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The Possibilities and Limitations of Using Drama to Facilitate a Sense of Belonging for Adult Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants in East London

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Abstract

There is symbiosis between theatre and belonging. This thesis examines the ways in which a sense of belonging can be more effectively facilitated for adult refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and their families through drama practices rooted in a relational ethic of care.

Findings engendered by practice-based research projects in the London Boroughs of Hackney, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge are articulated by this thesis. These projects, carried out between 2008 and 2010, were framed as creative approaches to English language learning and were developed in partnership with the charities Lifeline Projects and the Open Doors Project. They modelled access for all regardless of age or English speaking ability, focusing on participant-centred play and improvisation.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the impact of UK government policy on the lived experience of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and their negative representation across different media has resulted in a need to develop alternative strategies for support that work in conjunction with agencies and voluntary sector organisations and fulfil a need for a sense of belonging from their clients.

My methodologies have included practice-based research, interviews with participants and other practitioners and reading across the fields of performance studies, relational ethics, psychology and education. I identify 'practice' in practice-based research as professional practice consonant with the fields of health and social care. The theoretical frameworks I am

working within include: Brown's (2010) definition of genuine belonging; Pettersen's (2008) mature, reciprocal care; Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of need; Krashen's (1983) theory of adult second language acquisition and Thompson's (2009) argument for the radical potential of joy and beauty. The thesis addresses the need for a greater understanding of the practices which generate authentic belonging in drama and second language education outside a formal education context.

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Introduction

It is 2006 and I am the substitute teacher for a class of adults learning English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). There are fifteen people in the group from countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, and Algeria. They come into the classroom in silence. They sit separately and isolated, dotting themselves around the horseshoe of desks to avoid getting too close to one another and the risk of interaction with their neighbour. The group attends the Lifeline Centre in Hackney, London for four days each week and yet behaves like a room full of strangers. They are following the Entry Level 1 Skills for Life ESOL programme. When I instigate the speaking activities from the course materials and organize members into pairs, they shuffle awkwardly away from one another. Only two of the pairs make any attempt to speak. Chatting to one of the women in the coffee break, she says how lonely she is in the UK. Surely, I wonder, this class should be an opportunity to break through her isolation and make connections with others? I observe this awkwardness between participants repeated again and again in different classrooms I work in at Barking, Seven Kings, Hackney, and Goodmayes. As an applied drama facilitator, as well as an English teacher, I believe that there is a missed opportunity here. Could play and creativity re-mould the atmosphere in the room, develop confidence in speaking English and build relationships in the group?

This moment was a catalyst for the sustained investigation of the possibilities and limitations of using drama to create a sense of belonging for adult refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in the UK. The practice-based research projects respond to a need identified within Lifeline Projects and the Open Doors Project, two third sector organisations known in the communities where they operate as 'Lifeline' and 'Open Doors', for whom I already worked as an employee and volunteer prior to this research. In addition to working as a substitute teacher in their adult ESOL classrooms, Lifeline Projects employed me as an applied theatre

facilitator on a project for young people, which integrated host community and new arrivals to the UK, and as an English and Drama teacher at Lifeline Institute, the alternative school for those excluded from mainstream education, as a consequence, amongst other reasons, of being new to the UK. Lifeline Projects offers a wide range of services for families, young people, and those looking for employment and training, including courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It seeks to be a catalyst for whole community change and is supported in the London boroughs of Redbridge, and Barking and Dagenham through the work of volunteers from the charity, Open Doors Project which offers one-to-one support and a variety of additional courses and activities aiming to 'help people out of isolation' (Open Doors Project n.d.).¹ At this time, I was also volunteering for the Open Doors Project at a women's drop-in session and teaching English to vulnerable women in a library. I was also delivering half-termly family learning sessions for vulnerable families attended by a high percentage of refugees and migrants. In all these contexts, I was increasingly aware of the challenges for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in negotiating different cultural identities, improving their English, building friendships, and developing a sense of belonging.

My applied theatre practice with young refugees and migrants, combined with thirteen years of experience as a qualified teacher of Drama and English in secondary schools, made me aware that there were benefits in this approach compared to desk-based teaching or drop-ins, but that the same techniques were not used with adults. I was also aware that some types of theatre practice seem to facilitate belonging more effectively than others, and were thus worthy of further investigation through research. A sense of belonging is integral to the sense of well-being and community that supports mental health and combats practical difficulties, at a time of great instability in people's lives as an outcome of refugee policy or the experience of

¹ Open Doors also works in partnership with Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL), the Perinatal and Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS), and Social Services.

migration. I initially imagined I might address this issue across the various age groups with whom I was working. In October 2007, I began the first phase of my research within Young Stars, an arts project for 11 to 16 -year-olds attended by approximately 50% members of the host community and 50% asylum seekers or recent migrants. The focus of this phase of research was to allow participants to shape the research questions that were to be explored. My practice is characterised by creative approaches based on play and improvisation which facilitate participant-led engagement. It was important to me to invite the participants to shape the journey of the research. A Lifeline Projects programme funded by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, at Young Stars, I found the objectives of my line manager to exceed targets agreed with the funder by producing multiple high profile performances, conflicted with the wishes of participants and the preliminary findings of the research. In order to carry out the research as free from external controls and agendas as possible, it was necessary to conduct it as a volunteer, hence a shift to delivering the projects under the auspices of Open Doors. In addition, feedback from research participants suggested that it was women, owing to their isolation, insecurity in engaging with people or services outside the home, and inability to access English language provision, who were in particular need of support in their integration into the UK. The young people believed they themselves would benefit if their mothers were to integrate more successfully. The use of drama in the informal ESOL sector and in community second language settings is also an area where there is a need for research (Stinson and Winston 2011, 486). Lifeline Projects is the larger organisation, in receipt of £4.5 million in grants for community work in the financial year 2009-10 mainly from local authorities (Charity Commission 2010). Therefore, it has the capacity to provide a space for practice-based research to be carried out on behalf of Open Doors and some access to interpreters for the interviewing of participants. Funded by the Big Lottery, Charles S. French Charitable Trust, and Church Urban Fund, Open Doors is much smaller, hence operating in only

two boroughs. It gave me access to existing groups for the research and covered the costs of consumable art materials and photocopying.

As Chapter 1 will show, the second phase of research occurred primarily in two extended projects from May 2008 to July 2009. These projects, which lasted 60 weeks, were Creative English for adults, and Family Learning Club, originally conceived for families with children up to the age of eleven. These sessions took place in a multi-purpose room at the Lifeline Centre, with desks stacked to make a workable space. The shift from facilitator to researcher did not come as a surprise to participants, as I had been open about returning to university as a postgraduate student in conversations prior to the start of sessions, and in games involving details from one's week. Instead of operating within a manufactured context, this research developed in an existing one where I was viewed as the student-teacher who wanted to learn how to improve the sessions and help other people deliver sessions that were more effective as a result of what I had learned. I was also interested in exploring the challenges of short-term practice during this period, as funding often provides opportunities for short-term work. Barnes questions the ethics of delivering short-term projects to young refugees, arguing that it can be more damaging to create a place of belonging and then remove it than for it not to have existed at all (Barnes 2008). I was, therefore, interested in exploring the potential of drama interventions in venues where participants had an existing relationship, which may have potential for a longer term increase in belonging, and thus delivered some one-off sessions for parents and pre-school siblings in primary schools and on existing adult ESOL programmes. There was also a five-week project developing parents' ability to support their children's English literacy, which was delivered for Lifeline in Hackney. The fact that Open Doors does not operate in Hackney was of particular significance to the research in terms of examining how the different external contexts affected the outcomes of the workshops in

terms of belonging. Without Open Doors, there was no bank of volunteers to offer support to the most vulnerable, nor was there a regular range of additional groups and activities supporting Lifeline's work, although volunteers did set up weekly informal ESOL sessions following the conclusion of the research programme. It was, therefore, of interest to see whether these additional opportunities had a significant impact on the broader sense of belonging experienced by participants in the applied theatre project.

In the delivery of the practice-based research, I have never perceived a difference between paid professional practice and voluntary practice, other than the fact that in the former the agenda is set by the funder, and in the latter the agenda is set in collaboration with the participants. In this sense, the distinction is critical. Facilitating as a volunteer created a space where I could follow the participants' wishes, developing a model of professional practice which could then be employed elsewhere. Conducting the majority of the practice-based research in a context where there are no pre-determined outcomes and where participants are not required to address specific language topics for public examination generated a freedom to be playful and exploratory, experimenting with a variety of workshop techniques and subject matter, especially during the extended research projects. In a thesis examining the ethic of care, facilitating as a volunteer could in itself be considered a demonstration of care, especially within an organisation staffed by individuals for whom giving time freely to support others is the norm. However, in the 60-week projects participants considered me to be an employee of Lifeline rather than an Open Doors volunteer, as I was in a Lifeline building and many of them had been offered the opportunity to participate by a Lifeline Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) advisor. Conducting the research as a volunteer also removed participant concerns about who was funding the research. Kissoon records that participants are concerned about who is funding the research and are suspicious if

it is funded by the Home Office and are, therefore, less likely to participate. She writes: 'Asserting my personal investment in the research was reassuring to participants who would otherwise have declined to be interviewed' (Kissoon 2006, 83). Whilst I suspect many of the participants did not give any thought to whether I was an employee or volunteer, my personal investment in the research was apparent in my articulated desire to be a better facilitator and to help others be better facilitators too. In a cultural climate where the 2012 Olympics and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government's vision of 'Big Society' have raised the profile of volunteering, research into the qualities of care that most benefit the recipient is timely. However, whilst I anticipate the findings of this research will have an impact on other volunteers working within organisations which support refugees and migrants, I also anticipate that research findings will have a practical relevance to applied theatre practitioners and teachers of English as a second language.

There are a growing number of practitioners working through drama with refugees and migrants in the UK. Nevertheless, there is very little academic writing on it, especially prior to 2009.² It was, therefore, very important to take the opportunity to learn from other practitioners in the field through interviews and where possible participation in or observation of practice. This enabled me to identify issues and questions that would be worth exploring further within the field. I focused on organisations within London, especially East London, as they were geographically close to my own practice, and the very particular social and cultural mix of the area makes it a rich terrain for research. While refugee arts projects take place all over the UK, especially in the North-West of England, London has a particularly high density of projects due to the high levels of immigration in the area, as recorded by *Arts and Refugees: History, Present and Future* (Kidd, Zahir and Khan 2008, 20). The thesis was an opportunity to

² See Chapter 1 pp. 50 -1 for further discussion of this point.

examine in more depth specific types of participatory practice within the field, particularly those with an English language focus, family learning, and projects for adults who do not consider themselves artists, as these are particular characteristics of my own practice. Practitioners did not necessarily know about others working in a similar field and had developed their methodologies independently. Interviews with these practitioners and with other people working in the field, provided a context for dialogue about common difficulties and successes (see Appendix 1). I also took the opportunity to learn through participating in workshops run by these practitioners alongside postgraduate students or other professionals. I participated in workshops hosted by Phakama (residency at Goldsmiths, University of London 10 - 12/2/09), Ovalhouse 'Living Here' (Training Day 29/1/08), GLYPT (Voices Conference 4/3/09) and the Refugee Arts Project (Open workshop 27/6/08). I also accessed the practice of these arts organisations by attending performances, A.G.M.s, Refugee Week events, conferences led by refugee arts' organizations, and by reading their evaluation reports. Surveying other practice in this way also helped me to identify what was distinctive about my own practice in terms of its approach to addressing needs through play and a particular approach to storytelling, thus developing a new model of informal ESOL provision. The practice is also distinctive insofar as it facilitates access to other sources of help, support and opportunities to volunteer in Lifeline and Open Doors, such as the chance to meet with job brokers, attend certificated courses, gain support with claiming benefits or volunteer in a parent and toddler group, or by delivering a cookery course. I was also an external evaluator on Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project, and have referenced the public external evaluation report which I wrote, which includes transcripts of interviews completed for this purpose (Smith 2009). Following this initial contact, Debra Glazer, who developed and facilitated Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project, was particularly interested in the challenges of generating traditional stories as source material. We discussed our experiences relating to this issue at length and the findings of my practice-based research (Appendix 1,

interview 62). Later, Glazer generously invited me to interview her participants as she began to accomplish the sort of source material she desired. She also allowed me to watch workshops when she was exploring this issue. This collaboration was invaluable in enabling me to investigate the issue in a different context, free from my influence in the role of facilitator.

The final phase of practice-based research through my own practice ran from January to May 2010. After a period of analysing interviews and reflecting on accounts of the workshop, I identified specific areas where I was not sufficiently satisfied with the outcomes and wished to explore further. These areas included: the generation of traditional stories as source material from participants; increasing the degree of empowerment sustained beyond the workshop space; encouraging integration with members of the host community, and addressing cultural barriers to play as a source of learning. As a practitioner, I wished the research to have a positive impact on the quality of my own practice and that of my peers. Hence I instigated seven additional short-term research projects, generally lasting about five weeks each. The projects included: two short Creative English courses respectively addressing practical health literacy needs and the use of traditional stories; a family learning book creation project on the latter theme, and four projects relating to two of Open Doors' Play 'n' Chat groups, with a mixture of members born locally and those from other countries. As a consequence, I identified strategies which improved the sense of belonging achieved in the outlined areas.

A Sense of Belonging

The word 'belonging' expresses an emotional attachment. As cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn states, it combines the notion of 'be-ing' and 'longing'. She explains that the term 'belonging':

captures more accurately the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by learning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state (Probyn 1996, 19).

The practice-based research for this thesis uses theatre to create a liminal space, in which identities can be redefined and reshaped; relationships built and an ownership of the creative and practical process developed, to create that attachment and development. A sense of belonging is often considered to be an indicator of successful integration into the UK (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole 2007, 7). In an emotional state where one feels an affinity with people and environment, one does not need to present a 'public' face pretending to share appropriate feelings and behaviour, but can simply be one's self. A sense of belonging is an innate human need and thus crucial for well-being. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have been identified as suffering from unusually poor mental health in comparison with the host population, a condition that is related to a lack of well-being (Tidyman, Gale and Seymour 2004, 26). A better understanding of how belonging is achieved is, therefore, an important focus of this research. As a sense of belonging is an internal, psychological state and thus difficult to measure, belonging is often considered to be indicated by shared behaviours or heritage. Anne-Marie Fortier, for example, highlights the importance of behaviours and legends that create a group identity that others can join. She explains: 'practices of group identity are about manufacturing cultural and historical belongings that mark out terrains of commonality, through which the social dynamics and the politics of 'fitting in' are delineated' (Fortier 2000, 2). From her perspective, it is external characteristics that dictate belonging. Psychologist, Brené Brown, however, recognises the internal, psychological side of belonging as an emotional state. This thesis shares Brown's view that one can appear to belong through adopting all the external trappings of such, yet be unhappier and more detached if these things are forced and not instinctive. 'Fitting in' can, therefore, be a barrier to belonging rather than an aid:

Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us. Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval, which are not only hollow substitutes for belonging, but often barriers to it. Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance (Brown 2010, 26).

Belonging, therefore, involves a degree of security where individuals feel comfortable to be vulnerable and reveal their weaknesses. This thesis argues for a culture within the applied theatre group where this can occur. The notion of 'fitting in' is further problematised in the context of work with refugees and migrants as an element of external 'fitting in' is required when one does not have the language or cultural knowledge to function in another country. To belong, one must have the functional ability to manage daily tasks to one's satisfaction, like shopping, employment, or accessing medical help. 'Fitting in' in the context of this research, however, does not involve Brown's 'seeking approval' from others, just a confidence to communicate and ask for help if required. The concept of 'fitting in' could be considered to have echoes of the policy of assimilation, long abandoned in the UK, where the aim is to lose one's own cultural identity as quickly as possible and adapt that of the host nation. An imposed loss of existing cultural identity is not compatible with belonging. A sense of belonging, as perceived by this thesis, includes a sense of entitlement: one has the right to be treated with respect and a right, as well as a capability, to access services on an equal basis whether independently or with support. Consonant with Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole's definition of integration as 'a two-way process involving mutual adjustment and participation on the part of the host society as well as by the refugees themselves', the practice-based research for this thesis includes projects where refugees and migrants have worked alongside members of the host community, exploring what mutual adjustment may look like in this specific, local context (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole 2007, 12). Rather than being about 'fitting in', it is about what Modood describes as 'fitting people together', which involves 'give and take, mutual change and the creation of something new' (Modood 2008, 87). The

practice-based research for this thesis has addressed practical needs, which will help participants to feel they can 'fit in', but it has also sought to address a sense of belonging through feeling comfortable and accepted in who you are and what you are able to do at this current moment, hence its additional emphasis on the non-verbal and creative activities that embrace the different cultures of participants, including members of the host community.

Research imperatives and the Context of the Thesis

At the beginning of the 21st century, the impact of government policy in the UK on the lived experience of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and their representation in the media and art, which generally either provokes hostility or maintains their status as victims, has resulted in a need to develop alternative strategies for support which work in conjunction with agencies and organisations and fulfil the need for a sense of belonging among their clients. This practice-based research responds to that need, which is not sufficiently fulfilled by existing practice, particularly the culture of 'drop-ins' in wider organisational practice that addresses immediate, practical needs, but fails to encourage any sense of belonging. As Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei state: 'Research to understand the range of issues faced by refugees is vital in order to comprehend the lives, the experience and the need of these groups and so to develop more appropriate and effective responses' (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2011, 1273). This section examines the main imperatives for this research: refugee policy at the beginning of the 21st century; the loss of access to English language classes; the UK multicultural context; and representations in the media and art.

Migration has affected the UK as far back as the 5th century (Panayi 1999, 2). Although the first refugees were documented in the UK in the 12th century, the first significant wave of refugees arrived at the end of the 17th century (Rutter 2003, 13; Kushner 2006, 16). The relationship between the UK and refugees has always been complex. Government policy remains a response to what is perceived and portrayed as a constant state of crisis, as it seeks to appease hostile public perceptions, encouraged by negative media coverage. At the start of the 21st century, government policy has made the successful integration of refugees and vulnerable migrants increasingly difficult, thus creating a significant lack of a sense of belonging for these arrivals. In 2000, the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was set up, as a branch of the UK Borders and Immigration Agency, to withdraw responsibility for the care of asylum seekers from local councils and the Department of Work and Pensions. This aimed to relieve local hostility to asylum seekers who were perceived to be jumping the queue for council housing and taking benefits 'earned' by the local taxpaying community. However, the policies it implemented had a negative impact on asylum seekers' well-being.

NASS created an alternative benefits system, which originally supported asylum seekers through vouchers that could be exchanged in some shops. This was later replaced by cash worth 70% of income support. A joint study by Oxfam and the Refugee Council shows how this is simply not enough. According to the refugee organisations it surveyed, 85% said their clients experienced hunger, 95% could not afford to buy clothes or shoes, and 80% were not able to maintain good health (Penrose 2002, 4). This poverty forces asylum seekers to make difficult choices when the cost of a bus fare, for example, may be involved. Midwives have identified the poverty and destitution experienced by pregnant asylum-seeking women as significant barriers to providing effective care, citing appointments missed because the women do not have money for transport (Musgrave 2012, 4). Following evidence from an independent study,

the Refugee Council concludes: 'Many asylum seekers do not receive the basic support they may be entitled to, because the system is badly designed, extremely bureaucratic and poorly run' (Refugee Council 2005). A further Refugee Council study showed how the uncertainty experienced often leads asylum seekers to suffer from depression (Refugee Council 2005, 24).

Priya Kissoon identifies a range of studies which show the importance of housing in the reception and resettlement of refugees (Van der Veer 1992; Carey- Wood et al. 1995; Carey- Wood 1997; Zetter and Pearl 1999; Murdie and Teixeira 2000; Garvie 2001; Foley and Beer 2003; Edgar et al. 2004 (Kissoon 2006, 79)). She concludes that the benefits of appropriate housing are wide-ranging. As Zetter and Pearl explain: 'More than filling a basic physical need for immigrant newcomers, it constitutes an important resource in re-establishing social structures such as family and linkages to the wider community, and minimising dependency on welfare support' (Kissoon 2006, 79). These issues all impact upon belonging. However, NASS's introduction of the policy of dispersal has made the positive benefits of housing more difficult to achieve. In 2000 NASS was given responsibility for dispersing refugees and asylum seekers around the country to relieve pressure on the South-East, where most of them arrive into the country. The NASS almost always houses asylum seekers in 'hard to let' properties where other tenants do not wish to live (*The Truth about Asylum* 2007, 6). A survey by Refugee Action revealed that 83% of female refugees and asylum seekers do not go out at night as they fear abuse and harassment (Dumper 2002, 12). This policy of dispersal is criticised for situating asylum seekers in inner-city neighbourhoods with existing social and economic problems and in communities that have little knowledge of their new neighbours or experience of dealing with newcomers, such as Barking and Dagenham. This has resulted in considerable local tensions, including attacks and, in the most extreme cases, even murders of

asylum seekers and refugees.³ When people fear walking in the streets around their home, it is simply not conducive to experiencing a sense of belonging there.

In 2002, the right of asylum seekers to work was removed. As well as being damaging financially, this also affects self-esteem and a sense of belonging, as asylum seekers simply cannot contribute to society in an expected way. In 2010, the right to apply for permission to work after a year was reinstated. However, this still leaves asylum seekers with double the original period of being unable to access the structure and normality of paid employment.⁴ In 2002, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act also focused on the control and removal of people whose claims were unsuccessful. Wider powers of detention were introduced. Financial support and housing could be removed from people who did not apply for asylum immediately on arrival in Britain. English language and citizenship tests were also introduced for people applying for British nationality. To prove belonging, applicants had to remember facts and statistics, such as the year women gained suffrage and the percentage of the population that is considered 'young.' Most British-born citizens would struggle to supply these facts. Furthermore, the capacity to memorise facts about a country bears no relation to an emotional sense of belonging.

For asylum seekers, uncertainty about the future does not disappear after gaining refugee status as, since August 2005, refugees are no longer given indefinite (i.e. permanent) leave to remain when their claims are accepted. Instead, they are only given permission to stay for five years, a decision which can be reversed at any time. After five years, they can apply for

³ Mrs Kalokohi, who fled war in Sierra Leone, and Mohamed Ali Maslah, who fled war in Somalia, for example, were both murdered in the supposed sanctuary of London (Judd 2007; Summers 2006).

⁴ Prior to 2002, asylum seekers had been able to apply for permission to work after they had been in Britain for six months.

indefinite leave to remain. This uncertainty, as well as the trauma they may have experienced prior to their arrival in the country, means that mental health problems amongst asylum seekers and refugees are common (Tidyman, Gale and Seymour 2004, 34). It also makes genuine integration between locally born and asylum seeking communities very difficult to achieve, if on either side their presence is perceived as temporary.

For refugees, asylum seekers and migrants wishing to integrate into life in the UK, the erosion of the entitlement to free English language classes has also been highly damaging. In 2006, the Learning and Skills Council announced its intention that, from September 2007, the English for Speakers of Other Languages classes would no longer be free, except to priority groups who were unemployed or receiving income-based benefits. This meant that asylum seekers were not automatically eligible for free tuition. Ironically, its reasoning was that demand was too great for the classes. The LSC stated:

ESOL provision and funding have expanded well beyond the expectations in the original Skills for Life strategy, but demand has risen even faster. Given the scale of demand and the pressure on resources, we must focus public investment on provision for those most at risk of disadvantage (Palmer and Ward 2006, 18-9).

Anna Reisenberger, the Refugee Council's acting chief executive, highlighted the absurdity of this position, especially in the context of increasing debate about the importance of integration:

How is it going to be possible to promote social inclusion, which the Learning and Skills Council states is a priority, when people are unable to talk to each other, and newly arrived asylum seekers find it a struggle just to go into local shops and buy a pint of milk? (Kingston 2006)

The Refugee Council's strong opposition resulted in concessions being announced in March 2007. These concessions meant that asylum seekers were eligible after six months, failed

asylum seekers who were eligible for Section 4⁵ support were eligible, and further evidence of low pay would be taken into account beyond the Working Tax Credit (Refugee Council 2007). However, although this clearly benefitted refugees in low paid work and asylum seekers, the change in policy has still meant a decline in learning English from other migrants, who previously only needed to have lived in England for more than six months to qualify for free tuition. This has particularly affected many of the women moving here to marry. They are often not intending to work and, especially with migrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, are expected to assist their mother-in-law with housework and cooking. As a result, unable to speak the language and without local friends and family of their own, they spend most of their time isolated within the home and can be prone to depression (Appendix 1, interview 59b; Palmer and Ward 2006, 18-19).

From August 2011, funding for ESOL courses was further restricted to those receiving Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance. In other words, those not actively seeking work, such as parents, carers, elderly people, and those with low incomes, are exempt from funding, including refugees. An Association of Colleges Survey suggested that, of the 187,000 people on college and community group courses in England, around 99,000 would be unable to access ESOL provision due to this change (Verinder 2011, 1). The impact upon women is particularly significant, as they represent 74% of those who become ineligible nationally. In London, the figure is slightly higher, as 80% of ESOL students on so-called 'inactive' benefits are women (Verinder 2011, 2). Access to English language classes has been limited despite the findings of the NIACE 2006 report which identified that ESOL provision was 'critical to the success of a range of other key government policies, including child poverty

⁵ Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 gives the Borders and Immigration Agency power to grant subsistence level support to some destitute asylum seekers whose asylum application and appeals have been rejected.

agenda, health, sustainable communities, regeneration, and community integration and cohesion, including refugee integration' (ESOL Inquiry Executive Summary 2006, 5).

The lack of a shared language exacerbates the challenges of a multicultural society. The concept of multiculturalism evolved in the 1980s in response to the diverse UK population. Kevin Miles defines multiculturalism as 'a form of governance where the assumed autonomy of ethnic communities was to be recognised and their cultural difference celebrated' (Miles 2006, 37). However, this form of governance has simply not resulted in a sufficiently cohesive society. Multiculturalism has overemphasised difference and damaged the notion that there are common values and beliefs to which all people subscribe. Belief in stereotypes flourishes on both sides, enhanced by the limited contact between communities rather than challenged by it. As a result, ethnic groups have become increasingly separate. Since the events of 9/11 and race riots in some cities in the north of England in the same year, criticism of multiculturalism has come from a variety of sources. This has included the Commission of Racial Equality, which published an article by Kenan Malik that argues, 'multiculturalism has segregated communities more effectively than racism' (Modood 2008, 83). This segregation is often linked to other social problems. Abbas describes a 'sense of dislocation and alienation' that many young Muslims feel, as they 'live in poverty, in overcrowded homes, segregated areas, declining inner city zones, face educational under-achievement, low graduate employment, and experience poor health' (Abbas 2007, 10). In some cases, this has led to a rise in interest in extremism. Wiktorowicz charts how experiences such as discrimination, socio-economic crisis, and political repression can cause a cognitive opening when an individual may be receptive to new ways of thinking and world views, even those of extremist groups (Wiktorowicz 2005, 5-6). The second and third generation of migrants is in danger of sharing the views of freed Guantanamo detainee Moazzan Begg: 'I was born and brought up in England but I never saw myself as English. And neither do the English' (Malek 2008, 26). If

being born in a multicultural society does not necessarily confer a sense of belonging, it demonstrates the importance of finding practices that do.

The separation caused by multiculturalism has resulted in some of the women participating in this research having lived in England for 20 or even 30 years without learning English. They have rarely ventured outside their ethnic community and then only with the support of a husband or child. This severely limits any sense of belonging they may have to wider society. Although a shift in policy has meant that since the end of 2010 partners are no longer allowed into the UK without demonstrating that they can speak English, many of the previous generation remain very isolated from mainstream British society. They will continue to be so, unless alternative strategies are employed.

In a 2008 article, Tariq Modood describes multiculturalism as having three key ideas at its centre: equality, multi (which he defines as a recognition of pluralism in both those who seek racial equality and the racism that attacks it), and interactive integration (Modood 2008, 84-88). Interactive integration is an active, two-way process, which involves mutual change. Modood argues that most multiculturalists seek to promote a new level of respect and tolerance towards diversity and to redefine Britishness, seeking a shared culture for all in the process. As Modood states: 'An interactive idea of integration will clearly mean that we are always rethinking what it means to belong to this society, to be part of this country, to be British' (Modood 2008, 87). An 'interactive idea of integration' is a key to achieving a sense of belonging, where both immigrants and host society gain a tolerance and understanding of one another and recognise the plurality of religious and racial identities that belong in the UK. The applied theatre projects which form the basis of the research are interactive integration in

practice. This applies particularly to projects and activities which have been shared by members of the host community and those who have not previously integrated. It also applies to activities which emphasise the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of participants. Whilst Modood focusses on group identities which are racial, the research practice for this thesis has foregrounded shared group identities beyond race, such as mother, daughter, or performer.

Shared group identities beyond race are important as the British public have consistently felt disproportionate levels of concern over the issue of immigration. In 2008, opinion polls found only concern over 'Health' surpassed it and only 'Education' and 'Crime' could be rated as of equal importance (BBC News 2008). In the 2011 Ipsos Mori Index, respondents found it to be the second most important issue facing Britain today, after the economy, expressed as a concern in 65% of responses (Santoro 2012, 4). A 2008 YouGov poll recorded that even 58% of second and third generation immigrants felt there was an immigration crisis and 40% of them felt new migrants were getting special treatment (Dispatches 2008). This disproportionate level of public concern is shaped by newspaper coverage of asylum seekers which is frequently hostile and inaccurate. ICAR's *Media Image, Community Impact* (2004) identified 'there is evidence that refugees and asylum-seekers are directly affected by the predominantly unbalanced and inaccurate newspaper reports: they feel unwelcome and fearful' (ICAR 2004, 8). It also suggests that media coverage reinforces the prejudices which cause racial harassment. The study found clear evidence of negative, inaccurate, and unbalanced reporting. Asylum seekers and refugees tended to be referred to en masse rather than as individuals where more empathy may be developed. Stories about individuals focussed on those who had committed crimes. The language used was emotive and 'in some respects potentially alarming' (Ibid., 2004, 7). These trends could still be exemplified in 2012, for

example, 'Soft-touch Britain, the asylum seeker capital of Europe: We let in more than anyone else last year' (*Daily Mail*, 29 June 2012) and 'Asylum seeker's false name scam raked in £425,000' (*The Express*, 19 September 2012). Article 19's *What's the Story? Media Representations of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK* (2003) also highlights that images used to accompany these stories in the press are dominated by the image of the 'threatening young male'. Images of women and children are rarely seen, while the image of groups of young men trying to 'break into Britain' appears repeatedly (Santoro 2012, 13).

For those refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who are Muslim, representations of Islam are similarly hostile and inaccurate, especially since 9/11 and 7/7.⁶ A Cardiff University study examining 1,000 articles between 2000 and 2008 found that two-thirds of the stories portrayed British Muslims as a problem, linking them to terrorism and cultural difficulties. Only 2% of the articles placed Muslims in a positive light (Moore, Mason and Lewis 2008). In the first half of 2008, 37% of articles emphasised that Muslim religious and cultural values are incompatible with the British way of life (Moore, Mason and Lewis 2008). This constant negative treatment can only create an increasing sense of alienation amongst the British Muslim community and provoke public hostility. According to a 2008 YouGov poll, 61% of Muslims said hostility against them had increased since the bombings in July 2005.

The strength of feeling surrounding issues of asylum and immigration reflected in the emotive headlines and images referenced here, is also reflected in professional British theatre. In response to the perceived myth-making and consequential concern for authenticity, theatrical responses have often sought to use refugee testimony, such as Sonja Linden's *Asylum*

⁶ 7/7 is the name often given to 7 July 2005 when a series of co-ordinated suicide bomb attacks occurred in London, targeting civilians using public transport during the rush hour, 52 civilians were killed and more than 700 were injured. The suicide bombers were British-born Islamist extremists.

Monologues (2008), where actors read the verbatim accounts of three refugees' difficult experiences, or undertaken research with refugee communities, such as Bola Agbaje's *Detaining Justice* (2009), which questions Black British responses to immigration through the portrayal of the central character's abuse in a detention centre. Despite the intention of raising public awareness and compassion, such performances tend towards identifying refugees as victims. As Alison Jeffers states: 'the association of refugees with parasitism is so strong that many theatre makers seem to think that they need to be represented as politically neutered to the point of victimhood in many fictional representations' (Jeffers 2012, 44). Complexities are removed to create a simple focus on the 'deserving' refugee, fully worthy of our help and support. Stella Barnes applies David Mamet's term, 'emotional pornography' to much theatre about refugees. She considers that the audience are encouraged to feel superior to the characters as they have experienced emotion on their behalf, which clearly defines them as a 'good' human being, without having to take any further action or acknowledge the moral complexities of real life (Barnes and Zory, 2007).

When representations do not rely on passive vulnerability, this does not simply result in a positive response from those emotionally engaged by the subject matter. Richard Bean's *England People Very Nice*, performed at the National Theatre, London in 2009, chronicles the history of immigration. Its boisterous cartoon style highlights the ridiculousness of national stereotypes, as it charts the arrival of French Huguenots, Irish, Jews, Bangladeshis and Somali refugees and migrants to East London. Its absurdity is further mocked by the asylum seekers playing the roles within a play-within-a-play device. *England People Very Nice* caused an outraged response from the public and some critics, resulting in demonstrations outside the theatre, with 146 comments on one blog entry alone in the first week and attention from the national press. Hussain Ismail, a British Bangladeshi playwright from Bethnal Green, was the

most vocal critic of the play. He viewed the stereotyping in the play as a 'personal attack on me and the community I belong to' (Judd 2009). His disgust was so strong that he disrupted a 'Platform' event where Richard Bean was discussing his work. Accompanied by another man, he chanted 'Richard Bean is a racist', refusing to leave the stage until the intervention of security (Bean 2009). The strength of this response, and others like it, can be explained by James Thompson's use of Elaine Scarry's work to explore audience and participant response in sites of war. Scarry suggests that pain is experienced as 'either the contraction of the universe down to the immediate vicinity of the body or as the body swelling to fill the entire universe' (Thompson 2006, 47). Consequently, a verbal critique may be experienced as an attack on one's innermost being. While pain initially provokes silence, it is followed by a need to be expressed, as pain itself does not have an object, as food is to hunger or drink to thirst. With reference to his own experience of presenting an academic paper in Sri Lanka, Thompson explains:

A verbal analysis in a situation of conflict can very quickly become felt – experienced and responded to as a bodily assault. My use of Scarry's work on injury and pain therefore must also note that the very act of discussing these issues enters the terrain of belief systems and collective identities that are formed both through and by personal experiences of bodily pain. [...] If the fact of the injured body gives material authority to the belief, a challenge to the belief is experienced as a re-injuring of the body. So my comments during the public seminar in Jaffna were not mere talk but experienced by some as a re-injuring of their bodies and thus it resulted in a vigorous, defensive verbal assault on me (Thompson 2006, 51).

Although a performance rather than an academic critique, this notion of re-injury explains the passionate response *England People Very Nice* received. Ismail could be said to have ignored the universal lampooning within the play, which showed all stereotypes to be ridiculous, including those of white British-born characters. However, the intensity of the bodily pain experienced by an issue as current and evocative as perceived racism drowns out any capacity to see the wider whole. This sensation is likely to be magnified within a prestigious national institution such as the National Theatre. Bean defended his choice of subject matter by saying that he had listened to members of this community, in which he had lived (Bean 2009).

However, although he had clearly conducted research for the play, his agenda as a playwright is to create an entertaining piece of theatre about his theme. His focus is, therefore, not on recognising the potential impact of exposing such a raw wound in public. As tensions rose in the disrupted Platform event, the audience was quick to shout back at the protesters: sometimes with reasoned arguments and occasionally with frustrated obscenities. At one point, Ismail and an audience member who was also of Asian descent, simultaneously shouted opposing views in one another's faces. Neither speaker was listening to the other's words. This illustrated one of the major problems with this debate. Where feelings run so high, there is no genuine dialogue and there is no chance of changing perceptions without listening as well as talking. Despite Bean's intention to communicate that love dispels prejudice and brings about integration between different racial groups, the comic treatment of stereotyping had caused it to be misread by some members of the audience. It had alienated rather than creating temporary *communitas* for them. Some issues are perceived to be too sensitive to lampoon. Whilst the play may have portrayed historical immigration, the contemporary political sensitivity of the issue means the historical context does not provide protective distance. In contrast to this theatrical experience, workshops within this practice-based research have sought to create a private and intimate context where issues around Britishness could be explored and where it would be easier to respond to the individual and their concerns. This thesis proposes that the private workshop is a much more appropriate context to bring together diverse individuals and explore sensitive issues in a non-threatening way. The capacity of the workshop to be participant-led means, unlike a high-profile public performance, it can deal with individuals and their issues with responsiveness and care.

Key Concepts and the Critical Landscape

The disciplinary fields engaged by this thesis reflect the context in which the practice-based research has taken place. The thesis is rooted in Drama, specifically Drama-in-Education and Applied Theatre, but draws primarily upon Psychology, Relational Ethics, and Education (particularly on second language acquisition and play). It also engages with Refugee Studies, Migration Studies, Cultural Studies, and Grey Literature related to UK government policy.⁷ The informal ESOL sector which frames this research interacts with all these fields, hence the benefit of considering input from these sources. The following section defines key concepts within the thesis and identifies the core theorists upon whom it draws, describing the rationale behind those choices.

Applied theatre aims to have social benefits. According to the introduction to *The Applied Theatre Reader*, applied theatre seeks change in groups rather than in individuals: 'Where applied theatre derives, albeit indirectly, from the discipline of sociology, the goal tends to be group (or social), rather than individual transformation' (Prentski and Preston 2009, 12). Inevitably when working with groups in the practice-based research for this thesis, one would anticipate seeing change in those groups. However, as a sense of belonging is an internal, emotional state experienced by an individual, it would seem valuable to look to psychology rather than sociology for the key theoretical grounding of this thesis. Working with vulnerable groups with hoped-for benefits in terms of participant well-being, it would also seem beneficial to learn from the fields of health care and social care where the ethic of care is increasingly influential, as demonstrated by a significant number of contemporary publications including Barnes 2012, Parrott 2010, Baillie et al. 2012 and Barker 2010. This thesis asks if there are

⁷ Grey Literature has been defined as 'that which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers' (GreyNet 1999).

lessons learned in these fields from the ethic of care that can also strengthen the quality of provision in the drama workshop space to enhance a participant's sense of belonging.

The ethic of care has provoked considerable discussion and debate within health and social care over the last two decades. An ethic of care is a moral theory which sits within the field of relational ethics. As a 'relational ethic', it focusses on relationships rather than on the disposition of individuals. As Carol Gilligan explains, an ethic of care simply 'represents an attempt to turn the tide of moral discussion from questions of how to achieve objectivity and detachment to how to engage responsively and with care' (Gilligan 1990, xiv). Bergum and Dossetor contend that health care professionals are characterised by a commitment to relationship, both to the patients they serve and to one another, hence a focus on relationship as a key location for ethical action (Bergum and Dossetor 2005). Applied theatre practitioners are committed in a similar way to their participants, for without them there would be no applied theatre, so a relational ethic seems an appropriate source of influence for the field. Held argues that relational ethics is simply another name for an ethic of care, as its discourse keeps returning to that of 'care' (Held 2006, 9). In their definition of relational ethics, Bergum and Dossetor's theme of 'engagement' (2005), for example, argues for the cultivation of a sensitivity that promotes authentic connection between people, in other words 'care'. Held argues that care is both a practice and a value (Held 2006, 9). As such, 'the ethics of care does not accept and describe the practices of care as they have evolved under actual historical conditions of patriarchal and other domination; it evaluates such practices and recommends what they morally ought to be' (Held 2006, 39). In the view of this thesis, an ethic of care remains, therefore, the more appropriate term in the context of practice-based research which seeks to examine both the value and practice of care in the applied theatre space.

Consonant with the views of Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1986), Held defines an ethic of care as being: ‘the compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of particular others for whom we take responsibility’ (Held 2006, 10). Thus it ensures a focus on ‘attentiveness, trust, responsiveness to need, narrative nuance, and cultivating caring relations’ (Held 2006, 15). It contrasts with a disposition of care, which can mislead people into thinking they are caring because their intentions are benevolent, regardless of how much the needs and wishes of the recipient have been misinterpreted. Nicholson has already recognised this as a flaw of some applied theatre practice, thus causing her to use the metaphor of the gift, which is both a ‘present’ and ‘poison’ to the recipient, as it invokes a complex framework of obligations (Nicholson 2005, 160-1). This thesis defines an ethic of care as the moral responsibility to interrogate practices of research and applied theatre practice to ensure responsiveness to individual need. Care has to be demonstrated to individuals; it cannot be given in generalised terms to a group, without being sensitive to individual nuances, needs, and vulnerabilities. This thesis foregrounds the reciprocal aspect of care and recognises the importance of being able to give **and** receive care. It recognises empowerment as a fundamental need within care ethics. In the theatre practice, the desire to respond sensitively to participants’ needs and to support them in achieving autonomy, is demonstrated both in the broader planning of sessions and in the quality of interactions with individuals.

An ethic of care recognises the interdependence of individuals in society. Held argues that ‘every domain of society need[s] transformation in light of the values of care’ (Held 2006, 18) and that it should have a relevance in social, political, and economic life. Kittay argues that liberal individualistic notions of a person, who is free, equal, independent, and able to choose whether to associate with another person or not, ignores the dependency experienced by everyone at some points in their lives. Everyone, she argues, is dependent when they are

young; most people are dependent when they are old or ill. People subject to a disability may be dependent throughout their lives and others work in an unpaid role caring for dependents (Kittay 1999). Living in another country with no language skills or familiarity with the culture or systems is another phase of enforced dependency. Depression or other mental health illness may also affect one's capacity to be independent, especially when combined with these other practical difficulties. Held argues that an ethic of care 'sees many of our responsibilities as not freely entered into but presented to us by accidents of our embeddedness in familial and social and historical contexts. It often calls on us to *take* responsibility, while liberal individualistic morality focuses on how we should leave each other alone' (Held 2006, 14-5). In a society where many government and social measures actively work against a sense of belonging for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, it is important to take that responsibility to create a space where belonging, as a fundamental human need, may be encouraged. Migration has such a long history affecting the UK that it is an issue that cannot be ignored. The desire to respond to the needs of participants is central to the ethic of care which has shaped this practice.

Critics of an ethic of care sometimes consider it incapable of dealing adequately with violence. Claudia Card, for example, sees the violence historically directed against women as a limitation on care ethics and sees the solution in resistance rather than care-taking (Card 1993, xiii-xiv). As discussed in relation to the public response to *England People Very Nice*, Thompson demonstrates that a spoken act can be one of violence (Thompson 2006, 47). However, as Held highlights, an ethic of care offers an appreciation of the possibilities for non-violence and of countering violence in appropriate ways. She states:

The ethics of care upholds standards of care. It understands those who use violence, even in ways normally considered justifiable, as having morally failed to develop appropriate ways to avoid needing to do so. The ethics of care does not turn violent conflict into a Hobbesian assumption of normal relations between self-interested

individuals in a state of nature. It highlights the way practices of care can overcome violence, rather than merely respond to it in kind (Held 2006, 139).

Consonant with an ethic of care, this applied theatre research will avoid any re-injury of the body through perceived verbal attacks on participants' beliefs and values.

The avoidance of Scarry's 're-injury' of the body is particularly important for refugees and asylum seekers, who have and may still be experiencing trauma. The *Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities* indicates the acute sense of isolation and marginalisation, which may be experienced particularly by refugees and asylum seekers, as they are detached from the host community and from people from their own backgrounds. It links this form of isolation to the highest levels of mental health problems (Tidyman, Gale and Seymour 2004, 26). Alison Jeffers also identifies how refugees may carry with them a certain amount of trauma, which may be formally diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or is evident in them taking medication for depression or other mental health problems. However, she also argues:

Assumptions of trauma in relation to refugees underplay differences in culture and world view, ignoring ethical issues by leaving questions about the responsibility for trauma with the individual rather than on the context which created the trauma, and potentially undermine refugees' own processes and techniques for coping with rapid change [...] At the same time storytelling, the technique by which traumatic narratives are usually uncovered, has been reified to the point where it is sometimes forgotten that it is not a neutral act but is 'intertwined with multiple acts of narrative creation (Thompson 2005, 216). (Jeffers 2012, 138-9)

Jeffers argues that, despite assumptions of trauma, and 'even when there is evidence of trauma, it is vital to remember that refugees' stories are of survival. It may be tempting to dwell on representations of trauma in some refugee performance because the alternative is to portray refugees as "mad" in the sense of being angry, as active agents of change, to an audience who are better prepared to accept an image of depressed passivity' (Jeffers 2012, 139). An approach to applied theatre shaped by an ethic of care is a particularly effective

response to such circumstances as it is rooted in the needs of the participants rather than the needs of the audience. Held argues that caring relations should be reciprocal, at least some of the time, and that it should be a relationship in which the carer and cared-for 'share an interest in their mutual well-being' (Held 2006, 34). For this reciprocal relationship to be upheld, depressed passivity will not suffice; celebrating and developing individuals' capacities as active agents of change is necessary. The *Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities* highlights the importance 'of building on and supporting people's survival skills and resilience and creating opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to use their skills and qualifications' (Tidyman, Gale and Seymour 2004, 26). Shaped by an ethic of care, the practice-based research for this thesis will address these needs.

Tove Petterson argues that any moral theory, including an ethic of care, cannot be addressed without drawing on the field of psychology:

As moral theories are concerned with justifying what morally ought to be done, the moral philosopher needs to attend to research on human capacities and development if recommendations found therein concerning how we should live our lives are to be taken seriously. (Petterson 2008, ix)

As this research seeks to have an impact on the way workshop sessions are facilitated, there is value in drawing on the field of psychology. In this case, it is the theories of Abraham Maslow and Brené Brown which will be particularly significant in shaping the argument of this thesis.

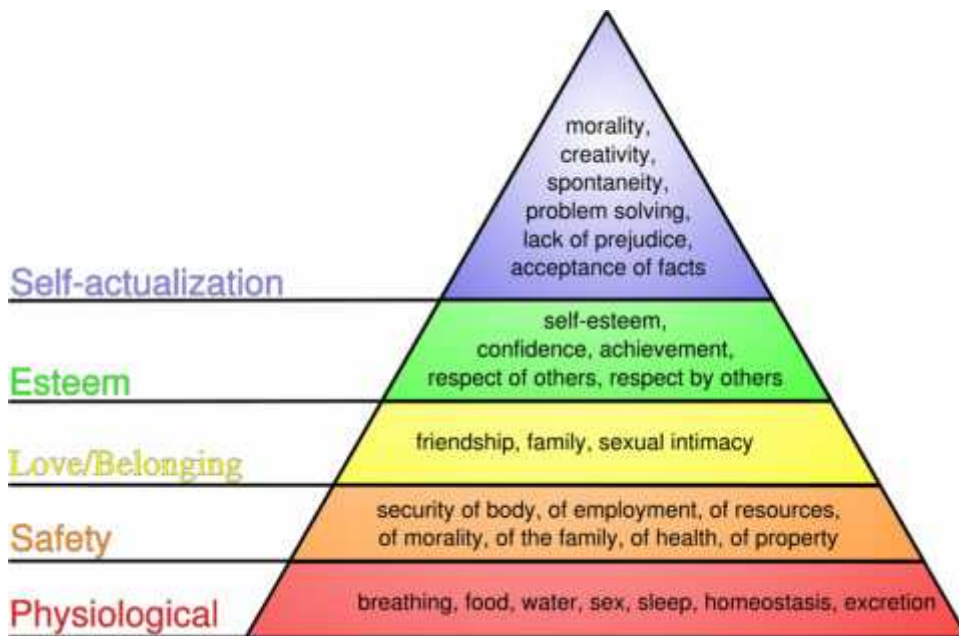
If belonging, as defined by Probyn, combines be-ing and longing, it is useful to look at Maslow's theory of human motivation to address the longing (Probyn 1996, 19). Abraham Maslow published *Motivation and Personality* in 1954, in which he theorised human motivation to be dictated by a hierarchy of needs. His study has remained influential in psychology, business and culture, education, health, and management theory. According to

the hierarchy, in the first instance, physiological needs have to be met, such as food, sleep, water, and excretion:

The physiological needs, when unsatisfied, dominate the organism, pressing all capacities into their service and organising these capacities so that they may be most efficient in this service. Relative gratification submerges them and allows the next higher set of needs in the hierarchy to emerge, dominate, and organise the personality (Maslow 1987, 32).

The next tier of needs involves those relating to safety, including security of body, employment, family, health, and property. The third tier is described as 'belongingness,' which includes love, friendship and family (Maslow 1987, 27). This supports the tier described as 'esteem,' where confidence and respect of and by others develops, and finally, at the top of the hierarchy, 'self-actualisation,' where creativity, spontaneity, problem solving and acceptance are achieved. To achieve self-actualisation, Maslow stressed the value of *peaked experiences*, moments of great liberating joy, in achieving more of one's potential (Maslow 1971, 175-176). Like Thompson's work in *Performance Affects*, this helps to justify the emphasis placed on play within this thesis. To create a context to develop Probyn's 'desire for some sort of attachment', the foundations on which a sense of belonging is built must be understood.

