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# Introduction: Stories, Words and Points of View

> Illegals, refulciado, migrant workers, clandestines, imigrante, manonegra, asylum seekers, sans papiers.
>
> (Wild Geese, Banner Theatre)

> For whom is the border a friction-free zone of entitled access, a frontier of possibility? Who travels confidently across borders, who gets questioned, detained, interrogated, and strip-searched at the border?
>
> (Conquergood, 2002: 145)

An increasing number of stories told by refugees about their experiences are available in print (Arbabzadh, 2007; Eggers, 2006; Kenney and Schrag, 2008; Maric, 2009; Moorehead, 2005; Schmid et al., 2003). However, it is only in face to face meetings with people seeking asylum and with refugees1 that it is possible to comprehend the subtlety of these stories and the huge range of emotions behind them; anger, fear, anxiety, jubilation, hope, guilt and mistrust are just a few of the more obvious ones. In order to claim asylum refugees require a credible story of individual persecution to convince the authorities of their right to stay in the country to which they have fled. Without this they are vulnerable to refusal and their right to stay comes under threat, making it likely that they will be returned to the country they have fled from. Refugees' stories are troubling, troubled and troublesome. Troubling because they are hard to hear, especially if the listener enjoys the privileges of the West; troubled because persecution, trauma and suffering are essential elements of

these stories, and troublesome because lives depend on their claims for truth. Studying the many theatrical ways in which refugee stories are presented compels the listener to understand how these stories function and operate. Some are valued for their 'truth', as a way to validate or authenticate the suffering of refugees, while others represent the depths to which people will 'stoop' in order to lie or perform their way into a better life. Interpreting refugees' stories for a western audience involves a process of translation; as a scholar of refugee theatre, the process of listening in performance requires a kind of double translation. I will show that it is important to listen to the listeners – the writers, actors and directors who create theatre and performance works concerning refugees, while maintaining the imperative to listen to refugees themselves.

## Distance and proximity

Participant observation has proved an important way to meet and talk to refugees as well as to artists and others who are working with or on behalf of refugees. This method of research has been extended in two ways beyond the traditional definition of participant observation involving the researcher observing a community or cultural activity of which they are temporarily a part (Hume and Mulcock, 2004). First, in setting up an opportunity to work alongside refugees and asylum seekers, for example, in running the on-going participatory drama project mentioned in the Preface, I have deliberately *manufactured* rather than *encountered* research opportunities. The question of *role* is crucial in participant observation and, in taking on the role of leader/director, as well as being seen as a representative of a powerful cultural institution in the shape of a university, I will have affected the participant research in innumerable ways. The same is true of my role as a mentor to the participants in the radio project described in the Preface, for example, that put me in the position of trusted expert. My 'expertise', even if it was simply that of having lived in the UK all my life, inevitably put me in a certain position of power in relation to the refugees I was hoping to observe and interact with.

This leads to the second way in which the classic version of participant observation has not only been stretched but may even have been inverted. Traditionally, the participant observer is expected to place themselves in 'awkward social spaces' some of which would be

'difficult to inhabit' (Hume and Mulcock, 2004: xi) as the stranger. The 'field' of observation, in this case, was 'my field' and I was observing 'strangers' in my own environment, one which was hostile to their presence in many ways. Hume and Mulcock (2004: xii) argue that 'personal inadequacy and social failure' on the part of the researcher are perhaps an inevitable part of successful participant observation. In this case the refugee 'subjects' of research were just as often in this position as the researcher because of their fragile social and political position in a new home.

