Multilingual Matters & Channel View Publications

Chapter Title: Communicating Within, Between and Beyond Social Categories

Book Title: Listening Without Borders
Book Subtitle: Creating Spaces for Encountering Difference
Book Author(s): Louise Dearden and Ana Korzun
Book Editor(s): Magdalena Kubanyiova, Parinita Shetty
Published by: Multilingual Matters & Channel View Publications. (2024)
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.20558242.6

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2 Communicating Within, Between and Beyond Social Categories



Butcher's window in Kirkgate market (Elisabetta Adami, 2017)

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Dwelling Inside, Dwelling Outside

Charlotta Palmstierna Einarsson

The ETHER (Ethics and Aesthetics of Encountering the Other) project's overarching question 'How do people of conflicting worldviews, memories and future visions encounter each other?' seems to target Dan Zahavi's claim that 'the capacity to engage in different types of collective intentionality is often considered a key feature in human sociality'.[1] Notably, as Sahavi points out, the relation between we and I is not merely a theoretical question but one with tangible practical effects that we experience on a daily basis. As human beings, we are friends or foes, club members, butterfly collectors, academics, lovers, neurotics, heterosexual, homo, transgender or cis persons, conservative, liberal, feminists, young, middle-aged, old or dog lovers. The list goes on. And if prompted to define who we are, we reach for criteria to justify our belonging to certain communities that are directed at certain ideas, activities or values. That is, our sense of belonging to community predicates on what Dan Sahavi calls collective intentionality.

Identity on this spectrum is intersectional as Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw pointed out in 1989.[2] There are certain aspects of a person's identity that tend to be privileged over others. And the issue of how we negotiate our inclusion in or exclusion from communities of speakers is therefore a matter of participation and thus intrinsically ethical. Difference conceived, for instance in terms of collective intentionality, emerged from discourse, and the context in which communication takes place could be seen to regulate such differentiating processes.

In preparing for this talk, I began by imagining a community of like-minded individuals – an assumption that brought the 'we' to mind. Based on my understanding of the significance of the overarching question that ETHER asks, I also imagined this community could be keenly sensitive to the subtle workings of power, to the processes by which issues of power frame human interaction, and to the ethics of acknowledging this situation. Yet, in so doing, I was immediately reminded of Timothy Garton Ash's thought-provoking question: 'When you say we, who do you mean? What's the widest possible political community of which you spontaneously say "we" or "us"?'[3]

In our answer to that question, Garton Ash points out, lies the key to our future.

As Garton Ash's question suggests, then, the notion of we is inevitably divided along philosophical, social and political lines. And trying to answer it, I realised that I had to call my own assumptions about belonging to community into question; not because I believed I was wrong in envisioning a group of like-minded individuals interested in the ethics of communicating with the other, but because I realised that I could not clearly specify the nature of the we I had in mind.

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I understand that I will never understand but I stand with you.

Lara-Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi

In encounters in Germany there are apparatuses[4] at work that constantly measure for blackness but not for whiteness. So these apparatuses – of which I am a part – actually enact cuts that produce black bodies and German bodies, but not white bodies. Because white bodies and German bodies are conflated, no cuts are being enacted there. Only between German bodies and black bodies. Currently, white Germans are not a thing because they are *the* thing. So, what does that mean for us? Well, I would say that this means that participation in material discursive practices which enact cuts that produce white Germans and black Germans might actually be our responsibility.

So, let me get back to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) slogans and what we can learn from them in this regard and also with this theoretical lens. In an interview with Noëmi, a black German woman, we were looking at and talking about a selection of BLM protest placards that I had compiled on a PowerPoint slide. While Noëmi knew that what brought me into this research had been this placard: 'I understand that I will never understand but I stand with you', she started talking about all the other slogans I presented but she didn't really talk about this one. And I said, 'Well you've ignored this one so far so let's look at it'. And she said, 'Yeah that was easy for me to ignore that poster because for me it's essentially a poster that if we're talking about Black Lives Matter protests, it must and should only be brought and carried by white people or by people who are read as white'.

So, we can see here, with Noëmi's help, the enaction of difference as cutting together apart: there's a cut being enacted here between white people or white bodies who would be the ones forming assemblages with this particular slogan. Word–body–assemblages – or placard–body–unions – enact a cut between them and black bodies within the BLM movement. But then Noëmi goes on immediately to say, 'Well I would love to take the poster with me if I went to protest against trans- or homophobia, for example. So say I go somewhere where I stand in for trans rights, then I can put myself in those shoes and take on the perspective that maybe a white person would have at a Black Lives Matter protest'. So, thinking through these 'word–body–assemblages' – which enact cuts that differentiate and connect in one move – opens up new possibilities for making relations, showing solidarity, identifying with each other.

We use collective terms for anyone that isn't white and this reduces our individuality to an acronym and it kind of dispels any sort of freedom and inclusivity that we need to feel accepted.

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Mohasin Ahmed

In modern-day Western society, visibility and equality have improved for our communities. Equality legislation means that Queer people and People of Colour (PoC) have more equal opportunities and see themselves represented in society better. So why, in 2021, is a space like Mojxmma, a club night for Queer People of Colour, needed? Something that demonstrates this need is the 'Progress Pride flag', which was created in 2017 by American civil rights activist Amber Hikes in direct response to the racial discrimination that Queer People of Colour were facing in gay bars in Philadelphia. This experience is not exclusive to Philadelphia. I myself did not feel comfortable as a Queer femme and as a person of Colour in the majority of Queer spaces that I entered. These clubs catered for the majority within the minority and that is White cisgender, homosexual men. You can assume that when you go to a gay bar that there will not be any homophobia but you can't assume that there will not be any racism/transphobia/sexism.

It may be a surprise that discrimination exists within our community but it is a common experience, illustrated in a survey by Stonewall UK in 2018, which found that 51% of LGBT Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents had experienced racism within the community. This increased to 61% for Black LGBT people specifically. Disabled people as a group with pre-existing barriers to support and inclusion also face discrimination within the community and LGBT clubs and events are often not catered for them, dividing the community further. Bisexual people are often dismissed as heterosexual or 'still in the closet'. Some people do not accept them as part of the community as they can 'pass' as straight and might not face the same struggles as homosexual people if in a heterosexual relationship. Transgender people also face discrimination within the community by those who do not believe that they should be included in the LGBT+ spectrum. An example of this is the LGB Alliance, a registered charity in the UK, which actively promotes trans-exclusionary rhetoric.

This brings me to the theory of intersectionality. This was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to explain how different aspects of identity can intersect and compound discrimination. Crenshaw's initial example was using the intersection of race and gender to illustrate the unique experience of Black women in America. During the feminist and anti-racist movements of that period, Crenshaw argues that Black women were left behind by a White-centric model of feminism and a male-centric model of racism. Furthermore, the experience of discrimination faced by Black women that is rooted in both racism and misogyny is ignored, causing significant numbers of people in our communities to be underserved by social justice frames because they don't address the particular ways that they're experiencing discrimination.

We can see examples of these intersections within the LGBT community. People with intersecting identities often code switch, masking parts of their identity to be accepted in specific spaces. We, as others, encounter

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those outside of our community by shape-shifting to what we feel is acceptable in that space. I think that recognising intersectional identities is the most important point. We are all multidimensional – we have our ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, experiences, personality and stories. When providing spaces to include others, we must realise that we all have different needs. The 'others' are usually lumped together; we say the LGBT+ community for all gender and sexuality spectrums that are not cisgender or heterosexual, and BAME/PoC, for all ethnicities that are non-White, ignoring the rich culture, religion, beliefs and experiences that each group hold.

> While the disappearance of this cultural capital is evident, visual arts presents the possibility for reimagining schools through approaches that validate Pasifika perspectives.

Dagmar Dyck

Tēnā koutou katoa
Greetings to you all
He uri tēnei no ngā whenua o Tonga, no Hamene
My ancestors come from Tonga and Germany
E noho ana au kei Tāmaki Makaurau
I live in the city of Auckland
He ringa toi au, otirā ko au te kaiwhakahaere hōtaka o te matauranga Pasifika – Uniservices kei te Waipapa Taumata Rau
I am an artist as well as the programme manager for Pacific-led Education – Uniservices at the University of Auckland.
Ko Dagmar Dyck tōku ingoa
My name is Dagmar Dyck
Tēnā tātou
Greetings to us all

I am a first-generation New Zealander living and working in our largest city Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. My mother is German Tongan from Vava'u, Tonga, and my father is German Polish Dutch.

My entire life I have felt my difference. I look different to the dominant culture, my name Dagmar Dyck sounds different, my parents speak different languages, our family traditions are different. Being different is part of the framework of my identity.

In our sea of islands, Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa[5] writes, 'Whatever we produce must not be a version of our existing reality, which is largely a creation of imperialism. It must be different and of our own making. We should not forget that human reality is human creation. If we fail to create our own, someone else will do it for us by default'. Hau'ofa believed in an individual's right to be custodians of their own knowledge and identity so that their realities are not only learned and understood but also shared.

As a Pasifika artist, social justice activist and art educator, I believe that the arts and storytelling are powerful levers for those like myself

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where being different is our lived experience. Arts and storytelling are interlinked in the way that we as Pacific peoples create our arts and provide the vā or spaces in which we tell them.