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Like Maslow, Brené Brown suggests love and belonging cannot be separated. Brown argues that perceiving oneself to be worthy of love and belonging is essential in causing people to feel they belong. However, unlike Maslow's theory of motivation, where the motivation to achieve self-esteem comes after belonging, her research suggests in emotional terms a sense of self-worth has to come first. The practice-based research for this thesis has been about balancing these demands – recognising the need to effectively motivate people to attend but then develop the sense of self-worth necessary to encourage a sense of belonging. Brown also proposes creativity is a key to recognising one's originality and value. Maslow regards creativity as part of self-actualisation, his highest tier. This is not a motivating source until other needs have been fulfilled (or one has accepted that those needs cannot be met). This research demonstrates that someone who is fulfilling their individual potential and is valued for such is also likely to have a sense of belonging. One of the participants explained:

[I feel belonging] In a place where I feel valued. It might be because I'm providing something, like a service or helping someone or just where people make me feel so cared about and supported that I feel like I'm part of the group or community. If no-one really cares whether I'm there or not, I don't feel like I belong. [...] It might be

because I have creative ideas or can draw a beautiful elephant. I think it's having something to contribute, so you feel like you are bringing something (Appendix 1, interview 41).

This participant clearly rates the creativity and problem solving of Maslow's upper tier as a foundation to belonging, even though they may not have been the motivating forces to attend the group in the first place. She continued:

I guess when I was unhappy and when life was hard, I didn't think, 'Yes, let's go out and help someone. Let's make an elephant.' That would have been crazy! But, looking back, I would say that's how things changed. (Appendix 1, interview 41.)

Here she recognises that, in a time of difficulty, participating in an arts activity or helping others would seem a bizarre choice and yet doing those things has had a positive impact on her well-being.

Brown views the 'worthiness' or self-acceptance necessary for belonging as something that can be cultivated through the practice of courage, compassion, and connection. She defines the key word here as 'practice' (Brown 2010, 7). It is through practising or rehearsing these key elements that they develop and through them that belonging is achieved: courage through small acts of 'ordinary' bravery in everyday life ('Heroics is often about putting our life on the line. Ordinary courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line' (Brown 2010, 13)); compassion through kindness to oneself as well as others, and connection through being prepared to be vulnerable and to reach out to others. The drama workshop provides a space in which these elements can be rehearsed. There is courage in participating in unfamiliar activities, perhaps in front of others, challenging your capacity to communicate in another language, being prepared to fail or play; there is the opportunity to speak to people whom one may normally avoid, recognising shared humanity and differences. Rehearsing these elements in this safe liminal space encourages participants to practise them in everyday life too and thus create a sense of worthiness and then belonging in wider society as a whole.

As an applied theatre practitioner who is examining my own practice, I am also exploring my work in relation to other applied theatre practitioners who write on their own practice. I am particularly interested in the work of Sue Jennings, whose work is influenced by psychology, and James Thompson, who is interested in questions relating to moral theory. I am also interested in looking back at the work of Dorothy Heathcote, as I share her standpoint of thinking as a teacher first rather than an artist: 'I am thinking as a teacher. I am not trying to think as an artist, but I seek to marry the truth of the art and the truth of the teacher who is trying to create learning situations for people' (Heathcote 1984, 114). While Heathcote's notion of 'truth' and 'art' is highly romanticised in this quotation and resistant to the postmodern age around her, her words confer an equal value on the potential of the art and the teaching. She is foregrounding the educational benefit for the participants and is prepared to sacrifice the theatricality of the subject matter if it generates a better learning experience. 'Truth' is a matter of trust in a postmodern era. It is not transcendental or foundational. The truth of the art is that the teacher can trust the students to find their own meaning in it, making it relevant to their own experiences, which is a key part of its power. 'Thinking as a teacher' suggests a considered attempt to generate progress in all individuals in the group, appealing to diverse learning styles, interests and abilities. Creative English has been developed with a focus on pedagogy and utilising the benefits of theatre to strengthen the learning outcomes. Although Heathcote's work predates the identification of the moral theory of an ethic of care, her writing foregrounds many elements of this and, although her focus is on pedagogy, much of her advice to teachers links to Brown's psychological theory in its promotion of the elements of courage, compassion and connection. Where her work focusses on children and trainee teachers, I am interested in exploring how these principles can evolve to benefit adults and families at the beginning of the 21st century. Other education theory, most notably Stephen Krashen's theory of adult second language acquisition, has also helped

to explain and shape the findings of this thesis (Krashen 1981). There has been a conscious decision to look at contemporary and earlier theoretical reading, foregrounding useful theory from the past and considering my work in relation to the latest thinking in my field.

Subjectivity in the Research

As a facilitator researching my own practice, I fully acknowledge that this is a problematic role as I cannot in any way be considered objective. In my capacity as the facilitator, I am generally outside the activities, observing the responses of the participants, but I am also involved in supporting the group in completing tasks and helping them with English vocabulary. At times I take the role of the storyteller, holding the improvisation together through moments of narration which link the story to the provided text. There are moments when I am also participating, by creating a necessary even number for a game, modelling performance requirements or intervening briefly as a character to lighten the mood or refocus an improvisation. This participation is part of facilitating the session but it also helps to build the rapport in the group whereby participants do not feel that they are test subjects but part of a collaborative experience. Whilst some of these moments of being 'inside' the activities give an opportunity to see and hear precisely how specific individuals are responding, my own emotional engagement with activities makes me a biased witness to proceedings. However, as the only person developing a new type of practice within the hosting organisations, I cannot research this theme in an external role in my professional context. As a consequence, understanding other practice in the field through observation, participation, and practitioner interviews increased in importance. Most significant in gaining a deeper understanding of practice was the participants' role as co-researchers, fully aware of this context. I have emphasised the voices of participants in this thesis. Extensive interviews were conducted to establish their views, as well as evaluative discussions at the end of sessions, which form the

source of representative quotations that helped me understand events from the participants' viewpoint. Some people argue that the active involvement of the researcher with the community under study can influence interviewees' responses and compromise findings (Jacobsen and Landau 2003). However, early exploration of interview approaches for this research suggested that the feedback was more honest in discussion with me rather than with an outsider. Loyalty to me as the facilitator, and perhaps to the organisations Lifeline and Open Doors, resulted in feedback which was universally positive, but not helpful in terms of research when some participants were interviewed by a person outside the project when attending the Lifeline Centre at a different time. A lack of understanding on the part of the interviewer concerning specific incidents and events in sessions also resulted in bland or slightly confused discussion, where participants stopped attempting to explain rather than contradict the interviewer. Getting participants to interview one another in this context was also unsuccessful as language barriers and confusion over the nature of evaluation generated less useful feedback than standard evaluative group discussion and informal questioning of individuals. An open and reciprocal relationship between the interviewer and people being interviewed has been recognised as resulting in better data about people's experiences and feelings (Markova 2009, 147). In this instance, the facilitator is best positioned to develop this relationship, especially as the notion of reciprocal relationships is already key to the ethic of care examined by this thesis.

A good rapport with the participants is critical for the collation of good quality, robust data. Social Science researchers Ann Oakley and Valerie Hey both write about developing relationships with research participants, which the participants wanted to sustain following the conclusion of the research process. Valerie Hey, in her work examining the friendships of school girls particularly, acknowledges that the more she became involved and accepted into

their lives the more interesting the data became (Hey 2002, 74). While a good rapport is essential with participants, on the other hand, when the subject matter is theatre workshops you have facilitated, there is also a concern that this will interfere with the accuracy of the responses you are given. If the participants like you, there is a danger that they want to be helpful and give you the results they know you want, rather than honest data. Whilst in evaluating my own projects, I cannot guarantee that this has not occurred, my feeling is that people have actually been surprisingly honest, partly because, as adults who have no compulsion to be there, they have a vested interest in making the project they are participating in as beneficial to themselves as possible, and partly because they were positioned as co-researchers or, in the early part of Creative English, helpers of the student teacher. My view is supported by the fact, unlike initial trial interviews with an outsider, participants were critical of their experiences. A good rapport with the group resulted in comments like, 'I say the truth because I want help you. You are my friend,' when delivering a particularly damning critique of a particular approach in the session (Appendix 1, interview 15). Yuval-Davis and Kaptani discovered that having the theatre facilitator conducting the research interviews, after leading drama workshops, built trust quickly, as they had already acted, listened, and laughed together, as fellow human beings rather than detached professionals (Yuval-Davis and Kaptani 2006, 2). Carol Gilligan emphasizes the role of an ethic of care in shifting the focus of 'moral discussion from questions of how to achieve objectivity and detachment to how to engage responsively and with care' (Gilligan 1990, xiv). Engaging responsively and with care actually generates more honest and detailed data. It also means researchers, like applied theatre facilitators, have a responsibility to develop a well-considered exit strategy to support participants beyond the end of the project.

Some researchers will argue that involvement with participants will provide access to those who would not usually participate in research which will result in more accurate findings (Markova 2009, 144-7). Dahinden and Efonayi-Mader, for example, found it difficult to get participants on their fieldwork with asylum seekers and migrant sex workers due to a lack of trust (Dahinden and Efonayi-Mader 2009, 104). Whilst not dealing with such sensitive subject matter, I still found the motivation behind the research was important to the participants and affected the number attending the project. Only four individuals attended an applied theatre project delivered by Queen Mary undergraduates, culminating in the forum play, *Can you help me?* on 9 December 2011. The project was perceived as being of primary benefit to the undergraduates, as demonstrated by the need to film the concluding performance for second marking purposes. Although the filming alone may have provided a significant barrier for many, participating in a university research project was regarded with more suspicion or considered of limited interest to clients, despite an extremely relevant health literacy theme. Trust is relational and can take time to build. By conducting research within my existing role in the organisation, there was a higher level of trust which meant people felt comfortable participating in the research or in the drama project without obligation.

The role of the facilitator will be dealt with at length in Chapter 5 as part of an overarching examination of how the theatre project may influence behaviour outside the workshops. The thesis argues that the facilitator plays a key role in modelling care and enhancing perceptions of self-worth and agency. However, this characteristic of practice must be considered after the content of the sessions, as understanding the subject matter and session structure contextualises this dimension of the practice.

Defining 'asylum seeker', 'refugee', and 'vulnerable migrant'

The media will often blur the terms 'asylum seeker', 'refugee,' and 'migrant'. The same applies to many members of the general public. At a Refugee Week event in Barking and Dagenham, for example, one audience member expressed surprise that anyone with a different coloured skin and speaking a foreign language was not 'an asylum seeker on benefits' (Refugee Voices 2009). The term asylum seeker has its origins in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which was a response to the events of World War Two. The Declaration laid out the fundamental rights of all human beings, including Article 14.1, the right to asylum: 'Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.' By signing, United Nations member states committed themselves to upholding these rights. The term 'asylum seeker' stems from the use of 'asylum' in this document, although the term itself is not applied here. This document indicated a key shift in the language used to refer to the refugee issue, away from a preoccupation with employment and access, to one which acknowledged human rights and accepted responsibility for fellow human beings beyond their borders. In 1951, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was followed by the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This defined a refugee as a person with 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (United Nations 1951, 16). This definition, which excludes those who have been displaced by environmental disasters, has been used ever since. The Convention set out standards for the treatment of refugees. Governments who signed it agreed not to return refugees to places where they would be in danger. It applied mainly to people who were refugees because of events in Europe before 1951. However, it was later extended by a 1967 Protocol, to cover people anywhere in the world at any time. These significant documents are still the basis of refugee rights today in all UN countries, and form the basis for many asylum appeals.

The term 'migrant' is not enshrined in a single definition, although the term has shifted in meaning from its original associations with movement due to remunerated employment. The Commission of Human Rights (1998) defines migrants as those who have freely taken the decision to leave their country of origin for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without 'the intervention of an external compelling factor (United Nations 1951, 16). Some scholars make a distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrants, as some migrants will have been forced from their country by circumstances beyond their control. The practice for this thesis has addressed the needs of vulnerable migrants. Some definitions of 'vulnerable migrant' are very specific and include victim of trafficking, irregular migrant (an undocumented or failed asylum seeker), unaccompanied minor, smuggled or stranded migrant, who does not have the money or adequate documentation to continue to their intended destination. This thesis defines 'vulnerable' in terms of being vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through insufficient access to formal or informal support networks and inability to cope oneself whether through lack of access to information, poor language skills, or mental health difficulties. This definition includes the above categories but extends beyond them. The family learning research, for example, included a student who was completing a Masters degree and thus spoke English to a high level. Whilst she would not be defined as vulnerable according to the first definition, the poverty in which she was living with her three young children, with no recourse to public funds as a condition of her visa, resulted in her becoming a victim of criminal exploitation and her children subject to neglect. The research projects have sought to support any asylum seeker, refugee or migrant, regardless of the definition of their immigration status. Whilst recognizing the distinctiveness of the immigration statuses and that there may be unique difficulties related to the asylum process, the difficulties of adapting to a new culture and language are the same when one is isolated. This thesis has drawn attention to the different categories of

individuals benefitting from its services in its title, as participants in applied drama projects where learning English is a focus usually also include migrants, who may be unacknowledged in work absorbed into the refugee arts field. Each label does not represent a homogeneous group but rather an expansive range of nationalities and experiences. However, this thesis will now use the phrase 'refugee and migrant' within the body of the text to encompass all those who have not yet been granted asylum and all categories of vulnerable migrant.

This thesis will also refer to the families of refugees and migrants. In most cases, 'family' refers to the children of the participants. However, 'family' also includes husbands and occasionally grandmothers, where the wider family has also migrated. In the Play 'n' Chat projects which were for families with children under five years of age, the majority of the children had been born in the UK. In Family Learning Club, the majority of children were born outside the UK but had a higher level of English language if they had been attending a local school. Some of the women had British-born husbands as the result of an arranged marriage, who did not participate in the research. The majority of the men who participated in the family learning activities had all arrived in the UK within the previous two years.

The Thesis

To address the issues raised by government policy, media and art representations, and the aftermath of 9/11, and to approach them with awareness of the needs of the individual participant demanded by an ethic of care, this thesis has adopted a practice-based research methodology. As an internal, cognitive/emotional experience, belonging must be embodied and changes documented over a period of time to provide a window into the real experiences of new arrivals to the UK. The embodying of belonging in practice-based research also

empowers those with limited English language skills to participate rather than excluding those most in need. This context of professional practice, with its focus on both the family and on learning the English language enables women, who are often missing from research data, to contribute (Temple and Moran 2006; Bagenda 2006, 191). Participation throughout a practice-based process also enables it to empower participants, rather than imposing upon them (Guijt and Kaul 1998). As a consequence, the practice-based research for this thesis has taken place in three phases: a preliminary exploratory phase; an extended phase of examining different approaches, and a final phase, addressing specific questions and limitations demonstrated in the previous phase.

Chapter 1 will describe my research methodologies and compare my practice to other related practices, arguing for the significance of both the research methods and the theatre practice within this. Chapter 2 argues for the importance of creativity and play in relation to belonging, and thus the general approach to applied theatre practice adopted by this thesis. It will examine these themes in relation to Brown and Maslow's theories and argue for a 'person-centred' approach to learning. It will argue that the practice adopts Brown's view of creativity in relation to belonging through adopting techniques which allow participants to express their originality through being creative. It thus reduces the comparison with others that makes people doubt their own personal value. Chapter 3 argues that, unless already addressed elsewhere, a focus on English language needs is of primary importance in the drama workshop space to create a sense of belonging for adult new arrivals. This is consonant with Maslow's theory of human motivation and an ethic of care, as it is linked to a focus on individual needs. However, once motivational needs have been satisfied, this chapter will argue that Maslow's hierarchy can almost be reversed: creativity first, then confidence, then friendships and belonging, then safety needs. It will also argue that, combined with some moments of formal

teaching, acquisition is a more effective way for adults to learn and thus improvisation should be valued more in adult second language learning. There should, therefore, be a re-emphasis on Krashen's monitor theory from the 1980s to address current concerns about the slow progress and low confidence of adult learners in formal classes. Valuing participants' cultural origins is also important in creating a sense of belonging. However, participants' relationships with their home countries may be problematic, meaning it is important to select source material with an appropriate level of protective distance. Chapter 4 argues that using traditional stories as source material may provide this protective distance, while celebrating participants' cultural roots. Moreover, it argues for the value of opportunities to explore and embody belonging through expressions of bi-cultural identity in performance. Finally, Chapter 5 argues for approaches and techniques compatible with an ethic of care to help applied theatre project participants experience a greater sense of belonging in their wider community, by acting as a bridge between the 'safe' space of the drama workshop and the 'unsafe' space of the outside world. This chapter argues for the importance of empowering participants and creating a 'culture of care' through the facilitation. It argues that, for women, belonging must be addressed within the whole family, hence the importance of family applied theatre sessions. In conclusion, it will sum up the key possibilities and limitations of facilitating a sense of belonging for adult refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, and foresee the potential impact of an informal ESOL sector shaped by an ethic of care.

As demonstrated by the removal of funded ESOL provision, the lack of professional development for ESOL teachers, contemporary media coverage, and the role of the voluntary sector in this field, improving the sense of belonging for refugees and migrants is not generally deemed of social or political significance. The examination of tiny detail in this thesis places value on a sector which is rarely documented and places value on the lives of refugees and

vulnerable migrants, particularly women who are often overlooked but play a key role in the integration of their families. It argues that the specific needs of refugee and vulnerable migrant women in integrating into the UK should not be ignored. In terms of general applied theatre practice, the thesis values elements which are often taken for granted, like the manner of a facilitator, which have a significant impact on the participant's experience. As already suggested, consistent with its roots in Sociology, the emphasis of applied theatre is usually on group change. Where belonging is a personal, psychological state, this thesis has sought to emphasise the needs of the individual *within* the group. It argues that small, intimate moments have a significant impact on belonging, thus on well-being. For the women who participated in this research, an emotional state of belonging was not conferred by the state nor did it demand a high-profile, public performance, but was found in the remembered detail about one's week, shared laughter, and uninhibited play. In a project facilitated through an ethic of care with an emphasis on empowerment, individual choices and gestures can have a significant impact on creating an inclusive community which can sustain its own community initiatives beyond external intervention.

Chapter 1. Professional Practice-based Research: originality, significance, and rigour in a methodology of care

In 2008 *Arts and Refugees: History, Impact and Future* was commissioned by the Arts Council England, the Baring Foundation, and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. This report identified almost 200 organisations which were actively engaged with arts and refugee programmes in the UK. It acknowledged that this was not an exhaustive total (Kidd, Zahir and Khan 2008, 5). It observed that a clearly defined strand of arts practice working with refugees and asylum seekers began to emerge in the 1990s but had seen particular growth as a result of the policy of dispersal, which came into effect in 2000.⁸ A substantial amount of money had been invested in arts with refugees, about £17 million between 1994 and 2008. However, surprisingly, despite the significant sum of money involved, the ‘*study* [my emphasis] of arts-related work involving refugees and asylum seekers in the UK remains minimal’ (Kidd, Zahir, and Khan 2008, 11). Helen Gilbert founded the Performance and Asylum Network in 2006, which promotes the investigation of issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers in Britain and Australia. It facilitates connections between transnational researchers, theatre practitioners and community stakeholders. Its members are the main source of publications in this field, especially since 2008. Most noteworthy is Alison Jeffers, who has published significantly on theatre practice by and with refugees in the UK, including participatory work. This thesis builds on some aspects of her theory with a specific focus on pedagogy. This focus on pedagogy is important as *Arts and Refugees* identified that practitioner evaluation was a weakness in the field, which impacted upon the dissemination of learning and good practice. Poor evaluation also affected the effectiveness of strategic advocacy for this type of work (Ibid., 9). Although *Arts and Refugees* recognised that there was ‘a high level of specialist expertise working in this complex area,’ in some cases it found projects were initiated with

⁸ For more information on the policy of dispersal, see p. 19.

'insufficient groundwork or prior research' (Ibid., 9). This thesis advances discourse in the study of art with refugees, examining existing drama-based methodologies, and building upon them to develop new approaches to facilitating a sense of belonging for participants. It focusses upon adults who would not define themselves as artists and are outside formal education, as refugee or migrant theatre practice is rarely analysed beyond these parameters. Carol Ann Christensen's essay, 'Crossing Boundaries and Struggling for Language: using Drama with Women as a Means of Addressing Psycho-social-cultural Issues in a Multi-cultural Context in Contemporary Copenhagen' (2005) relates most closely to this practice-based research, as it examines a seven-week project involving 17 women which addressed the acquisition of the Danish language and sought to increase self-esteem and well-being. In contrast to Christensen's work, the practice-based research for this thesis explicitly addresses the issue of belonging and focusses on developing a methodology which is suitable for an informal education context where participants do not have access to other sources of formal language tuition. Christensen concludes her essay by posing a question to other researchers: 'How significant is the *context* and *environment* in which drama is explored and enacted, to its potentially therapeutic value and impact?' (Christensen 2005, 70). Chapter 5 of this thesis will respond to that question. This thesis is also original in that it focusses on applied theatre practice engaging families, which rarely occurs specifically for refugee and migrants, and is not critically analysed elsewhere. This thesis intends to have a direct impact on the professional practice of organisations working with refugees and migrants. It will contribute to the 'dissemination of learning and good practice,' which Kidd, Zahir, and Khan characterize as currently lacking in this field (Kidd, Zahir, and Khan 2008, 7). While *Art and Refugees: History, Impact and Future* (2008) and *A Sense of Belonging: Arts and Culture in the Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (2004) survey the field, this thesis critiques the politics, expectations of the work, and its methodological choices. Unlike these reports, it also foregrounds the voices of those who are not artists or practitioners. It seeks to explore the

experience of participating from the position of those refugees and migrants involved rather than judging solely on the basis of external impressions and statistical data.

In addition to a research imperative emerging from the fields of Refugee Studies and Community Arts, a need has also been articulated from the field of drama and second language learning. As Stinson and Winston explain, recently there has been a surge of interest in drama and second language learning. However, gaps in existing research remain:

More research is needed to help us understand how, why and under what circumstances the conditions for drama and second language pedagogy are most productive. Studies that take place in non-traditional education settings, including natural family and community settings rather than schools and language classrooms [...] would potentially add fresh understandings to this complex domain (Stinson and Winston 2011, 486).

Through studying the use of drama in a non-traditional education setting, this thesis proposes that there is a link between strategies that encourage a sense of belonging and effective language acquisition. While Stinson and Winston highlight that the 'most common form of research practice lies in the realm of the short term intervention-style projects, mostly in formal education settings' (Stinson and Winston 2011, 485), and seeks more research into longer term impact, this thesis argues that the drama projects' positioning within the community can enable the gains of short-term intervention to have a more sustained and long-term impact. It analyses approaches which provide language and communication skills, but also encourage participants to have the confidence to use those skills in wider society.

This chapter contextualises the applied theatre practice described in this thesis and compares it to related practice in theatre and language education. It argues for the significance of both the research methods adopted and the theatre practices. Through comparison with other applied theatre projects with refugees and migrants in London, this thesis will demonstrate

what is significant, original, and rigorous about this practice and highlight some of the challenges of working in this way with the target group. This chapter will describe the methodology, arguing for its propriety in terms of the ethic of care that shapes this research. It will argue that this practice and this writing are best defined as practice-based research. It will explore issues arising from the methodology, such as translation and informed consent, acknowledging their impact, and arguing that they have been addressed as far as possible.

Comparing my Practice with Other Practice in the Field

Theatre can create a liminal space where performers or audience can feel solidarity with strangers. This solidarity is an experience of belonging. Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner names this feeling of group solidarity generated during a ritual 'communitas'. Spontaneous communitas has something 'magical' about it (Turner 1982, 47). It is a moment when individuals 'become totally absorbed into a single synchronized, fluid event' (Ibid., 48), where status is abolished, and all are equal. When status is temporarily removed, a particularly exhilarating sense of belonging can temporarily occur. Turner acknowledges, however, that this experience is normally short-lived. He defines the paradox of communitas as being that the '*experience of communitas*' becomes the '*memory of communitas*'. In striving to replicate itself, communitas then historically develops a social structure, 'in which initially free and innovative relationships between individuals are converted into norm-governed relationships between social *personae*' (Ibid., 47). It is in this context that one finds normative communitas. Normative communitas is 'a subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships of spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis' (Ibid., 49). Whilst its members may not experience communitas as a matter of course, there may be moments of spontaneous communitas within the normative. An audience in the theatre may experience spontaneous communitas, as may the performers. However, in an applied theatre

project or theatre ensemble where there is an expectation that a sense of community will emerge within the group, moments of spontaneous *communitas* have to be a catalyst for normative *communitas* to occur. Without the norm-governed relationships and structures of normative *communitas*, sustainable community will not develop. This section compares the practice conducted for this thesis to other practice in the field. It focusses particularly on other projects in London, where the greatest density of refugee and arts projects in the UK exists (Kidd, Zahir, and Khan 2008, 16). The section focusses on projects whereby participants engage in a series of drama workshops, which are not related to a professional performance. This is because, in the view of this thesis, to have a lasting impact on one's sense of belonging, the duration of the encounter with the theatre project must be sustained. There must be an opportunity for normative *communitas* to develop.

In theatre education, Anthony Jackson favours overtly performance-based work, where the educational aims are explicit or embodied in the work. He argues that 'any theatre project which aims to educate will do so successfully only *if* it is also conceived as an artistic entity' (Jackson 2007, 4). While this thesis agrees that the artistic value is integral to the success of applied theatre, I argue that it is the way the process of participating is facilitated which impacts most significantly on belonging. This is illustrated by the forum performance, *Can you help me?* This was a forum play that sought to address aspects of the health literacy of refugees and migrants. It was performed by Queen Mary undergraduates on 9 December 2011. The central character had to negotiate challenges within the health service to access appropriate advice and treatment. After the initial performance of scenes, audience members were invited to take the role of the central character and to try to change the outcome. The undergraduates spent a considerable amount of time developing the characterisation and staging of the performance as an artistic entity. Conceived as a one-off performance and

workshop, audience feedback indicated that they had felt that their health literacy had been improved by the performance, as had their confidence in dealing with medical professionals and understanding their rights. However, they expressed a strong desire for regular sessions of this type, rather than just a stand-alone event. For example, an Algerian participant stated, 'This is what I need every week', and an Indian participant asked, 'When can you come again? I like this class very much. I improve my English. I feel more confident to talk to doctor [...] I make new friends. Again please. More. I feel sad when I not come.' (Evaluative discussion 9/12/11). The project had achieved its stated aims, but as a transitory experience could not significantly contribute to a sense of belonging, a sustained experience was needed to allow the normative to evolve.

Arts and Refugees found that the vast majority of projects involving arts and refugees were for young people (Kidd, Zahir, and Khan 2008, 6). Two of these London-based projects were of particular interest, as notions of 'belonging' and 'family' (as an expression of belonging) were particularly repeated within project documentation and in interviews with the practitioners involved: Phakama (particularly work between 2003 - 2006)⁹ and Ovalhouse's Living Here.¹⁰ The familial aspect of each project was especially important as both projects were developed for unaccompanied minors. This practice-based research, therefore, sought to identify which qualities particularly impacted upon belonging in these projects. It adapted and applied them,

⁹ Phakama is an international project involving arts practitioners and young people from 11 countries and four continents. In 2003 Phakama UK began to respond to the needs of the influx of young, unaccompanied asylum seekers into the country. Between 2003 and 2006, it delivered an intense programme to fulfil the social as well as artistic needs of its participants. Its focus is on high quality, site-specific productions and training for young facilitators.

¹⁰ After pioneering work in this field at Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre, Stella Barnes moved to Ovalhouse in 2004, where she founded 'Living Here', a participatory arts project for young refugees and asylum seekers. In 'Living Here,' participants have social and artistic opportunities in and out of school, where facilitators provide weekly drama and visual arts workshops in school or at Ovalhouse and two or three times a year host events which bring young refugees from different schools together to explore the arts and build new social relationships. The focus is on providing an 'enjoyable and uplifting experience' in a 'safe, secure and non-threatening space' (Ovalhouse, n.d.), supporting young people in the early stages of settling into London life through activities which do not rely on spoken language.

with a view to establishing whether they still have value for adult participants, who may have a family here. In both projects the social element was crucial to the work. Fabio Santos, Phakama's Director, goes as far as to define the social aspect as being as important as the art. He says: 'You cannot have one without the other. It creates a sense of belonging and of being part of a community' (Santos 2005, 2). From 2003 to 2006, the sense of community was enhanced by running all day Saturday workshops and residencies where possible, as well as other trips and theatre visits. Participants cooked for one another, ate together and, at times, slept in the same room, in the same way as they would have done with family in the past, thus building a sense of collective responsibility. In Ovalhouse's Living Here, the social time together was less intense but just as important. When looking for a new name for the project, one of the participants wanted to call it 'Saturday Family' (Appendix 1, interview 61). Informal social time, what facilitator Stas Smagalas calls 'human time,' is critical to this sense of family. Drawing on the work of Stuart C. Aiken, Nicholson points out that it is normally exterior spaces, such as dens, streets, parks, and other non-domestic spaces where young people gather and construct their own belonging. These places often carry with them an element of danger (Nicholson 2011, 123). The potential for rebellion is part of the dramaturgy of freedom which these places represent. Despite the illusion of freedom, young people on the street are often subject to the discipline of watching adults. Groups of young people are often perceived as 'a threat to moral order'. However, in the internal space of Ovalhouse, the adults are not taking a disciplinary role. They are greeting them as equals: shaking hands with all the participants as a symbol of this remains a characteristic of all Barnes' practice. They initiate the serving of refreshments and the care of those who arrive, but then share this responsibility with the attendees. There is a sense in which this space belongs to all – the young people and the facilitators. In addition to the shared sense of responsibility, the lack of significant conflict with those in authority helps to create the sense of an idealised family. Where risk is high in other areas of the lives of unaccompanied minors and foster-care circumstances may not be so

idyllic, the oasis of the Living Here group has a significant impact on resilience, as it encourages an optimism about people they may meet in other contexts. For the adults in this practice-based research, the applied theatre project can also offer an idealised version of family. Family is never a guaranteed source of security and care. Like idealised notions of 'community' which will be discussed later in this thesis, a traditional family structure can leave some individuals trapped in unhappy relationships, paralysed by fears of rejection and social isolation. In fact, some of the worst abuse can occur within families, protected by the complexity of emotions that surround love and abuse in the same person. However, the support, encouragement, and sense of personal worth gained from caring interactions in this ideal can impact very positively on an individual's resilience at a time of significant challenge. From the first phase of the practice-based research for this thesis, the notion of the theatre project as an alternative family was being expressed. At the end of the project one participant explained:

It felt as if it was family and you could come and just feel that you belong to that family and there was just an atmosphere of relaxation and just a place to come and meet friends and relax and have fun. I used to just love it. (Appendix 1, interview 2)

For this participant, the social aspects of meeting friends, relaxing, and having fun are associated with belonging. In the emphasis on relaxation and in the words 'you come and just feel that you belong', there is the suggestion that there was no need to make any effort to adopt required patterns of behaviour. An idealised notion of family knows its members well and accepts them for who they are rather than requiring that they 'fit in'. This association with Brown's definition of true belonging makes characteristics which build this dynamic worthy of more detailed discussion.

Phakama's artistic process also encourages participants to experience a sense of belonging.

Their 'give and gain' philosophy stresses the value of every participant. 'Give and gain' is the view that everyone has something to give to the process, as well as gain from it. Every young person has an equal creative input to the facilitating artist. Unlike the drop-in centres that most refugees are familiar with, Phakama stresses how much every individual is needed: creatively, socially, and practically. Santos explains: 'We keep saying: 'We need you. You need to be here. We will be waiting for you. Showing them they are important is crucial' (Appendix 1, interview 56). Nakesa, a Phakama participant in 2006 summed up the impact simply:

Personally, I feel belonging. I discovered my own talent, something I'm good at. I'm stepping out of my lonely world. I'm not invisible any more. I feel I'm ready to face the world (Phakama 2009).

Facilitating the creative process in such a way that everyone can contribute and achieve, regardless of language or performance skills, would also affect participants' sense of belonging. It reflects Pettersen and Helm's concept of reciprocity (2011), which emphasizes the expertise of the cared-for as well as the carer. Pettersen and Helm stress reciprocity as being more important than responsiveness within an ethic of care. However, in this practice-based research it is a combination of responsiveness and reciprocity which is particularly effective. Whilst the reciprocity in Phakama's work is dominated by an artistic aesthetic which results in high-quality public performance, the majority of individuals in the practice-based research for this thesis did not perceive public performance to be desirable and would have been unlikely to join a project with this agenda. This resulted in a different creative emphasis in the sessions, shaped by the needs of the women involved.

In addition to an interest in projects that revealed the possibility that participants could perceive them as 'family,' this thesis was particularly concerned with projects exclusively for adult participants. This enabled the identification of some of the limitations currently affecting arts projects for adult refugees and migrants. Critically, this research found that recruiting

adult participants who would not already consider themselves artists was problematic. Applied theatre is normally defined in part by engaging those who may have 'no real experience in theatre form' (Taylor 2003, xxx).

The Refugee Arts Project, which works with Turkish and Kurdish communities, is a clear example of the challenges of recruiting adults who do not have past experience of theatre. The Refugee Arts Project does not explicitly address belonging in its mission statement. However, it aims to share many of the objectives of the practice-based research for this thesis:

The Refugee Arts Project works towards developing and implementing arts-based projects to help empower refugee communities; facilitate their active and creative participation in the wider society; improve their access to services; develop initiatives to address common issues and improve health and well-being. (Refugee Arts Project n.d.)

As a method of addressing common issues and enabling participants to influence the circumstances in which they find themselves, the organisation places a particular emphasis on Forum Theatre. In this way, it uses the real life experience of its participants as an educational tool, challenging the institutional practices which disadvantage refugees and migrants. Between 2006 and 2009, participants delivered training for Hackney Housing Department staff through a performance inspired by their own difficulties. The housing staff then had to improve the experience of the refugee characters by embodying those roles. The creation of empathy and understanding successfully resulted in the improvement of 'access to and delivery of services' (Refugee Arts Project n.d.), with 100 staff attending the training in the first year alone. However, the majority of the Refugee Arts Project's work is in music and dance, particularly Anatolian folk music, which is viewed as a way of celebrating their cultural heritage. Such aesthetic practices are particularly well attended and popular. In the open workshop I attended, it was the traditional dance which engaged high numbers of participants

rather than the drama workshop.¹¹ The facilitator of the 2008-2009 phase of the Forum Theatre Project, Doug Holton, considers the participants' cultural familiarity with music rather than drama to be a barrier to their participation in the drama sessions. Holton explained: 'Quite a lot of Turkish musicians don't understand or see the point of drama' (Appendix 1, interview 54). Unfamiliarity with theatre as a form does not make recruiting adults easy. The 2008 – 2009 Refugee Arts Project Forum Theatre Project only involved participants aged 13 to 20, all of whom have previous experience of drama through school or youth theatre projects. The challenge of unfamiliarity with the form is shared by many of the nationalities engaged by the practice-based research for this thesis and has implications for the structure of sessions and style of facilitation necessary to maintain their participation. This issue provides an imperative for this research as it raises a question about whether a form which is non-motivating and alien is capable of encouraging a sense of belonging at all and is thus worth pursuing in this context. However, this thesis argues that the drama activities create a framing for the relationships and empowerment which enable belonging to develop, in addition to providing an effective context for language and cultural learning. The form may be new but this is typical of much in participants' current experience as they adjust to life in the UK. This practice-based research seeks to find fixed common ground within the unfamiliar through expression of shared experiences such as family relationships, traditional stories, and domestic skills. Through redefining their collective identities as wives, mothers, and former children who were once told stories, the participants are able to co-create a context in which there is the possibility of affinity with those who are different and thus the possibility of belonging. Walton et al. (2012) show how even the smallest cues of connection with unfamiliar others causes significant changes in the self, interests, and motivation. Their study found connections as apparently insignificant as discovering a shared birthday increased motivation in addressing

¹¹ At the Refugee Week 'Connecting Communities' event at Hackney Community College on 27/6/08, 12 participants started the drama workshop but only four finished it. From the same room of potential participants, 20 participated in the dancing. The number grew during the dance rather than decreased.

maths puzzles in a group, and that sharing an idiosyncratic interest, an unfamiliar other could adopt their goals and seek to complete them on their behalf. If such incidental connection can have such a measurable effect, the sustained experience of a theatre project which is actively seeking to draw out common ground between participants, however diverse, should enhance motivation in language learning and problem-solving in life. The questions for this thesis then are: how to engage adult participants who do not already consider themselves artists, and how to maximise the discovery of common ground across cultures. These questions are addressed through Chapters 2 to 4.

The same issue of recruitment affects the only family learning project explicitly aimed at refugee and migrant families in London at the time of this research, Richmond Theatre's 'Exploring English through the Arts' 2009-2010. To address the difficulty of enrolling adults, this project began with the involvement of 11 to 16-year-old participants from a school in Richmond. It then sought to engage their parents in the 10 Saturday morning sessions of the project, which culminated in a performance at St Mary's College, Twickenham. However, of the 16 participants, only four were adults, representing three different families.¹² Initially engaging their children in the project had not erased barriers to adult participation. In addition, delivering sessions for parents and children together introduced other challenges. Project facilitator Theah Dix explains some of the demands of meeting the different needs of adults and children in the group:

I think the adults were quite nervous because they aren't as strong at speaking English [...] The kids are really quite strong. They're following the National Curriculum at school. Some of them have been kept back a year because of their English. But they are definitely better than the adults who are there, so it's really hard to target quite extreme language levels and also we're trying not to make it like an English class but at the end I have adults coming up to me and asking for, like, grammar points, as opposed to asking me about artistic things...They learn in a different way. They want

¹² The fourth adult participant attended on her own, expressing a need to access the provision.

to know what the present perfect is, they want to know what an adverb is (Appendix 1, interview 49).

So to create a sense of belonging for adults and children within the same group, the practice for this thesis needs to address multiple needs and to create a space where individuals can progress at their own level without feeling insecure about what they do not know. Younger children who spoke good English sometimes unintentionally reduced the confidence of the parent by expressing frustration at the adults' slowness to speak or simply dismissing any attempt to speak by stating 'Mum doesn't speak English'. Children may also be quicker to express boredom or impatience if the task is too easy, which may impact negatively on the mood of the session or morale of the parent, if they are struggling with the 'easy' task. The addition of children to the group necessitates a shift in emphasis in the pedagogy of the session. In family learning, therefore, the focus on English language, communication, and confidence is implicit in the activities, not explicit as in the practice-based research aimed solely at adults. There is also a focus on prop and costume making, which, amongst other functions, helps to balance the power between children with better English and their parents within the session. While parents often remained dependent on their children for support with the language, children in turn needed the support of their parents in the artistic activities, as the adults were generally much more skilled in using the materials to create better puppets or costumes. A focus on the creative task rather than the language created an interdependence within the family that is beneficial for the self-esteem and relationships of all its members. This accommodation of a range of needs within the group and recognition of interdependence is characteristic of practice shaped by an ethic of care.

In an alternative response to the challenge of recruiting adults, Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project is situated within formal education. It has a partnership with Westminster Kingsway College and delivers its programme within existing ESOL courses. Participants attend

10 90-minute sessions, generally once a week, as part of their compulsory timetable. The final session culminates in a performance for friends, family, and other students, which usually takes place in the Michael Frayn Studio at Hampstead Theatre. This project is an important contributor to this field and bears the closest comparisons to the adult practice-based research for this thesis, as improving participants' language skills and integration are stated aims of the project. Its approach, however, has significant differences.

Figure 2: Table of projects within the practice-based research for this thesis

Name of Project	Dates of Research within Project	Borough	Adults or Families with age of children	Number of participants	Number of participants in research	Length of session	Particular Research Focus
P	H	A	S	E		1	
Young Stars	October 2007 – March 2008	Barking and Dagenham	11 - 16 -year-olds	26	9	2 hours	Developing research questions
P	H	A	S	E		2	
Creative English	May 2008 – July 2009 (60-week programme)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Adults	64	31	90 mins	Explored a variety of strategies to promote belonging and English language learning
Family Learning Club	May 2008 – July 2009 (60-week programme)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Families, advertised for families with children aged 0 - 11, but actually also attended by older teens and lone adults	38	23	90 mins	Explored a variety of strategies to promote belonging, parent-child interaction and English language learning

Name of Project	Dates of Research within Project	Borough	Adults or Families with age of children	Number of participants	Number of participants in research	Length of session	Particular Research Focus
Primary school one-off family learning workshops	September and November 2008	Barking and Dagenham	Families with primary school children at the school	23	5	2 hours 30 mins	Drama workshop as a way of responding to existing needs and connecting participants into other sources of help, through attendance of IAG (Information, advice and guidance) advisers.
Words Unite Family Literacy Project	April to May 2009 (5 weeks)	Hackney	Families with children aged under five	16	7	90 mins	Learning English and supporting their child in learning the language
One-off workshops for ESOL students within their course	May 2008, April 2009, July 2010	Hackney	Adults	23	9	3 hours	Effect of one-off sessions within an existing ESOL programme
P	H	A	S	E		3	
Write a Children's Story (Creative English short course)	January – February 2010 (five-week course)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Adults	14	10	90 mins	Developing bi-cultural identity

Name of Project	Dates of Research within Project	Borough	Adults or Families with age of children	Number of participants	Number of participants in research	Length of session	Particular Research Focus
Going to the Doctor (Creative English short course)	February – March 2010 (five-week course)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Adults	16	12	90 mins	Empowering participants
Play 'n' Chat Goodmayes	January – February 2010 (five weeks)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Families with children under the age of five	31	17	Making props/costume/puppets and an interactive storytelling took place within an existing two-hour opportunity for free play.	Engaging families who would not normally have access to or understand value of learning through play
Storytelling training	February 2010 (three weeks)	Goodmayes, Redbridge	Adults (but children were welcome to come to the session and play while adults were being trained.)	5	2	Two-and-a-half hours, including shared lunch at start of session	Empowering participants

Name of Project	Dates of Research within Project	Borough	Adults or Families with age of children	Number of participants	Number of participants in research	Length of session	Particular Research Focus
Play 'n' Chat, Barking and Dagenham	March – April 2010 (five weeks)	Barking and Dagenham	Families with children under the age of five	30	13	Making props/costume / puppets and an interactive storytelling took place within an existing two-hour session of free play.	Integration of host community and immigrants
Storytelling training	April – May 2010 (Five weeks)	Barking and Dagenham	Adults (but children were welcome to come to the session and play while adults were being trained.)	15	10	Initial two-hour session, followed by four weeks of groups developing and sharing performances	Empowerment, sustaining impact of project and integration of host community and refugees and migrants
Book-making project	May 2010 (3 weeks)	Hackney	Families with children up to the age of ten	11	4	90 mins	Generating traditional stories from participants

In keeping with the theatre's 50-year association with new writing (Hampstead Theatre 2009), the project focuses explicitly on script-writing, with the participants scripting, as well as devising their performed piece. This is highly successful with Entry level 2¹³ groups and upwards. The more sophisticated a participant's vocabulary, the greater the benefit in terms of practising written English and developing a higher level of understanding of theatrical techniques and approaches. It was particularly successful with Level 2¹⁴ Teaching Assistant students in 2009, due to their higher level English language skills. Other writing tasks were also completed, such as writing back stories for characters and their secret diaries. This model involves writing tasks being used in a natural way which improves the theatrical depth of the piece and satisfies the ESOL teacher's demand for written as well as oral practice. However, the challenge of reading a written text is not successful with E1 participants, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 (Smith 2009, 4). The practice-based research for this thesis has developed an alternative model of practice that addresses the needs of the informal ESOL sector, where participants are not filtered according to their language levels. These mixed ability groups will typically include some more accomplished speakers but will be dominated by total beginners or those functioning at Entry Level 1, who do not benefit from Hampstead Theatre's script-based model.

A further advantage of Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project is that performing within a professional venue confers additional kudos to the participants' experience. Despite pre-performance nerves, afterwards, many participants considered the public performance and consequential understanding of what happened behind the scenes as their favourite part of the experience, which they felt had increased their confidence (Smith 2009, 2). Public

¹³ Entry level 2 is equivalent to the language skills of a seven-year-old.

¹⁴ ESOL levels are as follows: Entry Level 1(E1) for beginners, Entry Level 2(E2), Entry Level 3, Level 1 (equivalent to C-G GCSE), Level 2 (equivalent to A-C GCSE).

performance was also an excellent motivator in the pursuit of accuracy and for fostering a team spirit, as participants supported one another as stage hands and prompts.¹⁵ By contrast, the practice-based research for this thesis foregrounds the value of spontaneity and improvisation. At Hampstead Theatre, ESOL tutor Sandra Abdelrahman stressed the value that visiting the theatre had in terms of the participants gaining independence and being able to go to different places in the community without fear (Smith 2009, 3). Access to a prestigious theatre building and professional script writers and stage designers helps to generate a sense of confidence and ownership over a British institution. Regular access to a space in the theatre had given the participants a sense of place there. The workshop is literally a space which enables physical movement. It is a space where there is awareness of what Tuan describes as 'openness, freedom and threat' of different possibilities and vulnerabilities (Tuan 1977, 6). As a liminal space, the movement possible is social and implicit in one's very identity. For the ESOL Literacy Project participants, this was a shift from student to actor. A week after the conclusion of the project, for example, one participant declared: 'Everyone now is professional actor. When you making a play, you call me!' (Appendix 1, interview 4). Tuan argues that 'place' is a pause in movement, which makes it possible for location to become secure and stable, as participants 'get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan 1977, 6). By the end of the project, the theatre, a venue they had not previously known existed, was now a source of such familiarity and affection that members of the group reported an eagerness both to bring their children to youth theatre auditions and to bring them to play in the grassy open space behind the theatre building (Smith 2009, 2-3). The spaces where workshops have taken place in the practice-based research for this thesis do not have the symbolic associations of a high profile institution. In many cases, the venue works against a sense of security and stability as there is a strong sense of being a temporary presence, a disruption which stacks away the tables and chairs and may be disposed to another room at a moment's notice, in

¹⁵ Observed in rehearsals, 25/3/09 – 1/4/09.

venues that are often dark, cluttered, and dirty. A value is not conferred on participants by the location. Despite this, however, Chapter 5 argues for the socialized role of the workshops as a 'homeplace' with embedded norms and values which make it a place of welcome and acceptance, regardless of the physical location.

In summary, all the projects cited involve public performance. All, with the exception of Phakama, are in a professional theatre space. The practice-based research for this thesis explores how a sense of belonging can be achieved without these elements. It also seeks to encourage positive relationships between new arrivals and the people of the host community rather than with an institution. Most drama projects which claim a positive effect on English language skills are in addition to more formal English language teaching. This practice-based research also wished to explore how applied theatre projects can respond to funding cuts which mean that those avenues of learning are no longer available to the majority of participants.

Practice-based Research in Professional Practice

This section argues that practice-based research develops in practice but needs to be articulated through this thesis, academic papers, and other writing to publicise its findings. It argues that, because of the objectives it shares with non-arts disciplines, this 'practice' should be defined as 'professional practice', consonant with the fields of health and social care, rather than the arts.

The terms 'practice as research' and 'practice-based research' are often used interchangeably and are therefore difficult to define (e.g. Barrett and Bolt 2007, Allegue, et al. 2009). In the same way, 'research through practice', 'research by practice', 'performance as research' are also contested terms that resist close definition (Piccini 2002). In practice-based research in the arts, the term is often used to define an experiment set up by the researcher from which a piece of art is the outcome. However, although there have been artistic outcomes within this research project, they have not been the only objective of the sessions. The social and emotional change sought by the applied theatre projects for this thesis has been more in line with the objectives of some social care. In health and social care, 'practice-based research' is defined as research within a professional's daily working practice, with the aim of improving the care of the clients (Wade and Newman 2007; Mold and Petersen 2005; Seamark and Seamark 2009). This is how this thesis has defined practice-based research. As part of the continuum of professional practice, the findings of this research are both complete in their own right and are being developed in different ways to suit the needs of other vulnerable groups elsewhere in the researcher's professional practice, such as with sufferers of peri-natal emotional illness. This thesis shares Smith and Mockler's view that research and practice are indivisible (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2008, 80). Thus, the research project has added a rigour and considered methodology to the natural process of striving for professional development.

Arguably, the approach shares many similarities with action research. Action research is common in education, but is very specifically defined as personally benefitting the practitioner: '*by teachers for themselves*' (Johnson 2008; Mertler 2009). Definitions of action research are agreed to involve a practitioner, identifying issues within their professional practice, researching it, and putting into place strategies to address this (Mertler 2009; Parsons and

Brown 2002; Punch 2009; Basit 2010). However, definitions vary to the extent to which this is considered to result in continual improvement, as findings from one cycle provoke research questions for the next. It can simply conclude in an action plan to address findings (Mertler 2009), without any follow through to see if this action plan is of value. The sense of a process where findings prompted the next questions to be addressed was very important in this research. The approach relates more closely to Taylor's view of reflective practitioner researchers, who are concerned with 'documenting and understanding the tacit and known knowledge base which enables reflection-in-action to occur' (Taylor 1996, 28). Although the title of this thesis foregrounds the identification of possibilities and **limitations**, this practice-based research was particularly interested in addressing those limitations, once they had been identified. Through interviewing other practitioners, it was apparent that barriers identified in this practice were commonly shared. Interview evidence from other professionals and feedback from participants also showed that improved strategies for generating belonging would have a significant impact on participant well-being. It was, therefore, valuable to examine the possibility of solving the limitations through exploring different approaches to addressing the difficulties. This will make a valuable contribution to the field, as other practitioners can make use of the findings.