Ahmed (2000) questions the traditional position of the ethnographer as a 'professional stranger', dismissing it as inadequate for ethnographic enquiry and citing the controversy around Bell's writing on indigenous women in Australia. Power relationships within the ethnographic process inevitably affect that process but Ahmed suggests that the problem lies not so much in the process of translating the strange into the familiar as in the *concealment* of that translation. One way in which this process is concealed is by not drawing attention to the deixis in writing, the little words that locate the researcher and the subject of research within a matrix of power and influence (Billig, 1995). Ignoring this is impossible and unethical; it is a 'postmodern fantasy' that the I of the ethnographer 'can undo the power relations that allowed the "I" to appear' (Ahmed, 2000; 64). Ethnographic writers have used a number of strategies to approach this problematic area: inserting verbatim italicised speeches from the subjects of ethnographic research, for example (Nordstrom, 1997), or using elements of autobiography as cited in Bell's work (Ahmed, 2000). But these are not enough to destabilise, let alone invert, the power relations that are at play in an ethnographic situation. Ahmed rejects Bell's strategy of putting the autobiographical within the ethnographic in a bid to 'make friends' with the stranger/subject suggesting that the 'double vision' of Hortense Powdermaker provides a possible model of practice. From this position the knowledge of the subjects as *both* friends and strangers *admits the impossibility of being (with) them* (Ahmed, 2000: 72 emphasis in original) at the same time as allowing for a degree of humanity and compassion.

Ahmed's idea that 'the proximity of ethnography leads to a recognition of distance' (Ahmed, 2000: 72) echoes Jackson's words in the Preface to this book that speak of the impossibility of understanding the experience of being a refugee. This has many echoes for the

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research described here where setting out to 'get to know' refugees produced an ambiguous kind of knowledge. This ambiguity is reflected throughout the study seen in the images of host and guest in Chapter 2, in the indecipherability of some refugee speech in Chapter 3 and in the discourses of togetherness reflected in the title of Chapter Four, 'We with them and them with us'.

## Hosts and guests

This book is not only about refugees but is also about those in the 'host' nations and their responses to the presence of refugees. Examining the cultural products made both *by* and *about* refugees reveals layers of thinking and practice that are dissected with discourses on performance, diaspora, migration and identity. Most importantly, these cultural expressions are strongly conditioned by the political and historical moment in which they are located because the growing numbers of refugees arriving in Western states since the late 1980s have frequently been viewed with alarm and the refugees treated with hostility, prejudice and even violence. Mistrust, and suspicion that has developed as a result, has generated a 'crisis' and it is against this background that all contemporary refugee theatre and performance takes place. The notion of the 'refugee crisis' is discussed in more detail in the next chapter but for now it is important to note that it is not simply a crisis of numbers but one that goes to the very heart of questions about the nation state, identity and belonging. This can be seen in the language used to describe refugees who come from a sedentary place, from 'us' who have no need to flee, to 'them', those who live an uncomfortable, insecure and less favourable existence. The etymology of the word refugee encourages this reading as the term *refuge* emerged in French indicating a 'shelter from danger or trouble' in the 14th century, based on the Latin *fugere* meaning to flee (Hoad, 1996: 395). The word was transmuted in subsequent centuries so that in the seventeenth century the word *refugie* came into being, based on the past participle of *se refugier*, to take refuge. Linguistically refugees are people who flee danger and seek safety elsewhere.

However, this over-simplified conception risks reinforcing binary notions of home and away where 'home' indicates safety, belonging, and rootedness while 'away' is designated as frightening, inhospitable,

unknown. This emphasis on refugee *flight*, running away, implies weakness or passivity and exists in sharp contrast to the term 'asylum seeker', which implies activity and a vision of the asylum seeker as an active agent who wants something seems to create a sense of threat (Rotas, 2004). Sociolinguists have identified a process of negative semantic slide (Daly, 1986: xix) by which an apparently neutral word or phrase accrues negative meaning over time. The negative semantic slide of the term 'asylum seeker' illustrates how, 'commonsense racism', promulgated by the press among others, changed the meaning of the term asylum seeker 'from a legal term to a synonym for "illegal immigrant"' (Kundnani, 2001: 43). Although language and terminology inevitably differ across such a large number of countries and language communities most languages differentiate legally and linguistically between refugees and asylum seekers. In Germany refugees are called *fluchtling* while asylum seekers are *asylbewerber* (Peck, 1995: 109); the French for asylum seeker is *chercher d'asile* while refugees are *refugies*, and in Spain the term for an asylum seeker is *solicante de asilo* and refugee is *refugiado*. In most English speaking countries people waiting for their claim to be heard are called *asylum seekers* and can only be granted the title *refugee* if their claims for asylum are considered successful.

