

## Language Acts and Worldmaking Debates



### Traversing Traditions, Opening Opportunities

The *Language Acts and Worldmaking* round-table *Debates Series* has been conceived by Cristina Ros i Solé (Goldsmiths, University of London) for *Language Acts and Worldmaking*, an Arts and Humanities Research Council Open World Research Initiative project, to foster a dialogue on the connections, divergences and identities of well-established traditions in Modern Languages and Language Education. As a major element of the *Language Transitions* strand led by Debra Kelly (Westminster) and Ana de Medeiros (King's College London), the series focuses in particular on the synergies and fissures between Language Education across educational sectors and the humanities, as well as seeking to investigate new openings and possibilities for the future. This is a three year programme of debates beginning in the academic year 2017/18, culminating in a collective publication, and takes place at King's College Modern Language Centre and at other *Language Acts and Worldmaking* partner and collaborating institutions.

We have defined these 'Language Transitions' as 'border zones of learning' between stages that often become more of an hindrance than a stepping stone for so many language learners, whatever their level. The aim in the *Debates* is therefore to establish connections and create new directions for existing provision and for educational sectors in order to discuss how to foster dialogue, create smoother transitions and re-energise the field by examining current concerns and pedagogies in the field. Each *Debate* will address a different aspect of these transitions and will emphasise the benefits and challenges of traversing educational terrains and traditions to enrich and widen the experience of Modern, Community and World Languages.

Each *Debate* consists of positions papers and responses to these papers from prominent experts, policy makers, academics and teachers.

All papers and responses are recorded and posted on-line on the *Language Acts and Worldmaking* website and blog: [www.languageacts.org](http://www.languageacts.org). This is the virtual home for posting information on the latest news and developments in the *Debates Series*, and the place where all the information about this series is archived.

#### There are 5 debates this academic year 2017/2018:

**Debate 1:** 4th October — Language Education Activism (LRC, King's College London)

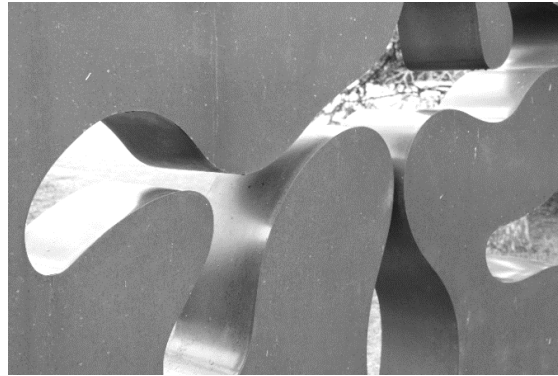
**Debate 2:** 15th November — Debate 2: Modern Languages—A Discipline (still) in Search of an Identity? (University of Westminster)

**Debate 3:** 14th February — SLA and Teacher Development (LRC, King's College London)

**Debate 4:** 15th March —Modern Languages and the Digital World (LRC, King's College London)

**Debate 5:** 26th April —Emotions and Subjectivity in Modern Language Education (LRC, King's College London)

## *Language Acts and Worldmaking Debates*



### **Debate 1: Language Education Activism**

**4th October 2017, 6—7.15pm, King's College Modern Language Centre, Strand Campus**

**Introduction by Professor Debra Kelly, *Language Acts and Worldmaking*, Co-Investigator of the *Language Transitions Strand***

**Chair: Dr Cristina Ros i Solé**

This theme debates whether current policies in Modern Language Education are fit for purpose. We start from the premise that we need a radical new and coherent scope for the field that not only reflects current social and demographic changes, but that also aspires to exert influence and bring about change in society. Languages are not merely an advantage for 'business overseas', 'employment', or for other instrumental purposes such as travelling or 'understanding another culture', but are also a fundamental intellectual endeavour that fosters the cultivation of the self and the promotion of a more responsible and solidary society. 'Foreign' languages are an essential element in a super-diverse and multilingual world where new cultural roles, stances and responsibilities are needed. Beyond the role of the intercultural brokers and mediators, there is the need to seek new goals for the language learner and for the language educator. This debate discusses alternative directions for Language Education by posing the following three key questions:

- Do Modern Languages programmes allow students to go beyond the 'fluent fools' syndrome and allow language learners to reflect and connect with themselves, their cultures and their surroundings?
- How can we re-purpose language teaching to bring about such change?
- How would these issues impact on the different educational sectors?

**Guest speakers:** Prof. Alison Phipps (University of Glasgow) Prof. Janice Carruthers (Queen's University, Belfast) Prof. Anne Pauwels (SOAS, University of London)

**Discussants:** Dr Jim Anderson (Goldsmiths College) Dr Tita Beaven (Open University) Ms Jelena Čalić (SSEES, University of London) Isabel Simoes-Rodrigues (King's College London)

**A drinks reception will take place at King's College Staff Room from 7:30–8pm**