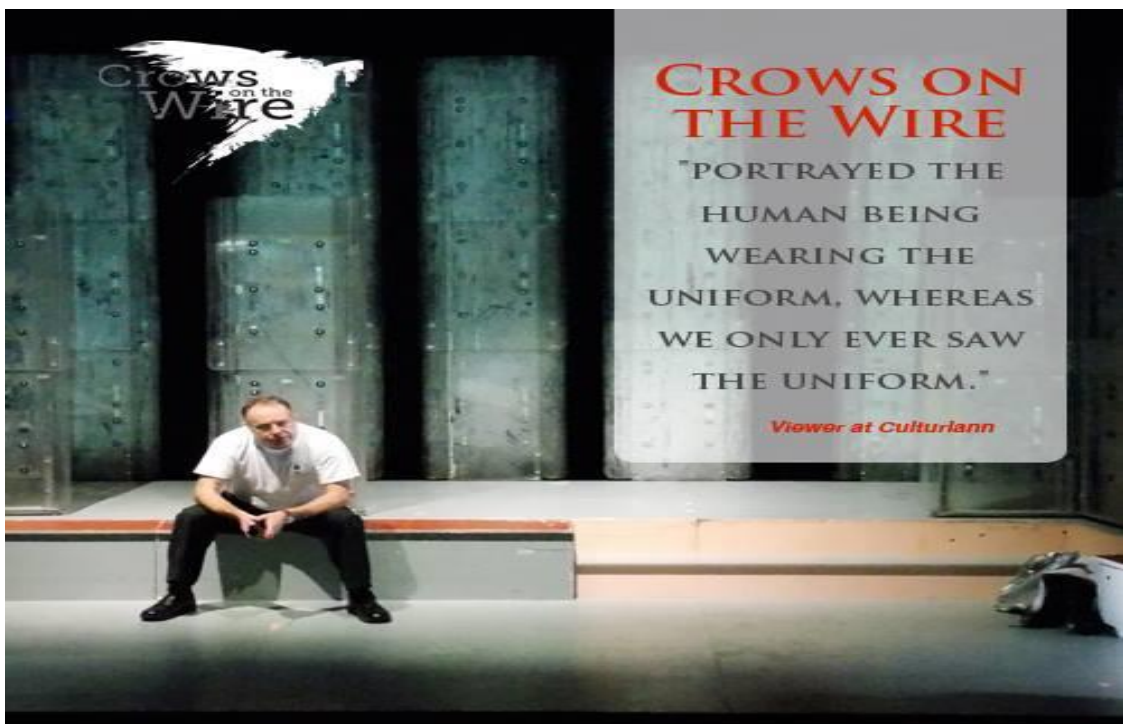
Johnson (1993) argues that imagination is the key to “artistic acts by which new things come into existence, old things are reshaped, and our ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking and so forth are transformed” (p. 212). Lederach (2005) believes that by giving birth to the unexpected artists challenge people to “think about how they know the world, how they are in the world, and what is humanly possible” (p. 39). As discussed earlier, a critical aspect of this theatrical production was to create a space conducive to the humanisation of the ‘other’, here RUC officers. PSNI Chief Inspector T. Callaghan (cited in *Crows Verbal*, 2014a) stressed the importance of bringing to light the human side of policing:

The personalising of policing is really, really, important because when we put on the uniform ... we are still people and the more we can personalise policing ... the better [it is] for us all and for society. (3:31min)

While it is important for RUC officers to get a chance to tell their story, it is equally important for others to hear and listen to those stories even if in

everyday life they “live on different planets. You know, we don’t get to encounter each other” (D. O’Mochain–transcripts, November 7, 2013). For many viewers someone like protagonist Jack would be seen “as somebody quite threatening, a difficult sort of character” (ibid.). A border county resident who visited family around Derry-Londonderry during the conflict said that “all [he] ever saw was the uniforms ... [and] they weren’t people ... But what the play made me think tonight was ... [that] it was people wearing those uniforms” (Anonymous–transcripts, November 29, 2013).

Figure 6.7 Highlighting the disconnect between the human being and the uniform



Note. Impact of storytelling on an audience member (COTW, 2014c).

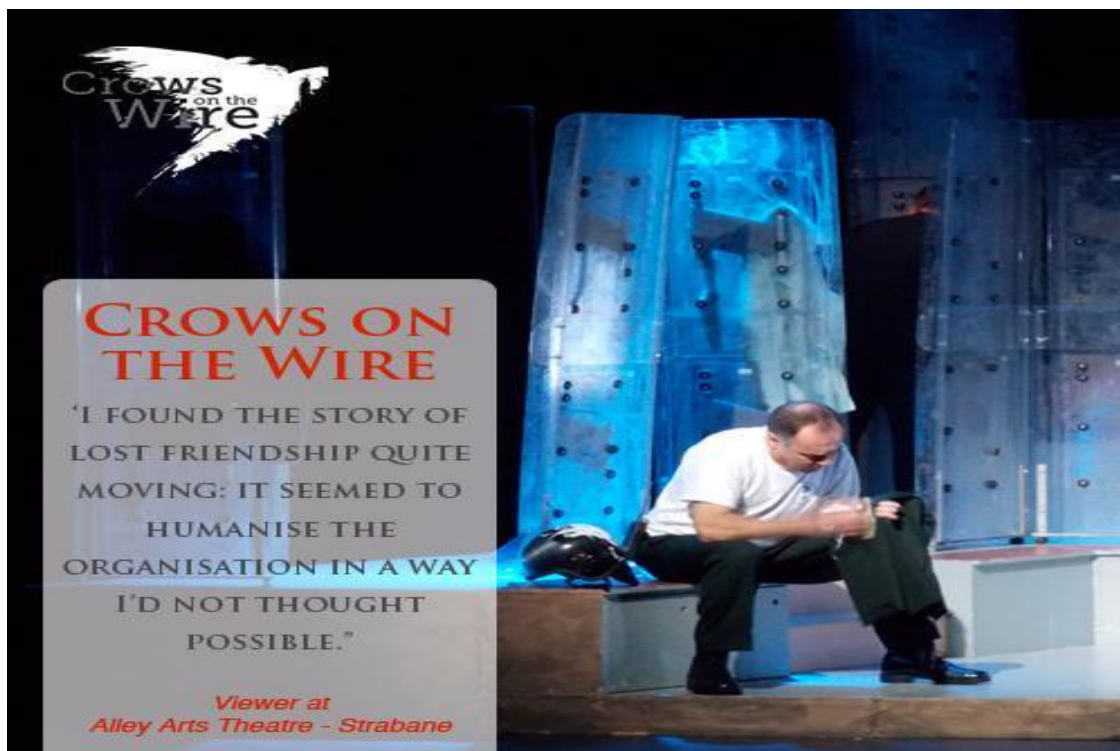
This feeling is echoed in a viewer’s comment reproduced in Figure 6.7. The process of humanisation invites audiences to reflect on the complexity and fragility of the human condition and to distinguish between the RUC as an institution and the “human emotions behind the events” (Burgess cited in Verbal, 2014a, n.p.). It can lead to the display of moral imagination as shown by this statement made by former republican prisoner G. O’Hara to the effect that COTW protagonist Jack’s story resonated with him:

I’ll not make it a straight equation, but ... in the community that I lived, and in the organisation that I was involved in, you know you checked under your car, and you had bars on the door, and all that stuff. So it resonates at a very

personal level ... I was a bit sad at seeing just what we've all lived through. (post-show transcripts, November 6, 2013)

D. O'Mochain, also involved in the republican movement, stated that while he cannot "empathise with the situation of the RUC ... [he] can empathise with the sense of what it's like to go through a period of change and to be side-lined" (post-show transcripts, November 28, 2013). Finding a ring of truth in a story can open the door to empathy as "pain knows no bounds" (T. Callaghan-transcripts, November 6, 2013). The capacity shown by panels and audiences to acknowledge that "a lot of what we suffered in terms of the human condition [during the conflict] was similar" speaks to the positive role theatre can play in building constructive change as depicted in Figure 6.8 (D. Crabbe-transcripts, November 26, 2013).

Figure 6.8 Jack's story about losing his best friend resonated with a viewer



Note. Example of the impact of Jack's story embedded onto a photograph showing him reflecting on what he experienced and sacrificed during the conflict (COTW, 2014e).

This capacity to envision creative acts as building blocks towards sustainable peace also captures the essence of the fourth discipline of Lederach's (2005) idea of moral imagination: willingness to risk (p. 5).

6.2.1.4 Willingness to be Guided by the Imagination of Risk

The act of bearing witness to the stories of RUC officers is an

example of the attributes required to venture onto unfamiliar paths that carries people toward the exploration of “that unknown land called peacebuilding” (Lederach, 2005, p. 164). Panellist D. O’Mochain observed that there is likely “no one big single act that can undo what’s been done” in the past (transcripts, November 28, 2013). It is about finding constructive ways of dealing with the past and not about drawing a line under the past or “keeping their heads down and wish it would all go away” as evoked in Figure 6.9 (Anonymous–transcripts, November 26, 2013).

Figure 6.9 Dealing with the past is about moving toward sustainable peace



Note. An example of the impact of the play crafted as a catalyst for informed discussion about dealing with the past (COTW, 2014c).

For one person, this requires that politicians “get their act together and start trying to deal with the past, instead of swishing it away under a carpet” (ibid.). For another it calls for the exploration of “different ways of doing this. Not political ways of doing it, but cultural ways of doing it” (ibid.). For others, it is about re-creating a sense of community and this may be one of the most significant imaginative leaps “that we have undergone since the Agreement” (ibid.). At one of the post-show discussions former RUC/PSNI officer R. McCallum stressed the need to “take risks and ... challenge the demons” of the past namely by participating in panels alongside member of other communities (transcripts, November 7,

2013). The total sum of visible and less visible creative actions needed to bring about sustainable peace equals one long, slow conversation centring on “how people are making real efforts to try and deal with real issues on the ground” in Northern Ireland (D. O’Mochain–transcripts, November 28, 2013). As panellist M. Hetherington concluded: “It’s a very slow process and there’s a lot of trust to be built. But we have to all keep taking risks” (transcripts, November 28, 2013). For Lederach (2005) this kind of leadership is essential, if “we are to survive as a global community, we must understand the imperative nature of giving birth and space to the moral imagination in human affairs” (p. 172; also Foy, 2013b, 2013c).

The frank exchanges of views that took place during post-show discussions exhibits an appreciation for the time it takes to effect constructive change and for the need for multiple processes to help people understand each other on all sides of the conflict, including theatre. The analysis of the wide-ranging written responses to the play offer further insight into the role of theatre as a site for creative conflict transformation.

6.2.2 Adult Post-Show Feedback Forms Analysis

Over three hundred and sixty-eight feedback forms from fourteen out of sixteen adult-oriented performances of the COTW play were reviewed as part of this case study’s fieldwork (Foy–fieldnotes, August–September 2014). Being granted access to audience written responses allowed for a deeper level of exploration of the connection between adults’ perception of the RUC based on community identity, impact of exposure to unheard stories of RUC officers and views on theatre as a catalyst for change. The number of respondents was significant enough to provide valuable insight into aspects of post-conflict life in Northern Ireland. Referring back to Figure 6.4, in response to the question about their religious/cultural background, many added a specific marker like Catholic/rural area, Irish Catholic/nationalist (not republican), Ulster or British Protestant, PUL–Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (Foy–fieldnotes, August–September 2014). Fearon Consulting (2014), hired by VAC to conduct an evaluation of the COTW project, broke down community attendance as follows: forty-three percent identified as Catholic, forty-one percent described themselves as

Protestant; and sixteen percent under other affiliations (p. 8; also Verbal, 2014d).

This thesis' findings about perceptions of the RUC reflect the fact that respondents belonged to one of these groups:

- They were former RUC officers and family members.
- They were RUC sympathisers who believed in what the RUC stood for and the work of officers during the conflict.
- They did not hold the RUC/policing in high regard yet were curious about unheard stories and/or wanted to gauge the accuracy of the play's depiction of the RUC.
- They were curious about the RUC because they had no specific knowledge of or direct experience with the force during the conflict as some were from border counties, other parts of the United Kingdom or other countries, and others were too young at the time of the conflict. (Foy-fieldwork, August-September 2014)

Moreover, the responses were guided by the questions reproduced in Figure 6.4. The form did not seek out views on the PSNI or policing in general in today's Northern Ireland as the responses that the COTW team "hoped to elicit were concerned with experience and perceptions of the RUC specifically" (M. Sutherland, personal communication, December 16, 2014). The analysis of adult feedback forms suggests that views about the role of the RUC remain divided along the main religious and cultural traditions in Northern Ireland. As the issue of policing during the conflict remains a controversial and sensitive topic this finding is not unexpected. What is interesting is the depth of feeling of those who are either sympathetic to the RUC or fear and distrust the former police force, which is in line with comment samples found on the COTW website under Community Engagement (COTW, 2014; also Crows Verbal, 2014a). To offer a more balanced overview of pre-performance perceptions of the RUC, Table 6.2 is divided into three columns: the third one compiles comments made by those who did not state their religious affiliation, are currently non-practicing or from other parts of the United Kingdom or other countries. Comments from those living in border counties were added to the first or second column unless the respondent provided another cultural signifier.

Table 6.2 Compilation of adult audience members' comments on COTW feedback form regarding their pre and post-show perception of the RUC

Protestant Background	Catholic Background	Non-religious, from other parts of the United Kingdom/other countries
Would have looked up to the RUC as a child.	Nothing is black and white (some good/some bad).	Typical police force coping as best it could; mixed views.
Protectors of society during the Troubles (war); hard working force in middle of a nightmare.	Had no problem with them, aware of corruption/collusion goes on but no experience of it; hard job.	A heavily Protestant force known for favouritism toward Protestants at the expense of the Catholic community.
Best trained and effective force in the world.	Oppressed the nationalist community.	State police; sectarian in nature and purpose.
A force that was stripped of all its history for political reasons.	They were not to be trusted; deeply flawed police force.	Bias towards Protestant community; needed to be replaced.
They suffered many casualties; their families came second.	Never thought much of them; little thought about the human side.	Little knowledge of them.

Fearon Consulting (2014) concluded that sixty percent of the audience as a whole noted a change in perception and this number rose to seventy-one percent for those from a Catholic, nationalist, republican community (p. 8). However, this thesis' analysis of the same data suggests that while the play may have helped someone to "get inside the heads of the RUC" and gain an understanding of "the perspective of that group of people, the former RUC", this did not always suggest a clearly identifiable change in perception that would carry on or be acted upon in everyday life (Anonymous-feedback, November 7 & 16, 2013). In line with the range of views presented in Table 6.2, most respondents stated that the play had not altered their opinion of the RUC and the role it played during the conflict (Foy-fieldnotes, August-September 2014). For instance, where a viewer believed that the RUC was the "best police force in the world" prior to the performance, overall the play reinforced that view (Anonymous- feedback, November 16, 2013). However, the discussions also showed that many RUC detractors from the Catholic/nationalist/republican community were able to separate their views about the RUC from the day-to-day reality of those behind the uniform (Foy-fieldnotes, August-September 2014; also Fearon Consulting, 2014). The written feedback analysis revealed similar themes to those reported in post-show discussion transcripts:

- They were glad this unheard story was being explored, that they needed to hear more from that perspective and

from other unheard stories and experiences;

- The play provided insight into the conflict and everyday challenges of policing during the Troubles;
- The play reminded them of the human pain, fear and loss endured during the Troubles;
- That multifaceted people wore the RUC uniform and that there are good and bad apples in all organisations;
- The play revealed the complexity of the dynamics around the changeover and how change affected long-serving RUC officers, something play attendees had not really thought about before;
- They recognised RUC officers' suffering yet still felt that the RUC upheld an unjust state.