Despite defining this research as practice-based, the findings have been presented through writing rather than a performance or other practice-based demonstration. This is because belonging is a physical, emotional, cognitive experience, which exists in the practice and it seemed important, therefore, to find a way to write the practice, to communicate it to a wider audience. It was also imperative that the practice should not be changed by the research in such a way that the learning would be about the nature of doing a practice-based PhD in this context, rather than about the possibilities and limitations of normal professional workshop

practice. The experience of performing for the Molten Festival in the first phase of the research indicated that public performance was not necessarily conducive to creating a sense of belonging.¹⁶ To have created a performance or workshop for examination would inevitably have shifted the focus towards the researcher achieving a PhD rather than the needs of the participants. It is also more likely to colour the findings, as external observers create a need for participants to perform their belonging or at least their ability to be 'good' students or 'good' refugees, at a time when participants' status may already be most fragile if they are awaiting a decision on their asylum application. It would disrupt the professional practice rather than enrich it.

Other forms of representation of the practice, such as video and photographs are limited, as they only capture part of what is going on in the room. As Caroline Rye explains, 'the research may be concerned with exactly those qualities of the live encounter and the production of embodied knowledge which cannot, by definition, be embedded, reproduced or demonstrated in any recorded document' (Rye 2003, 115). In addition to forming only a partial representation of the experience, the use of a video or stills camera also created a barrier to participation for some, particularly devout Muslim women. This was clearly demonstrated in the undergraduate performance, *Can you help me?* (2011). Here, using a video contributed to a significant reduction in the number attending, even though it was made clear that the video would focus on the university students and would only be used for second marking purposes. Excluding participants from participating in a project which would otherwise be highly beneficial to them on the basis of its documentation is simply not consonant with an ethic of care. In groups where the use of a camera was less sensitive, there was an attempt to get participants to take the photos themselves and to agree which could be used to represent the

¹⁶ This will be discussed in detail in the subsequent section.

project outside the room. However, the majority of the women were very reluctant to do this or it became a distraction from the real focus of the sessions. As a consequence, photographic documentation of practice is patchy. Therefore, this fragmented record of the practice has not been submitted, as it does not usefully enhance the prose, distorting views of participation through the over-representation of the minority who were not inhibited by the camera.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that writing itself is part of the practice. The process of research has formalised and added depth and rigour to the questioning and note-taking that forms part of an existing professional process, especially where evidencing of progress is part of the evaluative documentation demanded. Similarly, the practice of using writing as a means of reflecting on sessions and recording what has been learnt to inform future choices is simply being developed with the objectivity and meticulousness necessary to communicate with a wider audience.

Methodology

The following section will provide a more detailed account of the methodology than was supplied in the introduction. An ethic of care has shaped the research methodology for this thesis, as well as the theatre practice. The methodology itself places emphasis on the relational, empowerment, and meeting needs. Tove Pettersen describes the ethic of care as 'democratic, discursive and inclusive' with a necessity for 'participation, dialogue and engagement' (Pettersen 2008, 177). This definition of an ethic of care could equally apply to this research, as the following section will explore.

As opposed to thinking solely in terms of independent individuals and their individual circumstances, an awareness of interdependencies is a central element of an ethic of care. Held argues that a caring relationship requires '*mutuality and the cultivation of ways of achieving this* in the various contexts of human life [my emphasis]' (Held 2006, 53). The methodology adopted by this thesis has sought to cultivate that mutuality by positioning participants as co-researchers with the expertise of their experience, without obligation to participate in the research when participating in the applied theatre projects. This element of an ethic of care characterises the practice as a whole: encouraging friendships, recognising a variety of skills, providing contexts to share them, and creating links to opportunities beyond the project to allow gains in the wider community. The research process and theatre practice sought to empower participants. Held considers that autonomy is often learnt through interaction with others. She explains: 'Our personal, familial, social, political, and economic relations with others enable or inhibit our access to significant options. And we are both enmeshed in and capable of shaping such relations' (Held 2006, 48). Sensitivity to the impact of family relationships, religious practices, cultural attitudes, and financial circumstances also helped to ensure that the maximum benefit was achieved by each individual within the research.

Pettersen proposes that 'asking what one can do for others' is a core value of an ethic of care and, 'in order to accommodate social needs and make reasonable priorities, participation, dialogue and engagement are required' (Pettersen 2008, 177). 'Participation, dialogue, and engagement are very much at the core of applied theatre and are inevitably thus central to this methodology. To create a space to 'ask what one can do for others' in terms of the research, establish relevant priorities, and address the needs of participants, it was necessary to embark on a provisional phase of research before narrowing down the research focus.

This initial exploratory phase took place from October 2007 – March 2008 within a youth project which sought to integrate new arrivals and members of the host community.¹⁷ It was from this phase that my research questions and hypothesis developed. This is also in line with Philip Taylor's preference for being a reflective practitioner. He highlights the relationship between reflective practitioner research design and ethnography: 'Both are based on the same principle; that reality is multiple and shifting and that truths evolve and transform over time. Both are not so much interested in testing a preconceived hypothesis, but rather allow the data to generate a hypothesis' (Taylor 1996, 27).

This exploratory phase of research generated ethnographic and interview data which demonstrated that the project was impacting on participants' sense of belonging and that this theme was important to the participants. However, it also discovered that some individuals found this difficult to sustain owing to family pressures or choices made in terms of participating in a high profile local festival in a professional venue. Where for some, as in Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project, performing in the professional venue positively impacted on their sense of belonging, for others it created a barrier to it. In a performance by the participants in this initial exploratory research phase as part of the Molten Festival in Barking, the thick Nigerian accent of one of the performers was met by mocking laughter from white and black young people in the audience. For these audience members, this laughter may have reinforced their own sense of collective identity by rejecting the non-standard accent as Other, thus marking out Fortier's 'terrains of commonality, through which the social dynamics and the politics of 'fitting in' are delineated' (Fortier 2000, 2). However, whilst this incident may have created an increase in belonging through 'fitting in' for the audience

¹⁷ Young Stars (2007 – 2008) was a year-long arts project for 11-16 year olds and was funded by the Borough of Barking and Dagenham. It was run by Lifeline and based in Dagenham.

members without such an accent, this remains an increase in belonging through 'fitting in' rather than Brown's true belonging where one is accepted for being oneself and accepts others accordingly. For the Nigerian participant, it was a moment of exposure when the safety of the applied theatre project was breached by a reminder of difference and the hostility within the borough.¹⁸ In practice shaped by an ethic of care, responsiveness to the needs of the individual is the priority. In this case, those needs were not best served by open public performance. The mocking of an accent is an attack on identity. Like Thompson's work on verbal critique in a site of war, it may be experienced as a 're-injuring' of the body. At a time of instability and insecurity in other areas of her life, it exposed the performer in an unnecessary place of risk rather than security. In an analysis of risk and investment in performance, Tim Etchells considers risk to be integral to the investment that makes compelling performance. He describes the performers as 'not representing something but going through something. They lay their bodies on the line ... and we are transformed - not audience to a spectacle but witnesses to an event' (Etchells 1999, 49). While this may result in exciting, engaging performance from professional artists, the focus is upon the experience for the audience rather than the participants and while one may expect an actor in a theatre company or on actor training in order to be able to make an informed choice about this level of exposure, this does not apply to a non-artist who may be experiencing theatre for the first time. Mature care, as Pettersen argues, prioritises the needs of those with whom one has a relationship, otherwise it can result in 'serious harm' occurring to those individuals (Pettersen 2008, 124). It is, therefore, imperative that the needs of the participants are prioritised above those of the audience for whom one can only ever demonstrate what Pettersen defines as 'thin' care anyway, as one can only have generalised and impersonal knowledge of audience members at a public performance. As a result, it became important for the research to move

¹⁸ Barking and Dagenham has struggled to come to terms with high levels of immigration in recent years, which has resulted in anti-immigrant feelings which have been capitalised on by the British National Party. For example, in elections in 2006, 11 out of the 13 candidates they fielded were elected, making them the second largest party after Labour.

away from high profile, public performance as a workshop outcome and to explore strategies which bridged the transition from the safety of the theatre project to the unpredictability of the outside world more effectively. This would build participants' resilience so they would be less affected by those struggling to come to terms with difference. In addition, this experience highlighted that belonging through 'fitting in' is never enough.

During the first phase of research, it also became apparent that there was a need to engage the whole family. In the same way that the host community was often distrustful of immigrants, refugee and migrant parents were equally suspicious of indigenous young people, as a result of negative British stereotypes, which associated them with wild, lazy, disrespectful behaviour. Cultural attitudes to the value of the arts and the position of girls within the family also proved barriers to the participation of young refugees and migrants. The young people believed that they would find it easier to integrate if their parents' needs were addressed. During this preliminary phase, it became clear that it was the mothers who found it particularly hard to integrate, as in many cases, they simply did not have access to English language skills or contexts to meet the broader community. The response of this participant was typical: 'My mum won't come. She don't speak English' (Workshop 5/12/08). There was a perceived link between the ability to speak the language and a willingness to engage in an unfamiliar public situation, even as a member of an audience in an informal context. The outcomes for the wider family in Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy Project (Smith 2009, 2) support the notion that addressing the needs of the mothers would impact positively on the whole family. These provisional findings shaped my research questions, thus the second phase of research projects. My research questions were:

How is belonging constructed and enacted?

What does drama do to enhance a sense of belonging?

How can we show this?

In this initial phase of research, external pressures were also identified which militated against the participants' developing sense of belonging. The hosting organisation, for example, required a suitably impressive concluding event for representatives of the funding body and local dignitaries. Although some participants clearly benefitted from the opportunity to celebrate their work in this way, for others the pressure of high profile performance clearly worked against their sense of belonging, resulting in a couple of participants ceasing to attend. Despite being aware of some of the vulnerabilities of participants from a previous performance, there was no flexibility to avoid this conclusion. In addition, at times the importance of some of the external trappings of corporate event management, like white tablecloths and Received Pronunciation, seemed to outweigh the importance of the young people themselves and what they had achieved. There was a focus on their need to 'fit in' with another agenda rather than being accepted for who they were and the work they wanted to produce. The performance, in this case, had become a UK version of what, in his work on performance and war, James Thompson describes as 'only for the British' or 'just for show' (Thompson 2012). It simply bore no relation to the needs and wishes of participants. Conscious of the potential conflict caused by pre-determined agendas, this thesis sought a research methodology which, shaped by an ethic of care, prioritised the needs of individual participants. In research with potentially vulnerable groups, standard ethical requirements are not enough. With reference to social work research, Hugman argues:

'Do no harm' is a necessary but insufficient principle alone as the ethical basis for such work. It needs to be integrated with respect, beneficence and justice in a more relational approach that can be gauged in terms of what is offered back to participants in ways that are meaningful to them (Hugman 2005, 2010).

A more 'relational approach' is in keeping with the relational ethic that has shaped the practice. The research grew out of a desire to listen, free from the influence of outside funders and other external agendas. It hoped to create a space where participants could affect any

outcome. Consonant with an ethic of care, it aimed to genuinely empower participants, as they shaped the experience they had in the workshops. For this reason, the projects in the second phase were set up and then the option of participating in the research was introduced later, rather than establishing them as university research from the start. To have established the projects solely as university research would have foregrounded an institutional agenda rather than the value of care. It was, therefore, important that the life of the theatre project was not dependent solely on the duration of the research. Many refugees and asylum seekers are suspicious of research. They may be concerned about how their responses may impact on their asylum application and may be particularly concerned with how the research is funded (Kissoon 2006, 83; Robinson and Segott 2002, 9). A lack of control over how one has been represented in prior research can also generate negative feelings about new research projects. Kaptani and Yuval Davis describe their Somali participants' previous experience of research: 'They felt that outsiders came, made them talk and used it for their own ends' (Kaptani and Yuval-Davis 2008). It is common for researchers working with refugees to 'earn' trust in some way through unrelated voluntary work (Kissoon 2006, 81; Miller 2004, 220), or articulation of their personal migrant background (Markova 2009, 147; Bagenda 2006, 186). This research methodology focussed on equality and reciprocal relationships. These relationships will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5, as a key feature of the practice as well as the research methodology. In the field of social work, Hugman et al (2011) discuss a model of reciprocal research, developed through UNSW Centre for Refugee Research. Here, relationships are created between researchers and participants in which there is a more equal exchange of ideas and benefits to be gained from participating in the research project. Refugees are therefore involved in all stages of the process, including deciding the questions to be asked at the start. In the example quoted, research participants also received training in human rights documentation and advocacy (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2011, 1279). In this practice-based research, the benefits for participants are even more immediate as their

contributions shape the sessions, increasing the enjoyment and usefulness. The research is also governed by Barnes' principles of ethical drama practice. These principles dictate that participants should be furnished with safety, choice, respect, equality, and tutor competence (Barnes 2009, 36-7). If these principles are also observed in the research, participants should have a positive experience.

Sheila Preston argues that there is a dissonance in applied theatre: 'the dilemma between safeguarding people's right to speak *or* not speak in private or public with the urgent need to challenge society and its marginalising hegemonies' (Preston 2009, 68). The freedom to participate in the applied theatre projects without participating in the research safeguarded the participant's right to choose whether to speak or not. The lack of public performance outcomes in the latter stages of the research and the deliberate addressing of language and situations likely to be faced in life meant that participants could choose to challenge expectations and represent themselves publicly if they desired. This was, however, a positive choice on behalf of the participants rather than imposed by the researcher. Participants were able to encourage one another through stories of their successes outside the project, as some chose to challenge injustice and rudeness in the small daily ways that make a difference to everyday life.

The second phase of research was dominated by two sustained projects: Creative English (for individual adults), and Family Learning Club (for families). The research in these projects ran from May 2008 to July 2009. Although the initial intention was that the family learning sessions would be suitable for families with children up to the age of 11, the project actually had children participating up to the age of 14 and some adults attending without children,

including an 18-year-old and a grandmother. The research did not have a planned duration from the outset. It could have run for two complete years. However, it seemed to have explored all it needed to within 60 weeks. Therefore, it seemed more valuable to instigate a third phase of research, after a period of interviews, reading, and reflection. Allowing 60 weeks enabled the practice to explore a wide variety of approaches without being too selective. Creative English, for example, included working on traditional stories, childhood autobiography, forum theatre around participants' experiences in the UK, 'rehearsal for life' drama around everyday situations, and devising. It explored the use of improvisation, text, visual art, and games. It focussed explicitly and implicitly on English language. Smith and Dean argue that 'artistic selection processes are likely to be even more arbitrary, and there may be fine specimens amongst the practitioner's rejects' (Smith and Dean 2009, 22). There may be cultural reasons for rejection or simply a failure to recognise the relevance or potential of an idea at the early stage of the process. While there may have remained the arbitrary element of the mood the participants were in on a given day, which may have affected their response, on the whole, the 60-week duration gave time for avenues to be explored, developed, and returned to if the full potential did not seem to have been exploited.

It was also hypothesised that both the length of the project and the context of the workshop were factors in creating belonging. Therefore, some additional research was conducted in one-off sessions within existing ESOL courses and single sessions of family learning in schools. This generated a greater understanding of barriers and successes in this type of provision. These included: the lasting impact of play on group dynamics; the significance of getting a parent who has never entered their child's school to cross the threshold, and sensitivity in some

communities about providing an opportunity exclusively targeted at immigrants at all.¹⁹ The findings from these interventions prompted an exploration of how short-term projects could affect belonging in the final phase of practice-based research.

To increase their usefulness to other practitioners in the field, it was important that the findings from this research were generated from exploration in a range of project contexts. Barbara Bolt also emphasises the importance of generalizing findings in practice-as-research. She states: 'Learning takes place through action and intentional, explicit reflection on that action. This approach acknowledges that we cannot separate knowledge to be learned from situations in which it is used. Thus situated enquiry or learning demonstrates a unity between problem, context and solution' (Barrett and Bolt 2007, 5). It was, therefore, important to explore facilitating belonging in different contexts. This resulted in research being conducted in three different London boroughs with contrasting socio-cultural-economic profiles: Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, and Redbridge. These are also boroughs in which the charities Lifeline and Open Doors were operating. Working within these locations both helped to identify the universal challenges in achieving a sense of belonging, and some of the specific challenges related to addressing specific needs, as groups in each borough had distinctive characteristics.

In Barking and Dagenham, hostility from the host community to a workshop for migrant families in the initial research phase highlighted the need for projects which sought to integrate the host community and new arrivals. This is due to the fact that, for many years, Barking and Dagenham has had a relatively stable, predominantly white working class

¹⁹ In one school parental protests resulted in the ESOL workshop being opened up to all to deal with wider issues of family literacy.

population. However, in recent years migration has increased markedly and Barking and Dagenham is now one of the fastest growing local authorities in England. The 2006-2009 Local Area Agreement estimated that the population would increase by 100,000 over the next 15-20 years (164,572 in 2004) (Barking and Dagenham Local Area 2006 - 2009), including the fastest growing ESOL population of any London borough (Minet 2007, 10). As a consequence, Barking and Dagenham has the second lowest level of community cohesion in the country. Only 48% of local residents believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area (Commons 2008, 10), which is reflected in an increase in the popularity of the British National Party.

By contrast, Hackney has a well-established diverse community due to its long history as a place where migrants settle. It was also identified as the second most deprived borough in the country and is thus facing challenges of poverty and unemployment, particularly among its ethnic minority communities (Indices of Deprivation 2007). According to statistics gathered in 2006, less than 60% of the working age population in Hackney were in employment and over 40% of families with dependent children were headed by single parents. 34% of households spoke a language at home in addition to English, and 12% of households did not speak English at home at all (Hackney 2006). The reduction of English language class funding has, therefore, had a significant impact on this area.

Goodmayes in Redbridge has a Black and Minority Ethnic population of 61%. The two 60-week projects took place in this ward. Approximately 50% of the participants in these projects came from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh as there are significant communities from these countries in this area (R. L. Authority n.d.). While the borough as a whole is relatively

affluent²⁰, the ethnic minority population is particularly concentrated in the southern wards, correlating with the areas of highest deprivation (Abley, Jaffar and Gent 2004, 1). Around 14.3% of the Redbridge population are economically inactive women looking after home and family compared with 11.9% nationally (Statistics 2001). Often these women are not well educated and feel awkward about helping their children with school work (Abley, Jaffar and Gent 2004, 5). This adds to feelings of isolation and vulnerability (Grieve 2008). Addressing the needs of women became particularly important to the practice here.

The methodology has been influenced by ethnography, as defined by Hammersley, who considers it to be ‘a form of social and educational research that emphasises the importance of studying *at first hand* what people do and say in particular contexts’ [emphasis in original] (Hammersley 2006, 4). I have, therefore, kept field notes on my observations of participants and activities in the sessions. The notes focus on description, without making judgements. Analytical reflection only occurred when the notes were re-read later in the week. The notes were made immediately after each session, initially on everything that happened and then, in the latter stages, mostly on the specific areas which were being investigated. Although the initial intention was to be completely non-selective in the material described, my subjective viewpoint as a former teacher is apparent in these notes, as there is clear documentation of the success or otherwise of activities in terms of their educational value, and a particular focus on the social, emotional, and academic progress of specific individuals in the group. It is unsurprising, therefore, that this data has led to a thesis which explores belonging in relation to pedagogy and an ethic of care. For the first seven weeks of Creative English and Family Learning Club, the only notes taken were those compatible with normal professional practice. In Week Eight, the research was introduced and participants had the option of becoming part

²⁰ According to the Indices of Deprivation (2007), Redbridge was ranked 143rd out of the 354 boroughs nationally.

of the formal research. Where a research participant made an interesting comment during a session, it was jotted down at once to capture their response as accurately as possible. Notes were also taken during session evaluations. Reflection on these notes prompted shifts in pedagogy or session content or sometimes closer observation of a specific individual or aspect of the session. By conducting research within projects where participation in the research was not compulsory, there was in effect a sort of control group which responded in the same way, but was not formally part of the research. Although these participants will not be referenced in the analysis, for obvious reasons, this was helpful in indicating that it was not the process of being listened to and valued in the research itself which created a sense of belonging for the participants rather than the applied theatre project.

One of the problems with observational research is that, as Hammersley points out in his article 'Ethnography: problems and prospects': 'we sometimes tend to treat people as if their behaviour in the situations we study is entirely a product of those situations, rather than of who they are and what they do elsewhere - simply because we do not have observational data on the rest of their lives' (Hammersley 2006, 5). The clearest example of this comes from the youth project in phase one of the research. Twelve-year-old Sian would seem to be the perfect case study to demonstrate the transformative power of theatre, as over the course of her engagement with the project she changed beyond recognition from an incredibly withdrawn child who never spoke beyond a whisper to a boisterous, lively, confident joker, who was eager to take centre stage. Observational notes clearly document her development through the theatre process and I do believe the facilitation of the project helped her to grow in this way. However, just as significant to her development was the fact that her parents were embroiled in a particularly bitter and unpleasant custody battle at the start of the project, which was resolved in court around the same time her personality transformation

really started to take hold. Within the project documentation, Sian's mother is quoted as stating that the theatre project had transformed her daughter completely. However, I believe her mother simply did not want to acknowledge that family circumstances had significantly affected her daughter. The evidence I have from the mother and my observations within the theatre project point entirely to theatre as the source of transformation. However, I believe this is simplistic, and although it did play a key role, it is not the sole factor. If it were not for casual conversations, I could easily have remained entirely unaware of her home circumstances, and even with this knowledge, my views on its influence on Sian remain conjectural. When interviewing people, it is inevitable that their perceptions of what is happening or how they wish to present themselves will sometimes be distorted. To address subjective interpretation of events, it is necessary to gain multiple perspectives from interviews and text-based research and to share interpretation of the findings with participants.

As part of my own subjectivity, I also need to be aware of my own cultural values and how they may impact on my interpretation of my findings. Westerners, for example, tend to see fulfilling their role within the family at the cost of individual freedom, where most Eastern cultures 'do not prize individuality as highly as westerners do, and for most of them the sacrifice of individuality that the culture requires is more than offset by the advantages of fulfilling one's role within the family and community' (Shaw 1988, 6). It would, therefore, be tempting to view some of the non-attendance due to family pressure, for example, as more repressive than it actually is. Even in the selection of stories as source material, I have my own cultural understandings of what a good story is, so it is really important that I do not unintentionally censor source material by prejudging it through my cultural expectations. Philip Taylor supports the view that, although researchers are generally expected to be

objective and free from values, this is an impossibility: 'We are all shaped by our values, by our experiences and by the specific influences on our lives' (Taylor 1996, 15). Consequently, all experiences are also shaped by the context. In the Introduction and in this chapter, I have, therefore, attempted to position myself clearly within the research, as well as acknowledging the local context within the boroughs and hosting organisations.

Encouraging the participants to evaluate their applied theatre experiences was one of the challenges of the research. Various methods were explored to try to get honest evaluative feedback on the activities. Anonymous questionnaires, even very simple ones which require the circling of a happy, neutral or sad face in answer to simple questions, did not work because the participants could not read them or, even when done orally, they often missed the subtle difference between evaluating the activities and their own personal performance. Categorising photos was trialled as a method of assessing participants' attitudes towards specific activities. While for some this was an effective way of gauging their opinions, others simply copied other members of the group, or enjoyed making attractive patterns with the images, oblivious to the significance of where they placed them. Observational notes about how people responded and what they did and said at the time appeared to be a much more accurate reflection of their views. The critical element was to constantly ask questions which sought clarification and explanation to try and ensure that these impressions were accurate, both within the sessions and in interviews.

In the second phase of the research, participants were refugees and migrants who had been living in the UK for anything between two weeks and 30 years. The participants who had been in the UK for 15 years or more were generally spouses, who had remained predominantly

within their own family or language community and, therefore, spoke English generally assessed at ESOL Entry Level 1.²¹ It was a deliberate choice not to seek information regarding a participant's immigration status on joining the applied drama projects. This thesis does not advocate that constantly reinforcing this categorisation is helpful to the participant or has any bearing on the work, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

At the end of the second phase of research, a series of semi-structured interviews with individual participants was conducted. Participants were invited to be interviewed and could choose whether to participate or not. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes and an hour. In addition to the general invitation, those participants demonstrating the least sense of belonging or the most complex responses to the project were specifically targeted as interview subjects, as this data was of particular interest to the research. The venue was determined by the participant, except for two participants when the availability of the interpreter dictated the interview venue. Some interviews took place in people's homes, some took place at the project venues, and some occurred in a neutral space such as a café or park. The emphasis was on convenience to the participant. The interviews helped to provide the multiple perspectives which are so important in forming accurate impressions in research (Taylor 1996). To increase the possibility of the findings being generalizable, 106 participants were interviewed or participated in focus groups across the different applied theatre projects. Forty-two of these individuals had participated in two or more of the research projects. To support the process of reflection on the interviews, 21 of the participants' interviews were transcribed in full, before grouping comments from these interviews within categories according to the topic. These categories were initially very broad, such as 'learning English',

²¹ ESOL levels are as follows: Entry Level 1 for beginners; Entry Level 2 (on certification at this level, learners will have the language skills of the average 7- year -old); Entry Level 3, Level 1 (equivalent to C-G GCSE), and Level 2 (equivalent to A-C GCSE).

but as patterns were identified in the data the categories were further subdivided, such as 'confidence in spoken language' and 'attitudes to play'. For subsequent interviews, sections that were of particular interest to the subjects under consideration were transcribed, rather than the whole interview.

Most participants chose to be interviewed in English. As Yuval-Davis and Kaptani's research indicates, interpreters are generally disliked by those who need to use them owing to 'the enormous power of the interpreter in mediating between the individual and the state,' which is often abused (Yuval-Davis and Kaptani 2006, 7). Anyone who spoke sufficient English to be offered the choice of being interviewed with an interpreter in their own language or in English, chose to be interviewed in English. While this did limit the scope of some interviews to the participant's range of English vocabulary, it was important to retain the empowerment of this element of choice where participants desired it, as part of operating within an ethic of care. As a later section of this chapter will show, interviewing in translation will always provide challenges whether an interpreter is present or not. In combination with desk-based research during this period, the interview findings shaped the third and final phase of the practice-based research.

During this second phase of research, interviews were also conducted with 25 drama practitioners and other professionals working in this field. These semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. Interview subjects included: practitioners from a range of theatre projects for refugees and migrants, especially from East London; professionals who had experience of drama workshops being delivered to their refugee and migrant clients, and professionals working or volunteering with refugees and migrants in other fields, who

were employed by charities, community organisations, or the local authority. This helped to develop a more detailed picture of strengths and concerns within different types of practice. As highlighted in the Introduction, I also participated in workshops and training delivered by these practitioners and Debra Glazer explored the use of traditional stories at Hampstead Theatre, which I was able to observe, contributing to my thinking on this subject. Furthermore, as previously indicated, desk-based research was also important in this period, as it allowed findings to be explored and cross referenced with research from other fields. Rowe highlights: 'the absurdity of trying to solve problems with inadequate tools [which] is driving moves towards more integrated approaches to research in the sciences and more traditional disciplines' (Rowe 2003, 2). As has already been explained in the introduction, the fields of Psychology, Relational Ethics, and Second Language Education have been particularly useful for increasing the depth of understanding of the findings, especially in terms of comprehending the internal state of belonging, the nature of care, and the pedagogy of adult second language acquisition.

The third and final phase of practice-based research sought to address the limitations identified in the interviews and, through reflection, on the previous phase of research. The projects in this phase occurred between January 2010 and May 2010. As a practitioner conducting practice-based research, I was keen to develop solutions rather than simply propose limits, as this has more value in terms of my own professional development and for other practitioners in my field.

Although participating in the applied theatre project over a sustained period did clearly impact upon participants' sense of belonging, I was surprised at the impact a one-off workshop within

a pre-existing community group had, according to interviews with participants and professionals. In response to this participant feedback, I found myself interested in exploring what could be achieved by short-term projects in terms of belonging. Thus five to 10-week projects characterised the final phase of research. For adult participants, one project focussed on pragmatic health literacy needs, which had been strongly articulated in research interviews, while another developed the use of traditional stories in an attempt to overcome some of the barriers identified in generating source material from participants. For families, issues surrounding attendance, understanding the value of activities, and creating a longer term impact were explored through projects in pre-existing parent and toddler groups. In contrast to research in social work, where one refugee explained: 'We were really fed up with people just coming and stealing our stories, taking our photos and we never get anything back, not even a copy of the report. Nothing changes.' (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2003, 36), the change for these applied theatre participants was immediate and enabled them to gain very tangibly from the research, if they remained in the local area and wished to participate in further applied theatre projects.

During this phase, ethnographic notes were again kept on the sessions and perceptions were discussed with participants. However, at this stage it was very specifically in relation to the much narrower research focus. A total of 16 interviews and two focus groups took place during this phase of research. At the end of the second storytelling training project, the research questions had been answered. Hence the focus shifted to writing up the conclusions. The quotes which appear within the thesis represent viewpoints which were more widely evidenced within interviews, unless otherwise specified. Extensive use of these quotations is made to support my readings of the workshops. Long quotes have been selected from the interviews, which allow participants to express their views in their own words, rather than

being mediated by the author and reduced to sound bites which fit the argument of the thesis.²² The quotes are expressed in the original grammar. I have sometimes inserted words in brackets to assist with the communication of meaning in the quote, but generally consider that too much alteration of the participants' words forms a type of translation in itself and risks obscuring the participants' original meaning. This thesis will later argue for a focus on meaning rather than form in adult second language learning and although recording spoken words as written text makes the errors in grammar more striking, it has honoured the participants' original phrasing, which communicated adequately in the original interview. Moments of practice which particularly illuminate a theoretical point have also been selected from the ethnographic notes described to give the reader further access to the practice.

Having defined practice-based research as professional practice, this thesis argues that the process of writing the thesis is part of the practice which will allow other practitioners and managers of community organisations to access the learning which has resulted from the research. Keeping a reflective written record of the possibilities and limitations of specific professional practice for personal use is integral to progression for individuals within and across projects, as is the production of documentation to disseminate good practice. The process of writing the thesis has enabled a thought process to occur about the practice, in dialogue with itself and other practitioners, which will benefit the future work of this practitioner and open up a broader dialogue in the field.

²² Bill McDonnell, 'The Politics of Historiography - towards an ethic of representation' (2005) and Frances Babbage, 'Putting yourself on the line: Ethical choices in research and writing' (2005), both emphasize the importance of collaborating with research subjects, enabling their voices to be heard within the research and being explicit about one's own position as the researcher.

Issues Arising from Methodology

This section will explore issues arising from the methodology: informed consent; translation, and power relationships. It will acknowledge the complexities involved and argue that they have been addressed as far as possible.

Achieving informed consent was a key concern within the methodology and a potential barrier to potential participants. In the second phase of the research, I felt that framing the work as a research project alone would have formed an additional barrier to attending, as the majority of participants had poor English and thus an inability to understand what they were being invited to do, unease, in many cases, about what officially collected data may be used for, and insecurity over whether they would be able to contribute anything of value. To offer them genuine freedom to join or not, as they desired, it was necessary not to begin with the necessity of a formal signature. The research was intended to improve and disseminate good practice, rather than to limit access to the applied drama provision for those who would benefit from it.

Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei favour a relational view of autonomy, rather than the individualistic, liberal notion of autonomy that informs research ethics. They argue:

The principle of 'informed consent', in itself, is ethically sound, but the evidence from work with refugee groups is that it does not go far enough because of the assumptions on which it depends about how individuals are able actually to achieve moral autonomy. (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2011, 1280).

In other words, the context of giving consent does have an impact on understanding and choice. An ethic of care shares this emphasis on the relational and thus, through these relationships, trust should be developed and honoured. Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei

(2011) propose beginning the research project with a meeting where all can discuss the implications and think about whether they wish to participate or not all the way through. In the practice-based research for this thesis, this starting point was not appropriate. The real professional context meant that participants were constantly joining and leaving the longer projects owing to dispersal, relocation in the UK or to their country of origin, or possible employment or changes in family circumstances. It was not desirable to exclude new arrivals or short-term visitors from the research as the intention was to learn about the impact of this practice in real circumstances. Hence, following the start of the applied theatre projects, some individuals were invited to participate in the research. Where possible, another participant explained it to them, as they were more detached and less likely to generate any sense of pressure to become involved. As per Stella Barnes' guidelines for ethical practice, choice was a consistent element, whether in terms of participating in workshop activities or in research activities.

Mackenzie et al (2007, 310) argue that the idea of relational autonomy might impact on research with refugees in both positive and negative ways. As a negative, it introduces obligations for researchers to attend to ways in which research might compromise individuals' capacity to exercise moral agency and to take all possible steps to ensure this does not happen. However, when informed consent becomes an iterative process, this obligation is facilitated through the way in which participants can gain shared control over what is happening. The positive aspect of this notion is then seen in the ways in which refugees strengthen their autonomy through this model, as well as highlighting the specifics of their plight and providing a means by which it can be addressed (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2011, 1282). This view of relational autonomy is consonant with an ethic of care. In Held's view, when people are 'valued for their own sakes as distinct, particular persons rather than

instances of abstract rational beings' and where caring relations are cultivated as valuable, even the political and legal domain can be shaped (Held 2006, 130).

In the third phase of research, some participants simply gave permission for their responses to activities to be recorded and were not formally interviewed. When Creative English resumed in January 2010, it was much easier to be explicit about the research context, as some of the participants had already been interviewed and so had a full understanding of the research project. My work as a drama practitioner and Open Doors volunteer was also well established within the organisations, which may also have enhanced perceptions of my trustworthiness. Consistent with standard ethical practice, all consent forms made clear that participants would not be named or otherwise identified when the research was written up, and that the recordings of the interviews would only ever be listened to by me, thus further protecting their anonymity. One of the challenges in sharing research findings with the participants was their frequent lack of language skills, which made understanding the content very difficult. The findings were discussed as far as possible with participants to ensure that they were happy with how they were represented. Participants also chose the images used to represent them in presentations at conferences. However, the fact that a main focus of the research was to discover the most effective practical techniques and approaches meant that understanding gained from the participants was embodied in physical changes in the workshop space in terms of how the sessions were delivered. In normal evaluative discussion at the end of the session, they were asked whether these aspects had improved, thus confirming the outcomes of the findings. In this way, there was an on-going dialogue with participants throughout the research period.

Like informed consent, translation has been a highly significant issue within this research. Not only have some participants been interviewed through an interpreter, but those who have not are still communicating through a second language. Much of the research that has been conducted on minority ethnic communities in Britain, especially the 'grey' literature, makes no reference to language issues at all and results are presented as if the participants spoke fluent English or as if the language they used is irrelevant (Temple and Young 2004, 163). Social constructionist, Interpretative, Non-positivist epistemology recognises that your location within the social world influences the way that you see it. There is, therefore, no neutral position from which to translate and the power relationships within the research need to be acknowledged. Philips (1960) describes the position of conceptual equivalence across languages as 'in absolute terms an insolvable problem' since 'almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings and values that the speakers may or may not be aware of but that the field worker as an outsider, usually is not' (Temple and Young 2004, 165). Moreover, as Temple and Young state: 'the translator always makes her mark on the research, whether this is acknowledged or not, and in effect some kind of 'hybrid' role emerges in that, at the very least, the translator makes assumptions about meaning equivalence that makes her an analyst and cultural broker, as much as a translator' (Temple and Young 2004, 171). The most striking example of this within my research was a morning of interviews with Urdu speakers, all of whom were less enthusiastic about the drama activities than I had anticipated from the way they behaved in the sessions. In discussion with the interpreter, she revealed herself to be violently against drama and any other form of active learning. This would explain the neutral terms in which she translated the participants' replies about drama. Discussing the interpreter's background, their views on the subject matter, and perceptions of the translation process has helped to address these difficulties as far as possible.

It is always important to allow people time to think in the interviews. However, when interviewing someone in their second language, it is particularly important to ask more questions to clarify their thinking, as you can never express yourself fully in another language.

Without clarifying questions, misunderstanding could arise. For example:

Interviewee: If there is no English or no teaching, I can't come.

Anne: When you say you 'can't' come, do you mean **you** wouldn't want to come or your **family** would not be so pleased for you to come?

Interviewee: No, no, my family are really good. They will not stop me when I attend the class. They really want I can speak and write English.

Clarifying questions are vital to ensure data from interviews is an accurate reflection of the participants' views. Operating within an ethic of care, it is also essential to ensure that one is responding to genuine needs rather than those which one has inaccurately assumed. Taking the time to listen carefully and facilitate genuine communication is part of demonstrating care in the research process.

'Belonging' also proved to be an abstract concept to discuss with people without strong English. When working with an interpreter or trying to describe its meaning in English, the term tended to be described through characteristics of belonging as an indigenous English speaker would understand it, particularly through the notion of friendship and being able to talk to one's neighbours and strangers from different backgrounds. The extent to which their area 'felt like home' was also discussed. Home, in itself, is a problematic term for refugees and asylum seekers. Kissoon explains that home is a 'soft indicator of integration that straddles issues of emotional and material well-being':

Each person has an idea of home that merges place and personality, that goes beyond having four walls and a roof, and that indicates a positive feeling derived from security, belonging, attachment or familiarity amongst other things. The scale at which individuals interpret this place of home may vary greatly, ranging from the metaphysical and global, national, and regional to the local, neighbourhood, dwelling and even embodiment by specific people in one's life, such as a parent, spouse or

child. The home may be more than mappable localities, and exist among institutions that reflect one's ideals, concerns and endeavours, and it may exist as feelings of permanence, agency, autonomy, dialogue and participation (Kissoon 2006, 76).

For a refugee, Kissoon argues, neither the country of origin nor the place of dwelling can be presumed to have been a home in any respect: 'the imposition of this emotionally laden term on spaces that may have included persecution, destitution and fear constitutes sentimentalised concepts of both national and domestic spaces' (Kissoon 2006, 78). It was, therefore, important that the notion of 'feeling like' home was discussed rather than making any assumption of any place being 'home', with the option of stating that this role was fulfilled nowhere. Participants' aspirations for their children were quite revealing about how they felt about themselves, their borough, and the UK, so later interviews often posed the question: 'Where would you like your children to feel is home?' .

Inevitably, questions of social power are embedded in all research relationships, which is why 'ethics is integral to every aspect of research' (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2011, 1284). The ethics of care is particularly concerned with the relations between people, evaluating them and valuing relations of care. According to Virginia Held, it does not assume that relations relevant for morality have been entered into voluntarily by free and equal individuals, as do dominant moral theories. She explains that an ethic of care 'appreciates as well the values of care between persons of unequal power in unchosen relations such as those between parents and children and between members of social groups of various kinds. To the ethics of care, our embeddedness in familial, social, and historical contexts is basic' (Held 2006, 46).

Any participant observation will be shaped by the role adopted by the researcher. This is particularly the case when facilitating the group. As Alison Jeffers states, with reference to her own research:

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 (Jeffers 2012, 2).

In the instance of my research, I am particularly interested in the role of the facilitator and am looking to influence practice through my findings which, by its very nature, is likely to be facilitated by an 'outsider' from the host community. I am, therefore, looking to explore the possibilities and limitations, despite the inevitable power relationship between a facilitator who is from, or more established, within the host community and the refugee/migrant group. By researching within my normal professional context, I have also not chosen to frame myself as a representative of the university from the start. In establishing a reciprocal research relationship, I made it clear that I was a student too, who needed their help to improve my classes, in the same way as they were students needing help to improve their English. My consent forms clearly included my contact information and the university which I was representing. However, neither the information sheet nor the consent form carried the university logo, which may have helped to emphasise my role as a student within the institution rather than a representative of it. Certainly, participants appeared more wary of signing the official headed paper version of a similar consent form in a recent research project with the same target group. If anything, I was viewed as a representative of the hosting organisations Lifeline or Open Doors. This obviously continues to give me an inevitable position of power in relation to my participants. However, Jeffers references Ahmed who suggests that the problem is not so much in the process of translating the strange into the familiar as in the concealment of that translation. It is a 'postmodern fantasy' that the 'I' of the ethnographer 'can undo the power relations that allow the I to appear' (Jeffers 2012, 3).

Some of the interviews, especially with professionals working in this context, have become a dialogue, for, as feminist researcher Ann Oakley states: 'the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship' (Oakley 2004, 263). In the workshop sessions themselves, I increasingly used details from my own experience to encourage an open, non-hierarchical relationship in the group, as Chapter 5 will discuss. A non-hierarchical relationship was also important in encouraging evaluative feedback from participants in sessions, who initially found it much easier to critique themselves rather than 'the teacher's' choices.

Through describing the practice for this thesis and comparing it to other related practices, this chapter has argued for the originality, rigour, and significance of both my research methods and my theatre practices. It has been unique in its approach to working with adults and families, developing some techniques already successful with young people, especially in developing a sense of family within the group, and evolving new ones to address the needs of the target group. It has identified some of the difficulties facing applied drama projects for adults, such as recruiting participants without previous experience of performance. It has argued that this thesis can be defined as 'practice-based research', as it is related to professional practice. It is part of a continuum of practice as I am a practitioner, not just a researcher setting up an experiment. Thus, applied drama research shares characteristics with research in other professional practice, such as health and social care. One can only learn about facilitating a sense of belonging through practice. The approach to the research itself is shaped by an ethic of care, which has emphasised the choice and agency of the participants and the importance of addressing the individual needs of those involved. This is particularly

important when researching in a context where participants have already dis-empowered in other ways. To ensure the accuracy of my findings, data has been collected and cross referenced from a variety of sources. This includes observational notes, the work itself, and interviews with participants, support workers, and other professionals, who can also chart changes they have observed. As Philip Taylor asserts: 'developing multiple perspectives on the event(s) being examined have permitted reflective practitioner researchers to develop confidence in the trustworthiness of their findings' (Taylor 1996, 43). In addition to desk-bound research, this gives my findings rigour and credibility, despite my dual role as facilitator and researcher.

Chapter 2. Reversing Maslow's Hierarchy: Creativity and Play as Foundations of Belonging

This chapter argues for the importance of play and creativity in relation to belonging, thus the general approach to applied theatre practice adopted by this thesis. It argues for play as a methodological approach to adult learning and generating social integration. It argues that creativity and play reverse Maslow's hierarchy by providing the foundations for belonging, rather than requiring, a priori, a sense of belonging and secure self-esteem.

Definitions of play generally agree that it is fun, social, voluntary, experimental, and creative (Huizinga 1955; Piaget 1962; Sutton-Smith 1997 etc.). However, opinions about the function of play vary. On the one hand, Sutton-Smith (1997) argues that play has no function except to prepare for more play. Fagen, on the other hand, argues that play is innate behaviour 'to develop, practice or maintain physical or cognitive abilities and social relationships' (Fagen 1981, 65). Stuart Brown defines play as 'an absorbing, apparently purposeless activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of self-consciousness and sense of time' (S. Brown 2009, 60). He considers play to be a state of mind, which must be entered into in order to play, although he admits that an activity may provide the means of accessing this mental play state (S. Brown 2009, 60). This thesis agrees that play is a state of mind, but disagrees that, in the context of this practice-based research, it is purposeless. Participants had a clear sense of purpose, especially in the adult-only groups. The purpose was to learn English. Without this purpose, they would have been reluctant to move into a play state and, once in this play state, this thesis argues, they learned more effectively than by using traditional methods, especially when integrated with some formal English grammar teaching. Play is self-motivating and makes an individual want to experience it again, which encourages the repetition necessary for rapid progress. The 'suspension of self-consciousness' referenced in the definition is important

in feeling free to try out unfamiliar language, make mistakes and thus improve or simply allow recognition of the capacity to communicate despite flawed English language skills. A freedom from self-consciousness also makes it easier to meet the Other, as there is an openness and increased willingness to accept others. In an unselfconscious state, one is also more likely to behave in a way that is true to oneself and therefore experience belonging. Brown's phrasing: 'We have to put ourselves in the proper emotional state in order to play' suggests that it is the responsibility of the individual to muster a state of responsiveness to play. However, applied drama participants unfamiliar with the form are not going to arrive with that expectation, especially when they have different cultural attitudes to education. Sessions are, therefore, structured to help induce an emotional state of play. These issues will be discussed in this chapter.

Play and creativity, however, are not the only ways to learn. Batmanghelidjh clearly demonstrates that violence is also a source of learning. Batmanghelidjh explains that children who have been exposed to extremes of violence and abuse 'store' the events on a psychological and physiological level. If the child has been unable to form a healthy attachment with a maternal carer as an infant, it has not the emotional resources to diminish the psychological affects:

The trauma remains in the cells of the body like an encoded shock waiting to be unleashed. On a physiological level the terrorised child is relentlessly secreting adrenalin, which triggers the release of a similar flight-fright hormone called noradrenalin. Had there been a robust attachment relationship in place, maybe the child could have been able to call upon the experiences of good care given by a maternal carer to calm down or self soothe. But poorly attached infants do not bring resilience into their childhood and are therefore doubly disadvantaged by violence and neglect (Batmanghelidjh 2006, 96).

The learning outcomes of violence and abuse are further violence and abuse, only this time with the victim as perpetrator. The child may compartmentalise aspects of their identity which express themselves as extreme caricatures in an attempt to give the illusion that they have

greater mastery over their identity. Many refugees, including children, will have experienced or witnessed violence and abuse as a cause or outcome of their forced migration. Most tangibly in Open Doors, some of the women referred by the Perinatal and Infant Maternal Health Service struggled to come to terms with children who were the product of rape. Even if the act of violence does not directly relate to the child, it is common for refugee parents to be very emotionally distant from their children, as they seek to come to terms with the trauma they have already experienced and the further trauma of adjusting to life in the UK (Rutter 2003, 133). This response to violence further damages the emotional well-being of all members of the family. As Batmanghelidjh demonstrates, violence and neglect can result in explosive outbursts which may create difficulties at home, school, or work. There is a lack of resilience, which is defined as the capacity to resist adversity, cope with uncertainty and recover successfully from trauma (Newman 2004). While it is likely that the majority of the adults engaged by this research would have had positive experiences of attachment relationships to draw upon in an infancy, relentless cycles of difficulty in the host nation can damage the capacity for resilience, as the trust and the optimism necessary for problem-solving are worn away. Contemporary emphasis in resilience research is on the understanding of resilience as a process rather than a particular character trait (Luthar 2003). As a process, individual adaptations result from interactive processes within the child, family, and community (Yates and Marsten 2004). At least one secure attachment relationship, access to wider supports, like extended family and friends, and positive experience at school, nursery, or in the community are viewed as key factors in generating resilience (Daniel and Wassell 2002). The theatre project can create an alternative, somewhat idealised, family which models maternal care. This chapter argues for the value of learning through play and creativity, especially when external circumstances may be challenging.

William Plomer describes creativity as ‘the power to connect the seemingly unconnected’ (B. Brown 2010, 96). This definition acknowledges the wide range of experiences that can be considered creative. This thesis both acknowledges the range of creative actions and focusses specifically on artistic creativity through applied theatre. For Csikszentmihalyi, creativity is ‘any act, idea or product that changes an existing domain. It is important to remember, however, that a domain cannot be changed without the explicit or implicit consent of a field responsible for it’ (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 28). This view of creativity makes its existence within a community extremely important. In fact, this definition makes the validation of the wider community integral to creativity. While Csikszentmihalyi’s study focussed on exceptional people who have made a major contribution in the arts or sciences, smaller innovations by participants in this research are just as dependent on the support of communities they participate in. The support of one’s community is a characteristic of belonging.²³ This will be explored in more depth later in this chapter.

Csikszentmihalyi also argues that the stereotype of the tortured artist was not accurate. The 91 creative people interviewed in his research, who had impacted culture in all fields, were happy and fulfilled. Whilst acknowledging that those who were discontented may have chosen not to participate in the study, he feels it demonstrates that there is no link between creativity and depression (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 18-19). A potentially positive impact is a benefit for the vulnerable adults participating in the research, already at a high risk of depression. The *Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities* indicates the acute sense of isolation and marginalisation that may be experienced, particularly by

²³ Csikszentmihalyi and his students from the University of Chicago interviewed 91 ‘exceptional individuals’ between 1990 and 1995. Each participant had to have made a difference to a major domain of culture – one of the sciences, the arts, business, government, or human well-being in general. He or she had to be currently involved in their domain and over 60 years of age. An equal number of men and women were sampled and as wide a representation of cultural backgrounds as possible.

refugees and asylum seekers, detached from their host communities and from people from their own backgrounds. Isolation of this type is linked to the highest levels of mental health problems, highlighting the importance 'of building on and supporting people's survival skills and resilience and creating opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to use their skills and qualifications' (Tidyman, Gale, and Seymour 2004, 26). Csikszentmihalyi's research indicates that creativity may be an appropriate means of building resilience and using and building skills.

