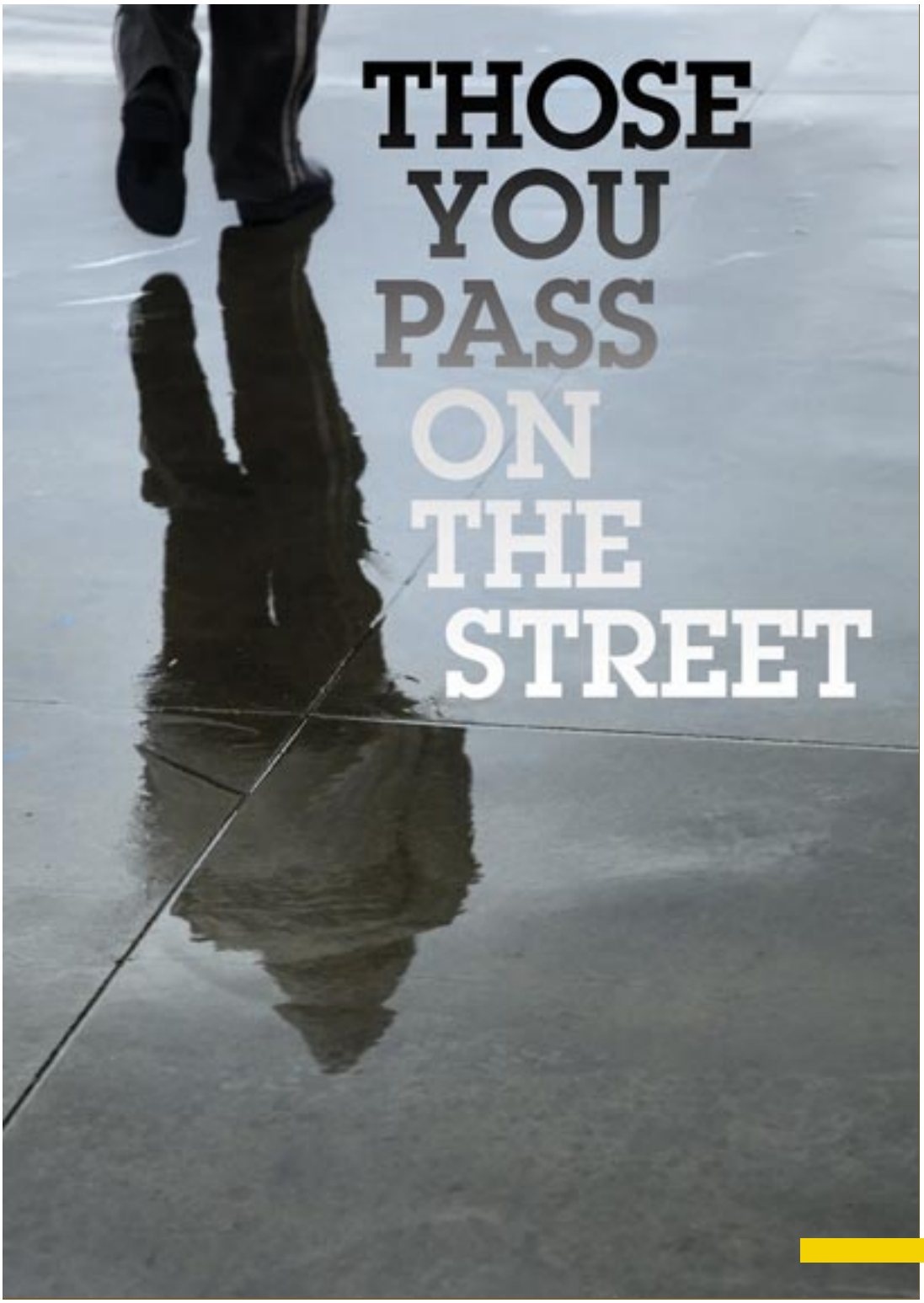
Healing Through Remembering

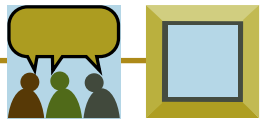
Conversation Guide

on Dealing with the Past

Additional workshops and resources relating to Storytelling section using drama Those You Pass on the Street (2014)



Basics: Storytelling [B4.9]



Storytelling – the use of the arts – drama, poetry, novels, films

In storytelling processes, aspects of peoples' own experiences are often used to create new stories that differ from their specific story. These projects nevertheless have roots in a person's 'true' story and may even be a composite of a number of peoples' experiences. This is particularly so in the arts; such stories are told through plays, novels, films, poems and so on. These less 'factual' but still accurate versions of past experiences are a useful way to create a space for people to discuss both personal experiences and how as a society we react to events and issues.