Another group of viewers stated that encounters with police officers since the end of the conflict, life experience and education, had altered their perception: "over the years I met various officers who are just like us" (Anonymous-feedback, November 7, 2013).

On the broader issue of theatre as a means for constructive change, Fearon Consulting (2014) reported that ninety-seven percent of audiences saw theatre as an effective medium (p. 8; also *Crows Verbal*, 2014e, 2:39 min; *Verbal*, 2014d). Figure 6.10 shows a tweet posted by VAC capturing a positive view of theatre's role in a society in transition.

Figure 6.10 An audience member's view of theatre as a medium for untold stories



Note. A post-show exchange between the COTW panel and audience (COTW, 2014d).

However, this thesis' analysis also suggests that a very small number of respondents were more sceptical as illustrated in Table 6.3 which presents a sampling of key themes extracted from the feedback forms.

Table 6.3 Sampling of adult audience members' comments on theatre as an effective medium for exploring unheard stories

Positive feedback	Divergent/Nuanced feedback
Strong vehicle to explore challenging issues and themes; opens up minds; cool, innovative way of showing difficult issues.	Not sure whether theatre is an effective medium; left wondering the point of the play and what it was trying to portray.
Fulfilled the role of good theatre.	It was a one-sided view of the Troubles.
Great way for people to get their stories told without people talking over each other, audience members have to observe and listen as opposed to being a debate where some people hog the content.	Theatre can allow difficult stories to be expressed but can also be a false medium, lacking nuance; are performances like this enough to make people reflect more?
Seemed closer to real life, a more personal experience; allows things to be said that can't always be discussed due to 'baggage'.	Would have preferred to hear real-life opinions and stories from RUC/PSNI officers, others affected by the changeover.
Gives people a chance to think differently; maybe see the other side of the coin that might not have been thought of before; question personal misconceptions/biases.	May be too soon for the theatre piece; maybe in future this type of performance can go a step further like giving a voice to loyalist and republican prisoners in a play.
Theatre creates a neutral, non-threatening platform and intimate setting; gets people who do not normally go to theatre a change to see/experience topics like this.	Wish it had been seen by more people in my community/would have been better if there had been a better turnout; perhaps that is something (sadly) significant?
Helps audience experience a world whose complexity they might not understand fully, that seemed hermetically sealed.	Found it hard to empathise with the characters; not sure it was a realistic interpretation of what RUC life was like.
Visually, emotionally, verbally engaging; makes you empathise with story.	Was not powerful enough; the play portrayed polar opposites.

The question of whether the opportunity to discuss sensitive issues in a safe public space "is enough to make people reflect more" noted in Table 6.3 raises the issue of the significance of storytelling in the wider context of conflict transformation (Anonymous-feedback, November 26, 2013).

Longchari (cited in Lederach, 2005), a human rights advocate, talks about the importance of "restorying" in conflict affected societies:

Violence might best be understood as the disruption ... of a people's story ... This disruption cannot be directly repaired ... The challenge ... lies in how, in the present, interdependent peoples 'restory', that is, begin the process of providing space for the story to take its place and begin the weaving of a legitimate and community-determined place among others' stories. (p. 140)

This process requires people to locate themselves in an expansive view of

time: “think in terms of decades not one or two years” (Lederach cited in Foy, 2013b; also Lederach, 2005, p. 54). This may explain why the respondent questioned the nature and scope of the immediate impact of hearing the stories of the overlooked including those of RUC officers.

Many respondents noted the need to roll out this type of storytelling in schools to bridge the knowledge gap and get young people to think about the past, the present and the future (Anonymous-feedback, November 19, 20, 23 & 28). This idea forms the basis of the next subsection that offers a unique window into young people’s knowledge of the role of the RUC in Northern Ireland and connection between their views and backgrounds.

6.2.3 Pupil-Orientated Post-Show Engagement Analysis

The young people’s engagement programme was another key part of the *Crows on the Wire* project. VAC delivered workshops to pupils in a number of schools in Northern Ireland and the border county of Donegal (Republic of Ireland) in advance of the November 2013 COTW performance tour (Verbal, 2013a, n.p.). McMurray (2014a) lists the questions explored at post-show discussions held after four school performances:

- What did you learn from watching the play?
- Was there a need to change policing in Northern Ireland?
- How has Jack’s background different from David’s?
- How was Jack’s attitude different from David’s? Why?
- How did being in the RUC affect officers/their families?
- What do you think people thought about the changes from the RUC and PSNI?
- How did Ruth feel about being in the RUC?
- What did Ruth think about the changes to the RUC?
- Why were police symbols and uniforms changed?
- Did Jack think he was fighting a war? (p.54)

McMurray’s analysis of these post-show discussions suggested that overall pupils’ input met the main learning goals with were empathy for the characters, identification of themes like organisational identity, tensions between old guard (RUC) and the new guard (PSNI), human side of change and engagement in discussions of challenging issues (p. 28). The findings are significant as many pupils had little knowledge of the history of policing

in Northern Ireland beyond inherited attitudes prior to attending COTW workshops and performances as their written responses suggest. Figure 6.11 captures the panel and pupil discussion after the school performance at the Waterside Theatre in Derry-Londonderry (see *Crows Verbal*, 2013b).

Figure 6.11 Post-show discussion involving panel and post-primary school pupils



Note. Panel: M. Sullivan (COTW team/facilitator—standing), T. Callaghan (RUC/PSNI), R. McCullum (former RUC/PSNI), C. McLaughlin (play director) and J. Burgess (*Verbal*, 2013e).

The researcher reviewed one hundred and fifty post-show feedback forms completed by pupils (Foy—fieldnotes, August 2014). The objective of this analysis was to explore whether their perception of the RUC and policing aligned with their cultural/religious identity, if the play changed their views in any way, and if they saw theatre as a useful medium to explore unheard stories. Table 6.4 presents a cross-section of responses suggesting that when pupils had clear pre-performance views, they mainly aligned with those of adult respondents sharing the same background.

Table 6.4 Sampling of pupils' comments on COTW feedback form regarding their perception of the RUC

Protestant Background	Catholic Background
Police service during the Troubles.	They were the police force in Northern Ireland; they had a negative reputation.
The RUC protected Protestants.	Protected Protestants; very one-sided/anti-Catholic; violent, intimidating, corrupt force.
There was a culture/religious divide.	Only employed loyalists; thought they discriminated a lot against Catholics.
Times seemed a lot harder/dangerous.	Destroyed the lives of innocent republicans.

Fearon Consulting (2014) stated that there was a lower level of attitudinal change among pupils – thirty-nine percent versus sixty percent among adults – which can be attributed to their limited knowledge and experience of policing in Northern Ireland (p. 15). Yet overall, the pupils had a positive view of theatre as a medium for exploring unheard stories. A pupil said that theatre offers “the feel of a living conversation that can only be exploited on stage” (Anonymous–feedback, November 6, 2013). Table 6.5 presents key positive/divergent views on this issue regardless of stated background.

Table 6.5 Compilation of pupils' comments on COTW play and theatre as an effective medium for exploring unheard narratives of the conflict

Positive Feedback	Divergent Feedback
More interesting than someone speaking to us; easy to see how characters are feeling through body language/speech.	Might not always show both sides fairly; very one-sided view; did not reflect the real story of the RUC or show IRA's side.
Effective - can express how it really was back then, how policing changed.	The script was hard to follow; could not tell where the action was taking place.
People listen; and it makes people understand things.	A bit boring for teenagers because we don't know the RUC/I didn't understand it.
It helps others see their side of things.	It was all in one place (setting).
It gives good insight to life in the past; shows effect the Troubles had on people.	Not for our age group; the older generation would appreciate it more.

Given that the majority of young attendees had limited knowledge of the RUC, it is not surprising that many found the play and its themes challenging, could not always relate to protagonist Jack's story, and felt adults would get more out of the play (see Fearon Consulting, 2014, p. 15).

As stated earlier, adult attendees expressed support for the creation of educational resources that could help young people learn more about Northern Ireland's recent past and for youth cross-community dialogue purposes (Anonymous–transcripts, November 6-29, 2013; also McMurray, 2014a). To engage the younger generation VAC developed a digital

educational resource aimed primarily at post-primary schools teachers wanting to involve pupils in discussions on difficult issues about the past.⁷⁸

6.3 How Conflict Transformation Aims are Realised in the *Crows on the Wire App* for iPad and Android Tablets

While in 2013 the project's emphasis was on the performance and discussion tour and on community engagement programmes around the themes of the COTW play, in 2014 VAC's focus shifted to the legacy of the project through the production of a digital form of the script, "a form of legacy that is active, contemporary and engaged" (Sutherland, 2015, p. 10). VAC has a history of producing traditional hard copy resources for use in schools in and around Derry-Londonderry although "many of them have been gathering dust on shelves" (M. Sutherland cited in Digital Arts and Humanities, 2014, 26:47 min). The decision to develop a digital-only educational tool as part of the legacy output of the COTW project marks an expansion of VAC's exploration of modes of community engagement stretching the boundaries of the "constituency of the imagination" (J. Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014; also VAC, 2014c). The target audience for VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) is post-primary school pupils, with a view of having it used as part of the teaching curriculum to encourage young people to discuss and form their own opinions about complex and divisive issues like the recent history of policing in Northern Ireland.⁷⁹ This highlights the long-term nature of building sustainable peace and the generational impact of protracted conflict (see Irish Peace Centres, 2010). This section gives insight into the creation and launch of the COTW App and how this alternative mode of engagement can be viewed as an example of a digital practice of moral imagination in a society in transition.

⁷⁸ Another example of a youth outreach programme is The Playhouse Street Talk Project established in 2012 as part of its ICAN project referred to in this thesis' introduction (see O'Neill, 2013, pp. 38-42). Co-funded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, it targets young people at risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour, from different communities around Derry-Londonderry (ibid.). Urban art forms like animation, DJ performance and legal space graffiti, are used to break down barriers between youth and local police officers, and between youth that might otherwise have never met or realised they face similar issues (O'Neil, 2013, p. 40; also Playhouse Derry, 2013b).

⁷⁹ The COTW App was registered on the Apple Store by Verbal (2014) and on Google Play by Blacknorth Studio (2014).

The application for iPad and Android tablets launched by VAC consists of a graphic novel in contemporary comic book style based on the COTW script and interactive resources for independent enquiry-based learning which provides an opportunity to explore the past in its multiplicity in a format and medium more relevant to the younger generation. McMurray (2014a) interviewed a number of educators for his research on the context and rationale for developing the COTW-related educational materials (pp. 30-34). Most felt that a drama-based tool would be an effective way to discuss issues around how the past influences the present as what young people hear often becomes “what they believe ... The challenge ... [is] to enable young people to critically reflect upon their own views and how they communicate with others” (McMurray, 2014a, p. 30). This outlook speaks to Lederach’s (2005) argument that a key aspect of the practice of moral imagination is about nurturing “an inquisitive capacity that explores and interacts constructively with the complexity of the relationships” in divided societies (p. 173). To this end, the invitation to tender for the delivery of the tablet application clearly defined VAC’s aim:

To deliver an immersive audio, visual and motion reading experience, integrating the elements of animated storytelling with the technologies of gaming into a user friendly graphic novel that is easily navigated and read. (VAC, 2014a, n.p.)

VAC devised the App in partnership with Belfast-based digital media production company Blacknorth Studio. Figure 6.12 shows images used in the leaflet informing schools of the launch of the COTW App in September 2014. These images reflect the contemporary feel of the digital graphic novel including the decision to use “strong lines and deep colours, giving a strong identity to *Crows on the Wire – The App*” (Verbal, 2014c, n.p.).

Figure 6.12 Getting a feel for VAC's approach to the COTW digital graphic novel



Note. Characters Jack, recruit David, and former RUC officer Ruth (COTW, 2014h).

The approach to the development of the COTW App is reminiscent of the one adopted by United States-based Cognito Comics for their pioneering CIA: *Operation Ajax the Interactive Graphic Novel for iPad App* (2013a) launched in 2011, chronicling the Central Intelligence Agency's role in the overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953. Built for iPad and iPhone devices, that app is based on a two hundred page hardcopy of the graphic novel (Cognito Comics, 2013b). Cognito Comics (2013b) stated that:

Once the decision was made to go digital, there was no limit to what we could embed into the story. Suddenly all our research became content, including photos, newsreels and authentic declassified CIA documents. (n.p.)

Cognito's founder Daniel Burwen (2012) felt that an interactive reading experience should make people curious so Cognito Comics decided not to bombard users with loads of information and "all the other things that compete in our electronic, digital consciousness" and instead opted for a tangential learning approach (50:16min). A similar method was adopted for the COTW App: it is a graphic novel, a series of filmed drama, of teachers' and pupil resources (see *Crows Verbal*, 2014d; Verbal, 2014b). App users can read the novel only or also explore resources specific to each chapter. Figure 6.13 reproduces the resource portal for Chapter 3 – 'What's Lost?' inviting teachers and pupils to explore issues around the decision-making

that led to the Good Friday Agreement and the disbandment of the RUC (McMurray, 2014a, pp. 23-28). This portal includes a filmed version of a heated exchange between central characters Jack (old guard) and David (new guard) which is illustrated in Figure 6.18 in the digital graphic novel form (see e.g. *Crows Verbal*, 2014c).

Figure 6.13 Storytelling and tangential learning potential of the COTW App

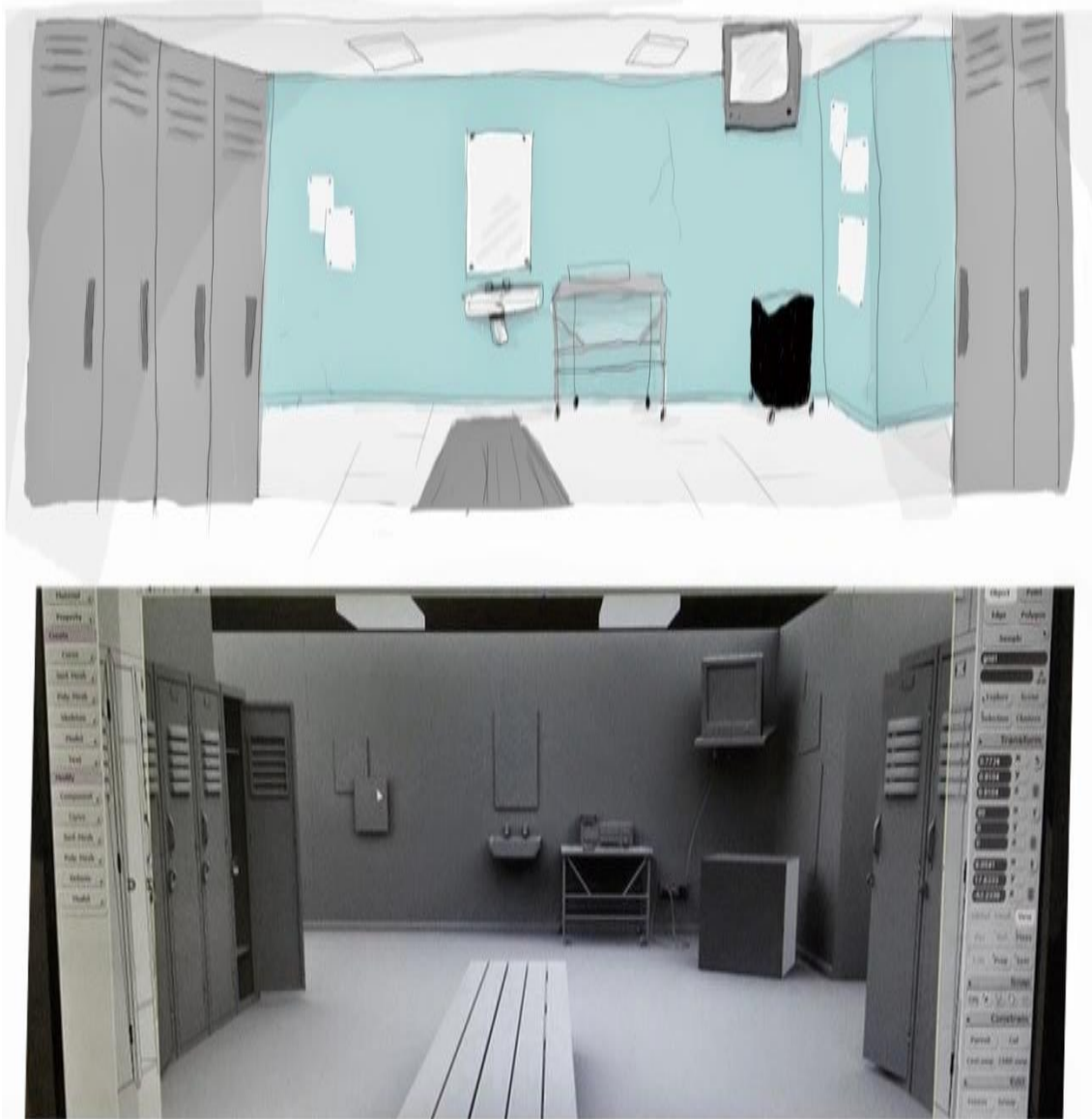


Note. COTW resource portals are accessed by pressing a link button at the end of a chapter or by using the dropdown menu at the top of each page of the chapter (COTW, 2014b).