Other books have been written about the relationship between theatrical representation and immigration and they have been helpful in shaping this consideration of the relationship between refugees, asylum seekers, theatre and performance. The work of Karen Shimakawa (2002) on Asian-American theatre has proved illuminating in its use of theories of abjection; Lisa Lowe (1996) has offered a detailed and provocative insight into Asian immigration in the United States which provided ideas that are helpful when thinking about refugees in relation to cultural performance in Chapter 4. These works have opened up possibilities for reading refugeeness through discourses of immigration and, taken with Peter Nyers' (2003) concept of abject cosmopolitanism, show how refugees have challenged expectations by producing a counter discourse to that imposed by the dominant culture (Shimakawa, 2002: 20). Refugees are immigrants who have made a difficult political decision to expose themselves as immigrants who require political protection. They are framed in a particular historical and political moment, at a time when Western powers have become increasingly alarmed by the

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growth in the numbers of refugees claiming political asylum and by increasing movement in a globalised society.

It is in the interests of Western governments to blur the distinctions between refugees and economic migrants in order to obscure their increasingly draconian measures to deter them. For example, in France the so-called 'Pasqua Laws' passed in 1995 are cited by many (including French theatre director Mnouchkine whose work is discussed in Chapter 2) as responsible for the homogenisation of immigration (Fisek, 2008: 209). Refugees' claims for political asylum are based on rights enshrined in international law and yet it has become increasingly difficult to make the claim of being a refugee in all Western states where the suspicion is that immigrants are not 'real' refugees but economic migrants lying about persecution to gain access to a life outside their own probably war-torn and impoverished countries. The onus is on refugees to prove their persecution to the state before that state will offer the protection that is due to all refugees. Thus refugees become asylum seekers, immigrants in limbo, waiting to hear if their claims for protection have been accepted, enmeshed in the bureaucratic performance of refugeeness which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

It is only in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that the issue of refugees has become 'politicised and internationalised', and refugees have become 'increasingly constructed as a "problem" ' (Kushner and Knox, 1999: 3). Writing during the 1980s about refugees tended to focus on the patterns of migration that followed the First and Second World Wars detailing population movements in and around Europe (Bramwell, 1988; Marrus, 1985). Marrus quotes two earlier researchers who said in 1944 '[t]he history of international migration in the past thirty years has been largely the history of refugees [...] ours might truly be called the era of refugees' (Marrus, 1985: 3). This notion of the emblematic nature of refugees for the times in which the writers were living is frequently repeated, and Rabbi Hugo Grynn's words that the twentieth century will be seen as the century of the refugee are often used (Kushner and Knox: 1999: 1). Arendt's work, particularly *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is influential in the development of thinking about refugees (Kushner and Knox, 1999; Malkki, 1996; Marfleet, 2006; Zolberg, 2002). She notes how, in the wake of the First World War, refugees were increasingly at the mercy of the state preventing great numbers from ever returning home.

Playing on the idea of the refugee as an object of knowledge in her critique of the growth of totalitarian states, Arendt calls refugees 'the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics' (Arendt, 1986[1951]: 277). In her view these states demonstrated a growing tendency among governments in Europe to place the 'shame' of being a refugee firmly on refugees' shoulders, at the same time removing from themselves any taint of guilt for producing the conditions that created refugees. Contemporary commentators have shown how the treatment of refugees can be taken as a kind of ethical measure with which to assess the degree of hospitality or largesse shown by a nation towards the stranger (MacCallum, 2002; Manne, 2004; Schuster, 2003). This sense of the figure of 'the refugee' as symptomatic of global inequalities and conflict remains prevalent, and refugees are often discussed in ways that would suggest they are sometimes significant as ciphers as much as for their materiality.