Group Conversation – Those You Pass on the Street

Purpose: to use monologues from the HTR commissioned drama Those You Pass on the Street as a way to create a space in which to explore contentious issues. This drama presents an opportunity to bring people to different places.

NB It is not necessary to see/read or understand the fuller drama to make use of these standalone monologues. You may like to remind your participants that there are no right answers to the discussion questions.

Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Prepare: There are six monologues available for this conversation that cover a range of themes. Read through the monologues and their accompanying questions and notes to decide which monologues to use as part of this exercise.

Task: Read through the synopsis and character descriptions with the workshop group. This will help them to imagine the characters and thereby provide context for discussion of ideas around storytelling and truth recovery and acknowledgement.

Part One

Select a member of the group to read the monologue(s) aloud (or the facilitator can read it). Each monologue has the potential to evoke a number of different ideas and interpretations depending on the experience of the listener.

Facilitators may also find it useful to photocopy the synopsis and monologue(s), and have participants read them silently before having someone read them aloud. Monologues for photocopying are at the end of the exercise.

Part Two

Each monologue is accompanied by a set of workshop questions as well as facilitators' notes which include more leading questions or issues for discussion if a group finds it difficult to begin the debate. Facilitators should use these questions as they see fit to encourage participants to explore the ways the monologues touch upon certain themes or meanings. Facilitators may find it useful to give time for personal reflection before group discussion.

Encourage participants to share their interpretations of the monologue(s), and how these meanings and interpretations relate to their own experiences, and also those of wider society, in dealing with the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Suggested monologues by theme: Facilitators are encouraged to select monologues that best fit the needs and context of their group. Below are suggestions for which workshops might work best together to address specific themes, and should act as a guide for facilitators in selecting monologues for different workshops.

- Families dealing with victimhood – Ann (1), Ann (2), Frank (2)
- 'New ways' versus 'old ways' – Elizabeth, Pat
- Roles in the conflict – Frank (1), Frank (2)
- Assumptions and trust – Ann (2), Pat
- Daily impact of the conflict – Elizabeth, Frank (2), Pat

Introduction: In March 2010, HTR commissioned Laurence McKeown to write a play illustrating complex issues presented by the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The drama addresses how a number of individual characters are dealing with the past relating to the conflict, but also examines wider themes that we all may consider. The monologues were commissioned as part of the drama but were also written in such a way that they could be used without any knowledge or experience of the fuller script.

Synopsis

Elizabeth (a Protestant), the widow of a (Catholic) RUC man killed by the IRA in 1992, walks into a Sinn Féin constituency office seeking assistance regarding anti-social behaviour in her area. **Frank** takes her details and promises to look into it himself as he knows the area.

Shortly afterwards **Frank** learns from his colleague, **Pat**, that **Elizabeth's** husband had been killed by the IRA. When **Frank** visits **Elizabeth** at her home some days later they get into conversation about what happened to **Elizabeth's** husband and also discuss their own personal lives.

Ann, **Elizabeth's** sister-in-law, is surprised and concerned that **Elizabeth** has gone to the local Sinn Féin office for assistance. She decides to contact the PSNI to report the behaviour herself, knowing that they will look after the widow of an RUC man.

When **Frank** discusses with Pat the conversation he had with **Elizabeth**, **Pat** advises him to tread carefully and not to get personally involved as there is the 'big picture' to think of and that if any agreed way of dealing with the past is to unfold, then republicans will need to have an agreed, structured and coherent approach to their involvement in it. **Frank**, however, feels the need to continue the conversations with **Elizabeth**.

'Those You Pass on the Street' explores the complexities of dealing with the legacy of a conflict that was very personalised and local. It contrasts party political positioning on any agreed way to deal with the legacy of that conflict with the individual needs and human interaction that has already begun at a personal level. Most importantly it challenges the view that any mechanism for dealing with the past is simply about 'whose side gets what' and shows that there is a need not just for inter-community but also intra-community engagement and reconciliation.