My difference plays a fundamental role in the way I navigate my world. Throughout my schooling years, I never had a teacher or lecturer who reflected me, nor did I have conversations with teachers about my exact identity, an experience that made me feel culturally invisible. However, through the deliberate actions of my art teachers, they recognised the creative capacity in me. They encouraged me to use my art as a platform and vehicle to tell my story. The rest is history.

New Zealand's education system has generally remained silent on the topic of whiteness, white privilege and supremacy and the Eurocentric nature of our schooling policy and practice.[6] Relevant to New Zealand-born Pasifika students and families is the acknowledgement of language and culture loss as a result of colonisation. While the disappearance of this cultural capital is evident, the visual arts presents the possibility for reimagining schools through approaches that validate Pasifika perspectives.



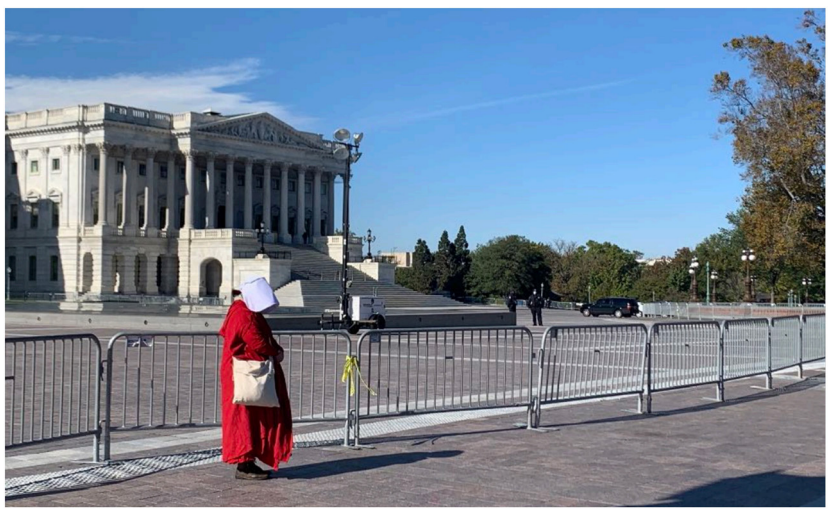
Social Standing I and II (Original artwork; Dagmar Dyck, 2023; photo by Sam Hartnett)

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> Not being able to attune to one another not only means failing to communicate with the other, it could also mean shutting people down.

Erin Moriarty

Turning to Washington, DC, these are photos of my neighbourhood. Public spaces in DC were radically transformed and everyday encounters became fraught as a result of tumultuous events on the Capitol throughout the Trump administration. I live on Capitol Hill, a few blocks from the Capitol, where Congress meets and the epicentre for encounters between US citizens and their representatives. During lockdown, I would take daily walks to the Capitol. On and off, the Capitol and its surrounding blocks had been fenced off from ordinary citizens because of the protests that had been taking place in the neighbourhood on a daily basis.



A person dressed in a red, hooded robe in Washington DC (Erin Moriarty, 2021)

On this particular day, the tall fences had been taken down and only a few barriers remained. In front of the barriers, I encountered a person dressed in a red, hooded robe, standing with their head bowed. There was a powerful stillness, as this woman was a solitary figure standing in front of the barriers surrounding an empty expanse of concrete in front of one of the most powerful symbols of American democracy. This person stood there, in the shimmering heat, silently resisting the former president and the direction he was taking the country in. The photo is from 2020, and her red robe was redolent of the book and the television series *The Handmaid's Tale*. This encounter was with a lone figure, head

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bowed in silent protest, in a landscape of stillness, as we were the only two people there, besides the figures on the steps of the Capitol in all black with machine guns. The aesthetics of the moment did not invite conversation. However, as I encountered her in the stillness in front of the Capitol, I became witness to her silent protest.

Awad Ibrahim

For Buber,[7] language or, more broadly, communication is central to any form of dialogue, even though dialogue can take place in silence. To be able to communicate in silence is the human capacity that he calls communicating inter-subjectively. This kind of communication happens outside language and outside the speech act. And so, even though dialogue can exist outside the boundaries of language and in silence, communication is, nonetheless, an essential component of dialogue. As an event, dialogue is deeply embedded in time and space. For dialogue to take place, especially what he calls 'genuine dialogue', requires a quality of communication that he calls communion. A sense of time, place and, above all, a sense of recognising the humanity of the other. This means moving from a simple dialogue to becoming an act of love.

Ana Deumert

Angela, when you mentioned the word moral, for me it's interesting because you then mentioned ethics as well. And somehow ethics is a word I feel quite comfortable with. To me, moral immediately evokes the moralistic, the self-righteousness. I think that's why, very often, we tend to – *I* tend to – prefer the word ethics because it doesn't seem to have those connotations of somebody judging someone; whereas moral seems, to me at least, to somehow have that implication, including the negative associations of being moralistic.

Angela Creese

Yeah, I agree with you, I think it does. Although having now read some of the literature which I wasn't engaging with before, I can see that it is much more about responsibility. And the dynamic that's created in the relational with people being together is a kind of moral responsibility. So, I think it's a bit like the word individuality as well – it means very different things to different people obviously.

The thing about ethics though is that it's too easily linked these days with a kind of ethical form filling and going through the university systems. That takes on another dimension of meaning. In sociolinguistics it's also an issue because when we talk about interaction, we're very much at ease going into meaning and indexicality and other processes of meaning making. But we still find it very hard to talk about the ethical

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or moral dimension of interacting with one another. And I think that's one of the things I've learned from Maggie asking me questions about my work. I know we're not all sociolinguists, but this is a point where I find this really speaks to me. I want to be able to bring in a different dimension of interaction that is much harder for a linguist to do.

Elisabetta Adami

I will bring a couple of examples of meaning-making towards a perceived other done by using objects as resources of communication. These examples will lead me to ask questions on appropriation and on what defines successful communication. I will not provide answers but rather try to show how, by looking at instances of communication beyond language, we might be able to uncover principles and practices of meaning making with 'perceived others' that help us dismantle ideas of 'intercultural' as hinged on national or ethnic criteria and, possibly, redefine 'otherness' and 'kin' in more dynamic, relational, situated and emerging ways.

Sociolinguistics and applied linguistic research on language, culture and intercultural communication has long advocated against an essentialised conception of culture based on national or ethnic boundaries. However, intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic contexts are still considered as separate. That is, while communication among people with different mother tongues would be considered in the realm of intercultural communication, communication among people with the same mother tongue and possibly using different varieties would be considered in the realm of societal power dynamics instead, not within intercultural communication. When, in reality, I argue that both contexts should always fall within the same case of communication with perceived others.

Now, although I'm a linguist, I'm particularly interested in meaning made by so-called non-verbal resources and how the meaning-making principles that are in place when we use these resources with perceived others might shed new light on concepts of culture, communication and possibly also on how we use speech and writing in this context.

So, I'll use one example of this through the use of objects in a public space and specifically in the window of a butcher in Kirkgate Market in Leeds City Centre (see image at the beginning of this chapter). And this is one of the findings that emerged during a three-year project that I worked on with other colleagues in Leeds; the project was funded by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust. It was called 'Leeds Voices – Communicating Superdiversity in the Market'.

Now, this butcher has placed a lucky cat in his shop window close to where he displays belly pork. He has done that to attract Chinese customers, because in his experience Chinese customers frequently buy belly pork unlike other customer demographics. So here, he has used an object

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as a resource, he has turned it into a sign that, in its intended meaning, addresses Chinese customers – it says 'you' Chinese customers – and indexically, through proximity placement, draws their attention to an item that they might want to buy.

From this example, we can ask many questions. Is the sign successful? What does it mean for a sign to be successful? Is it a case of cultural appropriation? We could certainly ask Chinese customers passing by what meaning they make of the lucky cat. And most likely we'll receive very many different answers.

But that's not really my point. When I came across that shop window, I had recently arrived in the UK, the Brexit referendum results had just been released and I started to feel particularly conscious of the popularity of an anti-immigration stance blowing across this island. The butcher also has a Union Jack outside his window. And that's used to show the provenance of its activity and produce. But within the Brexit climate, I have become more and more triggered to interpret UK national flags on display as a nationalistic sign potentially associated with anti-immigration ideas.

So, in this case, as a recently arrived migrant, I interpreted the lucky cat as a sign of openness towards foreignness, mitigating the potentially nationalistic and neo-nativist meaning that I would associate with the Union Jack on display. Although the lucky cat did not mean to me what the butcher intended it to mean, it was indeed successful. It let me enter without fear. Not in indexing the belly pork, which I didn't even notice, but rather in pre-empting a potential meaning of 'I don't welcome migrants'.

There is more, because in the very same window, the butcher has also placed some plastic grapes on display. He did that when fishmongers were temporarily relocated to the butcher's aisle when their hall in the market was undergoing renovation. Traditionally, fishmongers have a higher-budget clientele than butchers in the market. The butcher told me that he thought he needed to decorate his window, given the many 'posh' customers now walking down his aisle. So, he's used plastic grapes. In this case again he used a resource that he thought would appeal to the taste (that is, would speak the register) of a perceived other – not in nationality, as with Chinese customers for the lucky cat, but rather in class this time – people with a 'higher taste' if you will. Here again, was this an intended cultural appropriation, even if it ended up using a resource that does not belong to the intended addressed audience? But also, was the sign successful? Most likely 'posh' customers would interpret the plastic grapes as a sign of 'authenticity' (not certainly belonging to their taste, but belonging to a somewhat 'inferior' other, which is endowed with some fascination). The principle is one of 'exoticising', not in nationality but in class in this case.

