Interrupting Knowledge, Decolonising Care:

Understanding Mental Health with a

Refugee-run NGO in Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

Any expression of medical pluralism will reflect the organisation and hierarchisation of its traditions of knowledge. My thesis attends to moments in which diverse understandings of mental affliction are negotiated, and sometimes even silenced, in the networks and relationships surrounding a Sydney NGO. Here, alongside this NGO run for and by people from Central Africa, I explore approaches to questions of what mental affliction is, various notions of who (mis)understands it, and how afflictions and their percieved misunderstanding are dealt with. In the process, the category of 'mental health' emerges and disappears, is challenged and negotiated, within jostling epistemological frames of understanding.

To examine this therapeutic landscape, I prioritise modes of analysis that are sensitive to the fluctuating complexities of caring for community through existing, yet not always equitable, structures for such care. I draw on affect theory's slowness and attunement to the unseen, often unarticulated forces that unfold in encounters, conversations and in what *is* articulated (Stewart 2017: 192). Affective scenes provide an access point to each chapter's textured study of the refugee-migrant community health assemblage, which is examined in terms of: historical context (Chapter One), NGO sector development (Chapter Two), education (Chapter Three), belief (Chapter Four), faith (Chapter Five), and care (Chapter Six). Through such attention, this thesis asks after what medical pluralism looks like when a group of people with histories of a range of healing traditions—psychiatry, cosmopolitan medicine, religious faith healing, and spiritual cleansing of curses—move to Australia? How were these different knowledge traditions treated and talked about? And how could one meaningfully study these pluralities?—what would anthropological research and ethnographic writing, as modes of knowledge creation, come up against in trying to engage with plural traditions of knowledge?

Through representational sensibilities, moments of ethnographic attention and narratives that circle back and interrupt themselves, this thesis builds an argument for ambivalence towards conclusive uses of knowledge. Ambivalence is presented as a counter to the kinds of simplified understandings of diversity that are often salient in the migrant health and community development sector, and that are shown, through this ethnography to beget subtle, structurally violent effects. I frame such ambivalence as an act of care. Part examination of the tensions "between fragmentation and connectedness-in-the-making" (Biehl and McKay 2012: 1210), part portrait of the tensions held in suspense when crafting an ethnography of knowledge(s), my work seeks to contribute to the decolonisation of knowledge and care.

Keywords: Affect, African Australian, Care, Community education, Community development, Decolonising, Diversity, Ethnography, Knowledge, Mental health, Migrants, NGO, Pluralism, Refugees

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Declaration

i. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
ii. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used, and
iii. The thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

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Introduction

A way in

My first meeting with Elijah[1] left me feeling that we shared an ambivalence towards the categories through which we could realise our idealism. Perhaps this impression formed when he chuckled at my apology that I was still awaiting ethics approval for my research, saying, "yes, the bureaucracy, though ethics are negotiated all the time in life".

Elijah, a Rwandan man, was one of the directors of Africare[2]: a grassroots community NGO, based in Sydney, Australia, and run for and by people from Central Africa. The people running Africare hosted a range of activities to help new migrants and refugees settle, including community mental health conferences. At the time, I hoped that aligning with Africare could form an inroad into the communities they served and represented, and that this would be a first step towards meeting people who had suffered from afflictions that were hard to define—whether they understood these as normal pains of living, mental illness, curses, demonic powers, or a mix of these and other interpretations too. I hoped that through meeting these individuals, I could also meet the healers they had consulted, from psychiatrists to pastors, sorcerors to spiritual cleansers (all of whom practice in many Central African countries)—and consequently, I might better understand medical pluralism in practice in these individuals' diasporic lives. I imagined that doing this would somehow illuminate answers to the vexing questions of how some of us enact our beliefs in proximity to those of us enacting both starkly and subtly different beliefs. Additionally, I wanted to discover, especially when the stakes are high, how co-habiting differences great and small are understood.

For that first meeting, we had sat, Elijah and I, on either side of his broad desk in the Africare office to discuss my proposal. A lot rested on this meeting for me.

