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Difference, becoming and rhizomatic subjectivities beyond 'otherness'. A posthuman framework for intercultural communication.

Introduction

With this paper, I aim to critique the binary self/other in intercultural communication by focusing on difference as a productive force of becoming within a posthumanist framework. I argue that the binary self/other belongs to a specific tradition of Western metaphysical thinking, which is founded on hierarchies and oppositions that conceal the interdependence and contextual processes in which difference is embodied. The paper is therefore a theoretical intervention that aims to reframe difference through the perspectives of posthumanism and post-structural feminism employing the notion of subjectivity as a site of becoming in order to replace the increasingly problematic notion of the 'other'.

I begin with an overview of difference in interculturalism from neo-essentialist understandings of the other to current critical perspectives that introduce intersectionality and gender theory in intercultural studies. Taking this as a point of departure, I examine the critique of Western metaphysical tradition initiated by Deleuze and Guattari (1986, 1987) in its relation to the notions of cyborgs (Haraway, 1991, 2016) and mythobiography (Lorde, 1982) to explore an understanding of difference that foregrounds agency, creativity and becoming. Finally, I discuss some of the methodological implications that emerge from the adoption of a rhizomatic and posthuman understanding of the intercultural.

The role of difference in the intercultural field and the binary self/other

As one of the central constructs in interculturalism, the notion of difference is employed to demarcate the cultural difference of the other. This process of identification of the other is enacted according to parameters that focus on nationality, language and cultural characteristics that essentialise cultural difference. I explored elsewhere (Ferri, 2014, 2018) the limitations of this understanding of difference which becomes particularly evident in the clear delimitation between self and other formulated in the notion of intercultural competence. Posing a cultural and linguistic barrier between self and other, intercultural competence frameworks (see for example Deardorff's pyramid model, 2011a, 2011b or Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009) promise the overcoming of difference through the acquisition of skills that allow the self to communicate competently with the other. In this sense, the notion of culture is taken at face value as a set of characteristics that define a particular group and that guide their behaviour, beliefs and values. Intercultural competence models promise to overcome these barriers posited by cultural difference through the adoption of specific skills that can be acquired in intercultural training. From this perspective, I argue that this functional, instrumental understanding of communication and of difference stems from a Western-centric position that reflects power dynamics between a powerful self and an essentialised cultural other.

Further analysis of the notion of the other conducted in the field of critical interculturalism has revealed difference in the intersection between gender identity, sexuality, religion, nationality, race, and ethnicity. For example, the migrant body as 'other' and its translation in embodied contexts through dominant discourses (Chávez, 2009), the notion of queer/transing 'other bodies' in intercultural communication (Yep, 2013); and the analysis of violence against trans* persons from an intercultural perspective committed to issues of power and privilege (Johnson, 2013). An example of research that advocates this transversality or intersectionality of interests is Chávez's (2013) argument in favour of the inclusion of queer and trans theories in

intercultural communication, such as mapping the trans-national and trans-cultural circulation of notions of gayness and queerness. Chávez identifies a number of points of convergence between queer and trans studies and the critical turn in intercultural communication particularly the focus on gender, class and race in order to question not only normative modes of identity, but also modes of social and economic organization within the logic of the commodification of difference in political and economic neo-liberalism (see Kaway, 2009 and the commodification of cultural difference in tourism in Shepherd, 2002 and Jack and Phipps, 2005).

Furthermore, there are other instances of intercultural communication documented in disparate fields of research that foreground the complexity of communication in the presence of a dominant other in situations of clear inequality. For example, the ethnographic research on asylum seekers in the Belgian legal system (Maryns and Blommaert, 2002; Maryns, 2006) and research on grassroots literacy with African migrants and asylum seekers in Belgium (Blommaert, 2001, 2004) and in the UK (Blommaert, 2009). Phipps (2012) discusses this sense of precarity in the context of linguistic solidarity, which designates the effort of 'intercultural listeners' (p.587) to accommodate one's own language in the endeavour of communication, particularly when confronted with the traumatic experiences of asylum seekers using a foreign language under difficult circumstances. In this sense, research in intercultural communication is faced with the challenge to address openly issues of inequality and conflict, shifting from the predominant focus on business relations, intercultural training and language learning in higher education, to the development of viable alternative theoretical perspectives that redefine the ethical significance of intercultural dialogue, a concept which ''is challenged profoundly by the insecurities and precarities which now affect large numbers of people in the world'' (Phipps, 2014, p.115).

