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Adapting intercultural research for performance: Enacting hospitality in interdisciplinary collaboration and public engagement

This article is a reflective theorisation of the process of adapting my research for public performance in collaboration with theatre company Cap-a-Pie. The theorisation it offers is necessarily retrospective, but the changes in the UK political climate since the adaptation took place in 2015 have rendered it both more urgent and more coherent, for reasons I will outline below. First, I offer a brief account of my research and my reasons for wanting to adapt it for performance.

The research took a Bakhtinian theoretical and methodological perspective to analyse six English-language learners motivation for learning English, understanding this as a process of *ideological becoming* (Harvey, 2014, 2016, 2017, following Bakhtin, 1981). The following analytical vignette, based on Harvey (2017), highlights an illustrative story from one of the participants:

Dmitry was a very successful English learner in Russia, was highly proficient in English when he came to the UK to study for his PhD, and did not expect any particular difficulties with language or social life as a result of the move. He was also an amateur singer, so when he came to the UK he joined a choir, who would go for a drink after rehearsals. The first time he went to the pub with them, they asked questions about what kind of music he used to sing in Russia, and he answered in great depth and detail. But he noticed that people would soon start to lose interest; they would look away or become restless, or start trying to talk to someone else. This was, of course, very uncomfortable for Dmitry, and significantly dented his confidence in interacting in English. He was shocked that, even though he could speak English, communication could be so problematic, and social life so difficult.

However, as he spent more time socialising, he realised that the kinds of interaction that take place in these social situations are based around ‘small talk’ and ‘chatting’. By discoursing at great length in answer to a question, he had broken this unspoken rule of communication – his talk was too ‘big’ for a situation where small talk was required. Having understood this, Dmitry was able to adapt his discourse to social situations, and gradually found social life more manageable.

This vignette draws attention to a sharp contrast between Dmitry’s expectations and the lived reality of his experience of coming to the UK. The expectations Dmitry had regarding his ability to communicate and socially integrate is echoed in the UK’s powerful public discourse on immigration and language, which says that (non-English speaking) immigrants must learn English in order to integrate (Casey, 2016). This has intensified into a significant rise in hate crime and linguistic xenophobia in recent months, since the Leave or ‘Brexit’ vote in the UK EU referendum in June 2016 (Dodd, 2016; TLANG team, 2016). However, there appears to be little media or public awareness in the UK of how difficult learning English actually is and the very real structural barriers learners face, not least owing to the drastic cuts to funding for provision of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) funding since 2008 (Simpson, 2015; Drifill, 2016). Rather, this discourse places the responsibility for learning (or not learning) on the immigrant. There is little, if any, public conversation about what speaking English might mean; about how the experience of being an immigrant and a language learner is unsettling, destabilising, often frightening; and about how, if language and learning are by nature dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981; Harvey, 2017), we share a collective, public responsibility for acknowledging and accommodating this. My project to adapt this research for public performance stemmed from a desire to fuel this important public conversation: to (potentially) stimulate intercultural learning by raising awareness of the individual language and

communicative practices through which such acknowledgement and accommodation, which I theorise in this article through the lens of hospitality, is enacted.

There is also an ethical dimension to my desire to adapt this research for public performance. In my home field of applied linguistics much research, particularly that concerned with social justice, aims to ‘give’ voice, to make audible the stories of the disempowered and disenfranchised, in relation to ‘real world’ questions (Phipps, 2012). But to whom are these stories actually audible *qua* stories? Researchers in the humanities are increasingly engaging with practitioners and policy makers, but by then the research is already distilled into action points, key messages, recommendations - and the stories themselves get lost. These are stories which are created over time, over intense and prolonged, often emotional and at times quite intimate encounters: they are precious to the people who have constructed them together. So what happens to them? They get published in truncated form in academic journals, of course, for an academic readership; but then they get filed away, perhaps awaiting a date for destruction. Is this ethical treatment of our research participants, their lives, and the work we have done together (see Phipps, 2010, 2013)? What happens to the stories’ potential for emotional engagement, their communicative power – their potential to ‘transvalu[e] the personal to the more than personal’ and their promise of empathy (Shuman, 2010: 4)?