At the COTW App launch event in September 2014, Blacknorth Studio's Creative Producer K. Kelly explained that their approach to the COTW App was driven by two levels of digital production (Foy-fieldnotes, September 15, 2014; see also COTW, 2014g). Firstly, a creative aspect aimed at finding interesting ways to engage young people, and secondly a technical aspect that would ensure that this project has the potential to be

translated into multiple platforms and formats using current and future digital technologies. Figure 6.14 shows the creative aspect of the project through drawings of the stark police station locker room acting as a virtual storytelling space in and a stage on which the COTW drama unfolds.

Figure 6.14 Creative aspects of designing a virtual COTW locker room



Note. The top shot shows a drawing of the locker room by Blacknorth Studio; the lower shot is a later digital version of the storytelling space (Lindsay, 2014a).⁸⁰

Figures 6.15 and 6.16 illustrate the App's more advanced technical side as users enter the graphic novel's locker room with the help of the Oculus Rift

⁸⁰ Illustrator Ashling Lindsay (Blacknorth Studio) worked on the conversion of the COTW script to a digital graphic novel (personal communication, September 14, 2014).

platform, a virtual reality system immersing its users inside virtual worlds.

Figure 6.15 COTW App's transmedia potential is explored by playwright J. Burgess



Note. J. Burgess puts on Oculus head gear to interact with his script (COTW, 2014f).

Figure 6.16 COTW App's transmedia potential is explored by a pupil

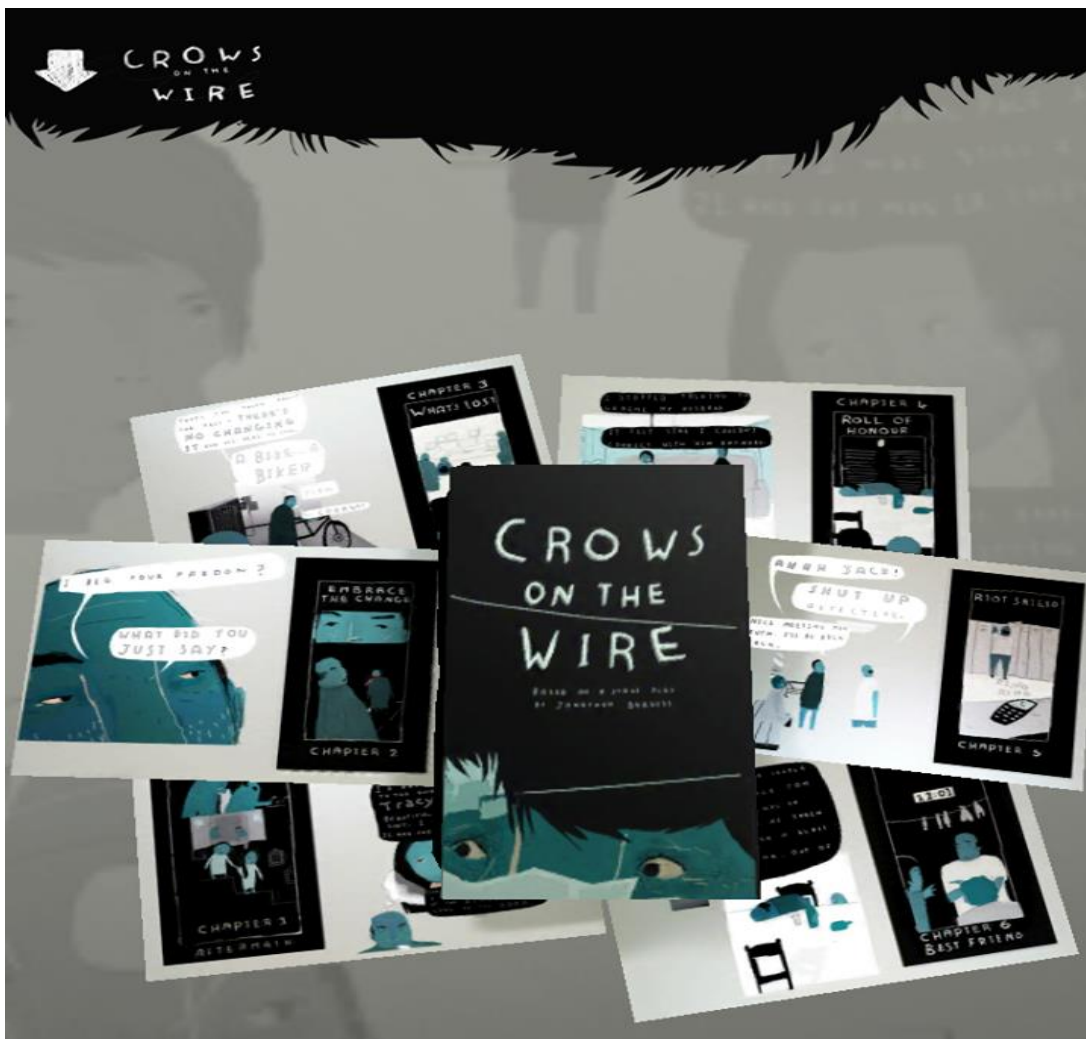


Note. A post-primary school pupil attending the COTW App launch enters the virtual RUC station locker room (Foy-fieldnotes, September 14, 2014).

In interview, J. Burgess stated that he considered the COTW App as a form of validation of his role as storyteller of unheard narratives which “come primarily from his own community [Protestant/loyalist] that would not get the light of day otherwise” and had no difficulty in letting others turn his

script into a graphic novel (personal communication, October 1, 2014). To ensure a cohesive reading and learning experience the COTW script was condensed and divided into six chapters laid out in a comic book style with two and three dimensional, light and sound effects to sustain the reader's interest. The chapters are organised around key themes of the play: Chapter 1 – Aftermath; Chapter 2 – Embrace the Change; Chapter 3 – 'What's Lost?'; Chapter 4 – Roll of Honour; Chapter 5 – Riot Shield; and Chapter 6 – Best Friend, as shown in Figure 6.17 (see COTW App, 2014).

Figure 6.17 Translating the COTW script into a digital graphic novel



Note. The main screen invites users to interact with the graphic novel. Tapping on the App cover page (middle illustration) brings users to Chapter 1 or else they can tap on any of the chapter cover pages to access the story and related resource materials (COTW, 2015).

Figure 6.18 offers insight into the look and feel of the digital graphic novel original script. It shows scenes from Chapter 3 – 'What's Lost?' after recruit David tells Jack that he does not see him "or any of the other ones that came into this [the RUC]" with him as role models (Burgess, 2014, p. 32).

Figure 6.18 Jack (old guard) and David (new guard) in Chapter 3 – What's Lost?



Note. This scene centres on a key COTW theme (see Table 6.1) around the impact of change on individuals (Lindsay, 2014b; also Burgess, 2014, pp. 33-34; Crows Verbal, 2014c).

As portrayed in Figure 6.18, this comment infuriates Jack as while the new recruit born around 1979 “into all that [conflict]” was only “two or three when the hunger strikes were on” (ibid., p. 33):

I’ll tell you something whenever you were trying to learn what to wipe first, your nose or your arse [sic], I was walking the streets of this country wearing a uniform, wearing a target on my back, day in, day out. (COTW App, 2014, Chapter 3 – ‘What’s Lost?; also Burgess, 2014, p. 34)

As this scene suggests, the creation of a digital application centered on the emotive subject of the position that the RUC held in Northern Irish society exemplifies the vision and values at the heart of Lederach’s (2005) call for greater moral imagination in divided societies. In the case of the COTW project, it is done through “the telling of a previously ‘unheard’ story ... an innovative educational resource, and ... a graphic novel in digital app format” (M. Sutherland cited in VAC, 2014c, n.p.).

M. Hetherington, the wife of a former RUC officer and COTW Steering Group member, shared with post-show discussion attendees what stood out for her in the dramatization of the stories of RUC officers:

I thought it was going to be really difficult for Jonathan [Burgess] to be able to capture the complexity of the changeover ... To see that on the stage was very moving for me. When my husband went out on a beat ... I would have been told nothing. It was ... very much a closed shop, and that was about the protection of me as well ... That would create a fear, because you created conversations in your head ... about what he might be doing. So to hear some of that dialogue within changing rooms ... that was really interesting for me to hear. (transcripts, November 7, 2013)

While this quote refers to the play’s locker room, the App enabled VAC to push the boundaries of the imagination further as shown in Figure 6.19 by adding a virtual police station watchtower, a familiar sight during the conflict. The physical presence of other RUC officers in the graphic novel that were only heard over Jack’s police radio in the play gives a better sense of what went on in police stations around the time of the changeover to those not privy to those discussions or did not stop to think about the human side of change. This device offers more depth, context and visual interest for users and invites them to reflect on “how people’s views about the RUC were likely to be influenced by others” (McMurray, 2014b, p. 18).

Figure 6.19 Early drawing of the COTW graphic novel’s virtual police station watchtower



Note. Scene from Chapter 2 – Embrace the Change: directives are issued to patrol officers while officers in the watchtower are talking about the changeover – “take the money and run boys, take the money and run” (Burgess, 2014, p. 25; Lindsay, 2014b)⁸¹.

A group of post-primary school pupils including those involved in VAC’s Journalism School programme were invited to test the COTW App prior to its launch (Verbal, 2014c, n.p.). Speaking at the COTW App launch event, pupil M. Gillespie stressed the importance of encouraging young people to form their own opinions about the past in Northern Ireland (Foy-fieldnotes, September 15, 2014). She saw value in the App:

⁸¹ As part of the *Patten Report* (1999) policing reform recommendations referenced in the introductory chapter, it was suggested that severance packages be offered to RUC officers wishing to leave the force around the time of the transition to the PSNI (see e.g. O’Rawe, 2008, p. 118; Ryder, 2000, p. 518).

It shows us our city's past history and it really gets the pupil involved – it's a more personal way of learning ... I've learned that the RUC weren't just uniforms – they were human beings in uniforms – they have feelings and emotions. I will definitely be ... using it in the future. (Verbal, 2014c, n.p.)

This is in line with VAC's belief that the uniqueness of the COTW App lies in its exploration of the past "in its multiplicity rather than just something that is painful, or fraught, or is constantly a tale of one side trying to score points over another" (M. Sutherland, personal communication, October 8, 2014). As part of the young people's engagement programme, workshops were held in November 2014 around Derry-Londonderry to introduce the App to pupils and teachers (Sutherland, 2015, p. 10). iTeach, a UK-based educational technology company, also demonstrated the App during teacher training sessions across Northern Ireland and border counties (Republic of Ireland) (ibid.). iTeach (2014) noted a great level of interest in the App and in the exploration of ways it could be included in teaching plans (n.p.).

In an e-mail to M. Sutherland in the latter stages of the COTW project, the researcher asked for information about how many schools had expressed an interest in using the COTW App in their classrooms and whether VAC was envisaging any form of evaluation of the impact of the App in schools at a later date (S. Foy, personal communication, November 19, 2014). Between September and December 2014, VAC launched the COTW App, sent leaflets to all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and in the border county of Donegal (Republic of Ireland) advising them of the App, held a very limited number of workshops to introduce the App to post-primary school and their teachers, and iTeach generated interest in the App through already planned tech-related workshops for teachers in Northern Ireland. Therefore, as explained by M. Sutherland in her reply e-mail to the questions above, the evaluation of the impact of this educational resource "was not within the remit or timescale of the ... project, nor was it required within the terms and conditions of [Peace III] funding" and the COTW project ended before VAC could assess the impact of the App in classroom (personal communication, December 16, 2014). While she expressed the hope that this could be done at a later date subject to securing adequate funding, to the researcher's knowledge, there were no attempts to track the

number of downloads or digital engagements with the digital graphic novel and educational resources that form part of the COTW App. Not unlike Healing Through Remembering's decision to not be directly involved with runs of the *Those You Pass on the Street* performance and post-show discussion after the initial run of the play in early 2014, VAC completed its COTW project in December 2014, the COTW Team was disbanded and the organisation concentrated its efforts on new projects. It is therefore not possible in this thesis to say whether the App attracted new audiences to this mode of storytelling. This is one of the key limitations of this aspect of this research in as much as the systematic collection and availability of analytic information might have yielded interesting research findings and insights that could inform other researchers and organisations wanting to explore the use of technologies for peace and social change. The issue of how to measure such projects' impact is an issue that "already plagues the peacebuilding field: it is very difficult to measure impact if it requires measuring 'more peace' or some indicator that is a sub-set of peace" (Puig Larrauri cited in Cochrane, 2015, n.p.). This is one area that would benefit from increased partnerships in Northern Ireland between community and cultural sector organisations and academics through initiatives such as the International Conflict Research Institute's (INCORE) Peace Tech Laboratory project launched in 2014 to focus on the exploration of how technology can be beneficial to societies emerging from a history of conflict.⁸² At an international level, new initiatives such as the *Build Peace* conferences (mentioned in the introductory chapter) that bring together technologists, activists, artists, and conflict scholars to discuss issues around the effective use of technologies for peace and social change in conflict and post-conflict settings provide another promising forum to explore other models of digital practice of the moral imagination, discuss lessons learned, and engage in discussions about the unresolved issues around project evaluation.

Nevertheless, as shown by the analysis presented above, VAC's efforts in this area demonstrate a willingness to risk and imagine "beyond what is seen" and the tools that are at hand (Lederach, 2005, p. 177; see

⁸² For more information, see e.g. <https://vimeo.com/117570377> and <http://www.buildingchangetrust.org/blog/Tech-for-Good-~-Peace-Tech-Lab>

Burdick et al., 2012). This digital practice of moral imagination underlines the belief expressed by Kahl and Puig Larrauri (2013) that technology can assume a constructive role in peacebuilding by “offering tools that foster collaboration, transform attitudes, and gives a stronger voice to communities” (p. 1). The use of these tools point to interesting and promising intersections “between the virtual and physical in ways that reinforce not only access and outreach but also establish new models of imagination, quality, and rigor” rooted in the local needs of a society emerging from conflict (Burdick et al., 2012, p. 49).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter further explored the use of drama as a creative approach to storytelling and difficult discussions around a significant chapter of recent political and social history in Northern Ireland that of the transition of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in November 2001, from the perspective of the lesser known narratives of RUC officers. Using primarily documentary sources of data, this chapter built a case around the *Crows on the Wire* project to answer this thesis’ research question on ways in which engaged theatre creates space for the moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition. From the analysis it is clear that the script’s central themes around the impact on the RUC officers of change brought on by policing reform and its personal, cultural and organisational consequences brought audiences to look beyond the uniform and exhibit a capacity for empathy for the stories and experiences told by protagonists Jack, David and Ruth and perhaps find some resonance in their own lives. The play stressed the importance of the process of humanisation of the ‘other’ facilitated here through a fictional drama that encourages audiences to “sit in the messy ambiguity of complexity”, engage with the “mystery of risk ... [and step] into the uncharted geography of relationship with the enemy”, all central elements of the practice of the moral imagination (Lederach, 2005, pp. 163 & 169).

