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Analysing for Resistance in Talk and Text: Challenges and Opportunities for Critical Discourse Analysts and Oral Historians

Introduction

The reasons for writing this chapter, which is concerned with exploring how to analyse resistance in talk and text are twofold; firstly, there are the calls for more attention to be given to resistance in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and Oral History and secondly, there is a dearth of explicit accounts of how analysis of resistance in talk or text is undertaken (Hughes 2018; Wolgemuth 2014). To respond to these calls, the focus is on resistance and resistance frameworks / schema are proffered as helpful when analysing for resistance in talk and text. In the first section of the chapter, critical discourse studies (CDS) and oral history are introduced and the reasons as to why analysing resistance can be common to both research approaches are explained. Then the reader is provided with an overview of the interdisciplinary resistance studies literature toward uncovering how resistance has been understood. It is this literature that provides the fertile ground for the development of resistance frameworks, which are central to the section which follows. The conclusion drawn in the chapter is that there is value in using a resistance schema as an analytical tool or primer to help explore the complexities of everyday resistance in the context of complicated power relations. This is demonstrated in the section before the conclusion, drawing on the oral history narratives of Irish women talking about their working lives.

Critical Discourse Studies and Oral History

The field of critical discourse studies is broad and interdisciplinary and similar to linguistics, it has many sub-fields. However, it is significantly concerned with analysing discourse to show social inequalities and power relations at work (Forchtner and Wodak 2018). Indeed, critical

discourse analysis as one strand of CDS has been defined '… as being fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language' (Wodak 2006: 53). If power relations are at the heart of critical discourse studies, it is the intent to obtain a history 'from below' (Lynd 1993:1) or from people with less access to power and position in society that inspires so much oral history work. Both critical discourse studies and oral history recognise that when we draw on certain discursive resources in our talk and text, we represent the world in particular ways and in so doing, we may utilise the discourses that are dominant. Yet how talk and text provide people with a means to speak back to power is also acknowledged. Both research approaches have in common their readiness to trouble claims to truth and to unsettle dominant and normative narratives. For instance, it is recognised that it is in the telling of our stories in oral history that we may see ways in which dominant discourses are accepted but also problematised and resisted (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Appreciating the value of discursive resources for oral history data analysis, Sealey (2012) used extensions of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis to analyse structural and socio-cultural constraints on narrators' goals and experiences in oral history transcripts and Cornell et al., (2020) proffered narrative-discourse analysis as an approach very suited to the analysis of contested memories.

In the context of a high level of attentiveness to power relations in both CDS and oral history traditions, there are those who call for much greater attention to be given to resistance in both fields and for more explicit accounts of analyses of resistance. For instance, Hughes (2018) argued, that while CDS brings oppression and resistance together theoretically, CDS is overwhelmingly focused on critically analysing oppressive power relations to the neglect of resistance. In a similar mode, Kim (2008) noted that implicit in oral history's intent to give opportunity to those on the margins to "find a voice", to "speak out" against repression and

injustice, or to “break the silence”, is a problematic assumption. It is the assumption that oral history interviewees are by their silence, subjugated, when their silence may be born out of their resistance to the operations of power. What follows is a brief overview of how resistance has been theorised in different ways in the literature.

Resistance in the literature

Some scholars argue that resistance as a term should only be employed for visible and collective acts, where there is unequivocal intent to resist (LeBlanc 2002; Reed 2000; Seymour 2006) to achieve significant social change (Reed 2000), and when the targets and the observers are aware of the resistant action being taken (Rubin 1996). Collectively organised mass demonstrations, protests, strikes and uprisings come to mind. However, the focus on everyday resistance, as elaborated by historian De Certeau (1984), and by the political scientist and anthropologist James Scott (1985), permitted the resistance term to be applied to a much broader set of activities than what would be included above. It prompted a questioning of the importance put by some explanatory frameworks on resistance as denoted by the intent or the goals of the resister, the degree to which acts are constituted as resistant by targets, the resisters and the bystanders (Johansson and Vinthagen 2014; Prasad and Prasad 1998). As noted by Scott (1989: 51) when resistance is too narrowly defined, the vital role of power relations in constraining forms of resistance are at risk of being overlooked. It is also suggested that forms of everyday resistance have potential to be developed or scaled up into more organised resistance (Lilja et al. 2017).

