

Perspectives on Children and Young People

Kathleen Gallagher  
Dirk J. Rodricks  
Kelsey Jacobson *Editors*

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# Global Youth Citizenry and Radical Hope

Enacting Community-Engaged Research  
through Performative Methodologies



Springer

# **Perspectives on Children and Young People**

Volume 10

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# Foreword

## Exploring the Construct of Radical Hope

The Radical Hope project gathers a team of youth researchers to investigate one of the central existential questions of our age: *who am I, relative to others, and what compels me to act upon my world?*

A question of this immensity requires a deep and sustained enquiry. It calls for attention to the nexus between agency, identity and citizenry.

It is most appropriate then that the Radical Hope project responds to the relevance and global importance of this question via research sites in five very different countries: Canada, Greece, India, England, and Taiwan. The project conducted across a five-year period embraces the research efforts of a team of 17 investigators and the active engagement of 250 young people ranging in ages from early teens to early twenties. In this, the project offers a rare opportunity to engage with young people's views about global citizenry through a genuinely cross-national project.

The researchers call on embodied, dialogical, and performative methods of enquiry evolved from drama and theatre traditions. In this, they work to explore the nexus between ethics and aesthetics in the relational process of participatory enquiry. They use performative methods to position young people as active agents in the sustained collective enquiry. These performative methods offer a rich modality through which to explore and communicate the affective nature of experience. Here, the focus on the aesthetics of enquiry offers rich contribution for those seeking methods which embrace the interconnectedness of the individual and the social, the personal and the political, and the material and discursive. In this, the collected works within the book make a contribution towards the "purpose and place of aesthetic expression in research" (p. 8).

The team led by Kathleen Gallagher investigates the construct of 'radical hope'. Gallagher introduces this concept as one which builds on the notion of 'radical imagination' which entails a collective aspirational urge towards transformative action (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014). Building on her prior research with young people, she argues that hope is a relational practice, not a possession. Hence, the

social *doing* of hope and the transformative interest in the *production* of hope is of central interest in this enquiry, as is the work of harnessing the imagination, or the visioning of alternative possibilities through which to orient social and political action. For Gallagher and her fellow investigators, radical hope is aspirational. It is not a prediction of what will come to pass, but rather an ethical and affective vision of what is desirable and what it is people believe can or should be made possible.

Gallagher argues that drama-based methods offer a unique way to access the imagined as well as the real in youth research. They provide a way to tap into the hopes and dreams of young people, as well as into their experiences and insights into what holds certain injustices in place. This offers a method to research not only what is, but also what is cherished and what *could be*. This is necessary in researching the production of hope, for hope pertains to the possible, and holds as premise that the line from past to future may be interrupted to permit for new directions and new becomings.

## **Relating to Readers of Youth Studies, Research Methodology and Drama Pedagogy**

The authors of the book bring together a number of fields of interest. Scholars of youth studies may come to this text with a chief interest in the findings about global citizenry and the production of radical hope, asking: *What do these young people have to say about the intersection between hope and citizenry? What findings do the researchers have to offer about the conditions that foster hope in times of precarity and despair, and of threats to the planet, and to the social, economic and physical wellbeing of its peoples?* Those with an avid interest in the use of participatory and embodied research methodologies may come to this text to learn about the affordances of the methodology, asking: *How were the drama-informed methods worked to position young people in a sustained enquiry into the central ontological, ethical and ecological questions of our age?* A third field of educators and scholars may come to the text with an interest in the use of drama and theatre education as a transformative contribution in the lives of young people. They will be interested to encounter here insights from those leading the pedagogical interventions, asking: *How can the pedagogical methods within drama and theatre education be harnessed to enliven critical consciousness and an orientation towards civic contribution?*

Those concerned to learn about the production of radical hope will gain insight into the nexus between hope and relational experiences of listening and care. Those concerned to better understand agency and citizenry will see evidence of the ways in which emancipatory energy can be generated through collective enquiry and further fostered through the use of performative methods designed to share the insights of enquiry with wider audiences. Those interested in the use of drama-based methods as tools for collaborative enquiry will see that artistry is as relevant in methodology as it is in pedagogy. They will encounter ways in which an

interest in the ethics and aesthetics of youth ‘voice’ can be operationalized through the use of affective and embodied techniques found within verbatim theatre, oral history and group devising processes. They will note the ways in which individual and collectively held narratives can be investigated, interpreted, and communicated through metaphor, analogy, and other forms of creative dramatic play. Those looking from the perspective of drama education will relish the rich accounts from practitioner–researchers about the methods they used to engage and sustain a deep enquiry whilst also fostering skills in the use of theatre as a medium.

## **Enacting a Methodological Commitment to Deep Listening**

Those who come with a particular interest in participatory methodology will be aware that there has been a long history of attention to the importance of activating ‘youth voice’ when researching with young people. The activation of ‘voice’ has been championed as a marker of quality, authenticity, excellence, and relevance in research. This book reaches beyond a focus on voice, to provide a sustained methodological focus on ways in which the conditions of ‘listening’ come to shape the nature and depth of the encounter. The investigators advance insights about the integral nexus between listening and speaking, between audience and performer, between positioning and power relations. They work from the premise that it is not only the framing of the question that creates the space for enquiry, but that methods themselves are inherently social and political, and they exert a governance upon the knowledge and relationality that can be created.