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[1] With some exceptions (including politicians and people making public appearances associated

[2] To protect this organisation's real identity, I have changed its name to 'Africare'—a popular name that I've seen used for a range of care oriented projects and products both vast and small, local and international. Other smaller community organisations also have pseudonyms while larger established organisations, more peripheral in this ethnography, are properly named.

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Concerned with representing my project fully and sensitively, I was nervous, formal and far too verbose while Elijah nudged me to be precise and more concise.

"What kind of people do you want to work with?", Elijah asked.[3]

"Oh—anybody involved in health relationships—community workers, doctors, patients, psychologists, other kinds of healers", I offered.

Elijah nodded slowly, but I could tell I was not clear.

People in Melbourne with whom I had talked about my project, many of whom were African themselves, had warned me to tread sensitively when asking after mental illness and witchcraft. *It's not the kind of thing we talk openly about—you're not proud to believe in witchcraft*, explained one colleague, who was also a researcher. *Don't be disappointed if nobody tells you about this sort of thing*, cautioned another. With the balance between sensitivity and frank clarity in mind, I tried another approach.

"So let me use my example", I started, "when my family moved [from India] to New Zealand in 1992, we moved from a place where we went to a homeopathic doctor for everybody's sicknesses—from colds to cancer, this doctor was involved—to a place where homeopathy was not thought very highly of. And it was hard. That's what I'm interested in here— amongst people I meet through Africare—for conditions that might be understood as mental illness, but they might not be that—they might be curses, they might be PTSD—there are a lot of ways to understand and treat a problem—I am interested in practices that people don't have access to after moving"

"Ah, yes," Elijah said, "although", he added meaningfully, "rather than looking at what is lost, there is also what arises here that is new."

"Yes, of course! And then there is the difficulty of negotiating your own beliefs and values with the healers you meet in a new country, like my family had to with homeopathy in New Zealand. Dealing with cultural difference is hard for people".

"It is true", Elijah said. "Plenty is said and written about multiculturalism but once you rub up against the beliefs of others, it's an issue—there's no question of, how do you integrate this 'multiculturalism'".

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[3] Most of the conversations I represent here are written up based on recordings or notes taken as the conversation unfolded. This first conversation with Elijah, though, has been reconstructed from memory based on notes I made that evening, after we met.

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I was thrilled by Elijah's eloquent distillation of the issue here. "Absolutely! That's exactly what I am interested in too!" I replied, then, abandoning my careful language and trying to be very clear: "Do you think I could meet people who will talk to me about mental illness through your organisation?"

Elijah replied that he was happy to facilitate introductions, but he would not promise anybody's participation; people would meet me and be free to choose the extent of their involvement. This was all I wanted.

Ultimately, though, this thesis is not just about mental affliction and healing networks, for as I settled in beside Africare to begin this project, these subjects as living practices and experiences eluded me. Instead of getting to know people who were dealing with psychic, spiritual afflictions, and through them the kind of tangential, personalised therapeutic networks I had set out to study, I found myself moored in the bureaucratic and social worlds surrounding the NGO I was attached to in order to meet 'the community'. I found myself in circles where this 'target community' was widely discussed, as were the categories of mental illness, mental health, and the alternative beliefs that this community allegedly maintained. I sought to get beyond this mooring, and in to the community[4] Africare served.

Research and researcher can grow up together. This project, as I conceived of it at the beginning, was a cruder animal than it has become. It was dreamed up across desks and armchairs, occasionally consulting the internet, as I searched for a case study through which I could ethnographically illuminate the ways that distinct culturally and historically constituted knowledge traditions sometimes merge and blur in the praxis of people's lives. In fact, my project's main foci—pluralism, mental illness, healing— seem often to recede in the field, in spite of their presence and promise as categories of analysis. They paradoxically disappeared as other complexities and historicised, socialised 'noise' surrounding them came to the fore. I found my way in to this thesis through recognising that my conversations and observations in the field seemed to reflect the discursive salience of my original research topic, and by paying attention to

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[4] The problematic category of 'community', particularly in my fieldsite(s), is analysed more rigorously on pages 34–35 and 63–65, and its deconstruction underlies the arguments of Chapters Two and Three.

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the textured ways my pursuit of this original topic was interrupted by tangential processes, orientations and discourse.