Character Descriptions

Frank
Frank is 39 years old (born in 1974) and comes from a republican family. He had an older brother, Gerard, (born 1964) who was a republican prisoner from 1980-1988 and who was killed in 1990 at the age of 25. Frank is a part-time activist for Sinn Féin.

Elizabeth (or Lizzie)
Elizabeth is 48 years old (born in 1965). She was married in 1985 to Michael, a Catholic RUC officer ten years her senior. Michael was killed by the IRA in 1992 at the age of 37. Michael and Elizabeth had two children, Mark (now 23) and Rebecca (now 21).

Ann
Ann is 55 and the sister-in-law of Elizabeth. Ann does not live in the same area as Elizabeth.

Pat
Pat is 47 (born in 1966) and a senior Sinn Féin strategist. He always sees 'the big picture' and looks 10 years down the road to where his party will be then rather than getting caught up with the issues of the moment. His attitude is that 'if it is not essential, then leave well alone'.

Monologues & Questions

ANN (1)

"I love her to bits - like a sister - but there's times she just doesn't think. A few months ago she decided she'd redecorate the bathroom. She never liked the tiles so what does she do one day but rip them all off, took half the plaster off with them. And you want to see the ones she was going to replace them with. Luckily I arrived and we went and chose something a bit more appropriate. But this. I blame myself in some ways. She mentioned the hassle she was having but made light of it. I should have known it was troubling her. I should have kept a closer eye on things, took the initiative. There's an old friend of Michael's. He still has good connections. We'll get something done."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss what you think this monologue tells us about the relationship between these two women, both impacted by the conflict.
- As a society, how do we express our care and concerns for those most affected by the conflict?

Facilitators Notes:



- Do you imagine that Elizabeth appreciates Ann's help?
- Discuss the difference between victim-centred, victim-led, and society-led initiatives for victims and survivors
- The definition of victim/survivor; who counts as 'most affected'

ANN (2)

"The less said to Lizzie the better. I got reassurances my request would be acted upon promptly, given the circumstances. I said to mummy that I thought Lizzie was a bit down of late and that we should take the opportunity of the holiday to give her a bit of support. Mammy was saying it may be because Mark and Rebecca have now up and left home, have their own lives abroad. That Lizzie has too much time on her hands. Funny how mothers just know these things. We've agreed that every month one of us will go down at the weekend and stay over. It'll be a bit of company for her. Take her out of herself. And mother and I went out the other day and bought her a few surprises. Nothing grand, just some nice bath products and a new pair of slippers so she can pamper herself on holiday. We'll wait 'til we're over there to give them to her. Will be a nice surprise."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss what you think about Elizabeth and Ann's different approaches to solving the social problem (i.e., asking for help from Sinn Féin or the PSNI).
- What other tensions still exist in our society that are linked to our experience of the conflict?

Facilitators' notes:



- **NB** The first two lines in this monologue are key to the questions offered.
- Where in our society would you go or not go? Who will you engage with? Who do you trust?
- Assumptions we make about victims and survivors:
    - Ann tells us they think Elizabeth is 'a bit down' and say this is due to the fact that her children have left home. Is Ann ignoring (in what she says), or overemphasising (in what she does) the issue of Ann's dead husband?
    - Ann buying Elizabeth slippers to make her feel better.

FRANK (1)

"Gerard was my only brother and my hero growing up. He was 10 years older than me. I was the 'little surprise'. He was imprisoned in Long Kesh from '80 to '88. I'd go to visit him in jail and he always had something for me, money or chocolate, or something he made me. On my birthdays he'd give me a card that all his mates had signed. I had a collection of them over the years. I could rhyme off their names, still can. I had just turned 14 when he was released, June '88. We'd a big party in the Celtic Club for him. At one point he called me outside, "Frankie", he always called me Frankie, or kid, "you're going to have to rescue me." I said, 'Rescue you?' "From all these bloody aunts who want me to settle down now and get a job and start a family." He took me down the street to Flanaghan's pub, into the wee room at the back and bought me a pint of beer. Old Jimmy Flanaghan either didn't know it was for me or wasn't going to refuse Gerard. "Get that into you," Gerard said and as I lifted the glass he said, "We're going to have some good times you and me." We yarned about school, and football and he slegged me about girls and then we went back to the party. I think I floated back rather than walked. My big brother was out of jail, I had drank my first pint, had my first serious conversation with an adult and someone very respected by others. When we walked back into the club I seen everyone in a different light. I was now different. Things were going to be good. We went off camping a few weeks later, up to Donegal. He'd been up there at the Gaeltacht when he was at school and had learnt the Irish in jail so wanted to try it out on the locals. Didn't do so well. And it rained, constant. The tent was washed out and we had to stay in a hostel. But I'd have slept by the side of the road just to be with Gerard."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss how you think Frank's childhood memories and admiration for his brother influence his own behaviour and attitudes.
- How much, as individuals and as a society, are we still impacted by our relationships with or opinions of those affected by or involved in the conflict?