One of the most distinctive offerings of this book lies in its rich illustration of the pedagogical design employed to structure the commitment towards ‘listening’. Kathleen Gallagher describes this method of listening as a ‘turning towards’ and a ‘being with’. It is a deeply relational pedagogical method for opening and sharing via the use of metaphor, play, story, and performance.

The choice within the project to hold open the enquiry across years, and across cohorts of young people, shows a commitment to deep and sustained listening. However, the listening design brought to this project is more than the listening of researcher to researched, important as that is. The strategy here has been to use dialogic, embodied, and drama-based methods to create a space of deep listening amongst and between the young participants themselves. The workshop design provides a participatory process of enquiry and devising, providing the young people themselves with a substantial period of time within which to dwell in the enquiry and to shape their response. The attention to deep listening in the project also extends to consideration of the audiences of the performed works. Theatre-based modes of communication are used to invite audiences to listen affectively, politically, collectively, and imaginatively.

## **Employing an Embodied Aesthetic Within Critical Enquiry**

This is deeply engaged research, rich with empirical data and carrying a clear social justice agenda. In the tradition of critical pedagogy and critical inquiry, it aims to make a difference in the lives of its participants and a difference to their capacity to make a change for good in their worlds.

The positioning of young people as active agents in the construction and communication of knowledge about their lives is central to the epistemological, aesthetic and ethical design of the project. In each of the five countries, the young people participated in a series of dialogic workshops in which they explored the social and political conditions that shaped their identities. They explored the intersections between issues of concern to them within their immediate micro-worlds and those operative within the larger macro-forces impacting on their families and communities. Under the guidance of the practitioner-researchers, the young people used the traditions of Verbatim Theatre, Oral History Performance, and Collective Devising to create performances through which to share their vision about changes needed to create a more socially just world. The collective effort of devising performance works through which to communicate their concerns to a wider audience had the young people working across the research, analysis, and reporting cycles normally preserved for the adult researcher working in youth contexts.

The partnerships between teacher, artist, and researcher are not only framed across the adult research team. They are also replicated within the sites of practice, with the young people also positioned as artist-researchers, whose mission it is to investigate each other's experiences and views, and to fashion their findings in such a way as to educate and activate their audiences. The emphasis on activation of citizenry is central to the enquiry, as the practitioner-researchers seek to explore what drives young people to action within their worlds whilst also using the drama-based medium to provide a vehicle for direct influence within their communities.

## **Inviting a Diffractive Reading**

The introductory chapter traces a number of the key concepts explored across the text and the interest of the research team in investigating young people's engagement with a sense of global citizenry in neoliberal times. It sets a focus on the use of arts methodologies within a relational form of youth research which positions participants and researchers alike as the sense-makers at work to interpret their experiences. An overarching view of the meta-project is then provided by Kathleen Gallagher. She introduces the socially engaged collaborative methodology which informs the transnational research design. She describes the ways in which methodological leadership was passed between a number of collaborators, each of

whom offered a different drama-based method through which to elicit the experiences and insights of young people. She takes us to each of the research sites, offering an initial sampling of the transformative methods of creative enquiry and the ways in which they enable a focus on young people in the process of becoming. She demonstrates the contribution to youth research that is made available when young people are studied within a set of sustained and creative peer relationships. She works the concept of ‘creative resilience’ as a collective generative engagement which permits for both critical thinking and co-creation of possibilities for action and care. She highlights the ways in which the creative and performative methods permit for investigation of the fluid, emergent, and social nature of identities and offer a unique way to investigate hope, as it emerges at the ‘borderland between real and imagined’.

Following this framing of the meta-project and its research questions, the remaining chapters in part one present case stories of the research conducted variously in schools, tertiary education, or community settings. These chapters illustrate the contribution of playful, drama-informed methods in evoking listening, thinking, enquiry and collective voice. These chapters are written by the practitioner–researchers. The term ‘practitioner’ is used here to signify that the investigators are artists and/or educators, as well as researchers. They are dramatists and theatre-makers, with the pedagogical skill set and experience derived from the traditions of education and crafting in drama and theatre arts. In this, they are adept at bringing performance-based methods to both the object and the method of their enquiry. Their location as practitioner–researchers means that they are also ideally positioned to invest in sustained relational work and to pursue transformative outcomes for the young people in their various school, university, and out-reach or community-based settings.

These chapters take you into the worlds of young people. In each instance, the author foregrounds the intersections between the events occurring within their broader sociopolitical context and the experiences that young people are encountering within their micro-worlds. The enquiries with the young people thus encompass attention to the political, economic and social conditions within which they are experiencing their lives. The pivot between macro and micro connects the personal and the political and invites attention to citizenry and to the awareness of self as both acted upon and actor in the world.

The use of Verbatim Theatre, Oral History Performance, and Collective Devising affords young people the opportunity to explore collective experience, without negating the input of individual biographies. The individual contribution is harnessed, but also augmented, by its location in a larger work designed to have a cognitive and affective impact on the audience. Its audience-centric focus, and the shared work of communication carried between and via the bodies of the performers, works the relational enquiry into an outward-facing relational encounter. Here, the aesthetic traditions of theatre are harnessed to heighten the impact of the messages, insights, and experiences that the young people want to convey. Through this ensemble work, the micro or the exemplar can be worked to also signify the macro or the patterned nature of the story. The authors provide insights into the methods used to pivot from specific to general, using various performance traditions of movement, song, poetry, analogy, parody, symbolism, and metaphor as well as narrative. Using these methods,

they demonstrate that the affective poetics of the research event can be used to carry meaning and create impact for both audiences and players.