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Now, had he done all this with language, he'd have had to use Chinese to address Chinese customers for the belly pork – thus failing to communicate to me as I can't read Chinese – and some sort of English hypercorrection in place of the plastic grapes to address the posh customers – which would have exposed him to judgments of being illiterate instead of being 'authentic'. Most importantly, with language it would have been difficult to identify these two cases as being the result of the same meaning-making principle, that is, to address – to reach out to – a perceived other by using the resources that are perceived to belong to them.

My provocation to you would be then: What if we looked at meaning-making with the other starting from what we do with signs beyond language, considering that these have not undergone the same level of national codification? Could we possibly have a glimpse of different interpretive paradigms on how we communicate with others – and even more so on the dynamics that lead each of us to perceive somebody as other or as kin?

Charlotta Palmstierna Einarsson

According to Gendlin, we are not self-sufficient autonomous subjects but we are interaction. Gendlin's process model of thinking opens up a route for thinking about the distinctions between self and other based on the role of the body in experience.[8,9]

In Gendlin's account, then, humans are embodied interaction; the motive being that, again according to Schoeller and Dunaetz, it could be more fruitfully understood in terms of kung fu or dance.[10] In kung fu, they explain, one learns to absorb the energy of the other as part of striking back or shifting direction. The point is that human beings are not entities that somehow interact, but that our notions of subjectivity and identity emerge from interaction.

As a former dancer, I confess to being particularly attuned to this description. In my experience, to dance is to interact – with spatial orientations, for instance, the corner of a room or the floor – and to do so in ways that seem to produce a form of time-space mattering that Karen Barad associates with entanglements.[11] To dance is to absorb and produce weight, orientation, rhythm and shape. And these material phenomena emerge only through being entangled in this particular way. By analogy, musicians performing a piece do not play alongside each other but they attune to each other and music emerges from their musical entanglements.

The emphasis on embodied cognition does not deny the significance of language. It only insists that we rethink our processes of sense-making. Attuning to embodied cognition arguably reveals our mode of being in the world as intrinsically incomplete. We cannot create meaning on our own, says Gendlin, nor can we speak a private language, says Wittgenstein, but

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we emerge from interaction as do meanings, concepts and identities.[12] Attunement to embodied cognition is therefore an important potential resource for thinking and for communicating with the other. According to Gabriel Carter, the reason why the idea of attunement is so important in new materialism is precisely that it emphasises the intrinsic interconnections between self and other, human and non-human, subject and object – and that it does so in a way that is rhetorical. As Carter suggests, quoting Lydia Walsh, an inability to attune is a rhetorical failing.[13]

Even more specifically, he explains, 'attunement offers the individual entangled within an assemblage a practice; not a task with which one could complete but an ongoing practice of interrogating one's own complicit participation via their practices in the becoming of an assemblage'. Basically, we must attune or fail. And not being able to attune not only means failing to communicate with the other, but it could also mean shutting people down.

To be attuned, then, is to participate and share in the production of meaning. And as Jane Bennett explains, this is also to participate in the ongoing creative processes that constitute various modes of 'being towards others'.[14] As such, one could say that it also approaches what Richard Kearney terms being towards others, a mode of being that 'in itself is an ethical gesture of welcoming what is different'.[15] In making claims, we are thus appealing to others to share in our understanding of the world, to see our reason and commitment to certain values. And the wider the context we can imagine for our claims, the more universal they seem to be; and the more universal, the truer they also seem to be.

Interrupting Assumptions

> When you begin to name differences as cultural differences, you'll begin to explain them. And those explanations actually remove you from the encounter.
>
> *Gert Biesta*

In relation to the question of culture, and again in the whole field of intercultural communication and cultural education, many scholars have raised a really important and valuable question about culture. Can we simply map nation onto culture onto language? Of course not. Can we think of culture as monolithic and static? Of course not. Can we simply say that identity is linked with culture and becomes cultural identity? Also not.

But, again, one question that I see less there, but maybe it says something about my reading, is that these discussions sort of assume that culture exists. And I'm always inclined to say culture is not a thing. Culture is a very particular explanation of the experience of difference. You could even say that culture is an explanation of encounter. But

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culture is never the encounter itself. The problem is that when you use the word culture, very quickly you work with the distinction of nature and culture. And then when you begin to name differences as cultural differences, I think you begin to explain them in a very particular way. And my worry is that those explanations actually eradicate the difference. They remove you from the encounter. So, to say to someone else, your difference from me is merely cultural, we're actually saying, it appears as cultural within the frame I have, and there is no longer the question of whether that frame itself is shared. That's why a lot of the social cultural theories going around in education for me are problematic.

And you can also say that when culture appears as an explanation for difference, it has a really colonial gesture in it where you say, I claim the right to explain you from where I am.

Now, when we think of these encounters as intercultural encounters, you can say that these encounters are framed in a very particular way, which I would characterise as viewing the other. That means that in that understanding of intercultural relationships and encounters, you can say that I am positioned as a spectator of the other. I like the German word Beobachter. When you have this image and begin to think back about all these competency frameworks for intercultural communication, what they all try to do is to see how I can become more competent as a spectator of others. And I think that's a problematic way of staging what's going on.

The problem is that in one and the same move, the 'I' only arrives in the world as a spectator, as a viewer. And this, I think, is still troubling a lot of talk and understanding about intercultural encounters, encounters with the other; that they always start with an 'I' who then needs to encounter, connect, understand, empathise with, get into a dialogue.

Here I see the importance of the work of Emmanuel Levinas which has also come up in the ETHER project because Levinas, in a sense, raises a very fundamental question about what he calls an ego logical worldview, a worldview that starts with the ego, and assumes the ego is there first and then the ego begins to engage with the world, with other people, with living nature. Levinas pushes back against that idea and I think that's a helpful response. He pushes back against the idea that we first need to know before we can act, pushes back against the idea that we first need to understand before we can live, you could say. So, in a slightly bigger way of putting it, he pushes back against any idea that a theoretical perspective on the world comes first, that I am there first and have a view of the world, and then everything else begins.

Ingrid Rodrick Beiler and *Joke Dewilde*

We knew we were doing something wrong when our potential participants reacted to our consent form as if it were a summons from the secret police. We eventually realised that we were dealing with

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differences not only of language and educational background but also of biography and memory.

Our current context of research consists of three classes for migrant learners considered to have little formal schooling, at an adult education centre in Norway. Here, we interpret difference to refer to biographical difference, especially in terms of memories of governance and communication. Several learners have lived in Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq or Syria, where they have had negative experiences, including bad memories of encounters with the government. We have noted that their linguistic repertoires intersect with these memories in complex ways. These kinds of biographies do not mesh easily with what is expected from researchers who are required to follow the Norwegian research ethics regime.

Research in Norway is subject to one of the strictest regulatory regimes in Europe. Since the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation, the national regulatory body for research ethics has required the use of an extended template for project information and participant consent. Given the differences in language and literacy among our potential participants, we were mindful of the need to adapt and go beyond macroethical procedures.[16] However, even after simplification, written translation and oral explanation in learners' most proficient languages, a surprisingly large number refused to participate.

To better understand the reasons for the learners' scepticism, we deferred more to the judgment of others – teachers, translators and research assistants – than we had done in previous research. The following excerpt from an interview with Zahra, a multilingual teacher at the school, points to troubling associations with formal letters for some learners:

Zahra: Yes it was those forms like consent forms, I think that was very difficult for the learners, the translation was a bit, bit too difficult for them to understand, so I thought that maybe that could be a little simpler, in a way, don't write so much about everything, everything you do, it would have been a little easier just to write a little, how we will protect you, how we will protect the (xxxx), so that was a little too much for them.

Joke: Right, we'll do that, we will raise that, because we're required to use those specific forms, but uh, it is, I completely agree with you that it became too difficult and that, we didn't manage to communicate well enough to the learners what it was really about […]

Zahra: And then there are many of them who are traumatised, they have, many of them have internal traumas, so when they hear those kinds of words, then the anxiety comes, then it's best

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to use very simple language, because in homeland, like in Iraq when we use that kind of language that's in the form in Arabic, the only thing we have heard of is when there was a letter from the police or from- from- when someone is going to jail, so then that- that is what was, was a bit difficult for them.

Joke: Are you thinking that, for another time, we should just have had the forms in Norwegian and had for example a person like you explain in the mother tongue and that they then sign in Norwegian?

Zahra: Yes, I think so, I think it would make it a bit easier.

In a similar vein, some learners specifically did not want us to take field notes while observing, as this evoked memories of the police taking notes for surveillance or during interrogation. This surprised us, as we expected learners to find field notes to be less invasive than recording.[17] Furthermore, the teachers reported that many learners were concerned that we came from the university to check on their teachers because they were not doing their job well. The teachers had to reassure them that this was a collaborative research project that they had welcomed.

Increasingly, we looked at the consent process in terms of not just satisfying a requirement, but also considering it as data of how differences encounter one another, producing unpredictable outcomes. It required us to ask how we as researchers could better understand participants. Reflexivity and monitoring the process of research took us into researching 'engagement with difference' and discovering what kind of difference we have to negotiate and what effort this takes, in terms of both time and meaning making.