In relation to the concept of difference and becoming, Warren's (2008) conceptualisation of difference is of great interest for the intercultural field. According to Warren, intercultural communication studies limit the understanding of difference to that of representing an opposition to a normative construct. This means that difference is perceived in terms of a negative, ''something that hurts or constrains us'' (p.295), whether it is construed in terms of racial, ethnic, gendered or linguistic difference. This dynamic can be observed at work in intercultural communication in two ways. First, it appears in the neo-essentialist attribution of cultural difference in terms of a problem that needs fixing through the discovery of commonalities between cultural traditions that allow people to communicate interculturally, or through the practice of cultural tolerance. In this instance, the focus on difference is apolitical, abstracted from the contextual factors and the power dimension that are woven in the relation between the construct of a dominant self and a 'cultural other'. Second, this etiolated notion of difference is present in the critical appreciation of minor and marginal cultural realities pitted against hegemonic cultural ideologies, which essentialises the culture of 'the other' as a stable and homogeneous construct. In this respect, it can be argued that in both instances difference contributes to the reproduction of inequality, affecting the lived experiences of individuals and consolidating existing discourses and power relations (Warren, 2001). Although it is important to investigate the power imbalances caused by difference, at the same time it is important to re-valuate difference in terms of particularity and uniqueness, not relegated to representing a negative moment. As Warren (2008) explains difference can be seen as a productive force, an affirmation of uniqueness,

> This is not the same as saying that we are all different and therefore all the same; rather, it is to say that there is variability within presumed categories of people and if we want to understand how power works we need to invest careful attention to particularity and avoid the trappings of binary logics (Warren, 2008, p.295).

Here, Warren delineates two fundamental issues that I seek to address in the present paper in order to further define an intercultural approach to difference and becoming beyond the binary self/other that embraces a posthuman perspective. First, to account for particularity whilst avoiding an apolitical and superficial embrace of the 'other', and recognizing the struggles and power imbalances entailed in the notion of difference. Second, to critique the binary logic in which thinking about the 'other' is framed by focusing on embodiment and becoming. In doing this, I take Warren as a point of departure to further elaborate on difference as a productive force and to introduce a posthuman perspective based on the experiences of 'outsider' or minoritarian subjectivities rooted in feminism, gender, LGBTQ+, and antiracism.

In the next section I will examine Deleuze and Guattari's (1986, 1987) rhizomatic philosophy, and its influence on posthumanism and the wider contemporary reappraisal of difference as a creative force of change and becoming. Because the static and essentialist binary self/other underpinning much intercultural communication stems from Western philosophy, a sweeping overview of this tradition will help the reader situate its subversion in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of difference and becoming. It is important to emphasize that with this largely theoretical and philosophical discussion I intend to prepare the ground that will allow me in the subsequent sections to elaborate on the notion of minoritarian or 'outsider' perspectives and on some of the methodological implications that emerge in recent critical intercultural research that foregrounds difference and becoming.

Situating difference and becoming: rhizomatic subjectivities and posthumanism

In philosophy, a broad and approximate definition of ontology is the study of being, or the study of what there is. The distinction between being (identified with abstract and stable entities such as God or Truth) and becoming (identified with change and impermanence in material entities) in Western metaphysics is related to the idea of transformation. According

to this distinction, being is immutable and static, whilst becoming pertains to material entities which are subject to change (Natanasabapathy & Maathuis-Smith, 2018). As a result, being has been accorded a privileged status over transformation and becoming. Conceiving being as an immutable, fixed essence creates what Derrida (1997) defines a metaphysics of presence (Derrida, 1997). According to this metaphysics of presence, the whole ontological tradition of Western philosophy is based on a series of dualisms in which one term, representing the plenitude, the purity and the immutability of being is privileged over a subordinate term which is identified with becoming, change, and lacking in respect to being; in other words this subordinate term is considered a negative and subordinate force. This binary model recurs throughout Western metaphysical tradition. For example, the separation between immutable Forms or Ideas and empirical reality in Plato, or the split between body and mind in Descartes (Moore, 2012) denote a privileging of rational thinking over the empirical existence of bodily reality, a preference for uniformity over difference and a distrust of the messiness of empirical entities in their variety in favour of disembodied and idealised forms. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) represent this ontological supremacy of being as a fixed entity with the image of an arborescent structure denoting a stable, self-enclosed totality in which relations between concepts are established according to rigid binaries (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Stagoll, 2005).

