

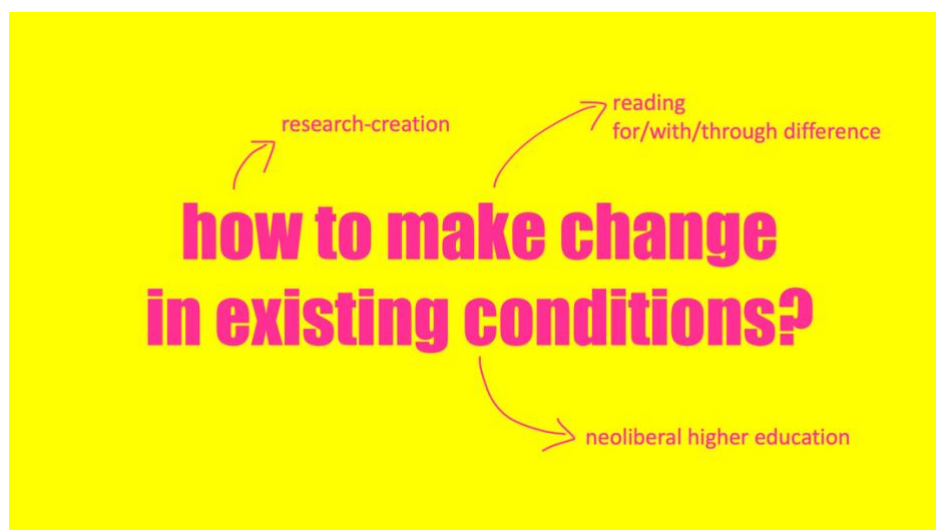
jxst reading | research-creation

jxst reading is a research-creation process I'm developing as part of my work with the Network Ecologies working group at CONNECT, the Research Ireland/SFI funded centre for future networks. This work was seeded in June 2024 at the TLR showcase, following the Keynote by Sara Clavero, Deputy Director of RINCE at TU Dublin EDI.



During her keynote, Dr. Clavero drew upon the work of philosopher Miranda Fricker, discussing the need to address the lived experiences of *epistemic injustice* in the context of teaching, learning and research in Higher Education. After the key note, during the coffee break, I was enthusing about how good it was to hear the question of epistemic injustice raised and I wondered how many people in the room were familiar with it. Dr. Selina Guinness (Head of Teaching and Learning at IADT) and Daithí Mac tSíghigh (Head of Strategic Projects at IADT) were near by and indulging me, to the point that Selina suggested 'why not start a reading group'?

My practice as a poet, teacher and researcher involves engaging with the following question: "how to make change in existing conditions?" And I want to propose jxst reading as one way to begin. But first, I need to define some terms.



I'll start with 'existing conditions' – the image in the background (below) shows the economist Friedrich Hayek teaching at the London School of Economics in 1948. It was Hayek's *Big Idea* to

conceptualise the world and everything in it as a market-place that laid the ground for neoliberal political economy as people experience it today.



In relation to Higher Education, I'm drawing on the work of Dr. Ivancheva and Dr. O'Flynn at UCD. They provide a critique of neoliberalism in relation to how academic workers are contracted, and how this is contributing to an erosion of public education. What I want to highlight here is that the *conditions* of labour are important, and that neoliberal conditions actively disable the agency of education – in particular, the ability to have conversations, to listen, to think and debate, to be together in difference.

WHAT IS RESEARCH-CREATION:

RESEARCH-CREATION

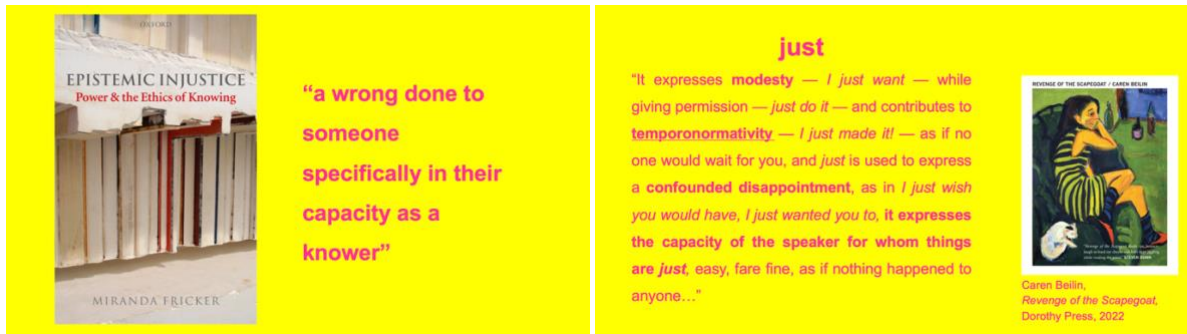
- A sister term to artistic research, advocated by a movement of Canadian artists and scholars working within the university-as-a-site.
- Natalie Loveless, in her 2019 book *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, describes it as a “**genre full of exciting pedagogical and institutional possibility**”, emerging at a time when there is “**an increased corporatisation of the university and a complex and insidious evisceration of experimental pedagogy and research**” (Loveless 2019: 2).

RESEARCH-CREATION

- **Artistic research** situated both **within and critically adjacent to institutions** of education and epistemic cultures and practices, from schools, to artists studios, to galleries, to universities.
- A research practice that mobilises poetic and persuasive language attuned towards **manifesting “a different world, performatively”** (Loveless: 2).
- Research-creation functions as “a site of **generative recrafting**: a touchstone and **orienting point** that might help **render daily life in the academy more pedagogically, politically and affectively sustainable.**” (Ibid.)