This raises the further question of whom other listeners might be: if applied linguistics, notwithstanding its breadth and lack of conceptual unity as a field (Cook, 2015), is essentially about ‘research into language relevant to real-world problems’ (Applied Linguistics, 2016; Brumfit, 1995), how then do applied linguistics engage with the ‘real world’? What about the lay people, the general public who are interested in and concerned about the world and the social issues they engage with? The UK EU referendum campaign, the ongoing process of Brexit, the Trump administration in the US and the rise in rightwing populism across Europe,

have brought a greater urgency to the question of how people communicate with each other, and in particular to the question of how ‘experts’ can communicate with non-experts in ways that avoid being perceived to wield the position of the ‘metropolitan elite’ (Glaser, 2016) while at the same time resisting such easy, lazy characterisations. Furthermore, the Brexit referendum outcome highlighted the differences between Leave and Remain voters in terms of education, socioeconomic status, age, and those born within/outwith UK (Barr, 2016). Ironically for a campaign so heavily anchored in the concept of national sovereignty, this clearly demonstrated that nation state and national ‘culture’, having traditionally been the ‘prime unit’ of cultural identity (Holliday, 2016: 219), are no longer the ‘default signifier’ of who we are (MacDonald and O’Regan, 2011: 553). This political context, then, both in the UK and beyond, added even greater relevance to consideration of this public engagement project in its own intercultural terms.

Having written in detail elsewhere about my participants’ intercultural learning (Harvey, 2016, 2017), this article first explores my own interdisciplinary learning through the enactment of hospitality in the collaboration with Cap-a-Pie, and then the (potential for) audience intercultural learning through the enactment of hospitality in the performance. I therefore use hospitality as theoretical nexus in this paper in order to analyse the connection between my original research, the interdisciplinary process of adapting it for public performance, and the potential for learning through this form of public engagement.

The Creative Lab: A hospitable space

In June 2015 I was one of three academics chosen at my university to work with an arts organisation as part of the Leed Creative Labs scheme. This is a programme of engagement between the University of Leeds and creative and cultural industries in Yorkshire and the

northeast, and aims to foster collaboration between individual academics and creative industry partners. The scheme aims to:

- Spark collaborations between academics and creative innovators to find new and inventive ways to showcase academic research and achieve broad public impact
- Increase our understanding of how the arts and technology might inform and support research relevant to contemporary society
- Create new works, new ideas and new methodologies through collaboration and creative prototypes.

(Leeds Creative Labs, 2016)

I applied to be partnered with theatre company Cap-a-Pie - Artistic Director Brad McCormick and Producer Katy Vanden - who are experienced in theatre work in educational settings, working with academic researchers and adapting research for performance. We had no brief for the Creative Labs, other than ‘exploring thinking, ideas, curiosities, challenges, ambitions’ (Leeds Creative Labs, 2016) together for three days over one month. There was no pressure for a ‘product’ or for any particular outcome – the only commitment was that the partnerships (of which there were three) would come to a Showcase event the following month and share what we had done with the group. However, Cap-a-Pie and I both came to the lab with the idea that we would like to create a short piece that we could perform at the Showcase. So over June I spent three days with Cap-a-Pie at their office in Newcastle, and we developed a script for a seven-minute performance called *Up and up and up towards*, which Brad performed at the Creative Lab Showcase and has since performed at further University of Leeds and public events. It is the interdisciplinary work through which we produced our script that I want to theorise in this paper through the lens of hospitality.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines hospitality as

The act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill. (OED, 2016)

So far, so familiar. But what does it mean to enact hospitality, and what are its parameters? Here I turn to Derrida (2000, 2001) who points out that order to be hospitable, one must have the power to host. This means judging who to host or not to host by reinforcing boundaries of ownership or belonging between the ‘self’ or the ‘us’, and the ‘other’ - e.g. one’s community, family, nation. However, in posing these limits on hospitality, hospitality actually becomes inhospitable, because absolute hospitality requires unconditional welcome ‘without reserve and without calculation’ (2005: 6), which means relinquishing the power to host and the judgment in regard to who will receive your hospitality. But without any boundaries of ownership or belonging, the possibility of hosting anyone is negated, and so hospitality becomes impossible. This creates an aporia to hospitality: the condition of its possibility is at the same time the condition of its impossibility.

