

Virtual truths: a citizen's-voice view on Ireland's Public Employment Service

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Arguably one of the most significant changes in Irish manpower policy in the half-century since its inception has been the reassignment of Irish Public Employment Service (PES) provision to a Civil Service Welfare Department after 50 years of delivery via dedicated agencies. This paper traces that historical journey, providing a critical narrative on the evolution of Irish manpower and welfare policy, pinpointing the issue of unemployment as a common denominator in labour market policy formulation and establishing how lifelong guidance counselling is viewed as key to achievement of labour market policy goals. It argues that reframing PES within a disciplinary architecture denies client-centred guidance to unemployed citizens and queries Ireland's ability, in that context, to deliver on Europe 2020 growth strategy. Based on a virtual duoethnographic enquiry by the author, it offers an alternative discourse to a dominant narrative of undeserving citizens who are responsible for their own unemployment and is presented in the format of a dialogue between the virtual co-researchers, two fictional Dublin characters



Introduction: A brief note on virtual duoethnography and creative representation

Diverse narrative approaches are gaining wide appreciation in social science (Zazkis & Koichu 2015), with many noting purpose and benefits of the narrative enquiry genre, in particular the presentation of events using creative formats. Acknowledged by Reece & Speedy (2014) and Riessman (2008) as the

extension of an invitation to enter the perspective of the narrator, and the opening up of spaces for thinking (Richardson 2005), it has likewise been hypothesised as the creation of a space of resistance: either to think both within and against a given context (Lather & St. Pierre 2013), or to counter dominant discourses (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Kara (2015) credits the use of fictional accounts, portraying actual but anonymised experiences, as a solution to the problem of how some truths and perspectives cannot be made available in a non-fiction realm. Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2011) observe similar necessity for alterations of the authorial voice, while Wiebe (2014) notes a vital role of literary characters in affording identity protection through the creation of a context where an author, particularly in autoethnographic research, can become an "other". Such method is adjudged by Ellis (2004) and Fetterman (2010) to be both a process and a product. This author's production of a text of a dialogic format, where fictional characters conduct research conversations, exemplifies an approach conceptualised as virtual duoethnography. Zazkis & Koichu (2015) delineate virtual duoethnography as an amalgamation of both duoethnography and virtual monologue, where duoethnography consists of real researchers collaboratively producing a dialogic text in their own voices and virtual monologues are works of fiction where researchers reproduce their subjective perspective as a text in monologic format. According to Wegener (2014), fictional dialogic others serve as collaborators, co-writers and co-researchers, an additional voice in an author's dialogue with data. The enquiry on which this paper is based was conducted using conversations between two fictional characters as an innovative research tool and their reported dialogue as a creative method of representing the findings, thus giving voice to the citizen. The dialogue of the virtual duoethnographers in this paper reads like the script for a two-person play, the anonymous

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characters differentiated simply by regular and italic font. Consider this your invitation to listen in on their conversation:

- I'm so sick o' lookin' for a job, an' no' findin' one...
- *Unemployment...wasn't it Thatcher (1983) tha' called it the universal problem of our time?*
- Yeah, think so...pity **I'm** only ever a statistic but...me humanity is diminished behind those percentage rates they're always quotin'
- *For policy-makers an' suchlike, unemployment is just a phenomenon, a theoretical construct*
- ...I know...an "economic concern"...bu' for me it's a lived reality (Hearne 2014)...Wilson (1971) got tha'...he understood tha' for an unemployed person the rate is 100%
- *Thing is, countries use different determinants to measure the rate of unemployment...our Government uses the Live Register as the main short-term trend indicator (CSO 2015), tha's why they use exit rates from it to verify how effectively they're managin' unemployment*
- To show how well they are doin'?...but I see it first an' foremost as a social concern
- *Look, Governments an' policies may be concerned abou' the individuals who aren't workin', bu' the electoral salience o' unemployment (Murphy 2012), an' macro concerns abou' its collective effects mean its reduction becomes a national priority (Herr & Cramer 1996)*
- So it's a problem by default for whoever happens to be in Government (Bond 1988)? The Irish Government's concern abou' unemployment reduction is as old as meself...
- *Yer righ', ever since active manpower policy was first defined in the 1960s it had the stated aim o' achievin' full employment*
- Difference is, at tha' time they enunciated a clear vision for the role of Employment Services guidance counsellin' in the achievement o' tha' objective (NIEC 1964)...no' like today...
- *No' just then, o' course, throughout the followin' decades aswell...wi' growin' unemployment in OECD countries, successive Irish Government policy responses focused on reforms to effect a "major assault" (Government of Ireland 1991: 7) on unemployment, wi' an increased emphasis placed on the role o' guidance, in particular a client-centred approach*
- The Social¹ seemta have forgotten all abou' tha' since they became the Employment Service
- *I don't see why...the most recent series o' Government policy statements on Labour Market Activation, commencin' 2012, set a number o' explicit goals in the management o' unemployment, envisagin' "the provision of appropriate career guidance support" (Government of Ireland 2012: 20) as part o' the client engagement process an' thus part o' the solution*
- Tha' IMF Executive Board were also lookin' for improved employment services (IMF 2013)...I'm confused now...if no' only unemployment, bu' also guidance, has featured as a common denominator in the development o' manpower policy since its foundation fifty years ago...how did it all transmute into a disciplinary activation architecture (Boland & Griffin 2016)?
- *Since it landed in the Welfare...*
- "Welfare"...strange name for a system tha' doesn't seem to have yer welfare at heart...
- *It's built on a foundation o' moral judgement, tha's why...tha' discourse o' deservin' an' undeservin'...goes back to the Poor Laws*
- I though' we hafta thank Winston Churchill for labour exchanges an' welfare (Keenan 2006: 198; Keenan 2008)?
- *From 1909 on, yeah...them exchanges were intended as an Employment Service bu' ended up almost exclusively doin' unemployment payments (McCashin 2004: 20)*
- Ah, the precursor to the oul' Social...