> The hardest part about doing this kind of work is that the ground beneath is not settled. And the moment it becomes settled, then we really need to start to attend to the fact that we're not opening ourselves to the possibilities of difference.

Joseph Valente

I like what you're saying about not making a claim because it's like when we were writing about the non-verbal child in that preschool in Paris and how we argued that we could not make claims about what his actions meant. We talked about the productiveness for us to think about his difference and the way it affected us and the productiveness of the fact that we didn't know what he really thought or what it meant to him. So, if you're doing this kind of work, you can't make claims, right?

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Gail Boldt

I mean it's not possible for us not to make claims. I make claims all the time because I have to have a method for working so I have to have some way of thinking about the fact that I do this or I don't do that. So, I make claims but I have to hold those claims really lightly.

Joseph Valente

All right, we don't want to hold steadfast to them, we're not rigid about it. Or, at least, we are transparent about the fact that we are making claims, right?

Gail Boldt

They're working hypotheses.

Joseph Valente

It's a process and you're recognising that it's always already becoming, right? The minute you make claims with certainty about it, then you're no longer attending to the possibilities of that potential or the potential of it becoming something other than what you expected. It's like that paper you gave about Wilfred Bion[18] who writes about going into therapy sessions with patients without memory or desire. You have to enter the session without memory or desire but part of that is that it's impossible to enter sessions without memory or desire. So, you hold the impossibility.

Gail Boldt

You hold the impossibility even though it's impossible. You still try, right? Or to see what gets produced and the difference between what's impossible and what you do to hold on to the productiveness of the difference.

Elisabetta Adami

Something that possibly connects with my interests about communicating with others is that I felt both excitement and frustration by watching your provocation. Excitement about getting access to the other's universe that's unfamiliar to me, but also frustration because I constantly try to translate it into my own universe and that's exhausting. And I think that is also the kernel of how I conceive of communicating with others or trying to make meaning of the other in a sense.

What Gail mentioned about the non-making claims, the non-representational in trying to not make claims, not fix the way I interpret

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things, which I very much agree on. It's also my social semiotic take on meaning making. I'm wondering if that is asignifying or if it is, in fact, meaning making but it's actually rather the need to accept that, even if we are committed to non-making claims, we also need to accept that we keep making hypotheses. We can't help, and rightly so, but make educated guesses and hypotheses and we keep trying to make meaning. And what's important, I would say, is the ability to acknowledge that these are just hypotheses, they are not set in stone definitions. The idea of accepting the fact that you can't have control of others' meaning making but you also can never be in someone else's head. I felt it also as part of my frustration. I wanted to be in your head while you were there co-constructing this dialogue. Instead, I had to accept the fact that I had to make my own meaning out of it.

Gail Boldt

We frustrate ourselves and each other all the time. It does have to do with disruption, actually, of what we imagine we know through our usual modes of communication. And I guess it's that thing of something that you can't say very much about because it can't be said and also holding onto the productive value of knowing that there is all this stuff that we can't say anything about. Also, we are most excited about the productivity of difference. I mean we can't help but make claims. We have to have ways of working and being in the world. But if we can do that and, at the same time, say but this isn't what it is… that certainly leads you to a lifetime of self-frustration.

Joseph Valente

The hardest part about doing this kind of work is that the ground beneath is not settled. And the moment it becomes settled, we really need to start attending to the fact that we're not opening ourselves to the possibilities of difference and variation. But really, if you think about the ideas, what's happening is you have multiplicity, right? Here are multiple things that can happen. And there are multiple sides of the same point at any time you think you're perceiving something, right?

Gail Boldt

I'll pop in one more thing which is, Elisabetta, about the frustration that you felt. Joe and I are frustrated with each other all the time, and part of that is that we're communicating across deaf, non-deaf differences. And so, I guess I'm interested in the productivity of the frustration which really characterises our relationship and the work we try to do all the time.

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Maggie Kubanyiova

And a related idea is about how you actually communicate this. I love the idea of interrupting assumptions by using the cartoon, as you, Gail and Joe, did, which made me pause and think about what it is I'm looking at. So, the whole idea of representation and what we're doing, through dance, cartoons or other creative forms of communicating our research, that question always goes back to the ethics of aesthetics. And again, I think I'm alluding to Joe here. So, when we're talking about aesthetics, a way of assembling different forms to represent or communicate, what is the ethics of that? There will always be questions about what right we have to represent. But should we also be concerned with what kind of ethical responsibility we have and what kind of ethical response we want to invite?

Charlotta Palmstierna Einarsson

In terms of that ethical response, I would say that it's very difficult to remember the flow of our ideas, the flow of life. We get so caught up in meanings and we keep taking them for granted. For me, it's very much about interrupting myself to remind myself of that. I don't know if I always succeed; I mean, often I don't succeed. I can look back and say, 'Oh my goodness, I just took that as a given or forgot to listen'. But that's very human to be completely immersed in life and in ideology.

The question is, dare to challenge yourself. I think that may be very difficult, it may be very scary. And that's one way of securing a more ethical stance towards the other: to remember that perhaps you haven't been walking in their shoes; you don't know what kind of life they're leading.

I consider myself really privileged to be able to say what I want in most contexts, not in all contexts. But you don't see your own privilege, you forget about your own privilege. And we have a tendency – and when I say we, I mean human beings – to just see the things that confirm our own understanding of the world as it already is, and it can be really difficult to challenge that.

Quentin Williams

What I want to demonstrate is an analysis of reaction videos towards a parody performance by an emerging pop group called Woman2Woman based in Cape Town who used Coloured English with Kaaps which is understood as a historically racialised variety of Afrikaans. The reaction videos on YouTube show how speakers or YouTube users are invested in language ideological frameworks of *in difference*.

Why reaction videos? Reaction videos are a uniquely YouTube or social media framework because they have transformed the nature of

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self-imaging platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. It is an important data source to study the performance of language, gender and race and the many ways users provide a multimodal affective experience. According to McDaniel,[19] reaction videos are an effective response to media that generates further engagement because reactivity points to a quality of media that transforms reception into interaction by provoking a response.

Woman2Woman performed a parody of Beyonce Knowles' song *Irreplaceable* on a famous show called Morning Soul Expresso in 2017. They are all so-called Coloured speakers in Cape Town, which is often defined as a racial label that describes not White enough, not Black enough. And on this particular day, they parodied Coloured English together with Kaaps to present a funny rendition of the song which is about Beyonce Knowles breaking up with her boyfriend because presumably he has cheated.

Coloured English becomes embodied in the performance of the parody. Woman2Woman embodied their performance in such a way that they challenged language ideological discourses of *in difference* that attempted to reduce their exaggerated use of Coloured English and Kaaps as inauthentic and erroneous and contradictory. I pay particular attention not only to the group's performance but also to the linguistic hate that resulted from the imposition of language ideologies of *in difference* that came the group's way once their performance was published on YouTube.

A lot of the reactionary comments below the video were filled with sarcasm and mocking but also reflected on the use of English by the participants. The users responded through conjectures and determinations that their performance caused linguistic feuds, confusion and 'how-dare-they perform-that-Beyonce-song-in-that-variety', leading to a fair amount of hate. So, in exaggerating Coloured English alongside Kaaps, users did not provide a very good description but were sarcastic, mocked it and tried to affiliate the use of Coloured English with that of a woman speaking either Indian or the other performers not speaking proper English.

In the reaction to the expression videos, this performance represents language discourses of *in difference* that seek to bind the discourses of race to the group's racialised and gendered bodies and their singing ability; not only their ability to use a certain variety of English, in this case Coloured English and the use of Afrikaans, but also the confusion around its use in the song. In many of the reactions, the users try to figure this out in the song. These metalinguistic reflections of some of the users rely on language ideological discourses of *in difference* as conjecture – seeing the group's use of the type of English and accent as violating standard language norms, that is, standard English language norms.

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I interpret this to be language ideologies of *in difference* as tied to discourses of integration of gender and speech in the use of a racialised form of English. I am interested in demonstrating more specifically how one racialised variety of South African English, that is Coloured English, is used and exaggerated by performers and is framed by discourses of *in difference* by other speakers who arrive at language ideologies of *in difference* by conjecture, determinations and contradictions across forms and modes. Through the parody of Coloured English, that is historically racialised varieties, speakers challenge and critique language ideological *in difference* frameworks and they do so because they are often at the vanguard of reinventing language in egalitarian ways.

The Woman2Woman performance is indicative of what happens to previously racialised forms when they are rethought and relinked to voices that challenge language ideologies of *in difference* that are represented through conjectures, determinations and contradictions; and in our case by YouTube users familiar and unfamiliar with the multilingual realities and social, cultural, communication lives of a group like Woman2Woman. By exaggerating Coloured English through parody and the matrices of gender, linguistic power and hegemony, Woman2Woman provides an example of what exactly speakers of historically racialised forms and languages are doing with language inclusivity and recognition.

Lastly, I want to say that Woman2Woman's performance demonstrates that the reappropriation of language by communities of speakers on the periphery often involves and evolves understandings of language authenticity and ownership that divert significantly from more institutionalised discourses on language. And it is in this act of reappropriation that we must pay attention to discourses of difference if we are to better understand what I call language ideologies of *in difference*.

Maybe we need a little less ethics and a little bit more encounter.