This book has been designed for a diffractive reading. The insights from the case stories of part one are deepened by the chapters in part two, which work more intensively an exploration and critique of elements of method and analysis. These chapters are also authored by artist–practitioner–researchers who bring a keen eye to the intersections between artistry, method and analysis. Many of the chapters highlight the importance of relational rituals and practices of care within research encounters, analysing the methods which work to honour and safeguard diversity whilst also evoking intimacy and agency. Contributions are made about how to trace the sensual and affective responses of multiple participants and the ways in which they contribute to the evolution of intimacy and connectedness between young people, the subject matter, and the researchers. Issues of relatedness and response in research are discussed in the context of employing a responsive methodology that is capable of following the preferences of participants when they depart from the initial interest of the researchers. Explicit focus is given to the process of knowledge co-creation, reciprocity, and reflexivity that is called into play between researchers in a large team who work also with a large group of youth who are also positioned as co-investigators of the issues affecting their lives. Deep consideration is offered about the ways in which metaphors emerge and are harnessed within storytelling and the challenges that can be encountered working them in linguistic and cross-cultural translation within a transnational study. Contributions are made about the use of quantitative data to measure the affective nature of *communitas* and about the use of familiar metaphors and language through which to feed findings into a research ensemble primarily using arts-based qualitative methods to explore the connections between hope, care, and belonging. Each of the contributions deals in some way with the importance of harnessing aesthetic contributions and modalities within data analysis and representation, and significant contributions are made within these chapters to discussions about the use of theatre-making and embodied performances as a tool to communicate and amplify research findings.

## **Producing the Possibility of Radical Hope**

The researchers in this wide-reaching study find that radical hope is sustained through caring collective interactions which focus on a shared effort to examine what is so and to communicate about what could be brought to pass to make the world a better place. When this collective voicing is aesthetically and thematically worked up by the participants into forms of performance, it makes a contribution to audience as well as to players. Additionally, the work to fashion embodied and crafted performances derived from their life experiences permits young people to encounter their own agency and voice and their sense of an ethics of care. The collaborative process and the deep collective listening brought to bear fosters an

experience of care, which in turn fosters radical hope. The collective construction and articulation of an imaginary for change foster the response-ability which can be understood to propel ethical and agentic citizenry.

Can a reading of this book itself produce the possibility of radical hope? For me, it makes evident the possibility of joy and power in education and research partnerships. It enlivens my own delight in the use of participatory methods which enrich in the doing as well as in the reporting. It energizes my hope in the capacity of teachers to nurture an ethics of contribution with and for their students. It adds evidence to my belief that at this time in history, we are in greater need than ever of access to embodied, collective and participatory forms of critical enquiry. It enlivens because the works in this collection evidence ways in which arts-informed educative and research methods can activate a shared ethical imagination.

Gallagher and her team provide important pointers towards the contribution that collective creative endeavours can make within pedagogies for social change. They highlight the contribution of creativity at the nexus of ethics and agency within emancipatory endeavours. Their body of research contributes to a growing awareness that a grand interruption is needed to disrupt the neoliberal premises which underpin the focus on the individual human subject. The works invite us to recognize that our imaginations need nurture and expression, such that a new inventiveness towards justice, respect and planetary responsibility might in time come to characterize the turn of an era.

For those seeking methodologies that might contribute to the generation of hope, Gallagher suggests that investigation of the “borderland between the real and imagined is possibly one of our most hopeful ways forward in a world that can seem intent on disappearing itself” (p. 43). In this, she signals the importance of finding research methods capable of attending to the ethical yearnings of young people. In doing so, she opens an invitation for educators and researchers alike to find ways to elicit, engage and enact a radical imaginary for ethical global citizenry. The impact of this text will lie in the response that they make towards answering this compelling call.

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We dedicate this book to the 250 young people across our research sites in Canada, India, Taiwan, Greece and England who not only warmly welcomed us into their creative spaces but also taught us immense lessons about what it means to imagine other ways of being, to defy structural and systemic forms of injustice, to open doors and hearts in dark times. You have allowed us to witness your extraordinary acts of self-creation and community-building. Your contributions to this project and the practice and examination of *radical hope* surpassed our wildest research dreams.

# Contents

<b>Introduction: A Situated, Ethical, Imaginative Doing and Being in the Encounter of Research</b> . . . . .	1
Kathleen Gallagher, Dirk J. Rodricks and Kelsey Jacobson	
<b>Listening to Youth Differently</b>	
<b>Art, Collaboration, and Youth Research in a Collapsing World: Conceiving and Enacting a Multi-vocal Research Project in the Borderland of the Real and the Imagined</b> . . . . .	23
Kathleen Gallagher	
<b>“Listen! We Have Something to Say!” Researching Collaborative Co-creation with Youth Using Oral History and Devising in a Disunited Kingdom</b> . . . . .	47
Rachel Turner-King	
<b>Methodology as ‘Resistance Aesthetics’: Young Girls in Lucknow, India Talk Back to Patriarchy</b> . . . . .	67
Urvashi Sahni	
<b>From Personal to Political—Taiwanese Youth Navigating Multiple Identities and Renegotiating Confucian Ethics Through Documentary and Ethno-Theatre Methodology</b> . . . . .	89
Wan-Jung Wang	
<b>The Politics of Care in Indifferent Times: Youth Narratives, Caring Practices, and Transformed Discourses in Greek Education Amid Economic and Refugee Crises</b> . . . . .	111
Myrto Pigkou-Repousi	