¹ Colloquial name for the Social Protection/Welfare Ministry

- ...*tha' thread o' suspicion...so deeply ingrained in the welfare psyche...policies predicated on a belief tha' jobseekers are indolent or fraudulent...or both... support based on conditionality...ye'd be sick o' tha' discourse*
- Where yeh satisfy qualifyin' conditions to get yer money, yeh mean? Wha' abou' welfare as an unconditional social right, based on citizenship?
- Nah, forget rights²...*citizenship's been commodified (Brodkin 2014), it's all abou' social contracts, work-first, an' the active citizen nowadays*
- Terms an' conditions apply!
- *Tha' principle o' mandation conveys tha' welfare claimants hafta be coerced into lookin' for work (Anaf, Newman, Baum, Ziersch & Jolley 2013)...an' when tha' emanates from the top down...Taoiseach³ wantin' to stamp ou' "unemployment DNA running through some households" (Kenny 2013)...how insultin'...*
- How judgemental! The conditionality o' activation is the polar opposite o' the client-centred approach where the client value **isn't** dependent on "acceptable" behaviour
- *look, the objectives o' welfare an' manpower policy have always been polarised! Go back to where it all started...the 1960s...*
- Wha'? Flower Power?
- *No, Manpower...picture this...it's 1964 an' the OECD is all interested in manpower policies...gettin' countries to set up an Employment Service to provide vocational guidance an' occupational counsellin'(OECD 1964)...*
- Wha' did Ireland do?
- *Took notice straight away...NIEC did a report for Government, recommended providin' staff trained in up-to-date placement an' guidance procedures, a single agency for all functions, an' the dissociation o' the Employment Service from the Dept. o' Social Welfare...because **tha'** operation was so unsatisfactory (NIEC 1964)...*
- They took it **out** o' the Social? We've come full circle in a half century so...constructin' an' Employment Service an' deconstructin' it again. Imagine puttin' it back into the Social, what made 'em think the polar opposites would attract this time?
- *Corporate memory loss?...anyway, next is 1965 White Paper on Manpower Policy an' the establishin' o' a new Dept. of Labour in 1966 to implement the manpower policy an' develop the placement an' guidance functions*
- They sure took the oul' guidance seriously back then, really seemed to understand wha' citizens an' society required...
- *It useta be characteristic o' Ireland to focus on the human angle...a person-centred philosophy...from day one o' settin' up an employment service Agnew (1967) said tha' there would be **no question** o' havin' an impersonal, institutional approach*
- There was a client-centred perspective, eh!
- *Wha' a different discourse today...anyway, next came a dedicated employment service agency, the National Manpower Service (NMS), wi' an integral occupational guidance service*
- An' sure we joined the EEC soon after tha'...
- *Yeah, 1974...an' all tha' European Social Fund (ESF) money...then a series o' reports published on Manpower policy in OECD countries, includin' Ireland (OECD 1974), an' the Minister for Labour got the NESC to comment (NESC 1975)*
- Reports abou' reports!
- *Well the NESC were really strong on how the economic an' social dimensions o' manpower policy were of equal importance (NESC 1975: 5, 7, 37) an' **again** insistin' on the NMS as an executive agency **outside** the control o' the civil service...couldn't have 'em workin' towards the Minister, wha?*
- Definitely didn't want the Social back in on the act...they saw how tha' had gone the first time...