Gert Biesta

The notion of empowerment is quite prominent in education. I want to put forward another notion – the idea of education as disarmament because I think disarmament may have something to do with the whole question of how our souls can be touched. For me, the possibility to be touched has something to do with aesthetics and one concern I have is that a lot of education nowadays has become anaesthetic. It numbs our students so that they can quickly move through producing measurable learning outcomes and for me that's a travesty of education.

And although I think a lot of empowerment is done out of good intentions, there is a problem that before you know it, you end up in a mindset where the other is first of all seen as a potential threat; where the first

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interest for me is my own survival; and the future begins to be a kind of battlefield, where we all come empowered for the encounter. That's my worry when there is too much empowerment going on because you can say when you begin to empower, you begin to build a harness around yourself and that begins to raise the question, 'Can something still come through? Can you still be touched?'. And for me, this speaks to the danger that education actually becomes an anaesthetising process where students are empowered so much that nothing can enter any longer. Are these abstract concerns? Not for me.

So, how do we in cultural organisations create a space where people can meet as individuals?

Kate Fellows

We all put people in boxes in our heads either consciously or unconsciously, it's a natural human thing to do. This might be based on what they look like, what they say or indeed what they don't. Looking at or listening to me, you'll make assumptions about the communities to which I identify or belong. Through the information I've volunteered or what I'm wearing even, you may have decided based on that whether you think we'd get on if we went out for a coffee. And most of the time I'm okay with that.

The bit of the time I'm not okay with that comes from the negative side of the process. The bothering kind of 'othering' for me is recognising and often labelling somebody as different to you. It can have really positive effects of shared learning and empathy or it can have really negative ones of assumptions, misunderstandings and, at a very extreme level, hatred. The 'otherness' labels we give people often stay with them throughout their lives, and they may not be happy or comfortable with the assumptions and labels that others make.

So, how do we in cultural organisations create a space where people can meet as individuals? How do we create a comfortability factor where we can recognise the difference? I've tried not to assume things like the postcode of a school, which leads to another assumption of a certain attitude or a certain lived experience. I've learned to trust my instincts and try to be open about having difficult conversations, acknowledge my biases and my mistakes, be empathetic and curious, keep learning. All of these are now driven by what I see as my values of kindness, compassion and trying to be an empathetic human. I still ask questions of myself, I'm still learning.

The moment we start talking about languages in that way, there's a risk of losing the conversation that we want to have in the first place.

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Angela Creese

Many of us here have been at the forefront of promoting a multilingual way of looking at the world rather than a monolingual way of looking at the world. But the moment you start talking about, for example, prioritising other languages at the start of a conversation with others, there's a possibility that if many others don't speak that language, then you don't join in the conversation. So, Jan Blommaert was always very keen to say, OK, that's great, let us all talk in a variety of different languages, but hey, you know that's not really the essence of the conversation because we may end up not understanding one another.

And there is a kind of argument in multilingual research that we should be first and foremost focused on demoting English in favour of other languages in particular contexts, so that somehow levels out the situation. But for me, the moment we start talking about languages in that way, then there's a risk perhaps of losing the conversation that we want to have in the first place. So I don't know. It's pretty controversial for me to say some of that actually, because I think I'm seen as someone who promotes multilingualism, but sometimes I think that discussion goes awry and we're talking about the wrong thing.

I was thinking about the notion of languages as possibilities or opportunities for doing and being different things.

Tracey Costley

So, if we're moving backwards and forwards between different language practices or different named languages even, if we think about it in those ways – what do those kind of hierarchies represent in terms of established practices? Who gets to establish them? In what context were they established? And again, I'm just thinking through some of the things that we've been doing not only in terms of research methods, but also in terms of classroom practices around language teaching. In a sense, things happen in a certain way because we think that we've inherited certain systems and certain practices. And so changing our view of languages may enable us to change the hierarchies and with it the types of conversations that we can have, who can be part of them and how we join in and out of those conversations. So, thinking about languages in this way enables us to get at existing practices that perhaps maintain some of that inequality and present obstacles not only to access or to be able to manoeuvre, but also that restrict possibilities.

So, part of what I'm interested in is trying to disrupt some of those expectations. I want to explore how to do that and how to shift from a starting point that assumes a particular linguistic mode or where the assumptions are that you're going to be operating in a particular way.

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I am interested in how to shift that and how to open up the discussion from the very beginning.

I think this is a period of change and it's really quite positive in the sense that there are lots of people working on this. There are lots of really exciting new publications about researching multilingually and how we do that. So, I think it is sort of there, it feels like there's a moment where things might be changing. But what parts of what structures need to be changed and how that happens remains, I think, an interesting question.

Irene Heidt

At some point in my work, I actually started using the notion of multilingual students instead of the official designation students 'with migration background' which is an ideologically loaded term that refers to individuals who were born outside of Germany (first generation) and those who were born in Germany to at least one foreign parent (second generation).[20] By multilingual I do not mean just speaking different languages – referring to a knowledge of separated linguistic systems – but having different ways of seeing the world, different ways of thinking and different ways of making meaning, even though we speak the same language.[21,22] So, those students in my provocation actually spoke German with the teachers, but they were drawing on entirely different discourses and different historicities, different collective memories, which ended up in those conflicting situations.

And I found it fascinating how Colin and you actually pointed out that our universities do not prepare us to do ethnographic work multilingually because the universities are so monolingually focused. And I agree with that and I found it's still paradoxical because that contradicts strategies of internationalisation in higher education, which also aim at international and (inter-)cultural exchange programmes, research and education – even though I recognise that these strategies of internalisation aim at instrumental and neoliberal goals. And so I was thinking, how do you define multilingualism? What would a multilingual ethnography look like?

Tracey Costley

So, Colin and I and other colleagues are involved in a large project looking at students or young learners in schools in Tanzania, Botswana and Zambia, and how their linguistic resources are or are not brought into classrooms. What happens in the community, what happens in the classrooms and the same for the teachers.

These students are existing in multilingual contexts. Yet, when they're in the classrooms, a very dominant model of language pedagogy and language instruction is happening. And our research looks at whether adopting a kind of translanguaging perspective – trying to have that sort of fluidity – is something that's possible in these schools.

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In our first fieldwork trip to Zambia, we were thinking about how we do this during some of our meetings. Again, this is a largely multilingual group where there was a sort of default into English. And so we were curious about how we can interrupt that. So, in terms of researching multilingually, instead of leading with English as an opening for a meeting, perhaps getting another colleague to start in a different language so as to set the scene from the beginning that this was okay. And it was okay for it to feel uncomfortable. My own linguistic repertoire is relatively limited in this context, and that's fine. There are other things that I do and bring. And so when the meetings start, I can follow along and move in and move out. And so again I'm trying to make sure that we are doing things multilingually, collaboratively and responsively at all times with an awareness of how the language is working there.

Colin Reilly

I think this type of research has potential to be disruptive. Because if we think about it, me and Tracey are working in the UK. English is obviously the default academic language as it is for many countries around the world. I think our starting point is, as Tracey said, to view all the linguistic resources that we encounter – within the research, within the research team, as we're conducting the research – as valuable resources. In terms of education research, generally our team would have a position where we think pedagogically, the whole linguistic repertoires of students can be viewed as resources. So, we wanted to take that into our own research as well.

Researching multilingually is something that affects all stages of the research. This was important for us because sometimes there's an expectation of going out and doing your research and then maybe you need a translator at some point, and then that's when you start thinking about multilingualism. Something we were interested in was thinking about how it affects the planning and things like that and then how we engage with each other in our team. What languages do you need to use there? And then, importantly, thinking about outputs and things like that. How can we be disruptive within that and challenge this kind of English dominance?

Thandanani Gumede

When I reached the UK, I co-founded my own company called Zulu Tradition that began touring around the UK, and it also had a programme for schools. Education was a huge and integral part of everything that we were doing. So, for instance, if we did a showcase, we would perform for people, but we also had to deconstruct what we did and be able to explain and expand the significance of the music that we were doing in our culture.

For me, music and education are interchangeable. As a person of Zulu and Xhosa heritage, our history was not recorded but it was

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actually orally relayed and transmitted from the older to the younger generation, through music, poetry, etc. So, there is a lot in our music that ensures there is education, there is language and there is culture.



Thanda dressed in Zulu regalia (Thandanani Gumede)

I would go to different schools across the UK and perform with a group of other Zulus dressed in traditional Zulu regalia. We would only perform for 15–20 minutes. Afterwards, we would explain what we are wearing, including umqhele (a Zulu crown/headdress) worn by men, inkehli (a Zulu hat reserved for married women) and imbatha (the upper body covering). We would also speak about Africa in general: it is not just a place with trees, giraffes and lions loitering around, you know, they need to understand the contemporary aspect of that place.

We feel that education is part of everything that we do, because in Zulu culture, we have a thing called ukuthamundwa. That means information orally relayed, so we had to memorise songs to preserve the embedded knowledge. For example, my last name is Gumede. We don't have ancestry.com. We don't have things written down to say this is your ancestral tree. So, I have to memorise a sort of poem made up of my clan names (izithakazelo). Those are the names of my forefathers. So, if somebody else sings their poem and there happens to be a line that is similar to mine, then that would mean that we are related and cannot date or marry into that family.

So, this is why music, poetry and dance are important – they serve as the archives of our history. When they were teaching me to dance, I

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thought I was merely doing a dance but I later found out that they were teaching me to defend myself. So, those things, the subliminal education is ingrained in the music, the poetry, the drawings, the art. That is why when we go into schools, we insist that our music cannot be divorced from education. So we sing, we chorus and then we expound.