Facilitators' notes



- Why might Old Jimmy Flanaghan not have refused Gerard?
- What are the roots of Frank's admiration for his older brother (community status, older brother, returning to family, prison time?)
- What do you think Frank becomes/does because Gerard is/was his older brother?
- Explore roles:
  - 'Involved' versus 'affected'
  - Are we all either bystanders or players?

FRANK (2)

"Gerard wasn't out of prison all that long until it was clear he was back in the IRA. He became more serious, had places to go, would be gone for days. I noticed how anxious my mother would be when he wasn't in the house. I overheard her say to a friend of hers one day, 'At least when he was in prison I knew where he was. Knew he was safe.' I was angry with my mother for saying that and told Gerard about it but he just said, "Ach you know mum, she just wants us to be OK." Then the raids on the house started and he'd be taken away for 7 days interrogation. It was the norm then. And my mother would be down to the solicitors to have it documented. And on to the local priest, neither of which had any affect but I suppose it made her feel she was doing something.

Then in October 1990, he said he was going down South for a couple of days with a mate. My da gave him 20 punts before he left. He had it from the previous year when he and my mother went on the pilgrimage to Knock. He said, "Here, you might as well drink this. No good to me up here." A few days later we got a knock on the door. It was Jim, an old republican from the area. My mother said, "What is it Jim?" She knew something was up. He says, "It's Gerard. It's not good Rosie." And my mother says, "Was he in an accident? Is he OK?" And Jim says, "I'm sorry Rosie. He's dead. He's been shot." And my da says, "Where? When? Sure Gerard's down South." And Jim says, "He was shot by the IRA as an informer." At that point my mother screamed and shook her head and said, "No way, no way." My da took Jim out into the kitchen and I followed. Jim said, "I'm sorry John Joe to be the one to bring this news." He handed my da a small brown bag. There was some of Gerard's personal stuff in it. A cross and chain our granny had got him while in prison. A ring. And the 20 punt note my da had given him. He also took out a small tape recorder from inside his coat and said, "I can play this to you now John Joe or leave it until sometime later." My da just sat down at the table and nodded. It was only then he realised I was in the room. I walked over and sat down beside him.

Jim switched on the tape. It was Gerard speaking. He told how he had been stopped one time by a foot patrol and caught with some marijuana on him. He had been coming from a party the previous night and didn't even realise it was in his pocket. He was taken to the barracks. They told him they were going to charge him or, ... or he could work for them. He knew volunteers were not allowed to use drugs. If charged he would be disgraced and thrown out of the IRA so went along with the cops. They told him it would be nothing big, nothing more than they already knew, just confirming things for them. Then of course it got deeper and deeper. He cried on the tape. Said he was sorry, sorry for what he had done, sorry for the shame he had brought on the family. Then he said cheerio to each of us. 'Look after yourself kid. I love youse all. I'm sorry.'

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Jim switched off the tape and walked out the back door. My da and I sat there for I don't know how long. Until my mother walked in. We stayed there all night. Nobody spoke. I don't know where that night went. In the morning my mother switched on the radio at seven o'clock. The first item was about a naked and bound body found on the border in South Armagh. She switched the radio off and walked out.

Wakes in Ireland are well-known for their craic and stories about the deceased. Gerard's was silent. Few even stayed for the cup of tea and sandwich."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss the tensions you think might be experienced by Frank and Gerard's mother in her roles as a mother and as a republican.
- Do you think in our society we are prepared to accept different standards of morality/legality relating to the conflict?

Facilitators' notes:



- Why do you think people did not come to the wake?
- Explanation/justification by groups of their rationale
- The play was written by Laurence McKeown, who is a republican ex-prisoner. What impact does this have on the drama or how we view it?
- Morality/legality – i.e. the police getting Gerard to work for them; the response of the IRA to Gerard's role.