2 Many authors note the shift from a concept of social rights as unconditional to one based on obligations: Aasen, Gloppen, Magnussen & Nilssen 2014; Bothfeld & Betzelt 2013; Brodkin 2014; Dahlstedt 2013; Evers & Guillemard 2013; Handler 2003; LeGrand 2003; Lister 2011; Marston 2008; Powell 2002

3 Irish Prime Minister

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- well the NMS certainly distanced themselves from the Social...no compulsory registration...meanwhile, back in Europe, unemployment levels risin'...discourse shiftin' from passive payment o' benefits to active approaches⁴...still wasn't activation as we know it... until the policy discourse changed, an' the enablin' system o' active measures morphed into a regulatory one o' mutual obligations an' people havin' ta take up opportunities to keep qualifyin' for benefits
- Way to go! Turnin' a positive into a negative... Governments an' policies seem to react in strange ways to unemployment rates...
- Even Ireland was forced into givin' it a go eventually. 1986 White Paper on Manpower Policy introduced a Direct Action Programme for long-term unemployed. Remember 1987 an' JobSearch⁵? People selected by the Social...the NMS dragged into interviewin' 'em... an' the AnCO runnin' courses...
- Same welfare discourse o' lazy, scroungin' jobseekers?
- Always...the Minister for Social Welfare said it'd identify those who weren't genuinely seekin' work (Woods 1987)
- Did no one object to tha' language⁶, but?
- Senator Ryan (Ryan 1987) did, an' he agreed wi' you abou' somethin' positive bein' turned into a negative ... one-sided, judgemental terms o' reference, he said, an' how it looked like a witch hunt for people who weren't, get this, **the deservin' poor!**
- He saw the wolf in sheep's clothin'...musta thought he'd landed back in the condemnatory days o' the Poor Laws...
- He wasn't advocatin' today's "work-first" approach⁷... fundamental tha' people shouldn't be forced into jobs tha' bore no relationship to their skills, trainin' an' aspirations
- Ireland musta got disconnected from its client-centred beliefs somewhere along the line, tha' "work-first" approach conflicts directly
- Ah, bu' the JobSearch wasn't a resoundin' success...a "blunt instrument" (Bond 1988: 204) tha' drew negative publicity due to the compulsion attached, **an'** it didn't achieve higher placements than would've occurred naturally (ESF Evaluation Unit 1996: 25)
- So, activation was shown not to work...an' they're tryin' it again...definition o' madness doin' the same thing an' expectin' a different result
- They tried doin' somethin' different the followin' year, 1988. The FÁS⁸ was set up
- mergin' guidance, placement an' trainin'
- Still a backdrop o' risin' unemployment headin' into the 1990s but, so the European Council reoriented their fundin' programmes to modernise employment, trainin' an' education systems so EU member states could develop active labour market policies
- Ah, so instead o' the usual programme-led response...
- ...they recommended a client-centred approach... developin' a personal action plan based on a professional assessment o' **individual** needs...
- A renewed emphasis on guidance...an' Ireland reclaimin' its client-centred identity!

4 Based on provision of labour market programmes involving education, training or subsidised employment

5 A Government directive that 150,000 people on the Live Register were to be put through a compulsory process and "offered" scheme or jobsearch training opportunities

6 Objections to the stark language of activation are widespread (Grimshaw & Rubery 2012; Wright, Marston & McDonald 2011). Claims are made that it reinforces stereotypes (Boland & Griffin 2015), limits agency and conveys a message of "catching out" rather than supporting (Brodkin 2014), problematises welfare as generous (Dukelow & Constantine 2014), and communicates the necessity of punishment to motivate claimants (Anaf et al 2013; Handler 2003)

7 Criticisms of the "work-first" approach abound, including how it fails to promote investment in human capital (Van Berkel 2010), equates to social discipline (Brodkin & Marston 2013), exempts employers from having to offer good conditions or competitive wages (Boland & Griffin 2015), should be balanced with other active labour market policies (e.g. a train-first approach) in a constrained labour market (European Commission 2013), and is anti-competitive, subordinating the development of the person to the development of the economy (Torfing & Triantafillou 2013)