> The Indigenous presence in the exhibition space aimed to stop the general public just wandering through and looking at things. Instead it aimed to make them engage all of their senses to start to challenge unhelpful stereotypes.

Thea Pitman

My current research has focused on a 2018 arts-based project that aimed to create a positive space for intercultural exchange and the lessening of prejudice, on all sides, between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous society in Brazil.

On the first weekend of August 2018, a group of Indigenous people took over the Museum of Modern Art in Salvador, Brazil. The Arte Eletrônica Indígena project promoted the co-creation of electronic art between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and subsequently brought that co-created Indigenous electronic art to the Modern Art Museum for an exhibition. But more than an art exhibition, this turned into an occupation, a retomada of a space normally reserved for elite culture and its clientele.



Indigenous people starting to dance a toré at the inauguration of Arte Eletrônica Indígena (Dayanne Pereira, 2018)

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Many prejudices circulate in Brazilian society about how 'Indigenous people can't use modern technology' and 'What are they doing with a mobile phone or a computer?' or 'What are they doing creating electronic art?'.

The interesting thing about the exhibition space was that it was in a site that attracted passers-by. So, it wasn't just preaching to the converted. And the Indigenous presence in town, in the wider urban space, for that opening weekend, was also part of this engagement with mainstream society. The Indigenous people went around wearing the project t-shirts which caused people to stop and ask questions. They used the space – through their presence and their performance of Indigeneity – to engage with this non-Indigenous audience.

The Indigenous presence in the exhibition space aimed to stop the general public just wandering through and looking at things. Instead, it aimed to make them engage all of their senses and to engage them in conversation about anything and everything to do with Indigeneity and art. To start to challenge unhelpful stereotypes that circulate in Brazilian mainstream society about Indigenous people.

Tawaná Kariri-Xocó: When you mix electronics with our culture, with spiritual things, ancient things, crafts, it's about getting society to understand what it's like to be an 'Indian' these days. And I explain it all and people get the idea. People who would be afraid of talking to me and after they've stopped and talked, then they feel differently about things.

Mangatxai Camacan Ymboré: It was a kind of cultural occupation because today we are recognised as being Indigenous more through our culture. If we don't show off our culture, we're not recognised as Indigenous. If I am dressed in my traditional clothes, showing off my Indigenous culture, many people will see that I'm Indigenous. They'll be curious and ask me questions.

But if I'm daring to show my face here today, ready to fight, I've summoned the strength to speak up and tell people what it's like to be Indigenous. To say that I am Indigenous. I'm not afraid to say that that's what I am. I am Mangatxai and I came here to tell you that I am Indigenous and I'm going to fight for my rights.

Mayá Tupinambá Pataxó Hãhãhãe: I even said to my colleagues, my brothers and sisters, my relatives in the community, I told them that we were getting ready to carry out a retomada at the museum, showing off our knowledge, our experience.

> What happens in the encounter is that we experience a moment of being taught. We are being addressed by the world.

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Gert Biesta

This for me suggests, but I'm quite radical in some of my opinions, that the whole discourse about learning I think has little to do here. I would be happy to say, let's take learning out of education, because it's such an unhelpful notion. We should not think that we teach our students so that they learn about the other, because then they step into the game of explanation. I also don't particularly like the phrase 'learning from the other'. Because before you know it, you say, yeah, I use the other for my learning. And that's also not an encounter; it's an instrumentalisation.

Rather, what happens in the encounter is that we experience a moment of being taught; that we are addressed by what we encounter, by who we encounter; that we are being spoken to. And I want to claim the right, not just for other human beings to speak to us but I think that the whole world is speaking to us in all kinds of ways; that we are being touched, you could say. And there, I would suggest, we find the real educational question. The question we find in each encounter, namely – What is this that I encounter here asking of me?

And that's not a question that I can resolve by saying if I understand it and engage with it. Well, that's fine. That question – What is this asking of me? – is a question that interrupts, and therefore you can say it's an aesthetic question, because it potentially awakes you. And it wakes you in a very particular way, because the question – What is this asking of me? – puts me in question actually. And there, I'm no longer empowered. But I meet a moment of disarmament where you can say the encounter is precisely what pulls me into the world.

Teachers needed to be willing to be vulnerable and to be positioned as unknowing.

Rae Si'ilata

So, when we first piloted this work, getting teachers to work bilingually or multilingually with their Pasifika children was not normalised practice in English medium classrooms. So, we wanted to co-construct this with teachers so that they didn't get too defensive about it. Generally, teachers are used to holding power in classrooms, so we had to support teachers to actually have a choice and make decisions around how much they were able to put into practice.

And we noticed that when they felt they had ownership of it, they were willing to have a go. And so, what this meant was that teachers needed to be willing to be vulnerable and to be positioned as unknowing or as learners. Here's a quote from one of those teachers:

> I didn't know how to be culturally responsive. I remember that first workshop feeling out of my comfort zone and thinking how can I teach

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> using bilingual books when I can't speak Tongan, how can I teach in Tongan or Samoan? I remember that fear.

But she soon realised that just creating opportunities in her classroom for the children to become the teacher, she found that you don't need to be fluent in the language:

> You can let the children be the experts. They just step up and shine and it transforms your classroom culture. The children love it. It strengthens their literacy in English too because of the way you're working with the dual language books.

So, as teachers continued to engage in their professional learning and then to take risks around trying out these practices within their classrooms: to move from monolingual to multilingual spaces or bilingual spaces and to be willing to make themselves vulnerable, they began to surface and recognise their own existing beliefs. This comes from one of those teachers:

> The bottom line is I failed this child and I have changed and I'm really emotional about this because if I failed him how many other children have I failed? And I've noticed that every single one of my children are now moving and this has all taken part in the last month or so it's happened. Often we think we know it all; actually, we don't. I used to think I was a damn good teacher, and you woke me up on that day. I had to have a really good check of myself and my teaching practices and what was working and what wasn't and how I could change it and to this day it's affected me greatly.

So, as teachers became willing to share power, they started to learn from Pasifika children. Pasifika children were no longer othered in their classrooms but, in fact, became the teachers both of other children and of the teacher. This teacher said:

> They're constantly translating for me but also they're talking to each other in their heritage language they love seeing me being the learner. They're at the point now where they will slow this speech down for me so I can repeat new words and they are the experts, and they are so proud. The change in classroom culture is mind-blowing. It's a culture of talk and expressing themselves; of being proud of who you are in your language and your country and accepting of everybody else's language and culture.

Thus, as they changed their practice and began to support children to make connections between their lived experiences and the schema in the

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book or the story of the book or the underpinning message in the book, the teachers actually realised that they had a real lack of knowledge about children's linguistic and cultural resources at home.

> I can't read the books to them, but the book speaks to their worldview. These are their stories. Quite often our books do not intersect with children's worldviews like skiing holidays and feeding baby lambs on the farm. I hadn't thought about the stories that children bring with them to school. They all have stories that they bring.

Claiming Sameness, Claiming Difference

> Not because we are like-minded but because we are different do we arrive to think differently together instead of merely confirming what we already know.

Charlotta Palmstierna Einarsson

Taking our community of ETHER speakers as an example, I realised that it's not merely that we come together here today but our coming together does something. It says something that it couldn't otherwise say. Gathering, even though we are online, enables us to think together in a way that we would not be able to do on our own or in another context. And meaning emerges from this thinking together. Not because we bring our various ideas just to create a pile of ideas but because we construct something new together that we could not have otherwise created – be that something knowledge or insights or new ways of looking at the issue of encountering the other. Not because we are like-minded but because we are different do we arrive to think differently together instead of merely confirming what we already know. The issue of self and other clearly compels inter- and multidisciplinary answers and I would like to comment that this situation makes it all the more important to recognise the diversity of the community gathering here today.

> How does one achieve an individual positionality in regard to previously racialised or class or status or gender related speech forms and so overcome collective notions of linguistic authenticity?

Nigel Rapport

Your work, Quentin, is to try and end hierarchical, hegemonic and stereotypical determinations that are associated with speech forms and maintain a kind of collectivist apartheid in South Africa. If I was faced with that problem, my ethical proposition would be to do two different things. Firstly, an attempt to institute a neutral public language in

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the spirit of say Esperanto, a language that does not have any cultural, ethnic, collectivist history behind it; in which everyone is versed alike. Overcoming issues of differential cultural capital, overcoming issues of historical ownership, hierarchicalisation, etc.

So, on the one hand, one has a neutral public language. On the other hand, one guarantees private personal reserves, private spaces; where individuals express their selves to themselves and to significant others in individual ways. So, my solution would be a kind of bifurcation in usage. At one extreme, public and neutral; at the other extreme, private and idiosyncratic in which individuals' idiolects are given full rein, are allowed full expression.

How does one achieve an individual positionality in regard to previously racialised or class or status or gender-related speech forms and so overcome collective notions of linguistic authenticity? Because it seemed to me that Woman2Woman were going down this road in parodying collective speech forms and were doing it in a kind of individual way. I would want them to go further to explode notions of collective speech forms and say that as individual human beings, we each bring our personality to the collective forms of language. We inhabit them in individual ways, we personalise them, we animate them in individual ways. Rather than just parodying collective speech forms, explode the very notion that these things are linked to particular social groups. Public language is linked to everybody. Private language is linked to individuals alone.