What does this mean for collaborative work? For Derrida, the responsible action lies in recognising the need to mediate between these two positions of conditional and unconditional hospitality. Here I return to the mediating (though not *enacting*) role of the Creative Lab. The parameters of its hospitality, through the offers of bringing strangers together to collaborate in any way they choose, created the conditions for fruitful interdisciplinary mediation. The Creative Lab had the power to host, and did so by striking a fruitful balance between conditional and unconditional hospitality: it did not set parameters for the nature of our collaboration, but did ask us to commit to attending an interim event and speaking at the final Showcase. Cap-a-Pie and I started from a place where we were strangers

to each other's disciplines. We were all interested lay-people: I had an interest in performance and some amateur knowledge; they were very interested in the stories of my participants and in current concerns around migration and language; but in terms of our professional disciplines of applied linguistics and theatre-making, we were strangers. We mediated this disciplinary strangerhood through the giving and receiving of hospitality within the hospitable space of the Creative Lab. Following Phipps and Barnett (2007), Cap-a-Pie and I gave and received hospitality in *material* form, by welcoming each other into our professional spaces and in the names of our respective institutions; in *epistemological* form, engaging with disciplinary boundaries by welcoming each other's ideas, and engaging with each other's different ways of working and knowing; and in *linguistic* form, by engaging with the discourses of each other's disciplines and practices, by translating my work into key ideas for adapting for performance, and translating our collective ideas into a script for performance to an audience. We mediated between our disciplines by being both host and guest in each other's spaces, knowledges, languages and practices.

Thus Cap-a-Pie and I mediated between our disciplines through mutually hospitable practices, within the overarching hospitality of the Creative Lab. However, the hospitality of the Creative Lab only created the conditions for collaboration – it could only offer an institutional form of hospitality, rather than an interpersonal form. The collaboration still had to be enacted, and enacted hospitably. It is at this interpersonal level that I found the process of interdisciplinary working could be understood in Bakhtinian terms, through the framework I used to theorise language learning motivation (Harvey, 2014, 2017) and the relationship between language and intercultural learning (Harvey, 2016). It is my understanding of intercultural learning that I wish to elaborate here, in order to theorise the enactment of hospitality within the interdisciplinary collaboration with Cap-a-Pie and within the performance of *Up and up and up towards* itself. In doing so, I do not posit interdisciplinary

interaction and intercultural interaction as analogous; rather, I present and follow a theoretical thread which informs and connects both the interdisciplinary and the intercultural elements of this project.

Bakhtin and *outsideness*

To theorise my participants' processes of and motivation for language and intercultural learning, I adopted a Bakhtinian framework, in which language is immanent to experience. Language, for Bakhtin, is thoroughly permeated with dialogic relations, and the major relation is that between *self* and *other*, which lies at the heart of the dialogic self. This self is in a constant state of flux, in interaction with the social environment, without fixed boundaries, constantly engaging in meaning-making with *other* selves and *other* voices. In Bakhtin's conceptualisation, the self/other relation is not one of either/or, as self and other are not absolutes. Rather, they are always related to each other and dependent on each other, coming together in the utterance through the 'simultaneous unity of differences' that the utterance expresses (Holquist, 1990: 36). The individual self is thus inherently dependent on other selves – the *I* cannot exist without the *other*:

To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he [sic] is always and wholly on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks *into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another*. ... I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance). (Bakhtin, 1984: 287)

However, for meaningful dialogue to be possible, the distinctiveness between the interlocutors must be maintained. Each participant in the dialogue must find the other in themselves, but must also maintain their unique self and remain different from each other; they must both enter and remain outside each other. For Bakhtin, we are entirely reliant on the other's position outside us: 'we evaluate ourselves from the standpoint of others, and through others we try to understand and take into account what is transgredient to our own consciousness', accounting for 'the value of our own outward appearance from the standpoint of the possible impression it may produce on the other' (Bakhtin, 1990: 15). Only in what the other reflects back to us, then, can we see ourselves. This 'transgredience', more transparently characterised by Bakhtin (1986) as *outsideness*, is essential in order to be able to speak to and understand others, and is thus an essential element of intercultural understanding:

Of course, a certain entry as a living being into a foreign culture, the possibility of seeing the world through its eyes, is a necessary part of the process of understanding it; but if this were the only aspect of the understanding, it would merely be duplication and would not entail anything new or enriching.