8 FÁS Training & Employment Authority was established by the 1987 Labour Services Act, a merger of the National Manpower Service, Youth Employment Agency and AnCO the Industrial Training Authority

- The objective o' the national development programme o' the time was to ensure effective operation o' active labour market policies an' adopt a coherent Programme Framework to promote them, includin' counsellin' an' placement services (Government of Ireland 1994: 37)
- Did tha' framework happen?
- Yeah, increased operational effectiveness o' the National Employment Service formed the centrepiece o' the response... establishin' a dedicated guidance service in the FÁS... an' a clamour for supportive labour activation for long-term unemployed (NESF 1994)
- So the Local Employment Service Networks were set up in disadvantaged areas?
- Didn't think the FÁS could do supportive activation...
- Musta been confusin' them wi' the Social...
- Then 1997 White Paper on Human Resource Development (DEE 1997) reinforced tha' state trainin' support for an individual would be based on agreed needs o' the client
- The official mandate to implement a client-centred approach...
- An' the rest is history... Professional Diploma in Adult Guidance an' Counsellin'... investment an' growth... White Paper on Adult Ed (DES 2000) reaffirmin' tha' effective service required trainin' in guidance an' counsellin'
- Musta been a great time to be a practitioner...
- Fulfillin'... a great time for guidance... but... in 1998 the EU requested each member state to report on a National Employment Action Plan (EAP)... a preventive strategy o' systematic engagement wi' people at an early stage o' unemployment
- How did tha' work?
- State agencies collaboratin'... mandatory selectin' an' referral by the Social to the FÁS for guidance
- Sounds like tha' JobSearch to me...
- FÁS didn't like tha' mandatory aspect ... counsellors didn't fancy bein' police for the welfare... luckily OECD (2004) are still all abou' guidance... country

reviews⁹... seein' how guidance services advance public-policy objectives, lifelong learnin' goals, an' how career guidance could help in implementin' active labour market policies

- I remember tha' Lisbon Agenda (European Council 2000), lifelong guidance for lifelong learnin', Ireland enterin' the knowledge age... ah 2004, still a Celtic Tiger¹⁰ then... no one thought tha' would end either...
- No' tha' we took proper advantage of it, mind... loads o' jobs goin' spare... bu' no' much implementin' active manpower policies... labour shortages managed usin' inward migration... anyway, I digress... tha' OECD report was a catalyst for change... tellin' countries to develop lifelong guidance systems an' revealin' tha' policy makers had long-standin' expectations o' career guidance servin' labour market goals¹¹ (OECD 2004)
- An' sayin' tha' active, mutual obligation approaches to welfare dependency require a career guidance input (OECD 2004: 23)... wi' policy attention on guidance, they musta all jumped on tha' bandwagon
- 2004 was a boom year for guidance alrigh'... Ireland President o' the EU an' **two** Ministers launched The National Guidance Forum to ensure tha' guidance became central to the public policy process in education an' the labour market... they got busy... produced a competence framework for practitioners; plus an integrated framework for guidance (National Guidance Forum 2007)
- Advocatin' an enablin' model... a lifelong learnin' an' guidance approach for EAP activation?

9 Fourteen OECD countries took part in the review: Australia; Austria; Canada; the Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; Germany; Ireland; Korea; Luxembourg; the Netherlands; Norway; Spain; and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

10 The Celtic Tiger refers to the period 1995-2007 when the Irish economy experienced a rapid growth

11 The contribution of guidance provision to a range of public policy (labour market, economic and social) goals and outcomes is highlighted not only by OECD (2004), but also more recently by NESC (2011) and ELGPN (2015). NESC (2011) draw attention to the significant economic and social benefits that publicly funded job-placement and career guidance services provide and how they are cost-effective when compared to intensive activation, supported by ELGPN (2015) which credits guidance as one of the few active labour market measures that have an impact on labour market outcomes for citizens