Foucault (1982: 780) is often credited with identifying the part played by resistance in bringing to light power relations, preparing the way also for power and resistance to be increasingly brought under the same analytic spotlight. Following Foucault, greater attention has been given to resistance’s capacity to co-constitute power as well as other forms of

resistance (Johansson and Vinthagen 2014; Baaz et al. 2016) to be both rational and irrational in its relations to power (Lilja et al. 2013) or to accommodate power while subverting it (Ali 2014). Such contributions over time draw our attention to understanding power- resistance relations as much more complicated entanglements (Chandra 2015; Lilja 2022) rather than entirely separate oppositional categories.

Foucault's conception of power's capacity to be productive as well as repressive inspired conceptions of resistance as productive or constructive in terms of its creation of alternative discourses, subject positions and institutions critical to undermining the exercise of power (Baaz 2023). In some studies, it is acknowledged that not all resistance achieves visibility or recognition by persons seeking to interpret it (Fleming and Sewell 2002; Vinthagen and Johansson 2013) that resisters may intend to resist but conceal their resistance or not articulate it as such, so that their resistance may pass unrecognised by targets or others (Scott 1985; Mihelich and Storrs 2003; Simi and Futrell 2009). Resistance can have multiple possible outcomes and can be viewed as being both situational and contextual as it shifts with the economic, political and socio-cultural landscape (Mumby et al., 2017). Given the complexity of resistance and its complicated relationship with power, it is understandable that there have been efforts to identify or distil from the literature, theoretical and empirical analytic schema for studying resistance in narratives or discourses. It is such schema that are the focus of the following section.

Resistance Schema

Different frameworks or schema have been put forward for the purpose of studying the anatomy of resistance in organisations or other contexts (Baaz et al 2016; Hollander and Einwohner 2004; Johansson and Vinthagen 2014; Mumby et al 2017) and two of them in

particular (Hollander and Einwohner 2004; Johansson and Vinthagen 2014), are considered in this section. Drawing on the two recurring themes of recognition and intent in cross-disciplinary academic discussions about resistance, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) viewed these themes to be core to resistance and developed a typology, which constituted seven distinct types. For five of the types of resistance they identified (overt, covert, unwitting, target-defined, externally-defined), they found extensive published material and for the two other types (missed, attempted), they found nothing. The first type in their typology was overt resistance. They argued that this constituted resistance at its core, because of its interpretation as resistance, being for the most part consensual among the actors, the targets and the interpreters. The six other types of resistance they found may or may not be defined in studies as resistance because they generate questions relating to recognition and intent. These six types they placed outside the consensual core in their schema because in conceptions of resistance, evidence of agency and intent have been longstanding features often relied upon to distinguish resistant actions from other activities (Hollander and Einwohner 2004; LeBlanc 2002). Johansson and Vinthagen (2014) acknowledging the value of Hollander and Einwohner's framework (2004), take issue with their development of a resistance 'typology', perceiving it to be too restrictive. They also reject the privileging of consciousness in Hollander and Einwohner's (2004) account as well as their prioritising of recognition and intent in the making of a determination as to what counts as resistance. Alongside Hollander and Einwohner (2004), Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) agreed that resistance did not have to be pure, on the basis that it is often bound up with other motivations.