Creative understanding does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding – in time, in space, in culture. (1986: 6-7)

For Bakhtin, then, intercultural understanding involves simultaneously entering and remaining outside another culture. If *outsideness* is maintained, neither participant is culturally threatened; rather, perspectives are broadened, for 'each retains its own unity and

open totality, but they are mutually enriched' (7). The six participants in my research found their motivation by learning how to communicate in their new context through their own developing English voices: Dmitry, for example, developed a voice as a Russian speaker of English, and learnt to inhabit an intercultural boundary between being Russian and being an English speaker (Harvey, 2017; see also 2014, 2016).

As I have argued elsewhere (Harvey, 2016), this perspective contrasts with many analyses of intercultural encounters, which are based on either a binary understanding of self and other, or host and stranger, representing a 'unidirectional attribution of power' (Coffey, 2013: 272) in which hospitality is always conditional; or on a transcendent, universal consciousness in which difference is effaced (MacDonald and O'Regan, 2013; Ferri, 2014) and hospitality can be absolute. Bakhtin's dialogical self recognises the other as part of oneself, in a relationship of dialogical reflection rather than division or dissolution. And in recognising the other as part of ourselves, we find theoretical space to mediate between conditional and unconditional hospitality. While I employed this framework to analyse the relationship between language and intercultural learning, outsidership and finding the other in oneself are also useful concepts when thinking about how to communicate with people who share the same named language but identify with different social, ethnic, gendered, and socioeconomic cultures (Kramsch, 1998: 81). As discussed above, in the UK, these differences have been thrown into particularly bleak relief since the EU referendum. I will now apply these concepts to another context of a shared named language: that of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Enacting hospitality in interdisciplinary collaboration

I here offer two examples of gaining a perspective of outsidership on myself during the collaboration with Cap-a-Pie.

The Bakhtinian framework outlined above informed my understanding of intercultural learning, particularly in terms of its relationship to language learning. However, the bridge that led me to connect this framework with my collaboration with Cap-a-Pie was Julia Kristeva's concept of the stranger, or the recognition of the other within oneself couched in psychoanalytic (rather than intercultural) terms. Following Kristeva (1991), Simon Coffey (2013) writes that strangerhood can be understood as an existential strangeness, or Das Unheimliche/the uncanny (Freud, 1985) which describes the feeling of something being strangely familiar or as both home and not-home. It is a feeling of foreignness that we carry within us and which we must face whenever we confront something new (Kristeva, 1991: 181) - a new language, a new 'culture' or, as in my case, a new field of practice. It is an inherently human quality, 'a symbolic conflict of polarity between home and strangeness before the material encounter of the intercultural moment' (Coffey, 2013: 272-3, following Kristeva, 1991). While Coffey applies Kristeva to intercultural communication, her work does not originate from a specifically intercultural context, and this is perhaps why, though it is so clearly relatable to Bakhtin's work, I recognised it more quickly as applicable to the interdisciplinary collaboration. Thinking about the ways in which my discipline was made strange to me through the collaboration – and about the necessity of this strangeness for the enactment of hospitality - was productive for understanding the outside perspective on myself and my work which I gained.

The first example demonstrates how, in order to enact hospitality, we had to translate my research and my desire to adapt it for performance into an easily communicable idea that we would be able to work with. Here, my research and my disciplinary home became strange to me through a process of translating myself to myself (following Ricoeur, 2006). This process is exemplified in the poster (see Image 1), which depicts the initial brainstorming Brad, Katy and I did on our first morning together. Having talked through my research, my

findings and my reflections on these for most of the morning, we developed our central concept of *assumptions of understanding but not knowing the rules* (in the middle of the poster). This describes the assumption of feeling, like my research participants, secure in knowing what is going around you, but then something destabilising occurs (a word, a gesture, a story, a shared joke) and you realise that actually, there are unspoken rules of which you are not aware, and you do not understand the situation as you thought you did. This new way of understanding my research for me was reached by considering the emotional experiences of my participants (as can be seen from the notes around the centre of the poster), speculating that they would feel *confusion, apprehension, disconcerting, enclosure/claustrophobia*. This is not to say that I had not previously considered the participants' emotional experience – this affective dimension had been very significant in the thesis, and it was this that had made me feel in the first place that the research could be very powerful in performance. However, I had not thought about this *for* and *to* and *with* someone else outside applied linguistics or language education, in the way I had to when explaining my research to Brad and Katy. This process, then, gave me *outsideness* on my research – it made my research strange to me, so that we could come up with a new description of it followed by a new representation. It was our different disciplinary homes that made this possible: for, in Bakhtin's terms, the distinctiveness between interlocutors was maintained, and we were able to both enter and remain outside each other (1986).