## Refugee studies

Refugee studies, as a discrete academic discipline, emerged in the early 1980s and one of the most prominent sites for this is the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) based at Oxford University. Established in 1982, and claiming an international reputation as the leading multidisciplinary centre for research and teaching on the causes and consequences of forced migration, the Centre has developed programmes of study into forced migration, an in-house journal *Forced Migration Review (FMR)*, as well as the *Journal of Refugee Studies*. The RSC library alone holds 39,000 bibliographic items, much of it so-called grey material that is not published or not available through the normal channels.[2] Consideration of culture or the arts generally is not a significant feature of Refugee Studies, as exemplified by the work of the RSC. Only one issue of *Forced Migration Review* has examined cultural practices among refugees, for example, with an edition in December, 1999 devoted to the examination of the art and culture for displaced communities (*FMR*, 1999: 6). Only one project in that edition examines the role that the arts might play in the reconstruction of refugees' lives in the West, with a project which took place in California looking at the ways in which involvement in playing traditional music was said to have been beneficial for Afghan refugees living there (Baily, 1999: 10). For the most part, like refugee studies generally,

the rest focus on activities taking place in refugee camps close to the borders of the countries from which refugees have fled.

The fact that most of the world's refugees do not travel great distances and are often housed in camps along the borders of their own countries means that most research in refugee studies is concentrated there. The increasing use of incarceration for those who do arrive in Western states also prohibits research as these institutions are not easily accessible to outsiders. The idea, however, that it is not possible to access refugees outside these institutional spaces (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 2007) is inaccurate and does not apply to all states. Refugees and asylum seekers live in community settings in many places but their dispersed locations, fears of authority, concerns about racism, prejudice and not least their volatile legal position often compel them to live in a covert way preferring to be seen as migrants rather than asylum seekers.

One further implication of the fact that the majority of refugees do not travel far beyond their own borders is the fact that it is generally the most mobile that can and do travel. In general the gender mix of refugees is fairly even across the world but in situations where it is necessary to travel extensively it is logical that those seen as stronger and more resilient will undertake the journey, which means that refugees in Western states are more likely to be young men. This is borne out in statistical terms; in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean young males constitute a higher proportion of those of concern to UNHCR (Merheb, 2006: 22). It also means that many refugees will have the means to pay for their travel to the place of refuge, even if that entails severe hardship on the families they are forced to leave behind.

Some scholars do take account of cultural thinking in relation to refugees; Lisa Malkki in cultural anthropology focuses on differences between Hutu refugees who settle in camps and those who are dispersed to urban settings in Tanzania. Malkki discovered that refugees who had been settled in designated refugee camps on the borders of Tanzania differed in their attitudes to their identity as exiles from those 'town refugees' who had dispersed into non-refugee neighbourhoods. Broadly speaking, those in the non-refugee setting began to conceive of themselves in a more cosmopolitan way than their counterparts in the refugee camps who classed themselves as refugees and who also maintained strict ethnic boundaries (Malkki,

1995). Malkki is critical of the conceptualisation of 'the refugee' as 'an epistemic object in construction' (Malkki: 1995a: 497) but her research methodology has been criticised by scholars in refugee studies for ignoring the grim material realities of displacement in the face of which questions of identity can seem superficial (Kibreab, 1999: 407). This impatience with cultural considerations in such extreme conditions is perhaps understandable but it is important to show how Malkki's work points to the importance of questions of identity in the move beyond the material considerations which tend to dominate a great deal of thinking in Refugee Studies.

Her work has made an important contribution to the conceptualisation of refugeeness showing how, for example, an over-emphasis on practical and material support for refugees can obscure important questions about cultural attitudes among the 'settled' communities to which refugees flee. Malkki suggests that we should pay as much, if not more, attention to what she calls the sedentarist position of a great deal of research on refugees. Ideas about home and belonging reveal how constructions of identity are based on assumptions about rootedness, taken for granted to the extent that refugees appear to threaten or disrupt the so-called natural order of things. Malkki's work provides a bridge between refugee studies and cultural theory (Verstraete, 2003: 227) and she uses Deleuse and Gautarri's images of roots and rhizomes (Deleuse and Gautarri, 1987) to suggest the importance of always becoming as opposed to reaching any totalising identity destination (Malkki, 1996). Nyers (2003, 2006) seems to agree concluding that cultural expectations, as much as legal definitions, are responsible for the contemporary image of refugees and he directs readers towards refugee activism which eschews traditional notions of invisibility and voicelessness as discussed in Chapter 3.