Any expression of medical pluralism will reflect the organisation and hierarchisation of its traditions of knowledge. This thesis asks after what that ordering looks like when a group of people with histories of a range of healing traditions—psychiatry, cosmopolitan medicine, church religious faith healing, and spiritual cleansing and curses move to Australia. What does it mean that amidst such heightened and persistent attention to cultural diversity and mental illness, these categories, which are so often talked about and vexed over, slip in and out of prominence in lived life? Relatedly, how were these different knowledge traditions talked about and treated? And how could one meaningfully study these pluralities? How would anthropology, as one kind of project of knowledge creation, engage with plural traditions of knowledge?

In the public but intimate everyday spaces of this thesis we see the creativity with which people work with and within overarching historical and structural forces; finding opportunities in them, finding ways to care—and to matter—in spite of them. Forms of care and notions of knowledge inform and intercut one another, shot through with classed and raced dynamics, bringing out the poignance of ambition, opportunity, erasure and suffering in the everyday. Part examination of the tensions "between fragmentation and connectedness-in-the-making" (Biehl and McKay 2012: 1210), part portrait of the tensions held in suspense when crafting an ethnography of knowledge(s), this thesis seeks to enact attitudes that might contribute to the decolonisation of knowledge and care. It is also an ode to the strivings and the care exhibited by those I worked with.

Medical pluralism and mental health: A review

Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders claim that one of the contemporary sociological challenges is how to make sense of the world's pluralities: "multiple modernities, ever-expanding cultural flows and the ever-present tensions between forces of homogeneity and heterogeneity" (2001: 14). This thesis is concerned with studying and representing pluralism: the tensions between homogenising and other forces, as well as those moments in contexts of multiple co-existing ontologies where distinct points of

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difference between people are honed in on and addressed. In this section, I trace a lineage of anthropological and anthropology-adjacent approaches to such moments in order to situate my work. Many of the texts discussed here deal with medical pluralism in terms of categories that are explicitly attributed to health (whether spiritual or herbal healing, for instance). Consequently, this groundwork is key to understanding how my study—with its incorporation of institutions, bureaucracies and opportunities as sources of healing—contributes generatively to the order of things.

Medical pluralism

The term 'medical pluralism' was coined in response to research contexts where biomedicine was not the dominant medical system. Based on this, Sarah Cant and Ursula Sharma (1999: 3) suppose that pluralism simultaneously implies multiplicity and some kind of presumably biomedical monism—much like multiculturalism signals the multi and assumes a mono-cultural norm. This implied mono-cultural norm is a highly suspect assumption, though, for all societies are medically pluralist, it is just that the degree and organisation of pluralism varies from one to another (Janzen 1978: 3). The anthropological literature on medical pluralism has long grappled with some of the core concerns raised by my research such as: the distribution of power, structure and agency, the navigation of seemingly discrepant belief systems, approaches to knowledge multiplicity, and, more lightly, relationships of knowledge to care. There are distinct positions within the anthropological, health and development literature attending to these issues. In this subsection, I overview these various literary positions in order to sketch out my works position in and contribution to these fields of understanding, as well as demonstrating my project's literary alignments.

Anthropologist's focus on pluralism has evolved from understanding the differences between therapeutic models to the *relationships* between them. Innately, pluralism implies relationships. Thomas Csordas proposes that these relationships can take one of four forms in a complex sociomedical landscape (2006: ix). They can be seen as contradictory and competitive; complementary and compatible; coordinating in that they are deemed suitable for different problems; or coexistent in a field but useful to different communities in it. I would add to Csordas' list the 'virtual medical pluralism' Grønseth (2001) describes amongst Tamilian refugees who hold in their memories the Ayurvedic practises they have no practical recourse to in Norway's

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psychiatric medical landscape. Grønseth's (2001) notion of virtual medical pluralism demonstrates the disjuncture brought about by pluralism that is not local; that people's body's individual experiences can be connected to idioms and praxis many miles away. This felt gulf is common in newly settled refugees and migrants' experiences of healthcare (see Adler 1995 for a pronounced case of this).