Brené Brown's view of creativity is that it expresses an individual's originality and reduces a person's tendency to compare themselves with others. She argues that it is comparison that makes people doubt their value. She views comparing oneself with others as being about competition: a paradox of requiring one to be just like everyone else, only better. Creativity, on the other hand, is the source of any unique contribution to the world. Everyone is creative. Only some people choose to use their creativity, and others do not. Brown argues that art is the only way to make meaning: to be creative one has to create something, whether through sculpture, photography, acting, or rebuilding an engine. If one feels more secure about oneself, there is a significantly increased likelihood of achieving a sense of belonging (Brown 2010, 94-6). This is supported by Dorothy Heathcote, writing from the perspective of a drama teacher: 'before we can relate to people successfully, we must first come to terms with ourselves' (Heathcote 1984, 22). The fact that one's art is often validated by others through recognition or admiration of the creative product can also increase self-worth.

In addition to impacting on self-worth through reducing comparison and making meaning, creativity also shapes belonging through its impact on group dynamics. When creativity takes place in a group, the focus on the creative task can allow group relationships to develop more

naturally as there is a common interest and starting point for discussion. When circumstances are very bleak, as Thompson suggests, play and creativity resulting in beauty can also be an act of resistance (Thompson 2009, 11). This refusal to conform to imposed expectations of victimhood and depression encourages both the experiencing of spontaneous *communitas* and of belonging. This chapter will explore and develop these arguments in more depth.

Person-Centred Learning

This thesis argues for an approach to learning which is person-centred. Person-centred learning shares many of the characteristics of student-centred learning. Student-centred learning recognises the prior knowledge of students and their own capacity to make meaning through the active exploration of ideas, facts, and processes. Learning is a social process involving dialogue with the teacher and peers. The teacher is not the gatekeeper of knowledge, as is traditionally expected by ESOL students. Instead, the teacher facilitates the problem-solving of their students (Di Napoli 2002, 3-4). Person-centred learning, however, is much more holistic. According to Hicks, its purpose is to develop creative, confident, and competent members of society, who are able to contribute effectively to the life of their community (Hicks n.d.). Consonant with an ethic of care, it is responsive to the needs of the individual. It recognises the wider social and psychological benefits of education. The term 'person-centred learning' tends only to be applied in academic analysis of the educational experiences of adults with disabilities or young people demonstrating extremes of challenging behaviour (e.g. Gatongi 2007; Tilly 2011; Carnaby et al. 2011). The related concept of person-centred planning describes the holistic support of an individual through social services in alliance with family and friends and centred on the individual's wishes. This has spread from the specific field of learning disability to the wider field of adult social care. Consonant with

such practice in the field of disability, which foregrounds an individual's capacities, capabilities, and talents (Sanderson 2000, 5), this thesis argues for a model of practice which facilitates the discovery and celebration of strengths and abilities. A focus on play and creativity prevents participants from being limited by accurate expression in English. Much has been written about child-centred learning and how play is a core element of this approach (Entwistle 2012; Doddington and Hilton 2007; Tassoni and Beith 2002). This thesis argues that an emphasis on play should also be central to person-centred education for adults. Play has only been recognised by neuroscientists as a primary emotional function of the mammalian brain comparatively recently (Panksepp 1998, 281). Ashley Montagu argues that in the Western world, there has 'been a failure to recognise that the need to play remains a necessity **throughout one's life, a biosocial necessity**' [my emphasis]. He considers that the 'four great chords of mental health are the ability to love, to work, to play and to think soundly,' and that 'it is remarkable how closely interwoven each of these abilities is with one another' (Blatner and Blatner 1988, 7). David Cohen points out that adults frequently feel uncomfortable playing as they consider this something only a child should do. As a consequence, adult game play often involves the addition of complex rules and technical requirements to justify their interest, 'and, so, bring into their "play" many of the stresses of real life' (Cohen 2006, 178). Cohen argues that adults need to play more and more freely, without feeling uneasy about it (Cohen 2006, 13). It is appropriate for a person-centred approach to learning to address this need for play.

Despite the need for play in adults, it is important to recognise that some participants may find learning through play very alien. Learners may have expectations of formal desk-based learning by rote from their own countries, which may make them hostile to play. A British

Pakistani ESOL tutor, who had been trained in the UK but would not participate in play activities herself, or see any value in a drama-based approach for ESOL learners, explained:

All they want to do is learn and function in their everyday lives and to a certain extent I always think the method of 'to play games' is very childish based ... It's as if it's aimed for children but for them, as adults at home, as mums who have children, it's got to be more of a constructive way of learning: sitting down and blackboard and books.....if you're aiming to cater for the different culture side we have and that's what the purpose of the classes are, it's got to work for them (Appendix 1, interview 44).

While the notion of education rooted in 'sitting down and blackboard and books' has long since disappeared from the British education system, this is not the case for most non-European participants. This makes them doubt the value of active learning even for their children. Active learning requires students to perform meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing, as opposed to passively receiving knowledge from a teacher or textbook. The approach, which covers a variety of strategies, was popularised by Bonwell and Eison in 1991. They suggested that learners should work collaboratively (Bonwell and Eison 1991). Many refugee and migrant parents, however, are highly suspicious of learning through play and experiential learning, even in primary school. Desperate for their children to succeed, many of the families I visited as an Open Doors volunteer kept their children copying inaccurately formed English letters or doing sums for hours after school for fear they would fail in later life, especially if they had to return to their country of origin and had to enrol in a school where copying from the blackboard and reading books were the normal forms of learning. 'I worry so much,' said an Indian mother of her four-year-old. 'They say he is doing well in school but if we have to return to India he will be behind in school,' as her son recited the planets of the solar system by rote (Appendix 1, interview 34). While evidence from this practice-based research showed that learning through play was very successful for adults, a person-centred approach must respond sensitively to these concerns. It has caused the practice to be explicit about the learning objectives of play-focussed activities; to provide opportunities to make notes or photocopied worksheets to reinforce the learning; to introduce

an explicit language-learning element into warm-up activities, and even to create a participatory performance to educate parents about the impact of play on their child's brain development. Some of these strategies will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

A person-centred approach is also one which encourages the development of Freire's vision of a 'horizontal relationship' between teacher and student where the teacher is 'no longer merely the one who teaches, but the one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach' (Freire 1970, 61). This is also consonant with an ethic of care. Tove Pettersen defines 'mature care' as transcending 'the traditional demarcation between the private, the public and the professional' (Pettersen 2008, 123). It is thus a relational activity where the relationship between the carer and cared for is the focus, even in asymmetrical care when one party is superior in power, resources or competence and this influences the caring (Pettersen 2008, 131). In this way, as in Freire's methodology, dialogue, not monologue, is the aspiration. Mature care also implies a balancing of one's own needs with those of others.

In Pettersen's 2011 article with Marit Hem, the concept of reciprocity is developed as an alternative to the responsiveness more usually defined within an ethic of care. Focussing on relational care between nurses and users of psychiatric services, they define reciprocity as a care relationship when both the expertise of the professional in offering help and the expertise of the patient and carer are also recognised in living with or caring for someone with the condition. The whole process within this practice-based research has been about opening up dialogue between the facilitator and the facilitated and developing a reciprocal process. However, without the additional element of research, this reciprocal relationship exists within the individual workshops and blocks of sessions. Sometimes this is illustrated by participants

input of creative ideas and at other times through diverting from the original plan and addressing whatever people share, such as segueing into an improvisation about dealing with tradespeople to get a washing machine repaired, in response to concerns raised by one participant and discussed by the group (Workshop 12/11/08).

As Freire identifies, a horizontal relationship may be resisted by students. He explains: 'self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalisation of the opinion their oppressors hold of them' (Freire 1970, 40). As a consequence, students may be convinced of their own unfitness. Brown defines this internalisation of unworthiness as 'shame', which in turn creates a self-imposed barrier to achieving a sense of belonging (Brown 2007, 5). This self-depreciation certainly applied within this practice-based research, where participants were initially reluctant to express opinions or take decisions to shape the sessions. A common response was: 'You do what you think. You are the teacher' (Workshop 10/12/08). Despite attempts as a facilitator to avoid an authoritative role, participants repeatedly returned to this position. Charles Bingham confirms: 'abdication of authority may decrease the internalisation of alienating positions, but there is no guarantee that students will rid themselves of internalised otherness that has already taken place' (Bingham 2008, 133). However, play offers an antidote to this internal position, initially creating temporary fissures in self-perception, which when repeated and nurtured can become habit that shifts attitudes in the long-term. In an example of this, one Pakistani participant, who had been in the UK for 29 years described herself as being frightened of many things at the start of her participation in Creative English and Family Learning Club. She was frightened to speak to people and never left the house, other than to attend the workshops and pick up her granddaughter from school. When she brought her granddaughter to Family Learning Club, it was apparent that this lack of confidence was reinforced by the four-year-old insisting

'Grannie can't speak English' every time we tried to interact (Workshop 26/11/08). Initially, when given the opportunity to take the initiative in a scene or group activity or when asked a question, she would reply, 'You say. You are teacher' (e.g. 12/11/08). However, by the time she joined the 'Write a Children's Story' course, she had developed in confidence so much, that not only did she volunteer to give an inspired and whole-hearted performance as the central character of a scared little girl in the group's devised piece, she had so many ideas in the group character creation exercise, I had to intervene to ask specific questions of other members of the group to prevent it becoming a story solely from her imagination (Workshop 5/2/10). Moreover, her enthusiastic and full contribution as a *hijab*-wearing grandmother, gave permission to the new, younger Muslim women in the group to join in with a similar lack of inhibition. She became an advocate through her infectious enthusiasm for an approach she had initially found daunting. In addition, owing to her habitual isolation she valued the social element and saw it also possessed value for other people: 'Party is good. Because everyone is happy. Every people eat food: different, different food. It is good for me and all class' (Appendix 1, interview 17). Over time, she was prepared to organise her 'teachers' and the rest of the group into making these events happen. Thus she initiated several shared lunches, invited the project support worker and I to her home, and organised a party when the project support worker had to return to Sierra Leone (Workshop 13/05/09). The spirit of play within the sessions gradually undermined her perception of a hierarchy and enabled her to take the lead. Thus a reciprocal relationship developed.

While creativity may involve learning new skills from an expert artist, play is a leveller when all are on equal terms. As Schechner states, the fun of playing is in 'the playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting accepted procedures and hierarchies' (Schechner 1993, 27). With hierarchies inverted and a willingness to engage beyond one's normal expectations, reciprocal

relationships are more likely to develop in a play state. Whilst it may be possible to judge a person according to how fully they may be entering into a spirit of play, one cannot be judged on the quality of one's playfulness, especially when the session has been structured to erase a focus on difference, such as through an initial game which does not demand language. Creating a context where one cannot be judged on one's performance is also important for refugees and vulnerable migrants. One participant explained [in the grammar of the original]:

The first moment I felt really shame to stand in the middle of all people and then I realise that everyone is the same as me. [...] They speak like me. I do not need to shame. Then, yes, really good. I do not need to shame, as like me (Appendix 1, interview 11).

This Creative English participant reiterated the experience of shame common to the daily experience of many refugees and migrants who do not have good English language skills. This experience from the participant's first Creative English workshop is typical of the unease felt by many participants at the start of the first session. However, it was also typical that, on finding others were at a similar level of language ability, these feelings would diminish. Creating non-threatening early interactions with the group is a key element of a session facilitated through an ethic of care. A gentle playful approach helps to dispel negative feelings.

Brown's understanding of creativity and belonging developed from her research into shame. In her initial interviews with 215 women, the absence of belonging was expressed as one of the five representative definitions of shame she categorised from interview data: 'Shame is feeling like an outsider – not belonging' (Brown, Hernandez, and Villarreal 2011, 357). Brown's overarching definition of shame consequently concluded that it was: 'the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging' (Brown 2007, 5). Refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable to all types of shame, which act as a barrier to achieving a sense of belonging. Furukawa and Hunt (2011) explain how many immigrants experience shame as a consequence of appearing incompetent

because of their limited language skills, lack of education or job skills, or unfamiliarity with the host country's cultural practices. The inability to negotiate even simple tasks like shopping or using public transport, or helping their children with homework erodes self-esteem. They conclude:

These situations threaten their role as parents, providers and protectors and can lead to feelings of worthlessness. In addition, some may feel unwelcome in the community and experience shame because of their ethnic or religious identity or newcomer status' (Furukawa and Hunt 2011, 199).

Refugees and migrants may be vulnerable to feeling shame, but play and creativity generate safe spaces in which one can expose oneself. In play, there is no right or wrong. All are equal. The room is filled with laughter. In creativity, facilitated through an ethic of care, there is the protective distance of fiction and metaphor; one has no responsibility for the choices of a character. Sharing the experience with others in a similar position helps one to recognise that one is not alone in this situation. This recognition combats shame and develops resilience. It also encourages a sense of belonging.

Creating safe spaces through play does not mean that there is no element of risk. However, the type of risk involved and the way it is facilitated remains important. Winnicott argues that play is exciting owing to: 'the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects' (Winnicott 1980, 55). This excitement inevitably generates risk, as the relationship between the real and the imaginary also means there is a vulnerability in a play state. The risk involved in play can be a positive source of self-definition and exploration. According to Winnicott, play is an activity that reveals personal aspects of the person engaging in it: 'It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self' (Winnicott 1980, 63). Thus play experiences embody aspects of the subject's internal reality. Winnicott argues that playing exists in a place and a time neither

inside nor outside. 'To control what is outside one has to *do* things, not simply to think or to wish, and doing things takes time. Playing is doing' (Winnicott 1980, 47). In the context of this practice-based research, participants are playing outside the confines of everyday life to explore language, behaviours, and strategies that will change how they cope in the real world. Physically embodying these alternative strategies increases the likelihood of participants using them in life. In the case of the Pakistani grandmother described in a previous section who developed a reciprocal relationship through play, it was during a moment in the Creative English workshop on 26 November 2008 that her perception of her relationship with others began to shift. In the session, the project support worker was in role as a woman who was new to the country and did not know what to do. She sat in the middle of the circle and the group were asking her questions and giving her advice. This grandmother stood up, entered the circle, and said, 'I am your friend. Come with me.' 'I am your friend' was echoed by a number of other women in the circle, as the grandmother led her away. This playful context was the first time that the grandmother had taken a lead in the group, recognising she could help and support in the fictional context. As documented earlier in the chapter, this grandmother became the instigator of social events and a key voice of welcome to new participants in the real context of Creative English. The risk of standing up and taking the scene in a different direction may seem small but for this woman at the time it was a brave and significant action, prompted by her engagement in a play state. Affirmed by the rest of the group, it opened up the possibility of taking this role in real life.

A person-centred approach to learning, however, needs to create a sense of safety to enable risk to be appropriately explored. Schechner is clear on the relationship between risk and security: 'Security is needed at the outset of play more than later on. Once play is underway, risk, danger, and insecurity are part of playing's thrill' (Schechner 1993, 27). Schechner

recognises that there is usually some sort of safety net within play, where one can call time out or involve an umpire etc. However, informal 'dark play' can continue even when individuals feel threatened and abused. When facilitating work with vulnerable adults, it is very important that there is always a safety net and that the workshop individually and within the sequence provides a safe framework. Schechner continues:

This pattern of moving from safety to danger is true of performance workshops, which need to commence in an atmosphere of “safety” and “trust” but, once underway, are places where very risky business can be explored. On a larger scale, the whole workshop-rehearsal phase of performance needs protection and isolation, a well-defined safety net, while the finished performance can move from place to place on tour, overcome many particular distractions heaped on it by audiences, and in general “take care of itself” (Schechner 1993, 27).

Maslow defines 'safety' needs as fundamental motivation, close to the base of his pyramid. While I will go on to argue that the workshop process reverses the order in which needs are gratified, safety within the workshop space remains fundamental. Participants have to feel secure to feel able to take the risks necessary to play. When many of the women participants arrived in Creative English, their hesitancy and whispered responses suggested that even speaking their name in front of others was something they perceived as a risk. For refugees and vulnerable migrants, stress and pressure in other areas of their lives makes this need for safety within the workshop space paramount, especially when they may already be taking a risk in trying a totally new way of learning through drama. Schechner's reference to the preparation and presentation of a performance on tour acts as a metaphor for the aims of this research. In creating a protected space through an ethic of care, which is outside normal life, individuals should be able to interact more freely, independently, and confidently in their lives after passing through the project.

An applied theatre project can create a sort of alternative family that provides safety but enables risk to be introduced in a safe, structured way. Stella Barnes (2009) defines the

difference between creative risk, necessary for developing satisfying art, and personal risk, where one is left feeling exposed and emotionally vulnerable. She argues that personal risk should never be required in work with young refugees and asylum seekers, particularly through avoiding work that demands they revisit traumatic experiences in their pasts, unless they are capable of making an informed choice about this. She aims to build creative risk slowly and begins with consultation with the group, involving very low levels of risk for those who are new to the UK, new to group work, and new to drama (Barnes 2009, 37-9). This practice-based research shares this view. Even working through metaphor can take participants to risky places emotionally, especially through sustained engagement with a particular character or text. Giving an example from her own experience as a performer, Jennings writes of a performance she devised inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*: 'What the play did was jolt me into acknowledging my own failings as a mother, where I had neglected my own children and gone with sometimes naïve ideas that in retrospect were downright irresponsible!' (Jennings 2009, 7). There is no way of anticipating the associations and connotations for any individual of a particular piece of source material. Whilst it is impossible and undesirable to remove all risk, it is important to structure sessions to support participants in engaging with creative risk and to have the support of a wider or alternative organisation to which participants can be referred, if necessary, for appropriate emotional support.

The structure of each session and the project itself provides important scaffolding for the participants, which enables them to respond positively to risk, develop skills, confidence and relationships with others in the group. Adult Education Co-ordinator Paula Turton described what she perceived as one of the advantages of the approach to drama within Creative English sessions compared to other drama sessions she had witnessed elsewhere:

You come up with some building blocks that transcend language barriers and you've got facial expressions and body movements. People have already got a kit that they wouldn't feel embarrassed to stand up in front of a handful of other people and demonstrate what their new-found drama skills are. Even if the language isn't particularly in place they've got something where they can think, 'OK, I can do this.' (Appendix 1, interview 51)

Having a clear supportive structure, however, does not mean that this should be immediately obvious to participants. Sometimes the room may appear chaotic, despite the underlying structure. Jacques Lecoq states: 'Chaos is necessary to creation, but 'chaos' must be organised, allowing each person to put down roots and develop his own creative rhythm' (Lecoq 2002, 172). Certainly the family learning projects within the practice-based research would at times appear chaotic, but within the 'chaos' a variety of needs were addressed to allow participants to achieve in the workshop. The most 'chaotic' phase of the session was usually the section where participants made the appropriate props, costumes, or puppets necessary for the performance. This always occurred at the beginning of the session to allow for cultural differences in time-keeping. There would be the means to assemble the required item quickly or pre-made spares, which could be used by a family who had arrived too late to make their own, and extension activities which allowed those who had arrived early or finished quickly to be engaged for the whole time. Being focussed on the task maintained a positive, anticipatory atmosphere in the room. There would then be a series of games beginning with those which are very non-exposing and build confidence and the skills needed later in the performance. For example, in a one-off workshop on the Chinese story, *Sister Lace* on 28 May 2008, the families constructed giant puppets, which had to be operated by adults and children together. My observations of developing participant confidence in the room, verbal evaluation from participants, and the interview evidence of the family support worker who worked regularly with some of the families and participated in the workshop, suggests that the structure supported participants in negotiating increased levels of risk both in the creative activity and in working alongside their children, which may not be a customary activity. The

first warm-up activity involved everyone simultaneously playing with sticks, experimenting with the different ways one could move with a stick balanced on a finger tip as a pair or family. This began to playfully develop the physical co-ordination the family would need to operate their puppet together. This was followed by a frenzied race, when families worked together to carry as many sticks as possible to their container in the allotted time, which generated energy, concentration, and laughter. The atmosphere became more focussed then as they began to learn how to operate their puppet expressively, with different members of the family operating different limbs, and to learn the vocal sound effects, song, and choral speech necessary for the performance at the end of the session. With the safe, gentle build-up through the activities, it was actually a parent, who claimed that, normally, relating to her children was very difficult, who volunteered to take the lead part. This placed her and her children in a more vulnerable position, especially as they chose to be seen operating the puppets, rather than hiding behind the puppet curtain, which was an option. This, however, was a productive risk, as the mother smiled in a way her family support worker had not seen before, and the family engaged together in the task in a manner which was unusual. 'This was fun,' she said. 'This was crazy. I did not think we could do this together, but I find we can' (Angolan participant in evaluative discussion 28/5/08). The spontaneity encouraged by play is central to achieving the capacity to relate to others differently and even solve problems.

According to Adam Blatner:

Spontaneity involves a quality of mind, the active opening up, which accompanies the thinking of a new idea or trying something a new way. It involves thinking afresh, balancing impulse and restraint, and integrating imagination, reason, and intuition. Spontaneity is the process by which inspiration enters creativity. It is *more than mere impulsivity* because it requires some intention to achieve an aesthetic or constructive effect. Spontaneity may also be understood as the opposite of habit, stereotyped thinking, neurotic compulsive rituals, or transferences [...] In being spontaneous, you are open to how the present moment is different from the past, and how the people around you might be able to offer new and more rewarding experiences (Blatner and Blatner 1988, 23).

In this example, the spontaneous play state, created by a structure which gently introduced risk, enabled both parent and children to interact differently rather than in their routine patterns. The parenting support worker agreed, and found it easier to support the family after participating in the workshop alongside her:

I remember her enjoying the experience and her kids ... just not being aggressive, distant and 'Oh whatever' and so the setting up drama in a family learning environment for people, particularly those whose English isn't their first language, is another opportunity to foster bridge-building across groups who would otherwise be too difficult, too much of a challenge to do because of the age range and the language levels (Appendix 1, interview 51).

An openness to risk is clearly an advantage to those with limited English language skills. In the arts, mistakes are expected as part of the creative process. A clear difference could be seen comparing earlier and later sessions in Creative English and family learning projects, when initially there was considerable anxiety amongst many of the women to have the correct answer. As this culturally imposed expectation to always be right lifted, participants contributed more fully and language flowed more easily. With the fear of failure gone, the brain naturally absorbs more efficiently (Hart 1993, 109-10). This makes it an excellent context for language learning.

Creativity and Belonging

Maslow distinguishes between 'special talent creativeness' and 'self-actualising creativeness.' He considers the latter to emerge more directly from the personality and to show itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life, such as in housekeeping, dealings with a client, or even a sense of humour (Maslow 2011, 106-7). He found people who exhibited self-actualising creativeness were less inhibited and less self-critical than their peers. Thus, Maslow considered there to be a link between creativity and self-acceptance. This impacted on their integration with the wider community: 'the creativity of my subjects seemed to be an epiphenomenon of their

greater wholeness and integration, which is what self-acceptance implies' (Maslow 1987, 162). Brown explores how and why this is the case. She argues that creativity expresses human originality and reduces the comparison with others that make people doubt their value. This section argues that the practice-based research for this thesis adopts Brown's view of creativity in relation to belonging. It achieves this through using mixed art forms, valuing all practical and social roles, and the structure of the sessions.

Brown makes a clear distinction between 'fitting-in' and 'belonging':

Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to *change* who we are; it requires us to *be* who we are (Brown 2010, 25).

According to this definition, Brown identifies a difference between the construction of a superficial appearance of belonging and actually experiencing it on a deeper emotional level. As the emotional experience of belonging is much more difficult to assess, belonging is often judged solely on the external appearance of belonging through functional indicators such as access to welfare, levels of educational participation, housing provision, language skills, and labour market participation. However, Atfield et al. (2007) conceptualise integration as a subjective process, in which the refugee's perceptions are central, often influenced most strongly by the way neighbourhood and community is experienced in everyday actions (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole 2007, 13-5). As the challenges of multiculturalism and past unsuccessful policies of assimilation suggest, neither remaining in an entirely separate community nor relinquishing your cultural identity are effective ways of creating a sense of belonging. However, 'being who we are' cannot simply accept the prejudices members of all cultures inherit. Facilitating a sense of belonging is about creating a culture where individuals do not feel threatened or insecure about their own identity and are, therefore, at ease with people who may be very different to them. The deeper level of emotional security, which is

fundamental to those with a deep sense of belonging, is integral to an inclusive community. Without understanding the value of a diverse community or having built positive relationships with the Other previously, it is unlikely that people will look to those who are very different to themselves to build relationships. The applied drama project creates a space where this can happen, where participants get to work alongside others, celebrate difference and similarity and develop and be valued for their own strengths. Through play and creativity, participants are open to new ways of seeing and responding. This, however, is a complex process and the preconceptions of generations do not break down overnight. This practice-based research is about providing a surface context that brings diverse individuals together to help them 'fit in' with UK society through better language skills and understanding of the culture and services they may wish to access. Once they are attending the project, however, it aims to meet these expectations, but also to encourage their sense of belonging through play and creativity and consequently value the skills, abilities, and experiences they already have.

According to Brown, creativity is 'the expression of our originality', which 'helps us to stay mindful that what we bring to the world is completely original and cannot be compared' (Brown 2010, 97). In her eyes, it is comparison with other people that makes individuals doubt the value they have. In this research, for example, participants played a game involving lining up according to different criteria. One of these criteria required participants to stand in line according to the amount of time they had been in England, which on this occasion ranged from two weeks to twenty years (Workshop 5/11/08). At the end of the workshop, a participant who had been in England for three months expressed fear that she would not be able to speak English after 20 years in the UK. She had assumed that other participants in this game, who had lived in the UK for 20 years, had worked as intensively on their language skills as she had since her arrival, and yet still struggled to communicate. A lack of contextual knowledge

prevented her from recognising that these were Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who had lived entirely within their own language speaking communities for this period, without any significant attempt to learn English. In terms of developing confidence, a game involving one person miming an emergency for which another member of the group must get appropriate help was more constructive in a workshop on 11 March 2009. The mimes were exaggerated and the tone was frivolous. However, the game also celebrated the simple and inventive ways speakers of different levels of English could communicate. Sign language, showing props, using key words, and even getting the help of a passer-by were just as effective as fluent English. By the end of the exercise, there was no doubt that a wide range of strategies could solve the same problem.

It was also important within this research to celebrate all forms of creativity, whether in art, drama, cooking, or efficient management of the register list. Therefore, I used a mixture of art forms in my approach and valued the practical and social roles within the project just as highly: being friendly to newcomers or making food for the group was recognised as much as the art. In being creative, the participant should not merely be trying to fit in. The sessions were structured to give people confidence in being more creative, increasing the creative freedom in tasks within each session and within a project, as appropriate.²⁴ For example, where I supplied an example prop, puppet, or costume for families to make as part of each Family Learning Club session, I made the choice to create an example using materials other than those I had in the workshop. This was because people only used the precise materials I had provided to make an exact copy of my example in the early weeks of the project. Parents would even correct their children for not colouring in their puppet in the exact colours I had used

²⁴ Erratic attendance, especially in family learning, due to illness and other pressures in their lives, meant that the progression tended to remain within each session rather than within the project as a whole, especially in Family Learning Club.

(Workshops 21/5/08, 28/5/08, 4/12/08). Without the same materials, participants were forced to find more creative and individual solutions to create their artefact. I also found that, with a new group, it was more effective to create an example that revealed the potential of the materials but was not skilfully constructed. This gave parents the confidence that they could achieve what had been asked of them but also gave them the space to exceed what I had done. I was amazed, for example, by the variety of ingenious ways of creating monster costumes from bin liners and newspaper when I adopted this strategy (Workshop 4/06/08). In the field of psychotherapy, Winnicott warns that 'the patient's creativity can be only too easily stolen by a therapist who knows too much. It does not really matter, of course, how much the therapist knows provided he can hide his knowledge, or refrain from advertising what he knows' (Winnicott 1980, 66-7). In applied theatre, it is also important to leave space for participants to step in and take full ownership of the process and product. As a facilitator, there is a delicate balance between developing skills and leaving space, so participants are fully empowered. It is about responding to the needs of that particular group of participants. It is vital that the task set is achievable. For the family learning design activity pitched at a mixture of ages and confidence, there may be the option of using pre-existing cut outs to ensure that the final product is something the maker is proud of, as well as exploiting the creative freedom of raw materials. Success in one activity encourages the confidence to be more free and imaginative in the next. Csikszentmihalyi emphasises the link between success and enjoyment: 'If you do anything well, it becomes enjoyable' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 349). Pleasure is motivating and creates a relaxed atmosphere to engage with the task and the rest of the group. 'To keep enjoying something, you need to increase the complexity' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 350), so it is also important that the facilitator uses their skills as an artist to develop the participants' creative skills and abilities throughout a project. As one participant stated, the creative process then has significant benefits:

It makes me feel more me. I feel like I'm myself when I'm being creative. I'm not trying to be like anyone else. [...] There's like a humour and a joy in the process and in the end product. You usually end up wanting to share it with someone. (Appendix 1, interview 41)

It is interesting that the participant sees a link between being true to herself and wanting to share that with others. This suggests there is a connection between creativity and the wider community. Through connection with the wider community, a sense of belonging develops.

Csikszentmihalyi also considers there to be a link between creativity and a wider social network. According to him, creativity results from: 'the interaction of a system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the symbolic domain, and a field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 6). He argues that no new discovery can be made without prior knowledge, an intellectual and social network to stimulate the inventor's thinking, and without the social mechanisms that recognise and spread the innovations. Whilst Csikszentmihalyi's study focussed on exceptional people who made a major contribution in international arts or sciences, this same principle can be applied in the everyday context of this research. This may be in the most simple of artistic acts. For example, a family-learning workshop on 11 June 2008 focussed on the Romanian story *The Hundred Children*. Participants made simple puppets to represent the large numbers of characters necessary to complete the story. Without being specified, the symbolic rule dictated that all but one participant create people with skin in shades of pink, yellow, brown, and black. One mother, however, coloured the skin of some of her puppets blue. At first this seemed the childish action of someone unused to art activities, but then someone recognised she had coloured some of her figures with the blue skin of Hindu gods and this was validated by some others in the group and me as the facilitator. It added a further multicultural layering to the Romanian story as it was performed by the group. Not

only were the 100 children a magical provision from the old man to the childless couple at the start of the story, but the fact that they were infiltrated by the gods themselves added an urgency for Bukur, the father, to provide for them, and hinted at divine intervention in his capacity to trick the dragons later in the story to satisfactorily provide for his enormous family. In an example of practical rather than artistic creativity, in June 2010 a member of the Play 'n' Chat group where storytelling training was taking place, had the idea of serving toast at the sessions as a hot breakfast rather than just the usual tea and biscuits. This idea would not have become a practical reality without Csikszentmihalyi's 'social mechanisms': in this case volunteers from the group offering to take turns to buy the bread and toast it, and the support of the venue's staff who equipped the kitchen with a toaster to enable them to do so. Toast can now be served by other groups who use the building. What Csikszentmihalyi's conclusions show is that creativity cannot exist in isolation. There has to be a community to generate creative activity. Imagination needs to be stimulated, ideas recognised and taken on by others, for the invention to spread it and impact the culture as a result. Community and belonging are inextricably linked.

A creative task also provides an ideal context to expand perceptions of one's community. According to Maslow, creativity involves 'here-now self-forgetfulness and other-forgetfulness'. He lists the attributes of this 'forgetful' state as: 'less fear, less inhibition, less need for defence and self-protection, less guardedness, less need for artificiality, less fear of ridicule, of humiliation and of failure' (Maslow 1971, 67). Sharing in a creative task is, therefore, an ideal context to meet with those whom one would normally consider the Other. This section, then, argues that an applied drama project is an invaluable context for integrating diverse communities.

Shared participation in an arts activity encourages a focus on shared goals. It can provide a context for interaction where the focus is not on oneself or one's differences. The focus on a short-term artistic goal can create a liminal space where common ground can be found. This was demonstrated in the Barking and Dagenham storytelling training. In Barking and Dagenham the training was delivered to a mixed group of refugees, migrants, and host community participants. The participants took responsibility for a performance in a subsequent Play 'n' Chat session in pairs. The fact that they were in a pair helped them to feel more secure in achieving the actual task. However, it also provided an opportunity to work closely with someone from a different ethnic background. In an area where race politics have a considerable impact on everyday interactions and perceptions of one another, positive contact between different ethnic groups is particularly valuable. Nasra was a migrant from Algeria and Laura had lived in Dagenham since birth, never travelling further away than the nearby Essex coast. The two were united by the fact that neither of them really wanted to make puppets, props, or sets, or perform a story in front of the group. After a few awkward minutes of working together, they spotted some of the existing example puppets and asked if they could use them. Soon they were making branches and owl nests and foxes, which moments earlier they had maintained they would not do at any cost. The performance was based around the children's picture book *Owl Babies*. Nasra asked Laura to read the book, as she was not confident in her ability to read English. Laura obliged. Nasra, however, was more confident in using the puppets. Thus, the two women, who would not normally have come together, were soon chatting and sharing the responsibility for the task as a team, planning how they would share the resources afterwards to tell stories with their children, and asking, 'Can we do it again next week?' The focus on the task emphasised their shared identity as performers and mothers rather than differences of race and culture.

If the arts project has sufficient duration or is embedded in another context where individuals will continue to work side-by-side, this initial interaction has the possibility of developing into a friendship. Friendships with specific individuals can have a more universal impact on one's ability to care about diverse others in society. Pettersen categorises care as either 'thick' or 'thin'. 'Thin' care is given to someone the carer does not know very well, when her information about them is general and impersonal. 'Thick' care requires 'a personal relationship between the carer and cared-for, where one's knowledge of the other is detailed and discriminating' (Pettersen 2008, 114). Pettersen links the idea of friendship to being able to care more effectively on a national or international scale, as well as an intimate local one:

Friendship is one such relationship where we can achieve knowledge of the other person's perspective and emotions, while learning more about our self. This is a type of knowledge that enhances our capacity to give care, thin as well as thick care (Pettersen 2009, 56).

Simply recognising that there may be more than one response to a given situation may result in more sensitive personal care of individuals, as well as generalised care of unknown others. This capacity is generated by what Gilligan describes as 'co-feeling'. She defines 'co-feeling' as founded on the ability to enter into and understand the feelings of others, a capacity which can be developed through recognition of shared experiences and imagination, prompted through performance (Pettersen 2009, 56). In this example, Laura and Nasra were united initially by the shared experience of not wanting to do the task and then by their success at it. Their shared understanding of how their creativity could benefit both their children, prompted a good-natured and fair distribution of the resources from the task. Given time, as the final section of this thesis will demonstrate, Laura did go on to deliver care on a more generalised basis. 'Gobi Monster Goes to the Doctor', a short performance on 30 March 2010 within the storytelling project in Dagenham, provides an example of a context in which an imaginative leap into the role of the Other had an impact beyond the moment of performance. This performance sought to address cultural barriers to play and to encourage parents to see the

value of play in their child's development. The neuroscience was communicated in a simple but fun way through the character of a doctor and brightly coloured visual aids, generated by the brain scan in the plot. Gobi the Monster puppet then sought help from the parents and children in the audience to develop the links in his brain. Positioned in the performance as experts, each parent had to embody the role of one who did believe play was valuable and to actively write or draw a suggested play activity on a link that became part of a visual representation of Gobi's well connected and functioning brain. The discussion time allowed within this task ensured the appropriate information was translated into different languages as necessary, as more fluent language speakers translated for others. It also allowed for discussion, helping those who empathised with the character of the bemused monster parent to recognise their existing expertise in this area and thus embody the role of expert with more assurance. This imaginative act resulted in a shift in the perception of the participants. Typical responses included: 'It's really interesting. I didn't know the brain worked like that. It has shown me what I do is important.' 'I didn't know it was important for the brain to play. I will try to do more' (Evaluative discussion 30/3/10). However, suggesting a more sustained impact, there was also an increase in attendance on the follow-up storytelling course, which taught parents how to use these techniques at home. Unlike the previous course, which had five attendees, the course which followed this training had 15 participants.²⁵ Similarly, participants were witnessed discussing play activities offered by the group on Gobi's brain scan which remained a visual prompt on the wall beyond the end of the session.²⁶ These parents then

²⁵ The storytelling course on 26/2/10 with five attendees was held following the same workshop programme at Goodmayes Play 'n' Chat, as was later delivered at Barking and Dagenham Play 'n' Chat, with the exception of the neuroscience element. Storytelling training in Barking and Dagenham for 15 participants was held on 29/4/10. The only other variable between the two groups was the ethnic make-up of the groups, where Barking and Dagenham group is about 50% migrant from varying ethnic backgrounds and 50% White British. In Goodmayes, the majority of the group are from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, with one white British family and a few participants from other countries. Participants in both storytelling training groups were from India and Bangladesh, which seems to suggest that ethnic background was not the key variable, although further research could be done to support this point.

²⁶ Adding photos of participants performing some of the activities in a subsequent week helps to rekindle interest in the visual aid and, as a consequence, its subject.

became advocates of play activities to other members of the group: 'I like your idea. This I try' (Workshop 6/4/10).

Applying and Inverting Maslow's Hierarchy of Need

This section argues that the practice-based research for this thesis both supports Maslow's theory of motivation and subverts it, as participants' perceived needs are met in the reverse order within an applied theatre project. With reference to James Thompson's work in *Performance Affects* (2009), it also argues that play and beauty can be acts of resistance which enable this to happen.

As explained in the Introduction, Maslow theorised human motivation to be dictated by a hierarchy of needs. According to the hierarchy, in the first instance, physiological needs have to be met, such as food and sleep. Safety needs, like health and employment, are the next priority, followed by love and belonging, then self-esteem, and finally self-actualisation, which is where creativity features. If 'relative gratification' of a tier is not achieved, the thoughts and behaviour of an individual are completely dominated by this object. As a theory of human motivation, this is helpful in understanding why recruiting for an arts project in this context can be challenging. However, when the hierarchy is reversed, it is also helpful as a way of understanding how the arts can benefit participants. The hierarchy of needs met through the arts is the opposite of the hierarchy of needs for motivation, as the next section will explore.

The charity hosting most of the practice-based research, Open Doors, has many years of experience of delivering activities that aim to engage its isolated clientele. It finds that

motivating and maintaining the attendance of vulnerable adults is always a challenge. For refugees and migrants, it has tried activities such as keep-fit, card-making and 'Time Out for Women,' a course aimed at the social needs of the women with guest tutors in health and beauty issues. However, the only activities that have proved successful, in terms of the numbers attending are those which are marketed as improving English language skills. Other activities have always closed down after a few weeks with only one or two attendees. By contrast, any course or activity addressing English needs gets between 10 and 25 participants.²⁷ The importance of including a reference to English language learning in the course title is reflected in other applied theatre projects such as Rewrite's 'Creative ESOL' and Richmond Theatre's 'Learning English through the Arts'. When the Refugee Arts Project sought to recruit adults for a theatre project in 2009, named explicitly as such, the participants were all aged between 13 and 20 and had a school or youth theatre background in drama in the UK previously (Appendix 1, interview 54). These factors influenced the decision to entitle the adult practice-based research programme Creative English, and to position the family drama projects under the 'Family Learning' agenda.

The appropriateness of this decision was reiterated within the practice-based research by the fact that the only Creative English participants to attend only one session were those who attended during a project where the emphasis was on creativity first and developing English skills second.²⁸ Maslow's hierarchy of need helps to explain the lack of participant motivation for a purely creative activity. When living in the UK, English language skills are a fundamental 'safety' need, which falls within Maslow's second to bottom tier. By contrast, the social objectives of 'Time Out for Women' fall within the middle tier and the creativity of a card-

²⁷ Open Doors activity attendance: Sewing group: 1 attendee, Card-making class: 1 attendee, 'Time Out for Women:' 4 attendees, which dropped to one by the end of the short course, Discussion group: 2 attendees, Keep Fit for Women: 5 attendees. By comparison, English Conversation Classes, always have 10 to 25 participants at any given session. Source: e-mail to author from Sally Dixon, Head of Open Doors 11/1/11.

²⁸ This occurred during the development of 'Ghost Lesson', a play devised and performed by the group on 29/4/09. This performance will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

making class or drama session falls within the top self-actualisation tier and will, therefore, not be prioritised by potential participants, unless the lower tiers have received 'relative gratification.' Maslow's hierarchy of need thus explains participants' motivation in attending. However, in the context of working with those who may have extreme safety or physiological needs, the concept of relative gratification needs further consideration.

'Relative gratification' implies that needs have to some extent been met in each tier before progressing to the next level. However, if this were the case, applied theatre work in contexts such as refugee camps and homeless shelters, where unresolved physiological and safety needs remain, would remain unattended unless participants were coerced. Refugees and vulnerable migrants may have quite extreme and long-term physiological and safety needs, owing to experiences in their country of origin or within the UK, as described in the Introduction. In this context, however, I argue that 'relative gratification' may be acceptance rather than resolution of the current need or circumstance. If there is no immediate possibility of remedying one's homelessness, illness or safety, the choice to participate in a creative project may be an empowering and liberating one, refusing to be defined by restrictions of personal circumstance.

The value of participation in an arts project in times of need is supported by James Thompson in *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect* (2009). Thompson argues that applied theatre projects have positioned themselves within a framework of social utility, thus preventing the foregrounding of pure joy they can bring, and the political importance of such intervention. The emphasis of funders on predetermined impact has resulted in 'a certain atrophying of the practice, which now needs to be countered with, what I am calling *attention to affect*' (Thompson 2009b, 117). Thompson defines 'affect' as 'the bodily sensation that is

sustained and provoked particularly by aesthetic experiences. It is a force that emerges from attention to pleasure, astonishment, joy and beauty' (Thompson 2009b, 135). Thus he argues for performances of beauty, which inspire happiness in the participants and considers that this part of its radical nature: 'safety, protection and care (particularly when translated to situations of conflict) are not a retreat from some imagined politics of freedom, but the heart of its radical vision' (Thompson 2009b, 118-9). He argues that:

dancing, and other forms of aesthetic expression, might be places of respite, but the argument here suggests something more radical - they are also integral and necessary parts of change itself. In a world of inequality, social injustice and endemic violence, they could be acts of resistance *and* redistribution, made in an intimate and sensory key (Thompson 2009b, 11).

It is this affect, Thompson believes, that lasts beyond the moment of performance. He encourages 'readers to maintain their commitment to working with groups and communities in dynamic and joyful performance projects - and to continue to make real everyone's right to *beautiful, radiant things*' (Thompson 2009b, 11). The practice-based research engaged in for this thesis has sought to do just that.

'Beautiful radiant things' can be found in a completed piece of performance, but in this practice-based research they have also been found in moments of laughter or pure magic that have touched simple experiences, especially in the family learning sessions. In a participatory storytelling of *Noah's Ark* on 26 November 2008, for example, the families had made animals that were placed on the fabric rectangle representing the Ark at the appropriate point in the story. All the families got into the Ark too and rocked with the waves, while making the sound of the sea with their voices. A rain-maker added the sound of the rain falling. As the floodwaters rose, the participants lifted up a huge piece of shimmering blue fabric enclosing everyone in the Ark. It was a moment of inexplicable magic when everyone for a few seconds was entirely in the moment, everything else forgotten. The children's eyes were wide open

inside this tent of blue and the adults too delighted in the magic (Workshop 4/6/08). In a dramatization of the children's picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak 1963), the moment of communal magic occurred when the adults released the creepers they clutched coiled up in their raised hands, suddenly creating a breathtaking forest before our eyes, in which the children could wander in awe and wonder (Workshop 24/9/07). In these moments of magic, there is a temporary but total release from life's difficulties, simply by tapping back into the wonder you have, or used to have, when you were a child. If it is possible to be emotionally touched by something as simple as some home-made shapes in string, paper or fabric and simple sounds and movements you are making with your own body, there is hope for tomorrow in whatever challenges you face. What makes these moments magical is the sharing of it with others. Otherwise, it would just be an effective use of props or physicality. People feel connected with one another through the simultaneous recognition of beauty. In Thompson's view, an encounter with beauty also generates 'an urge to share, communicate and offer other people the same sense of pleasure' (Thompson 2009b, 145). In this way it inspires the communication, solidarity, and positive feelings necessary to build a sense of community.

Thompson argues that beauty brings pleasure but also that this response is an involuntary one, which cannot be dictated or enforced. We want to share beauty with others, as something that is good, but we know this response cannot be insisted upon and, as a result, enter we into debate without the arrogance ensuing from certainty of our righteousness (Thompson 2009b, 153-4). Creating something of beauty together thus opens dialogue in a safe but inspiring way. Consequently, Thompson argues, a focus on beauty should be central to an ethical vision of community-based performance. He writes: 'I would argue, particularly in contexts of suffering or violence, it provides a safer route through. Beauty can overlay pain or stimulate a critique of it, but in the process profound pleasure or delight is experienced' (Thompson 2009b, 156).

Recognition of our capacity to experience beauty reinstates a key part of our humanity, which encourages us to see that we are not restricted by the circumstances surrounding us, thus offering capacity for change.

Thompson believes: 'Beauty is more intense when it is experienced in a place of deprivation, and, more significantly, here we have a sense that beauty reveals and perhaps fulfils a need' (Thompson 2009b, 151). For individuals struggling to survive or battling to come to terms with loss and exile, it provides them with temporary release from stress and strain. It is a response to Maslow's highest need: self-actualisation. It can be an act of defiance against the limitations of their current circumstances. Attention to affect can, as Thompson argues, become an ethical 'generator for radical intent' (Thompson 2009b, 118).

As a generator of radical intent, play and creativity can invert Maslow's hierarchy. While the findings from this practice-based research support Maslow's understanding of the hierarchy of human motivation, they also indicate that to achieve each tier of the hierarchy, the arts, in fact, reverse the sequence. Maslow describes the highest tier of his hierarchy of motivation as self-actualisation, which he defines as a state in which one experiences purpose, meaning, and inner potential. It is in this state that creativity becomes desirable. However, Stuart Brown argues that 'if we stop playing, we share the fate of all animals that grow out of play. Our behaviour becomes fixed. We are not interested in new and different things. We find fewer opportunities to take pleasure in the world around us' (Brown 2009, 71). This applies to many of the participants in this research. The difficulties experienced in their lives have destroyed the time/inclination to play, which in turn makes life more difficult. They need to reconnect with a sense of play and joy to make it easier to build positive relationships with people who

are different and to be able to respond to the problems they face more creatively. It is the impact of play within the creativity that allows Maslow's hierarchy to be reversed.

As previously highlighted in this chapter, a range of art forms and drama activities that did not rely on the spoken word were used in workshops to enable all participants to play, create, and contribute fully, regardless of language skills. This example from Creative English's 'Write a Children's Story' course illustrates how the arts reverse the hierarchy of need. In a session on 5 February 2010, the use of puppets enabled a Pakistani woman to have purpose and create meaning in the session. The woman spoke no English and struggled to learn, owing to her lack of previous schooling and illiteracy in her own language. When interviewed in Urdu about the sessions, she simply stated: 'I enjoy your classes. I like you but unfortunately I don't understand' (Appendix 1, interview 16). However, the use of puppets actually enabled her to understand and communicate more effectively than her peers. During a session where participants were sharing traditional stories from their countries, the use of animal puppets and props enabled her to recognise a fable that was being shared. She then instigated the retelling of a fable she remembered. In her operation of the main character, a crow puppet, she created a huge amount of humour. No words were needed but she introduced some well-timed comic squawks from the squeaker in the puppet's beak. The class roared with laughter and the woman's eyes shone. She positively glowed with delight as she took centre stage in the group in a way she had never been able to before. Being able to express this story from her culture, her sense of humour and ability to entertain the group so effectively won admiration from the rest of the group, which in turn gave her more confidence. After making little progress in her spoken English, this now began to improve significantly, as she took more risks in speaking out and interacting with others, building better relationships with others in the group. In this example, although the woman has been motivated to attend by learning

English as addressing a safety need, according to Maslow's hierarchy, in practice, the hierarchy has been completely upturned. It is the creative activity, which gives her the self-esteem to build the relationships, and it is these relationships that then support her in improving her English language skills. Although not evidenced within this research, it is conceivable that, having improved their basic language skills or had other safety needs met, this may allow a participant to achieve the physiological needs of Maslow's base tier.

Although 'relative gratification' or acceptance of existing needs may release participants into an arts project as a source of joy and resistance, this will not apply at the moment of crisis itself when a fundamental physiological or safety need becomes known. However, having already built relationships through a creative project, a lack of access to other sources of help may also mean that participants attend, even at the moment of crisis. On attending, however, their concentration will not be on the arts activities. Moreover, if their situation is not resolved by the next session, this may be their last appearance, as the importance of this need dominates their thoughts. For this reason, partnerships and links with other organisations are very important, as they can fulfil practical needs and offer specialist advice. On 4 March 2009, for example, a Congolese participant arrived at a workshop distraught because she had just become homeless, and could not focus on drama activities. What was more beneficial was to introduce her to someone from the partner charity, Lifeline, who could help her access emergency accommodation and support her in negotiating the application process for the financial assistance she was entitled to. The following week, crisis overcome, she was back participating in the drama sessions with full enthusiasm. This woman described the group as her 'spiritual family,' recognising the value of having what another participant described as 'friends for help not just for fun' within the group. For participants being supported in

addressing their basic needs through Lifeline and Open Doors, it simultaneously allowed for their emotional need for friends and a sense of belonging.