Thinking culturally about contemporary refugees leads to questions about borderlands, limits, margins and liminal spaces which have been much discussed in recent years across a range of disciplines concomitant with a growing interest in place (Cresswell, 2004: 103). In performance studies, noting that '[b]orderlands traditionally exist as sites of political contestation, risk, and risk-taking' leads Roach to suggest that 'the refugee is the cultural epitome of the postmodern condition' (Reinelt and Roach, 1992: 13). In Bhabha's conception any notion of 'building blocks' of identity gives way to interstices, borders and frontlines where 'the boundary becomes the

place from which *something begins its presencing*' (Bhabha, 1994: 5 emphasis in original). For Hall 'identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question within that space, between a number of intersecting discourses' (Hall, 1996: 339). He notes that, traditionally, metaphors of identity have been located in images of depth, giving the example 'in here, deep inside me, is my Self which I can reflect on' and asks, 'what is replacing that depth?' (Hall, 1996: 340). Rejecting the obvious binary of 'shallow', he opts instead for destabilization, noting the 'decenterings in intellectual life and in Western thought that have helped to destabilise the question of identity' (Ibid.). So, if certainties about stability in questions of identity are severely shaken by this theoretical and conceptual de-centering how can we think about cultural identity in relation to refugees and questions of migration generally?

One way is to capitulate to the 'endless nomadic existence' which lies behind the argument that 'the self is simply a kind of perpetual signifier ever wandering the earth in search of a transcendental signified that it can never find' (Hall, 2000: 343). This is an unsatisfactory position, valourising refugees, as it does, as cosmopolitan citizens or ideal postmodern subjects, a stance which Gilbert and Lo have described as 'not only utopian but curiously indifferent' (Gilbert and Lo, 2007: 187). The alternative shows how it is important to reconceptualise the very idea of identity which has to be forged in a newly diverse or pluralised society. Identities, and concepts of identity, change throughout the individual's life and this does not happen in a vacuum but always in relationship to the Other: 'only when there is an Other can you know who you are' (Hall, 2000: 345). Hall's argument serves as a possible method by which to conceptualise a way out of the maze of deferral that Bhabha's more fluid concepts of identity conjure.

Hall's more concrete ideas about identity stop 'the spin of post-structuralist or post-modern instabilities long enough to advance a politically effective action' (Dolan, 1993: 417). The presence of migrants, forced or otherwise, offers an opportunity to re-define *all* identities as ethnically produced but the question remains: in whose hands does this re-definition take place and according to whose vision? This creates a paradox whereby subjects may be given an opportunity to define themselves in relation to the Other but in this very act of definition, made necessary by the presence of the Other,

resentments and hostilities are built up by the imposition of the *need* to define. This often leads to the urge to ignore or dismiss the task and 'expel the Other symbolically – blot it out, put it over there in the Third World, at the margin' (Hall, 2000: 345).

In an effort to stop the need for re-definition from retreating 'over there' Brah has created the concept of 'diaspora space' defined as the space where 'multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested; proclaimed or disavowed' (Brah, 1996: 208). This uses ethnicity as a way to define *all* groups so that diaspora space becomes 'the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of "us" and "them", are contested' (Brah, 1996: 209). The point of using diaspora space is to undermine the grounds on which the native and the diasporic subject are founded, throwing the emphasis onto an account of the ways in which *both* identities are constructed within the nation space. In this way, for example, England becomes a diaspora space in which 'African, Caribbean, Irish, Asian, Jewish and other diasporas intersect among themselves as well as with the entity constructed as "Englishness", thoroughly re-inscribing it in the process' (Brah, 1996: 209). In performance studies there is an opportunity to re-envisage these general terms about meetings and encounters giving them a temporal and spatial quality in the theatrical space. This allows us to address specifics where diaspora space is small enough to examine moments of encounter; the space between two individuals on a stage, for example, or the space in which an audience and performers meet.