Johansson and Vinthagen (2014) proposed their own analytic schema to conceptualise what they called 'everyday resistance'. Their schema comprised four key intersectional dimensions; repertoires of everyday resistance, relationships of agents, spatialization and

temporalization. They chose the concept of 'repertoires' from the work of sociologist Charles Tilly (1991) because of it being sufficiently broad and dynamic to link patterns of resistant practices to specific configurations of power. The relationships dimension, they noted, requires a focus on who carries out the actions of everyday resistance and their relationships with others including the targets of resistance. To better appreciate the multiplicity of power relations and resistant practices, they called for more intersectional analysis of both aspects. Exploring the intertwined dimensions of space and time as they relate to the exercise of power and resistance, they argued that both should be included in a conceptual framework. They then recommended that the framework be kept open to accommodate other important analytic dimensions if and when required. Baaz et al., (2016: 145) subsequently suggested some extras to those proposed by Johansson and Vinthagan (2014). These were the spectrum between individual and organisational resistance (3) the relationships between bodies and representations in resistance (4) resistance reinforcing or creating new performances of resistance and (5) processes of self-reflection and affects. The elaboration of Johansson and Vinthagan's (2014) open-ended analytical schema with additions (Baaz et al 2016), draws attention to the considerable scope of potential theorising on the concept of resistance. Such a schema can be usefully employed as a kind of primer when looking to analyse for resistance in talk and text. This is shown in the next section, which utilises an oral history dataset for the purpose of demonstration.

Utilising resistance schema to analyse resistance

The oral history dataset is comprised of narratives from 42 women who worked in different jobs in the south of Ireland in the Fordist era, from the 1930s up to the 1960s and who volunteered to be interviewed.[1] The group studied were diverse in terms of the kinds of jobs they held, but the jobs were, for the most part, representative of those held by women in Ireland

at this time.[2] The women were asked questions to elicit stories of resistance in the context of power relations they experienced in their work and family lives.

The participants were of a generational cohort who grew up and became women during what are widely recognised as repressive decades for women in Ireland, when the Catholic Church exercised considerable power. This was noticeable in the data. In the independent Irish State which emerged in 1921, legislation and policies were introduced which restricted women's rights as citizens and as workers and idealised for them caring and home-making roles (Ward 1993). These were implemented with little organised resistance, as no significant feminist movement emerged after the disintegration of the feminist suffrage movement and up until 1970 when the Irish women's liberation movement was formed (Smyth 1993; Ward 1993).

The consensual core of resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004) or overt resistance is easy to see in the data. There were women who organised and initiated a trade union; actively sought out trade union membership or directly engaged in trade union activity; participated in collective strike action or used formal means to challenge unfair work practices. Eileen D., a cheese-maker, was dismissed along with her husband and some co-workers, for attempting to introduce a trade union to the cheese factory where she worked in Cork in the 1960s. Mary T. recounted details of a longstanding union struggle she and other poultry instructresses engaged in, in the 1950s, to achieve parity of pay with male horticultural and agricultural advisors, who were extremely hostile to their pay claim, an action that was unsuccessful but was later introduced (via the European Community's Equal Pay Directive which prompted the Irish Anti-Discrimination Pay Act in 1974). Joan D., who was an active member of the Irish Nurses' Organisation rejected the pervasive view at the time that nursing work and unionisation were incompatible, determined as she was, to struggle on behalf of army nurses to achieve parity of pay with hospital-based nurses. By the time she resigned from army nursing to marry in 1963,

the fight for parity had been partially successful. Mary T. was a founding member of the National Association of Irish Widows, established in 1967, which advocated for rights and entitlements for widowed women. Mary was modest in her assessment of the organisation's achievements, but she made clear that social change was the order of the day in her comment: 'We didn't do a lot there to change the world no, but we made a contribution'.

Strike action qualifies as a significant form of worker resistance and makes up part of Hollander and Einwohner's (2004) consensual core. Strike action featured only rarely in the data and where it did, the reason for the strike was hazy and presumed to have been action taken to support other workers' pay and conditions. This is very evident in Rose's account. In her long working life, she could only remember one strike action, the detail of which she could not recollect, except that it was taken to support a group of shift workers. Kathleen F. recalled a short-lived work stoppage in the factory, which she claimed was trivial. As the shop steward, she informed the manager that the machinists had in protest stopped work and were refusing to take orders from an offhand examiner. By order of the manager, the machinists resumed their work in a matter of minutes. From what Kathleen F. reported, the reason for the work stoppage was to alleviate for a time the boredom of the factory routine, rather than to establishing an important point of principle.