Opposed to the static conception of the arborescent model, Deleuze conceives being as an immanent and material force in a constant state of transformation (Deleuze, 2004; May, 2005; Rae, 2014), destabilising traditional metaphysical hierarchies associated with the distinction between being and becoming. Reality, seen as an immanent field of difference and multiplicities, is embodied in the image of the rhizome, a non-hierarchical network acting as a counterpoint to the traditional ontological tradition that underpins Western metaphysics (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, 1987). Contrary to the arborescent metaphysical tradition,

rhizomatic processes proceed from multiple perspectives outside binaries and hierarchies to affirm being as a positive and productive force: ''A rhizome has no beginning and no end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance'' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.25). Rhizomatic networks are formed by contact between heterogeneous bodies, concepts, thoughts and affects that create new configurations, novel means of expression, new behaviours, or assemblages (Colman, 2005).

A positive shift towards multiple subject positions, embodiment, and the messiness and complexity of real life encounters between intercultural subjects can be observed in recent developments in the field of intercultural communication and intercultural language learning. Kramsch (2010) adds to the critique of the dichotomy between self/other another binary that has become attached to the intercultural experience, that of the split between mind/body in second language acquisition (SLA) research. This split is evident in the attention paid in research to the cognitive aspect of learning a language over the bodily and affective resonance of the act of communication between speakers. To counteract this split between self/other and mind/body, Kramsch highlights the embodied nature of language and the myriad subject positions that speakers navigate while engaging with other speakers in the materiality of everyday interactions. Similarly, Ros i Sole' (2016) emphasises the lived aspect of intercultural experiences and their affective character embodied in language learning and communication, looking at the shifting nature of identity positioning and at the uniqueness of each language learner. To this affective and embodied dimension, Phipps (2019) adds decolonising as a practice that subverts hegemonic narratives, and in calling into question the role of the researcher in legitimising othering she invites us to decentre and question our own power.

These accounts of embodied and shifting subject positioning in intercultural language learning and of decolonisation and decentring of the researcher in interculturalism more in general can also be viewed through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic philosophy. The subversion of the binaries self/other, mind/body, essence/becoming initiated by Deleuze and Guattari is particularly visible in their analysis of the human-animal metamorphoses, or becoming-animal, in the writing of Kafka. These acts of becoming destabilise the binary human-animal (Colebrook, 2002) and reaffirm the productive capacity of a previously subordinate, negative and otherised term to embody a new radical subjectivity based on difference (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986). One of the main effects of the acts of rhizomatic becoming is the creation of new subjectivities that emerge in collective action and find expression in the arts, in literature, in the social field and in political activism. Examples of these rhizomatic subjectivities can be found in the multiple, collective names Luther Blissett or Anonymous (Deseriis, 2012) or the art movement Fluxus (Sholtz, 2018). Rhizomatic subjectivities are also visible in the minority, spontaneous political and social movements that have developed outside organised and institutional structures (Hardt and Negri, 2000), such as the Zapatistas in Chiapas in the 1980s and 1990s, Black Lives Matter, Feminist Digital Humanities, Occupy or the more recent #Me Too movement and Extinction Rebellion. The subversion of entrenched binaries and of the metaphysical privileging of the self over the other, of mind over body, of the abstract over materiality, and of essence over becoming enacted by rhizomatic subjectivities brings the intercultural field at a crossroads. On one side, to continue with linear narratives of intercultural learning as the acquisition of skills and knowledges to communicate effectively with the other. On the other, to embrace the intercultural in its potential for critique of unequal and hegemonic practices and for the affirmation of multiple and agentive subjectivities beyond otherness.