## Practice and dynamic ways of knowing

This book is informed by practice, some my own but mostly that of other people;[3] by conversations, interviews and encounters with refugees and asylum seekers, with refugee artists, with artists who are deeply concerned about refugees, with advice workers, social workers, activists and refugee advocates. It presents an analysis of what happens when people flee fearing for their lives and the ways in which they create drama, theatre, music, poetry and performance to make sense of that journey and of their new surroundings. It considers refugee theatre and performance in the UK and the rest of Europe, in Australia, and in the United States. Different locations are more prominent at different times in the book depending on the kind of theatre

under examination. Productions by companies like Théâtre du Soleil, for example, originate in France but tour internationally while smaller companies like version 1.0 in Australia are not set up to tour outside Australia. The participatory theatre which is examined in Chapter 4 is mostly located in Manchester in the UK because of access to this necessarily localised work. What has been labelled activist performance in Chapter 3 is located in Australia and in the UK.

Conquergood's writing on radical research has provided a useful model for practical research, especially his notions about the radical potential of performance studies research. Quoting de Certeau's idea that 'what the map cuts up, the story cuts across' (Certeau quoted in Conquergood, 2002: 145) Conquergood shows how the map, 'official, objective and abstract' is one way of knowing; the story, 'practical, embodied and popular' another. It is Conquergood's belief that performance studies offers a 'promiscuous traffic between [these] two ways of knowing' (Ibid.). Performance studies can open up the space between analysis and action or, more dramatically, 'pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice' (Ibid.). This dynamic approach to knowledge synthesises bodily knowledges which are subjective, proximate and situated, with more empirical knowledges produced and encoded in text. This conceptualisation builds a complex picture that can encompass the individual and the general, the personal and the political. However, examining practice in theatre and performance also sets up the possibility for moments of incongruity and counter-intuition, for surprise and bafflement, as much as for neat theories, models and paradigms.

Conquergood's notions of dialogical performance which emerged from his model of 'mapping performative stances towards the other' (Conquergood, 1985) has also proved useful. Developed to conceptualise work among Hmong refugees in Chicago, he describes four 'moral pitfalls' into which the performance ethnographer might fall: the Custodian's Rip-off, the Skeptic's Cop-out, the Enthusiast's Infatuation, the Curator's Exhibitionism (Ibid.). His description of Dialogical Performance, where genuine conversation is enabled between researcher and subject, is an ideal towards which he strives. Despite the fact that he does not dwell on the political status of the refugees with whom he works, this model will be used as a performance ideal against which it is useful to discuss both professional theatrical and participatory performance about and with refugees respectively.

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Refugee theatre has been created by citizens of the states in which refugees have sought asylum, and increasingly by refugees and asylum seekers themselves, but all these endeavours take place against a background of fear, suspicion and mistrust on all sides. Contemporary attitudes to refuge and asylum are conditioned by a sense of crisis and Chapter 1 shows the various ways in which this crisis has been manipulated and perpetuated and the effect that this has on refugees and on cultural expressions surrounding refugees. Suspicions about refugees' motives for seeking asylum and increased numbers of refugees generated by conflict and instability in many regions of the world have been heightened by fears that refugees are connected in some way to those instabilities.

Stories are multiply complex in a world where lives and futures depend on believable stories and this is explored in Chapter 1 when I introduce the concept of bureaucratic performance which is generated because refugees have to prove their individual persecution under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention. To convince the authorities of their right to stay asylum seekers are compelled to produce a convincing story of individual persecution in their previous home and to show that this persecution would continue were they to be returned. I analyse this moment of telling as a speech act with the capacity for success or failure but show how the outcome is more likely to be the latter on a political level despite its linguistic success. Using Kafka's parable *Before the Law* I show how 'the man from the country' is like a refugee who waits at the 'door of the law' imagining it to be open and accessible for all only to discover that this is not the case. Given the high stakes involved in bureaucratic performance I go on to suggest that theatre provides an arena in which a level of experimentation with names and identities can take place and in which artists have seized an opportunity to use the exploratory nature of theatre to educate and inform audiences.