> I understand that we need to focus on the individual but that does not help us, many would argue, to work on the corrective, that is, the communities that need to be empowered.

Quentin Williams

It's a very interesting question that you pose, and I think every language community in South Africa would disagree, especially the historically marginalised communities, because the current spirit of democracy is geared towards a future where the collective becomes empowered. The history of apartheid in Africa, especially among sociolinguists and linguists who need to atone for their linguistic sins because they were the most privileged, who went into coloured and black communities and documented the varieties as a collector, thereby also sustaining a misunderstanding of who that collective is by imposing a particular label on them. I understand that we need to focus on the individual, but that does not help us, many would argue, to work on the corrective, that is, the communities that need to be empowered. There are linguists who still insist that these varieties spoken by so-called coloured English speakers are coloured English. Language ideology of indifference has enormous

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implications for agency and the voice. Voice, that is, your ability to be heard, and agency, your ability to bring about institutional change.

I'm a great admirer of Esperanto and moving towards a collective understanding and moving out of the ethnic category that oftentimes multilingual speakers in our country are sort of locked into or boxed in. And currently, we are having a sort of violent public debate about origins of languages and different histories of formations.

So, I think the individual repertoire and understanding how that feeds into translanguaging or languaging have really shone a light on the multilinguality of South Africans and that sort of helps us to bust the myths and stereotypes of the speaker, different from what we came to understand in what I call apartheid linguistics. Because the obsession with apartheid linguists was Afrikaans and standard Afrikaans and that has meant that the other speakers – speakers like Woman2Woman – and the way that they parody creatively were pushed to the background. But now they are in the foreground and I think there is a focus on the collective more so than the individual.

Nigel Rapport

I just think that once you start essentialising membership of collectivities, there's no escape. It is a falsification of their individual humanity and their true individual identity by merely boxing them, labelling them, classifying them according to what I call fictional collectivities of class or status or profession or religiosity. These are cultural fictions that get in the way of the ontological realities of our humanity and our individuality, and once you start politicising them it's really hard to find a way to escape forcing people to identify by way of historical fictions that don't speak to their individualities.

> That is what was expected of me during Black History month – I had to be an organic echo chamber of pre-existing misconceptions.

Thandanani Gumede

In South Africa, I primarily focused on contemporary and American Gospel music, as well as jazz. And in the UK, I've been focusing exclusively, at least for my first decade here, on traditional warrior song and dance compilations. I am of Zulu and Xhosa heritage, and so the biggest struggle I faced when I was in South Africa regarding my performances: people expected me to sound American when I was in church. So, that was the default benchmark of my musical proficiency. My accent disappeared – it had to because the music was/is completely Americanised. And when I came back to the UK, there was this expectation that I had to sing in the click sounds. That is what was expected of me during Black

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History month – I had to be an organic echo chamber of pre-existing misconceptions.

Fortuitously, about four or five years ago, Opera North created a particular project that I was so glad to be a part of because it allowed me to step away from doing what I was expected based on the way I looked and where I came from.

So, my work has shifted beyond 'what' I am to incorporate 'who' I am too, as an idiosyncratic individual – my work then became the conduit for that expression. Instead of just being put in an assigned box, I would reserve the elasticity to draw from any particular part of my life in order to express different things. All that I have been doing has been based on encounters. How do I resolve those tensions when, for instance, as a South African singer we were not allowed to sing with white people or people who looked different from us. How do I resolve those tensions so that they result in collaborations, in interactions?

> How can somebody who has been othered by a majority culture, still encounter members of that dominant culture within their own shared language without being rejected, misunderstood, patronised?

Helen Finch

How can somebody who has been othered by a majority culture, and who has experienced extreme violence at the hands of that culture, still encounter members of that dominant culture within their own shared language?

I'm speaking particularly in reference to my research[23] on the literature written by German Jewish survivors of the Shoah or the Holocaust, the mass murder of European Jews at the hands of the Nazis and other associated allies in the middle of the 20th century. This research encompasses a number of questions very germane to this project, particularly looking at life writing in the aftermath of trauma. The writers that I am looking at encountered violence at the hands of the Nazis because of being othered as Jewish, and yet they were people who shared a culture with their German persecutors, they shared a language with their persecutors. Often, they reflected on the fact that they knew their persecutors intimately as friends.

How can a German survivor, somebody who was born in the German lands, write in German to a German-speaking audience about their history of pain and suffering? How can they make a German audience – who in the 1950s and 1960s often wanted nothing more than to say that the past was over and done with; to say that enough compensation had been given to people who had suffered persecution; who wanted their literature to reflect an optimistic sense of moving forward from the past

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– how could these writers find an audience? What role did their literature have in staging this encounter between Germans and Jews that would acknowledge on the one hand the shared culture, but on the other the radically different experience that German Jews had during the period of Nazi persecution?

Many questions emerge from this – the practical questions of what German publisher is going to publish this material that often accuses the German public of crimes and attitudes that it would rather forget? Such works might find a publishing house in other parts of the world. But when the people being accused of, for example, culturally persecuting Jews are the people who are publishing the literature – how does that encounter play itself out?

In fact, in many of the literary texts that I'm looking at, this encounter is fictionalised and restaged. Over and over again, the German survivor attempts to publish their work and yet it is rejected. Or in other fictionalised accounts, the German survivor attempts to testify in the German language to a fellow German only to find their witness ignored or in some way rejected, misunderstood, overheard, patronised or dismissed as being over-emotional, untimely.

> However, while such contextualisation can educate, it unfairly places the onus on the marginalised person to constantly explain themselves.

Parinita Shetty

For my PhD project, I created a fan podcast called *Marginally Fannish*. My guests and I loved different media, and we engaged with fandom communities in different ways. In our episodes, we explored how diverse groups of people are erased or misrepresented in media. We used the framework of our favourite fictional worlds, characters and events to discuss our real-world experiences and perspectives.

I was really lucky that a relatively diverse group of fans volunteered to participate. Together, we inhabited a wide range of identities – different nationalities, races, genders, sexualities and abilities. Since we were marginalised and privileged in different contexts, it wasn't really a case of me encountering the other because I was myself an other. Instead, different others came together in the podcast episodes and our conversations helped make up for my own gaps in knowledge about identities beyond my own.

Robert, one of my co-participants, discussed how in mainstream science fiction and fantasy media, magic or advanced technology is often used to fix and thereby erase disabilities. It's rarely used to imagine creative ways for disabled bodies and minds to navigate these worlds. He was deeply uncomfortable with the idea that his disabled mind and

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body don't belong even in most people's imaginary worlds. As he said, 'It comes back to the idea of always being told that a progressed world is a world which has eradicated you'.

Such conversations can act as consciousness-raisers and enable a collective process of decolonisation as people from both marginalised and dominant cultures become aware of issues they may not have previously considered. However, while such contextualisation can raise awareness and educate, it unfairly places the onus on the marginalised person to constantly explain themselves since the default in mainstream media and society rarely includes their experiences and perspectives.

For example, Robert found it difficult to explain what it's like to live with a disability because he's never experienced anything else. He's always had dyspraxia and he's always been on the autistic spectrum. He didn't know how his experiences differed from other people's lives.

Lara Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi

Helen, you mentioned the idea of the 'same other'. You also talk about language, some of what constitutes the sameness in your concept. How do you operationalise that concept? What is part of the sameness in the other and how you're using it?

Helen Finch

The question of sameness is about a cultural claim on the part of survivors, saying that 'the act of violence cast me out of the community'. During the Holocaust, obviously, there was an extreme example of excluding people and putting them into the 'zone of exception'[24] – dehumanising people, excluding them from the community of humanity, never mind the community of the nation. And the people that I'm writing about – H.G. Adler, Fred Wander, Edgar Hilsenrath and Ruth Klüger – make the claim: 'no, I have equal dignity and I have an equal claim to this culture'.

That's about equality, also saying this is my identity – you've tried to steal it, to take the language that I speak and to make it do violent acts, but I'm going to have a claim to that language. I'm going to have a claim to write literature in that language, in the way that I see fit. That might be drawing on traditions that are Jewish and have not been acceptable in this language; or it might be drawing on traditions that are traditionally seen as German and say, 'no, they belong to me as well'. So it's an act of reclamation – the sameness.

> One cares sufficiently about one's fellow human beings to ensure that they're given the space to come into their own and do not become mere means to others' classificatory ends.

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Nigel Rapport

Society, culture, nationality, ethnicity, religion, class are symbolic fictions by which we classify the world according to insiders and outsiders, the same and different, good and bad, and by which we limit and fix, homogenise, stereotype and essentialise identities. But such symbolic constructs, literally fictions in that *we make them up and they remain dependent on our belief in them*, need have no place in the ideal vision of how human beings should be recognised and respected, including in a liberal society.

The problem of society, according to one of the founding figures of social science Georg Simmel, is that we only come to know the individual human beings with whom we interact by way of distortions, by the imposition of alien and alienating labels, categories and taxonomies.[25] We distort the other's individual identity when we claim to know them in collective and merely conventional terms as members of classes, nations, genders, religious communities, professions and so on. Simmel would describe this as the tragedy of social life. In response, I wanted to imagine a linguistic and behavioural style of public engagement that might be called 'cosmopolitan politesse'.[26]

In presuming the individuality of interacting citizens, cosmopolitan politesse does not expect an intimacy with them, doesn't claim to know or name another's private self. Cosmopolitan politesse is a medium through which to interact with anyone at a respectful distance. One cares sufficiently about one's fellow human beings to ensure that they're given the space to come into their own and do not become mere means to others' classificatory ends. But one does not wish or presume to know in any detail or seek to influence in any substantial way what another individual's coming into their own might entail.