This chapter provided evidence of “windows into moments when this imagination was sparked” through its in-depth analysis of the varied forms of audience engagement utilised by the Verbal Arts Centre (VAC). The

analysis, illustrated with excerpts of post-show discussions and written feedback, demonstrated that the invitation to enter and exit a creative space where people are challenged to suspend judgement did support the process of humanisation of the 'other'. The fictional drama informed by the true stories of RUC officers allowed people from different backgrounds to gain an appreciation for the challenges faced by RUC officers during the conflict and their impact on their ability, as human beings, to accept policing changes in the aftermath of the violent, protracted conflict in Northern Ireland. From a peacebuilding perspective, an important point was that viewers were not asked or expected to change their perception of the RUC through attendance of performances. However, the analysis indicated that many found that either a story or a character resonated with them in some way. While a high number of viewers from a Catholic community background stated that they still hold a negative view about the RUC in general, they felt more informed about the day-to-day challenges of policing during the conflict and reflected on the fact that human loss, pain, and fear knows no boundaries. Conversely, those from a Protestant community background (including former RUC officers) expressed pride in the telling of unheard stories of RUC officers through drama. The analysis of pupil engagement revealed interesting correlations between their knowledge of the RUC and their religious/cultural community background. As well, the analysis suggested that most adult and pupil viewers recognised the value of theatre as a way of exploring unheard narratives of the conflict. The depth of audience engagement on the emotive issue of the role and legacy of the RUC gave valuable insight into the role that engaged theatre and digital practice can assume in peacebuilding in a society in transition.

This chapter's study of the emphasis placed in engaging post-primary school pupils in the dialogical process produced interesting insight into VAC's willingness to push the boundaries of the "constituency of the imagination" into the virtual realm (J. Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014). Based on the script, VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) created a virtual safe space where the lesser known narratives and perspectives of RUC officers can be voiced, witnessed and discussed in classrooms, community centres, and someone's living room – not unlike

Kabosh Theatre's *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a) presented in chapter 4. Initial analysis of the digital graphic novel and educational resource offered a concrete example of how digital media can contribute to the peacebuilding potential of engaged theatre in a society in transition and can be viewed as a form of digital practice of the moral imagination. While this chapter focused on the creative and technical elements of the COTW App and a strong interest by pupils and teachers in this learning tool, the lack of data regarding actual users of this mobile application prior to the end of the COTW project in December 2014 suggested that future project planners should consider the need for user analysis as part of project legacy output. Overall, like the *Those You Pass on the Street* project studied in the previous chapter, the *Crows on the Wire* project illustrated ways in which theatre can be used to explore and address the unseen and unresolved residues of the past.

Having analysed the research findings of the case studies selected to explore and answer this thesis' research questions, the next and final chapter presents summative conclusions that link back to the overall line of argument set out in the introductory chapter, reflects upon the methodological chosen, discusses limitations of this thesis, and offers consideration of future research directions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The greatest movements forward, when you look really closely, often germinated from something that collapsed, fell to the ground, and then sprouted something that moved beyond what was then known. Those seeds, like the artistic process itself, touched the moral imagination.

J. P. Lederach (2005) *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, p. 162.

Introduction

This chapter brings to a close the examination of the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding in a period of post-conflict transition, through the lens of conflict transformation theory. With Northern Ireland as the context, this thesis focused on ways in which theatre-centric projects can be used to create space for exploring and addressing unseen, often problematic, and unresolved stories in a place where, despite a peace process, there is still no political agreement on how to deal with the past since the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first restates the central and ancillary research questions formulated in this thesis' introduction, links these to the main case study research findings and considers how the findings relate to previous literature documenting the diversity of theatre practices developed in conflict and transitional settings worldwide, examples of which were offered in the introductory chapter. The second section reflects on the methodological approach adopted for this research that is described in chapter 2. The third section reviews limitations of this thesis, surveys future research directions and outlines recommendations intended for researchers, civil society organisations including theatre companies, peacebuilders and technologists, based on key lessons learned through the conduct of this research.

7.1 Research Questions and Main Findings of this Research

This thesis focused on three key research questions concerning the role that engaged theatre can assume in cultivating moral imagination and,

in doing so, the creative transformation of conflict in societies in transition:

1. What is the role of engaged theatre in relation to a conflict transformation?
2. On the basis of case studies in Northern Ireland, how do theatre-centric initiatives create space for the moral imagination to take hold in a society in transition?
3. How might digital elements contribute to the peacebuilding potential of engaged theatre projects?

In terms of the first central research question concerning the relationship between engaged theatre and conflict transformation, the findings of this research, based on case studies in Northern Ireland, support the idea that engaged theatre can assume a significant role in building sustainable peace. Peacebuilding, as defined in this thesis in chapter 3, requires much more than the cessation of overt violence. The community and cultural sector organisations studied in this thesis exhibit a great appreciation of the connections between conflict, violence, and peace reminiscent of Galtung's (1969, 1990) conceptual framework referenced in chapter 3. They illustrated an understanding of the fact that the ending of overt violence (negative peace) via a peace agreement does not necessarily mean the presence of sustainable peace after three decades of violent, protracted conflict (ibid.; also Azar, 1990). As stated in the introductory chapter, considerable fragility remains in Northern Ireland as exemplified by the lack of trust between unionist and nationalist politicians, difficulties in maintaining power-sharing governance and the division of political and public opinion on the question of how to deal with the legacies of the past in Northern Ireland. While many aspects of the "hidden face of peace" still evoke strong and conflicting emotions, the case studies suggest that a large number of audience members attending engaged theatre performances are realising the importance of getting voices heard from all sections of society in order to move from fragile toward sustainable peace: "there's a sense that you want to get it all out, and there's a need for all of the telling" (O'Neill, 2013, p. 33; J. Kerr, personal communication, October 8, 2014).

The findings also evidence the necessity of the conflict transformation school of thought's longer-term vision of "building a culture of peace" in divided societies (Boulding, 1990, p. 1; also e.g. Curle, 1990; Foy, 2013c;

Lederach, 1997, 2003a). Chapter 4 and the case studies offer evidence of the ongoing impact of simmering resentment towards the 'other' and transgenerational transmission of trauma, fears and attitudes (see e.g. Cohen et al., 2011c; Sepinuck, 2013; Shank & Schirch, 2008). The latter point is reflected in the analysis of post-primary school pupils' written feedback forms about the *Crows on the Wire* play showing these young people's continuing close religious/cultural alignment along the two main traditions, and in cases where they had an opinion about the role and legacy of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) it followed their declared community's general views on the subject. Many individuals with lived experience of the conflict, especially those who are now grandparents, voiced concern about the current generation's lack of knowledge of issues around Northern Ireland's recent past, its effect on the present and on that generation's future. They identified the need for creative outlets such as drama and digital media resources to engage young people with the past.

In terms of the second central research question that focused on how local theatre-centric initiatives create space for the moral imagination to take hold in Northern Ireland, the findings offer valuable insight into Lederach's (2005) thinking around the "messiness of innovation" inherent to the art of peacebuilding whose roots extend beyond intellectual suppositions and learned technical skills (p. viii). As noted in chapter 3, the practice of moral imagination built around four elements – centrality of relationships, paradoxical curiosity, creativity, and risk – has been criticised for a lack of "practical, contextual examples" that would facilitate its manifestation at the community level (George, n.d., para. 8). By offering just such practical, contextual examples, this research confirms that engaged theatre projects can be used to illustrate what Lederach identifies as the "core essences of peacebuilding", by inviting individuals and communities to imagine "possibilities that might exist beyond the seemingly intractable realities of the moment" (Lederach, 2005, p. 34; Kurtz, 2010, p. 17).

The findings show that the very nature of theatre-making, including a willingness to take risks, a capacity for embracing complexity and seeing the world in new ways and creating alternative realities, invites new ways of thinking that may be carried back into the community "primarily through

the consciousness and the bodies, words, actions, and relationships of those who participate in and witness the performance” (Cohen et al., 2011d, p. 162; also Cohen-Cruz, 2010). To illustrate this phenomenon, findings were reported in a way that highlights the ripple effects and affects of the relationships between script, staging, performance, audience receptivity to the drama and aesthetic experience, and modes of audience engagement that included post-show discussions, written feedback and Twitter posts.

Chapter 5 findings around the relationship between the challenging *Those You Pass on the Street* script and the adoption of a minimalist staging approach shed light on the minutiae of the creative process where “sometimes the familiar is exactly what needs to be lost when it encompasses biases, prejudices, and unwillingness to accept change that improve the lot of the many” in a transitional setting (Cohen-Cruz, 2010, p. 196; also P. McFetridge, personal communication, February 3, 2015). These findings reveal that the sense of unfamiliarity evoked by the minimalist set design helped audiences pay closer attention to the issues raised by the drama and reflect on how they would balance their own need to move forward with family, community and political loyalties. Chapter 6 findings show that setting the action of the *Crows of the Wire* play in a stark nondescript police station locker room conjured up powerful mental images of “a ‘no go’ area” for many Northern Ireland residents (Owicki, 2015, p. 235). As was reported, in a post-show discussion the wife of a former RUC officer shared that the ability to enter this space and hear “some of that dialogue within changing rooms” about fears, loss, personal hardships and the sense of being set aside for the sake of a political settlement, was very useful to her, a statement that was echoed by other audience members from all sides of the conflict (M. Hetherington, post-show transcripts, November 7, 2013). The examples spoke to the capacity of people to exhibit “this quality of perspective ... vis-à-vis others, even enemies” without having “to win converts to one side or another, or by forcing one or the other’s hand” (Lederach, 2005, pp. 36 & 85).

The findings on the relationship between artistic practice and audience engagement also suggest strong correlations with the capacity “to generate, mobilise, and build moral imagination” (Lederach, 2005, p. 5).

Chapter 5 findings illustrate this through the discussion around the act of bearing witness to the story of four very different characters' voices, worldviews and journeys and the need to summon deep listening skills. While dictated by the need to have a set that could be recreated anywhere, the decision to have the actors remain onstage at all times offered another lens through which the audience could observe the narrative:

Etchells [1999] suggests that 'To witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one's own place in them, even if that place is simply, for the moment, as an onlooker'. (Maguire, 2006, p. 38)

The findings showed that audiences exhibited vulnerability, a quality linked to the fourth element of the moral imagination – risk, which can create space for the birth of the unexpected (Lederach, 2005, p. 38; also Cohen et al., 2011d). This was achieved by having audiences at a performance of the play *Those You Pass on the Street* constantly re-assess what they thought they knew about each character, their backstory, decision-making, and reflect on how the comfortable yet uncomfortable sense associated with the performance space and the narrative reflect the challenges associated with "sitting in the messy ambiguity of complexity" (Lederach, 2005, p. 163). Key findings in chapter 6 revolve around the importance of the process of humanisation of the 'other' as a first step toward the exercise of the capacity to comprehend conflict/peace as a complex relational web and to rise above dualistic polarities. A telling example was when *Crows on the Wire* post-show discussion panelists and audience members spoke of their ability to look beyond the police uniform, exhibit empathy for the stories and experiences told through drama, and finding that either a story or character resonated with them, even though it may not be "a straight equation" (G. O'Hara, post-show transcripts, November 6, 2013). This illustrated Lederach's (2005) proposition that while embracing complexity over dualisms requires the suspension of judgment, it does not ask people "to relinquish opinion or the capacity to assess" (p. 37). The case study findings suggest that the latter capacity is made possible through the creation "of an imaginative space into which the audience may write themselves" and reflect on the fragility and universality of the human condition (Ehn cited in Cohen et al., 2001b, p. 3).

Despite these positive findings about the ways in which engaged theatre can animate the moral imagination required for conflict transformation, there are undoubtedly some limits to this potential. For example, while the large majority of audience members found theatre a useful medium to hear untold stories, not all communities either have a long tradition of theatre arts or trust the arts as a form of cultural intervention as suggested in chapter 4, which noted the particular resistance of some Protestant/loyalist communities toward theatre. The day-to-day reality captured by the case studies also points to the many other difficult stories and issues that remain taboo, have yet to find a voice, to be explored or addressed within single-identity communities. These findings suggest that peacebuilding efforts must factor in the work that remains to be done within single-identity communities alongside cross-community initiatives in a period of post-conflict transition.

The findings also highlight the importance for theatre-makers and partnering organisations to assess a community's readiness to explore and hear a story. In relation to this, chapter 5 findings show that while individuals may be ready to bear witness to untold and often overlooked stories of the conflict through drama, they may not be ready to attend post-show discussions due to an uneasiness to engage in such conversations outside of a known "safe contained space" (K. Turner, personal communication, February 23, 2015). While it may feel counterintuitive to hold closed performances within a peacebuilding context, it may be important to consider the longer-term benefits of respecting where people are at in their own journey to peace.

Overall however, the findings of the case studies, along with the discussion of other innovative manifestations such as the West Belfast theatrical walking tours surveyed in chapter 4, reveal that as more stories find a voice, the type of curiosity associated with the practice of the moral imagination manifests itself. From the feedback it is clear that audiences want to know what the 'other' community is thinking, what their stories are, what each other think about their respective stories and how theatre-makers are "telling their story or animating their space" (P. McFetridge, personal communication, June 4, 2015). As Milošević (2011) suggests:

People's need to understand the moment they live in, and it can help them meet fear, anger, prejudice, pain, and suffering in safe surroundings. It can remind people of the suffering of others. It can influence people without political pressure and propaganda. (p. 42)

The latter point proved important as audience members voiced their dissatisfaction over politicians' inability to come to an agreement on how to deal with the past and other pressing social issues and saw value in exploring alternative avenues of social intervention. This speaks to the relevance of trying to bring the productions to those who may never have attended a play and those who don't think they have been affected by the conflict and now realise that the past can't just be swept under the carpet.

Moving on to the ancillary research question concerning the peacebuilding potential of novel digital elements to theatre productions, initial findings pointed to interesting correlations between the models presented as part of the chapter 6 case study and chapter 4's exploration of the range of artistic practices which have emerged since the early years of the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland. Guided by the imagination of risk, VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) and Kabosh Theatre's *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a) invited its users to reflect on "how we know the world, how we are in the world, and most important, what in the world is possible" in conflict and transitional settings (Lederach, 2005, p. 39). These findings point to potentialities of digital media as "a kind of peacebuilding practice" within a broader peacebuilding spectrum (Cohen et al., 2011b, p. 13).

The development of VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) and of Kabosh Theatre's *Streets of Belfast App* (2015a) arose out of a desire to produce a tangible legacy that would extend the life of the respective projects and reach out to those who may not want to, be ready to, or feel uneasy about attending a play acting as a catalyst for difficult discussions around a challenging past. Chapter 6 findings reveal that the COTW App, by converting the script into an interactive comic style graphic novel linked to educational materials, did appeal to post-primary school pupils (thirteen to sixteen years of age) as a tool to encourage class discussions of difficult issues around a challenging past as well as serving as a learning platform

for the general public. Based on desk research, the findings confirm a promising initial level of interest for this classroom tool from pupils and teachers. Yet, as the *Crows on the Wire* project ended within weeks of these activities, the Verbal Arts Centre was not able to collect data or conduct a user study, nor was that part of this project's deliverables. So, chapter 6 findings focus on sharing some of the thinking behind the development of the COTW App and giving the reader a feel for how this digital element injected new life into the original script and its main themes around change in an interactive and immersion fashion.