Other forms of overt resistance were the formally planned and collective strategies utilised by interviewees to disobey rules or to change the culture of workplaces, some of which directly and knowingly challenged the operation of unequal gender relations. Catherine O' D. recalled a factory manager's abusive conduct to workers, which, when reported, resulted in his dismissal. Clare and her co-workers collectively and successfully defied the convention in the General Post Office in Dublin where she worked in the 1940s, whereby male but not female employees were permitted to smoke at their desks. She explained how they collectively challenged it: 'Five or six of us [female employees], we all lit up together. And the boss at that

time...suddenly saw all these spirals of smoke down the room and she shot up to her feet and she stood there looking at us. ...we pretended not to notice her and got on with her work and she stood there for quite a while and then she sat down and there was never anymore about it'.

In addition to collective forms of resistance, there were some noteworthy individual acts of very unsafe resistance in workplaces, which fit with Hollander and Einwohner's (2004) conception of overt resistance. While the data showed women's acute awareness of the vulnerability of employees, a small number of them reported acting assertively or engaging in direct and open confrontations with bosses or employers, knowing that such actions put them at risk of dismissal. In the 1930s Eileen D., a young apprentice cheese-maker, jeopardised her qualification by confidently rebuffing the lecherous advance of a much older creamery inspector. She also recalled her determination at the time to take matters further, if she perceived that her action resulted in her not receiving her qualification. Joan N., a domestic servant employed by a farmer, who she recalled, could have dismissed her on a whim and ruined any other local employment prospects she might have, threatened to hit him when he belittled her.

However, if the analysis of resistance was confined to the consensual core, the forms of resistance evident in other frameworks and in the data would have been missed. Considering that strike action featured rarely, it seemed important to avoid reifying conceptions of resistance that may not have been appropriate for studying women, who lived in a particular context and timeframe. Most of the women interviewed were not working in large unionised, predominantly male industrial settings, where resistance is most often looked for by researchers and indeed registered as such (Kondo 1990; Edwards et al. 1995; Fleming and Sewell 2002). This pointed to the need to recognise resistance in more complex and ambiguous terms as noted in resistance studies across disciplines (Ortner 1995; Chin and Mittelman 1997; Fleming and

Sewell 2002) and in scholarship on women's resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990; Gal 1991; MacLeod 1992), so this is how the 'everyday resistance' schema becomes particularly useful.

Beyond the Consensual Core to Repertoires of Everyday Resistance

Attending to Johannson and Vinthagen's (2014) repertoires of everyday resistance, there is evidence in the data of women carving out their own forms of resistant female subjectivity, at times rejecting normative dimensions of gender roles they found too constraining. Joan G. became very quickly adept at looking busy at work when she was idling '...on my probationary period I learned how to back horses and look busy'. Aside from Joan G. trying to look busy, using lavatory breaks to chat with work colleagues, taking unauthorised breaks, using employers' resources for personal benefit, playing pranks and having fun were just some of the ways in which women stretched the rules, carved out work time and space for themselves and succeeded in challenging some work-related restrictions in their lives. The women related stories of joining in banter and song to disrupting the monotony of the factory assembly line. Some performed poorly at work intentionally, not bad enough to generate sanction, yet knowingly not good enough to achieve the organisational productivity or efficiency so desired by supervisors and managers.

For a significant number of women, there was evidence that they did not let their work mean no more to them than the money it gave them to exercise more autonomy in the dimensions of their lives more important to them. Joan G. liked to go to dances far away from her home, where she claimed nobody knew her and where she could '... leave her hair down'. Mary F., whose job as a wards' maid in the mid-1950s was physically demanding was very clear that she lived for dancing and it made her working life more bearable. Her account shows how her body, an instrument of physical labour by day, was transformed by night through

dancing: '… you had a very, very hard day down on your knees, scrubbing and polishing and you went out then and you danced your heart out…'