**Thinking Across Space with Youth**

**A Method of Mis/Understanding: Translation Gaps, Metaphoric Truths, and Reflexive Methodologies . . . . . 135**

Kelsey Jacobson

**Hearing Athens Differently: Desire and Affect in the Methodology of Digital Video Analysis . . . . . 155**

Christine Balt

**Methodology as a Practice: Radical Hope Methodologies in Motion Across Toronto and Coventry . . . . . 175**

Nancy Cardwell

**Methodology in 3D: Commensality and Meaning-Making in a Global Multi-sited Applied Drama Ethnography . . . . . 197**

Dirk J. Rodricks

**Performative Measures: An Exploration of Cross-Pollinating Drama and Quantitative Research . . . . . 219**

Scott Mealey

**A New Hearing: Representation and Relationship in the Making of *Towards Youth: A Play on Radical Hope* . . . . . 245**

Andrew Kushnir

**Afterword . . . . . 267**

**References . . . . . 273**

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**Dirk J. Rodricks** is a queer/khush Desi with ancestors from southern India and a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. He holds a B.A. (magna cum laude) in Theatre

and a M.Ed. in Higher Education from the University of Vermont. He has co-authored a monograph on critical race theory in higher education, contributed chapters to edited volumes on postsecondary campus ecologies, critical youth pedagogies and creativity education and has published with *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance (RiDE)*, *Youth Theatre Journal* and *Qualitative Inquiry*. He also co-edited the recent issue of *RiDE, On Access in Applied Theatre and Drama Education* with Colette Conroy and Adelina Ong. Committed to learning across difference through critical race and de/colonial pedagogies, his research interests include multiply marginalized young adult identity formations in transnational contexts, inter-generational ethno-racial and queer inheritances and de/colonizing qualitative methodologies.

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# List of Figures

## **Art, Collaboration, and Youth Research in a Collapsing World: Conceiving and Enacting a Multi-vocal Research Project in the Borderland of the Real and the Imagined**

Fig. 1 Overview of global Radical Hope project. . . . . 29

## **“Listen! We Have Something to Say!” Researching Collaborative Co-creation with Youth Using Oral History and Devising in a Disunited Kingdom**

Fig. 1 Dress rehearsal of Philippe and Brian’s object-memory duo.  
*Photo credit* Hanzhi Ruan, 2016 . . . . . 52

Fig. 2 Capturing CYT’s emergent ideas. *Photo credit* Rachel  
Turner-King, 2017 . . . . . 56

Fig. 3 Lisa’s first draft to the Prime Minister (left) and the response  
from the Office of the Prime Minister (right). *Photo credit* Rachel  
Turner-King, 2016 . . . . . 59

Fig. 4 The Last Newspaper in performance.  
*Photo credit* Peter Marsh, 2017 . . . . . 59

## **Methodology as ‘Resistance Aesthetics’: Young Girls in Lucknow, India Talk Back to Patriarchy**

Fig. 1 Performance of Izzat at the Indra World Youth Congress  
in Plymouth, England in July 2015. *Photo credit* Study Hall  
Educational Foundation, 2015 . . . . . 84

## **A Method of Mis/Understanding: Translation Gaps, Metaphoric Truths, and Reflexive Methodologies**

Fig. 1 Rehearsal with Taiwanese youth, Canadian researchers pictured  
in background—Tainan, November 2016. *Photo credit* Andrew  
Kushnir, 2016. . . . . 145

### **Hearing Athens Differently: Desire and Affect in the Methodology of Digital Video Analysis**

- Fig. 1 Objects travelling around the circle during the process drama. *Photo credit* Dirk J. Rodricks, 2017. . . . . 164

### **Methodology as a Practice: Radical Hope Methodologies in Motion Across Toronto and Coventry**

- Fig. 1 The Regal Heights Collegiate youth rehearsing their devised piece. *Photo credit* Nancy Cardwell, 2017. . . . . 186
- Fig. 2 Story circle in progress with the Canley youth. *Photo credit* Dirk J. Rodricks, 2016. . . . . 190

### **Methodology in 3D: Commensality and Meaning-Making in a Global Multi-sited Applied Drama Ethnography**

- Fig. 1 Lunchtime at the home of Dr. Urvashi Sahni in Lucknow, India. *Photo credit* Andrew Kushnir. . . . . 202
- Fig. 2 Dinner in the garden at The Turner-King's the day after the Brexit referendum. *Photo credit* Dirk J. Rodricks. . . . . 207
- Fig. 3 Eating together. Our first encounter with Drama Club students from a school in a Greek suburb. *Photo credit* Dirk J. Rodricks. . . . . 208
- Fig. 4 Callista's recipe for Bougatsa, a Greek sweet. *Photo credit* Dirk J. Rodricks. . . . . 214

### **Performative Measures: An Exploration of Cross-Pollinating Drama and Quantitative Research**

- Fig. 1 Radical hope MDS common space: initial solution and hope items (40 variables) . . . . . 232
- Fig. 2 Radical hope MDS common space with dimensions and key variables. . . . . 235