In an effort to capture emergent advance of theatre-centric digital practices by cultural sector organisations, this thesis also offered an overview of the context and development of the *Streets of Belfast App* launched by Kabosh Theatre in early 2015. This project was developed and launched as part of cultural tourism initiatives in the city of Belfast. The findings reveal the theatre company's ability to navigate between two main traditions in West Belfast – Catholic Falls Road and Protestant Shankill Road areas – and revisit existing or create new walking tours that met the needs of the respective community and put the first person personal narrative of the tour guide in context through short dramas performed at key points along the tours' route. From a peacebuilding perspective, the connection established between the live and virtual walking tours illustrate artists' ability to develop methodologies that can be applied to future live and virtual theatrical walking tours show promise for their application, with adaptation, to other conflict and transitional settings worldwide.

While focused on the case of Northern Ireland, the presentation of these summative conclusions suggest that this research makes a contribution to current literature relating to uses of arts for peacebuilding internationally. The introductory chapter looked at that wider context with reference to the use of engaged theatre in peacebuilding in the former Yugoslavia and Peru. While there is growing academic interest in exploring connections between artistic practice and peacebuilding, few have examined these connections through the lens of conflict transformation theory and, in particular, Lederach's (2005) idea of the moral imagination. Cohen et al.'s (2011a) anthology that curated international case studies looking at

performance (community-based, artist-based, and rituals) and the creative transformation of conflict worldwide, did not contain any examples from Northern Ireland.⁸³ This thesis fills this gap and furthers knowledge around the role that professional artist-based theatrical work can assume in a society in transition. This is a vital point as earlier literature in the field broadly defined as community arts has traditionally focused on projects that were participant-driven versus professionally delivered work (see e.g. Cohen et al., 2011b; Cohen & Walker, 2011a; Cohen-Cruz, 2010). This thesis shows that as was the case in the former Yugoslavia and Peru:

Well-crafted performances are capable of containing strong emotions, opinions and statements as public history is reconstructed in the creative time/space of performance, allowing both shared and divergent narratives to be expressed. (Cohen et al., 2011c, p. 7)

Moreover, while Thompson et al.'s (2009) study of theatre and performance in place of war and the aftermath of conflict included a review of four Belfast tours, none of these have a live or virtual theatrical component. This thesis' initial review of two projects viewed as examples of the digital practice of moral imagination therefore enhances the body of literature in this area as well as in the area of political and cultural tourism.

In light of the summative conclusions presented above, it is useful to revisit this thesis' chosen methodological approach.

7.2 Revisiting Methodological Approach

This section reflects on the methodological approach chosen for this research which was detailed in chapter 2. This thesis employed an ethnographic-based methodology for the exploration of the role that engaged theatre can assume in peacebuilding. This decision was made with a view to document and analyse the strategies by which two different theatre-centric projects engaged with conflict and created space for discussions of difficult issues around a challenging past. This involved attempting "to work with the traces of the 'original', including practitioner narratives, audience responses and scripts" that was in line with

⁸³ A discussion of community/artist-based theatrical work carried out during the conflict and in the early years of its aftermath in Northern Ireland can be found for example in Boon & Plastow (2004), Byrne (2001), Cleveland (2008), Grant (1993), Maguire (2006), McDonnell (2008) and Urban (2011).

methodologies used in literature referenced in the previous section (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 18). In this context, Brewer's (2000) concept of, and approach to, "ethnography-understood-as-fieldwork" served as the central foundation of the research methodology which consisted of observational work combined with documentary sources and semi-structured interviews (p. 6). The theoretical framework drawn from the set of four disciplines that, "when held together and practiced ... form the moral imagination and make peacebuilding possible", gave a framework for analysis of the research questions (Lederach, 2005, p. 34).

The ethnographic-based methodology was successful in as much as every research question was answered through the selected data collection and analysis methods. The comprehensiveness of the thematic data analysis and resultant case study findings presented in chapters 5 and 6 should assist other researchers in the conduct of future work at the nexus of theatre and other art forms, digital media, and peacebuilding. To this end, it is worth reiterating that the aim in this thesis was not to arrive at a single definitive reading of the selected case study projects but rather:

To demonstrate the ways in which the social event and process in which each production called into being involved the interplay of divergent engagements, analyses and responses, an interplay which need not begin or end at the door of the auditorium. (Maguire, 2006, p. 19)

This also facilitated the exposure of the range of creative approaches to engaging with the conflict and its aftermath in and through engaged theatre in chapter 4 which acted as a bridge between this thesis' theoretical framework grounded in the literature review conducted in chapter 3 and its application to the case studies presented in chapters 5 and 6. This should inform other researchers and practitioners in their assessment of academic and practice-based work being done in Northern Ireland, in particular how this wide array of live and digital artistic practices can be adapted to reflect local knowledge and culture in other conflict regions and add to the sharing of global practices of engaged theatre and the development of a framework for documenting and improving arts-based efforts for social transformation as part of "a far-reaching vision of peacebuilding" (Arai, 2011, p. 238).

In revisiting the research methodology at the close of this work, there are limits to the approach adopted and, if time and resource permitted, perhaps other methods could have been used or developed, in two key areas. The first related to engendering deeper analysis of the impact of engaged theatre. As Cohen et al. (2011d) state: "it is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to measure the kinds of transformation that performances engender" (p. 187). The preparation of an online survey to identify evaluation methods used by established community and cultural sector organisations who engage in arts for peacebuilding activities might have offered additional material for the discussion. However, the research findings do offer sufficient evidence to gain a reasonable sense of at least some of the effects and affects of artist-based theatrical works on varied audiences through the research methodology.

A second additional method for accruing knowledge of the impact of theatre projects as contributors to conflict transformation, would have been to survey other channels which "allow transformed material to enter life outside of the space/time of performance. Posters, advertisements, and websites that publicise events draw attention to issues" (Cohen et al., 2011d, pp. 184-185). In the case of this thesis' case studies this would include videos promoting or documenting stages of a given project, Twitter posts, and interviews in written or digital format with artists and other project participants that "reach across time as well as geography" (ibid., p. 185). More attention could have been paid to how the capacities of, and sharing of knowledge production by, "artists, cultural workers, and peacebuilding practitioners" working in transitional settings could be enhanced through a more systematic approach to project legacy aspects, in particular the digital archival recording and retrieval of projects (ibid., p. 188). However, neither point raised here calls into question or diminishes the methods employed and the relevance of the evidence offered in this thesis aimed at strengthening ongoing efforts to creatively transform conflict through arts-based approaches animated by the moral imagination.

The concluding remarks follow with a discussion of key limitations of this research along with the identification of a future research agenda and key recommendations aimed at individuals and organisations interested in

developing, documenting and evaluating work at the nexus of theatre and other art forms, digital media and peacebuilding.

7.3 Limitations to this Thesis, Future Research Agenda and Recommendations

Chapter 2 offered a survey of key decisions around the parameters and limitations of this research based on issues ranging from ethical considerations, the economic context in Northern Ireland and its impact on the community and cultural sectors to insufficient data due to the absence or sporadic use of social media during post-show discussions by those involved in the case study projects. Thus, this section centres on key points around limitations to this thesis that inform future research directions and recommendations intended to act as starting points for a varied readership.

Firstly, due to resources and timeframe within which to complete this research, there were no attempts to undertake user studies on the two digital elements to theatrical productions surveyed in this thesis. A natural progression of the work would be to conduct adequate user studies of VAC's *Crows on the Wire App* (2014b) and of Kabosh Theatre's *Streets of Belfast* (2015a) digital applications. This could start with a closer review of relevant academic literature and methods in this area that could lead to the development of a set of guiding principles for other researchers and arts and peacebuilding practitioners engaging in similar work in other conflict and transitional settings. This would help to establish a greater degree of baseline knowledge for those developing such projects about public interest in these types of alternative models of digital storytelling and learning, how they are being used, whether there is tangible evidence that these digital practices are drawing new audiences and raising awareness of the array of creative conflict transformation projects being imagined and carried out in the period of post-conflict transition in Northern Ireland. As a further step, it would be important to further contextualise this research by identifying appropriate engaged theatre case studies from conflict/transitional settings outside of Northern Ireland which also use digital technology in order to evaluate how elements translate across other societies. Taken together, these steps would strengthen the contention of this thesis that engaged

theatre can be a “wellspring that feeds the building of peace” and more attention should be given to the study of the role that arts-related uses of digital media could assume within a broader peacebuilding spectrum (Lederach, 2005, p. 5).

Secondly, in response to the observation in the previous section around the digital trail left by the case studies ranging from short videos, Twitter posts, interviews posted on line and blogs to digital applications, further research could usefully explore more closely the issue of digital archiving of theatre-centric projects and the establishment of an appropriate central repository to facilitate knowledge production, transmission, and preservation, and in doing so make them more widely and easily accessible. In his study of theatre-making during the conflict and its aftermath, Maguire (2006) lets the reader know that there are omissions of works “for which there is little or no archival record, an inevitable consequence of the difficulties of retrieving the past from the shards of theatre history” (p. 20).⁸⁴ Therefore, in the context of looking at digital elements of theatre-centric projects, there may be an opportunity to consider the application of digital humanities theory and methods to conflict transformation research and practice. Initially, this could consist of a survey, mapping and digital archiving of collaborations between emerging academic discourse concerning technology and peacebuilding, some examples of which are referred to in the introductory chapter, and projects being conducted by digital humanists on the treatment, storage and transmission of difficult, painful and violent histories in digital space. Examples of such projects include the *Documenting Ferguson* digital repository created in the wake of the shooting dead of a young man, Michael Brown, by a police officer in Ferguson (Missouri) in August 2014; *Our Marathon – The Boston Bombing Digital Archive* related to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings and their aftermath; *The September 11 Digital Archive* that collects, preserves, and presents the history of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (United States) and its aftermath; and the

⁸⁴ The point made here is not intended to diminish the importance of the work undertaken by the Linen Hall Library (Belfast) with regard to its Digital Theatre Archive. However, to date, most of the material especially unpublished scripts can only be consulted at the Library. This is an example of using what is an already well-respected institution and collection and seeing what needs to be done to make it even more accessible and a greater in person and digital repository of engaged theatre work.

Letters of 1916 digital archival project (2013-2016), which is the first of its kind in Ireland, creating a digital collection of letters documenting life around the time of the Easter Rising.⁸⁵ Not unlike the kind of theatre work explored in this thesis, each of these projects, in its own way, endeavors to “rally, or bring order, to educate and inspire ... to heal, but most of all to tell the story – the hidden story, the story denied” (Cleveland, 2008, p. 9).

In order to solidify the role of theatre as a central mode of inquiry within the conflict transformation paradigm, it would be instructive for other researchers to conduct comparative research analysing how other art forms such as dance, film and photography are engaging with conflict and opening up spaces for dialogue within and across communities in Northern Ireland and similar examples taken from other transitional settings. This could be achieved through the analysis of projects initiated within the same time frame as the case studies informing this thesis. In the longer-term, it would also be useful to compile data about the wide array of post-show audience engagement modes, identify their strengths and limitations and promote increased collaboration opportunities between artists, community and cultural sector professionals, researchers and peacebuilders in this area.

As stated in the introductory chapter, this thesis’ research findings and critical reflexion on limitations of this thesis and future research agenda should be of use to a varied readership seeking to understand theatre’s (and other art forms) conflict transformation potential and to those looking to explore the innovative possibilities of the use of digital tools for peace and social change in transitional settings. Therefore, this thesis concludes with general recommendations intended as starting points for inquiry, discussion and reflection for researchers, civil society organisations including theatre companies, peacebuilders and technologists, based on key lessons learned through the conduct of this research. These should be read in conjunction with other recommendations made by scholar-practitioners cited in this thesis, in particular Cohen et al. (2011a), Thompson et al. (2009), Kahl and Puig Larrauri (2013) that, together with the body of work

⁸⁵ To connect to any of these repositories please go to: <http://digital.wustl.edu/ferguson/>
<http://911digitalarchive.org/> <https://web.northeastern.edu/nulab/our-marathon/>
<http://letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie/>

of John Paul Lederach, informed the design and conduct of this research.⁸⁶

In considering the use or study of alternative modes of engagement that give voice to unheard, overlooked or marginalised stories in the mainstream discourse, researchers, theatre-makers and other artists, community and cultural sector professionals, and peacebuilders should pay particular attention to a number of issues at the early stages of a project. These include identification, design and systemic use of varied live and digital modes of audience engagement to generate a robust body of in-house documentation of projects, facilitate academic research and publication of findings, and generate opportunities to share learning, methodologies and build or strengthen networks of support in other conflict regions and in so doing, reach diverse constituencies and attract new audiences. Moreover, while a lot of emphasis is often placed on cross-community initiatives in societies in transition, project initiators (and their partners) should not lose sight of the work to be done within single-identity communities and how it may contribute to the humanisation of self and of others within and across communities. They should also consider how and when to bring productions to communities, the selection of venues, how to balance the imperatives of open and closed performances/post-show discussions around “the need to validate and strengthen distinct identities and the need to enhance acknowledgment of interdependence”, different communities’ receptivity to theatre (and other art forms) and creation of safe spaces supporting the “constructive engagement of deep issues and of people” (Cohen & Walker, 2011a, p. 221; Lederach, 2005, p. 49).

There is also a growing need for more critical thinking and planning around how to measure the impact of the use of digital tools and platforms for the sharing of information pre and post-performance (via websites, Facebook or Twitter) and as part of a project’s legacy output (like VAC’s

⁸⁶ I would add the work of Burdick et al. (2012) to this list as their vision of the state of contemporary knowledge production, their survey of the question “What is the digital humanities?” and their invitation to engage in shaping new scholarship in the field of digital arts and humanities opened my mind to the potentialities of “domains of intersection between the virtual and physical in ways that reinforce not only access and outreach but also establish new models of imagination, quality, and rigor” within a broader peacebuilding spectrum (Burdick et al., 2012, pp. 122 & 49).

videos and its *Crows on the Wire App*). Researchers and technologists from different fields of study could examine ways of ensuring greater reach, effectiveness and more systematic curation of theatre arts-related digital approaches including building in project stages for the collection of data on the use of digital apps namely by targeted audiences. This includes the elaboration or adaptation of methodologies and guidelines taking into account the exigencies of community and cultural sector organisations operating in conflict and transitional settings.⁸⁷ When considering the design and/or adaptation of digital tools for social change purposes, theatre-makers and other artists, community and cultural sector professionals, peacebuilders and technologists “should step back and assess whether their investment will generate the desired results” (Mancini & O’Reilly, 2013, p. 5). This includes consideration of whether the use of digital technologies can have a positive impact; political, social and cultural contexts; generational factors; and integration of local culture, knowledge and practices. To this end, project initiators should seek partnerships with institutions, researchers, artists and peacebuilders exploring “new forms of inquiry and knowledge production ... that expand the scope, enhance the quality and increase the visibility” of creative conflict transformation initiatives in conflict and transitional settings (Burdick et al., 2012, p. 122).