Kandiyoti (1988), researching in the field of gender relations and development politics, illuminated the concept of the patriarchal bargain to describe how women strategise within a set of concrete constraints, with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression. Alice was among a group of working women, who utilised as part of their patriarchal bargaining, their prescribed roles as wives and mothers in the home space and their male co-workers as breadwinners to advance their own interests and they succeeded. It was of little concern to them that they offered up their male co-workers to work the nights that they were refusing to work. It provides one such example of resistance, which is not pure (Hollander and Einwohner, 2004; Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013). Alice and her co-workers also informally organised to use the washing machines in the dry-cleaning company to do their family laundry while the overbearing foreman, who kept them under close surveillance, was on lunch breaks. It brings to mind the 'tacit de facto gains' (Scott 1989: 34) a feature of everyday resistance, when resistance involves no big showdown, just the taking of opportunities by people to achieve their own ends, while interfering with the workings of power nonetheless.

Repertoires of Resistance in Relation to Configurations of Power

In the data there were comments which pointed to power at work in terms of the strong sense women had of a shared generational and gendered oppression. Maureen had commented 'I suppose looking back we were a very quiescent generation'. She volunteered the newness of the Irish Free State and lack of education as important factors in creating a culture of compliance. In decades of economic stagnation, high unemployment and emigration, interviewees frequently mentioned that socialisation towards becoming willing and obedient

workers was a strong feature of their upbringing. Joan H., did not settle for a construction of herself or other women of her generation as entirely submissive, but her narrative reveals that she was mindful when interviewed, that the patriarchal and cultural norms of the time set parameters for women in particular, in terms of what they might have considered possible. She remarked 'Oh I'd be able to fight my battle alright if anything went wrong, but you couldn't. Women couldn't that time. ... Not that we were browbeaten in any way into doing anything, but it just wasn't in the times.'

Strategies such as 'boxing clever' which were mentioned in the data, draw our attention to women's tacit recognition of their unequal position in wider gender power relations in Irish societal culture and in this context, the diverse and obscure forms their resistance could take. For instance, mention that women had to 'box clever' to get what they wanted, suggesting that open or direct resistant conduct in the face of power might have been avoided by women in favour of low-key strategic action designed to effect change gradually or with little dramatic effect.

Relationships of Agents

While a conceptualisation of resistance, which is focused on intent, clear targets and the goal of social change as advocated by Reed (2000) and others, is analytically useful for making apparent those actions levelled at a target where power is concentrated and where there is clear knowledge of the 'enemy', postmodernist scholarship and its associated frameworks (e.g. Foucault 1978; Sharp et al. 2000; Johansson and Vinthagen 2014) alert us to power and resistance as they operate in society in more diffuse ways. These frameworks are beneficial for taking account of the stories in the data, which revealed that gender discriminatory views held by women's trade union representatives, their co-workers or their husbands were challenged. This suggests that there were several targets in the context of the power relations

at the time for women's resistant voices and conduct. Indeed, the stories told, show that women had to negotiate power relations in a variety of spaces where asymmetries operated. One such example was provided by Rose, who recalled an instance, when chatting over a cup of tea in the kitchen with a male trade unionist friend, they clashed when discussing the issue of gender equal pay. She shared her view of the unfairness that she and her female co-workers were paid much less than the male employees, even when doing the same work. She recalled the discussion:

> 'And he said "How would you like to go down the quay" he said "shovelling coal". I said "I wouldn't be able for it". I said "It would be too heavy for me". "Well" he said "there you are". But I said "I'm talking about like work, doing the same work… How would you like to be in the Victoria hotel… as a chambermaid?" So he walked out and he didn't come in for weeks… he was a man's man like, you know, like women were inferior beings in those days. I knew it talking to him and I said it.'

While opportunities for solidarity in resistance are evident in some accounts of everyday resistance, Rose's story reveals that just as Alice and the women in the dry cleaners sacrificed their male co-workers to get what they wanted, conceptions of men's work as more important than women's also undermined the cultivation of work-based solidarity and trade union mobilisation on the issue of gender equal pay of benefit to women. The operation of patriarchal relations in the home environment permeated the data and some women's wishes to return to work were resisted by their husbands. Yet, there was testimony that a few women defied their husbands, determined as they were to have a working life outside of the home and an independent income.