The second example was a blog post Brad wrote for the Creative Lab website after our first two days together. He was describing the work we had done so far, and referred to me throughout as Dr Lou Harvey. He had done this because it was a post for a university website and he was giving me my professional title, but to me it jarred with a sense of Das Unheimliche: who was this Dr Lou Harvey? Dr Lou Harvey was the person affiliated with the research, the person who had applied for the Creative Lab, but not the person who had sat

around a table in Newcastle brainstorming ideas with Brad and Katy; not the person who had sprawled on their office floor sketching out characters and scribbling scenarios together; not the person who had bounced emails back and forth with Brad drafting and refining the script. The unheimlich feeling in this context called to mind an essay by Jorge Luis Borges, in which he meditates on the nature of authorship:

The other one, the one called Borges, is the one things happen to ... I know of Borges from the mail and see his name on a list of professors or in a biographical dictionary ... It would be vain to say that ours is a hostile relationship ... I live, let myself go on living, so that Borges may contrive his literature, and this literature justifies me ...

I do not know which of us has written this page.

(Borges, 1960, in Burke, 2000: 339)

Here, Borges describes the outsideness or the strangerhood of authorship, and the tension in the relationship between himself and his other, authorial self. To me, the collaborative work the three of us had done together had flattened our relationship and moved the ownership and creative impetus away from me towards a transauthored text (After Performance Working Group, 2016) – it was now a new thing, *our* thing, belonging to Brad and Katy and Lou. Like Borges, I did not know which of us had written our play.

Enacting hospitality in *Up and up and up towards*

Thus the dialogical self and the concept of *outsideness* offer a means of enacting Derrida's hospitality within interdisciplinary collaboration. The relationship of dialogical reflection between self and other offers the conditions for mutual enrichment and creative

understanding, in which a new thing may be created (Bakhtin, 1986). And this connects back to my reasons for wanting to adapt the research for performance. Following from initial questions about public engagement with research, I now ask: if intercultural and interdisciplinary engagement can be characterised, albeit in different ways, as developing creative understanding through a process of finding the other in oneself, how can we engage with the public in a way that facilitates finding the other in themselves?

To return to Bakhtin: the dialogic relation between self and other means that ‘a person has no internal sovereign territory, he [sic] is always and wholly on the boundary’ (1984: 287). Finding the other in oneself therefore means recognising and inhabiting the boundary, where perspectives may be broadened by each participant retaining their ‘own unity and open totality’ but/and being ‘mutually enriched’ (Bakhtin, 1986: 7). The self exists in a dynamic relationship with other selves and the ideological and discursive phenomena which shape it in an ongoing historical process - all that is ‘other’ (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 65) - and is thus continuous, fluid, unfinalised, constantly ‘becoming’. It is never whole or finalised – it can only exist dialogically. There is no point at which we are complete, at which we have seen a finite number of perspectives on ourselves, and no participant has the right to finalise another, nor to articulate final meaning (Kostogriz, 2004: 194). The recognition of unfinalisability means there is no ontological certainty or closure; no-one can know for us, and ‘there is no alibi for being’ (Bakhtin, 1993: 40).

This provided a theoretical impetus for the creation of *Up and up and up towards*. Having established our central premise – the assumption that one understands what is happening but then realising one does not know the rules – Brad, Katy and I had to think about the most concise and powerful way to communicate this, knowing that we only had three days together and therefore scope for only a short performance. It would be difficult to make a piece of verbatim theatre that would have the desired impact, and I had ethical

concerns about this regarding participants' anonymity and the use of their stories. We therefore explored how our premise might be enacted through the lens of performance, rather than directly through language or the narrative – how could we perform the feelings my participants had experienced? How could we create for the audience the sense of confusion and apprehension, the disconcertedness? We considered that an effective way to do this would be to translate the rules of language and communication into the rules of the theatre (see Image 1). From *not knowing the rules* we talked about *changing the rules of the theatre* and making the *mechanics of theatre visible*, which led us to the list of ideas in the top-left corner of the poster: *forgetting lines, stop speaking, coming out of character, audience participation, audience taking on roles*. We worked these into *Up and up and up towards* in order that the audience might experience the shift from security in their knowledge of the situation - their expectations around viewing a theatrical performance - to uncertainty and confusion in their understanding of what was happening.