While acknowledging that there is much more research that can and should be done, it is clear this thesis has provided a deeper insight into the role that engaged theatre can play in peacebuilding in a period of post-conflict transition, using Northern Ireland as the context. Against the background of Galtung’s (1969, 1990) concept of negative peace discussed in chapter 3 and repeated failed attempts to secure political consensus on how to address the issue of dealing with the past since the Good Friday Agreement, civil society organisations including theatre companies have been actively engaging with this difficult issue in ways that enable the

⁸⁷ This is an area where researchers could provide valuable support to community and cultural sector organisations, namely through the conduct of longitudinal studies examining how organisations prepare their funding applications and structure their projects. Discussions may need to be had with funding agencies around the need to fund the conduct of user studies to evaluate to a fuller extent the effectiveness and impact of innovative theatre-centric projects with a digital element. In turn, the systematic collection of user/download data could inform other project initiators and enable researchers to conduct reliable user studies. The identification of guidelines or modus operandi in this area would enhance knowledge in this emerging area of peacebuilding practice.

articulation, exploration and recognition of hidden and often overlooked stories and experiences of the violent, protracted conflict in Northern Ireland. Theatre projects have a key role to play in this work. As shown through references to international cases, the history of innovative theatre productions in Northern Ireland detailed in chapter 4 and the in-depth study of two cases of post-conflict theatre projects in chapters 5 and 6, engaged theatre is a space where the moral imagination of the artists and of the audience can be cultivated and conflict transformation encouraged. This thesis's theatre-centric case studies, now extending into digital practices too, have offered concrete examples of conflict transformation theorist John Paul Lederach's idea of the moral imagination at work and of the nature of transformation that can take place when peacebuilding is viewed as an art.

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Appendices

Appendix A Key events attended by the researcher in the areas of theatre arts, digital technology and peacebuilding

YEAR	EVENT DETAILS
2011	Innovation and the Future of Humanities in Ireland event hosted by Dublin Intellectual Project and Long Room Hub – Trinity College Dublin
	SAVE AS: Archiving Memory in the Age of Digital Technology seminar led by Dr Diana Taylor (New York University) at Queens University Belfast
	Democratisation and New Media Conference (1 day), hosted by Royal Irish Academy (Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
2012	Nine Tenths Under: Performing the Peace Conference (3 days), Playhouse ICAN & School of Creative Arts at Queen’s University Belfast
	Political Science Association of Ireland (PSAI) Annual Conference (3 days), Derry-Londonderry
2013	Challenging Place Conference (3 days), hosted by Playhouse ICAN project, Derry-Londonderry
	The Sectarian States of Ireland & Collective Action for Positive Peace – Project Launch , hosted by Community Workers Co-Operative (CWC) Donegal Network (Derry-Londonderry)
	Digital Testimonies on War and Trauma Conference (3 days), Erasmus University (Rotterdam, Netherlands)
	Community Arts Lab Festival: Art on the Frontline (2 days), (Utrecht, Netherlands) – at the intersection of the arts and peacebuilding – included performance by Theatre of Witness (Northern Ireland)
	Panel for Peace hosted by Luc Opdebeeck, founder of Formaat (Rotterdam) – (Teya Sepinuck – Theatre of Witness was one of the speakers)
	CultureTech – yearly festival of digital technology, media, music (4 days), Derry-Londonderry
	Leadership in a Shared Society NE Peace III Closing Conference facilitated by Dr J. P. Lederach in Portrush (Northern Ireland)
	Sharing the Stage: Theatre, Peace Building and Equality’ Symposium (2 days), led by Dublin-based Smashing Times Theatre Company in Drogheda (Republic of Ireland)
	Workshop on Theatre of the Oppressed Techniques (2 days), led by practitioner Hector Aristizàbal (ImaginAction) in Belfast
	2014
I was born in the rain and soaked in conflict – theatre in conflict , seminar with Vincent Higgins (actor/writer), Queen’s University Belfast	
Crows on the Wire Narratives of the Unheard Symposium (1 day), hosted by Verbal Arts Centre (Derry-Londonderry)	
Digital Arts and Humanities Institute (2 days) – University College Cork (Republic of Ireland) (m. Sutherland – VAC was an invited speaker for this audience of digital arts and humanities students (see above)	
Accounts of the Conflict: Digitally Archiving Stories for Peacebuilding Conference (2 days), INCORE/University of Ulster – held in Belfast (M. Sutherland –VAC was one of the speakers)	
2015	
	A Place, A Border – Different Stories , Bridging Ages organisation conference, held at the County Museum Dundalk, Republic of Ireland (P. McFetridge & M. Sutherland gave talks - June 4, 2015)
	Technology for Peacebuilding in Divided Societies talk by Transformative Connections (Belfast)

Appendix B Case Study 2: *Crows on the Wire* (COTW) project – composition of COTW Steering Group

Name	Background
Samuel Atcheson	Director, Northern Ireland Phoenix Project
Dr Anna Bryson	Previously Co-Director, The Peace Process - Layers of Meaning Project (Trinity College Dublin/Queen Mary University of London/Dundalk Institute of Technology), since 2014 she is a research fellow at the School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast
Tony Callaghan	Chief Inspector, PSNI Project Team
Michael Doherty*	Director, Peace and Reconciliation Group
Andrea Doran	Verbal Arts Centre’s Director of Programming and Learning
Will Glendinning	Co-Ordinator, Diversity Challenges
Maureen Hetherington*	Chairperson, Towards Understanding and Healing
Peter Lyttle*	Former member of the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Royal Irish Regiment
Roger McCallum*	Former RUC/PSNI officer, Trustee of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation
Dr Laurence McKeown*	Writer, filmmaker, former IRA prisoner/1981 hunger striker Wrote the play <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i> commissioned by Healing Through Remembering and which is analysed in chapter 6
* sat on COTW post-show discussion panels based on VAC transcripts as noted in chapter 6.	

Appendix C *Crows on the Wire* project-related videos uploaded to Vimeo and YouTube as part of project’s digital archive

Name of video/link(s)	Details
Crows on the Wire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNwkXHSKCGE	21 Oct 2013 (6:55 min) introduces project and includes excerpts of interviews with playwright, members of COTW Steering Group (Crows Verbal)
Crows on the Wire - First Schools Performance - Waterside Theatre Nov 6 2013 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpKEM0oF014	06 Nov 2013 (3:30min) captures post-show panel discussion and school audience feedback (Crows Verbal)
Crows on the Wire Launch Stormont https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7F3iJabzXa4	25 Nov 2013 (4:33 min) Presents highlights of presentation/excerpts of play at Stormont Estate (Northern Ireland Assembly building) (Crows Verbal)
Crows on the Wire Performance and Discussion Tour https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1oxslz2BGU	01 May 2014 (12:07 min) Presents aspects of post-show discussions held after performances in Derry-Londonderry, Omagh, Coleraine and Letterkenny (Crows Verbal)
My Best Friend https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JMjS1imnA	13 June 2014 (6:06 min) Presents a filmed COTW scene where protagonist Jack shares with the audience how his best friend who died in a car bombing – included in COTW App (Crows Verbal)
All Change https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMYIchUMmxo	20 August 2014 (6:07 min) Presents a filmed COTW scene between characters Jack and David around the impact of change upon the individual – excerpts of which are found in COTW App (Crows Verbal)
COTW App Production Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHXIas9kvE	12 Sep 2014 (4:14 min) Produced under ‘Verbal’; offers glimpse into production of COTW app by Blacknorth Studio (Verbal)
Crows on the Wire App Launch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfLpmdv4Yo0	09 Oct 2014 (3:06 min) Highlights from official launch of COTW App (15 Sep 2014) @ VAC (Crows Verbal)

<p>Mhairi Sutherland "Crows on the Wire: Transforming Narratives of the Unheard" https://vimeo.com/108353545 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNN_d8aXZAI</p>	<p>19 Dec 2014 (35:15 min) Address at DAH Institute 2014 @ University College of Cork (Digital Arts and Humanities; Crows Verbal)</p>
<p>The Crows on the Wire Symposium (Short Version) 02-10-2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtjOZC4dFrQ</p>	<p>06 Nov 2014 (5:04 min) Provides a short overview of event held on October 2, 2014 (Crows Verbal)</p>
<p>Crows on the Wire 'Narratives of the Unheard' Symposium 02:10:2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwd44j7DzbQ</p>	<p>10 Nov 2014 (17:51 min) Presents highlights of symposium that offered a space to reflect on COTW project, outputs and lessons learned (Crows Verbal)</p>
<p>Crows on the Wire App Vox Pops - Nov 2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBrpSo-MC4Q</p>	<p>09 Dec 2014 (8:22 min) Presents candid pupil feedback following their participation in drama workshop introducing them to the COTW App (Crows Verbal)</p>
<p>Crows on the Wire Celebratory Event https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIIXzFgSf3g</p>	<p>15 Dec 2014 (5:20 min) Marks end of project (Crows Verbal)</p>

Appendix D Details of interviews for Case Study 1 and Case Study 2

THOSE YOU PASS ON THE STREET INTERVIEWS DETAILS		
Name/Identifier	Expertise/Background	Date Interviewed
Actor 1	Professional actor – <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i>	3 Feb 2015
Actor 2	Professional actor – <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i>	3 Feb 2015
Paula McFetridge	Artistic Director, Kabosh Theatre Company and play’s director – <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i>	3 Feb 2015
Kate Turner	Director – Healing Through Remembering	23 Feb 2015
Dr Laurence McKeown	Playwright – <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i> Film-maker, republican ex-prisoner/1981 Hunger Striker	24 Feb 2015

CROWS ON THE WIRE (COTW) INTERVIEW DETAILS		
Name	Background/Expertise	Date Interviewed
Dr Matthew Jennings	COTW Dramaturgical Advisor/ Lecturer (University of Ulster)	30 September 2014 02 October 2014
Jonathan Burgess	COTW writer and producer, member of Protestant/loyalist community	01 October 2014
Dr Mhairi Sutherland	VAC – COTW Project Community Engagement Coordinator	08 October 2014
James Kerr	Executive Director, Verbal Arts Centre	08 October 2014
Roger McCallum	COTW Steering Group member, RUC George Cross Foundation, former RUC/PSNI officer	14 October 2014
Dr Laurence McKeown	COTW Steering Group member, playwright, film-maker, republican ex-prisoner/1981 Hunger Striker	24 February 2015

Appendix E Sampling of focused interview questions targeting a particular area of expertise or aspect of the project analysed in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2

Those You Pass on the Street Project (Case Study 1)

- Why did you use professional actors and what was the impact on performances?
- What do you think the role of actor-witness within the play brought to the overall aesthetic experience of audiences who were also bearing witness to the stories of the characters?
- How did you receive/react to the silence that was palpable during the first run of the play?
- What is your sense of how audiences responded to the play?
- Why did you attend post-show discussions?
- How has this project informed your approach on how to track and quantify audience response to the work? Is it part of a theatre company's mandate to conduct evaluations?
- What was your perspective or concerns on open versus closed performances?
- Might your organisation consider exploring the possibility of adding a digital output to a project around dealing with the past, as was done in the *Crows on the Wire* project?

Crows on the Wire Project (Case Study 2)

- What about the timing of the play (2003 versus 2013)?
- What factors contributed to the decision to use professional actors and the impact on performances?
- What is your sense of how the play was received within the RUC/PSNI community?
- What is your sense of how the play was received by the (republican/nationalist, unionist/loyalist) community?
- What is the role of the COTW digital app within a conflict transformation framework?

**Appendix F Template for informed consent form for interviews
approved by the Research Ethics Committee**

Consent Form for Research Study Participant

Trinity College Dublin PhD Researcher: [name]

Academic Supervisors: [name(s)]

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by RESEARCHER. *My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind.*

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The research study investigates the relationship between theatre and peacebuilding. Specifically, it applies the lens of peacebuilding theories to the work of _____ (*name of organisation and name of project*). The purpose of this to gain valuable insights related to the researcher's central research question: *how can socially engaged theatre-making practice, as developed and applied in and around Northern Ireland, inform peacebuilding theories and practice?* The research is founded on the hypothesis that socially engaged theatre models can be seen as potential sites of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland.

PROCEDURES AND USE OF DATA COLLECTED

If I agree to participate, this will involve me

Voluntarily participating in an interview (that will be audio-taped or videotaped) that will be held at _____. The interview should not last more than one and a half hours. A follow-up interview and/or follow-up e-mail may be required. My preferred follow-up method is _____. I am free to limit my participation to a single interview without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that the data collected in the course of this research study will be primarily used by the researcher for the purposes of her doctoral dissertation. It may also be used for publication and/or research-related blogging. I agree (or refuse) to have images (photo/video) included in the researcher's

_____ PhD dissertation _____ academic publications
_____ blog _____ I REFUSE

Do you want to add other details or conditions? _____ NO _____ YES:

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

To the best of the researcher's ability, every effort will be made to identify, address and monitor any potential risks and discomforts resulting directly from my participation in this research study.

Consent Form for Research Study Participant (continued)

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

I will not benefit directly from participating in this research. This research study may benefit the extent to which theatre arts and performance studies becomes a recognised field upon which conflict resolution theorists and practitioners draw on alongside theories from economics, politics, psychology, law, sociology, religious studies, and other fields in Northern Ireland and beyond.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Any information or raw data which is obtained from me during this research study or any other identifying information ('records') will be treated confidentially. To protect the identity of participants, the researcher will change names and identifying characteristics in typed transcriptions of interviews by either using a false name, 'anonymous' or 'female/male participant' and the like. The records including notes, audio-tape, audio transcriptions, videotape, photograph, electronic data, will be stored in a safe and secure way at researcher's home in Belfast; electronic data will be stored in on the researcher's personal computer and/or on disks. The researcher and her academic supervisors will be the only ones who have access to the data collected during the course of research study. The records storage and the grounds for continued storage will be reviewed within three months of completion of data. Any record that is no longer required will be destroyed or erased in a safe and secure way. Any record that is still required will be further reviewed every 12 months and may be kept for up to 10 years. Images (photographs/video) taken by, or provided to, the researcher will only be used for the purposes outlined under the Procedures and Use of Data Collected provision above. If you gave permission for use of image, you are advised that this could lead to identification by a third party.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

I can choose whether or not to be in this research study. If I volunteer to be in this study, *I may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.* I may refuse to answer any questions I don't want to answer and refuse to be photographed or included in a video. There is no penalty if I withdraw from the study and I will not lose any benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. The researcher may withdraw me from this study if my physician tells us that continued participation may injure my health.

QUESTIONS ABOUT RESEARCH

If I have any questions about this research I can ask the researcher, Suzanne Foy, who can be reached at (phone number) or at (TCD e-mail address). I am also free, however, to contact the researcher's primary academic supervisor, XXXXX at (phone number) or at (TCD e-mail address)

Consent Form for Research Study Participant (continued)

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The Trinity College Dublin School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics Ethics Committee has reviewed the researcher's request to conduct this project. If I have any concerns about your rights in this study, I can contact Dr _____, Director of Research, The Confederation School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology, Trinity College Dublin at Belfast, at (phone number) or at (TCD e-mail address).