In this sense, posthumanism presents an interesting framework in which to position the intercultural experience beyond otherness. Nomadic, multiple and heterogeneous rhizomatic subjectivities counteract totalising understandings of being as a fixed and unchanging essence, and are further developed in posthumanist philosophy (Callus and Herbrechter, 2012). Drawing from radical epistemologies such as feminism, gender, LGBTQ+ and antiracism (Braidotti, 2006, 2017), posthumanism promotes a more egalitarian relation to human and nonhuman others through the subversion of established hierarchies and dichotomies and the affirmation of minoritarian perspectives. In this sense, Haraway's (1991, 2016) notion of the cyborg further develops Deleuze and Guattari's non-hierarchical rhizomatic model of subjectivity. Cyborgs subvert the sovereign role of the rational subject of Western philosophy incarnated in the Kantian cogito with its split mind/body, pointing to a restructuring of possibilities through heterogeneity and multiplicity. Emancipating the figure of the cyborg from its scientific/militaristic origins (Cook, 2004), Haraway challenges a number of dualisms, beginning with the organic/technological distinction, and moving to further dichotomies such as human/animal, mind/body, private/public, self/other, nature/culture, truth/illusion, male/female, to create new fusions between heterogeneous categories (Cook, 2004; Haraway, 1991, 2016). Thus, the image of the cyborg is disconnected from the classical dualisms and hierarchies of the arborescent model, redefining identity as embodied, fractured and 'outsider' (Haraway, 2016).

I argue here that this outsider, minoritarian subjectivity represents an alternative to the impasse reached with the self/other dichotomy and with narratives of intercultural competence as a transparent process of acquisition of intercultural skills. In other words, I invite a shift from an understanding of communication between different groups that can be analysed according to specific cultural parameters to rhizomatic intercultural journeys as enmeshed in the complex nexus between subjectivity and its embodied character in the

world. This notion of embodiment reveals the ways in which subjectivity as a complex nexus of consciousness/corporeality interacts with the environment ''to which it responds and it actively structures'' (Simonsen, 2012, p.16). In other words, subjectivity is the result of an active engagement with the world through which it constructs meaning and finds purpose. Taking Haraway's cyborg perspective, outsider identities emerge from these intersections created by historical binaries to reclaim new types of engagement with the world located in difference and particularity. As Haraway writes,

> ''a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints'' (1991, p.154).

Aligning myself with this description of a cyborg subjectivity, I envision critical interculturalism as embedded in outsider narratives and engaged with the world in its multiplicity of assemblages, and recognising the challenges we all face at this historical moment. Pennycook's (2018a, 2018b) recent discussion on posthumanism clarifies the implications for the field of applied linguistics of this questioning of classic understandings of what it is to be human in the face of environmental disaster, growing global inequality, forced migration, gender inequality and the persecution of minorities. Furthermore, technological advancements put into question the classic modalities of knowing and communicating, creating another layer of complexity in what it means to be human and to inhabit the world. Following Pennycook's call for ''a new way of thinking about our ethical responsibility to each other and the world'' (2018b, p.140), I suggest that focusing on the figures of 'outsider' or rhizomatic subjectivities can overcome the binary self/other in which the intercultural is framed and encourage a more equitable approach to research. This paradigm shift brings about a number of methodological challenges, such as switching from a linear narrative to allowing a multiplicity of subject positions to appear, including narratives

of disruption, miscommunication, power imbalance and injustice. From this perspective, questioning the ontological underpinning of accepted binaries implies reviewing our own complicity with power and hegemonic practices. In the next section I attempt to provide an example of an intercultural journey narrated from a minoritarian subject position borrowed from literature, in the specific Audre Lorde's biomythography. This example will allow me to tease out in the final section of the paper some of the methodological implications that derive from a rhizomatic approach to intercultural research.

Outsider identities and rhizomatic subjectivities: biomythography and intercultural narratives

The writer Jean Rhys appropriates in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* the Eurocentric narrative of Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* to reclaim a voice and a central role to the 'other' (Cappello, 2009), the marginalised characters emerging from the periphery of colonial empires with their heteroglossic practices (Bakhtin, 1981). This subversion of the binary self/other from a feminist, post-colonial perspective can be observed in the novel Zami: a new spelling of my name (Lorde, 1982). Lorde creates a narrative of transformation from a minoritarian position, designing a trajectory of becoming that overcomes the dichotomies that defined her subjectivity as an African American non-binary woman. This is demonstrated in the intercultural journey described by Lorde, beginning in a West Indian immigrant family in New York and culminating in her sojourn in Mexico. In Zami*,* Lorde traces the stages of her life in a productive relation to difference and desire, mixing history, political activism, autobiography and myth. As Lorde (2007) writes, the experience of outsiders who embody the subordinate term of established binaries bears witness to the negative effects of difference when operating within this dynamic, for example in racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, elitism and classism. However, when reclaimed from an agentive position,

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difference can harness change and empowerment, creating knowledge and alternative modes of living, or as Lorde continues

> ''we have, built into all of us, old blueprints and expectations and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of these structures'' (p123).