The bodies of literature on pluralism, mental health and migrants or refugees—who have moved from one kind of pluralism to another—contend with very different questions and issues to the studies investigating medical pluralism and mental distress 'at home' (so to speak) in places like Nigeria (Prince 1964), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Janzen 1978), Brazil (Budden 2010) where plural medical paradigms have co-evolved in those socio-medical landscapes. A key contextual body of this research describes co-ordinated medical paradigms within African countries where there have been moves in recent decades to co-ordinate a fully integrative medical system that gives traditional healers formal status (see Ademuwagun et al. 1979; Green 1980; Heaton 2011; Lambo 1956; Laplante 2014; On'okoko et al. 2010). Janzen suggests that the change to be made is not in the relationship between Western and traditional medicines but the way that officials see that relationship; after all, multiple distinct therapeutic traditions have long co-existed alongside one another in as "complementary rather than competitive" (1978: 3) despite being independent as systems, because they are unified by users (see also Budden 2010; Garrison 1977; Sandoval 1979; van Wolputte et al. 2002). This observation alludes to slippages between officially, structurally recognised medical systems and systemic pathways and connections that health seekers create. Janzen suggests that these regimes are also complementary by way of a broader health framework that generally enables, even expects, flexible use (Janzen 1978).

At the same time Feierman (1986) points to historical shifts in economy and agriculture throughout Africa that promote ideologies of increased mastery of the environment and, subsequently, of one's fate. He suggests this ideology bloomed in attitudes to illness and the body also, which has especial relevance for the way that mental conditions are understood by many traditional African medical paradigms as originating in the supernatural or in fate. In their analysis of therapy seeking in Kinhasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Van Wolputte et al (2002) also argue that the continued prevalence of African traditional medicines throughout the colonial

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and post-colonial periods had a lot to do with users' political allegiance to traditional ways. These instrumentalist perspectives tend to assume and emphasise structural rationale informing health-seeking behavior. As I go on to show, some of the decisions, desires and processes that point to what medical pluralism looks like in a context can also be understood by thinking with affect and assemblages. However, as I show below, much of the research on pluralism, migrants and refugees is driven by more applied concerns that the NGO I worked closely with also try to address.

Pluralism, migrants and refugees

A dominant approach to refugees' movement between pluralisms involves critical social science directed at improving health services to migrants and refugees in settled countries (see Colucci et al. 2012; Guerin et al. 2002; Minas et al 2013). Such initiatives are a mark of living in a knowledge society—a distinctly post-industrial condition of living in which knowledge and expertise have high status as a commodity used in politics, work, health and everyday life (Adolf and Stehr 2014). This area of research seeks to understand various refugee communities' perceptions and interpretations of mental illness in order to inform how mental health practitioners treat them. Responding to this research is a body of critique directed at the assumption that mental illness categories can be universally applied. For instance, Goździak (2004) expresses cynicism towards the broad assumption of PTSD epidemics in post-conflict zones and the accompanying need for counseling programs for these populations. Although, there are numerous alternative explanations for mental illness-like conditions amongst refugees, and one must be careful not to simply medicalise human suffering (Ingleby 2005; Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997).

In the literature on mental distress and medical pluralism in refugee communities, there are points of strong focus on resilience, decision-making and personal somatic and perceptual evolution. However the majority of this literature focuses on challenges based on differences between the migrant community and the host population, and potentials and possibilities for moving forward with these. In many ways this is understandable; there are many reports on how resettlement and its accompanying racist, social, structural inequalities, and in some cases, gendered domestic tensions (see Beya 2011; Manderson and McMichael 2004), more significantly influence distress amongst refugee migrants than the traumas they have

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fled (Beya 2011; Bhugra 2004; Guerin et al. 2002; Silveira and Allebeck 2001). Overall, then, the literature on mental health amongst refugee groups in settled countries tends to fall into one of two categories: those aimed at providing better medical support to affected migrant groups, and those that subtly critique or altogether eschew this service-provider agenda by documenting community's practices of resilience.