Signature of research participant

I understand what is involved in this research study and I agree to participate in the study. *I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.*

Signature of research participant

Date

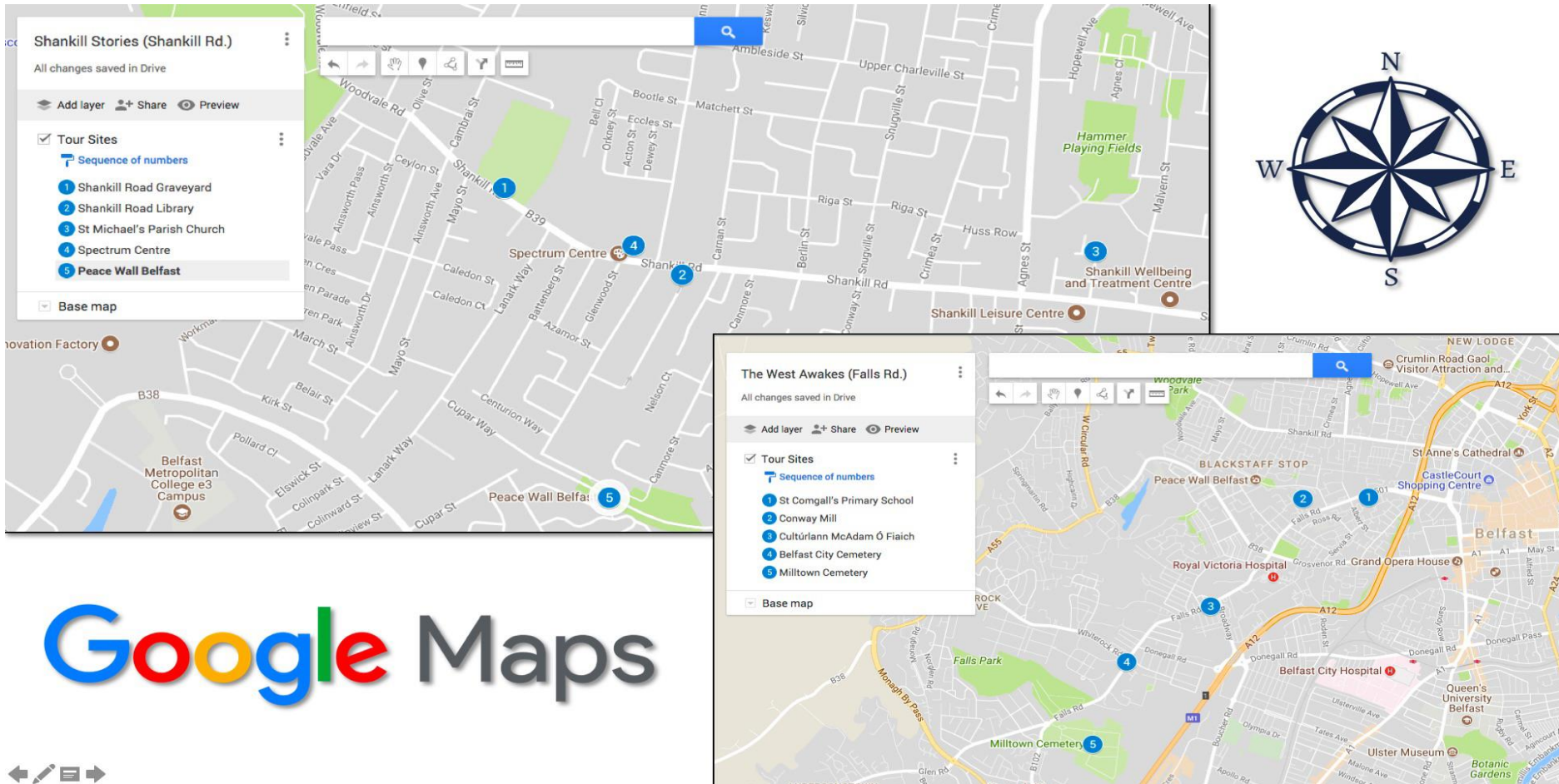
Signature of researcher:

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

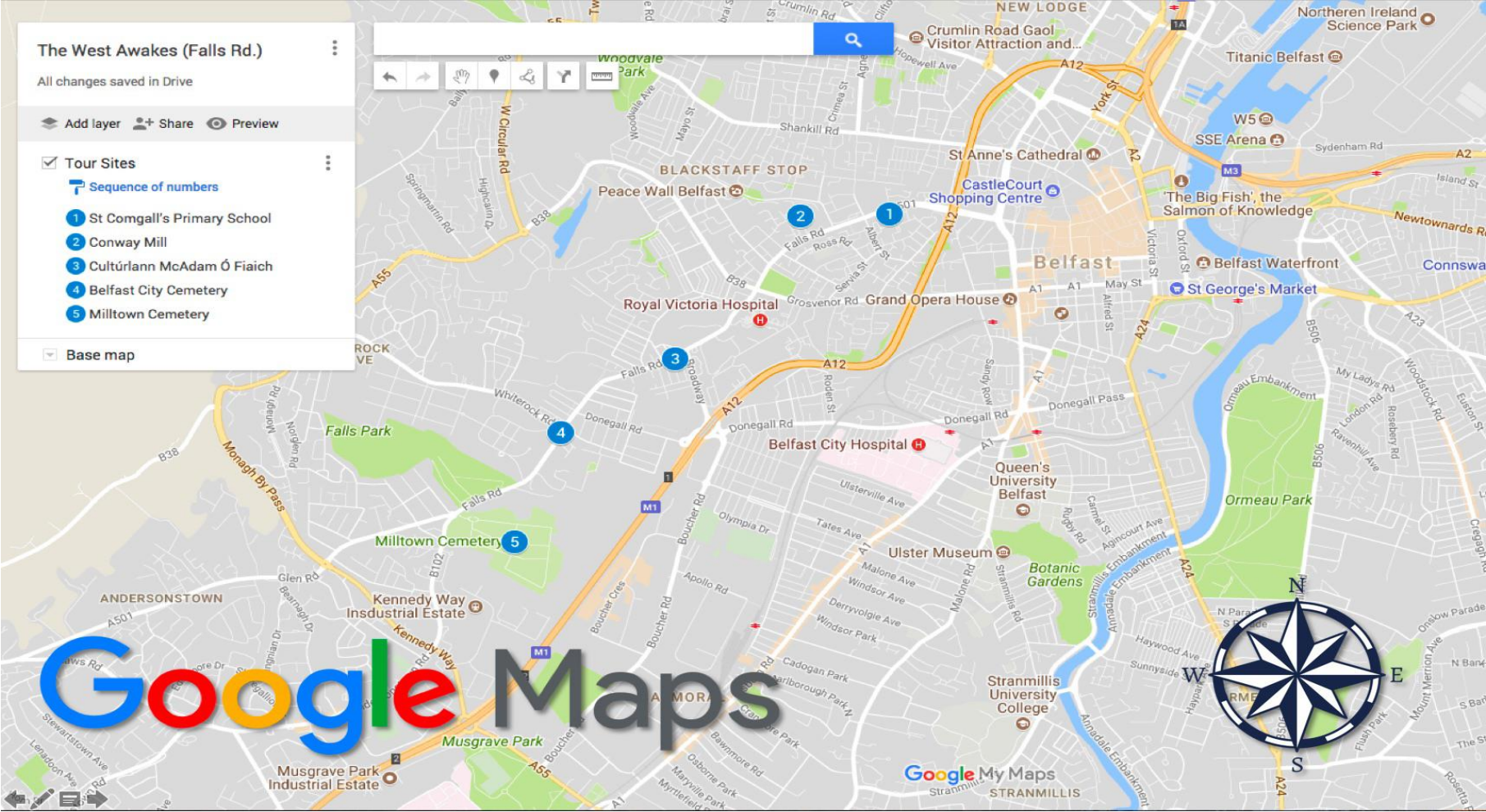
Date

Appendix G Side by side map of *The West Awakes* and *Shankill Stories* theatrical walking tours in West Belfast

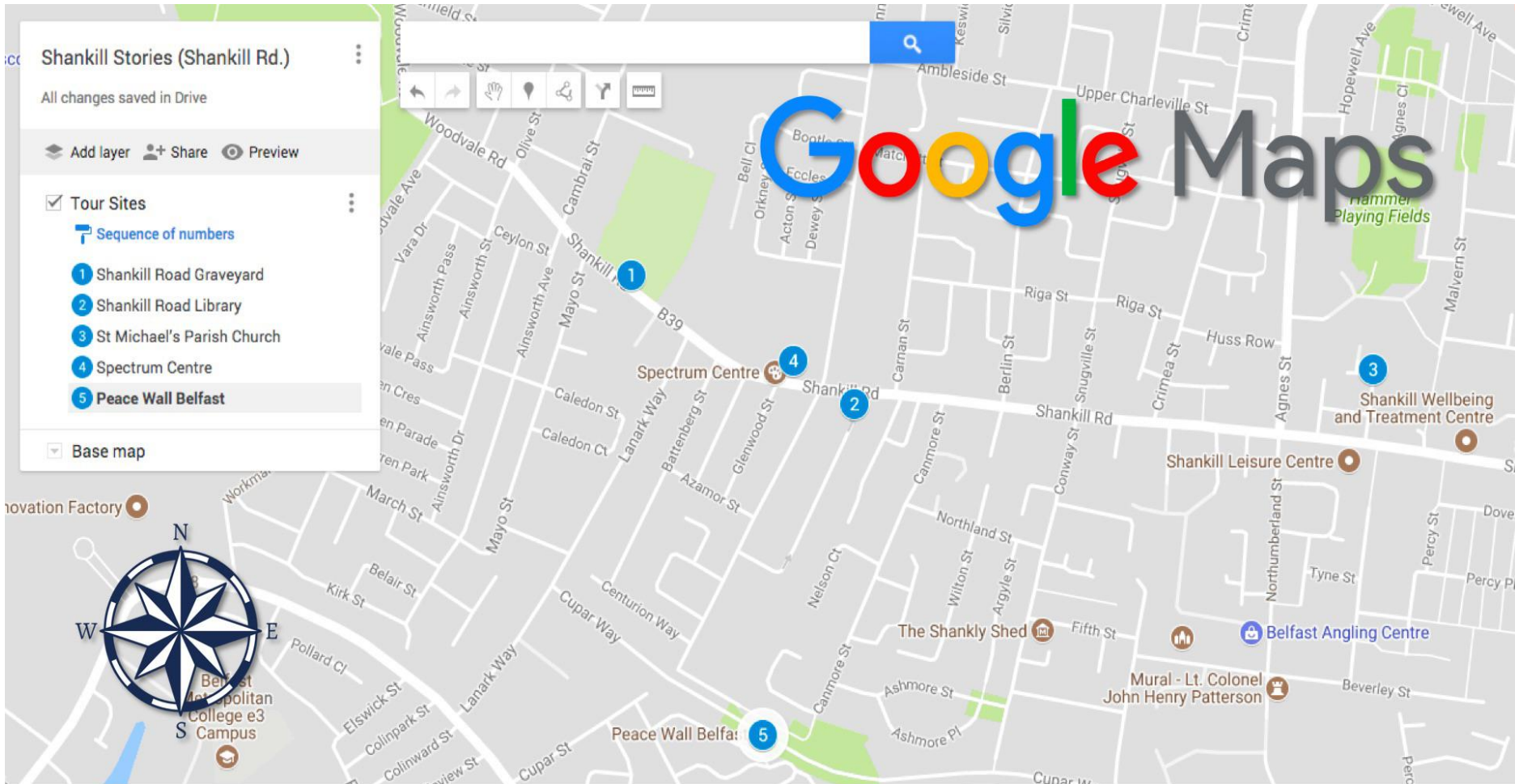


Note. The combination of the tour maps provides insight into the close proximity of West Belfast's Protestant Shankill Road and Catholic Falls Road areas.

Appendix H Map locating *The West Awakes* performance sites along the theatrical walking tour route



Appendix I Map locating *Shankill Stories* performance sites along the theatrical walking tour route



Note. Point 5 on the map indicates the location of the peace wall which goes the length of Cupar Way separating the Shankill Road and Falls Road areas.

Appendix J Construction of characters' backstories for *Those You Pass on the Street* (baseline: initial run of play in January 2014)

Character/ age or event	Year of birth/event	Background
Elizabeth Farrell (49)	1965	<p>From a Protestant background, she married RUC officer Michael Farrell in 1985. Her family was more concerned by the age difference than fact that he was a Catholic as he was born and raised in England.</p> <p>After her husband's death she chose to stay in their family home and tried to get on with it as there were two young children to raise. She has remained close to Michael's family. Children Rebecca and Mark recently graduated from university; living abroad.</p>
Michael Farrell (died at age 40)	1952	<p>His father was from England; he served in WWII, then became a police officer and later joined the RUC; Michael followed in his footsteps and was working in the Criminal Investigation Department before being killed by the IRA in 1992.</p>
Ann Farrell (55)	1958	<p>Michael's sister is married and is a civil servant working at Stormont (Northern Ireland Parliament).</p> <p>She looks forward to her annual trip to Scotland with her mother and sister-in-law. She remains focused on keeping Michael's memory alive.</p>
Frank Murtagh (39)	1974	<p>From Catholic/Republican background; works at constituency office and lives in a small cottage near Elizabeth's home.</p> <p>In 1990 (age 16) he lost his only brother Gerard, after that he ran a bit wild. Pat found him a job with his uncle in the United States; Frank later moved to London. He has recently returned to Northern Ireland and contacted Pat.</p>
Gerard Murtagh (died at age 26)	1964	<p>Frank's only brother; he was an IRA volunteer and a republican prisoner in the 1980s. In 1990, Gerard was killed by the IRA after becoming a police informant – the RUC caught him with marijuana on him and risked being thrown out of the IRA. His actions brought shame on his family.</p>
Pat Connor (48)	1966	<p>Long-term Sinn Féin party strategist and Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Ex-IRA volunteer and republican ex-prisoner in the late 1980s; he crossed paths with RUC officer Farrell. His sister's husband was killed while on active service for the IRA. Gerald Murtagh was his best mate; he felt he had to help Frank after his brother's death.</p>

Hunger Strike (Long Kesh/Maze Prison)	1980-1981	Not referred to in play yet theatre-makers needed to take this major event into account to situate events/characters (playwright was one of the hunger strikers)
Ceasefire	1994	On August 31, 1994, the IRA declared a cessation of its twenty-five year armed campaign. Its mention in the play helps situate events/characters' timelines.
Eames/Bradley Report	2009	Established in 2007, the independent Consultative Group of the Past co-chaired by Lord Eames and Denis Bradley, conducted extensive cross-communities consultations on how to build a shared future in Northern Ireland and made recommendations on possible steps to create a society that is at peace with its past; they were never implemented by the British government.
Haass/O'Sullivan Talks	2013	Chaired by Richard Haass and Meghan O'Sullivan (United States), the five main political parties represented at the Northern Ireland Assembly discussed how to deal with the divisive issues surrounding parades and protests, flags and emblems, and dealing with the past. After nearly six months the talks ceased without a deal in late 2013.

Source. Data compiled from fieldwork notes taken during the January 2014 rehearsals.