### **A New Hearing: Representation and Relationship in the Making of *Towards Youth: A Play on Radical Hope***

- Fig. 1 A still from the production of *Towards Youth: A Play on Radical Hope*; actors: Emilio Vieira in foreground. From left: Aldrin Bundoc, Zorana Sadiq, Amaka Umeh, Lorretta Yu, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Liisa Repo-Martell. *Photo credit* Aleksander Antonijevic, 2019. . . . . 259
- Fig. 2 Zorana Sadiq playing Bruce in *Towards Youth: A Play on Radical Hope*. *Photo credit* Aleksander Antonijevic, 2019. . . . . 260

# List of Tables

**Art, Collaboration, and Youth Research in a Collapsing World:  
Conceiving and Enacting a Multi-vocal Research Project in the  
Borderland of the Real and the Imagined**

Table 1 Overview of data sets in the Radical Hope project. . . . . 35

**“Listen! We Have Something to Say!” Researching Collaborative  
Co-creation with Youth Using Oral History and Devising  
in a Disunited Kingdom**

Table 1 A comparison between Cases 1 and 2 . . . . . 51

# Introduction: A Situated, Ethical, Imaginative Doing and Being in the Encounter of Research



Kathleen Gallagher, Dirk J. Rodricks and Kelsey Jacobson

**Abstract** In this introductory chapter, we begin by familiarizing readers with the key terms and concepts of the Radical Hope Research Project. Setting the context of the transnational research, situated in Canada, Taiwan, India, England, and Greece, we then consider some of the current complexities of research encounters with young people across diverse geographies and cultures. Centring theatre-making as a fundamental methodology of the project, we also ponder the larger question of the role of aesthetic expression in social science research. We conclude by offering readers a roadmap for the chapter contributions, underscoring the diverse social and scholarly locations of our research collaborators.

## Choosing Words

*Radical Hope: Investigating Global Youth Citizenry through Community-Engaged Research and Performative Methodologies* is a title that demands some unpacking, not least because it reads straightforwardly. But what belies the simplicity of this title is contention about nearly every single word innocently declared. The ambition of the book is to think with theory about the performative methodologies of our research and reflect upon how our work stands in relationship to the communities with whom we work.

The very notion of ‘global,’ with its sweeping and conclusive weight, hearkens the march of ‘our times’ but conceals its deeply asymmetrical relations and processes,

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especially the version of globalization with most currency now—neoliberal globalization. ‘Youth,’ a contested term with slippery meanings dependent on context, favored in North America over its European cousin, ‘young people,’ demands further contextualizing and, especially, an explanation as to why, as editors of this book, we are choosing the term ‘youth’ over ‘young people’ in the title. Simply, we favor what to our ears is the activity embedded in the word ‘youth,’ both a category and a call to action as it is used in many North American contexts and in the always-already political nature of discourse concerning young people, especially when they are mobilized as ‘our future’. To our ears, ‘young people’ assigns too much agency to the ‘namers,’ adults who modify the general term ‘people’ with ‘young,’ a diminutive version of people and veering too close to the paternalism so pervasive in studies about them.

‘A citizenry’: what could possibly be made of this term in these deeply divisive times? Times wherein political and social action is very much re-making itself of necessity, as long-revered institutions and global leaders everywhere take us all on a new course for which our steady understandings of citizenry have been called into question and are under threat. In truth, it has always been an exclusive word with insiders and outsiders, now a fact made more obvious with reactionary immigration policies and forced migration across the globe. And what of a ‘youth citizenry,’ the very idea that youth as an adjective makes something different of citizens? The reader would be right to ask whether, in these conditions of growing inequality and alt-right racism, the notion of a ‘global youth citizenry’ is a mere fantasy, an unrealizable ideal.

In thinking theoretically about the *doing* of research, the pragmatic and performative aspects of our methodology, we are not aiming to generalize from our very context-specific choices but rather to re-center the people, the communities and the imaginative and deeply creative work of our collaborative network. The pause we have taken, as we move into the final year of the five-year study, to wonder why an evolution of actions has unfolded among groups of people leading to particular understandings has become a crucial hiatus for us as researchers. And, our impulse to recognize this intermission in sense-making to reflect upon methodology has come, we would suggest, from our privileging in our research process of art and art-making, which is nothing if not about making choices.

To announce ourselves, right off the top, as ‘community-engaged’ researchers means that we have operated from a place of relationship in our methodological moves; we have privileged not only the people in the room with us but the communities beyond our research spaces which they relate to, care about, are answerable to. The impulses embedded in our ‘methodologies,’ our ‘ways of working,’ come not only from our personal desires and philosophical orientations and from those who are gathered in the room with us, but also from our past research, which has very much taught us to value a young person’s care-taking activities of others—family members, communities, friends—if we wish to understand anything about that young person.

Finally, what is ‘radical’ about the hope we speak to in this book is not that it is grandiose or cutting-edge or revolutionary but that it is a committed, daily practice, often in the face of great adversity. This most critical lesson was taught to us by

young people who understand that hope is an action, not a possession, a verb not a noun. And it is, at its most radical, not a future imagining but a practice of the present.