Though it is evident that promotional opportunities for women were limited, some women took such opportunities while others did not. Rose and Alice both refused promotion. Alice explained that it would have meant that '...you had to keep the workers down and they were down enough already'. Rose's refusal was driven by her sense that her co-workers would resent her for being disloyal and would make her working life difficult. In the hierarchical ordering of workplaces with their various levels and some women's movement between them, we are alerted to the limitations of defining resistance with reference to a simple binary dichotomy of superior / subordinate social relations.

Spatialization and Temporalisation in Analysing Resistance

Responding to Johansson and Vinthagen's (2014) call to give greater attention to the intersectional time and space dimensions when studying everyday resistance to power relations, we can take note of the significant obstacles to labour activism in this period and particularly to women's labour activism. It is evident in the data how the existence of a marriage bar[3] and the idealisation of the home-based married woman set significant constraints on women's motivation for workplace resistance and how women had limited time to invest in traditional forms of worker struggle more amenable to being typically conceptualised as resistance. The sites of employment in which women were concentrated were not unionised. Of the 42 women interviewed, 20 were unionised and 22 were not. Some employment sectors had defined features not favourable to the collectivisation of workers, or their militancy. These included the personally negotiated employment in private spaces (e.g. shops and small offices), the strong gender segregation, the live-in work arrangements (farm and domestic labour) and the very paternalistic employer / employee relations.

It is evident that paternalistic and chivalrous gestures or relationships on the part of employers or bosses towards women workers were a feature of women's work environments. These can be interpreted as productive uses of power as the accounts show in clear terms how they were conducive to engendering worker compliance and self-discipline. It was women's socialisation, particularly their gender socialisation from the earliest age that taught them to be deferent to employers and others in authority. In a period of high unemployment and emigration, comments revealed their awareness that they were working in an employers' market where opportunities for worker mobility and worker security were limited. There was evidence in the data that women perceived at the time that their views or experiences were accorded little value in private or public spaces and that articulating resistance in public or confrontational ways could be difficult and could cause them unwelcome problems. They found trade unions to be overwhelmingly male spaces in terms or their agenda and their culture and many held ambivalent views of the trade unions, which represented them.

While the data shows how time was used as an instrument of power and control by employers, some resistance to the control of time by employers or in workplaces was certainly in evidence. Interpreted as a form of time 'appropriation' (Johansson and Vinthagen 2014), Kathleen always elected to take a cigarette break as soon as she produced the required quota in the garment factory where she worked, determined as she was not to succumb to the pressure induced by the piecework system. Joan N., after spending time chatting with friends and neighbours when sent on work related errands, on more than one occasion let out the air out of her bicycle tyre to blame a puncture for delaying her. Clocking in for other workers, being unpunctual, making personal telephone calls at work, taking unauthorised time off were just some of the ways work time was disrupted and rules about time broken. For instance, Clare recalled a general 'charge out' by herself and other office workers to buy oranges when looking out the window they saw them for sale for the first time after the war.

There were women who actively decided not to marry or who rejected marriage proposals at certain times in life, fearing that marriage would put limits on them. For Joan G., when married, it was the feeling that '... the house, the four walls closed in on me...' which made her react against the social isolation imposed by marriage and motherhood in the home space, to take up employment outside of it. After her first experience of being Churched, a Catholic religious blessing and cleansing ritual of women after the 'sin' of childbirth, Doireann refused to comply with this practice after subsequent births. There was evidence of some women's active struggle against normative religious rites and practices as well as enticements and constraints imposed by culturally prescribed roles for women of wives and mothers, at certain times in their lives. These actions can be interpreted as resistant, because they constituted at moments in time a refusal to submit to a subjectivity that was not desired and in a cultural climate when submission by women to the wishes of parents, husbands and other authority figures was such a strong normative cultural expectation.