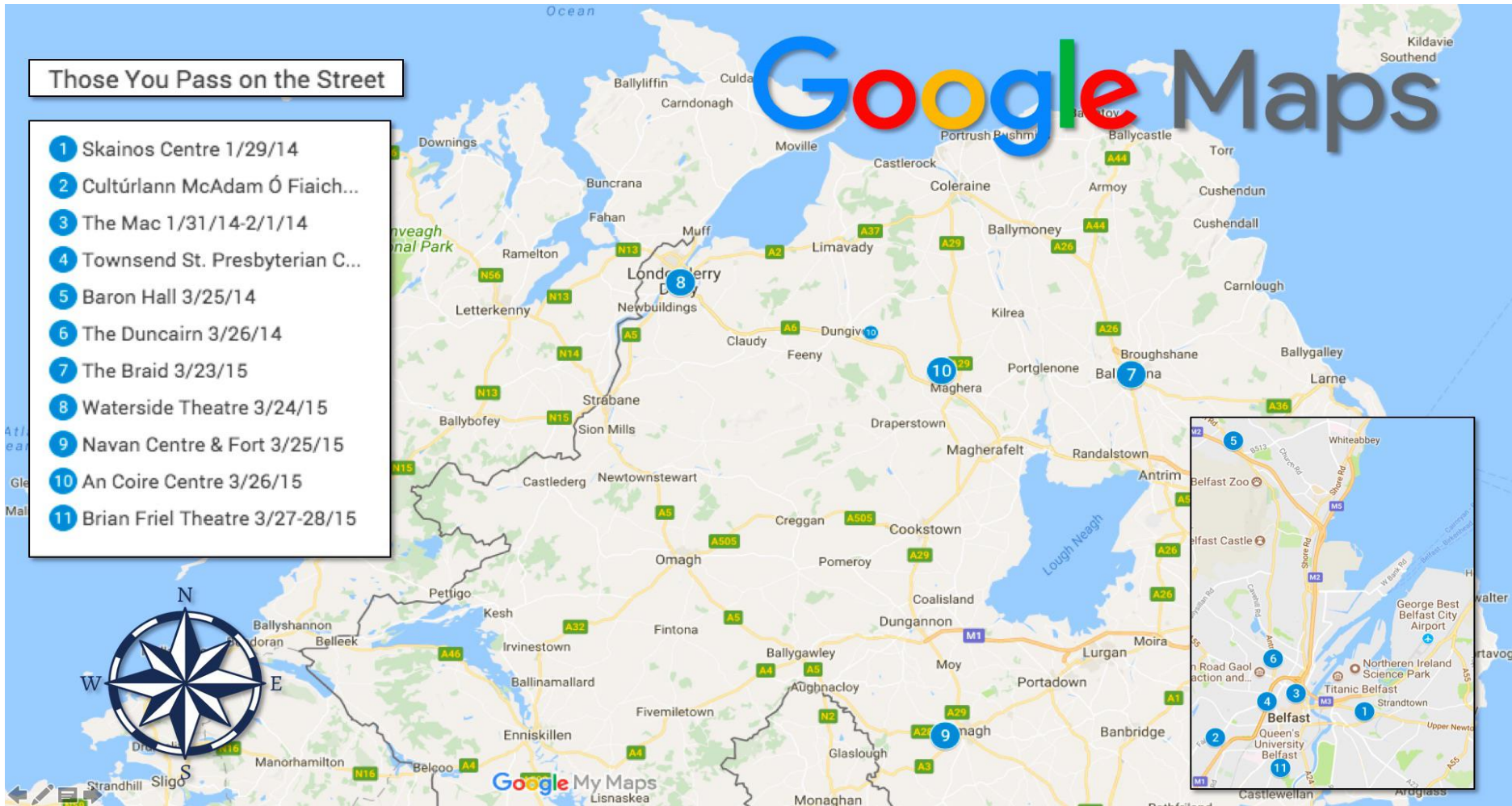
Appendix K *Those You Pass on the Street* - dates, venues, post-show panels and audience engagement methods

INITIAL RUN OF PLAY (January 29 – February 1, 2014)		
DATE & VENUE	POST-SHOW PANELS	AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT
29 January 2014 Skainos Centre (East Belfast)	Joe Blake (chair/HTR project delivery partner); Lesley Macaulay & Oliver Wilkinson (HTR Board members); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre), L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ HTR/Kabosh Twitter Feeds ✓ Feedback forms
30 January 2014 Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich – Irish language and cultural centre (West Belfast)	Martin Snodden (chair/HTR project delivery partner); Claire Hackett (HTR Board member); Padraig Coyle (broadcaster), P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre), L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ HTR/Kabosh Twitter Feeds ✓ Feedback forms
31 January 2014 The MAC (Belfast city centre)	Leslie Macauley (chair/HTR project delivery partner), Brandon Hamber (HTR Board member), Joe Austin (a Sinn Fein constituency office manager), P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre), L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ HTR/Kabosh Twitter Feeds ✓ Feedback forms
1 February 2014 The MAC (Belfast city centre)	No post-show discussion (informal discussion after performance favoured by HTR and its board)	✓ HTR/Kabosh Twitter Feeds ✓ Feedback forms
SECOND RUN OF PLAY (March 24-26, 2014)		
DATE & VENUE	POST-SHOW PANELS	AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT
24 March 2014 Townsend Street Presbyterian Church (South Belfast)	No feedback form P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter Feeds
25 March 2014 Barron Hall (Glengormley in greater Belfast)	No feedback form Joe Blake (facilitator/HTR project delivery partner); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter Feeds
26 March 2014 The Duncairn Centre for Culture & Arts (North Belfast)	No feedback form P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre) L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter Feeds

THIRD RUN OF PLAY (March 23-28, 2015)		
DATE & VENUE	POST-SHOW PANELS	AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT
23 March 2015 The Braid Arts Centre (Ballymena)	Martin Snodden (facilitator/HTR project delivery partner); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre); L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter feeds ✓ Feedback forms
24 March 2015 Waterside Theatre (Derry-Londonderry)	Martin Snodden (facilitator/HTR project delivery partner); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre); L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter feeds ✓ Feedback forms
25 March 2015 Navan Centre and Fort (Armagh)	Martin Snodden (facilitator/HTR project delivery partner); L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter feeds ✓ Feedback forms
26 March 2015 An Coire Centre (Maghera)	Martin Snodden (facilitator/HTR project delivery partner); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre); L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter feeds ✓ Feedback forms
27 March 2015 Brian Friel Theatre – Queen’s University Belfast	Dr Mark Phelan (Queen’s University Belfast) - (facilitator); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre); L. McKeown (playwright); M. Snodden (HTR project delivery partner)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter feeds ✓ Feedback forms
28 March 2015 Brian Friel Theatre – Queen’s University Belfast	Dr Cahal McLaughlin (Queen’s University Belfast) – (facilitator); Martin Snodden (HTR project delivery partner); P. McFetridge (Kabosh Theatre); L. McKeown (playwright)	✓ Post-show discussion ✓ Kabosh Twitter Feeds ✓ Feedback forms

Source. Data compiled by researcher and reviewed by Kabosh Theatre.

Appendix L Map locating venues for the *Those You Pass on the Street* 2014-2015 tours in Northern Ireland



Appendix M Kabosh Theatre Company feedback form used during third run of *Those You Pass on the Street* (March 2015)

Male

Female

Under 18

18-25

26-50

51-65

Over 65

Following the performance, how far do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I felt challenged and provoked					
It got me thinking about things differently					
I felt I could identify with the story					
I felt I could relate to the characters					
I found the performance very moving					
Issues raised by the play seemed relevant to my own life					
I could identify with one character					
A post-show discussion is a useful way to share this experience with other people					
I will be talking about this play for some time					
Theatre is a useful way to explore issues from our past					

Do you feel like there was anything missing from the production?

Would you like to add any further comments or thoughts? (you can continue on the back)

Have you been to a theatre production in the past

3 years **10 years** **Never**

**Appendix N *Crows on the Wire* main characters' backstories
(baseline: November 2001)**

Character/ age or event	Year of birth/event	Background
Jack (50)	1951	From a Protestant background, he has been an RUC officer for around thirty years. In his 20s, he witnessed the death of his best friend – killed by a car bomb. He was married to Doreen and has a son Ben who is in his early 20s. He no longer has a relationship with his son due to pent up anger after losing his friend which translated into violent outburst toward his family. His son has gambling debts. Did a lot of overtime during the conflict. He has been sober for fifteen months. He feels betrayed by the politicians.
David Anderson (23)	1978/1979	From a Catholic background, attended university before joining the RUC. He joined after seeing how police officers assisted his sister who was raped during a house party by two guys she knew. He sees policing as a career and embraces the policing change; does not see Jack as a role model; wants Jack to embrace change.
Ruth (in her mid to late 40s)	-----	From a Protestant background, she served in the RUC until around 1999 and is not sure why she joined in the first place. She worked with Jack for years; he helped her deal with a higher ranking male RUC officer who was sexually harassing her. She has since moved to the seaside with her husband though she is still finding it hard to connect with him – like Jack the work hardened her to the world around her.
Hunger strikes	1980-1981	Jack refers to the hunger strikes by republican prisoners in the Long Kesh/Maze prison that led to a lot of overtime; recruit David is too young to remember this event.
Good Friday Agreement (GFA)	April 1998	Political settlement to thirty year conflict that is referenced in this thesis' introductory chapter. Policing was a contentious issue during the negotiations of the settlement.
Patten Report	September 1999	Part of the outworks of the GFA; proposed extensive reform to policing in Northern Ireland including change of name, structure, emblems, recruitment policy.
New police service	November 2001	Transition from RUC to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

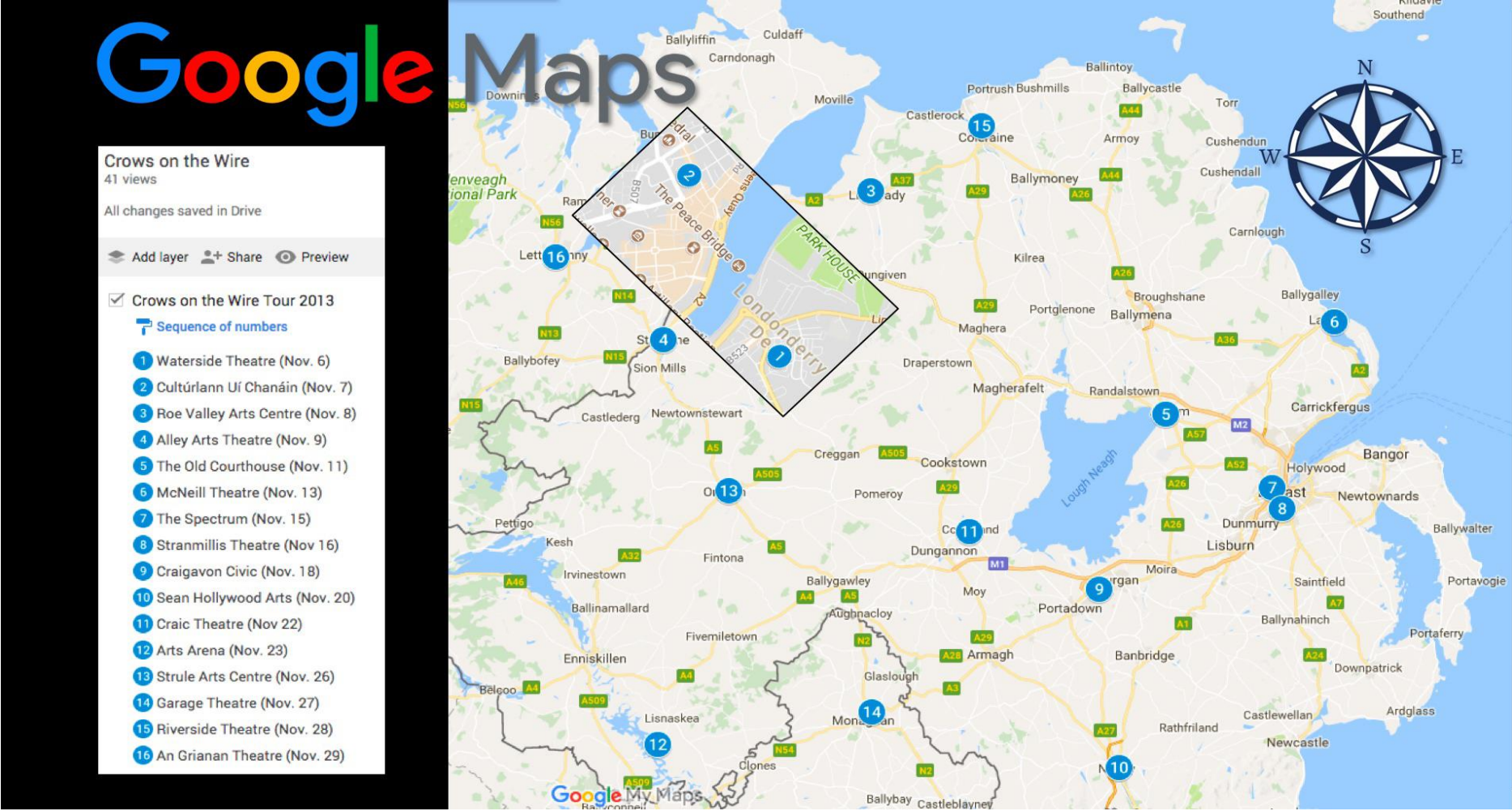
Source. Burgess (2014); see also introductory chapter.

Appendix O *Crows the Wire* performance and discussion tour across Northern Ireland and in County Donegal (Republic of Ireland – ROI) – November 6-29, 2013

Date	Venue	Location
November 6, 2013*	Waterfront Theatre	Derry-Londonderry
November 7, 2013*	Cultúrlann Ui Chanain centre	Derry-Londonderry
November 8, 2013	Roe Valley Arts Centre	Limavady
November 9, 2013*	Alley Arts Theatre	Strabane
November 11, 2013	The Old Courthouse Theatre	Antrim
November 13, 2013*	McNeill Theatre	Larne
November 15, 2013*	The Spectrum Centre	Belfast
November 16, 2013*	Stranmillis Theatre	Belfast
November 18, 2013*	Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre	Craigavon
November 20, 2013*	Sean Hollywood Arts Theatre	Newry
November 22, 2013	Craic Theatre and Arts Centre	Coalisland
November 23, 2013	Arts Arena (Shared Discovery Village)	Lisnaskea
November 26, 2013	Strule Arts Theatre	Omagh
November 27, 2013*	Garage Theatre	Monaghan (ROI)
November 28, 2013*	Riverside Theatre	Coleraine
November 29, 2013*	An Grianan Theatre	Letterkenny (ROI)
*Post-show discussion followed the performance.		
Performances for post-primary school pupils were held in Derry-Londonderry, Antrim, Belfast, Craigavon and Omagh.		

Source. Verbal (2013, n.p.).

Appendix P Map locating venues for the *Crows on the Wire* 2013 tour in Northern Ireland and border counties



Appendix Q Composition of adult-oriented *Crows on the Wire* post-show discussion panels for which transcripts are available

Date	Location	Post- show discussions panel members
November 6, 2013	Waterside Theatre (Derry-Londonderry)	Mark Patterson (chair) – BBC Radio Foyle Jonathan Burgess – COTW writer/producer Roger McCallum – Former RUC/PSNI officer, COTW Steering Group member Tony Callaghan – PSNI Chief Inspector, former RUC officer, COTW Steering Group member Gerry O’Hara – Sinn Féin politician, chairperson for An Cultúrlann movement, former Derry-Londonderry mayor, and a former vice-chair of Policing Board
November 7, 2013	Cultúrlann Ui Chanain centre (Derry-Londonderry)	Mark Patterson (chair) – BBC Radio Foyle Roger McCallum – Former RUC/PSNI officer, COTW Steering Group member Tony Callaghan – PSNI Chief Inspector, former RUC officer, and COTW Steering Group member Maureen Hetherington – Chairperson of Toward Understanding and Healing organisation, COTW Steering Group member Deaglan O’Mochain, republican ex-prisoner, member of An Cultúrlann
November 26, 2013	Strule Arts Centre (Omagh)	David Crabbe (chair) – then Chairperson, Northern Ireland Phoenix Organisation Northern Ireland Conor Sharkey – Strabane Chronicle journalist Michael Doherty – Director of Peace and Reconciliation Group, and COTW Steering Group member
November 28, 2013	Riverside Theatre (Coleraine)	Eamon Sweeney – (chair) – then Editor of the Londonderry Sentinel newspaper Maureen Hetherington – Chairperson of Toward Understanding and Healing, and COTW Steering Committee member Declan O’Mochain, republican ex-prisoner, member of An Cultúrlann
November 29, 2013	An Grianán Theatre (Letterkenny – ROI)	Martin McGinley (chair) – then Editor of Derry Journal newspaper Seanna Walsh – Former Republican prisoner, Coiste na niarchimí (Coiste) community organisation member Jim Gallagher – Former An Garda Síochána (Republic of Ireland) police officer Shirley Donaldson – Former RUC/PSNI officer

Source. Verbal Arts Centre (2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013c; 2013e); M. Sutherland (personal communication, December 16, 2014).