## Background Context

Our prior study discovered, through quantitative surveys nested within a multi-sited qualitative ethnographic study across drama classrooms in Canada, the United States, Taiwan, and India, that students' 'caring' activities outside school had a very strong correlation with their in-school engagement. In fact, family and caring activities that occurred outside of school was the single most consistently correlated variable within the entire study (see Gallagher, 2014). Our current study, *Youth, Theatre, Radical Hope and the Ethical Imaginary: An Intercultural Investigation of Drama Pedagogy, Performance and Civic Engagement* (2014–2019), the study upon which this book is based, has allowed us to follow that riddle, to more carefully examine how, when, and under what conditions young people invest in their learning and their civic commitments. What is occurring, we have asked, during those caring interactions and why is it significant to academic engagement and other positive social trajectories? In turn, how might caring and democratic engagement in the drama classroom support civic engagement beyond school? How is identity shaped by these altruistic activities, we wondered? How does the study of care-taking by youth open up questions researchers of youth might ask themselves? And, importantly, how is care understood and lived across different social locations marked by gender, class, caste, race, and ability?

In that prior study, we first came to understand a kind of profound hope operating in the direst circumstances and conditions in both the Asian and the North American schools of that study. This phenomenon presented us with a deep curiosity about the place of hope for youth in a time of overlapping global crises (financial, social, political, and ecological). For Mouffe and Laclau (2002), the idea of hope is linked to the existence of political alternatives. Similar to Mouffe and Laclau's proposal, what we had learned in that earlier study was that hope was not a state, but a practice, of the most resilient youth we met, a way of working that slowly came to circulate, often in unanticipated ways, as the struggle to create something together took hold. Through drama, a walk in another person's words became, in striking instances, the source of radical hope. How might such deep-rooted hope be more intentionally mobilized, more deliberately cultivated, we wondered? How might adults practice hope together with young people? And what practices of hope acknowledge, but are not reduced by, the precarity and insecurity of community life inside and outside schools and youth organizations? How does this hope live uncomfortably alongside disappointment and disengagement (see Gallagher, 2007; Gallagher, Freeman, & Wessels, 2010)? In what ways, we continued to ask, do students come to practice hope, in the micro-ecologies of classrooms or theatre studios when broader neoliberal experiences of individualism and technologies of divisiveness threaten its very sustainability?

## The Neoliberal

In Harvey's (2005) now classical text *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, he unpacks for readers the *construction of consent* which, he argues, has been central to the enduring power of neoliberalism and its role in the transformation of institutions and systems globally. Of course, both ideological and cultural mechanisms globally can vary widely, but they all have produced the principal edict that there is no alternative to neoliberalism. Though these individual mechanisms—bribery, coercion, corruption, propaganda etc.—can be powerful, it is the quality of everyday experiences that provide the most powerful grounding for the construction of consent. Neoliberalism has perpetrated many so-called common-sense understandings, not the least of which, Harvey argues, is that it is not only a necessary but a *natural* way for the social order to be regulated. "Any political movement," writes Harvey, "that holds individual freedoms to be sacrosanct is vulnerable to incorporation into the neoliberal fold" (p. 41).

And here is where neoliberalism can be challenged by a research methodology that privileges what can be known by a group, through a process of creating in that group, which draws both on what is given and what can be imagined. Neoliberalism, though deeply embedded in social life, cannot wholly colonize the imagination, and especially the imagination of a young person who has, increasingly, every reason to question the social order as given. Harvey proposes:

Values of individual freedom and social justice are not, however, necessarily compatible. Pursuit of social justice presupposes social solidarities and a willingness to submerge individual wants, needs, and desires in the cause of some more general struggle for, say, social equality or environmental justice. (p. 41)

Theatre-making is born of a temporary culture. At its simplest, and for a limited time, people come together and use the language of theatre to tell a story. For researchers, the temporal is also very much at play but is imperfectly acknowledged. As researchers, we are coming together with research participants, for a time, to encounter one another and to see what we can make of that encounter. In both activities, we provoke emotional sensibilities through inter-personal, embodied engagement. In the drama workshop, there is a kind and quality of peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student and artist-to-youth interaction where the pursuit of a common goal through working together, rather than merely being together, is prized. There are rites and rituals, dialogic exchange and opportunities for deliberation that invite young people to face difference from a position of solidarity, to face conflict from a desire to understand others through collectively created work. They confront daily what Harvey has signaled as the everyday struggle between individual freedom and social justice that neoliberalism has intensified. What could our research methodology, which uses various models of theatre-making, tell us about how that struggle is unfolding for young people at this time of heightened social and economic polarization? How can this creative work be understood as a rehearsal for the public sphere? What can we learn about youth today through the ways they may transfer to the

wider world these protean democratic ways of working that use social difference as a creative and political resource?

## The Global

Tomes have been written on globalization, its processes and outcomes. As the world continues to polarize and entrench global inequalities, or what Sassen (2002) has articulated as the hidden infrastructure of globalization, we have found much strength in Spivak's (2012) thinking on the question of globalization in her singular meditation on the subject in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. This work is especially important to our methodological reflections here not only because she has found the methodical polarities of tradition/modernity and colonialism/postcolonialism wanting but, in this work, she has also reflected on her own thinking over the last twenty years and radically reoriented towards what she is calling 'an aesthetic education' as the last instrument for implementing global justice and democracy. Our drama as a *doing methodology* is akin to Spivak's prescription for an undoing of the worst of neoliberal globalization and the best of what the humanities and social sciences can remarkably offer: a situated, ethical, imaginative doing and being in the encounter of research.