HOW TO MAKE CHANGE:jxst reading

As a reading group, it takes Epistemic Justice as its starting point. Fricker defines epistemic injustice as “a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower”.



Naming the reading group was important – taking the ideal of justice and including that, but also subverting that a little bit, complicating it in order to address prevailing conditions of injustice – which is where Caren Beilin comes in.

The protagonist, Iris, in *Revenge of the Scapegoat*, goes on a rant about the word ‘just’ – I’ll read this excerpt:

“It expresses modesty — *I just want* — while giving permission — *just do it* — and contributes to temporonormativity — *I just made it!* — as if no one would wait for you, and *just* is used to express a confounded disappointment, as in *I just wish you would have, I just wanted you to*, it expresses the capacity of the speaker for whom things are *just*, easy, fare fine, as if nothing happened to anyone...”

The aim of *just reading* is to make room for people to listen, speak, make meaning and be together, creatively and thoughtfully, through acts of reading. The goal is to generate a convivial, inter- and intra-institutional culture of imagination and honesty about the lived experiences of injustice in the context of knowledge making and reproduction today.



just reading is building relationships between CONNECT, Creative Futures Academy, IADT, and NCAD. The CFA have generously supported mentorship of this research-creation with contemporary artist Lyónn Wolf.

JUST READING, FOR WHAT?

While there are no specific pre-determined outcomes for the reading grxup, beyond establishing inter- and intra-institutional relationship and dialogue, Jessica will be creating work throughout the process of just reading, learning from each encounter, developing new poems, writing and research questions. Whenever meaningful, she will share developments with the grxup, to foster reciprocation of insight and to open up possible collaborations or tangential developments in peoples teaching, research, learning and/or creative practice.

a socially situated intention...

- to read and develop conversation around **epistemic injustice**
- to explore the concept and methodology of **just reading**
- to make a **record** of this process of conversation
- to present **insights** on the practice of just reading over time, through creative practice

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The project carries a socially situated intention...

- to read and develop conversation around epistemic injustice
- to explore the concept and methodology of jxst reading
- to make a record of this process of conversation
- to present insights on the practice of jxst reading over time, through creative practice

Research-Creation Methodology:

- Free-Writing and Research-Creation Diary
- Adapting the form of a Reading Group
- Deep and Active Listening alongside Loud-Reading in community
- Audio Archive
- Desk-based research – literature review, archival research, visual and material culture analysis, field-work and developing inter- and intra-institutional research relationships.



PROVISIONAL FINDINGS:

Regular free-writing develops insights and possibilities for interdisciplinary pedagogy:

There are perhaps two distinct but interrelated layers or streams at work here – the practical, pedagogic one – where learning-to-learn is the focus, and the learning at stake is criticality – and the tactics and tools being used are things like ‘slow reading’, etymology and word-work, a poetry of naming, deep listening, colouring-in, open-ended questioning, creating a psychologically safe space, creating the conditions for creative learning to take place, also, making the conditions for relationship and friendship to develop... it’s a space of hospitality too.

Research-creation lends itself to creative practice:

The other stream at work relates to my own creative and poetic practice – where I want to ‘make sense of my own social experiences’ as Fricker would put it. This is crucial for researchers in Higher Education, and it is a practice that is not actively fostered. If anything, such slow processes of conversation, contemplation and reflection are increasingly being erased or devalued. I think the form I want to play with most, at the moment, is the poem, not on the page but in audio form... both live oral/body work (as in reading aloud) and also recorded/digital work, written work, where the voice and the body have become transposed into the digital realm of information, of emails, of sharing platforms, of that economy of collective hermeneutic resources... attention, and the obscure yet pervasive data economy. Finding a way to ‘integrate’ these formal modes is part of the experiment of jxst reading.

Research-Creation via jxst reading hones in on an important question for our time:



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I skipped I skipped I skipped I skipped I skipped I skipped over the last session of **just reading** somewhat – it's been a busy couple of weeks, and I am not keeping pace. On the 12th of May,

How is reading practiced today? **The frame of just reading has highlighted how critical and urgent the question of reading is – particularly in relation to our 'capacities as knowers' and who credits whom or what for knowledge.** Posing probing questions in the context of interdisciplinary Higher Education research and teaching is a necessary part of creating conditions for just reading. What does reading mean and why does it matter? Who or what *gets* to read today? Drawing upon the research by Dr. Abeba Birhane, Director of the AI Accountability Lab at TCD, for example, how does machine vision and machine reading influence human or interspecies vision/reading today?

spontaneous responses...

"I really **wish I had had more flexibility** this term to attend these sessions on a regular basis, and I just wanted to say that I think this work is really **important and valuable**."

"I like the activity of **'slow' reading and circling back around** some key parts of a chosen text to **let the ideas gradually sink in**. It seems so different from the more common screen-based slightly pressured reading that is so visible now. I think it's **really helpful to model how engagement with text happens in practice as students especially may miss [out] on this**. I listened to the audio and enjoyed the repetition. The key ideas are new to me and will take awhile to assimilate."

"Keep up the good work"

Responses from participants has been positive, though gives a strong indication that there is little time available for people to engage with processes such as jxst reading. Again, this highlights both a problem and a need for these kinds of inquisitive interventions in Higher Education and Research.

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