This chapter has argued for the importance of play and creativity in relation to belonging, hence my general approach to applied theatre practice. It has argued for an approach that is founded in person-centred learning, where participant needs are met in a safe, structured, but playful way, increasing confidence first inside and then outside the workshop space. It argues that play is as methodologically appropriate for adult education as for a child's. It has argued that my practice has responded to Maslow's theory of motivation, but once participants have arrived it also addresses Brown's theory of belonging *being* 'who we are' not 'fitting in' (Brown 2010, 25). In this context, creativity reverses Maslow's hierarchy. Creativity can develop self-esteem, which in turn develops friendships and belonging, which enables individuals to access their right to have their safety and physiological needs met. Play, creativity, and beauty can also be acts of resistance in the difficult lives of refugees and vulnerable migrants, as they refuse to be defined by their circumstances. The practice-based research for this thesis adopts Brown's view of creativity in relation to belonging. Creativity expresses human originality and reduces the comparison with others that makes people doubt their value. The practice-based research addresses this by using mixed art forms, valuing all practical and social roles, and through the structure of the sessions. It argues that, although there are cultural barriers to learning through play that need to be addressed, the educational and therapeutic benefits make it worth addressing those barriers. The following chapters will analyse how applied drama shaped by the principles of play and creativity contributes to belonging through communication, traditional stories, and facilitator and group dynamics.

Chapter 3. 'Focus on Meaning': the necessity of supporting the language needs of participants to facilitate belonging

In the interviews carried out for this research, the overwhelming majority of participants listed a lack of competence in the English language as their greatest difficulty on arrival in the UK.²⁹ Other problems simply cannot be addressed without the capacity to speak English with reasonable fluency. Research conducted by the Refugee Council and the University of Birmingham supports this by identifying the ability to speak the English language as a key element in enabling people to integrate and feel a sense of belonging in the UK (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole 2007, 7). An approach shaped by an ethic of care cannot ignore such a strongly articulated need. If a sense of belonging and the capacity to speak English are so clearly linked, it is important to explore how drama can contribute to the development of English language skills. As a consequence, it forms the focus of this chapter. In addition to the obvious functional benefits of being able to communicate in English and thus cope in various dealings with professionals and interactions with the host community, English acts as a lingua franca which enables refugees and migrants from different countries to build relationships with one another. Historically, colonialism meant the learning of English was sometimes enforced as a tool of subjugation (wa Thiong'o 2004). However, Michael Toolan has argued that English is now so culturally removed from the traditional national language of English that the language should be renamed 'Global' (Toolan 1997, 8). In the twenty-first century, English operates as a means of communication for people across the globe who do not share a mother tongue and yet have a need to interact as a result of globalisation (Seargeant and Swann 2012, 29). English, for example, is the language of international trade, science and diplomacy. In research interviews, family learning participants expressed the desire that their children should have an 'international' identity. As one parent described it, they should 'feel like they

²⁹ All participants stated this in interview, except one family learning participant who spoke good English on arrival.

belong to the world [...] so they should not find any specific country loyalty, so they will become good citizens of the world and not become like a burden to society' (Appendix 1, interview 10). The capacity to speak English fluently is part of this international identity as well as a localised sense of belonging.

Drama second language researchers and practitioners, working with young people and university students (such as Dougill 1987; Kao and O'Neill 1998; Wagner 2002; Culham 2002) have concluded that the benefits of a drama-based approach to second language teaching include its capacity to release language by engaging the emotions and tapping into personal experience; its capacity to distract from self-monitoring and its resulting inhibitions in language use; its positive impact on intrinsic motivation, and its capacity for differentiation by outcome for mixed ability groups. Thus it addresses key challenges in formal education contexts. The practice-based research for this thesis supports these findings as being equally applicable in a community learning context. Despite evidence of the benefits of drama in the broader field, mainstream teaching resources, such as the ESOL 'Skills for Life' resources, fail to move beyond traditional role-play.³⁰ In addition, many ESOL teachers remain suspicious of drama as a source of 'noise and chaos... horrendous discipline problems...embarrassing activities to do with touching people...an unacceptable amount of errors', and frivolousness (Hamilton and McLeod 1993, 8; Burke and O'Sullivan 2002, xiii, supported by Appendix 1 interviews 44 and 67). Alternatively, they consider that role-play achieves the same benefits as drama and is not, therefore, worth attempting (Appendix 1, interview 51). A Creative English participant described the difference between Creative English and the role-play in her ESOL college course:

³⁰ ESOL 'Skills for Life' are the certificated courses for adult learners of English in the UK, which assess speaking, listening, reading, and writing from Entry 1 to Level 2.

When we make speaking exercise [in ESOL class at a local college], we just make practice in special exercise in book. I try hard to learn words but when I speak to English people, they not say same words. I do not know what they say! Creative English is good. I do not know what they [the other participants in the scene] say [in advance]. It is not written in book, but I speak, like [in] life. It is good for confidence, I think. (Appendix 1, interview 25.)

Role-play is the demonstration of pre-taught sentence structures and is completely unlike the spontaneous and unpredictable twists and turns of real life conversation. The scenarios are, as Fels and McGivern state: 'one dimensional situations with a prescribed dialogue and conclusion' (Fels and McGivern 2002, 20). Dialogue and action is restricted to the learning objectives which are linked to specific vocabulary and grammatical structures. As a consequence, the opportunities for critical thinking or creative exploration are limited. It becomes, as one ESOL teacher explained: 'a bit stilted and [...] slightly hindered the students' freedom to speak and use language' (Appendix 1, interview 51). For the adults participating in this research, they wanted to be able to communicate with neighbours, in the shops, and at the doctor's. They sought confidence and flexibility in verbal language. Perfection in English grammar or vocabulary was not necessary but the ability to communicate in English was essential. The capacity to speak overcame their sense of isolation and helplessness. The capacity to communicate made possible a sense of belonging. Perfection could be sought later after functional competence had been achieved.

Like the majority of texts in this field, Winston's *Second Language Learning through Drama* (2012) focusses on uses of drama with primary and secondary school students. The essays are drawn from the work of international practitioners. Significant emphasis is placed on drama as a method of generating student motivation, as opposed to learning a second language through 'a boring family in a series of boring pictures who go about leading deeply boring lives and having tedious conversations, mainly in the present tense' (Winston 2012, 1-2). Whilst,

through his reference to 'the preferences of parents', Winston implies that adults will perceive the value of learning a second language, this is not the case with children (2012, 2). A key benefit of drama is that it addresses this challenge. If adults appreciate the value of learning a second language, however, the most important benefit drama offers cannot be in terms of increasing motivation. As discussed in Chapter 2, adults' practical needs have to be addressed before the pure creativity of a drama workshop will have any impact on their interest in attending. Despite these perceptions, the previous chapter argued that drama enables Maslow's hierarchy of need to be inverted by raising self-esteem and building friendships, prior to the acquisition of language skills. In turn, this means that a drama-based methodology fosters a sense of belonging more quickly than other more traditional approaches to learning.

Stephen D. Krashen published the first comprehensive theory of adult second language acquisition: 'Monitor Theory' in 1981. Assisted by Tracy D. Terrell, Krashen developed this into 'The Natural Approach' in 1983. This was an approach to second language classroom practice which took beginners to an intermediate level. It introduced strategies such as the teacher solely speaking the target language and group tasks, which encouraged learners to talk about ideas and to solve problems. It placed emphasis on listening and responding to language rather than on the pressure to speak. Although Krashen does not identify drama as an activity where favourable conditions for acquisition may be created, he does define a key aim of the Natural Approach as being to 'instill a sense of group **belonging** [my emphasis] and cohesion which will contribute to lower affective filters' (Krashen and Terrell 1983, 97). This supports the view of this thesis that a sense of belonging is both a consequence of being able to communicate effectively in English and a cause of being able to learn English well. While Krashen's 'Focus on Meaning' has given way to an emphasis on 'Focus on Form', this chapter argues that 'Focus on Meaning' is more productive for mixed ability low-level English learners

in community learning contexts. Supported by Krashen's theory of adult second language acquisition, this chapter argues for a greater emphasis on improvisation in the second language classroom and a combination of creative activities and explicit language learning within the drama workshop. It argues that stories are a valuable source of context to increase comprehension and engagement with material, especially when addressing practical needs. It argues for ample use of realia as props (i.e. the use of actual objects in the classroom), elements of costume and visual aids, and a project structure which is accessible to unpredictable attendance.

Focus on Meaning not Form

Krashen's Monitor Model, as it was initially known, was grounded in five hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis; the Monitor hypothesis; the natural order hypothesis; the input hypothesis, and the affective-filter hypothesis. These hypotheses will receive further consideration in this chapter.³¹ Krashen's theories hinge upon the view that adults have two independent systems for developing ability in second languages: subconscious language *acquisition*, and conscious language *learning*. He proposes that, although these two systems are interrelated, 'language acquisition is the central, most important means for gaining linguistic skills even for an adult' (Krashen and Terrell 1983, 18). Krashen explains that language acquisition is very similar to the process that children go through when learning language for the first time: 'it requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not only with the form of their utterances

³¹ This is with the exception of the natural order hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order in both adults and children. Krashen has been criticised on this point, as further research has only weakly supported his view (e.g. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). Individuals may often respond differently. In the informal learning environment of the workshop space, many grammar issues may be dealt with as they arise in the creative material, which itself is shaped by the group. It is, therefore, not a relevant hypothesis for further consideration within this thesis.

but with the messages they are conveying and understanding' (Krashen 1981, 1). In 2003, Krashen renamed this theory the Comprehension Hypothesis to emphasize the role played by understanding in acquisition (Krashen 2003, 4). Drama provides a context in which meaningful communication takes place; there is something to be achieved by listening, understanding, and responding. It is, therefore, an ideal way to facilitate language acquisition.

Krashen's emphasis on subconscious acquisition duly influenced classroom practice. However, linguists became increasingly dissatisfied with an approach they dubbed 'Focus on Meaning', as it did not sufficiently foreground accuracy. Long suggests that negotiating meaning, especially negotiation that triggers interactional adjustments by the native or more competent speaker, facilitates acquisition. This is because it connects input, internal learner capacities (especially selective attention), and output in productive ways (Long 1996, 451-2). Social interactionists called this 'Focus on Form' as they believed this emphasis led to increased accuracy. Piazzoli (2011) argues that process drama can generate Long's focus on form while actually balancing negotiation of meaning with fluency and accuracy (Piazzoli 2011, 560-1). Whilst I agree with Piazzoli's view that drama can effectively provide this balance, I argue that for beginners and low-level English speakers, focus on meaning is more important in fostering a sense of belonging. Piazzoli's students are third year university students learning a foreign language. Their immediate goals and prior experience of the language is therefore very different to the women participating in Creative English in an informal, community learning context. Rather than language competence in an academic context, these learners want to be able to go shopping, make a complaint, talk to teachers, seek help from doctors, and chat to neighbours in their street. Fluency, not accuracy, is therefore their primary and most pressing goal.

If the focus is on communicating meaning as a context for acquisition, this explains the findings

of practice-based research on the value of storytelling. As previously documented, the practice-based research carried out for this thesis has explored a wide range of strategies including forum theatre, working with a script, and devising from a variety of subject matter. Following this investigation, it concludes that story-telling is of fundamental benefit when working with mixed ability adults from a range of countries in a community setting. It has used stories in a variety of ways: some have communicated the history of England and reasons for cultural traditions in the UK; some have enabled participants to share their own culture with others; some have encouraged parents to play with their children and to develop an interest in picture books; others have fulfilled practical learning needs. This is of value to participants because the performed storytelling puts emphasis on understanding the gist, not the significance of every word or detail. Furthermore, the fact that all the language used is contextualised by vocal tone and sound effects, the physical responses of the actors, costumes, props and in some cases previous knowledge of characters, comprehension is much easier than from written or spoken text alone. This chapter expands upon those characteristics of this methodology that have most effectively promoted acquisition within this research, supported by reference to Krashen and other researchers using drama in second language education.

Developing confidence through improvisation

Gerd Bräuer's *Body and Language: Intercultural Learning through Drama* (2002) highlights two of the main controversies in contemporary foreign language drama practice through a series of essays by members of US university foreign language departments and some theatre education specialists. The controversies are, firstly, whether imitation or improvisation is the most effective approach and, secondly, whether, to be most beneficial for participants, drama work should be process or product driven. For mixed ability adults in a community setting, this thesis argues that improvisation, and thus an emphasis on process, has the most significant

value. This applies particularly to learners in the beginner to intermediate ability range. While the chapter will later explore how responding to narration can offer beginners the option of Krashen's 'silent period', this section draws on examples of spontaneous improvisation. It explores how confidence is built up through the capacity to respond physically, the emotional connection with material, and the capacity to practice spontaneous, two-way conversation.

A lack of confidence in speaking a second language can stem from what Krashen defined as over-use of the Monitor. Krashen theorised that conscious language learning can act as the editor or monitor of utterances in a second language. However, learners need not have a conscious understanding of the rules of grammar; they may self - correct on the basis of a 'feel' for grammaticality. Krashen defines 'Monitor over-users' as people who attempt to monitor all the time:

performers who are constantly checking their output with their conscious knowledge of the second language. As a result, such performers may speak hesitantly, often self-correct in the middle of utterances, and are so concerned with correctness that they cannot speak with any real fluency (Krashen 1982, 19).

The focus on play, creativity and spontaneity within the methodology advocated by this thesis encourages people to improvise from what they know rather than worry about what they don't. This may result in the use of language which is simple and not grammatically correct. However, if it is successful in communicating, it will build the participant's confidence to try to speak more. Krashen states that there are two causes of over-use of the Monitor. One is personality, where a learner may be insecure about what they know. The other is the result of being 'victims of [a] grammar-only type of instruction' (Krashen 1982, 19). Some participants within this research could read English accurately but were extremely reticent to speak, simply because this was not part of the formal teaching they experienced before coming to the UK. One explained:

I learn English in India. But in India I never speak. I learn writing never speaking, because I study in Hindi medium school, not English medium school. English is only one subject. I learn in my country little bit. Never speak. (Appendix 1, interview 13)

Improvisation, supported by appropriate warm-up exercises, was highly successful in encouraging both types of participant to practice speech. Unlike the traditional role play of the language classroom, physical engagement in improvisation forces participants to draw on and experiment with the language they are learning. An improvised scene where police refused to allow a Queen to pass through a police cordon forms an example. While one of the police actors spoke little English and was reluctant to speak, she could gesture her denial of entry to the Queen. However, the Queen and her entourage were determined. 'No come,' the policewoman articulated adamantly, as her attempts to shoo away the visitors failed. As an aid to language learning, this repeated pressure to respond in an improvised scene is one of its strengths, as it forces participants to explore previously untested solutions to the situation they face. Active participation forces learners to draw on what they already know and to push themselves to be more specific. In the traditional classroom, there is plenty of time for learners to sit quietly. If they are disengaged from the process, they are not learning from it. Being passive when presented with a second language simply does not result in language being retained, as research into the extent people learn language from watching television shows.³²

Participating and having a desire to communicate something about that experience releases language. In drama, this occurs both within improvisations and when reflecting on experiences afterwards where they have particularly touched the emotions. In improvisation, the trigger may be characters or situations the participant particularly empathises with. An improvisation in Hackney, which retold the Greek legend of *Persephone*, provides an example.

³² Much of the research into the role of television in foreign language learning identifies the importance of captions or subtitling to promote active engagement with the subject matter, as in Thomas Garza, 'Evaluating the Use of Captioned Video Materials in Advanced Foreign Language Learning' (1991, 239) or Maria Da Coceição Condinho Bravo, 'Putting the Reader in the Picture: Screen Translation and Foreign language learning,'(2008, 193 – 194).

A previously quiet, middle aged Turkish woman released a torrent of language at her character's husband, who had not yet attempted to recover their daughter from Hades:

So find my daughter. Why aren't you doing anything, yeah? All you do is sit there. You don't do nothing. What are you waiting for? Go find her. Don't sit on your big fat arse. Get my daughter. I miss her. You don't do nothing. You don't know what is happening to her. She is with bad man. Why you still sit there? You are lazy husband. Bring her back to me! Safe! Go, now! (Workshop 22/5/08.)

Her empathy with her character's feelings about losing her daughter and frustration at her husband's apathy connected with her emotions and enabled her to express herself with an eloquence neither she nor the rest of the group expected. As a speechless Zeus sloped off the stage, the woman laughed with surprise at her own outburst and authority. The emphasis of the plot took on a whole new dimension, as Zeus became a weak character, too lazy to act without the passionate insistence of his wife. Her unexpected eloquence gave the woman a new confidence in her capacity to speak which became evident in the rest of her participation.

Kao (1994) and Wilburn (1992) have conducted studies which found that the language produced in drama is more authentic and close to that of a native speaker than language produced in other traditional classroom oral activities (Kao and O'Neill 1998, 59). However, when Kao analysed improvisation transcripts, it became apparent that 'compared with their fluency, the accuracy of the students' language use did not appear to be that impressive' (Kao and O'Neill 1998, 63). This remains the case despite the fact that the study focused on first year university students in Taiwan, a much more educated participant group than those analysed in this thesis.³³ As in everyday life, Kao found that the inaccuracies did not seem to affect the development of the drama, as the context helped make the meaning clear to the

³³ The university students were more educated in English and in general terms. Although some participants in Creative English had attended university, the majority had basic schooling and between a fifth and a quarter of the women had not attended school at all, especially those from Somalia and rural Pakistan.

participants. In the policeman scene, 'No come' is not a grammatically accurate sentence, but in the context of dismissing hand gestures and determined tone, there was no question as to the meaning. In *Persephone*, 'You don't do nothing' and 'She is with bad man' are similarly imperfect. For the hesitant participant, however, they had the confidence boost of having communicated the desired meaning, which could be transferred into their next attempt to speak. The ability to communicate was far more important for my research participants than technical language accuracy. This illustrates the relative value of 'Focus on Meaning' over 'Focus on Form' for the Creative English research participants.

While 'Focus on Meaning' was of significant benefit to the confidence of participants in speaking English, low-level English speakers still required the vocabulary and forms of language that would provide them with a greater level of confidence in being able to cope in British society. Therefore, although all the interview participants claimed to find purely creative activities enjoyable, participants who were at Entry 1 standard and below had a strong preference for drama activities which addressed their ability to function in daily life. This desire on the part of E1 participants for sessions based on everyday situations creates some challenges for a theatre practitioner. Everyday situations alone do not make interesting drama, as there is not enough tension (Fleming 1998, 151). Having roots in learning-based drama, Brian Way supports this view by reaffirming Aristotle's observation that 'fundamentally, the nature of drama is conflict' (Doughill 1987, 17). If there is an element of conflict, it is more likely to engage the brain, rather than the fixed dictation of role play. When I tried briefly doing drama based on everyday events, like shopping and weddings, the outcomes were disappointing both in terms of the flat atmosphere in the room and the language generated. A forum theatre approach to their experiences was much more successful and some members of the group expressed themselves with great eagerness and

fluency as they attempted to solve their peers' dilemmas. However, for a significant number of the participants, their language skills were insufficient to actively engage with the scene or to even understand the process and evolution of the scene. A new approach was needed to fulfil these participants' need to function within society and to benefit from all the advantages of communication and lively interaction drama can provide. When, with the participants' help, I began to create characters and a story around the everyday event, the level of participant engagement and language generated improved considerably. As a result, the 'Sally and Peter' stories became a sort of soap opera from week to week. The cast of familiar characters grew to include other relatives, friends and neighbours, as they negotiated real-life situations but with the additional human engagement of relationship tensions and romance. Humour was often apparent too in the plot and helped to add to the playful atmosphere of the session. Peter's strained relationship with his mother-in-law, for example, was a source of amusement, with her constant and inappropriate hints about how he should improve his garden. Despite his hatred of gardening, she persistently gave him a gardening book, even when it looked like he might be receiving something different. Family relationships have a universal quality, which engaged the group well, regardless of background. Using the device of narration from the section of pre-written text, it also provided an opportunity for new language learners to listen and respond rather than being compelled to speak, as Krashen recommended. The form could respond flexibly to the needs and wishes of individuals, who would sometimes launch into long passages of improvised dialogue in response to the narration, and sometimes just complete a simple physical action in response to similar text.

Despite the necessary prescription to support language learning in the situation and initial text, the group were able to shape the outcome of events and the development of relationships. At the same time, they were able to use a much wider variety of language structures than in a

traditional ESOL class. For the women in the Creative English group, love and marriage were particularly popular themes to explore. Within the evolving 'Sally and Peter' plot line, Peter's sister, Rebecca, fell in love with their neighbour, Tom in a workshop on 11 March 2009. In their family roles, the group asked Tom questions, wanting to see if he is suitable husband material for her. Enthusiastically, the group questioned, using a range of grammatical structures (unlike in a grammar exercise where the words will fall rigidly into the same pattern), motivated by a genuine desire to assess the character's suitability: 'Do you have money?' 'How will you behave with wife?' 'Why are you not married now?' Many of the group had arranged marriages themselves and enjoyed being in the role of taking the decision. There was earnest discussion, as it was revealed that Tom is a widower with three children, but the group were delighted when they agreed that the two were compatible and the 'love match' could take place. In drama, the participants' answers shape the process and direction of the session. In a traditional ESOL lesson, spontaneous English speech will only be in response to questions asked by the teacher. Generally, the teacher is asking questions to which they know the answer. Other than within a specific grammar exercise, students will not have the opportunity to formulate their own questions, as would be required in real life (Li 2002, 61). In addition, there is no reason to reply in the most perfunctory manner, as an answer to a question the teacher already knows the answer to is not important. Actively using the information helps the participants remember what they have learned. In this case, I anticipated that the group would forget Tom had children, but all remembered vividly from a previous improvisation about contacting the emergency services, when Tom's children had been rescued from a fire, even though it was some time ago. The comparatively obscure piece of vocabulary, 'widower,' for example, was also remembered and reused by members of the group during a subsequent encounter. At every stage there is the opportunity to practice having a two-way conversation.

As life in the UK inevitably does not involve predictable scenarios, improvisation teaches key skills of flexibility and negotiation of meaning. It gives participants confidence that they can communicate spontaneously, without preparation, unlike in a formal class. As Sarah L. Dodson points out, 'improvisation skills are especially necessary when living in a country where one's native language is not spoken' (Dodson 2002, 170). One session, for example, dealt with how to contact the emergency services. Within the session, as part of the Sally and Peter storyline, a story was improvised that involved spotting smoke coming from a neighbour's house and calling the fire brigade. As a warm up activity, various physical images were responded to with improvised phone calls to the emergency services. The atmosphere was light-hearted. Another session included reporting a snatched bag to the police. Again, the atmosphere was light-hearted, as the would-be thief sprinted round the room in a desperate bid to evade capture. Many weeks later, one of the participants became separated from her three-year-old while shopping. Despite being newly arrived in the UK, she was able to phone the police and get them to recover her child, who had got onto a bus travelling away from home. The mother firmly related her ability to cope with the situation to her participation in the drama session:

I was worried but I remembered what to do. I rang the police and the police came and they sorted everything out and we were together again and that was only because I knew what to do. Your session taught me that. (Appendix 1, interview 15)

Despite the fact that the drama session she had participated in had rehearsed the language needed for different specific situations, she was able to transfer the knowledge she had gained, even under pressure, to be able to solve the problem she faced. Improvisation equips people particularly well in this way.

The impact of props and visual aids

A significant advantage of working through partly pre-planned or existing stories is the ability to then furnish them with appropriate visual aids and props. This use of specific items, as

themselves, is another unusual feature of this practice. This makes a significant difference to the accessibility of material for low-level English speakers.

Research suggests that one of the greatest challenges in teaching adults a second language is teaching those who have a low level of literacy in their first language (Owen 2012; Wrigley and Guth 1992). Owen asserts that research among both younger and older English language learners confirms that learners who lack comparable formal education in their first language struggle to successfully learn a second language. To combat this, Owen advocates the need to begin with visuals, realia and a more kinaesthetic approach to oral skills development (Owen 2012, 123). Owen's view supports findings pertaining to this thesis. While a more kinaesthetic approach to oral skills development is clearly in line with the drama games and improvisation proposed by this thesis, the value of realia is often neglected within second language drama practice and is crucial in workshops in a community context where high levels of illiteracy in the first language may exist.

Generous use of props, costume and pictures is therefore a significant characteristic of the approach advocated by my thesis. The use of physical items both provides visual aids in the learning of new vocabulary and helps to clarify meaning for low-level speakers in performance. Visual elements include: photographs of objects, people and settings to clarify meaning; photographs of performance to allow participants to develop text in a picture book format; realia in vocabulary games; objects which have no clear purpose for participants to use as they wish, thus creating a focus on the participant's actions; specific props and costume items in storytelling, which exactly match description in the text, and props and costumes for sharing finished work. Interviews with participants articulate the benefits of this approach. One participant explained: 'It also helps if I don't understand a certain word and you have a picture

of it and I can say ‘What’s that?’ The acting helps but the pictures and objects also help’ (Appendix 1, interview 24).

For adults, the visual signals of props and costumes also give more legitimacy to ‘playing.’ It provides a clear signal to the audience that it is a character who is reacting in a particular way and thus frees people to speak. Pieces of costume and props fell into two categories dependent on the subject matter of the session. In the Sally and Peter stories, the emphasis was on realia. This was to support the transference of language skills and confidence from the drama to their own real-life situations. In other fiction, however, props and costumes often encouraged the playful tone by exaggerating the real item, or as deliberately absurd representation. When Sally saw smoke coming from her neighbour’s house, for example, the house was comically tiny and was revealed from under its cloth covering with deliberate comic timing, after melodramatic narration. Pieces of costume were often exaggerations of what the real person might wear. Wild wigs and over-large accessories characterised playful improvisations and emphasized that the drama was never intended to be a sensitive portrayal of real life. The use of narration and pieces of costume also enabled a new group who were uneasy with performance to participate without having to act, if so desired. Simply sitting in one’s place in the circle, wearing an appropriate hat, could be a very gentle introduction to playing a role. Even naturalistic props could contribute humour. In a plot on 7 January 2009 when Sally and Peter were planning a holiday, Sally complained that she was cold in the UK. Her husband encouraged her to wear more clothes rather than pay for an expensive trip. The sight of ‘Sally’, as she was bundled up in more and more clothes, created a lot of hilarity, as well as the vocabulary’s meaning being clearly apparent. Laughter filled the room, creating a temporary space away from life’s difficulties. ‘I must come here,’ one participant stated. ‘This is the only place where I laugh’ (Participant comment 12/11/08).

In the adult learning context, language anxiety is recognised as a common affective trait that can strongly inhibit the learning process (Piazzoli 2011). Krashen regards the atmosphere in the classroom and the motivation of the participants as key to language progression (Krashen and Terrell 1983, 21). His affective-filter hypothesis is still widely accepted. If a learner has high levels of anxiety (otherwise known as a high affective-filter), even when language is understood, it will not reach the part of the brain responsible for acquisition. Although Krashen does not consider drama as a context for language acquisition, he states that the willingness to adopt a character is an indication of extroversion and self-confidence with reference to an example of role play (Krashen, 1981, 31). My thesis disagrees that extroversion is a prerequisite for adopting a character. Instead, it argues that, when facilitated within an ethic of care, a role can help to develop self-confidence and ultimately a sense of belonging. Piazzoli (2011) found drama reduced language anxiety, especially in learners with a high degree of grammar knowledge but limited fluency. However, this research indicates that, when facilitated with a sensitivity to those who may feel nervous or uneasy about this approach, it was helpful to learners regardless of their existing capability or lack of it. Characteristics of facilitation conducive to a low affective filter will be considered at length in Chapter 5. However, when participants are laughing, it creates a relaxed atmosphere which is highly conducive to learning. Evidence of the benefits of relaxation in learning is found in much educational research. As Schuster and Gritton conclude in *Suggestive Accelerative Learning Techniques* (1986), 'Students generally learn better when they are relaxed thoroughly and consistently...than when they are anxious and nervous' (Schuster and Gritton 1986, 83). Laughter simply removes the affective filter.

The use of props and costume also helped participants envisage themselves in alternative identities. Where a role was not specified in improvisation, it was props and costumes which invited participants to play high status characters: sometimes very explicitly as with the crowns and tiaras, and sometimes through participant interpretation, such as a chef being the Head Chef, for example. In the Skills for Life role-plays, the social roles are as heavily prescribed as the language. The 'work' topic for Entry 1, for example, involves speaking and listening activities within the context of a supermarket, including shelf-stacking, working in a loading bay, and apologising to your employer. This emphasis clearly communicates to the ESOL learner that their horizons should be no higher than unskilled work in the supermarket. This is a demoralising situation in itself, especially for refugees and migrants who may be highly skilled in their own country. Entry Level 1 participants in this research have included a top criminal magistrate, teachers and nurses. A less prescribed approach allows participants to explore possibilities and define their own horizons. Participants chose roles like princesses, head teachers, lawyers, and police. One participant explained how she felt 'empowered':

It's like feeling you could be somebody and saying things that you wouldn't say normally, as you're being a different version of you. (Participant comment 22/7/09.)

According to psychiatrist Adam Blatner, people get tired, bored or burnt out when restricted to certain dominant roles: 'Excessive or prolonged enactment of authoritative, submissive, controlling, competent, helping, helpless, or any other general type of role generates a type of psychic fatigue. It is a relief to engage in an activity that embodies a role that contrasts with a previously extensively enacted role' (Blatner and Blatner 1988, 38). As noted in the Introduction, refugees are constantly prescribed the role of victim by society and art. They thus benefit psychologically from going beyond what Alison Jeffers describes as 'demonstrations of victimhood' (Jeffers 2008, 219). Recent migrants also need to break out of patterns of behaviour associated with struggling to survive. The mental release of alternative roles not only explores alternative possibilities which may be enacted in their lives but also

helps them to cope better mentally with their current reality. Blatner argues that playful adoption of a variety of roles is psychologically beneficial:

To balance your roles, through actively expressing them generates an experience of wholeness in your psychological existence that nourishes and heals your psyche (Blatner and Blatner 1988, 38).

The women of the Creative English group, for example, particularly enjoyed taking on the roles of queens and princesses, gleefully ordering around other members of the group who played servants. Stopped from passing through a police cordon in one improvised scene, a usually timid Asian woman could demand: 'I am Queen. It is my right,' triumphantly overcoming the police, who, in real life, she had previously admitted scared her. The improvisation had allowed a joyful subversion of her usual self-expectations, which energised and refreshed her, causing her to leave the session with a spring in her step, chatting animatedly. The apparently frivolous playing in role with a sparkly plastic crown and blond wig could challenge the sense of powerlessness generated by an inability to communicate. This freedom in fictional social roles and exploration of language in a variety of contexts could open up other possibilities in real life. As one participant explained:

After these lessons I start studying at Redbridge Institute, Adult Education, and if I didn't come maybe [to the] Lifeline Centre maybe I didn't feel confident to make test in Institute. (Appendix 1, interview 12).

This comment came from a participant who was a top criminal magistrate in her country of origin and shows the debilitating impact of an inability to speak English. A Hampstead Theatre participant succinctly summed up the feelings expressed by many participants: 'I am [an] adult but feel as helpless as [a] new-born baby' (ESOL Literacy Project performance 18/6/09). Women may feel particularly vulnerable following their move to the UK, as they may be living on their own for the first time or may be completely dependent on a husband or children as the only English speakers.

Facilitating conscious language learning

Krashen's acquisition learning hypothesis indicates that adults primarily learn a second language through acquisition. However, it also states that adults also need some conscious language learning to achieve fluency and accuracy. He highlights the fact that acquisition is not actually the sole source of language learning even in a first language. He states that: 'Acquisition does not, typically, provide us with 100% of a language. There is a small residue of grammar, punctuation and spelling rules that even native speakers do not acquire, even after extensive comprehensible input' (Krashen 2003, 3). If adults also have a need for some conscious language learning, it is right that this should be addressed in sessions, if they are not receiving this input elsewhere. Certainly for the majority of Creative English participants, this was their only access to English language tuition. While the majority of each session focussed on activities that encouraged acquisition, a small percentage of each workshop, therefore, addressed a specific grammar, spelling, or vocabulary point. This generally resulted in a few minutes of whiteboard-based formal teaching. This was usually followed by a game or exercise that applied the point taught. On some occasions, it even involved completing a worksheet to develop confidence in accurate fulfilment of the grammar point, before having the opportunity to apply that language structure in the drama. Adaptations of the name game involving participants in a circle, giving their name and a gesture that everyone repeats, was frequently cited in interview as being particularly helpful in remembering what had been taught. This structure was often used as a vocabulary or grammar game when participants had to state and copy actions in different tenses, adverbs or vocabulary on a specific theme. This exercise includes elements of four of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences: visual-spatial, linguistic-verbal, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal, thus making it accessible to a range of learning styles (Gardner 2006). A participant explained:

We act some words and [everyone] have to repeat what you say and you can really remember the words. It is really helpful for me because [when] I think of the game, I know the words [and] what you mean with the words. (Appendix 1, interview 11)

In the same way that Dorothy Heathcote saw herself as a teacher first and a teacher of drama second (Heathcote 1984, 11), this thesis argues that practitioners should not be afraid to integrate moments of more traditional teaching and learning into a drama workshop sequence if this is what will most benefit the participants.

The action of writing down vocabulary, language rules and information to help them cope in the UK assisted participants in feeling more secure that the playful drama techniques were a valid method of learning. It satisfied the urgent need many of them had to identify tangible progress in the session:

Because of the time limit, because of their other commitments, people are desperate to learn. So when they do come, they're desperate to make that time as useful and fulfilling, for when they come home. (Appendix 1, interview 44.)

Participants have proudly showed me notebooks bulging with text, dutifully copied down. Education for many in their own countries is to do with filling books. A teacher from Sri Lanka explained: 'the whole emphasis is on filling books and more books and more books with writing but very little actually retained in the head' (Appendix 1, interview 10). Despite this, it is writing things down that makes participants feel secure that they are experiencing proper teaching and learning. In a separate conversation, the same teacher, who is currently working as a teaching assistant in Redbridge and other Essex primary schools confessed that in school: 'sometimes I worry they don't do enough writing.' Even though she could see the benefits of active learning, her previous experience still coloured her view. Kao and O'Neill discuss the difficulty of overcoming past learning experiences for participants:

it may take a long period of inner struggle for the students to overcome the gap between their present and previous learning styles. The students' open attitude towards drama approaches is the key to further developing a harmonious learning climate (Kao and O'Neill 1998, 89).

The way a session is facilitated can help with this, being very explicit about the learning outcomes of each activity and structuring the session to allow confidence to grow through less exposing activities. Creating specific times within the session when participants could write language points down was also valued by participants. This also improved the flow of the session, as everyone was fully engaged with the drama when they were doing it, rather than individuals missing instructions or rehearsal time to build up notes. The capacity to refer back to material also encouraged maximum progress in participants' day-to-day ability to use English.

The effectiveness of the language learning is also increased through the careful preparation of appropriate written and performed input, which will become the basis of the resource material participants refer to after the sessions. Krashen proposes that language acquisition occurs when the learner is exposed to comprehensible aural or written material in a language, which is slightly above their current ability. He emphasises that acquisition occurs as a result of input rather than production of the language. Consonant with Newmark (1966), he argues that when learners are asked to speak without a silent phase of listening, they will use the syntactic rules of their first language while speaking the second language (Krashen 1982, 27). Swain (2000), however, argues for the value of producing written and spoken language oneself in the learning process. Swain also suggests that, when learners have to make efforts to ensure that their messages are communicated, they are better placed to notice the gap between their expression and that of proficient speakers, thus fostering accuracy in second language development (Swain 2000). Drama activities form an ideal context for relaxed self-reflexivity. This was particularly noticeable in a Creative English session on 4 February 2008 when travel disruption meant the project support worker ran the first half of the pre-planned session alone, writing down all the questions about grammar, vocabulary, and spelling for me to

address on arrival. The activities, related to choosing a property to rent or buy, spawned a range of questions about connectives, syntax, and word choice. Many of these questions could only have evolved through the participants comparing their own speech with that of more proficient speakers. Despite recognising the value of output and clearly utilising it within the drama, the methodological approach to learning English advocated by this thesis has a firm foundation in Krashen's input hypothesis. The mixed language ability of participants means not all will be capable of spontaneous output on first arrival. The use of storytelling, performance, and supporting written text provides input which participants can comprehend and revisit in various ways. The use of storytelling in the session means that everyone will participate through choral speech and movement but that most of the group are also primarily listening to the story and responding in role, rather than having to introduce spoken language, unless they want to when playing a role. The ability to understand and participate, even to a limited degree, is key to fostering a sense of belonging.

Despite disagreement about the role of language production in language learning, the relationship between hearing or reading slightly more challenging language and acquisition remains unquestioned. Input is made comprehensible as a result of the assistance furnished by the context. Drama uses body language, tone, gesture, and facial expression to naturally support understanding of the context. This is particularly helped by additional visual clues like appropriate props and costumes, which have been a particular feature of this practice. Providing this additional support in terms of contextualising the language enables a mixture of participant abilities to be catered for, as all understood something from the performances, even if they did not comprehend all the details. After watching a session, a Dagenham primary school teacher, with responsibility for integrating the non-English speaking families into the school, commented:

I was impressed to see how much they understood without understanding the words. I liked the way you used actions. I would have been too worried about them not understanding the talking and would have stopped, rather than carrying on like you did. I'll be much more confident addressing them now. (Appendix 1, interview 53.)

Mehrabian suggested that communication is 7% words, 38% tone and inflection, and 55% body language (Mehrabian 2009). Although the precise percentages are contested, it is widely acknowledged that less than 35% of communication comes from the spoken word. It is therefore logical that an increased focus on non-verbal elements will significantly improve the engagement of non-English speaking families.

An ethic of care dictates that the needs of individuals should be met in practice. In terms of the written materials provided in a workshop, this means writing or adapting them with an awareness of the language ability of the group and their capacity to develop vocabulary through supporting realia and drama games. In the case of Creative English and the family learning projects, participants were not assessed on their English language skills prior to participation. Some participants who were very poor at spoken English could read moderately well due to their previous education in their country of origin; others were quite fluent speakers but struggled with even simple written text. Inevitably, written text could not be precisely targeted. However, the provision of a simple and more challenging version of the same text seemed best suited to supporting the varied abilities in the group, especially when reinforced by appropriate preparatory activities. In a world where the internet provides easy access to stories that can be used with participants, there is still significant value in creating one's own version for the group or at least adapting any pre-existing version. The majority of text used in these sessions was original and adapted specifically to the ability of the group. Failure to do this, however, had a negative impact on the session. In a Creative English workshop explaining the traditions of Guy Fawkes Night on 1 October 2008, the written text explaining the story of Guy Fawkes came from a children's history website, just slightly

adapted for the session. The enacting of the attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament was playful as usual, Guy Fawkes proving very difficult to catch as he blocked his potential captors with chairs. A picture helped the participants understand the target building. The gist of the story was successfully communicated. However, although the sentence structure was simple, the borrowed text started with the motivation for the attack:

In 1534, King Henry VIII started the Church of England. This was a new Christian church which did not obey the Catholic Pope. King Henry made himself in charge of the church. This started English Catholics and English Protestants (Church of England) arguing.

These three lines of English history could have formed a session in themselves. Concepts like 'Church of England', 'Pope', 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are complex. In addition, without a performed version of the text to communicate the gist, words like 'obey', 'in charge' and 'arguing' meant nothing to some participants. The group were accustomed to understanding a modicum of written English and thus felt greater levels of confusion. I have seen other practitioners use internet extracts with even less success without the preparation, as the sentence structure and vocabulary is too complicated. When working with second language speakers who are learning English through the drama, careful preparation of all resources is important.

In 2003 Krashen advocated free voluntary reading as a powerful tool for language acquisition. Free voluntary reading involves any book, newspaper or comic that the learner has chosen for themselves and is not subject to any follow-up work (Krashen 2003). Although not a free choice, the text of the story used within a session is available to the participants at the end of the session, should they wish to take it away to read again at home. This was universally popular with participants and was considered helpful in practising English, even though a specific story was never generally revisited from one week to the next:

I like you give story to take home. I read [it] every day to help me. Sometimes I read [it] with [my] son. It help me remember, [to] get better in my English. (Evaluative discussion 22/4/09.)

The text would often be provided in two versions: a simple and a more complex one. The original intention was that participants would take the one most suited to their ability. However, the majority of participants chose to take both and felt, combined with the performance of the story in the session, that this was helpful in developing their reading competence. A one-off family learning workshop on 13 July 2009 provides an example in which families worked on the story of 'The Boy Fish'. The following extracts show the difference between the simple and more complex versions of the text, which were both used in the session:

Version 1:

He started to swim. He felt very happy as he dived under the waves.

He began to feel rather strange. When he looked down at himself, he found he had fins instead of arms and legs and scales instead of skin. He was a fish!

He laughed with delight as he could swim faster than ever before. He played hide and seek with a starfish. He danced with the other fishes. It was amazing! He swam and swam all day.

Version 2:

But Ishmail went swimming anyway.

He turned into a fish.

He swam happily and played with the other fish.

Both versions use the past tense, which is unusual for beginners, but authentic to any storytelling. The sentence 'When he looked down at himself, he found...' is a difficult sentence due to the subordinate clause and vocabulary like 'fins' and 'scales'. However, in the context of the session the participants had made fish, which had involved drawing and cutting out fins and tails and learning these words in the process. The performer had physically responded to all the instructions in the narration and had given a strong performance of the character's feelings as he swam under the shimmering blue fabric which was lifted above his head as he

dived in. He interacted with the fish and starfish that the group had made. Participants had also formed a chorus of disapproving friends and neighbours repeating 'You must not swim' prior to this extract, which gave confidence through familiarity with that sentence. There was also the opportunity to complete a word search using key vocabulary and flash cards linking words and pictures displayed in the room. Despite the immense difference in the complexity of the text, many of the participants were able to make sense of the more difficult version of the text, even though this was well above their usual capabilities. This particular session had the advantage of two volunteer support workers to help individuals associate particular actions with specific words. As a one-off family learning session with a generally poor level of English amongst participants, I believe the more demanding text would have been less successful without the help of the support workers. However, it was an occasion where the impact of performing, visual aids and exercises and a simple and more challenging version of the text demonstrated how it could benefit those who were interested in revisiting it at home.

As one participant explained:

If you give hand-outs or books or any sort of information, it's always welcome because that means I can go home and practice. I can ask my daughter to help me, 'What's this?' 'What's that?' because I can't remember everything, so if something is written down and given to me that helps a lot. (Appendix 1, interview 24)

Structuring sessions and projects with an ethic of care

This section argues for the value of an episodic structure, with some elements of development, when working on long-term projects in this context. It addresses the refugee and migrant adults' need for the sessions to be enjoyable, educationally useful, and yet still individually accessible.

Firstly, traditional courses have a specific start date and, owing to the accumulated knowledge built up across sessions, it is frequently not possible to join after that date. This is a significant barrier to refugees and migrants who may be newly arrived and thus in urgent need of language tuition, or who may simply have only just discovered that this learning opportunity is available to them, their inability to read fliers or brochures making them dependent on word-of-mouth. Limits on class size can also mean that tuition cannot be accessed until they have been living in the UK for several months. The need to be able to communicate is far more pressing. One participant explained:

Benson and me looked for a school and we can't find [one] because they have a really long waiting list.... I want something now, not wait maybe 3 months. It [Open Doors] was the first school that say, 'You can come now!' Lots of schools say there is a waiting list or the level is too high for me I need a lower class and they do not have a class for me. I want to start it now - not waiting 3 or 4 months - long! (Appendix 1, interview 11)

It is clearly a benefit of informal learning that new arrivals can access classes immediately when they really need them. Removing the pressure of the need to achieve exam results makes this possible. It is also the advantage of a drama course which is not building towards a performance over a series of weeks or months.

One of the greatest challenges to a facilitator in this field is the erratic attendance of participants, especially from the most socially deprived groups. Economic migrants needing English tuition tend to attend regularly, as they may be paying for their own ESOL tuition or have the strong motivating factor of needing to learn English to get work. Attendance by asylum seekers may be disrupted by many things including Home Office appointments, hospital appointments, family illness, and domestic commitments. Sandra Abdelrahman, ESOL tutor and college link teacher for the Hampstead Theatre ESOL project, explained the poor attendance of an E1 group in simple terms: 'it's a community group. That's where all the problems are' (Smith 2009, 4). Even on the day of the performance at Hampstead Theatre, a

number of key figures were missing and a couple of women had only attended twice, including the actual day of the performance. However, these absences could be put down to justifiable circumstances, such as a child in hospital or a long-awaited operation, when an interpreter had finally been made available. Abdelrahman praised a blind Somali woman, who had attended the performance despite being the victim of a race attack at her home the previous week. Some women, particularly those from India or Pakistan, were only able to attend if they were not needed by their mothers-in-law for domestic tasks. Families with children under five seemed particularly prone to illness, which made them erratic in their attendance at family learning.

Progression is usually a key element when planning a training course or workshop sequence, but in this case it is important both to build on skills developed and yet make it accessible to people who have not attended before or have missed previous weeks. Consequently, these workshops provided a through-line of progression, such as the overall development of the Sally and Peter storyline or the development of a linguistic point such as using present, past and future tense. However, each individual session and plot also remained self-contained, so that participants would not be alienated by having missed too much for it to make sense. At the same time, regular participants had the satisfaction of seeing their ideas become embedded into the storyline, as in 'Sally and Peter'. This helped to foster a sense of group identity as details from one week became written into the text for the next. As Nell Noddings states in her exploration of care and education:

When a teacher asks a question in class and a student responds, she receives not just the "response" but the student. What he says matters, whether it is right or wrong, and she probes gently for clarification, interpretation, contribution. She is not seeking the answer but the involvement of the cared-for. [...]The student is infinitely more important than the subject matter (Noddings 1986, 176).

One of the advantages of the workshop space is that creative ideas cannot be 'wrong', as proposed in Noddings' traditional classroom. However, the notion that one has been validated by shaping the outcome of the story for the whole group does help to build a sense of ownership over the sessions, especially for regular participants.

In conclusion, an approach shaped by an ethic of care seeks to respond to the individual needs of participants. While all participants claimed that they found linking words and movement helpful and saw the benefits of improvising scenes, participants at Entry Level 1 standard or below found material connected with basic functioning in society most helpful. They valued rehearsing going to the shop, doctor or pharmacist in the sessions. As has been already discussed in Chapter 2, these participants have basic safety needs, according to Maslow's theory of motivation. Having marketed the drama sessions as an opportunity to practice English, this must be honoured. While the opportunity to speak English in any drama activity can be argued to be beneficial for language practice, the unfamiliar applied theatre form may not be popular in recruiting potential adult participants, as projects discussed from the Refugee Arts Project and Richmond Theatre demonstrate. An ethic of care, however, accepts the responsibility to develop strategies that respond to needs both articulated and subconscious. Combining a creative element with the necessary functional learning has allowed Maslow's pyramid to be inverted, as previously discussed.

Krashen's theory of adult second language acquisition supports the findings which arose from the practice for this thesis. The methodology advocated by this research provides favourable conditions for acquisition, with a low affective filter and appropriate input. Improvisation provides an authentic context to communicate with the spontaneity required in real life. For learners who are Entry Level 2 and above, the creative freedom to shape an improvisation or

even craft a text can be highly beneficial. However, for Entry Level 1 and below, this thesis argues that stories based around everyday events are an effective way of addressing practical needs and creating engaging drama. The generous use of visual aids, costumes and realia is highly beneficial for adults who have poor literacy in their first language. Exaggerated pieces of costume also help to build a playful atmosphere which is conducive to learning. Drama practitioners should not be afraid to include moments of explicit language teaching within the sessions if participants do not have access to this elsewhere. An episodic structure with some elements of progression will help to build a sense of ownership for regular attendees, but also accommodate the reality of unpredictable attendance in this field.

Phil Benson and Hayo Reinders highlight the fact that research into language learning seems to suggest that language learning only occurs as the result of specific methodologies in the classroom. However, well-rounded communicative proficiency: 'it seems, depends to a large extent on the learner's efforts to learn and use the language beyond the walls of the classroom' (Benson and Reinders 2011, 2). This drama-based methodology builds confidence in one's ability to communicate spontaneously in practical, real life situations, and encourages the development of friendships within the group, where English may be the common language. The sessions also involve trips into the community to practice communicating in a real life context. These elements all encourage the use of English beyond the session with all its appointed benefits. The encouraging of friendships and visits into the wider community will be discussed in depth in relation to belonging in subsequent chapters.

The activities described in this chapter need to have a high level of input from the facilitator, simply because they demand significant amount of expertise in terms of cultural knowledge and English language competence. However, the following chapter examines how traditional

stories and participant devising de-centres the workshop leader and releases participants into a greater level of autonomy, more consistent with belonging. As a consequence, the emphasis in Chapter 4 will shift from teacher-artist to the participant shaping the content.