Her biomythography, or the mythological account of her own biography, represents a form of cyborg writing that reclaims a subaltern position as a mark of positive difference. As Haraway writes, it ''seizes the tools to mark the world that marked them as other'' (2016, p.55). Indeed, throughout her narration Lorde repositions difference as desire and as a positive act of becoming that subverts our binary understanding of difference. The subordinate role of otherness embodied in the historical experience of women, of minorities, of non-binary, queer and trans* identities, is thus reclaimed by Lorde through her narrative of becoming and her adoption of the collective name Zami, ''a Carriacou name for women who work together as friends and lovers'' (1982, p.303). It is argued here that the name Zami embodies a new multiple, rhizomatic and outsider subjectivity that Lorde embraces to signal the beginning of a new life based on the positive affirmation of her own difference and becoming. By retelling her own origin story and adopting a mythical West Indian feminine collective name, Lorde subverts the patriarchal origin myths of Western culture built on the dogma of phallogocentrism (Derrida, 2005) which survives in the modern ideas of democracy and political sovereignty, stemming from the ancient Greek model of friendship based on fraternity and brotherhood.

With the illustration of Lorde's biomythography I outlined a lived example of an intercultural journey narrated in the first person from an 'outsider' or minoritarian perspective, and in doing this my intention was to illustrate the passage from a position of 'otherness' to one of agentive subjectivity. Thus, my main argument is that Lorde's life trajectory reveals her

embodied engagement with the world which shaped and informed her resistance to hegemonic practices, leading to her reclaiming an outsider and rhizomatic subjectivity in the collective name Zami. The implications of Lorde's model of outsider subjectivity for intercultural research are outlined in the next section with a reflection on its methodological implications. I maintain that overcoming the notion of otherness entails challenging the ontological underpinnings of established binaries and adopting a post-structural feminist stance to research in order to challenge existing research paradigms in the intercultural field.

Outsider identities and rhizomatic subjectivities: methodological implications

An alternative to the binary self/other resides in challenging a static conception of cultural difference in order to focus on the contextual, processual and immanent character of engagement between embodied subjects. Because we are all defined and constrained by the categories that mark the differences between us, in terms of race, age, sexuality, gender, class, language, physical ability, these differences cannot be ignored or discarded in a superficial embrace of diversity and tolerance. However, the relation to difference is a crucial issue for the intercultural field whether it is used to demarcate binaries and entrench established dichotomies (e.g. self/other, insider/outsider, foreign language speaker/native speaker) or to reclaim agency from a position of difference. The latter scenario requires an epistemology that invites a multiplicity of viewpoints and subject positions, an intersectionality of interests, and a disruption of established and accepted truisms relating to cultural difference, dialogue, and intercultural encounters. The work of Asante (2017) on Afrocentricity has been instrumental in challenging Western paradigms of culture and introducing a narrative that subverts traditional views of minority groups as victims and objects of study, to reposition their centrality as ''agents of discourse and analysis'' (p.4). As de la Garza (2014) argues, the adoption of this type of critical work however has to confront openly methodological paradigms dominant in the social sciences, in order to avoid a

reproduction of determinism disguised under qualitative research designs. In this regard, epistemic concerns with validity and reliability in coding and interpreting data according to established methodologies can be put in a productive confrontation with the ontological concerns explored in this paper. This means that while analysing data it is important to keep questioning the role of the researcher as a powerful self who imposes her own voice and intentions on the 'other'. In this sense, St. Pierre (2017) describes post-qualitative inquiry as the endeavour to embrace and use post-structuralist and posthumanist theories while avoiding embedding them within a humanist qualitative methodological framework. Taking a post-structuralist, feminist position Mazzei and McCoy (2010) argue in favour of a problematization of knowledge production that challenges taken for granted assumptions and complicates our representation of the world from the perspective of agentive subjects in post-qualitative research. Against the practice of imposing a pre-determined theory on a data set, Jackson and Mazzei (2013) describe their process of 'plugging in' as a continuous procedure of meshing data into theory and theory into data, placing the researcher in a productive relation that repositions the 'object' under analysis as a subject actively involved in the process of research (Sellers, 2015).