While subversive or potentially risky or shameful acts of resistance were not claimed by those interviewed, they were reported. These provide insight into what other resistance happened in workplaces during the period. For instance, dismissal was the penalty for pilfering in the factory where Kathleen O' R. worked but as she claimed, 'I know for a fact the stuff that walked out of the factory then... the stuff that walked out them doors was no-one's business; clothes, jumpers, underwear...'. Information about resistant activities, which possibly would have been silenced in the past but then made safe by the passing of time could be revealed at interview and included in the public record.

Resistance reinforcing / creating new performances of resistance

The oral histories facilitated an understanding of the making of gendered subjects constituted by repressive power relations and structural constraints, but they also showed how

motivations for resistance take hold or how different forms of resistance feed each other. The women interviewed were conscious that as a generation of women relative to others, they could be perceived as oppressed, however the narratives also show that some had at the time and others later in their lives, formed strong critiques of the social relations and constraints they experienced. In some instances, they actively constructed with others, the spaces conducive to challenging unequal gender relations. For instance, Catherine W. and Mary T.s' narratives show that these two women were both exercised by the unfairness of their plight as widowed women workers and that they agitated for better treatment and working conditions on their own and through organisations. They were both drawn to the women's movement, which played an important part in challenging patriarchal power and driving social change in Irish society in the 1970s. Their accounts of living through the period, reveal key components of evolving feminist subjectivities, increasing access to and use of a feminist vocabulary to assess their lives and positive dispositions toward key demands of the women's movement (Kiely and Leane 2014).

Bodies and Representations

The exercise of power through the regulation and control women experienced at work permeates the data. In nursing, there were nerve racking daily grooming and uniform inspections. Joan, who worked as a poultry instructor, was warned by her supervisor 'never go out visiting on those farms without a hat.' In office work, women's dress and comportment were strictly monitored and digression from appropriate feminine dress, corrected and sometimes sanctioned. The language used to describe the atmosphere in many offices where women worked, showed most of them to be stuffy and hierarchical, with oppressive surveillance by supervisors and managers. In words that capture the impact of unequal power relations, Maura recalled that her boss's face was so fearsome that she 'cowered in front of him' and she 'kowtowed' to senior staff. However, the women's bodies were also conduits of

everyday resistance as shown in stories about performing busyness, flouting rules pertaining to appropriate grooming, flirting, chatting and idling in restrooms. Regulation of women's appearance extended beyond work and Ena recalled attending Oratory dances organised by an order of nuns, where young women's appearances were subjected to rigorous controls, including a rule which prohibited the wearing of make-up. When one of her friends 'defied one day and went in with her lipstick and the sister [nun] got newspaper and literally almost tore it off her lips'. This single act of resistance reveals how acts of defiance did generate further exercises of repressive power (the wiping off of the lipstick), revealing the ongoing entangled and dialectical relationship between power and resistance and in multiple sites in women's lives, as highlighted by others (Abu-Lughod 1990; Sharp, 2000; Johanson and Vinthagen 2014).

Self- Reflection, Emotion and Affect

The dataset provides access to 'hidden transcripts'; the critiques articulated behind the backs of the dominant (Scott 1990: 210). These provided access to 'discourses of dignity' (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013: 5) or accounts of resistance as they relate to resistant subjectivities and feelings, as distinct from resistant practices and outcomes. Feelings of self-assertion, anger and resentment were clearly relived during interview which the women did not share at the time. Margaret harboured a longstanding resentment. When due to her mother's illness, she was ordered by her father to give up her job to work at home and care for younger siblings it became something she 'always resented… that there was no thought given to your life, what you wanted.' When as an older married woman, she got opportunity to visit her sister in Australia, it was in her own words '… a major step for me in asserting myself in my life'. Knowing that because of her having three children, both her husband and brother were totally against her going, this only made her '… firm in my resolve.' It was evident that the project of rebuilding the self (Vaz 1997) was in full swing for some women in their later lives;

it was their time, after a long period of making sacrifices and there is evidence in the data that they were determined to resist any encroachments.