Spivak recites a Kipling poem: "Oh, East is East, and West is West,/And never the twain shall meet." "The problem now," she goes on, however, "is that in globalization, with the disappearance of 'East' and 'West,' North and South do meet" (p. 339). The adverse social and economic grounding of that encounter, however, as we have seen throughout our research, has entrenched inequality, hegemony, and heightened uniformity. Extrapolating on the powerful concept of 'hospitality,' used by Arendt and Derrida, Spivak rather lands upon a different idea in her efforts to minimize the either/or mindset of globalization: wealthy/requiring foreign aid, citizen/migrant, polarities left intact and further mobilized by capitalism and global exploitation, writing "If we imagine ourselves as planetary accidents rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us, it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away..." (p. 339).

## Youth Methodologies

There are a great many models of 'youth research' and indeed ways of working with youth that are built from a wide range of value systems, political and philosophical orientations (see Furlong, 2013). When we realized, in the context of our project conceptions and in what ultimately unfolded in our ways of working with the youth in our study—our methodology—that the privileging of *the encounter* with young people would guide us, (and especially our meta-context of the heightened encounter realized through art-making and the sharing of original stories as re-created through

theatrical story-telling), we landed upon the methodological orientation that would turn us towards young people and their relevant communities in ways that would ultimately change us as researchers. The metaphorical play of our research work meant not only that we would learn things differently, as researchers, but that we would be learning entirely different things, that we were allowing ourselves to be changed by the young people with whom we were working and learning, that learning ‘about them’ is inextricably linked to learning about our own orientations towards them, in the so-called ‘adult world’ in its alignments or misalignments with youth. Irigaray (2013) might herself have been on our research team with this utterly apt version of our important research methodology discovery:

How can we both preserve and develop our freedom as humans? It is precisely by cultivating the between-us, but not only as individuals who simply belong to a same people... Rather it is at every moment, in the relation with the one whom we are meeting, that we must cultivate the energy born thanks to this encounter... Starting from desire we can do so many things, and first of all become humans, alone and together, always safeguarding the relationship between two different beings. (p. 21)

While this sets us up in our research orientation, it does something more. It requires us to ask, what IS the relation between us? What is its nature? On what grounds do we come together in such an encounter? What is the role of histories of contact between so-called different beings in the present moment? And how are all these weighty concerns considered if the encounter is unfolding ‘in the name of research’ with its own troubled history (see Gallagher & Kim, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). We recognize that from the start, we are asking questions about the kind of relations between beings for whom the investments and stakes are different and sometimes unknowable to each other. In addition to our active attempts to subvert the extraction model of research, our compulsion to learn about and from young people through metaphor, through play, through craft, through indirect story-telling, through embodied knowing, through creative exploration changed how we would come to know things and what we thought it interesting to know. These choices interrupted certain research norms and practices as what we had presumed would be useful or interesting or important to know with and about young people became a more open question. As if intuiting our belief in the wisdom of art itself, Irigaray goes on:

Transforming our needs into desire requires the mediation of art, in our gestures, in our words, in all our ways of relating to ourselves, to the other(s), to the world... Art does not amount to a kind of unnecessary work that is suitable only for some artists. Art ought to be a basic daily undertaking carried out by everyone for passing from nature to culture, from the satisfaction of instincts to a sharing of desire, that is, for preserving and cultivating the between-us. Art is more critical than morality if we are to enter a culture of humanity formed by beings-in-relation ... (p. 22)

## Research and Relationships

Relationships are central to the knowledge produced. We will take pains, in this book, to highlight just how fundamental our collaborative working method is to the study and its discoveries, and in turn, to this text. The Radical Hope Research Project, as noted, is undoubtedly concerned with relationships: our ethnographic practice is fed through relationships with participants as we turn *towards youth*. We also look for relationships between quantitative and qualitative data sets, and in analysis, we attempt to illuminate relationships between disparate points of data and theories in novel ways. This project, however, involves a particularly complex warp and weft of relations due to its composition as a collaboration between five international sites and more than seventeen collaborators and research assistants, all under the leadership of Dr. Kathleen Gallagher. We see lines of relationality not only from data point to data point, but also between and through the data, to each other: a team of individuals working together on the same project. Put differently, beyond 'data-driven' relationships, the Radical Hope Project also concerns relationships *between* researchers by virtue of its design as an international collaboration.

Early on, the project included a collaborators' meeting in Toronto, at which Dr. Urvashi Sahni, Dr. Wan-Jung Wang, Dr. Rachel Turner-King, Dr. Myrto Pigkou-Repousi, Emily Temple, and Nikos Govas all met with Dr. Gallagher, her team of research assistants (Lisa Aikman, Sherry Bie, Nancy Cardwell, Kelsey Jacobson, Scott Mealey, Dirk Rodricks, Rachel Rhoades), the Toronto site teacher Mr. L and our artist collaborator Andrew Kushnir in Toronto, Canada for a week of information sharing. Beyond site presentations from each collaborator about their work with the project's methodology, time was spent attending theatre, sharing meals, offering a public symposium on the beginnings of our project and our different research contexts, and discussing future possible writing projects. These opportunities for relationship-building between the researchers set the tone for the kind of relationally-driven practice the global scope of the project demanded. The requirement to frequently share video, text, and audio data using a digital communications platform, along with translations and contextualizing, meant that collaborative relationships were vital for access to data and to make a virtue of the 'virtual' travel to each other's worlds we could accomplish through our various technologies (see Gallagher & Freeman, 2012).