Rosine Kelz

Emmanuel Levinas[27] criticises the Western philosophical tradition as a mode of thinking that aims to reduce the other to the same. He argues that it turns knowledge into a movement that domesticates everything it encounters, to make it fit into preconceived concepts, principles and theories. Similar critiques of modern epistemology are formulated by other 20th-century philosophers, as for example Henri Bergson[28] or Stanley Cavell.[29]

With Bergson, we can understand this mode of engaging with the world as seductive because it provides generalisable models that enable the successful manipulation of the material world. It makes the environment foreseeable and thus controllable. Cavell stresses that if one understands one's relationships to other people in terms of objective knowledge, this minimises the actual risks or challenges they pose to oneself. In that sense, framing the other as a problem of knowledge

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allows the self to deny its relational, vulnerable and finite character. For Cavell, human relationships would be better understood not in terms of knowledge but in terms of acknowledgement. Acknowledgement entails recognising that the other's pain requires a response. However, Cavell also points out that any response, any form of communication, always carries the risk of miscommunication and disappointment. And so, in this situation, even though Cavell assumes that we already share a form of life, a common language or certain assumptions and values, we still run up against the limits of commonality.

Maggie Kubanyiova

I think your talk illustrated how the moral connection is the starting point for tackling some of these big challenges. You have alluded to some of the tensions in our notions of sameness or universality and difference. I'm particularly reminded of Helen's point about sameness as a claim to a language, a culture, a claim to a shared space (see p. 46). And I wondered what your thoughts were on how we have been using the concepts of sameness and difference.

Rosine Kelz

Even when we want to talk about differences, the question of sameness comes back in. Many ideas of relationality require an understanding of an underlying sameness that is shared by all human beings. It is assumed that we need some form of common ground to be able to communicate. Some thinkers like Levinas or Judith Butler try to establish this shared ground by bringing in a bodily dimension. Sameness then, in a much more basic sense, can be understood as the shared experience of embodiment. I appreciate this argument to some extent. However, as Butler would also stress, we are not all embodied in the same way at all, and different bodies have very different sociopolitical standings. People do not all experience and see and feel their bodies in the same way. So, it's always this question of wanting to make a claim that we share something, but do we really need to make it so strongly?

Thandanani Gumede

There is one thing you mentioned, Ana, about initially focusing more on linguistics and grammar instead of the cultural aspects of language – and that sort of stayed with me. Something that can be an obstacle when it comes to certain encounters and in certain things being lost in translation. An example of that is someone who is Zulu coming to the UK, for instance. I remember coming to London, got on a train and I said hello to somebody on the train and they nearly called the police on me. And then I learned later that it is not appropriate to greet strangers in the UK.

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But in Zulu hello doesn't necessarily mean hello, it means something else. Sawubona (singular) or Sanibona (plural) means 'I see you'. So, it means that I cannot start a conversation without greeting you first and, as such, starting a conversation without recognising that I see you is perceived as extremely disrespectful. And there is a premeditated dialogue to that greeting. I say Sawubona, or I say Sanibona if it's plural. So when you greet a person, there is this expectation that if you're younger you greet the person who is older than you as a sign of respect. So here in the UK, I was told that the grammatically correct response to 'How do you do?' is to repeat the exact same phrase back: 'How do you do?'. I was oblivious to the London cultural aspect, while my original greeting was intended to show respect for a stranger; it was perceived as the opposite and it ended in conflict.

I was wondering: after studying the linguistic aspect of it, does it become feasible then to completely understand someone whose culture you're unaware of? Because although you said language is music, which is a beautiful sentiment, I also believe that it is probably impossible to separate language from culture. Have you seen any difference since you started shifting your focus from that grammatical approach to looking at things from a cultural starting point?

Ana Deumert

Totally. I trained as a linguist, a historical linguist. I actually have a master's degree in what is called philology. I don't even know if that exists anymore. So, I was very much trained in a traditional disciplinary way. And for me, it was really when I realised that this isn't working. What I'm learning in the classroom and what I'm being taught doesn't resonate with my own experience of language, it doesn't resonate with how I live with language.

And I think art is important. I mean at some stage in my life, I wanted to be an actress and I was always very close to the arts. So, I was learning and thinking about language, as if language is apart from culture, as if language is apart from beauty, as if language is this system and structure. So I became a sociolinguist, perhaps now a critical sociolinguist. The more I engaged with my own feelings around language, the more my disciplinary orientation changed. Very much so.

For example, I'm actually not South African by birth, I'm South African by marriage. Xhosa, not Zulu, but yes. And it was interesting because yesterday when it was about introducing, I was wondering why I always introduce myself with my German name and never with my isiXhosa name. So, it's kind of an interesting question about introducing kinship, all of that, into the professional space. But when I grew up, I mean the language I spoke was the language of the streets. And it has little to do

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with German, that is the standard form of German. The cultural norms are so different. And hearing the language, the emotion the language can bring up, is different too. I didn't learn anything about this in the linguistics classroom. That a certain language, a certain way of speaking, can make me want to cry, that language can make me feel emotionally touched because it's so beautiful.

> I like this idea of solidarity and revolution, where political vision and dreaming, allow for connections that are not based on traditional ideas of sameness, but on a common purpose and respect for each other.

Lara Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi

My question to you, Helen, is related to the colonial and post-colonial history of contemporary Germany, which is where I think our work comes together. What I've seen in my research is that a lot of Black Germans are frustrated that it's always about the Holocaust, and it's always about that part of the German past. So, racialisation of others is silenced by this overwhelming genocidal history, which is not the only genocide that Germany has perpetrated. But the one against Black bodies is not really spoken about. Do you see any possibility of bringing together the force of these two debates or part of history, in order to effect change? And not always have this idea, 'This is overshadowing us and we have different issues', but maybe to think together and what literature could do in that context.

Helen Finch

I think the question is so interesting because this is exactly what the term 'memory theatre' is all about.[30] This idea of a public performance, with a predetermined outcome and a limited range of players who have a limited range of options that they can play. The idea of 'multi-directionality' comes from the American theorist Michael Rothberg where he talks about how the memory of suffering can be used to build community between excluded groups.[31]

So rather than the 'memory theatre' which sees excluded groups or minoritised groups somehow battling for attention in the public view, it's about building solidarity between those groups, seeing the commonalities and also the historical continuities between them.

For example, what happened in Germany, South Africa, and what happened later in Europe, and using those resonances to productively build solidarity that doesn't always have to be mediated via the white community.

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Anna Douglas

The discourse of community has been a powerful sort of discursive framework for organising all sorts of practices. But actually, I'm really liking this shift that's been introduced by Rosine that is around solidarity with difference, that you can build solidarity and honour and recognise difference simultaneously, and I'm very interested in how that concept of solidarity, which, of course, in a British context is very much rooted in leftist ideology, which is why it's been replaced by community. It's emerged as a kind of anti-ideological positioning. But I'm wondering how we might begin to reposition the practices of solidarity with difference acknowledged.

Rosine Kelz

Definitely. And a practical question for me is what politics could look like if we do not start from a preconceived notion of community. I think this issue has come up a lot in social movements for migrant and asylum seeker rights in Europe, where the question arises how solidarity is conceived in situations where people are very differently situated in terms of resources and vulnerabilities and might not share the same political ideas on many points. In these settings, practices have developed that start off from taking care of basic needs and build community out of that, without assuming from the outset that we share the same broader political goals.

And then maybe from shared practices forms of political activism can build which revolve around a specific issue, but do not presuppose a pre-existing and shared social identity. I think both tactics of developing political interactions are important in different situations. Generally, it is worth re-examining ideas of solidarity, which in their histories already point towards the need to go beyond established forms of political community and political practice.

Ana Deumert

To me, the idea of solidarity resonates very strongly with my own thinking about positionality. I've always found the term 'ally' very problematic. It seems to me to be about the liberal subject, but it misses the deep collective commitment that shapes solidarity. The political scientist Jodi Dean[32] suggested that we should rather use the word 'comrade'. And I do like her suggestion. Jodi Dean notes that the word comrade indexes political and affective relations. She writes, 'no matter their differences, comrades stand together. They are united by a political vision, they dream of a different world, and actively struggle to achieve this world'.

A similar vision of solidarity was proposed by Kwame Nkrumah in the 1960s and linked discourses of revolution and African liberation. 'Comrade' first appeared as a term in the 16th century, when it referred to

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a person with whom one would share a house and food. Here, closeness was not, as implied by Derrida, grounded in the sense of emotional and affective sameness, but grounded in practices, in doing and in cohabitation. I like this idea of solidarity and revolution, where political vision and dreaming allow for connections that are not based on traditional ideas of sameness, but on a common purpose and respect for each other.

Linked to this is also the idea of love for others. We should not be shy to use this word – love – and to liberate it from its romantic connotations. James Baldwin's reflections provide inspiration. Love, for Baldwin, demands psychological and embodied self-transformation. We might not love everyone all the time, but we can engage with others, based on a practice that is informed by love.

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