Chapter 2 examines the range of theatre activity that has been produced by artists in the states to which refugees have fled. Continuing with Austin's ideas on speech acts I consider the nature of the etiolated speech of an actor on the stage and connections between this and accusations of parasitism against refugees. This suggests reasons for the popularity of verbatim theatre techniques in much refugee theatre and leads to questions about hospitality which underpin most theatre made about refugees by non-refugee artists.

All theatre about refugees attempts to create a better sense of understanding of refugees among non-refugee audiences, sometimes by confronting misunderstandings based on myths particularly those about asylum seekers. I look at two contrasting approaches to staging asylum myths through Banner Theatre's *They get Free Mobiles…don't they?*[4] and the play *The Kindness of Strangers* by Tony Green (2004). Identifying theatrical tropes of home and nation accounts for the ways in which a large number of plays examine notions of hospitality and the ethical responsibilities of the host. Plays in this category include *I have before me a Remarkable Document Given to me by a Young Lady from Rwanda* (2003) and *Crocodile Seeking Refuge* (2005) both by Sonja Linden, *Two Brothers* by Hannie Rayson (2005) and *Asylum! Asylum!* (1996) by Donal O'Kelly.

This chapter goes on to discuss a number of plays that depend on the audience 'standing in the shoes of the refugee', a strategy intended to create empathy and enhanced understanding. I suggest that the strategy used by Australian company version 1.0 in their verbatim piece *CMI: A Certain Maritime Incident* shows how eschewing notions of empathy with refugees and using the words of citizens can raise the level of debate beyond pity and into a more ethical arena. Large scale productions *Le Dernier Caravansérail* by Théâtre du Soleil and *The Children of Herakles* by American Repertory Theatre are examined in relation to *Pericles* by Cardboard Citizens/RSC in terms of their canonicity but also their differing abilities to access the international touring circuit.

In Chapter 3 I ask what happens when refugees step outside the expectations of silence and invisibility that are so often imposed upon them. This chapter examines a range of refugee activist activities and frames them as 'impossible activism', so called because they are carried out by refugees themselves and thus go beyond expectations of silence and passivity. These include marches and anti-deportation demonstrations as well as various manifestations of self-harm including lip-sewing and hunger strikes. I argue that it is important to understand the temporal nature of performativity in order to appreciate these acts as pieces of 'wishful performance' where the possibility of re-ordering things in a more just and humane way can be glimpsed even if they cannot be carried out on a pragmatic or political level.

Finally, Chapter 4 describes and accounts for the growing body of theatrical and cultural events produced by refugees themselves.

Using ideas from cultural performance it is possible to identify the significance of the many refugee arts and cultural festivals that have grown and developed since the early 1990s. Using the Exodus Refugee Festival in Manchester as an example of this phenomenon I show how narratives of authenticity and togetherness vie for attention at this event and what these show about the festival in the wider cultural calendar of the city and the nation. The work of four actors who are refugees, all of whom have created multivocal solo performance pieces that relate directly to their experiences as refugees, is considered here. Finally, from participatory theatre practices I examine a growing range of work that takes place when refugees get involved with creative projects that are explicitly designed for their participation. Looking at these indicates how it is important to question assumptions about trauma and to understand how bureaucratic performance can act to encourage narratives of victimhood in theatre and performance.

In concluding I turn to an explicitly ethical consideration of the work beginning with a discussion of the work of Levinas, some of whose ideas have haunted this entire enterprise. I will argue that the political understanding of refugees brought about by conceptualising bureaucratic performance is a necessary prelude to a more ethical understanding. Thinking ethically about refugees begins with hospitality and responsibility for the Other, with small local acts of (necessarily) compromised hospitality that stand in for hospitality on a larger scale. Given the impossibility of aligning political and ethical needs and desires on a geopolitical level these are, perhaps for now, the best that can be hoped for. Theatre and performance have an important role to play in creating a more understanding climate and in showing the way in which these small acts can be achieved and perpetuated. Importantly, the act of creating theatre itself can be seen as a manifestation of the possibilities of generous action, of acting ethically with refugees and people seeking asylum.

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