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- Exactly. *Tha' didn't suit everyone, but...the EAP was slated by an evaluation (ESRI 2011) commissioned by the Social...recommending a fully compulsory activation programme includin' sanctions...*
- The ol' welfare discourse creepin' back...they got their wish alrigh'...hello INTREO
- *They couldn't have known tha' the FÁS would shoot itself in the foot¹² just as the economy was collapsin' an' Ireland lost its sovereignty...an' then 2010 hit an' all tha' palaver wi' the IMF emergency financin' mechanism*
- All them terms an' conditions
- *You bet...National Recovery Plan as the basis o' the fiscal programme...indicatin' specifically savings to be realised from welfare an' labour market reform¹³... with the aim o' reducin' the unemployment rate*
- Ah unemployment...tha' common denominator
- *The Government said it'd achieve them reforms through "an improvement in activation procedures to strengthen job search conditionality" (IMF 2010: 27)*
- Tha' regulatory welfare discourse rearin' its oul' ugly head again...
- *Hear **this** bu'...with the improvements to be delivered via "better identification of jobseekers' needs and increased counseling activities at the beginning of the unemployment spell" (IMF 2010: 27)*
- Counsellin'? They saw MORE counsellin' as the way to reduce unemployment an' deliver us from the evil o' the IMF loan?
- *Told the IMF as much...better identification o' client needs by the PES...structural reform mergin' the PES an' the Social...*
- no' the first time **tha'** idea had been floated (Grubb, Singh & Tergeist 2009)¹⁴
- *Except, in 2012 the PES was subsumed into the Social...no' really a merger...more a takeover...no' the way it was presented to the IMF*
- Importin' supportive practices an' client-centred philosophy into a regulatory environment...musta forgot tha' guidance an' welfare aren't birds of a feather
- *Square peg in a round hole...manpower policy back under the control o' the Civil Service...job placement back in the employment exchange...after all them reports an' bad experiences...them corporate memories sure are short...NESC (2011) warned 'em but¹⁵*
- Policy reform isn't jus' abou' formally changin' the content, it's operational too (Van Berkel 2010)...
- *Yeh, so wi' the new "work-first" agenda, they spat out guidance...like a body's immune system rejectin' a transplanted organ...if yer workin' towards the Minister, yer workin' **away** from the public...immune to the needs o' the client...no place for guidance*
- An'thin' related to the FÁS musta been toxic to the Social...definitely didn't want any "touchy-feely"...bu' why didn't any o' the old FÁS-heads fight tha' corner?
- *Prob'ly tryin' to dissociate from tha' scandalous stuff... save their own necks...denyin' their origins...and dissin' guidance*
- Judas Iscariots! Wonder who's speakin' up for guidance at corporate level now?
- *Sounds like no one...reminds me o' that Martin Niemöller bloke...*

12 A series of revelations emerged during 2008/2009 about extravagant expenditure by FÁS senior executives and seemingly unrestrained expenses budgets, leading to the resignation of the Director General and precipitating a decision to break up the organisation. The timing was most inopportune. The demise of the Celtic Tiger and soaring unemployment rates meant public sympathy for those with "safe" jobs in public service in general (and FÁS in particular) was at an all-time low

13 Including structural reform, creation of a National Employment and Entitlements Services (NEES) by merging The Department of Social Protection and FÁS Employment Services. NEES was later branded INTREO

14 The OECD, believing Ireland to be soft on implementation of activation policy, had previously recommended amalgamating the PES, Social Welfare and LES

15 In the context of establishment of NEES, NESC identified the challenge for guidance provision facing INTREO (as the new PES), noting that staff from even closely allied activities elsewhere in the public service would need significant further training to work as career guidance professionals, and that the PES would need to put in place appropriate institutional supports necessary for staff to provide quality guidance services

- Huh? Tha' Pastor chap?
- *Yeah him...Lutheran guy...gave speeches an' lectures an' tha', abou' Nazi occupation...lamentin' not speakin' up when he had the chance...serious consequences for stayin' silent...for his conscience like*

- Didn't he write tha' poem abou' it:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out
Because I was not a Trade Unionist

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me
And there was no one left to speak for me

- *Don't know wha' the oul FÁS-heads'll do when they need someone to speak up for 'em...they'll hafta examine their own conscience on tha' one*

- Hope they can find it...

- *Find wha'?*

- A conscience...

- *Tha's their lookout...there's bigger fish to fry... like how is public service adult vocational guidance for unemployed citizens goin' to emerge from these wilderness years?*

- Well I've been hearin' a clamour o' voices o' late...emotive public discourse abou' the hiatus in school guidance in disadvantaged areas...it's all "damage inflicted on those at the bottom of the pile" (O'Brien 2016: 14)...an' similar abou' adult educational guidance...fragmentation in quality o' delivery...commitment to reform guidance systems an' develop an integrated guidance strategy for the Further Ed and Trainin' (FET) sector (SOLAS 2014: 31, 32)

- *They'll have their work cut ou' for them...delivery o' adult guidance is so fragmented...an' since the*

establishment o' INTREO there's been no adult guidance in the Trainin' Centres tha' useta be the FÁS...