The first category of research is motivated by a service provider agenda of understanding 'cultural differences' in order to integrate this understanding into clinical practice and deliver 'culturally appropriate' mental health services to refugees and other minorities. These "projects of inclusion" (Minas et al 2013) represent a desire to address healthcare challenges that have remained challenging for decades, not only in Australia but also in the UK, Alaska, Canada and New Zealand. As Lipsedge and Littlewoood observe "the appreciation and even the conceptualisation of psychological difficulties can take place only within the set of available beliefs and assumptions which are offered by one's cultural milieu" (2005: xi). This common and indeed "rather obvious" (ibid) observation is a part of what drives mental wellness services' to better understand cultural conceptions of mental illness amongst the communities they seek to include.

There is a significant body of anthropological literature aimed at critiquing and perfecting the practice of transcultural psychiatry (for example, Estroff 1979; Jenkins 2007; Kirmayer and Minas 2000). These works have yielded critical ethnographic material, but because of the particular questions I am interested in, I will focus for now on this literature's tendency to interrogate the limits of psychiatric tools and practices from *within* psychiatric practice, towards broadening its scope. The discipline may be questioned, but it remains seat from which alternatives are dreamt up. An apt example of this is Janis Jenkins' observation that both her disciplinary callings, anthropology and psychiatry, "contribute to the philosophical questions of meaning and experience raised by cultural diversity in mental illness and healing", and that this can be accommodated by revising the DSM nosology (2007: 21). These epistemological attitudes might stem from this literature's legacy as a biomedically situated response to the mismatch between the physician's reading of the afflicted body and how patients interpreted and experienced it.

Towards bridging this gap, there was a movement famously championed by psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman (1976, 1986) to treat 'whole persons,' rather than just disease. Kleinman (1976) emphasises explanatory models as a means of distinguishing

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between disease and illness, where disease is the somatic issue and illness comprises the culturally constituted meaning and expressive acts that swathe it. This concept and its accompanying practical suggestions for primary care offered physicians a systematic way to break with medicocentric perspectives and to integrate personal and enculturated dimensions of patients' experience into treatment (see also Kleinman et al 1978; Good 1986). At the same time, however inextricably disease and illness are perceived in this schema, the concept of explanatory models squarely delineates a way of identifying and handling subjective, cultural perspectives on an objective reality. Social science discerns the illness while biomedicine diagnoses the disease, and the incorporation of both perspectives leads to successful treatment (Callan and Littlewood 1998; Zuburan et al 2013). Even though 'mental illness' technically describes illness—not disease—this same notion of incorporating perspectives is evoked by services that diagnose and treat mental illness cross-culturally. Epistemologies of health are brought together within a schema in which presumptions of the biomedical paradigm's supremacy are continually centered, however implicitly.

Transcultural psychiatry can be similarly critiqued for framing 'culture' as a quality belonging to the patient that presents an obstacle to treatment, and ought to be understood so as to be negotiated with (Kirmayer and Minas 2000). For the most part, transcultural psychiatry represents an effort to transcend ethnocentricism and enact services more sensitively than they have been in the past. Yet this principle may at times be superficially applied, as Grønseth (2001) observes of Alaskan doctors when cultural sensitivity training prompted them to *presume* difference when they received patients of Tamil descent. In many ways, the aims of a transcultural psychology scholarly trajectory echo those of critical medical anthropology; both seek to understand health and healing practices towards intervening with a logic of 'improving' them.

Other research in this field of focus springboards off this premise by, for example, critiquing the enactment of cultural sensitivity (Grønseth 2001) and demonstrating the non-universality of trauma (Lewis 2013; Young 1995). Some such scholarship moves far enough away from the concern with refining medical practice towards taking a longer, more holistic view on mental wellbeing and health amongst settled refugees, and can be characterised by a few general qualities. Firstly, these projects do not cast host community sectors or services as catalysts for improvement. Secondly, notions of 'improvement', when they feature at all in analysis, are not the

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driving motivator or outcome of research. Finally, this body of research aligns more with anthropologically driven agendas of understanding coping, resilience and healing practices without applied ends. Within the work on the experiences of forced migrants, specifically, there are ethnographies that do concern depression, trauma and mental suffering within resettlement, but do so by examining changes to social networks and social capital (Manderson and McMichael 2004), narratives of bad experiences with "host community" health care (Manderson and Allotey 2003), or more generally decenter biomedical services' perceived importance (McMichael 2002; Lakika 2011). This thesis is more aligned with studies like this, which seem to present their subjects' practices of resilience as worthy of learning from and perhaps even aspiring to in certain circumstances, rather than seeking to always consider them in terms of being translated into, or somehow complementing, biomedical, psychiatric frames of reference.