It is beyond the scope of this article to provide a full description of the adaptation process, but through a process of creative inquiry (detailed in Harvey, forthcoming 2018), we developed the question *Which ambitions are acceptable?* around which to structure the plot of the performance. We chose the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus, along with characters and a story we had developed through the creative inquiry, to provide a narrative structure. The seven-minute performance, therefore, ran as follows:

Brad starts by narrating the story of Daedalus and Icarus. He physically enacts the characters to identify them (e.g. placing a crown on his head to symbolise the king, using his fingers as two horns for the Minotaur, working with a chisel for Daedalus). He steps out of character to comment on his performance and the story (e.g. 'I think that's the wrong gesture' or 'All that human sacrifice seems like overkill!'). At one

point he stops speaking for a minute in the middle of a sentence; at other points he speaks gibberish for sections of the script. At the climax of the Daedalus and Icarus story, the narrative shifts without warning: ‘Daedalus watched with horror as his son flew up and up and up towards the pub that Andy and Liesl go to on Friday nights. Now everyone act like you would in the pub on Friday night’. He then moves into the story of Andy and Liesl [characters and a story we created in our Creative Lab work]. Andy and Liesl are a couple living in Newcastle in UK; he is from UK, she is from Austria. Brad then acts out a conversation between Andy and Liesl, taking on the role of Andy and asking different audience members in turn to play Liesl, telling them what to say (e.g. ‘What would you like to drink? Now you say: a pint of lager, please’). The conversation, which becomes an argument, is about Andy’s frustration with Liesl’s adoption of the local dialect – he is embarrassed about her speaking Newcastle English because he feels she shouldn’t be talking that way as a foreigner who already speaks English well. For the final turn in the dialogue, Brad does not tell ‘Liesl’ what to say, leaving an embarrassed silence at the end of their argument. Brad then reverts to being the narrator, telling us that soon after that Andy and Liesl split up and Liesl flies to London, followed by a shift back to the original Daedalus and Icarus story: ‘as she flew up and up and up towards the sun Daedalus shouted to Icarus ... and saw the feathers floating past him through the air’.

Up and up and up towards has, at the time of writing, been performed five times: at the Creative Lab Showcase, a further showcase event at the university, and three showings to the public at Leeds Light Night, a city-wide arts event. Each performance was very well-received by audiences. After each performance I asked the audience to write down three words to describe what the performance was about and three words to describe how it made them feel.

After this, for all but one of the performances, a short discussion ensued in which I explained what the performance was about. This was very necessary for the audience and considerably enhanced their interest and engagement, and I regret having omitted it once; however, to have explained this beforehand would have compromised their discomfort, the key emotional effect of the performance. Their responses indicated that they had understood the performance to be broadly about communication and (mis)understanding, and that they had brought various other interpretations too – for example:

Non-verbal communication

Interweaving stories

Languages

Silences

Interruptions

Fantasy

Not understanding

Communications

Filling in the gaps

Storytelling

Setting up & breaking convention

Semiotics

Making sense

Similarly, responses to how the performance had made them feel were both expected and unexpected: *uncomfortable, disrupted, anti-climax, incongruous* were responses we anticipated, but *engaging, humorous, delightful, absurd* were not. In a subsequent

conversation with a colleague who had been in the audience I expressed my surprise that people had found it funny, to the response ‘Of course it was funny! People laughed because they felt awkward’. This seems self-evident now – of course people laugh to defuse awkward situations – but in my earnestness to communicate the discomfort and uncertainty my participants had felt, I had not considered that people might react with laughter. (And another moment of outsidership for me...).