When asked if she had fond memories of her working life, Mary T. responded they were mixed. The feelings bound up with her self-reflection and which prompted her to act at the time, are in evidence. She said she looked back on the discrimination she experienced at work due to her status as a widow 'with some bitterness'. It was this feeling that provided her with the impetus at the time to help form The Widows Association, to collectively advocate for changes to improve the status of widowed women in Irish society. Alice, married and pregnant, was invited to return to the company, which employed her before her marriage. Her mother encouraged her to take the job and offered to mind her children. However, she remarked that, 'It gave me the greatest satisfaction to tell them "Go to hell!" Well, I didn't exactly say it in those words but to tell them I wouldn't come in'. When working as a dental receptionist, Margaret was belittled by her employer, who laughed at her when she requested the pay increase due to her. She noted that she remembered saying to herself 'well you won't be laughing again...' as she promptly gave her notice and applied for a much lower status factory job, but one that paid more. Feelings of wanting to lash out against employers or managers were recalled but were not acted upon due to significant social constraints, or indeed acted on in ways which could evade clear recognition and evidence of intent (e.g. resigning from the job). Joan N., asserted herself at the very beginning of her interview to make it clear that 'I'm never ashamed of what I did'. She resisted the feeling that the framing of the work as being low status implied. Acutely conscious and critical of the power inequalities involved and the indignities she endured in her work, which she compared to 'slavery', Joan very openly showed her contempt for most of her past employers as shown in her comment about one of them; 'Thank God I'm alive today and he's dead and gone'. The emotion shown and the strength of the language used by Joan provide access to the psychic and subjective depths attained by the

exercise of power. This enables us to appreciate what helped or stood in the way of the women seeing beyond their present at the time to envisage possibilities for resistance.

Conclusion

Conflicting interests and commitments, needs and desires are all brought to bear as people negotiate the complexities of living and complicated societal power relations. This undoubtedly presents challenges for us when analysing resistance in talk and text. Resistance itself is undoubtedly a rich, complex and contested concept as is worker / workplace resistance (Thompson 2016). Resistance tends to be given less attention than power in analyses and at times is treated as if it is easily identifiable. Concerns that '… some scholars see it almost everywhere and others almost nowhere' (Weitz, 2001: 669) have prompted some of the efforts by those identified in this chapter to give it more definitional precision and to draw its parameters more determinedly. However, when analysing for resistance in talk and text, there can be value in stretching its definition and parameters, not for the purpose of romanticising it or for overstating its outcomes, but for taking better account of it as a 'diagnostic of power' (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). In critical discourse studies and in oral history data, we gain privileged access into the workings of power relations in society, into understanding circumstances under which resistance becomes possible or not and with what impact for those involved, as well as for the exercise of power relations. In this context, frameworks or analytic schema that enable us to better attend to resistance and the language of resistance are useful. Most analyses will recognise resistance in its most overt, open and collectively organised forms, but schema help to attune us to its more mundane variants and its multiple targets, which as we saw in the data can be diverse and can include unfair employment practices, patriarchal relations, social norms or gendered cultural expectations and so on. While it was not possible within the confines of this chapter to engage in the level of analysis of the textual / discursive features of the data as

would be required for a Critical Discourse Analysis, a resistance schema is proffered as a positive complement to such an analysis to ensure as more attention is given to the use of language for resistance as it is for evidence of the exercise of power and oppression. As Scott (1990: 199) noted and as demonstrated in this chapter, there is 'immense terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt' and if our analyses are confined by normative tropes of power and resistance, it means that this terrain is left unexplored.

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[1] The recordings of the 42 oral history interviews conducted are available in the Digital Repository of Ireland Irish Women at Work Oral History Project - Digital Repository of Ireland (dri.ie).

[2] The main occupations and areas of work for women according to the 1936, 1946 and 1961 Irish censuses were agriculture, domestic and personal service (domestic service, hotel work), retail / shop work, industrial work, typing, secretarial / administrative work, professions (predominantly teaching and nursing) and home duties.

[3] The marriage bar introduced in the Irish Civil Service in 1933 and strengthened in 1956, operated until 1958 for primary school teachers and until 1973 for all other categories of female public employees. A similar bar applied in many semi-state and private organisations like Aer Lingus (airline company) and the banks, until 1974 (Cullen Owens 2005).