Chapter 4. Embodying the Belonging of the Past and the Present: the value of traditional and new stories as workshop source material

To achieve a sense of belonging, research suggests that a refugee or migrant must have a secure identity rooted in both the country of origin and present residence (Framboise, Coleman and Gerton 2004; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005; Chen, Benet-Martinez and Bond 2008). The alternative to this would be assimilation. Assimilation involves the loss of an immigrant's own cultural identity and the adoption of that of the host nation. Some commentators, like Tololyan and Clifford, would consider assimilation to be the end product of a linear process of integration, acculturation and assimilation, where immigrants move from one culture into another. The invisibility of cultural difference, they would argue, is the inevitable consequence of this process (Fortier 2000, 19). This view, however, is now widely considered to be simplistic. The superficial appearance of assimilation does not indicate a loss of private cultural traditions or a change in the individual's internal state (Visram 2002, 294). It is an example of Brown's 'fitting in' rather than achieving a genuine sense of belonging. In her exploration of 'belonging', bell hooks defines a 'true' home as 'a place - any place - where growth is nurtured, where there is constancy. As much as change is always happening whether we want it or not, there is still a need we have for constancy' (hooks 2009, 203). As we have seen, 'growth' is offered within the practice-based research projects in the development of English language skills, confidence, and the capacity to engage in UK society. If continuity is equally important in belonging, source material which links past and present is also valuable. This chapter argues that traditional stories have a valuable role as source material for drama in creating a sense of belonging for refugees and migrants. This is consonant with an ethic of care. It recognises that cultural origins are important to the immigrants and that a sense of belonging cannot be achieved without acknowledging participants' roots (hooks 2009; Dokker 1998; Fromboise, Coleman and Gerton 2004). It

highlights that there are assumptions about the themes that refugees wish to engage with through practice, but that the use of traditional stories confers upon an engagement with the past a greater level of protective distance. It argues that notions of 'autobiography,' 'childhood', and 'home' resonate with each other, but the choice of focus has a distinct impact on the participants. Using Pettersen's concepts of symmetric and asymmetric care, this chapter argues that using traditional stories as source material supports the development of an asymmetric care relationship. Traditional stories are recognised as having a positive impact on the development of shared values and a sense of well-being, both of which are related to belonging. It argues, however, that facilitators need a greater level of understanding about what constitutes an 'authentic' story for the teller. In addition, the chapter proposes that traditional British stories can give participants a sense of ownership over cultural symbols in the UK, which again enhances belonging. Devising new material enables participants to express and explore bi-cultural identity effectively.

As described in Chapter 3, as a support to learning English, story-telling and written story-text have formed a key element of this practice. Within the practice-based research, the use of traditional stories was returned to at various points as an element that was successful but problematic in enabling participants to remember traditional stories. When facilitators generate traditional stories with participants, it is common to generate only one story. In my view, this diminishes the benefits of such an approach, as a step towards a more symmetrical care relationship. As a consequence, traditional stories were addressed as a theme in Creative English from 21 May to 2 July 2008 and returned to on 25 February 2009 and from 20 May to 24 June 2009. They also formed the basis of the 'Write a Children's Story' course from 15 January to 12 February 2010. In Family Learning Club from May 2008 to July 2009, stories from different cultures were a regular feature. A one-off 'George and Dragon' session also

took place on 23 April 2009 and there was a Book-making Project from 1 to 15 May 2010 on the theme of recording stories from one's culture of origin. Examples from these sessions will be used to support the argument that traditional stories as source material do have a positive impact on belonging.

Questioning the Value of an Autobiographical Approach

Many participatory drama projects make assumptions about what refugees and migrants wish to explore through their practice. As previously suggested, if a secure bi-cultural identity demands security in both the present culture and the culture of origin, it may seem that there is value in addressing the past. However, this often focuses on the specific experience of flight and its motives and consequences, rather than the wider experiences of an individual. There is an assumption that this will either make 'good art' and raise public awareness in a climate of hostility towards immigration, or result in an experience of sharing that will offer some therapeutic benefits. This section questions the value of exploring immigration as a theme in applied theatre practice with this participant group.

The desire to value the cultural origins of participants is often expressed in an emphasis on autobiographical source material. At the start of the practice-based research, the Head of Open Doors, the charity hosting the majority of the practice-based research, was keen that the participants should have an opportunity to tell their life story through the arts project. Another founder of the charity also described the value she perceived in allowing people to tell their stories. In this example, she had asked learners to write their life story as an exercise in an informal ESOL class:

There was quite a lot of crying when the Kosovans wrote their stories. It was an opportunity for them to tell it as it was – having a chance to say how awful it was, while knowing it [the group] was a safe place to be (Appendix 1, interview 55).

The volunteer viewed the opportunity for the women to cry as very positive. She explained that it appeared to serve a very therapeutic function for the participants, as she and her co-facilitator focussed on the positives of where they were now. However, as James Thompson highlights, the assumed therapeutic dimension of telling one's story is culturally specific and cannot be universally applied. In a critique of work he has witnessed in Sri Lanka, James Thompson writes:

I believe that *tell your story* can become an imperative rather than a self-directed action. This results in a set of practices and assumptions that inculcate themselves into relief operations in many locations, ignoring and potentially interrupting culturally particular modes of mourning, coping or crisis management (Thompson 2009a, 48).

He cites Argenti-Pillen's research which demonstrates how speaking straightforwardly of troubling events for many Sinhalese is understood to cause harm to the speaker (Thompson 2009a, 59). For this reason, the practice-based research for this thesis was interested in exploring approaches that addressed participants' pasts but did not focus on the act of migration itself, a common limitation of participatory arts practice in this field.

Many participatory arts projects aimed at refugees and asylum seekers, which are framed as a context for positive self-expression, choose to focus on themes relating to migration. The facilitators' expectations of extreme suffering can limit the opportunity for the refugees to represent themselves as multi-faceted human beings, and redefine themselves outside the identity of refugee or asylum seeker. With reference to an exiled writers' group, Iranian actress and writer Soheila Ghodstinat explains how facilitators put themes in 'people's minds that they have to do':

For the facilitators, their idea of something being powerful is all torture, or all misery or all war. [...] The group think they have to do it because this society wants

them to. Now I don't go to any refugee group or exile group because **it takes my freedom away** [my emphasis] (Appendix 1 interview 52a).

Ghodstina's comments imply that arts for refugees can be limited by the supposition of the facilitator, rather than by the responses and wishes of the participants. The creative process is not necessarily, as described in Chapter 2, an opportunity to be playful, true to oneself, and empowered. It must be remembered that, although forced migration may be a common experience amongst participants, it does not define them, nor will the responses of all individuals to their circumstances be the same. Within the exiled writer's group, Ghodstina was given the title 'Home is where Hatred is' to work from which she subverted with the conclusion 'love is where home is' (Ghodstina 2007, 16). An individual's response to their circumstances cannot be predicted simplistically.

Autobiography forms the basis of much professional and community-devised performance. As Govan, Nicholson and Normington state, theatre is often used in community contexts to 'reflect and re-frame autobiographical stories into community narratives' which in performance, 'might mediate public debate and encourage critical dialogue' (Govan, Nicholson and Normington 2007, 76). In participatory arts projects with refugees, however, the use of personal stories is ethically complex. In work with young refugees, Barnes criticises common autobiographical themes such as 'Journeys' and 'Memory Box' (Barnes and Zory 2007). I share Stella Barnes' view that it is not ethical to generate performance from the personal stories of past suffering from refugees who do not fully understand the art form they are using, and the potential consequences of expressing personal material in this way. It restricts them to an identity they have not chosen and ensures that they remain recipients rather than partners in the process. More significantly, it does not maintain the emotional and psychological safety of participants if they are being required to access potentially painful memories. This is particularly important at a time when, as Barnes recognises: 'young refugees do not have

many opportunities to socialise, feel safe, be themselves, build their creative skills and express their ideas' (Barnes 2009, 36). The adult refugees and vulnerable migrant within the practice for this thesis could be similarly described. Although Nicholson reflects favourably on what she considers a protective theatrical distance that the form has offered its refugee performers in the autobiographical *A Woman's Place* (2004), her account of her interview with the actor Olive suggests this protective distance is not automatically conferred:

Olive explained that she found her own story **so distressing that she could only perform it by imagining that she was talking about someone else**. She also told me that in the devising process she had edited her story significantly, selecting events that she felt **capable** of retelling in live performance. (Nicholson 2005, 96) [my emphasis]

In working with autobiography then, the performer must adopt strategies beyond those offered by the form to protect their emotional well-being. In this production, it was significant that a much larger group of refugee women initially embarked on the project but only two continued to the end. Although a variety of reasons for their departure may have been given, it suggests that the women who left the project were not sufficiently at ease with the form. In the theatre practice, there should, therefore, be a focus on participants' present or future, if basing the work in reality, or a focus on working through metaphor or symbolism to ensure their emotional and psychological safety (Barnes 2009, 37). Alison Jeffers is also critical of the tendency amongst applied theatre facilitators to create work that, through a desire to combat popular press misconceptions, resorts to 'demonstrations of victimhood' (Jeffers 2008, 219). Within the asylum process, asylum seekers are judged upon their ability to produce a 'convincing and compelling narrative of persecution, meaning that asylum seekers are often forced to perform the role of victim in order to expedite their case for asylum' (Jeffers 2008, 218). Anecdotal evidence exists, she states, which shows how asylum seekers are coached by their legal advisers to perform their victim's narrative before the courts in often contradictory ways, e.g. to cry, to not cry, to show how events have effected their mental health. Jeffers defines this as 'bureaucratic performance' and argues for awareness that this can seep into

applied theatre practice and prevent participants from redefining themselves in a new way through the drama. She stresses the importance of self-reflexivity as a practitioner and the acknowledgement of what she, quoting Hall, refers to as 'dirty truth – truth implicated in power,' thus causing the practitioner not to create a simple heroic role in relation to the asylum seeker's supposed victimhood (Jeffers 2008, 220). This will be 'potentially destabilising or, at least partially levelling, the ground on which participants and facilitators meet' (Jeffers 2008, 221). Jeffers cites examples from *A Letter from Home* (2006) of this in performance practice. In one scene, an appeal to the court by Wana, an asylum seeker, became a rowdy adversarial dance, after Wana playfully danced a challenge to which an immigration official responded in the style of call-and-response. This both moved the character from a position of supplication to one of agency and raised awareness of the extent to which achieving refugee status is dependent on performance and performance conventions. In a different scene, a projected message asked the audience to switch on their mobile phones before presenting a series of slides that highlighted the link between continued unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo and its mineral wealth, especially coltan, an essential component of mobile phones and computers. Finally, the slides highlighted that the host institution, the University of Manchester, had invested considerable sums of money in companies involved in abuses of human rights and that British arms are known to have been used in the conflict in DRC. In this way, it disrupted the villain/victim dichotomy and shows the complexity of a situation in which we are all implicated (Jeffers 2012, 144-5). Jeffers acknowledges that refugees carry with them a certain amount of trauma (Jeffers 2012, 138 – 141). This needs, however, to be responded to appropriately, without reinforcing stereotypes of victimhood or creating bureaucratic performance. She states:

Despite assumptions of trauma, and even when there is evidence of trauma, it is vital to remember that refugees' stories are of survival. It may be tempting to dwell on representations of trauma in some refugee performance because the alternative is to portray agents as 'mad' in the sense of angry, as active agents of change, to an

audience who are better prepared to accept an image of depressed passivity (Jeffers 2012, 139).

For the participants in this research, there was a benefit in producing work primarily for the group itself and not the wider public, as no wider public perceptions need to be taken into consideration. As documented in Chapter 1, the decision not to perform publicly evolved with the group in response to their needs. An approach governed by an ethic of care both recognises the importance of allowing cultural identity to be expressed while not limiting it to passive stereotype.

Within the practice-based research, initial attempts to address the past involved an autobiographical focus on early childhood. Early childhood cannot be assumed to have been a time free from trauma. Batmanghelidjh (2006) documents a range of childhood abuses, neglect, and loss from the lives of young people she has worked with in London. However, as the participants in the practice-based research for this thesis shared a more recent experience of migration that was often highly traumatic, it was hoped that early childhood would provide the maximum protective distance possible for autobiographical material, through the greatest possible distance in time. Actually, this series of workshops both demonstrated that there was something valuable in remembering the past that the majority of participants enjoyed, but also demonstrated that time alone was not a sufficient barrier to emotional pain for some participants. In a Creative English session on 17 September 2008, a woman from Afghanistan, who was new to the group, was upset by being asked to put a sticker on a world map to show which country she came from. She said, 'My country is a bad place' and something about her passport that we didn't understand. She politely shook our hands and told us that she needed to leave immediately for a doctor's appointment that she had previously told us would not require her departure for another half hour. As Kissoon states, sentimentalised concepts of national and domestic space should be avoided as a refugee's relationship to 'home' may be a

complex one (Kissoon 2006, 78). Despite no use of the emotionally laden term 'home', the very mention of her country was something this woman did not want to countenance. In evaluative feedback in the same session, another participant admitted to feeling 'quite tearful' at one point, as the session required her to think back to a place now destroyed by war. The home from which one originated is much more than a physical space in which to eat, sleep, pass time, and entertain friends and family, although all those roles are important. It embodies the past and present:

Home embodies aspects of both current and former identities: it is important in terms of people's relationships to themselves; to significant others with whom that space has been and continues to be shared; and adult children, for whom it is a base to go out from and return. [...] Homes embody memories of who we and others close to us have been, as well as who we want to tell others we are (M. Barnes 2012, 129).

It is those close associations with significant others which can provoke such a strong sense of loss in participants when reference is made to a 'home'. This may be exacerbated when one's current abode fails to fulfil even the most basic expectations of a home, such as space to eat or sleep as you choose, or in which to entertain others. Homes normally contain the artefacts that express a lifetime, which cannot be the case when one has been forced to flee one's country, or even a planned migration when there is limited capacity to transport personal effects. Activities involving reminiscence of the country of origin involve what Stella Barnes critiques as low creative risk and high personal risk (Barnes 2009, 38-9). While the act of remembering one's past or placing a sticker on a map is not creative, there is a risk for refugees that it may release unhappy memories. As acknowledged in Chapter 2, I share Barnes' view that it is creative, not personal, risk that benefits participants. Where play and an ethic of care are core principles, introducing an element that could make some participants feel vulnerable is simply not appropriate. However, despite limited proficiency in English, this material placed the participants firmly in the role of expert on their own countries and lives, which helped some members of the group seem more self-assured. The majority of participants responded with great pride and enjoyment to the opportunity to talk about their

origins. Supporting the value of remembering, hooks explains: 'We know ourselves through the art and act of remembering. Memories offer us a world where there is no death, where we are sustained by rituals of regard and recollection' (hooks 2009, 5). In a culture where society may define one according to a label one has not chosen, such as 'refugee', memories provide a sense of self. They can provide the hope and resilience to face the present by proving that survival is possible and that suffering is transitory. Positive memories affirm our sense of personal worth. They offer proof that we have been cared for and that we have succeeded. The past is a resource that can serve as 'a foundation for us to revision and renew our commitment to the present' (hooks 2009, 5). This benefit is exemplified by a Congolese participant in a Creative English session on 10 September 2008. The woman volunteered an account of the village she had lived in as a child and chose to stand formally to present to the rest of the group. The woman's eagerness to speak first was uncharacteristic. Moreover, the formal choice of a standing position had never happened before during a sharing of discussion ideas or presentation of a visual task. As she talked and presented a roughly drawn sketch, there was a real sense that this was important and worthy of everyone's focus, reflected in the physical authority of her commanding stance. With great pride, she talked in considerable detail about her father, who was the village chief, and how his status affected the family and accommodation. The challenge as a facilitator became to honour her story without preventing others from having sufficient time to speak. Whether it was the memory of her status in the village or simply the opportunity to reflect on a happy period of her life, it affected her attitude positively in the present, restoring a pride and confidence not previously seen in the sessions. On a trip to the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green shortly afterwards, she demonstrated a great interest in English history and culture. Recognising the importance of her knowledge of the culture she had previously lived in seemed to have increased her eagerness to embrace this aspect of her new identity in the UK. She said: 'I like to know this about your King and Queens. I am English now' (Museum of Childhood 15/10/08).

Therapist and counsellor Jane McDermott explores how an individual's sense of self is always constructed in relation to the whole person and their environment (McDermott 2009). In Western countries, much emphasis is placed on individual autonomy and agency. In this context, the individual self is strongly differentiated from other selves and the environment. By contrast, however, in other parts of the world, 'the self is experienced in more merged family and community identities and is also rooted strongly in the immediate physical environment in which the individual, and possibly generations of her ancestors, have lived' (McDermott 2009, 174). This may also explain some of the emotional responses to autobiographical work. The session in which participants were asked to recall the environment around their childhood home prompted particularly emotional responses from participants, both positive and negative. In addition to being a potential source of pain, responses also seemed to suggest that there was a value in celebrating people's pasts and cultural heritage in some way. It may support the development of an 'authentic' bi-cultural identity, which embraces past and present. When working with participants who may carry with them a certain level of trauma, it is not realistic to avoid all painful triggers. However, without being a trained therapist, it is not appropriate to facilitate work that is likely to prompt painful memories. As Tove Pettersen identifies, mature care is dependent upon the carer's reading of particular circumstances. Contextual sensitivity is important (Pettersen 2008, 135-6). I recognise that I cannot anticipate how a workshop participant may respond or know how best to support them if such a difficulty arises. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the facilitator to provide as much safety as possible in the framing of activities. Encouraging a sense of well-being is important in this work. Traditional stories offer a means of creating a safe space, where the culture of origin is valued through the safety of fiction and participants maintain the opportunity to demonstrate expertise relating to their past, as the following section will explore.

Valuing Cultural Origins

Regardless of the challenges of addressing the past that have been documented, valuing the cultural origins of participants remains important to belonging. Many migrants place greater emphasis on religious and cultural traditions from the place of origin when living in another country (Fortier 2000; Griffiths, Sigona and Zetter 2005, 79). Despite reflecting on the experience of moving between states rather than countries, hooks also describes the increased importance of the place of origin:

Living away from my native place I become more consciously Kentuckian than I was when I lived at home. This is what the experience of exile can do, change your mind, utterly transform one's perception of the world of home. The differences geographical location imprinted on my psyche and habits of being became more evident away from home (hooks 2009, 13).

This is a common response to migration. hooks describes how this quickly resulted in her losing her accent and being rejected by people who viewed her as old-fashioned or pitied her for not knowing 'how to be opportunistic or play the game to get ahead' (hooks 2009, 21). Consequently, she does not experience a sense of belonging. As Brené Brown states, belonging is a consequence of presenting one's 'authentic' identity to others, including one's cultural origins, and being accepted (Brown 2010, 26). Ditty Dokter argues that migration is not a single event but a developing process, as a migrant becomes bi-cultural, aiming to belong in both cultures while not feeling that they belong in either (Dokter 1998, 145). She highlights that for most immigrants 'the poor social conditions and loss of cultural identity have an effect on psychological health,' as ethnicity involves 'conscious and unconscious processes that fulfil a deep psychological need for identity and historical continuity' (Dokter 1998, 146-7). For migrants, the importance of one's origins is demonstrated by the fact that the desire to return to one's point of origin often continues over generations, even if the family has moved several

times (Benmayor and Skotnes 2005, 5). Tuan describes the attachment to the homeland as a 'profound [...] worldwide phenomenon':

It is not limited to any particular culture and economy. It is known to literate and non-literate peoples, hunter-gatherers, and sedentary farmers, as well as city dwellers. The city or land is viewed as mother, and it nourishes; place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present; place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and chance and flux everywhere. (Tuan 1977, 154)

This need for permanence and stability of place is therefore universal. The creation of a context where participants' cultural origins are expressed and valued within the workshop is, therefore, another need consonant with an ethic of care.

Storytelling is used in every culture as a means of education, entertainment, and cultural preservation (Killick and Thomas 2007, 3). While in some cultures the written story dominates, in others the oral tradition of storytelling is still an important part of everyday life. Many participants in this research spoke of sitting outside at the end of the working day with other members of their community to talk, tell stories, and sing. For others, story-telling was an important part of the parent – child relationship. Through stories, in all cultures, norms of social behaviour and cultural values of morality are passed on from adult to child (Fox 2006, 11). Consequently, traditional stories powerfully evoke cultural details and memories of the context in which one first heard them, but with the security of detachment created by a fictional world. As the previous section identified, participants demonstrated a sense of pride when describing autobiographical details about their childhood home, reflected in a tendency to stand when speaking. However, the practice-based research for this thesis found that participants behaved with the same sense of pride when telling traditional stories from their country of origin in the sessions, again often choosing to stand. On adopting a similar approach, Debra Glazer from Hampstead Theatre reported the same thing:

one of the women from Angola said she had a story and so we sat in a circle and she proceeded to tell it like a storyteller really clearly and confidently (she **wanted to stand**) [my emphasis] (Glazer 2010).

This suggests that traditional stories from the country of origin command the same positive connotations as autobiographical memory. The fact that no participants reported the same sense of sadness or unease in remembering their birthplace also suggests that traditional stories may be more effective in providing a protective distance from painful memories. Iranian writer, facilitator, and actress Soheila Ghodstinat articulated the link between remembering children's stories and the association with a happy childhood:

When you're a child, everything is so beautiful and colourful, the way you look at life, and as you grow older and look back you don't remember your childhood so much and is so much nicer there. The best part of my life was my childhood, I think. I feel excited when I go back there. (Appendix 1, interview 52b)

This excitement was reflected in the responses of many Creative English and Family Learning participants to stories they told and heard. The opportunity to step back from the tough reality of everyday life and remember happy times of the past was very precious to participants. One participant described the benefits of telling stories from her country in this way:

I have enjoyed again the chance to remember some of the Sri Lankan things because now I'm in the UK, I don't have lots of connections with Sri Lankan people and the culture as much so it brings back nice memories of home, when I was small and the things that I liked and how things used to be when I was small. It just takes you back to your home days of childhood, so that helps you really nice too. It reminds you how really nice things used to be in the past, even though things get more difficult as you grow up. (Appendix 1, interview 37)

Feeling connected with one's country of origin, when one does not have friends or other connections to that culture is clearly significant. In the case of the Sri Lankan, the pleasure was sustained by researching traditional stories she partially remembered from her childhood online in the week between sessions and then creating a photo-story book with her children, sharing the story with them and providing her family with an artefact through which they could tell the story again at home. This was further personalised by the family's appearance in

the photos as characters in the story. Stories heard in childhood are generally associated with feelings of security in the memory of the adult teller; even stories of danger and warning are met with shrieks of delight from the listening children. Participants often associated their childhood story with a particular teller, an uncle, a grandmother, a father, who had taken a particular interest in them through telling the story and even took on, through the prism of memory, mystical properties. As in hooks' quote, the memory of the specific occasion of the storytelling focussed on a moment in time when there really was 'no death', unlike the broader consideration of lives and landscape in the autobiographical stories, resulting in a recollection that is genuinely sustaining (hooks 2009, 5). Childhood memories are always selective and partial. The way a child experiences a place is different from an adult's experience, as it is related to their sense of time. Tuan explains that the young child stands as if outside time, remaining at the same tender age seemingly forever. For the adult, time rushes on, propelling him forward relentlessly (Tuan 1977, 185). This sense of standing outside time helps to generate the sense of constancy associated with connecting with the past and liberates participants from the frantic quality of everyday life.

Recognising Shared Values

In Jerome Bruner's view, one becomes a member of a particular culture through sharing with other members of that culture a common notion of what is ordinary and unexceptional. The experience of shared ordinariness within a social group is one that people find highly rewarding. A shared view of what is ordinary is characteristic of those who also share a sense of belonging. Magnusson and Marecek consider that this sense of shared ordinariness supports 'the uniquely human capacity for mutual understanding, which is a major part of what most people feel defines them as humans. Moreover, because the sense of shared ordinariness is so satisfying, breaches are discomfiting and must be repaired' (Magnusson and

Marecek 2012, 21). Bruner considers culture to be present in individual minds 'through the conventionalization of experience into shared ordinariness, a conventionalization that makes place as well for rendering deviations from shared ordinariness into a comprehensible and manageable form' (Bruner 2008, 35). He suggests that one of the most common ways that fissures in shared ordinariness are made understandable is through stories. These narratives repair these fractures by using cultural conventions that make the deviations understandable.

While these narratives may be biographical or autobiographical, the fiction in the practice-based research enabled connections to be built between participants on multiple levels. Firstly, the capacity of stories to travel from country to country meant that 'shared ordinariness' occurred in finding that the same stories were known in different cultures. Some stories had travelled through different countries and thus participants could either pool memories with people from other countries to reconstruct them, or share in the delight of hearing them again. The fable 'The Greedy Dog' was, as one participant described it, 'an important story for Indians' and this was reinforced by the fact that it was retold in different groups, where Indian participants were present (Workshops 17/6/09, 24/6/09, 1/7/09, 11/11/09, 29/1/10). It was also a story that was known by Pakistani participants. A German and a Bengali participant compared versions they knew of 'The Pied Piper.' The Bengali version, as remembered by the participant, had a happier end, when the repentant mayor paid the piper and the children were returned. For the majority of participants, the 'happy end' was unquestionably their preferred conclusion. Through different versions of the same story, difference became part of the shared ordinariness, as the group recognised that there was no universal version of any story, just preferences for versions individually or nationally told. In these stories, however, shared values were also expressed. 'The Greedy Dog' and 'Pied Piper' both foretell undesirable consequences for one who is greedy. Other stories shared by

participants also shared common values: children should listen to their parents; thinking creatively can solve any problem; family is important; life may be difficult but one can always get through it. A sense of shared values across the diverse religions and cultures in the group helped to shape a sense of group identity.

Family relationships presented in the stories were universal in their power, as people recognised characters such as disobedient children and authoritative fathers from their own literal or fictional experience. Helen Nicholson confirms that 'communities of identity are constructed when people recognise their own experiences in others, and share an understanding of each other's values or stories' (Nicholson 2005, 94). *Romeo and Juliet* was an example of a story that connected particularly with the participants whatever country they were from. On 25 February 2009, for example, the session overran quite significantly as the participants did not want to leave until they had improvised the whole of the *Romeo and Juliet* story. The forced marriage resonated particularly with some members of the group: 'This is what happens in my country all the time,' said a Somali participant. In traditional British stories such as *Robin Hood* and *King Arthur*, Jackie Hogan highlights the gender bias. She argues that while the male characters represent the best qualities of the British character, 'the women in the tales are often defined more by their Otherness than by their essential Britishness' (Hogan 2009, 58). All the stories I selected for Creative English had strong women characters and themes relevant to an all-female group. The one apparent exception was the legend of *King Arthur* when Arthur removed the sword from the stone to become King of England. This version was improvised from a simple nine-sentence version of the story. However, rather than focussing on Arthur's heroic rise to power, this telling again focussed on the family relationships. Half the source text was concerned with the fact that Arthur's mother had died when he was a child and that he was hated by his brother, who treated him very cruelly. Consequently, the improvised scenes developed by the group focussed on that

relationship. In an improvised television interview, Arthur's brother apologised for his bad treatment of his brother and this apology was accepted by Arthur. Tolerance in difficult family relationships was offered as a shared value.

Whilst shared values are crucial to creating a sense of belonging, it is also essential in this context to create a space where difference is ordinary and unexceptional. To build a coherent group identity, there must be tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultural beliefs and practices. Some of this was established before introducing stories from other cultures. In games like 'Step in if it applies to you', I was frequently in the opposing position to the rest of the group, but this helped to establish a culture in the group where it was acceptable to be different and eventually resulted in some good-natured teasing as the group dynamic evolved on a more equal basis. As the subject matter in the games was not sensitive, it operated as a safe way to begin to explore similarities and differences between individuals. The framing of the session as an opportunity to learn about English language and culture and a calm and factual facilitative manner also helped in occasional moments of significant cultural fracture. Whilst the fact that children should obey their parents was a shared value in the group, different cultures had different attitudes to child discipline and what constituted acceptable punishment. This was addressed through clarifying parents' legal responsibilities in the UK and connecting the participant to appropriate parenting support, if appropriate. Through traditional stories, these cultural differences could emerge pre-emptively without needing to be revealed through family crisis.

When the facilitator automatically has an 'asymmetric care' relationship, owing to the superior English language skills and UK cultural knowledge inevitably possessed when working in this

context, traditional stories play a valuable role in making the relationship more symmetrical. 'Symmetric care' is defined by Pettersen as care that takes place in 'relationships between persons who consider themselves as equals, where receiving and giving is reciprocal and recognised, and where the role of recipient alternates with the role of caregiver' (Pettersen 2008, 131). In the process of sharing traditional stories, the act of receiving and giving is reciprocal as the roles of teller and listener are alternated. Authority in terms of the teller's knowledge of that version of the story is recognised by the rest of the group. As the focus is not on the language skills (although the experience of telling and performing the story in English inevitably results in language learning), the equality of the relationship between the facilitator and the participant is more apparent. No one culture is superior. Participants were often particularly interested to learn the traditional British stories as part of developing a deeper understanding of the culture of their current country of residence. However, British stories were not reified. The only stories to be developed over more than one week into photo books or more polished performance were either devised by the participants themselves or from other cultures. Whilst generating multiple traditional stories from a group is notoriously difficult (Appendix 1, interviews 49 and 62), the practice-based research for this thesis found it was much more successful when the facilitator modelled what was required through telling stories from other cultures: one animal story and one with human or supernatural characters. Debra Glazer shares the view that using traditional stories from the participants' countries values the cultures of participants. She then states:

They know that it's not about this culture is better. Everyone's got very different things and we want you to bring what you have as part of your identity into this rehearsal room. (Appendix 1, interview 62)

Consequently, in a cycle of the ESOL Literacy Project in 2011, the group performed a traditional Ethiopian story to an invited audience of friends, family, and other students from the college. Asked how she felt while seeing a story her parents had told her as a child performed in Hampstead Theatre's studio, the original teller simply said: 'It was amazing' (Appendix 1,

interview 40). The positive response of the audience through facial expressions, laughter or applause, and then their desire to develop your story into a performance and find out more about your country in the process is a very affirming experience. Australian philosopher, Catrina Mackenzie explains:

Social recognition is necessary for self-definition because a sense of self-worth is necessary to the achievement of a reflective equilibrium among the different aspects of the self and because self-worth is bound up with social recognition (Mackenzie 2005, 291).

Participants in Creative English who had told one story from their country to the group, often enjoyed the affirmation so much they returned with other stories in subsequent weeks. A Sudanese participant explained: 'It is something new if someone is interested and listens, [...] you feel happy and it's very, very good' (Appendix 1, interview 32a).

Stories and Well-being

As observed in the Introduction, depression is common amongst refugees and migrants.

Remembering past happiness can help to counteract this and recalling traditional stories can contribute to this positive focus on the past. Child psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim supports this view. He considered traditional stories, which he called fairy tales, to be tales of hope, metaphors for daily life that showed how struggles could be overcome. He considered that fairy tales could make: 'such great and positive psychological contributions to the child's inner growth' (Bettelheim 1976, 12). The positive impact of the hero or heroine triumphing over adversity is not solely limited to children. According to Eades, some traditional cultures also consider stories to have a therapeutic power. In traditional Hindu medicine, for example, a psychologically troubled patient was given a folk story to meditate upon: 'The story would be one which was seen as encapsulating the patient's difficulty in some way and which would allow the patient to visualise both his problem and the means by which it might be overcome'

(Fox 2006, 35). As a consequence, the patient was then found to be able to cope with his or her dilemma. Bettelheim explains the plausibility of this approach in therapeutic terms: 'The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his own solution, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this moment in his life' (Bettelheim 1976, 25). Drama therapists will also work through metaphor and symbol rather than addressing an issue directly (Jennings 2009; Mann 1996; Barnes 2009, 40). These examples suggest that focussing implicitly on positive outcomes through stories can have a positive impact on mental health. An increased sense of well-being, in turn, impacts on a sense of belonging, as individuals are able to engage more proactively with the world around them. As Brown states, 'our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance' (B. Brown 2010, 26). This section argues that stories with flawed characters and a positive outcome can increase a participant's level of self-acceptance and, therefore, belonging.

Metaphors seem to function on conscious and unconscious levels through their connotations of the universal and the personal (Mann 1996, 2). Jennings argues that the power of metaphors and symbols lies in their ability to enable inner experience and change 'without destroying the defence systems' (Jennings 1992, 21). Writing from the perspective of a drama therapist, Jennings' practice demonstrated how participants can benefit from stories which have relevance to their concerns, without connections being explicitly made to their own lives. In one example, the group works with the story of Antigone and her uncle Creon to explore father/daughter relationships, resulting in a recognition of pressures experienced and positive choices made (Jennings 1992, 23-4). In an example, where themes were drawn out more explicitly, the story of *The Judgement of Solomon* enabled the woman who had played the

barren character to learn that 'I must forgive myself before I can forgive anyone else' (Jennings 1992, 45).

In the practice-based research, where the story choice has been facilitator- rather than participant-led, there is a tendency to select stories which encourage a hopeful outlook. These choices were an instinctive response to the type of material participants received best rather than a conscious decision. In a family learning session for families aged up to 11, for example, *Monster Island* was used. This choice rested in part on the design potential for monster masks and costumes. In this story, the monsters are trapped in a monster state by the perceptions of those who do not associate with them. The boy who gets to know the monsters personally, recognises that the myths surrounding them are inaccurate. In coming to love their company, he releases them from the witch's curse, back to their human selves. In *Penguins Can't Fly*, a story for pre-school children and their parents, the penguin is scorned by all for his inability to fly until he dives into the water and discovers his extraordinary and previously unrecognised ability to swim superbly. No connections are made explicitly between the listeners and the characters in the story but still an optimism and hopefulness exists in the room after the stories are told. There is the possibility of rewriting public perceptions and the actions of one caring figure can upset the stereotypes of history. Undiscovered talents may lie within everyone and the bullies and doubters cannot suppress it.

In *From Enlightenment to Receptivity* (2013), Slote argues against Enlightenment rationalist thinking from the position that emotion and feeling have a central place in human life and human thought. Drawing on the work of Gilligan and Noddings, he argues that caring requires

empathy and that this, in turn, demands receptivity to the feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of others:

A good life cannot be led without a substantial degree of receptivity in one's attitudes towards or beliefs about things and people and what characterises people as inconsiderate, cold-hearted and just plain immoral (and/or psychopathic) is more a matter of psychologically lacking certain forms of receptivity than of any other factor (Slote 2013, 22).

If this is the case, receptivity actually underlies caring and empathy. Slote, therefore, argues that receptivity should be considered of the greater philosophical significance. The use of a children's story as source material within a workshop session provides an appropriate level of protective distance for participants to experience an increased level of receptivity. In this way, there is a space where participants can be open to similarity and difference among other members of the group. It is fiction. It is something told to a child and yet within it they can experience empathy for its universal characters: the naughty child, the authoritarian father, the domestic mother. To focus on the autobiographical stories of participants, especially when dwelling on the past can reinforce stereotypes of victimhood and personal suffering rather than celebrating cultural origins.

Understanding Authenticity

In inviting participants to share traditional stories within an applied drama context, facilitators often claim to be seeking stories that are 'authentic'.³⁴ In their use of the word 'authentic,' they are foregrounding their preconceptions of what stories from other countries are like. This means a story is only valued if it involves exotic settings, characters and events beyond the experience of the facilitator. This completely ignores the cultural origins of well-known stories that are now embedded in British culture and the impact of colonialism, which spread British

³⁴ This desire is expressed in e-mails to the author from Debra Glazer 5/5/10 and Theah Dix 30/12/09.

literature and language across the world, Hollywood cinema and more recently, globalisation, which means that television and the internet broadcast British and American stories worldwide. As already identified, Brown also uses the word 'authentic' as a prerequisite to belonging. However, she defines it as the practice of being true to oneself rather than to what society wants one to be. The choice to be authentic is not an easy one. e. e. cummings wrote: 'To be nobody-but-yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody but yourself – means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting' (cummings 1958, 13). It involves cultivating the courage to be imperfect and vulnerable in front of others, practising self-compassion and recognising that others share those strengths and weaknesses and are deserving of compassion too, which allows one to build positive relationships with others (Brown 2010, 50). Celebrating one's cultural origins is part of an authenticity which does not allow that part of one's identity to be assimilated into any pre-determined definition of Britishness. However, exploring these issues through stories precludes a high level of vulnerability in this process. Brown describes authenticity as an unsafe option: 'sometimes choosing being real over being liked is all about playing it unsafe' (Brown 2010, 52). It leaves one open to personal criticism and shame. For refugees and vulnerable migrants who may already be in a place of limited practical and emotional safety in their wider lives, the safety provided by the fiction of traditional stories is vital to an approach rooted in care.

A spirit of authenticity that is helpful in creating a sense of belonging values all participants' contributions, recognising that the facilitator's somewhat romantic notion of authenticity may not match the experience of the participants. Two participants, an Indian and a Pakistani, for example, both cited *Cinderella* as their favourite story. There is a tendency amongst facilitators to place less value upon participant's childhood stories that are not exotic and

unknown to them. This may be communicated by the facilitator's comments or simply in impatient and disinterested body language as they try to move on to find a 'proper' story.³⁵ However, in this example, the eyes of these two women still lit up with joy at the retelling, as they remembered being told the story by a father and uncle respectively. These stories were clearly an authentic and important part of their childhood, and brought back wonderful memories of life in their country. Versions of *Cinderella* have been traced back to medieval China and Ancient Egypt, so a western version cannot be deemed the authentic one, despite the prominence of the Disney film version (1950) in popular consciousness, encouraging us to view it in that way (Killick and Thomas 2007, 7). In fact, the story of Cinderella is known to exist in over 300 different versions around the world (Anderson 2000, 26). The participants described Cinderella as blonde, consonant with the Disney image, rather than any variation of the story relating to their cultural backgrounds. However, this did not prevent the story from being an authentic part of their childhood. It could still, therefore, generate a joyful connection between their past and present and between other participants who had similar happy memories of the story.

In engaging with 'authentic' material across cultures, one also has to be aware that one may be engaging with a 'structurally different reality'. Communicating across cultures is always challenging. As Seelye and Wasilewski state:

Communication between cultures entails the rather formidable task of building bridges. Not just any bridge. But a bridge between orders that are not simply different structurings of the same reality, but structurally different realities (Seelye and Wasilewski 1996, 140).

³⁵ At a workshop at Hampstead Theatre for Entry level 3 students on 28 April 2010, for example, the story *Little Red Riding Hood* was treated dismissively, despite the version including a detail that was not part of my conscious memory of the story, that is, when the wolf was filled with stones after the grandmother was freed from his stomach.

As the previous section has demonstrated, the universal characters and familiarity of the story format can operate as such a bridge. However, practitioners also have to be aware that stories themselves can exemplify these structurally different realities through highlighting differences in morality, philosophy, and even in the concept of what constitutes an effective structure for a story. Practitioners have expressed discomfort at the complete unsuitability of some of the stories that participants have shared, sometimes due to the violence and dissatisfying nature of their construction. Glazer, for example, refers to a session where a participant had told a story about a woman who had fled a forced marriage only to be raped, and another where 'The ending didn't quite finish it for me' (Appendix 1, interview 62). Facilitators need to be aware of their own cultural bias, which embeds a western definition of a 'good' story. Daniele Klapproth summaries the ideal form of a good story for an Anglo-Western audience as goal-based, including an obstacle and a happy ending (Klapproth 2004, 211). When dealing with participants from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, it is important not to generalise from cultural expectations. This story from the Mende, who populate southern Sierra Leone, provides a clear example. According to Cosentino, everyone from children aged nine or 10 to the village chief performs stories in this region (Cosentino 1982, 8). One form of these is the dilemma narrative. *The Dilemma of the Pregnant Goat* is an example:

A bush creature liked to catch goats. He went walking one day in the bush next to the village. He met forty goats. He ate all but a pregnant goat who said, 'Stop, I'll give you three reasons not to kill me.'

He said, 'If there is a lie, I'll kill you.'

She said, 'First of all your stomach is full. Secondly, I'll soon be giving birth to three kids. Then we'll be fornicating again, and I'll get more kids. Any time you want another goat, you can just come and pick one up. Thirdly, when I go back to the village, they will kill me anyway- they will say I'm a professional liar.'

So he let the goat go. Then she went back to her village and they killed her (Cosentino 1982, 5).

Cosentino reports that the original storyteller, Pa Vandei, used his *njεπε wovεi* [translates as 'old talk' and refers to the traditional types of storytelling] 'as a form of wit, a conceit to

delight the audience (Cosentino 1982, 6). Within the dilemma narrative, a series of choices are presented to the audience from which they must choose or, as here, admit the dilemma to be irresolvable. In the UK, however, this type of story is seen as unpleasant, unsatisfying, and its lack of moral outcome is much missed. 'That's not a story! That's horrible!' squawked one English listener, amongst a clamour of disgust (Workshop 18/6/10). When I observed a traditional story-generating session as part of Hampstead Theatre's ESOL Literacy project on 28 April 2010, some participants and the project support worker reacted with horror to a reference to incest in the story: 'Brother?! Brother?! Are you sure you mean she was going to marry her brother?' [that was incidentally a forced marriage the protagonist was fleeing rather than embracing]. There is a contradiction in the desire to represent the experience of refugees and migrants in an 'authentic' way, and yet a need to fit it neatly within our cultural expectations.

Working within an ethic of care bears the responsibility to recognise the validity of different conceptions of reality, while at the same time balancing this against the needs of the group as a whole. Attitudes to violence, for example, may differ for some refugees. Being forced to repeatedly describe one's experiences of personal horror to the Home Office may result in an element of desensitization to topics others may find distressing. Stella Barnes, for example, had to ask a young man not to depict his uncle being shot in a workshop, as it was distressing other people, even though it was not upsetting him (Barnes 2008). Plainly, there is also a responsibility to the rest of the group. Retelling *The Dilemma of the Pregnant Goat* to young children who may be distressed by the violence of its ending is not appropriate and, in a context such as the Barking and Dagenham Play 'n' Chat family learning project, where the object is to build bridges between different members of the community, intentionally presenting a story which one side may perceive as 'disgusting' is not going to help participants

bond in their common humanity (Workshop 18/6/10). If some of the participants already view those from other countries as alien, a culturally repellent story will reinforce that view and reinforce and justify racial barriers and preconceptions. However, in context where a tolerance and interest in different viewpoints has been established, a story such as *The Dilemma of the Pregnant Goat* may open up some cross-cultural dialogue. Among core elements in the facilitation of this is the creation of a climate where difference is perceived to be interesting and not threatening. It is also an advantage not to be generating material for one whole group public performance, as there is less pressure for all the stories to fit into a group consensus of what is 'good.'

Ownership over British Cultural Signs and Symbols

This section argues that using traditional British stories as session material can help to give participants ownership over cultural signs and symbols, thus increasing participants' sense of belonging. Catrina Mackenzie explains:

One of the most important ways in which social recognition is expressed or withheld is through cultural images, representations, symbols and metaphors. These representations reflect, incorporate, and instantiate, often in subliminal but nevertheless powerful ways, social and cultural understanding of agents' worth, especially understandings of the significance and worth of different kinds of identities - such as gender, ethnic, racial, and religious identities (Mackenzie 2005, 294).

Consequently, engaging with cultural images and symbols through the medium of traditional British stories, and placing the migrant experience at its core, was very significant in subverting expectations of otherness, especially in a context of prevalent anti-migrant press, as described in the Introduction.

Workshops based on the legend of *George and the Dragon* proved particularly effective in reclaiming the English flag as a symbol which celebrated the contribution of migrants rather than its association with British nationalist racism. While recent years have seen an increase in the display of the English flag during major sporting events in homes and on cars, the English flag and Union Jack are also common sights at British National Party (BNP) gatherings and other racist protests. The BNP, in fact, incorporates the Union Jack into its logo, in an attempt to suggest that the party's values are central to British identity. As already identified in Chapter 1, Barking and Dagenham is a London borough where the BNP is popular and successful. It is a presence that research participants in that area cannot avoid. In 2010, Party Leader Nick Griffin launched the British National Party General Election manifesto on St. George's Day, accompanied by a man dressed in a St. George costume. The photographs from the launch which appeared across the British media include 'St. George', stood on the platform beside the leader as he waves the manifesto, which includes policies such as an end to all immigration and a ban on the burka and mosque building in the UK (Wolfreys 2010). Although identified as such only in the BBC General Election manifesto coverage, 'St. George' was in fact Ian Kitchen, a BNP election candidate (Wheeler 2010). The image of Griffin side-by-side with St. George is presumably intended to reinforce the party's claim to represent traditional British values.

'George and the Dragon' workshops were run as part of the Family Learning Club and Creative English programmes, as well as in one-off workshop sessions close to St. George's Day. The importance of understanding the story behind the flag was highlighted by the presence of a significant number of men in a one-off family learning session advertised on this topic. This was striking as cultural attitudes to childcare mean that family learning is normally dominated by mothers. Understanding the culture you are living in helps to give a sense of security and

belonging. As one participant stated: 'I am English now. I want to know English things' (Workshop 23/7/08).

Fundamental to the impact of this legend is the fact that George, the patron saint of England, is Turkish rather than English. After reminding participants of the design of the English flag, this fact was emphasized in a simple re-telling when the character of George is introduced and the actor presented with his white shield bearing the red cross. The story was originally brought back from the Middle East following the Crusades. The version of the story which made it popular in the Middle Ages, from *The Golden Legend* or *Lives of the Saints* circa 1260, set the story in 'Silene' in Libya (Garry and El-Shamy 2005, 76). However, most versions of the story leave the setting to the imagination of the reader or listener. Consequently, it is generally assumed to be set in the UK. Without being explicitly stated, the connection between George's coat of arms and the English flag suggests that people from other countries are valued in the UK and that this is embedded in British heritage. It subverts Griffin's anti-immigration message if he is presenting himself next to a symbol of immigrant influence on the UK. Especially as this symbol is one of heroism and integrity.

Bettelheim is critical of myths, considering that they lack the psychological benefits of fairytale. He considers that 'the myth is pessimistic, while the fairy story is optimistic no matter how terrifyingly serious some features of the story may be' (Bettelheim 1976, 37). He argues that myths have superhuman heroes, offering models to which people can aspire. However, in myths ordinary humans will always be too frail to meet the challenges of the gods and therefore myths will not connect so effectively with the audience as the ordinary human characters of fairy tales. Bettelheim does focus on examples of myths that include supernatural characters. However, although some versions of the story seem to emphasise

George's superhuman bravery and strength, the majority of the story's variants simply emphasise his courage and perseverance against the odds, which results in the destruction of his foe. This is characteristic of the participatory storytelling within the workshop setting. Subconsciously, it provides a hopeful parallel for anyone struggling against real-life impossible odds. George is the traveller passing through the land. He does not live in the area and yet he rescues the people from a terrible problem they cannot solve. At the end of the version used in the practice-based research, the story states and affirms through its performance: 'Some say he married the princess.' George becomes a welcome, established leader in the community in fiction, but this welcome is reinforced by the real life honour of his cross on the English flag which symbolises a nation.

Small alterations in the wording of the story may also enhance its capacity to bond the listeners. As previously suggested, stories can be used as a bridge between cultures which highlight shared values and common experiences. It can also provide a safe context to explore difference. However, when delivered by the facilitator, there is potential to include some subtle shifts in emphasis to reduce points of potential conflict or disengagement, or to emphasise common ground. This storytelling had a clear symbolism expressing migrant belonging in the UK. This particular re-telling of the story was based on a children's book chapter, which stated that George killed the fearsome dragon easily after invoking the name of Jesus. This illustrates the way the story was adopted as a narrative of a Christian miracle. In the multi-cultural setting, the reference to Jesus was swapped to a reference to God. The participants were from a wide variety of faiths but the majority did have a religious faith. Changing the specific for a general deity may have allowed the story to be more universal. It may also have added to the optimism of the story that God (from whatever faith) may help in times of difficulty. In another example, a choice of emphasis in the delivery of the words to an

all-female group helped to unite the women regardless of ethnic background. Emphasizing 'the **men** of the town decided they had no choice but to feed the dragon with children' always resulted in an audible response of indignation in a single sex group. This is confirmed by experiences of delivering this workshop outside the parameters of this research. There is something that is generally beyond the language skills of the group to express, which bonds the women in this moment. There is a sense that the women would have found a different solution to the problem, only risking the children as a last possible option. Childcare is still generally the responsibility of women across nationalities, as illustrated by their prevalence in family learning projects. However, sensitivity to the workshop context is essential. The emphasis on a single word, which can bond the group through our shared femininity, could also alienate participants dramatically if used in a mixed group. This would particularly apply in family learning when men present may already feel insecure in what they may culturally perceive as a female domain.

Expressing Bi-cultural Identity

This section argues for the opportunity to embody belonging through expressions of bi-cultural identity in performance. The work of Judith Butler has been highly influential in arguing that identity is the outcome of performance and not vice versa. She argues that even the notion that one belongs to a sex or gender can be problematized, not simply because of cultural and historical variation, but because gender is an effect which is produced performatively. Gender, she writes, is 'a construction that conceals its genesis, the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions' (Butler 1990, 140). Bell (1999) considers this performativity to be central to belonging. In *Performativity and Belonging*, she explores the 'citational' nature

of identity, which is embraced in the work of the Boyarins and of Fortier in the sense that the performativity of belonging 'cites' the norms that constitute or make present the 'community' or group as such: 'The repetition, sometimes ritualised repetition, of these normalised codes makes material the belongings they purport to simply describe' (Bell 1999, 3). Fortier writes of the Italian community in London, identifying the ritualised movements within Catholic mass as a cultivator of belonging. This citation in a non-Catholic country operates to recall and reconnect to places elsewhere, thus creating a site of diasporic belonging. Within the practice-based research for this thesis, an early attempt was made to create a ritual at the start of sessions through the repetition of a name game the participants enjoyed playing to mark the transition into the workshop space. However, this was unsuccessful, as participants were completely uninterested in learning the names of others, as their focus was on their practical and language needs rather than on any benefit from connecting with other members of the group from diverse backgrounds. One strongly asserted: 'We do not need to know other people['s] names. It is not useful. It does not help us practice our English' (Workshop 19/11/08). The activity only referenced the norms I wished to impose as the facilitator. Knowing one another's names was an external characteristic I anticipated would create a basic level of belonging, especially in a context where attendance may be erratic. Instead, it was more effective to simply create a space where participants had the opportunity to connect past and present for themselves. The use of traditional stories as source material within the session 'cites' the country of origin and is normalised through the repetition of experiencing traditional stories from all members of the group.