However, it is important to avoid what St. Pierre calls a ''rush to application'' (2017, p.1081), whereby new ideas are put to use and new methodological approaches are created without a prior engagement with their ontological implications. For example, using a rhizomatic model in research would recreate arborescent thinking if it was assumed that data reproduces the reality under observation in a linear and transparent fashion. Although arborescent tree-like structures operate as transcendental models of thought and the rhizome is incarnated in immanent processes of becoming, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987) the tree-like structure can still ''engender its own escapes'' (p.20) and rhizomes can produce '*knots of arborescence*' and ''constitute its own hierarchies'' (ib.). It is indeed a fundamental

aspect of rhizomatic thinking that the rhizome does not operate in opposition to the arborescent model, as this would reintroduce hierarchies and binary thinking. This dynamic, non-dialectic relation between the rhizome and the arborescent model requires theoretical engagement with its ontological underpinnings and constant vigilance in order to avoid recreating binaries. Counteracting the neo-positivist paradigm (Holliday and Macdonald, 2019) that essentialises the dynamism and co-constructed character of intersubjective engagement, a rhizomatic approach to researching the intercultural emphasises partialities and contradictions and emergent results that were not anticipated in the initial design to ''help disrupt that linear and layered thinking about subject positioning that is so dominant in modernist approaches to identity''(Honan, 2007, p.535). In this regard, Lather (2013) argues that the principles of a post-qualitative methodology are already embedded in praxis, in the ''immanence of doing'' (p.635) of feminist and post-colonial research that challenges the role of the agentive, all knowing subject/researcher.

An exemplar of Pennycook's (2018a, 2018b) call for radical and ethical approaches to the world and to people in a posthumanist framework is Johnson's (2013) intercultural analysis of the criminalisation of trans* identities through the case of CeCe McDonald. In this analysis, Johnson identifies the mechanisms that perpetuate privilege, while advocating for the introduction of minoritarian perspectives in researching the intercultural. Similarly, Warren (2008) examines autobiographical incidents through a Deleuzian lens, in order to reconceptualise the intercultural as a series of fractures, disruptions and becomings in contrast to linear narratives of transformation.

Following the principles of the rhizome, data can be collected from a myriad of sources including artefacts, video, artwork and auto-ethnographic narratives to create multi-layered texts (Honan and Sellers, 2008). For example, intercultural research focused on interpersonal dynamics in the context of small group interaction provides a wealth of data on the

provisional and co-constructed character of interaction, as in Gutierrez-Perez's (2016) auto-ethnographic study on the pedagogical implications of performance from a mestizo and liminal perspective. However, if the relationship of the researcher with this data needs to be questioned on account of power dynamics, it is also important to allow data to take research into unexpected territory, one that may not have been envisaged at the start of the process.

A posthuman framework for intercultural communication: final thoughts

I argued in this paper that the intercultural experience can be narrated from the perspective of radical new subjectivities, outsider identities, and from sites of minoritarian expression. Rhizomatic intercultural experiences can be found in the interpersonal liminal spaces within classrooms and other institutional sites, but they can also be found in objects, places, narratives and in performance, art and film (see Marks, 2000, on the relationship between cinematic expression and diasporic, intercultural identities). In other words, the intercultural can be retraced back from institutionalised sites of knowledge (Abdul-Jabbar, 2019) into spaces of becoming and difference. I argued elsewhere (Ferri, 2018) that a dialogic and inter-subjective approach to the intercultural begins with the acceptance of incompleteness, uncertainty and even the possibility of conflict and misunderstanding. A focus on intersubjectivity, in order to overcome the ingrained asymmetric relation between an all-knowing self and a subordinate other, entails the adoption of a disposition to de-centering and listening. This practice emphasises fractures and becoming over totalising attempts at framing dialogue within linear narratives. Although not yet fully fledged, a post-qualitative and rhizomatic interculturalism is emerging in the critical interrogation of established paradigms and a renewed interest in intersectionality, becoming and difference.

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