- Well, wi' adult ed pledgin' to start from the viewpoint of the end-user...takin' a client-centred approach...isn't that a bit o' good news?...voices representin' lifelong guidance for learners gainin' attention?

- *It's good alrigh'...bu' voices for guidance for unemployed citizens are still absent from public discourse*

- In the context o' ongoin' denial o' guidance, could this signify persistence o' a perception o' unemployed people as undeservin'?

- *I'd hate to think tha'...bu' evidence shows otherwise... the "work-first" focus o' the activation agenda suggests tha' not only have the Social consigned the concept o' lifelong guidance to the bygone decade o' the "Lisbon Agenda" bu' they're also failin' to appreciate the additional onus on 'em, as the PES, to actually set quality standards in lifelong guidance policy an' provision¹⁶*

- Do they think guidance has jus' gone away? Don't they realise tha' lifelong guidance policies have been identified as key elements in makin' the employment targets of the current EU ten-year jobs an' growth strategy "Europe 2020" (European Commission 2015) a reality

- *an' the importance o' PES as an integral part o' national lifelong guidance strategies has also been emphasised (Borbély-Pecze & Watts 2011: iii)*

- Long live lifelong guidance, wha'...doesn't anyone recognise tha' staff competencies are critical to the quality o' PES services?

- *They sure do...Ireland's particularly strong model around 2009 was referenced (Borbély-Pecze & Watts 2011: 9), bu' tha' was when the FÁS was the PES... before the marriage' wi' the Social*

¹⁶ The Lisbon Council was adamant that despite privatisation of guidance counselling in many member states, it remained the responsibility of the Public Sector to set agreed minimum quality standards and define entitlements

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- shotgun weddin'!...seriously bu', FÁS guidance counsellors were pivotal in Ireland's national lifelong guidance strategy...all the more lamentable tha' resource isn't utilised or valued. All tha' investment...squandered...
- *There's still a chance to learn from history...50 years o' manpower policy is a good foundation...*
- I dunno...are the Social still tryin' to come to terms wi' their new identity?
- *Or have they lost their way?...at the conceptual stage, Irish labour market policy envisioned a truly integrated service, intervenin' promptly wi' unemployed citizens, providin' intensive guidance counsellin' (IMF 2010: 27)*
- An' now it's fallin' to the Social to manage the unemployment situation, when they useta just pay 'em...somethin' hasta be done to lessen tha' fram'in' o' unemployment as an individual problem (Herr & Cramer 1996) rather than a social one (Brodkin 2014)
- *Tha's where guidance comes in...diminishin' the disregard for the lived reality (Hearne 2014)... affordin' an alternative to the judgemental discourse o' deservin' and undeservin'*
- Tha' Social needs to evolve...adapt to the new reality...tha' mono-cultural identity is changin' by default regardless...wha' did they think would happen...importin' a client-centred philosophy...
- *Yeh could understand the reluctance, but...just as conditionality is anathema to a client-centred philosophy, a concept of unconditionality is surely threatenin' an' underminin' to a framework o' control*
- Sure the internal dynamic musta altered, even in the face o' opposition an' resistance, I'm no' sure wha' all the fuss is about' anyway...it wouldn't be disavowin' the Social identity...incorporatin' guidance would be recognisin' the need to reshape it, providin' resilience an' relevance in the new operatin' environment
- *Well, all I'm sayin' is...it's high time to start thinkin' about' Europe again...we need to be conformin' wi' the European Social Charter...somethin' **else** good we did 50 years ago...Article 9 enshrines a fundamental right to vocational guidance...*
- Righ'...wi' a view to helpin' citizens choose an occupation suited to their personal aptitude an' interests...
- *the original intent behind active labour market measures...a client-centred approach*
- Back to enablin' rather than work-first!
- *Exactly...anyway our non-provision o' vocational guidance breaches fundamental rights*
- What consequences, but...is the voice o' unemployed citizens little more than an echo in tha' void o' public service vocational guidance?
- *...it's about' changin' the discourse...supportive manpower policy hasn't actually metamorphosed into a punitive labour market regime y'know*
- No, the disciplinary focus is attributable more to the architecture, as policy is interpreted an' implemented by the Social, wi' its regulatory mindset...wha' can we do but?
- *We can keep on talkin'...don't forget the power o' language in constructin' social reality (Richardson 2005)...meanings are made accordin' to the available discourses ... we're creatin' a space o' resistance... we're providin' an alternative discourse*
- We **are** an alternative discourse...

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