This deeply collaborative working style occurred locally as well: research assistants often sat side-by-side in the Toronto research lab and at times simultaneously coded the same video data. This enabled, as an example, the simultaneous close tracking of the movements of two students through a classroom as captured in one video segment, and for that comparison to unfold 'in real time.' This closeness (literally and figuratively) between researchers also meant that we could observe each other's analysis: we might re-code or pick up coding where a fellow research assistant had finished, each attuned to look for particular data points based on theoretical backgrounds and perspectives. One team member might note embodied reactions, while another noticed shifts in language during the same interview, both while coding

for ‘emotion.’ This collaboration resulted in an expansion of our possible analysis parameters and avenues of study.

By considering a single project through a multitude of individual researcher voices, this method of working throws into sharp focus the relationships between researchers that can exist in such a global, ethnographic project. Our project allows us to also consider, then, how such collaborative relationships intersect, intersperse, interrupt, and interrogate the relationships we find within the data. In other words, beyond a sense of what relationship we might have to ‘the work’ and ‘the data’ and ‘the participants’ there is also a strong sense of the value of the relationships among the individuals carrying out the research. If indeed you might write yourself into the work (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), what is the effect of seventeen voices being written into the same work? How might we write ourselves into each other’s work? The unique structure of the Radical Hope Project thus heightens awareness of the impacts of collaborative relationships, an increasingly popular mode of qualitative research (Gershon, 2009). The structure of both the project and this text also allows for an exploration of collaboration itself, as a distinct value of research, both its immense benefit and its potential for a “tyranny of collaboration” (Gallagher, 2018). Accordingly, in our analysis, we learned to pay close attention to times and spaces we shared that may regularly go unheeded; the interstitial moments as we drove as a group of researchers from location to location, ate a communal meal, or sat side-by-side in the lab, suddenly deeply relevant by virtue of our doing it together.

## Arts, Aesthetics, and Dramatic Truth

Significantly, this project, and this text, also delve into an ongoing debate about the purpose and place of aesthetic expression in research. The relationship between aesthetic expression and perceived ‘real’ data is complex; Liamputton and Rumbold (2008) point to arts-based methodologies as being “marginalized by the dominance of propositional knowing in research” (p. 2). The Radical Hope Project notably employs a drama methodology in its work with young people, and benefits from a close working relationship with our embedded playwright, Andrew Kushnir. The methods and outputs, therefore, are both closely tied to the arts and aesthetic expression: a connection we feel is vital.

This is in part because of the specific method of drama at work in the project: while drama is typically associated with illusion and fiction, the Radical Hope Study uses ‘theatre of the real.’ This is a genre that Martin (2013) describes as ‘recycling reality’ through its use of real words, real events, real stories, or real spaces in theatrical performance. The young people of our project used Verbatim Theatre (word-for-word interview transcripts), Oral History Performance (recounting stories from their personal lives), and Devised Theatre (working together to interpret and tell stories important to them) to reflect their lives and communicate their priorities. From the re-performance of police violence against people of color in North America, to a naturalistic presentation of a young man in Taiwan coming out to his parents, it was

often in the selection, interpretation, and fictionalization of figments from real life that the young people effectively communicated their reality.

It was thus, we found, often *through* the fictive that we were able to access a number of reals: the youth of our project used metaphor, image, and fiction to tell us and each other about their very real concerns, wishes, hopes, and desires. In the first year, for instance, the young people in our Toronto site interviewed each other about their hopes for the future. Their words—cut, spliced, and recombined by the students for performance—spoke to several themes: the desire to have a stable life; the drive to better the world; and the challenge of taking care of themselves and those around them. By virtue of this artistic process, these commonalities across individual interviews were both excavated and amplified. Combined with movement, choral speech, and theatrical staging, the ‘reality’ of the young people was presented to the entire school and community population at an Arts Night sharing, and the students were able to reflect on what their parents and peers’ reactions had been. Despite the theatricality of the performance, the students were communicating significant details about their ‘real’ selves. This example throws into relief the question of what truths and what realities a methodology centered in drama and theatre might offer to the study of youth and children. In what ways does a drama methodology offer real(s) that are additional to those of other qualitative and quantitative methods or as yet unknown even to the ‘research subjects’ themselves? This question of truth, realness, and reality is prescient not only in the work of the young people but also in our own consideration of methods used and the truths and reals they might excavate, obscure or represent. How does our ‘real,’ that is, our ‘real’ perceptions as researchers, interact with the ‘real’ of the data and the ‘real’ of the youth? We will illustrate in the following pages what it means to comprehend the ‘real’ in ways that interrupt many of the taken-for-granted understandings of traditional methods and methodologies of social science and humanities research, especially through the arts.

## **A Methodology of Adjust/Adjustment**

Listening is at the core of our practice in this project. Rawlins (2003), in an essay on listening in qualitative research, writes of listening as “a committed, active passivity ... the speaking constituted by listening only matters if you actually do hear, only if you allow the other person’s voice and stories to reach you, to change you” (p. 122). In this project, we extend Rawlins’ call to listen deeply by reflecting on how we respond to what we affectively receive and experience through the relational act of research. We draw on one of the core concepts that we first learned in Lucknow, when Urvashi characterized the activist work of the girls at Prerna as talking back to a society that asks them to ‘adjust’ to the social expectations that demean them. Our embedded playwright Andrew Kushnir then centralized the concept of ‘adjust’ in his documentary play based on the study; made of it a poetic metaphor. “‘Adjust’ is what youth are being told to do by the powers-that-be. It becomes dramatic when youth throw it back to the world and say, ‘No, you adjust.’” (Personal communication with Andrew,