ELIZABETH

"It's like reading an old book time and time again, comforting, but never exciting. You know the plot, you know the characters, and most of all, you know the ending. Whereas a new book - might not be great, you might see through the plot after the first few pages, the characters might be weak or confusing but you won't know the full story until you read it. It might turn out to be brilliant, 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? Is it a world to be kept for that special time of day or night when you can secretly enter it unseen by family or friends? People who would never share your excitement of trying to find out what's on the next page or around the next corner? I've always wanted to go to Galway. I know very little about it but even the name of it appeals to me, Galway, Galway Bay. I've never been to the West of Ireland. In fact I've never been East or South either except for that teachers' conference in Drogheda and that was years ago. I know more about Scotland than I do about places that are only an hour's drive away. Maybe at heart I'm someone who likes to reread old books time and time again."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss why you think Elizabeth is considering reading 'new books' rather than 're-reading old books'.
- How much as society are we 'reading new books' rather than 're-reading old books'?

Facilitators' notes:

- How much, as individuals and as a society, are we still impacted in our everyday lives by the experience of the conflict? Are there places we have never been or would still not go?



PAT

"My engagements with the RUC over the years were, more than a little fractious to say the least. But these days I have quite a bit of contact with the PSNI. I sit on the local policing partnership as a Sinn Féin rep. The strange thing is, I find them like republicans in their approach to things. Probably because they're part of an organisation with command structures, roles and responsibilities. So in some sense it's easy enough to work with them. There's a few of them of course who don't hide the fact that it sticks in their craw republicans are round the table with them. Tough. But there's others who know we'll only get the type of policing we want if everyone's involved. Did I just say that. That I want policing?

It was after our last partnership meeting that the local District Commander asked if he could have a private word. Tim Hamilton. Decent enough guy from what I can make out. Has respect from his own but isn't afraid to engage with republicans either, publicly or privately, as long as it gets the right result - I think that's Tim's view. He says to me "Pat, there's a sensitive issue was raised with me the other day and I'd like to get your suss on it before taking it any further. It concerns the widow of an RUC man." And I says, "Mrs Farrell." And he says, "So you have some knowledge of it?"' And I says, "Oh aye, she called into our office. Apparently she was getting a bit of hassle from some kids but we were able to sort it out for her. Why? What did you hear?" And he says, "Well I certainly didn't hear that she called into your office." And of course I was on to him like a flash, "Why is there something wrong with her calling in to our office?" And he says, "I'm just saying that it was reported to me with a different slant on it. That she was being harassed and given that her husband was in the RUC ..." I says, "What?" And he says, "If you're telling me that the problem's sorted then I'm happy to leave it at that."

"This is the problem Tim. There's ones among you who still have the old RUC mentality. Have their view of how republicans behave and won't shift from that." And he says, "I'm not doubting that Pat but in this instance the allegation came from a family member." So that was the rug pulled from under my feet. It seems everyone's not being upfront with one another and that pisses me off. Lay it out on the table so we can all see what it is. It might be difficult and it might be painful and in fact it will be bloody painful but at least that way no one can say later that they weren't aware of all the facts. Someone needs to come clean with what's going on here."

Workshop questions:

- Discuss why you think Pat is upset.
- In this society, do we make too many assumptions about how people will act here and now in this society based on what we understand to be their role or experience in the conflict?

Facilitators' notes:

- Possible topics from question of why Pat is upset:
  - Relationship with Tim; distrust of RUC; embarrassment
  - As a society, do we need to "lay everything out on the table so that we can see what it is" so that despite it being "bloody painful" we can no longer say we "weren't aware of all the facts"?



Ann Monologues



ANN (1)

I love her to bits - like a sister - but there's times she just doesn't think. A few months ago she decided she'd redecorate the bathroom. She never liked the tiles so what does she do one day but rip them all off, took half the plaster off with them. And you want to see the ones she was going to replace them with. Luckily I arrived and we went and chose something a bit more appropriate. But this. I blame myself in some ways. She mentioned the hassle she was having but made light of it. I should have known it was troubling her. I should have kept a closer eye on things, took the initiative. There's an old friend of Michael's. He still has good connections. We'll get something done.

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Elizabeth Monologue



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Pat Monologue



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