It is impossible to say what ‘learning’ took place from this, and what the ‘measurable impact’ might have been. The performance was also very short and very rough, and is soon to be developed into a longer piece following a recent grant to Cap-a-Pie from Arts Council England. However, theoretically, and judging from initial audience responses and conversations around the piece, the approach we have taken has the potential to enact hospitality by enacting unfinalisability. By making a familiar situation strange and not offering a resolution or explanation, by engendering discomfort and uncertainty within familiar parameters, we asked the audience to question their own sense of belonging, to reflect upon and acknowledge their own strangeness (following Coffey, 2013: 271) – to find the other in themselves. They were not ‘informed’ of my research; they were not ‘told’ that this is the way the world is for some people; there was no attempt at ontological certainty, no attempt to ‘know for’ the audience. There was no attempt to finalise, narratively, performatively, or ontologically. Rather, the audience had space to bring their own interpretations and understandings to the piece. And if these understandings can be questioned, critiqued, expanded, the kind of learning I hoped for in this public engagement project may have room to take place: for the self which broadens its scope, which seeks ‘provisional finalisation’ by various different authors, creates optimal conditions for learning (Emerson, 1997: 223-224), because it creates opportunities for creative understanding. This enacts hospitality by working the boundary of ownership: the performance we have created

has come from us, but it can come to belong to the audience too through its unfinalising and unfinalisable form. Of course the audience may reject our hospitality: they may not see the boundary as a boundary, or they may see it as something they do not wish to engage with. It may be – it probably will be – more comfortable to stay in familiar territory. The task in public engagement with intercultural research, as I see it, is to find caring and compassionate ways to de-familiarise that territory.

Conclusion: Hospitality and hope - towards a condition of possibility

From my 2017 vantage point, I can see how my research and the performance based upon it have been fundamentally driven by frustration, resistance and anger: professional frustration at the dominance of psychology in the field of language learning motivation; my research participants' resistance to the disempowered positions they found themselves in as language learners; increasing personal anger at the structural barriers faced by immigrants, particularly those with English-language learning needs; public and political anger around the subject of immigration, demonstrated in the UK in particularly fierce and ugly ways during and since the EU referendum Leave campaign and subsequent Brexit vote, and reflected more broadly in media reports from the US and Europe. This personal anger and public division have lent an urgency to this public engagement project, both practically and theoretically. But anger and division cannot have the last word; the project is, after all, a hopeful one. So whence and whither hope? How, and for what, can we be hopeful?

Gibson-Graham (2008: 618), following Eve Sedgwick (2003), identify a 'paranoid stance' in academic critical theorising, a sceptical and negative position which reduces meaning to something overwhelming, threatening, and outside of our control (such as neoliberalism, globalisation, capitalism) and always-already smothers any attempt at considering new ways of understanding, thereby reinforcing what is perceived as dominant

and placing limits on the possible. Gibson-Graham call for us to become ‘different academic subjects’ – to ‘disinvest in our paranoid practices of critique and mastery and undertake thinking that can energize and support’ other ways of thinking (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 618). For Gibson-Graham, this entails a performative, rather than a realist or reflective, orientation to knowledge; performativity being a quality of ‘discourses that produce the event of which they speak’ (Derrida, 2002: 209). Such an orientation is necessary for what Derrida (2002) characterises as ‘deconstructive’ resistance ‘to all the powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation’ (204); resistance in which everything is open to critique, including ‘the history even of the notion of critique ... the form and the authority of the question ... the interrogative form of thought’ (Derrida, 2002: 204). In a deconstructive mode, in taking nothing for granted and destabilising what is assumed to be known, new possibilities for thought open up. This entails a risk, because (following Attridge, 2014) the value of what emerges is unknown and unpredictable; but acceptance of this unpredictability is an affirmation of the future, of ‘that which arrives without having been invited – affirmation, in other words, being a form of unconditional hospitality towards the other’ (Attridge, 2014: 56). In a performative orientation to knowledge, then, our work as scholars makes things happen, welcomes the future into being, and ‘to change our understanding *is* to change the world’ (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 616; see also Moore, Bradley and Simpson, forthcoming 2018). My hope for this public engagement project is that it can contribute in some way to ‘changing understandings’ through the enactment of hospitality, and offer a ‘condition of possibility’ (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 619) for working as academics, for collaborating with other disciplines and practices, and for living. It is an idealistic hope; but hope is a form of hospitality to the future, and the future is always ideal (Marano, 2016).

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