The performance of stories from one's culture of origin in the UK merges elements of present and past identity. When a traditional story is expressed with props and objects that may not exactly replicate those from the original culture, and using techniques and approaches which

differ from the original context, it becomes bi-cultural. The Sri Lankan story, *The Wise Monkey*, provides an example. Participants were asked to research and bring traditional stories from their country to a family learning session. The following week, each family made props and costumes, performed the story and then created images and text from the performance to make a photo book of their story. This particular family brought three stories, with which the mother was familiar but had clarified the details by finding versions online. Prior to working on the performance, the mother expressed concern about how 'authentic' her family's presentation of the story would be. In interview after creating the photo story-book of *The Wise Monkey*, however, these concerns seemed to have disappeared when I tried to follow up with questions afterwards. In this case, offered a choice of Sri Lankan stories, as a facilitator I had guided the final story choice towards the one that could be furnished best with props that did not excessively emphasise the British creation context, through showing the props and puppets available and encouraging the participants to reflect on what would be most fun to make. There is an element of manipulation here, which the participant could reject without being pressured, but which is caused by the facilitator's awareness of the restrictions of time and the theatrical potential of the subject matter. The success of the task in creating an attractive and clearly expressed book, with the accompanying sense of achievement, was more important in this case than freedom from influence in the initial decision. The importance of a good quality end product in this project required a greater balancing of the demands of time, autonomy, and artistry than some of the more informal outcomes within the practice-based research. As the emphasis on participation rather than perfection was seen by participants as a very British approach to the storytelling, the performances had already become a celebration of bi-cultural identity, where stories from the past were reflected through a new cultural way of expressing them. The Sri Lankan mother explained:

I think they've enjoyed what they've done today a lot because it's very different to the way we as Sri Lankans would tell a story. There, the children sit and listen to the story. To be involved in it is something new for them. They enjoyed making the masks and acting out and how normal things could be... like how you used normal cloth to be the lake. It was fantastic. It adds so much more to the story. It makes it more interesting for them. (Appendix 1, interview 37)

The book which participants could take home formed a lasting reminder of the experience. As a result of participating in the workshop, some parents believed their children 'will settle down better here when maybe they have the chance to go to the nursery' or school in the UK, as they had experienced the active learning of an 'English' cultural context (Appendix 1, interview 10). The family, as a whole, had shared experience of an educational approach of which they were suspicious.

When participants had the freedom to devise something around any subject, the expression of diverse contemporary British identity was even more apparent. *Ghost Lesson*, a performance from the Creative English group on 29 April 2009, provides an example. This performance was based on characters that the participants had created without external restrictions on their choices. A mixture of drawing and words helped participants to create the character that they wanted.³⁶ As a result, many of the characters were often younger, fantasy versions of the deviser, with the money or talents they would like to have. Whilst the age of participants ranged from 18 to 69, all but one of the characters created were aged 20 or younger and had character attributes such as being 'strong', 'brave,' 'clever,' 'rich', 'good at dancing', and 'speaks English very well'. One woman created a 100-year-old ghost as her character, inspired by the paleness of her own drawing. As a consequence of these characters, a plot evolved around a ghost haunting a school. Despite murdering the head teacher, the ghost was finally driven away by the exuberant dance of the hero, 'Punjabi Boy'. As with other collectively

³⁶ This activity was inspired by a workshop with Eleanor Cocks at the 'Voices 1999 – 2009' Conference at The Albany, Deptford, 4/3/09.

devised material, the plot had a positive metaphorical meaning for the group, as the women were able to defeat the powerful ghost with the singing and dance skills they already possessed. Through fiction, it afforded the possibility of being triumphant in difficult circumstances. In addition, it was a context where representations of evolving bi-cultural identity could be explored and expressed. Teresa La Fromboise, Hardin L. K. Coleman, and Jennifer Gerton's article, 'Psychological Impact of Bi-culturalism: evidence and theory' (2004), links bi-cultural competence to higher cognitive functioning, increased attainment, and mental health. Within the representations the group created, cultural beliefs, symbols and values merged and were negotiated in a safe and non-threatening environment, affirming the validity of all cultural perspectives and providing an expression of the diverse British society to which they belonged. While the characters in the opening scene of *Ghost Lesson* were learning the English alphabet, the plot celebrated the diversity of the multi-cultural community of which they were part. The school created by the group, combined elements of the traditional blackboard-based education many of the participants had experienced in their own country and the drama-based ESOL education they had experienced in the sessions. While the dialogue was in English, the dance that defeated the ghost was of a Bollywood style, accompanied by songs sung in Portuguese and Urdu. This performance illustrates Modood's concept of interactive integration in action.³⁷ The framing of the English lesson demonstrated an awareness of the importance of proactive action in learning the language to achieve integration, while the Bollywood dance accompanied by singing in Portuguese and Urdu expressed the value of cultures of origin in the face of adversity. Without being expressly sought, the intuitive merging of different elements from the different cultures represented in the applied theatre group expressed a multicultural sense of belonging which was being redefined and re-articulated by those specific individuals. *Ghost Lesson* was a transient expression of belonging in performance, which would be continually renegotiated in each

³⁷ As discussed in the Introduction, pp. 25-6.

future piece of devising to account for the shifts in membership and self-perception within the group's identity.

The protective distance implied by the focus on stories told in childhood was not the only factor to encourage receptivity. When the subject matter was not rooted in personal pain and sorrow, it was also more likely to be explored playfully and with laughter. This also developed into an important characteristic of the practice that was greatly valued by participants, as a release from stress and difficulty in other areas of their lives. 'I *have* to come,' one participant stated. 'This is the only place I laugh.' Despite *Ghost Lesson* not having a comic plot, there was still considerable laughter during the devising process. This occurred when participants experimented with different ways of costuming the ghost, explored ways of consuming the teacher whole, or posed as the swaggering hero. The relaxed positive atmosphere created by this laughter encouraged people to be more open to differences. In another improvisation, in which a couple had arrived at a holiday resort and the husband wanted a glass of wine to celebrate, there was much laughter when, despite repeatedly asking for the wine and despite being told repeatedly he could have anything he wanted, the hotel staff member, played by a Muslim woman, refused to serve alcohol even in fiction. After the scene, another member of the group asked, 'This is because you no drink alcohol?' and after an affirmative 'Yes', the group moved on to the next scene with acceptance and unconcern, without the awkwardness of declining a drink offered in real life or a confrontational discussion of the difference. The protective distance of illustrating culture difference through fiction, combined with the light-hearted mood of participants, increased the receptivity of participants which Slote views as the precursor of caring and empathy. 'Telling a story,' Paul Ricoeur suggests, 'is deploying an imaginary space for thought experiments in which moral judgement operates in hypothetical mode' (Ricoeur 1992, 170). This hypothetical mode releases participants from socially

pressured responses and those driven by high emotion. In this way, representing oneself creatively addresses other elements that La Fromboise, Coleman, and Gerton identify as important in achieving bi-cultural identity: 'positive attitudes towards majority and minority groups' and 'groundedness', defined as stable social networks in both cultures. According to Abraham Maslow, creativity involves 'here-now self-forgetfulness and other-forgetfulness'. He lists the attributes of this 'forgetful' state as 'less fear, less inhibition, less need for defence and self-protection, less guardedness, less need for artificiality, less fear of ridicule, of humiliation and of failure' (Maslow 1971, 67). Sharing in a creative task was, therefore, an ideal context to meet with those whom the women would normally consider 'the Other'. In research interviews, participants repeatedly stated how much they had enjoyed learning about the culture of others in the group:

Before I come in the UK, I have never heard about Arabic, Bangladesh, and traditions and traditional food, it was interesting to know. I think it's very useful for me. Now I can tell which woman from Iran, Iraq or other country and what kinds of food they like. I don't know before. It's very useful. It's very interesting. (Appendix 1, interview 12)

They described the friendships they had developed during the course as an important outcome of it. One summarised: 'all of us we feel friends, despite our religions and customs. It's important for world peace, maybe' (Appendix 1, interview 20).

This chapter has argued that the use of traditional and other stories as source material within workshops encourages participants to develop a sense of belonging. This is achieved through celebrating stories as a bridge between past and present, developing a sense of common values through stories, encouraging a more hopeful outlook through the metaphorical struggles and successes of the characters, claiming ownership over British cultural signs and symbols, and expressing bi-cultural identity through the creation of new stories. Consonant with Sloté's concept of receptivity, traditional stories create an opportunity to explore self and relationships with others through a protective fictional barrier, enhanced by a playful and light-

hearted tone. The necessary reliance on the expertise of the participants when generating source material of this type also encourages a more symmetrical care relationship within the group. Facilitators' definitions of authenticity, however, need to embrace the diverse experience of participants shaped by both the unification of globalisation and each culture's structurally different reality.

Participants with secure basic language skills often rated an understanding of British culture as having equal importance as social and language benefits in the sessions:

When you come to the class, you have confidence speaking English and you understand English and you know the English culture, it is good. You know people. When you join the class, you know everything about English people, English culture, English language. (Appendix 1, interview 13)

Understanding in all these areas helps to encourage a sense of belonging, when the participant is comfortable interacting in each way. From literature on the psychological impact of bi-culturalism reviewed across disciplines, La Fromboise, Coleman, and Gerton conclude that 'the more an individual is able to maintain active and effective relationships through **alternation** [my emphasis] between both cultures, the less difficulty he or she will have in acquiring and maintaining competence in both cultures' (Fromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 2004, 402). This chapter has argued that traditional stories provide an ideal context to rehearse alternation between cultures and to recognise similarity and difference in values and behaviour. On mastering this alternation between cultures, participants will be able to act as 'cultural brokers', as the following chapter will explore.

Chapter 5. Creating a Bridge between the Workshop and the Outside World: the Radical Potential of Care

This chapter argues that the capacity to give and receive care is characteristic of belonging. An applied theatre group which accelerates participants' sense of belonging should, therefore, pay attention to pedagogical approaches and structures which support participants' ability to give, as well as receive, care. While a sense of belonging to a specific applied theatre group in the UK will have a positive impact on an individual's broader sense of belonging, a theatre project is subject to the time limits imposed by funding and, even if delivered by volunteers, is dependent on the capacity of suitable staff and key logistical factors such as the availability of an appropriate venue. An applied theatre project will, therefore, always have a finite existence. It is imperative that it actively facilitates the building of confidence in engaging with the real world outside the project and encourages individuals to autonomously expand their social and functional network. In this way, a sense of belonging to the UK is more broadly achieved and outlasts the temporary theatre intervention. This chapter argues that the practice of care is a radical force in the redistribution of power. While Thompson argues for performances foregrounding pleasure and beauty as part of the return to affect, he also states: 'safety, protection and care (particularly when translated to situations of conflict) are not a retreat from some imagined politics of freedom, but the heart of its radical vision' (Thompson 2009b, 118-9). This thesis argues that an ethic of care is the overarching key element, which enables long-term change to be brought about in individuals and communities. It proposes that the difference between a project rooted in an ethic of care and one that does not have this emphasis can be explained by variations in the relationships and focus of the distinct sections of the group. The ethic of care provides a framework to disrupt the uneven balance of power, which Nicholson identifies between the altruist and recipient, and to disturb acts of altruism that maintain existing powerlessness (Nicholson 2005, 30).

The Significance of the Seemingly Insignificant

At a time of significant stress and trauma, such as that experienced in forced migration, it is usual to demonstrate care only for one's closest related others. It is normal to experience difficulty in demonstrating care in these relationships. Children of refugees and recent migrants, for example, often live in very difficult circumstances with parents who are emotionally or physically absent, as a result of trauma faced in their country of origin or simply as a result of the difficulty of surviving day-to-day on a most basic level. Rutter explains:

Exile often disrupts family relationships: children may lose parents or key carers. More frequently, children lose the attention of their parents, who may be so preoccupied by basic survival and their own problems they cannot give young children the attention they need (Rutter 2003, 133).

However, as already identified at the start of this chapter, the capacity to give and receive care is integral to belonging. This section argues that seemingly insignificant details within the behaviour of the facilitator enable individuals to develop a capacity to care at a rate appropriate to their individual circumstance. It does not demand that participants care for one another, but creates a culture of care through the modelling of norms that are in opposition to the 'drop-in' culture of much refugee support. In non-Western countries where the self may be experienced more in merged family and community identities (McDermott 2009, 174), this may provide both a barrier to experiencing belonging to the group and an opportunity, as a new community is formed.

This section argues that the small, seemingly insignificant details of how a facilitator interacts with people can have a profound effect on the culture of the group. This in turn increases the effectiveness of the group in meeting the diverse needs of different members, as it is not dependent on the alertness of only one or two facilitators. For bell hooks, belonging is synonymous with 'a culture of place' where there is a 'community of care' and acceptance

(hooks 2009). A 'culture of place' implies the embedded norms that those who choose to stay in the place embrace. It is in small interpersonal interactions that this culture of care is established, which are initially modelled by the facilitator(s) and then replicated by the majority of the group.

The tone adopted by the facilitator(s) impacts on the atmosphere of the group and the attitudes of group members to one another from the start of the first session. Welcoming people into the space, asking about what sort of week individuals have had, remembering details participants have shared and enquiring about them in a subsequent week, creates a context where individuals feel valued and noticed as people as well as participants. The majority of research interviews referred to the facilitator and project support worker as 'friends' or behaving 'like friends.' This even applied in Creative English, where the facilitator was also clearly viewed as the 'teacher.' Where interviewing in a second language, some awareness is needed of the possibility of participants using the word 'friend' to refer to people whom an English speaker would be more likely to describe as 'acquaintances.' However, comments from interviewees reinforced the importance of the relationship. For some participants, this was their first interaction with a friendly member of the host nation. They were more used to emotionless indifference or even hostility from officials they encountered. The simple experience of a different type of interaction evoked the possibility of different relationships in other contexts. People felt more confident in asking questions than in a traditional classroom, as they felt valued as individuals. One participant summarised: 'How you teach us is very friendly and I can ask anything... everything. Other ladies won't help us but we can ask any question because you teach us nicely' (Appendix 1, interview 14). The friendly, relaxed atmosphere generates what Krashen calls a 'low affective filter', which is necessary for successful learning.

When language barriers mean words do not necessarily communicate, facial expressions become particularly important. Smiling becomes very important. One participant considered this to make a significant difference to other classes she attended: 'I feel very happy in your class. I like it. It is because of you. Your smiling face. You are easy to understand. I feel happy' ('Write a Children's Story' workshop 29/1/10). Stella Barnes considers smiling part of the package that makes people feel they belong: 'They come here: they are not judged; they are not treated according to being a refugee. We don't want to know their story [why they came to the UK]. Nobody gives them a funny look. We're all open and smile' (Appendix 1, interview 61). For refugees and vulnerable migrants, who may come from cultures where it is normal to smile at strangers and say 'hello', the lack of eye contact and sometimes outright hostility they experience in the UK is disconcerting and alienating. Smiling strangers in an arts project can connect with a comforting sense of what is appropriate, normal behaviour. As James Thompson says in *Applied Theatre, Bewilderment and Beyond*, 'The simple action of smiling with somebody connects you in a shared 'real' emotional experience. It is an intervention in your emotional repertoire that should not be dismissed or trivialised' (Thompson 2003, 169). The playful approach to subject matter within this research encourages moments of shared connection.

Smiling and valuing group members as individuals becomes the norm which individuals wish to reproduce. Peggy Phelan explores how seeing the other is 'a social form of self-reproduction. For in looking at/for the other, we seek to re-present ourselves to ourselves'. As we cannot define and understand ourselves solely by an inward gaze, this has to be in relation to other people (Phelan 1993, 21). In addition, re-presenting ourselves to ourselves through watching performance also applies to observing the behaviour of the facilitator and other members of

the applied drama project. If the behaviour is viewed as desirable, it will be re-presented by others. It will become part of the group's culture of place. In the extended projects, there was a striking development in participants' behaviour, as members of the group began to go out of their way to welcome newcomers and ensure they felt secure in this new environment, adopting the behaviour that had been modelled and appreciated by them when they were new. The level of interest in and support for one another grew over the duration of the project. Asking questions following something up that a member of the group had done the previous week became the norm. This not only made participants feel cared about but also inspired them to put their own English language skills into practice outside the safety of the workshop space. Brown suggests that courage is 'contagious' (Brown 2012, 54). Sharing stories of success inspires others. The story of one woman successfully taking back goods to a shop told one week, gave another woman the courage to take back a pair of shoes the following week (Workshop 3/6/09). Having told members of the group about the problem with the shoes, they encouraged her to take action and were genuinely delighted at the successful outcome. Caring about one another's problems and successes helps to build a sense of belonging in the group and encourages further acts of 'ordinary' courage within the group. Friendly interest in one another's lives also creates a context where partner organisations can be alerted to issues and provide help, but also where participants can demonstrate their own increasing sense of belonging by providing information and support to other immigrants based on their own experiences. A new arrival to the UK explained how, during the set or prop building in family sessions:

I've got the chance to ask people where I should go to and from whom I should get information and [this is] the main thing [which] has made it easier for me to settle into life in the UK ... This is better than the internet or formal ways of getting information, as by talking to people I have got the information more quickly maybe. People living in the local area know best where to go, whom we should meet and the procedure ... the mothers who come, they know exactly how the process goes because they have had first-hand experience, so that has been really helpful to me. (Appendix 1, interview 10)

Being the source of help for other new arrivals helped participants recognise how far they had progressed in terms of integration into the UK. This again both maximises the help available to individuals within the workshop by multiplying the sources of potential advice, and enhances participants' belonging by recognising the knowledge they have about living in the UK.

One source of this mutuality was inspired by interpreters in the research interviews. Those who were former beneficiaries of Open Doors services stressed the need to share information about their personal family background before commencing the interview. This increased the level of trust and equality between the people involved. As a result, in the Creative English, 'Write a Children's Story' course (January to February 2010), I consciously chose exemplar materials at the start of the first session that related to my own family background, supported by relevant photos. The women responded very positively to this. One stated: 'It is good to know who you are.' Another nodded approvingly, 'I like to see your family. They look nice people' (Workshop 15/1/10). Providing this contextual information about me as a facilitator appeared to give the group an increased sense of security early on. It signalled clearly that I was in the project with them rather than doing something to them. This sense of being part of the group was important when working as a guest facilitator in a pre-existing group. When reflecting on why people had got involved in the drama activities when this was not something they would normally consider, the Dagenham Play 'n' Chat Co-ordinator explained:

It didn't feel like you were a stranger doing something to them... Even though you were an outsider from the group coming in, it didn't feel like that because you were joining in, doing everything like anyone else, so people naturally warmed to you. (Appendix 1, interview 63a)

This included getting involved in the setting up and putting away of the toys, the refreshments, when the regular volunteers who did it were absent, and generally sitting with and chatting to parents and children during the free play of the session. Building a trusting and equal relationship involves humanising oneself rather than maintaining any sense of superior status

or detachment. It also helps to establish that helping one another in all roles as a team is an expected norm.

Sharing the values perceived as the norm and behaving accordingly is characteristic of belonging. Modelling a friendly attitude to all and interest in individuals helps to build a culture of care and mutual support within the group. This is the first step in creating a sense of collective responsibility from which leaders may develop. The following section will address how the project may empower individuals to take a lead within and beyond the group.

Agency, not Dependency

This section argues for the importance of empowering individuals within and beyond the arts project, rather than positioning participants in a state of passive compliance. To move beyond passive compliance, as the previous section argued, first one has to care for oneself and others to be able to take action. This requires the creation of a culture of care. A range of strategies can then be employed to increase empowerment within and beyond the workshop space. These include: encouraging participants to 'host' other members of the group through welcome and refreshments; participants as cultural brokers; demonstrating vulnerability as a facilitator; employing specific structures within the applied theatre project to develop leadership skills, and facilitating the recognition of these skills by the rest of the group. These possibilities will be discussed within this section.

The empowerment of individuals is a critical element of an ethic of care in the creation of a sense of belonging (Held 2006, Brown 2010). Lynnette Kelly describes empowerment as: 'the power to make decisions and choices, and the necessary knowledge and resources in order to

be able to make those decisions. (Kelly 2004, 123). The 'necessary knowledge and resources' is part of functional integration (Atfield, Brahmhatt, and O'Toole 2007, 29). The 'power to make decisions and choices', however, is part of an emotional belonging, rooted in security in one's self rather than simply 'fitting in'. In her work on The Bosnia Project, examining the treatment of Bosnian refugees in the UK, Kelly found that too little attention was paid to empowering the new arrivals: 'the end result was the creation and maintenance of a dependent relationship between refugees and support staff' (Kelly 2004, 133). Using the case study of Albert, an African asylum seeker with severe depression, therapist Jane McDermott warns of the danger of identifying too strongly with the role of 'rescuer'. In this case, this prevented her from recognising that she was also in a position where she could also become the persecutor herself and that by 'taking the rescuer position herself' she had left Albert 'in a powerless and dependent victim place where he was vulnerable to further persecution' (McDermott 2009, 178).³⁸ Despite aiming her words at therapists, the well-intentioned desire to play the role of the rescuer can equally apply to charity workers and even arts facilitators within this field, impacting negatively on those they aim to help by moulding clients into 'postures of extreme passivity and assiduous compliance' (McDermott 2009, 178). Avoiding extreme passivity and assiduous compliance is clearly an individual need which an ethic of care must address.

The previous chapters discussed moments in the practice when participants have been able to demonstrate creative agency. However, supporting the participants' sense of ownership and agency within the project includes their ownership over the simple, practical action of hosting others in the workshop space. Participants may develop a sense of responsibility for others in the room, which means they will welcome others, make them feel valued and comfortable,

³⁸ In this case study, McDermott records how, failing to make an immediate appointment with her client, after a chance meeting when he was no longer under her professional care, brought him to the brink of suicide.

and facilitate conversations between people who would not normally speak to one another, rather like the host at a party. Barnes also uses imagery of the host and guest in relation to participant interactions before the start of a session:

[In] a lot of arts projects, the young people arrive and they sit and they wait and the artist comes in and they say 'OK, come on...' and they go into the space and they all stand in a circle and there's the artist and the group. We greet people at the door and we shake their hand and we offer them a drink and it's a really subtle difference, it's like welcoming someone into your home. You don't let someone sit in your home and then you come in from shopping and say 'Oh, now you're here!' You greet them; you welcome them and we have the same way of greeting the young people. [...] Beginning with a very human interaction like 'How are you? Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? You're our guest.' ... And then they become the host for the next young person that comes and it's lovely. And sometimes people say, 'You're almost like my family' (Appendix 1, interview 61).

The very action of inheriting patterns of behaviour from more mature members of the group is a familial characteristic. Ovalhouse's foyer and café is in itself very welcoming, with comfortable chairs, exhibitions of art work, and lots of light from big windows. The welcome from participants and facilitators becomes even more important in some of the cluttered, dark, multi-purpose spaces that have been used in this research. Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida, Jeffers highlights the impossibility of absolute hospitality: 'because, as soon as the host has generously offered the possibility of hospitality, he or she has simultaneously placed themselves in a position of being able to make the offer, creating an affirmation of mastery' (Jeffers 2012, 51). However, in this example of hospitality, the new arrival is quickly able to adopt the role of host. The 'mastery' is open to all, as the venue is not owned by any of the participants or facilitators. A sense of ownership comes from using the space and can be encouraged by being invited to embody the role of host by serving others. It is the role of the host in this context to invite the guest to help with the hosting and thus become part of the 'family'. As Jeffers highlights:

The possibilities lie in the fluidity of the roles of host and guest to the extent that, if the guest is always the guest and the host is always the host, something has gone badly wrong and hospitality has been replaced by parasitism or charity (Jeffers 2012, 51).

While the culture of care evolved in the practice-based research through the group replicating observed social norms, the alternation between host and guest needed to be instigated more explicitly by the facilitator. The value of this role was made clear in a few quiet conversations with individuals about what would be helpful in terms of being proactive in welcoming others and engaging those on the fringes. Without being given explicit instructions to adopt the role of host, there was no evidence this would have occurred naturally as part of the reluctance to take agency typical of ESOL groups, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, once instigated, individuals invited others to help them, thus expanding the numbers in this facilitation role. In time, one would hope that alternation between host and guest would also become a characteristic of this 'culture of place'.

In time, 'hosts' will become what Seelye and Wasilewski define as 'cultural brokers'. As noted in Chapter 4, Seelye and Wasilewski recognise the challenges of communicating across cultures and identify the necessity of building 'bridges' between the 'structurally different realities' (Seelye and Wasilewski 1996, 140). They argue that communication between cultures requires cultural brokers:

Communication between cultures involves someone first having the conventional forms and orders of the other culture. Knowledge of the language of both cultures is typically critical. People from both sides of the cultural boundaries, by dint of their experiences and skills, become 'brokers,' mediating between cultures. They often create a unique culture (Seelye and Wasilewski 1996, 140).

The workshop facilitator is indeed one of these cultural brokers, who, as a result of their experience in this field, will have some awareness of the conventional forms and orders of other cultures. However, the practice for this thesis has involved a wide range of nationalities in this type of practice. The facilitator will never have a full knowledge of diverse cultures or the languages that are useful in each. This means that, contrary to participant expectations in a traditional ESOL class, the facilitator is dependent on some of the participants to take on the

cultural broker role. As highlighted in Csikszentmihalyi's definition in Chapter 2, creativity cannot occur at all without the input of the wider community. The arts project may be initiated by a facilitator who brings 'novelty into the symbolic domain', which is shaped by cultural expectations and behaviours. However, for it to be successful, it needs the cultural brokers, who are the 'field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation', to provide the social mechanisms to recognise and spread the innovation (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 6). The facilitator cannot bring about an increase in belonging in this way without the expertise of members of the community, who might otherwise have been seen as dependent on the help. A symmetrical care relationship is built into the very notion of successful creativity in any field. It is simply not always recognised as such.

Cultural brokers within this practice-based research were from diverse backgrounds and levels of artistic skill. They were often the older women, whose participation reassured the younger women that it was appropriate to join in. In family learning sessions, sometimes the children adopted this role. In time, the 'unique culture' of the drama project may allow all participants to act as cultural brokers for their families and other members of their community. This manifested itself in a variety of ways: conveying factual information ('I tell my husband we must register with job broker. This is how we can get work.' (Appendix 1, interview 10)); encouraging one another to integrate ('When I meet new people I say go to Lifeline and learn English' (Appendix 1, interview 14)), and adopting practices of the workshop in the family ('I sit with my husband and my daughter and we make this story together. It is very special to me. We sit there for ten hours. We have not done this before.'(Workshop 5/2/10)). Providing the adults with the opportunity to fulfil the role of cultural broker removes inappropriate pressure from the child, who may otherwise find their parents are heavily reliant on them (IPSA 2009). It also helps to remove the associated sense of shame from the adult who now feels capable of

fulfilling an appropriate adult role. In families where the child is required to fulfil the role of interpreter, it can be very damaging to the family dynamic as it can result in the child having authority over the parent (Children's Society 2013). Becoming a cultural broker restores the appropriate balance of power, which is necessary for a family to function effectively.

The fact that the theatre project has a culture of its own in the 'culture of care' and the culture of artistic practice, supported by the intervention of cultural brokers, suggests that it has become a community in its own right. A sense of belonging is closely intertwined with the notion of community. A community is generally defined as an association of people who share common lifestyles, values, and goals. With its culture of care, the shared goal to improve English, and emphasis on shared experience as mothers, wives and daughters, Creative English could fall under this definition. Claudio Bernardi gives it a more comprehensive definition:

a group of individuals who have learned to communicate among themselves, to create positive feelings, whose relationships go deeper than their masks, who have grown intimate enough to take pleasure in one another's company, who experience strong solidarity, a minimum level of suffering, and a high sense of purpose (Bernardi 2009, 63).

This definition is also helpful by more precisely explaining the sense of belonging that developed in Creative English, and may develop within the cast of a play or other extended applied theatre project. Most voluntary sector projects - whether a conversation class, support group, or the Play 'n' Chat that is the context of some of the later research projects in this thesis - have these characteristics as their goal. However, Bernardi's definition continues:

These communities, be they religious or ethnic, are very close-knit, actively enforce their boundaries, and exclude outsiders. Violation of norms by community members brings about exemplary punishment (Bernardi 2009, 63).

The notion of the exclusionary aspect of community is commonly accepted and criticised by commentators on community. The concept of community is often considered to be romanticised (Joseph (2002), Bharucha (2010), Cohen (1985)). Indeed, this exclusionary aspect

can apply to theatre projects. The 'active enforcing of its boundaries' may not involve formal exclusion on the basis of explicit rules or attendance, but an informal exclusion through verbal and non-verbal cues from key players which leave some participants physically and metaphorically outside the group. There may be an expectation of conformity in areas of talent, ability, and confidence which is deemed to make one worthy of belonging to the group. However, this thesis argues that an applied theatre project developed through an ethic of care is constantly looking to its fringes, seeking to draw them into the core through an attention to individual needs. Instead of an emphasis on punishing the violation of norms, it celebrates difference, as Chapter 4 has exemplified through the focus on source material from other cultures. At the same time, its foundation in an ethic of care means that the value placed on care is fundamental. As expected in 'mature care', care of the group and individuals within it is prioritised over any individual whose values may conflict with the well-being of members of the group. While appreciating that sexist, racist, and homophobic attitudes may be deeply embedded in the psyche of participants who have not experienced a multicultural society before arriving in the UK, which may result in a 'violation of norms', this awareness reiterates the importance of modelling tolerance and acceptance towards all, without accepting words or behaviour that interfere with the safety of the space. The emphasis is, however, on exemplifying positive care for others in the group, not on 'punishment'. The focus on 'looking outwards' in the project extends to looking beyond it to ensure it has a tangible impact on the day-to-day living of participants. This informs the choice to address the practical need to learn useful English, as discussed in Chapter 3. It also informs an emphasis on empowerment and opportunities to build friendships, as this chapter will discuss. All these elements are particularly important for participating refugees and migrants. To achieve a sense of belonging in the UK, participants need to integrate into British society on a practical and an emotional level.

The following diagrams highlight what this thesis argues is the difference between an applied theatre project which is actively seeking to respond to participants' need for genuine belonging, and a community theatre project which is not shaped by an ethic of care, where some participants may experience an intense feeling of belonging but this is not a universal experience.

Figure 3

Theatre project which is not shaped by an ethic of care:

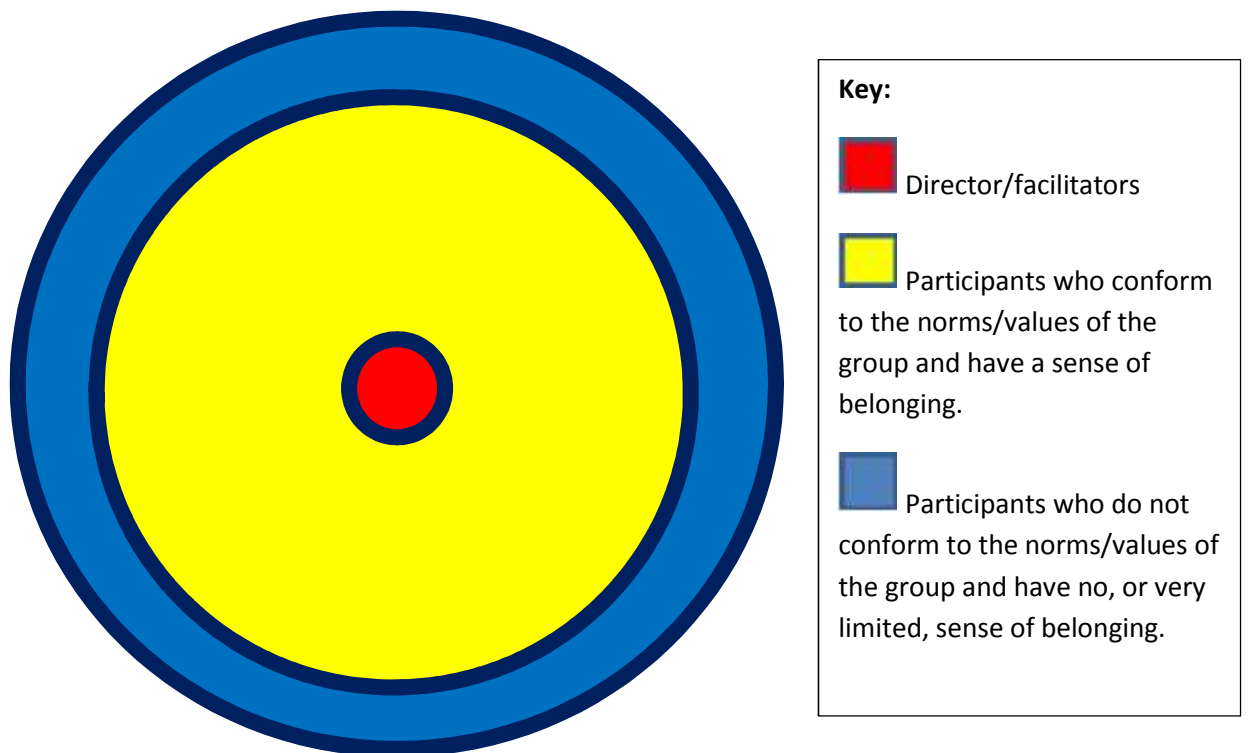
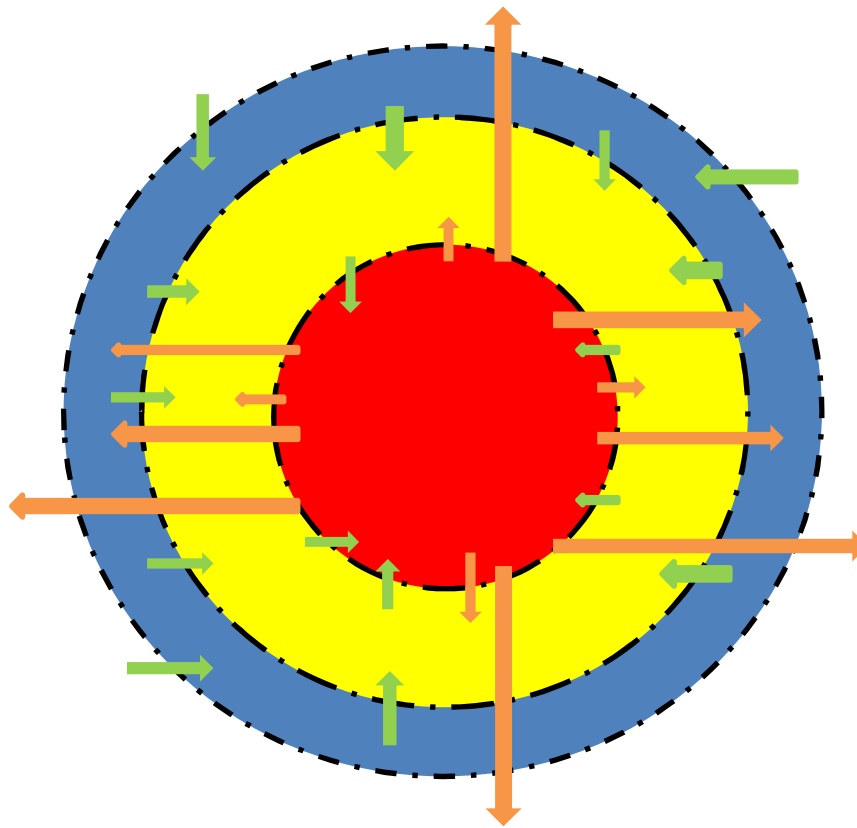







Figure 4:

Applied drama project shaped by an ethic of care



Key:

-  Facilitation team, initially project leaders, but subsequently including participants who have a strong sense of belonging to the project
-  Participants who come regularly and have a sense of belonging to the project
-  Participants who come to workshops occasionally, are new, or are audience members and guests
-  Looking outwards to increase belonging and empowerment
-  Moving towards centre of circle/increased level of engagement/belonging to the group

In Figure 3, there is a clear boundary between each classification of participant/leader which is not crossed. To be part of the yellow circle, participants must conform to the expected norms of the group. They must 'fit in' rather than experience authentic belonging. The participants in the blue zone may attend the project every session and demonstrate a high level of commitment to the group. They will never be welcomed as equal or be considered worthy of complete belonging by the core members as they are marked out as different by their lack of artistic skill, the perceived value of contribution to the performance, or their differing levels of confidence, fashion taste, or interest. There is a status attributed to each tier of the group, which the inner circles wish to preserve while the outer circle accepts and internalises its lower sense of self-worth, perhaps grateful to be close to those in the prestigious inner circles. The inner circles will have a highly developed sense of belonging but will wish to defend it from others it perceives do not 'fit in'. Theatre is synonymous with belonging, but as this diagram indicates, it is not always an inclusive phenomenon. A sense of belonging will not be experienced automatically, any more than a national insurance number or British passport will affect an individual's emotional affinity to the UK.

By contrast, Figure 4 shows the community created by the longer term projects represented in this research. Unlike the clearly defined barriers in Figure 3 which prevent exchange between the circles, the edge of each circle is porous. Facilitators and participants who are acting as hosts or cultural brokers actively seek to include those on the fringes, to make the project accessible to them, and draw them into its core. In this case, it is a community which builds a strong core through looking outwards at its fringes. Participants become co-facilitators of the project in a variety of ways, which may be social, administrative or creative. A deeper sense of belonging is achieved by a larger number. The inner circle may swallow all the others. The porous outer boundary encourages exchange with the world outside the project, both allowing practical needs to be fulfilled through the drama and a valuing of communication and

volunteering by individuals in the outside world. As previously discussed in this thesis, play and creativity are invaluable means of generating an environment conducive to moving between circles. A pedagogy which generates an inclusive 'culture of care', as described in this chapter, draws participants into the core of the group, where they will experience a strong sense of belonging.

The porous boundary around the central circle requires a sense of equality in the relationship between participants and facilitator, which is achieved in various ways, including through a degree of vulnerability on behalf of the facilitator. Brené Brown describes vulnerability, which she defines as 'uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure', as the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity (Brown 2012, 34). This thesis has argued strongly in favour of creative rather than personal 'uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure' when working with individuals who encounter personal uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure on a daily basis. However, facilitator openness about herself can form a type of vulnerability that increases the equality of the relationship and thus assists in facilitating a sense of belonging. Turner sees a responsiveness to this attitude as an inevitable consequence of spontaneous *communitas*:

When the mood, style or 'fit' of spontaneous *communitas* is upon us, we place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and a lack of pretensions or pretentiousness. We feel that it is important to relate directly to another person [...] free from the culturally defined encumbrances of his role' (Turner 1982, 48).

So in a context where spontaneous *communitas* is encouraged through activities and relationships, this vulnerability is particularly valuable. As Brown states: 'Being vulnerable and open is mutual and an integral part of the trust-building process' (Brown 2012, 45). It does not involve over-sharing or purging emotions. It is not attention-seeking and should not, therefore, dominate the workshop process or be in any way a focal point within it. However,

mutually respectful vulnerability can result in connection, trust and engagement, breaking down some participants' internalised otherness.

Mutually respectful vulnerability can appear in a workshop in a range of forms. Playing drama games at the start of the session, which did not rely on language, enabled the facilitators to compete on an equal footing with participants and, therefore, demonstrate a lower level of skill in terms of speed, agility, or memory. In a game involving speed, memory, and numeracy, I was clearly the worst player. 'You are teacher!!!' exclaimed one participant in disbelief, as I was sent to the bottom chair yet again (Workshop 20/5/09). Although not always appropriate to a short-term course with a language focus, these moments helped to subvert expectations of superiority. In the 'Going to the Doctor' course, this tone was more difficult to establish as there was a correct answer in terms of the health literacy issues discussed, as well as the English language involved, which reinforces the facilitator's status as 'expert'. In this context, being honest about difficulties one had experienced in situations similar to those being explored in the drama helped participants to recognise that their difficulties were not always due to their language abilities. The recognition that receptionists are not always friendly and that it is not always easy to get what you want regardless of whether you were born in the host community or not, destroys preconceptions that negative experiences are solely associated with immigration status. Brown calls this 'disruptive engagement' where education is 'humanised'. As a transaction between multi-faceted, individual human beings, engaging with vulnerability is much more effective in allowing shame to be recognised and combatted (Brown 2012, 187-8). The impact is increased by multiple facilitators sharing their authentic feelings about a problem being explored in the workshop. In a health literacy workshop facilitated by undergraduates, a number of them explained in the closing discussion how difficult they found dealing with medical professionals and said how they felt the

workshop had improved their confidence too. This surprised the participants who were migrants and refugees. One exclaimed: 'I thought it [was] just me with this problem. You are English, right? English! You speak so nice. Next time you call me, eh? We talk [to] this nurse together!' (Workshop 9/12/11). In these words, she both recognised the shared problem, that the difficulty cannot have been based in language ('You speak so nice') and offered to help, implying a growing confidence in her ability to manage the situation.

Revealing areas of limited skill creates space for others to demonstrate their talents. Again, this is beneficial in supporting participants in recognising the skills that help them enter the inner circle of the project. Having demonstrated skills in terms of performance and facilitation, the women were horrified at the revelation that I could not cook and did not like doing it. For many of the participants, especially those from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh, this was a very basic 'womanly' skill that I was lacking, evidenced by my contribution to the shared meals before the training in Goodmayes customarily being something purchased from the nearby garage or supermarket, generally a pre-packaged pizza. Consequently, their cooking skills were admired, both by me and by other women in the group, especially the Europeans, who tended to like spicy food but were not able to cook it to the same level of expertise. Conversations of this type resulted in a follow-up course being run after the storytelling course. This, however, was a cooking course, run by one of the Indian women, who had demonstrated herself to be extremely accomplished during these shared meals. It was not an intentional outcome of the course and developed entirely without the support of the Open Doors team. The woman simply recognised that she had something to offer the community and now had the confidence and relationships formed within the drama sessions to accomplish it. For women locked into the 'hero worship' of ESOL teachers as described above,

there was something liberating in the recognition that their teacher was not perfect and that they had equally valuable skills to contribute.

While creating high quality performance, writing or visual art is invaluable in building self-esteem. Joyful, imperfect work can actually have a liberating effect on the group. It can increase belonging and the willingness to be involved in a core circle of the group through destroying the perceived shame of 'not being good enough'. When a well-regarded member of the Dagenham Play 'n' Chat performed in a sketch, for example, she was not confident enough to want to do it without her script and had chosen comedy character glasses which made the script impossible for her to read, resulting in a chaotic piece of performance. There was as much laughter at what was going wrong as at the script itself. However, instead of experiencing any sense of embarrassment, she was clearly enjoying every moment. The joy of the occasion and the permission for imperfection she was giving had a very positive impact on the other participants:

It was so fun. She was having such a good time with that wig on and those mad glasses and people were laughing and responding and she still communicated what she wanted to communicate, so actually it didn't really matter if it was a fantastic performance. I guess if it was really amazing that might put you off from having a go. (Appendix 1, interview 36)

Carolyn Gibbons felt that seeing someone they knew and liked in the role did make a difference to how enthusiastically the women responded to the opportunity to participate themselves. One member of the group started to tell her about all the costumes she had at home that could be used for dressing up, after seeing the sketch:

She was getting really carried away with it, which is quite funny, but I was excited about that because I thought, yeah, if people are watching her [the woman in the sketch] and just thinking, 'Yes, I could do something creative; I could do something like that as well, in front of Play 'n' Chat,' and that all seems to be building up a sense of community, which is the whole point really. (Appendix 1, interview 63a)

Removing any self-imposed expectation that one has to have talent and skill to perform releases people to participate. Through joining in, they will increase in skill and confidence. Through joining in without worrying whether their performance is good or bad or offering other resources, they are being themselves and not simply 'fitting in'. A supportive 'culture of care' is important here, as discussed at the start of this chapter. It mattered that the woman in the sketch was affirmed by the group rather than condemned for her poor memory and foolish choice of prop. However, in a culture of care, where playfulness is a valued norm, unashamed presentation of imperfection is highly beneficial to belonging. Expression of pleasure also encourages others to become more involved in the core team of the project, as it is an attractive characteristic.

While the arts project presents a liminal space where there is an opportunity to develop leadership, it is necessary to create structures within a project which increase the likelihood of these shifts in role being sustained. As Bingham has demonstrated, participants will not automatically take the opportunity to lead, even when it is offered to them. It is, therefore, important to create structures within the project that support the necessary development of skills and confidence, especially if the project is short-term and requires the participants to capitalise on what they have done in their existing community after the applied theatre project has concluded. The development of an inner circle, as in Figure 4, is important in the existing community, as well as the applied theatre project, as this provides mutual encouragement and support in maintaining newly defined roles. Despite the success in empowering participants to develop a cooking course in Goodmayes after a three-week storytelling training with members of the Play 'n' Chat group, this was not successful in generating a long-term change in interactions between parents and children in the group. Although participants gave positive feedback on the course, it did not result in participants applying what they had learned to the

wider group. However, in the Dagenham Play 'n' Chat group, the training, despite being significantly shorter (a mere two hours) was successful in this goal, through a structured five weeks when pairs took responsibility for a storytelling each week, meeting up outside the training session to complete the props and rehearsals they had not completed within the formal workshop.

Illustrated here is the difference between the applied drama project being what Schechner describes as a 'transportation', when the participant enters into the experience, is moved, and then returns to normal life in the same state as he engaged in it, and a 'transformation', a liminal ritual which permanently changes who someone is (Schechner 2002, 63). Schechner illustrates the idea of a transformative liminal ritual by describing the eight-week initiation ritual of Asemo, a ten-year-old of the Gahuku people of Papua New Guinea in the 1950s, marking his passage into adulthood (Schechner 2002, 65-66). As part of this ritual, he is taken away from his family and spends two weeks being prepared to receive the knowledge of his tribe and six weeks being trained in it. When he returns to the village, as a man not a boy, there is a time of feasting and dancing. What confers his new status as a man, however, is both his own behaviour and responses to him: 'This time the women did not attack the men, but greeted them with a "rising chorus of welcoming calls." The newly conferred men, the initiates, danced without the assistance or protection of the older men' (Schechner 2002, 65). There is a difference in the expectations of others and in the boy's expectations of himself as a consequence of his training. Dancing before the village without assistance affirms and cements this change of status. Treated as a man, he will act like one. Obviously, attendance at a Creative English or family learning course does not confer an official change in status. However, relationships developed in the group, confidence engendered by performing, improved language skills, celebration of bi-cultural identity, and a sense of belonging within

that group all mark a significant step towards an increased sense of belonging to UK society. To prevent this from becoming a temporary transportation, they too need the affirmation and consolidation provided by changed expectations and an ability to contribute to society in a new way. For this reason, a supportive structure which encourages participants to develop skills and agency after the end of the drama project is very significant.

The family learning project at the Barking and Dagenham Play 'n' Chat session provides one example of such a supportive structure to ensure transformation at the end of the project. After five weeks of participating in family learning activities and performances within the regular Play 'n' Chat sessions, participants were given the option of attending storytelling training (April 2010). For those who attended the training, performing and leading the rest of the group became a rite of passage that marked their transition from follower to leader/performer. Van Gennep notes that rites of passage consist of three phases: the preliminal, liminal and postliminal (Schechner 2002, 57). Although not as violent as Asemo's, the preliminal phase was similarly preparation to achieve an openness and willingness to receive the skills on offer, through participating in performance activities in the regular sessions. Like Asemo, the liminal phase of the training then took place away from the rest of the group. The most significant of the three phases is the liminal as 'a period of time when a person is "betwixt and between" social categories or personal identities' (Schechner 2002, 57). Participants had the opportunity to demonstrate and develop previously undisclosed skills and talents during this time. They revealed aptitudes for art, improvising and comedy. When they returned, in the postliminal phase, they took responsibility in pairs for a performance in a subsequent Play 'n' Chat session. In this way, the participants asserted and cemented their transformation through the performance. Like the women of the village, their peers responded differently to the course participants, affirming and encouraging them in these

strengths. Natural conversation following the performances each week: 'That was a really good story. I liked your forest thing. Did you make it?'³⁹ recognised and celebrated the transformation, even when the performance skills themselves were not particularly strong.

Tom Douglas explains the value and difficulty in utilising human resources within any group:

The principal problem in using human resources is, first, discovering that they exist, for many who come into groups believe that they are there because either they have no resources or they have the wrong ones, or that what they have has been of little use (Douglas 2000, 44).

This opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate other abilities was important in revealing a skills bank that could be tapped into for future craft activities and storytelling beyond the end of the project. It also affirmed to the newly trained participants that they had value as creators and initiators in the group. As a result of this affirmation and expectation, participants offered to lead singing in the group during a subsequent week. Two participants borrowed materials to share their new-found skills with family and friends at home and others joined the Play 'n' Chat volunteer team, providing art and craft activities at other sessions. An Algerian participant explained how the confidence generated from succeeding in this context had encouraged her to share in new-found skills in a variety of contexts:

I introduce this to my friend and say, 'This is a very interesting thing.' ... [They tried it and] they like reading now... If I find it is the best way, I do it. At Play 'n' Chat, in my home, in my friend's house, I do it. Even when I go to my friend's house, I do it. Especially when I see the children are not very happy, I do it. I make the story even from your head. It keeps your child happy. I find your way very attractive and I do it everywhere. (Appendix 1, interview 29).

Thus a short-term arts intervention had a substantial impact on her family and friends, as she herself became the advocate and teacher of the approach. In addition to increased confidence in offering their skills, it was equally significant in maintaining the transformation of these women that, having revealed their capabilities, they would now be asked to use them. The rite of passage had changed the expectations of others and themselves. Rather than temporary

³⁹ Comment overheard from audience member at Play 'n' Chat, who had not attended the training 11/5/10.

transportation, transformation through participation and recognition in the project was assured.

This section has shown that a variety of different strategies can increase the agency of individuals within the project and draw them into the central core group, who have a responsibility for the well-being of other group members and the facilitation of elements of the sessions. Having developed a strong team, who are outward-looking in terms of supporting newcomers or the more vulnerable or insecure members of the group, a project which encourages a sense of belonging to society as a whole will also look outside the workshop space for opportunities to inspire wider belonging.

Breaking down the Boundaries of the Workshop Space

To create a sense of belonging that extends beyond the boundaries of the workshop space, it is important to facilitate opportunities to practice using English and using public facilities. Trips into the community provide a supportive structure to gain confidence in what has been learned.

While on the first trip into central London, I perceived myself as caring by taking control of details such as the purchasing of the tickets; I quickly realised this missed an invaluable opportunity to support participants in developing confidence. Acting under an ethic of care, participants had to do everything themselves but with the knowledge that help was at hand from the facilitator should any problems arise. This had a significant impact on participants' ability to function independently. For many participants, it was their first time using public transport and the majority of these individuals reported using it again after the trip.

Confidence in using public transport gave them access to a whole range of other places and opportunities. A particularly successful outing for encouraging functional and emotional belonging was a walking tour of central London sights on 8 October 2008. This event combined a picnic with seeing the famous places they had only previously seen on television. Phakama conducted a similar walk, with the additional requirement to recreate their allocated square of the map in food, as part of the Lift's Eat London 2007 project. Visiting places of social and historical significance in their city helped to increase participants' familiarity both in terms of recognising distinctive landmarks and their functional ability to move around the city.

A participant explained:

It was both an educational trip where I learned about tickets and trains and things, as well as mixing with the other people and the understanding of that's the Queen's house. I wouldn't have known any of these things, so I've learnt but also had time to mix with my friends and socialise, so I've even done shopping, which are all ways of learning. (Appendix 1, interview 24)

All of these features build confidence and, as a result, this participant could not only go shopping on her own in Brick Lane for the first time, but she also began to attend a certificated ESOL course. The bridging step of going out into the community with what she had learned accelerated her progress. The unstructured social time on the visit had also supported her development of friendships in the group, which led to contact with group members outside the session. Seeing one another outside the workshop space had opened up the possibility of doing this without the co-ordination of the facilitator. It highlighted shared interests and functional tasks, like shopping, which prompted two of the women, for example, to meet up to go to a market which was new to one of them. In this example, hosting in the workshop space had extended to playing a hosting role for one another in the wider community.

Partnership with third sector support organisations, in this case through Open Doors and its network of partners, not only helps respond to participants' practical needs, but also provides

a further opportunity to support individuals in making positive connections with the wider community. Organising visits to other groups, which may be suitable for individuals to join, helps participants feel secure in entering a new environment. In this research, it resulted in some members of the Creative English course joining a parent and toddler group. It also provides a context where opportunities to volunteer may arise beyond the group. In Bloch's research into the social and economic settlement of refugees in Britain, she found that volunteering was considered a sign of acculturation (Bloch 2002, 173). When the research interviews were carried out for this thesis, several of the participants took it as an opportunity to ask about the possibility of volunteering, even when they had only been in the country for a few months or a year. According to Bloch's research, volunteering is more common when respondents have been in the UK for five years or more (Bloch 2002, 173). This suggests that participation in the applied theatre project had either accelerated their ability to feel they could make a contribution to wider society, or that it had given them an opportunity, which they would not have had otherwise, to act on this pre-existing desire, which is equally valuable. In a transient arts project, opportunities to volunteer elsewhere are important in developing a sustainable social network. Working alongside diverse individuals as a volunteer in a community organisation increases the spheres of trust and reciprocity for an individual beyond the arts project. It also places the cared-for unequivocally in the role of carer, which has already been identified in the thesis as psychologically beneficial through the work of Blater and Nicholson. Without the project acting as a bridge into this opportunity for accelerated integration, volunteering would not have occurred until residents were better established. The connections with other organisations also provide a further context to vary the roles of host and guest. Through Creative English, individuals were partnered with an English-speaking volunteer in Open Doors' Reading Together partnerships. This gave individuals an opportunity to 'host' in their accommodation, as they received one-to-one support with their reading. Open Doors also offered opportunities to volunteer within the

wider community, supporting other vulnerable migrants, for example, or becoming a 'host' in a mainstream parent and toddler group. A key element of the porous outer wall of the project was to consciously facilitate links between individuals who would benefit and these services and opportunities. In this way, a sense of belonging is encouraged to the mainstream.

Another method of breaking down the boundaries of the workshop space was to deliver complementary projects for adults on their own and with their children. For a woman with a partner and children, the involvement of her family is particularly important in creating a sustainable sense of belonging. As one participant explained:

For a woman on her own, she can't experience true belonging unless her whole family belong. Her husband, her children. If they don't belong, it is only a limited belonging and can change at different times. Belonging has to be for the whole family. (Appendix 1, interview 41)

If a woman's family are not integrating into the UK with the same expectations of cultural norms and values, she will always return to 'fitting in' rather than true belonging. The needs of her family will always outweigh her commitment to the arts project, as expected in a mature care relationship. By participating together, there are shared experiences within the project that will result in shared norms of behaviour, as suggested at the start of the chapter. By being part of a community like Family Learning Club, there is also the informal support of others in negotiating difficulties in bringing up children in a different culture to your own. As already noted in this thesis, men attended family learning activities less frequently, so a further development of this research would be to explore material, like the session on St. George and the origin of the British flag, which men may be more eager to prioritise.

The Radical Potential of Care

This section argues for the radical potential of care to create a culture in wider society, where individuals are inspired to initiate further projects that create a long-term legacy from the initial project through taking responsibility for meeting the needs of the wider community.

Care is subversive as it forces individuals to recognise that those in authority, who they would traditionally see as more powerful, also need care. It is disruptive to recognise the humanity of all: everyone has strengths and struggles and is capable of giving **and** receiving care, regardless of their economic, social, or immigration status. The symmetrical, thick care of others, where a stranger may constitute a 'related other' with identifiable needs, means individuals can support one another in difficulties and seek to bring about change on a local, national and, as Held (2009) argues, ultimately global level. The importance of using pedagogical approaches which enable participants to recognise the skills and abilities they already have is therefore crucial, in addition to equipping participants with new skills and confidence in the value of the contribution they can make. To achieve a long-term impact, facilitating a sense of belonging means enabling participants to recognise that they are not dependent on an 'expert'. This is achieved through drawing others into the inner circle of Figure 4, where responsibility for others is shared and is not excessively burdensome on any one member. In 2011, following the end of the practice-based research, the Dagenham Play 'n' Chat group was due to close, and one of the participants in the storytelling training decided to take over the running of the group herself to prevent its closure. What was interesting was that this was 'Laura', who has already been described in Chapter 2 not wishing to 'make puppets, props or set or to perform a story in front of the group' at the start of the storytelling training. This woman did not previously have the confidence to take a lead or a sense of community spirit, and yet here she was taking the initiative:

[She] went in and spoke to the people about leading it as a volunteer, which was at the time very exciting and a massive thing. At the beginning, it was very hard to get her to move a table or do anything without a lot of encouragement. (Appendix 1, interview 63b)

Now she was leading activities in the parent and toddler group and taking responsibility for its management with a team of other volunteers from a range of countries and ethnic backgrounds. Whilst the nurturing role of the facilitators of Play 'n' Chat cannot be underestimated, leading a storytelling following the training was the first time Laura had attempted any sort of leadership and this began to open up other possibilities. While this thesis has already advocated creating space within the workshop and project structure to allow participants to take the lead, this can be further demonstrated by the outcomes following the project that were not actively sought. Following the conclusion of family learning workshops for this practice-based research, two participants from the storytelling training, one in Goodmayes and one in Dagenham, have started up their own family learning projects: 'Play Together' and 'The ESOL Reading Club'. These projects have been inspired by the activities within the practice-based research. In both cases, participants have taken ownership over the tools they were given through the training and have now utilised and developed them in a fresh, dynamic way, with a new emphasis from the original. 'The ESOL Reading Club' fulfils an identified need for parents and children from refugee and migrant backgrounds needing to practice reading together, and adopts many of the language learning games and structures employed by book-based family learning, but with a different emphasis. 'Play Together' is run by parents for parents and strongly advocates recognising and nurturing the existing skills and confidence of parents. It responded to a need recognised by the founder for parents to interact with their children more than in existing children's centre activities and parent and toddler groups. Beyond the utilisation of songs, stories and craft from the original sessions, participants have made jam tarts with their children and gone on a toddler assault course outdoors. Parent creativity has taken over to make something richer and more diverse than the original sessions.

It would be simplistic and inaccurate to attribute these recent projects purely to activities within this practice. Access to a suitable venue, support from the hosting charity, and the existing skills and vision of the group leaders, who are themselves operating in a strong ethic of care, are also integral. However, the experience of participating in the projects formed key building blocks that opened up a series of possibilities which ultimately transcend the skills and imagination of the initiator. When participants are operating within a culture of care, the ever-expanding inner circle of Figure 4 encourages them to develop their skills and abilities. When space is left for participants to recognise and take responsibility for the needs of others, the radical potential of care is that it gives individuals the confidence to fulfil them. It is a limitation of short-term research that it is often unable to trace some of the extended outcomes.

This chapter has argued that creating a culture of care within a drama project and employing approaches and structures that develop the confidence of group members in leading others, can increase participants' sense of belonging. In addition to creating a sense of belonging within the group, a culture of care can generate a wider sense of responsibility and compassion and the capacity to act, which can result in community support initiated from within the community, rather than from outside it. This is the radical potential of acting within an ethic of care, which recognises that empowerment and reciprocity is as important as compassion.

Creating a bridge between the workshop space and the outside world starts with seemingly insignificant actions on the part of the facilitator, which create a culture of care as the norms

of the facilitators' behaviour are replicated by members of the group. Creating a space where people feel valued and welcomed is an important step towards creating a sense of belonging. As friendships develop within the group, emotional support increases, which combats the isolation experienced by many refugees and migrants. It also challenges stereotypes of the Other and encourages a more optimistic view of people who are different. This makes an arts project an ideal context to integrate members of diverse communities. In interviews, a number of Creative English participants referred to speaking to their neighbours from other cultures for the first time, in addition to using English for functional needs: 'My neighbours are English and Indian, so I'm starting to get to know them' (Appendix 1, interview 24). Reversing Maslow's hierarchy helps to expand the inner circle of the project, as a wide range of practical as well as artistic creativities are celebrated. This builds self-esteem and, in turn, belonging. Working with others helps people get to know one another and form relationships where they are capable of giving thick care. As Krocke explains, as one endeavours to get to know those we work alongside, 'we learn to appreciate them in their depth and integrity and with a better appreciation for their potential and need. We see them for the unique creatures they are and begin to approach the complexity, beauty and mystery of every created thing and person' (hooks 2009, 228-9). It is through working together on shared tasks and socialising together that a strong core develops in the group. This makes the inner circle attractive to others through the quality of friendship and mutual support that it demonstrates. This helps to make others want to join the core team, as it is genuinely fun and desirable. The welcome, encouragement and practical assistance given to the outer circles by the inner circle help those participants to achieve a sense of well-being and belonging sufficient to be interested in the 'common good', both within the group as a whole and in the wider society. The recognition of the interdependence of individuals, consonant with an ethic of care, can benefit society in a broader context (Held 2006, 53).

This chapter has argued for strategies that increase agency rather than dependence. Belonging may first be embodied by functioning in the role of host, introducing other participants to the social norms of the group and fulfilling practical roles which suggest ownership, like the serving of refreshments. Imperfection, especially on the facilitator's part, is valuable in helping the participants to recognise their own expertise and how they can offer reciprocal care regardless of their material circumstances. To create autonomy, it is necessary to create a liminal space where participants may develop and express their skills and abilities. However, it is actually the expectations of the rest of the group, combined with their celebration of what has been developed, which brings about a long-term shift into a leadership role. When there is a need for a community project, former project participants may choose to fulfil that need themselves very effectively without outside help. To do this they must have been equipped with skills, which they can adapt to their own purpose, have the confidence that they have something of value to offer others, and view those subject to similar circumstances as the related Other for whom they can offer thick, symmetrical care. As the report, *Refugees' Experience of Integration* (2007) indicated, for some respondents 'being able to contribute to society was **the** key aspect of integration' [my emphasis] (Atfield, Brahmhatt and O'Toole 2007, 30). Facilitating the group may for some constitute this opportunity to contribute to society.

Conclusion: Implications for the Future of Projects which Generate a Sense of Belonging

This thesis argues that, although an emotional sense of belonging is integral to well-being in refugees and vulnerable migrants, belonging cannot be universally assumed as an outcome of participating in an arts project, as adopting the external characteristics of belonging does not necessarily affect an individual's internal perceptions. As Brown asserts, 'fitting in' and thus generating the appearance of belonging can actually increase an individual's sense of internalised 'otherness', increasing levels of alienation (Brown 2010, 26). Before one can belong, one must possess the self-acceptance and sense of self-worth which comes from being able to present one's authentic self to others. The creativity of an arts project provides an opportunity to celebrate one's originality, thus minimising unhelpful comparisons with others. Practice shaped by an ethic of care meets the needs of individuals and supports individuals in gaining autonomy. When working with adult refugees and vulnerable migrants, applied theatre practice may be required to prioritise the development of English language skills to address needs related to functional belonging in the UK, and to restore the sense of self-worth necessary for belonging. The Conclusion examines the ways the findings of this thesis may impact upon applied theatre practice that seeks to facilitate a sense of belonging for refugees and migrants, identifying key possibilities and limitations and proposing areas for further research.

The projects within the practice-based research address apparent functional needs but they also address a much deeper internal need to belong. Consonant with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, surface needs provide the motivation to participate and also offer the motivation for the hosting organisation or funder to provide the service. An awareness of participants' motivation, as theorised in Maslow's hierarchy, helps practitioners who experience difficulty in

recruiting refugee and migrant non-artist adults to understand why creative activities may not be perceived as a priority, thus creating the possibility of framing projects in a way that will appeal to more potential participants. On the other hand, reversing the hierarchy provides an articulation of the process whereby belonging is achieved and functional needs may be addressed. Understanding the benefits of participation in this way underlines the value for third sector organisations of utilising arts-based projects as an informal context to connect with individuals, build trust, identify needs, and forge connections with appropriate sources of help and advice. The practice-based research highlights that arts projects provide a relaxed context for individuals to communicate major and minor needs, if time for this is structured into the activities, such as, for example, prop and set building in a short-term family learning project, or social activities in a more sustained project. However, to achieve this benefit the arts project must be embedded in voluntary sector organisational practice where facilitators are aware of support that can be offered or where staff from other areas of the organisation also participate in the sessions, such as the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) advisers who participated in the primary school workshops in phase two of the research. Brown's view of the relationship between self-esteem and belonging supports the notion that the outcomes of an applied theatre project occur in the reverse order of Maslow's hierarchy. The reversed hierarchy explains what the practitioner instinctively knows: that creativity is beneficial in creating belonging, and that this is not always dependent on the subject matter of sessions, although it is the choice of theme which may impact upon the project's popularity in recruitment.

The practice-based research undertaken for this thesis has developed a new model of applied theatre that is particularly suitable for meeting the language needs of adult learners. Moreover, this thesis proposes that, delivered with an ethic of care, an applied theatre project

can simultaneously address deeper issues of well-being. Framed within the specific organisational context of the Open Doors Project and Lifeline Projects, it is consistent with an ethic of care that the theoretical understanding gained through practice should result in a practical outcome to address the original need identified by the hosting organisations. The quality of formal and informal ESOL provision remains variable in the UK, owing to a lack of continuing professional development, difficulties recruiting, training, and retaining staff, and the lack of status attached to the role (Furlong and Hunt 2009, 26). Observation of alternative informal ESOL provision in the early stages of this research discovered: inappropriate choice of theme; no sense of progression in language development; participants unable to understand conversation topics, and lack of considered planning.⁴⁰ Whilst this research found one-off sessions on any subject were valuable in a formal ESOL context for building group relationships and confidence, there is a need for more structured programmes in the informal sector, which can be delivered with limited training to address the need for language development as well as belonging. The evaluation of research participants combined with my experience as a teacher and trainer of educators suggests that particular elements of the pedagogy highlighted in the research would be suitable to develop into a sustained programme supported by a facilitator's resource pack, which can be delivered by non-specialists. On the completion of the thesis, I

⁴⁰ Two conversation classes, visited on 6 May 2008 typify contrasting problems within informal ESOL provision. While one group was facilitated by experienced teachers, it was well structured and ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak. The choice of topic, however, for this the second week of a new group, was 'Crime'. Whilst all members of the group expressed the view that they felt safer in the UK than in their countries of origin, the session inevitably focused on fears and negative experiences such as being robbed both in the UK and prior to their arrival. Whilst fulfilling the goal to practice speaking English most admirably, the mood was one of unease and had reinforced a sense of danger and risk in their daily lives. The tutor acknowledged that she had wished to address serious subjects that affected the women's lives but that gloomy atmosphere had not perhaps been most effective for those who were suffering from depression. The volunteers wanted to deliver something different to formal ESOL provision but had not achieved a sense of well-being in this particular session. The second group was larger, attended by approximately 25 participants, run by three enthusiastic Open Doors volunteers, who did not have any training in teaching English. The session was hastily planned as the learners entered and consisted of being asked to discuss in groups a list of questions written up on the board and then to share highlights of their discussion in a plenary at the end. There was no logical sequence or pattern within the questions: 'Do you like shopping?' for example, was followed by 'What do you think about litter in London?' Many of the participants had very little English and found comprehending what they had been asked to do very difficult. Some of the women explained that they were there because their children insisted they attend because their English was so poor, but there was no sense of any progression within the session. Despite a considerable time commitment from the volunteers, the benefits in terms of the language skills and confidence of members of the group seemed limited.

will develop the material described here as the 'Sally and Peter stories' into a year's course, encompassing a broader range of situations and characters to address common language issues, including those involved in shopping, school, accessing medical care, and employment, supported by appropriate training for its facilitators. Furthermore, practice relating to traditional stories provides potential for a follow-up course, which is a focus for further development of belonging beyond addressing immediate needs. A new model of informal ESOL is particularly timely when contemporary government policy has refocused on the value of learning English and is seeking community-based solutions for those most in need, identified as primarily women and children, in areas which already face integration challenges (DCLG 2012, 14; Pickles 2013). The proposed programme has been embraced by Faith Action, a national network of faith-based organisations whose members are responsible for the delivery of a significant proportion of informal ESOL provision each year.

Creative English has been developed to fulfil the needs of learners who are Entry Level 2 standard and below. Whilst I agree with Piazzoli that drama provides a context where the negotiation of meaning is balanced by development of fluency and accuracy (Piazzoli 2011, 560-1), Creative English does not sufficiently address accuracy in the form of the language to benefit higher level learners. This failure is primarily due to the conscious language learning elements: supplementary teaching materials and discussion cannot address all levels simultaneously, unless participants are split according to ability in some activities, which would require the support of multiple facilitators, and a greater focus on explicit grammar teaching. In addition, the wide range of abilities in a group that also includes beginners would reduce participants' exposure to more complex language structures and inaccurate grammar would more likely be reinforced by weaker speakers. Alternative methodologies would be more beneficial in developing a focus on form. Remaining within the field of drama and second

language education, it is likely that script writing, polished improvisation or public performance would be beneficial owing to the necessity to revisit, redraft, and perfect language choices. Although participants' preferred learning styles will always be diverse, when one's language is stronger there is more potential to benefit from more formal learning techniques. Although the focus on form is reduced for higher level learners, Creative English otherwise benefits from a range of abilities in the group: if everyone was a complete beginner, the texts and story lines would need to be significantly simplified, as much of the beginners' understanding of more complex material arises from watching and listening to more competent members of the group. The strength of Creative English is, therefore, in addressing the English language needs of low level, mixed ability groups.

Preliminary investigation through the 'Going to the Doctor' course suggests that there could be a value in conducting research into the potential of the Creative English model in relation to health literacy. Separate courses or specific elements adopted within the episodic structure of a sustained Creative English course could address very specific needs within specific communities. The majority of beneficiaries of informal ESOL programmes are women and so these courses could, for example, address maternal health outcomes that are particularly poor amongst immigrant women compared to the rest of the population (NHS 2012, 1). A contributory factor in this disparity is a lack of understanding about the system of routine antenatal care (NHS 2012, 2). A plot line involving a pregnancy would develop participants' understanding of a system and services that they are entitled to access. The story text and supplementary hand-outs, which participants take home after the session, provide them with a source of reference long after the sessions. Depending on the relevance to the specific group of learners, the antenatal system could be addressed at length or in brief in the plot. Whilst cultural barriers around some health services would be unlikely to be impacted due to

the strength, for example, of cultural beliefs around the value of modesty (Matin and Le Baron 2008), the Creative English model could address awareness of services, understanding of choices, and language useful in such circumstances. The character story lines enable a practical, entertaining, but non-idealised exploration of situations they may face, as the characters are confronted with obstacles rather than straightforward outcomes. According to the 'Policy Briefing on Maternity Services for Members of Refugees and Migrant Populations', a further barrier to accessing maternity services is 'negative attitudes of health care professionals' (NHS 2012, 2). While this must clearly be addressed via the retraining of the staff, the Creative English model provides a non-threatening space to develop resilience in such circumstances by recognising that it is a shared experience and finding strategies to cope with it without missing out on necessary ante-natal services. In this context it is important that Creative English remains a source of empowerment rather than a reductive 'fitting in' with unacceptable treatment.

In addition to the Creative English model, the thesis also demonstrated that an individual's sense of belonging can further be extended by access to family learning activities. These sessions provide an opportunity to access a supportive community of other parents and children, and some further opportunity to practice English language for those who may not be able to do so elsewhere. The family context may also enable women to attend who would prioritise their role in bringing up their children beyond any study or who would not be able to participate without a chaperone (Furlong and Hunt 2009, 31). As the research projects demonstrated, family learning activities can create a context where the needs of individuals can be identified and sources of help signposted. For women, the provision of family learning supports families in negotiating cultural difference. The prioritisation of mature care means that a woman cannot experience true belonging without the agreement of her husband,

otherwise this belonging may become a source of internal conflict rather than well-being. It is a current limitation of practice-based research that family learning was often considered part of the woman's childcare responsibility rather than involving the participation of significant numbers of men. Engaging significant numbers of fathers in activities with their children is a complex challenge across cultures, including within the host community. Men from BME backgrounds are considered the second most 'hard to reach' group across initiatives, after young men (Johal, Shelupanov and Norman 2012, 26). The nature of the activity is particularly important when seeking to engage men: physical activities, generally sport or DIY, are traditionally most popular (Ibid., 29). For more recent arrivals to the UK, publicising a family learning session on the history and culture of the UK appeared to be successful in engaging complete families, including fathers, although it cannot be disproved that men's relationship with the staff of the hosting organisation may also have been a contributory factor in motivating them to attend. More research in this area, which impacts upon the whole family, would be beneficial. For the women, it may also be inferred that the opportunity to attend more than one activity per week in the community where one will be noticed and missed if absent, contributes to a broader sense of belonging to the community. It is a further advantage of partnership with other organisations that these opportunities are more likely to be supplied.

As well as supplying additional opportunities to those on Creative English programmes, voluntary sector organisations may offer long-term projects, perhaps headed by volunteers, where short-term applied theatre projects can act as a catalyst for increased levels of belonging, and where there may be significant long-term impact. The Play 'n' Chat project involving five weeks of modelling fun parent-child activities, followed by five weeks of training and support of individuals in leading similar interactive story telling had a significant long-term

impact on Play 'n' Chat itself, inspiring increased levels of leadership from individuals within the Play 'n' Chat group and in the wider community. Short-term applied theatre projects in the UK are often self-contained, in that people may be invited to join them from existing contexts, but the workshops themselves are only accessed by those who have deliberately chosen to attend them. Positioning the workshop in a context familiar to participants so they may see and experience activities without pressure to join in means that material reaches an audience who may not otherwise prioritise it or regard it as valuable. The nature of the practice is integral to how it engages families who may otherwise not choose to participate. The playful energy of the participatory storytelling attracts people to watch or become involved at many points within the process, especially when a level of familiarity is generated through the repeated structure from week to week, and the creation of simple, colourful artefacts to use in the story is a non-threatening introduction through which specific individuals can be welcomed and encouraged to be involved. In this context, attendance is naturally erratic and the session and project structure has evolved to accommodate the unstable nature of the group. Active participation is the first step towards developing a sense of belonging and, when the applied theatre project includes the facilitation of a transitional period where the leadership is passed over to participants through a structured and supportive process, a short-term applied theatre intervention can significantly increase belonging. In addition to the benefits of working alongside members of the host society in terms of social integration, the practice-based research also suggested that a focus on understanding the value of play in child development was as provoking for the white, working class members of the group as for the immigrants. This was both a leveller within the activities themselves and supports the view that taking projects to the places people already are is useful in reaching those who would not normally engage with such a project, offering a non-threatening opportunity for supportive early intervention in families with pre-school children, as advocated by Allen (2011).

In Chapter 5 the thesis proposes a particular model of inclusive community, which is adopted in the longer practice-based research projects. The circles of belonging in Figure 4 identify that a project may involve participants with varying levels of belonging and the arrows on the diagram depict a project ethos which seeks to support the needs of those on the fringes of the group and draw participants into a central role, where they have a shared responsibility for facilitating the group and meeting the needs of others. Other examples of projects that successfully achieve a sense of belonging for their participants could be said to share this outlook, such as Phakama UK and Ovalhouse's 'Living Here'. This model has a particular resonance in the voluntary sector where the hosting organisation is embedded in the wider community long-term and is thus focussed on sustained impact on the community it serves. A desire to be liberated from the damaging impact of short-term funding on projects which address long-term needs may also explain voluntary sector interest in this model, as there is the possibility that the project or other new initiatives may be sustained by volunteers. In an applied theatre project, this model of community has the potential to maximise the number of people achieving an increase in belonging, as it engages participants in supporting one another. This support raises the volume of care within the group and empowers participants by enabling them to give as well as receive care. The empowering nature of giving and receiving care makes it a cornerstone of this practice. Judged by the disposition of care, the way participants support one another could be perceived as the facilitator's failure to care sufficiently for all. However, as an act of ethical, mature care, mutual support is much more beneficial for participant and facilitator. In terms of generating a sense of belonging, this ethical care position enables the outcomes of the project to be much more ambitious, but remain feasible, as its success is no longer reliant on one person. Furthermore, the longevity of the project is enhanced, as the applied theatre's benefits are able to extend beyond the

intervention of external facilitators. Although the level of English required for the role of lead facilitator in Creative English may be a barrier to a completely self-sustaining Creative English programme (unless delivered over many years, or involving a facilitator recruited from outside the group), co-facilitation roles were taken by individuals within the core team to good effect, with a primary focus on the well-being of all individuals in the group and elements beyond accurate English language. To maintain the ethos of Figure 4 long-term, the project will need refreshing at times to maintain the outward-looking focus and to prevent the generation of cliques. There is, therefore, a need for intermittent new training, building fresh skills and enthusiasm for the project. In the same way as there needs to be recognition from the group for transition into a higher level of leadership, some structure for continued recognition and encouragement is needed, especially if the group is run by volunteers. Understanding the community within an applied theatre project in this way helps to recognise, articulate, and value apparently insignificant but crucial roles within the project, removing perceptions that providing social support is less important than artistic support within the core team.

To return to Probyn's definition of belonging discussed in the Introduction, belonging is 'a process that is fuelled by learning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state' (Probyn 1996, 19). As a process influenced by experiences and understanding, a project should expect to facilitate engagement with other sources of learning beyond the limitations of a fixed role within a fixed group of people, and it is through this that the applied theatre project can act as a catalyst for belonging to the wider community. Similarly, the ethics of care acknowledges that close relationships are subject to gradual and sudden change and that 'related others' is not a fixed concept in the life of any individual, nor should it be expected to be (Pettersen 2008, 114). While the theatre project can provide a place of security and special belonging, its most important role is arguably its contribution to the development of resilience through

building self-worth, autonomy, and confidence. These elements have a significant impact on one's capacity to cope in challenging situations in the outside world. Belonging is an active state; it is an interactive process fuelled by emotional exchange with people or environment without which it becomes a passive familiarity that results in nostalgia for a connection residing in the past. As Probyn's words suggest, belonging cannot remain a static state. Without constant engagement, a disconnection and alienation can occur as a result of small changes to routines, such as not being able to sit in one's preferred chair, or an alteration to the refreshments, as the sense of belonging has become rooted in predictable externals. Belonging without engagement returns to a state of 'fitting in', where rituals, routines, and preconceptions are the focus and where the 'authentic' self can be lost amongst these empty behaviours. It may be surmised that host community hostility to immigration is often rooted in a focus on these externals and a resistance to 'learning' through change. With its focus on originality and making something new, creativity has a level of resistance to the static. To avoid the loss of authentic belonging, short-term applied theatre interventions in an existing context can provide a source of gentle change and re-engagement in the group, which prevents relationships and activities becoming stale, especially when, as in the Play 'n' Chat projects and Storytelling training, there is an emphasis on envisioning and empowering people to develop in their own way beyond the end of the project. While fresh intervention benefits the sense of belonging to established groups, fresh thinking also benefits theatre practice. In a discussion about the relationship between theory and practice, Nicholson states: 'Without theory, I have found that even the most reflexive of practice gets stuck and becomes repetitive, just as theory can become bafflingly abstract without practice' (Nicholson 2005, 15). Despite the focus on what is original and new in the arts, cycles of research are necessary to keep driving forward its creativity in problem-solving. Projects can benefit from the intervention of arts practice but arts practice benefits from interventions of research, such as the practice-based research represented here. This thesis argues for the importance of research spaces free from

predetermined agendas in order to establish new models of working which a community can shape and which can then be disseminated more widely.

Applied theatre is generally delivered by people who care about the communities with whom they work – those who are ‘motivated to make a real difference to the lives of others’ (Nicholson 2005, 28). The values of these practitioners have a real impact on the processes of working (Nicholson 2005, 28). This thesis argues that those values should be rooted in an ethics of care that foregrounds the needs of individuals in the group and their empowerment, rather than an emphasis on the collective whole. While it is difficult to imagine applied theatre practice rooted in non-care, the ethics of care, as in the fields of health and social care, provides a framework to better understand the nature of effective care in this context, by valuing that which is participant focussed and based on a detailed knowledge of people, both as members of a particular classification of practice and as individual human beings, rather than operating on an unfounded idea of what is wanted and needed. This thesis defines non-care as being when the art is valued above the well-being of the participants, exemplified by an incident described by Stella Barnes when a refugee performer was too distressed to be able to continue with autobiographical elements of a play that was the result of a series of drama workshops with refugee women (Barnes 2009, 34). This thesis agrees with Nicholson that applied theatre practitioners need a self-reflexivity promoted by an awareness that altruism and self-interest are interrelated. Drawing on Badhwar, Nicholson points out that altruistic acts are socially and psychologically beneficial to the giver, as altruism itself is a significant part of his or her self-identity. In Barnes’ example, there was a tension between professional quality performance and performer well-being. The uneven balance of power between the altruist and recipient has ‘the uncomfortable implication that, however well-intentioned, some acts of altruism may have the effect of keeping ‘other’ people in their place’ (Nicholson 2005,

30). Reciprocity is a key concept in avoiding this power dynamic and is, therefore, an important element of the culture of care that the practice for this thesis found important in generating a sense of belonging, removing the distinction between the carer and cared-for. The psychological and social benefits to the altruist also support the value of empowering refugees and vulnerable migrants to adopt voluntary roles within their community. In addition, volunteering performs the self-interested function of providing access into paid employment in the UK through building skills, contacts for references, and experience, as Furlong and Hunt demonstrate (Furlong and Hunt 2009, 45).

This thesis could be criticised for its focus on small and intimate moments in the development of projects. It argues that it is those small individual changes which have a profound affect on the collective whole and that small gestures of care should be recognised and celebrated for the impact they can have on the environment of a project and ultimately the outcomes for the individual concerned. The thesis itself embodies the ethic of care it examines. The ethic of care is found in: the attention to detail; the response to a need within a particular sector of practice through collaboration with those who are best positioned to understand it through their position as beneficiaries, and the close attention paid to individuals on the fringes of the group rather than just the core. In a society where there is diffidence, as Batmanghelidh observes, about the individual's capacity to make a significant difference in the face of social problems (Batmanghelidh 2006, 157), the thesis argues for a reclaiming of the importance of detail in bringing about transformation in individuals, who in turn by equally small gestures of care can magnify the change, shifting the culture in a local and even national way. The outcomes from such care-focussed attention to detail are not limited: Held (2006) argues that the ethic of care, established first in the 'small societies of family and friendship' with 'its

attention to the actual differences between persons and groups', may ultimately generate transformation in global relations (Held 2006, 165-8).

Paradoxically, the freedom to be one's authentic self that is integral to belonging needs to be carefully orchestrated by the facilitator in its early stages. It is the attention to tiny details, whether in the choice of a story from another culture which can be best furnished with available props, or in the detail of the wording of a handout that the participant can understand, which generates a sense of belonging through workshop materials, as well as through collaboration in actual creative practice. When an individual is in an emotionally vulnerable state, details can take on a disproportionate significance and thus be triggers of shame (Batmanghelidjh 2006, 98; B. Brown 2012, 63). The trivial can make all the difference to whether an individual continues to attend a project or perceives themselves excluded or the barriers too great to attempt to make progress (Appendix 1, interview 38). Without a supportive structure afforded by the facilitator, which manages gently increasing levels of risk, autonomy would not be achieved. It is part of the skill of the facilitator to make these choices appear unobtrusive and natural, as part of the norms of the space rather than appearing or being patronising and limiting opportunities for personal development on behalf of the participants. The detail of good practice can often remain invisible as it pre-empts difficulties and is thus in danger of being perceived as insignificant. Inevitably, styles of facilitation will be characterised by the personality and interests of the facilitator. As this interview quote illustrates, participants are quick to identify the inauthentic: 'They've been friendly but they haven't asked anything about who I am. It's not real. [...] It's no good, if being friendly is just a job – not real' (Appendix 1, interview 41). Identifying some of the characteristics which have made this practice-based research effective with refugees and migrants in this specific context

makes it possible to debate whether some approaches are more effective than others for participants with particular needs.

This practice-based research has found that certain types of source material and pedagogy have a positive impact on participants' sense of belonging. A focus on the detail of project facilitation demonstrates that the emotional, cognitive experience of authentic belonging cannot be achieved by the art alone. In conveying the acceptance of the whole person necessary for belonging, projects are enhanced by time spent on non-arts activities, such as shared meals and by a culture of friendly interest in one another. The banal and the trivial, like instigating the serving of toast in breaks, is as important to individuals' self-worth and confidence as the art. However, what the applied theatre practice does uniquely, especially when characterised by play, is to create a context where people quickly feel relaxed and comfortable with those who are very different to them and where there is an accelerated opportunity for language learning, celebrating diverse cultures and development of leadership. In her essay on drama in an informal ESOL context, Christensen concluded with a question as to whether the context and environment were important to the success of this type of practice (Christensen 2005, 70). Where the physical environment of some of the practice-based research has been unwelcoming and non-ideal for workshop purposes, this thesis has found that the broader context of the project is extremely important both in terms of access to additional support and opportunities via the partner organisations, and activity related to the arts project while not integral to it.

My subjectivity and position as the facilitator within the research projects may continue to be perceived as a limitation in the authority of this research. The process has been deliberately

exploratory, and further phases could now be developed in which a wider range of findings were confirmed through practice delivered by a third party or external evaluation. As research rooted in professional practice, projects which are outcomes of these findings will automatically be subject to a standard process of external evaluation when they are delivered. The research activity as undertaken throughout this thesis has provided an alternative opportunity for the sort of reflection and experimentation, free from externally imposed agendas and targets, that short-term funded projects will never be able to offer. In taking the opportunity to listen carefully to participants, this thesis has generated outcomes that I would not have been able to predict at the start but respond to needs and interests of participants in three distinct East London boroughs. The practice-based research has engaged a significant number of participants across a range of projects, which does provide comparative data to help identify universal features. However, as the process itself is developing and being refined, the research cannot take into account the impact of other variables, as discussed in the Introduction. The emphasis on the individual within the research has been taken through to broader, sometimes speculative, conclusions which may not be replicated in a different organisational or cultural context. Social and cultural integration, however, requires a localised response and this thesis proposes ways of working that respond to individuals and may assist in other contexts (DCLG 2012, 7). As research based in my professional practice, confidence in its findings also comes from adopting the same techniques in other contexts beyond the parameters of this study. By drawing attention to the role of the facilitator within this research, I have attempted to identify characteristics beyond an individual's personality which shape the practice and I have considered the work of other projects and facilitators where appropriate to confirm observations in another context.

A further potential limitation in convincing others of the validity of this research is its reliance on the self-assessment of individuals to identify progress. The self-assessment of participants in interview has been supported by the observations of the facilitator and Open Doors volunteers and the identification of certain markers of progression, such as talking to neighbours outside their own language speaking community. The findings, therefore, rest significantly on subjective opinion, but that which has been generated from more than one source. Measures of well-being or formal English language testing could have been used to demonstrate or disprove progress, once these features had been identified as characteristics of belonging. However, quantitative data of this type is not necessarily more useful as it is also subject to personal response on the day and language testing will be influenced through the extent to which the participant has been directly prepared for the test (Hughes 2003, 1). Close analysis of session transcripts may have provided more appropriate evidence of progress, or a lack of it. Rather than delivering 13 projects involving 110 research participants, future research inspired by this thesis may involve a close analysis of a small number of individuals within one specific project to provide concrete evidence of progress, perhaps as a long-term study to investigate the lingering effects of this work.

This thesis has responded to a need for a greater understanding of belonging and the conditions in which it may be generated, in addition to a need to further understand drama and second language education outside a formal education context. It advocates embedding research into existing professional practice to better understand the demands upon it and improve the quality of future provision, involving cycles of research on a particular issue to enable the possibilities to be developed and the limits addressed, as far as possible. Developing new understandings of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, new models of practice for adults and families have been forthcoming which support English language learning and

integration. This practice-based research has found that drama can be very effective in facilitating a sense of belonging for refugees and vulnerable migrants if it is facilitated through an ethic of care. Without this emphasis, there is a danger that some members of the group may not experience an authentic sense of belonging where individuals feel they are valued as themselves rather than needing simply to 'fit in'. A significant limitation of an arts project is the fact that it is finite, so simply belonging to the arts project is never enough. This thesis has demonstrated, however, that if the boundaries surrounding the arts project community are porous, enabling continual exchange with the outside world, there is an increased likelihood that a wider, long lasting sense of belonging will be achieved, especially if the projects have engaged the adults and their wider family.

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Appendix 1. Record of interviews and focus groups

Participants:

	Project	Country of origin	Venue	Date
1.	'Young Stars' focus group	Various	Community Centre, Dagenham	23/01/08
2.	Participant in 'Young Stars'	Sierra Leone	Community Centre, Dagenham	15/03/08
3.	Participant in 'Young Stars'	Pakistan	Community Centre, Dagenham	15/03/08
4.	Hampstead Theatre ESOL Literacy Project focus group	Various	Westminster Kingsway College	21/4/09
5.	Participant in Family Learning Club	Columbia	Café, Goodmayes	28/04/09
6.	Participant in Creative English	Turkey	Café, Goodmayes	28/04/09
7.	Participant in Creative English	Afghanistan	Café, Goodmayes	28/04/09
8.	'Words Unite' Family Literacy Project focus group	Various	Lifeline Centre, Hackney	20/05/09
9.	Participant in Creative English	India	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	01/07/09
10.	Participant in Family Learning Club	Sri Lanka	Children's play park, Goodmayes	01/07/09
11.	Participant in Creative English	Germany	Participant's home	02/07/09
12.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Bulgaria	Participant's home	07/07/09

13.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	India	Participant's home	12/07/09
14.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	India	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	15/07/09
15.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Pakistan	Participant's home	15/07/09
16.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Pakistan	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	15/07/09
17.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Pakistan	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	15/07/09
18.	Participant in Creative English	China	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	17/07/09
19.	Participant in Creative English	Democratic Republic of Congo	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	17/07/09
20.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Afghanistan	Children's play park, Goodmayes	22/07/09
21.	Participant in Creative English	Somalia	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	22/07/09
22.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat and Family Learning Club	Poland	Participants' home	27/07/09
23.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat, Goodmayes	Bangladesh	Participant's home	29/07/09
24.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	Bangladesh	Participant's home	29/07/09
25.	Participant in Creative English	Lithuania	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	23/09/09

26.	Participant in Creative English and Family Learning Club	India	Participant's home	20/10/09
27.	Family Learning Club focus group	Sri Lanka	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	28/10/09
28.	Participant in Creative English and 'Write a Children's Story'	Sierra Leone	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	16/1/10
29.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat/Storytelling Project, Dagenham	Algeria	Participant's home	25/05/10
30.	Participant in 'Write a Children's Story' and 'Going to the Doctor'	Angola	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	a)5/2/10 b)19/3/10
31.	Participant in 'Write a Children's Story' and 'Going to the Doctor'	Algeria	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	a)5/2/10 b) 19/3/10
32.	Participant in 'Write a Children's Story' and 'Going to the Doctor'	Sudan	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	a)5/2/10 b) 26/3/10
33.	Participant in 'Write a Children's Story' and 'Going to the Doctor'	Portugal	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	a)12/2/10 b)30/3/10
34.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat, Goodmayes	India	Participant's home	2/02/10
35.	'Going to the Doctor' focus group	Various	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	26/3/10
36.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat/Storytelling Project, Dagenham	UK	Participant's home	30/03/10

37.	Participant in Book-making Project for families	Sri Lanka	Participant's home	15/05/10
38.	Participant in 'Words Unite' and Book-making Project	Bangladesh	Children's play park, Hackney	25/05/10
39.	Play 'n' Chat, Dagenham, focus group	Various	Castlepoint, Dagenham	22/06/10
40.	Participant in Hampstead Theatre ESOL Literacy Project	Ethiopia	Westminster Kingsway College	24/06/10
41.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat and storytelling training, Dagenham	Cyprus	Participant's home	16/06/12
42.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat and storytelling training, Dagenham	UK	Café, Dagenham	16/06/12
43.	Participant in Play 'n' Chat Dagenham	Iran	Castlepoint, Dagenham	20/06/12

Practitioners:

	Name	Title	Venue	Date
44.	Firoza Mimosa	ESOL tutor	Participant's home	15/07/09
45.	Laura Crosbie	'Reading Partnership' volunteer	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	20/10/09
46.	Maureen Fashole-Luke	Project support worker: Creative English and Family Learning Club	Lifeline Centre, Goodmayes	10/5/09
47.	Emily Hunka	Co-founder of Rewrite and Director of Diversity and Inclusion at GLYPT	Café near GLYPT in Woolwich	18/01/10
48.	Mandy Lawrence	ESOL teacher	Hampstead Theatre	24/06/10

49.	Theah Dix	ESOL project facilitator, Richmond Theatre	Café at London Bridge	20/04/09
50.	Orode Faka	Creative Learning Officer, Richmond Theatre	Café at London Bridge	20/04/09
51.	Paula Turton	ESOL tutor and Community Development Officer	Participant's home	22/07/09
52.	Soheila Ghodstinat	Writer, actress and facilitator	Café in Richmond	a)13/01/09 b) 06/11/09
53.	Rebecca Smith	Primary school inclusion co-ordinator	Primary School, Dagenham	19/9/08
54.	Doug Holton	Facilitator of Refugee Arts Project	Café in Hackney	8/01/09
55.	Teresa Walker	Co-founder of Open Doors	Lifeline House, Dagenham	3/11/08
56.	Fabio Santos	Director Phakama UK	LIFT	16/12/05
57.	Gwyn Flowers	Dagenham Librarian and Open Doors volunteer	Participant's home	22/07/09
58.	Eleanor Cocks	Rewrite facilitator	Café	10/11/08
59.	Sally Dixon	Head of Open Doors	a) Lifeline House, Dagenham b)Participant's home	a) 3/11/08 b) 25/2/09
60.	Marie D'Haem	ESOL tutor	Café in Dagenham	9/04/09
61.	Stella Barnes	Head of Arts in Education, Oval House	Oval House	17/02/09

62.	Debra Glazer	Director of Creative Learning, Hampstead Theatre	Hampstead Theatre	13/11/09
63.	Carolyn Gibbons	Play 'n' Chat Co-ordinator and Play Together Team Leader	Participant's home	a)30/5/10 b) 18/6/13
64.	Pip Leach	Assistant Head	Goodmayes Primary School	11/12/07
65.	Elsbeth Paisley	Play 'n' Chat Co-ordinator, Goodmayes	Participant's home	5/02/10
66.	Jahan Begum	Open Doors volunteer	Participant's home	29/07/09
67.	Vassilia	Access Assistant	Hampstead Theatre	8/07/09
68.	Rebecca Seaton	Teacher	Gascoigne Primary School	24/01/09

Appendix 2. Participant Consent Forms

RESEARCH INTO CLASSES AT LIFELINE CENTRE:

Project information:

Anne Smith is doing research to help improve the teaching you receive in her classes. The research will also be used to help other teachers and organisations improve the services they offer to their clients. Anne may want to write about things you have done or said in the classes. If she interviews you, she will be asking you questions about her classes and other experiences you have had in the UK. If you agree, she may wish to interview you a second time to see if anything has changed or improved since the first interview.

You do not have to participate in the research. It is your choice. This does not affect whether you can attend Creative English/Family Learning Club in anyway. You can stop participating in the research at any time.

Interviews will be recorded. Anne will be the only person who will listen to the recording.

The information you provide may be published in reports or articles. However, you will never be named or identified in this.

Anne is a PhD student at Queen Mary, University of London.

If you have any questions, Anne can be contacted on: XXXXXXXXXXXX (phone) or XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (e-mail).

Name:

Participant consent:

I have read and understood **OR** I have had explained to me the information above and am happy to participate in the research.

Signed and dated _____

I agree/I do not agree (Delete as appropriate) to my photograph being used to support writing or presentations about the research.

Signed and dated _____

Translator's statement (if required):

I confirm that I have explained the project information sheet and consent form in a language understood by the participant and that the participant was given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

Signed and dated: _____

RESEARCH INTO ACTIVITIES AT OPEN DOORS/LIFELINE/XXXXXXXXXX SCHOOL (Delete as appropriate)⁴¹:

Project information:

Anne Smith is doing research to understand how you/your child feel(s) about activities you/they have done and the group you/they participate in (Delete as appropriate). The research will be used to help Lifeline/Open Doors (Delete as appropriate) and other organisations improve the services they offer to their clients. Anne may want to write about things you/your child have/has done or said during the activities. She will be asking you/your child questions about Young Stars/Play 'n' Chat/your school and your community and similar activities you/your child have/has done (Delete as appropriate).

You/Your child do/does not have to participate in the research. It is your choice. It does not affect whether you/your child can participate in the activities in any way. You/your child can stop participating in the research at any time.

Interviews will be recorded. Anne will be the only person who will listen to the recording.

The information you provide may be published in reports, books or articles. However, you/your child will never be named or identified in this.

Anne is a PhD student at Queen Mary, University of London.

If you have any questions, Anne can be contacted on: XXXXXXXXXXXX (phone) or XXXXXXXXXXXX (e-mail).

⁴¹ The appropriate deletion was completed on the Project Information Sheet before it was printed for a particular group of potential participants.

Name:

Participant consent:

I have read and understood the information above or I have had the information above explained to me (Delete as appropriate). I am happy to participate in the research/I am happy for my child to participate in the research (Delete as appropriate).

Signed and dated _____

I agree/I do not agree (Delete as appropriate) to my photograph and/or photographs of my child being used to support writing or presentations about the research.

Signed and dated _____

Translator's statement (if required):

I confirm that I have explained the project information sheet and consent form in a language understood by the participant and that the participant was given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

Signed and dated: _____