Theoretical attitudes to plurality: A grounding

This project demanded, from the outset, theoretical attitudes generous enough to engagement with the diverse modes of understanding that come under this study's lens. As I suggest above, a challenge in this is that the theoretical frameworks that epistemological diversity is conventionally thought through in scholarship on health bear in-built presumptions about the biomedical perspective's primacy (this criticism is also raised in Csordas 1987; Scheper-Hughes 1990; Goslinga 2013). This section grapples with how problematic assumptions of biomedicine's supremacy manifest in the writing of illness ethnography foremost as issues of representation, for instance, in the decision to write up paradigms of healing as matters of 'knowledge' or 'belief'. I also outline theoretical and epistemic approaches that help untangle some of the philosophical and epistemic knots associated with this problem my project raises. I see this exercise as one of deconstructing theoretical forms and authorities that hinder my goals, and delineating more constructive approaches to studying and representing plurality.

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Deconstructing 'belief'

The direct relevance of belief to health has an early anthropological precedent in Evans-Pritchard's (1976) sophisticated explanation of how witchcraft provided Azande with a philosophical, rather than physical, causation story for sickness. In this famous text, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, he explains witchcraft as an idiom for speaking of misfortune—from blights to infected, stubbed toes (1976: 19)—that answers the question, 'why me?' (Good 2010: 66), and accounts for the otherwise unknowable variables of chance and fortuity that the facts of a tragedy alone cannot explain. Yet, for all his generosity relating the complexity and rationality in Azande's worldview, Evans-Pritchard's analysis still opens with the almost scoffing dismissal: "Witches, as the Azande conceive of them, clearly cannot exist" (1976: 18). Despite more contemporary critiques of this standpoint (Geertz 1988; Good 1994: 10–14, 2010), this attitude pervades anthropological texts, particularly those on supernatural, 'unscientific' phenomena, like possession and witchcraft—both of which figure prominently amongst the interpretations of afflictions available to people from DRC.

As Geertz (1988) and Good (1994, 2010) do suggest, anthropologists' disbelief is seldom so emphatically stated in post-modernism's wake—to do so would be a kind of blasphemy. It is still expressed, though more subtly, in the elaborate mobilisation of social, sociological explanations of instances of possession or witchcraft—as in van Wolputte et al's (2002: 6–7) espousal that the continued significance of "traditional" African healing paradigms in the Kinhasan medical landscape is due to moral, political choices made by its users. This distancing also finds form in the tendency amongst anthropologists to cast non-biomedical causation theories as belief and spiritual healing as placebo, while positioning mental illness as fact and clinically backed healing as treatment. Substantial critique is directed at this (Good 2010; Latour 1987; Ram 2013; Scheper-Hughes 1990; Waldram 2000; Welch 2003). As Pollock observes, "we assume that penicillin 'works' *in spite of* belief in it; waving a dead chicken at the aurora borealis is effective, if at all, only *because of* belief in it" (Pollock 1996: 149). In other words, the efficacy of a sacrificial ritual is deemed context dependent, but penicillin's efficacy is context-less.

This posits an underlying hierarchy of truth traditionally assumed in anthropological knowledge. It also highlights cultural expectations developed in the humanities that the knowledge informing something's efficacy can always be knowable.

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Murray Last's article entitled 'The importance of knowing about not knowing' (1981) draws attention to this expectation in the anthropological imagining of medical systems. Inspired by Last, Roland Littlewood (2007) attests to the importance of anthropologists not forcing or adding coherence to such systems, to which Julie Laplante (2014) adds that we mustn't assume that knowing is not of importance to healers, but instead look for ways that knowledge may be approached non-empirically.

Taking a somewhat opposite approach, in her ethnography of spirit possession in a South Indian fishing communities, Kalpana Ram (2013) makes pioneering efforts to engage with possession as a fact; or, as she frames it, as a spirit's exertion of agency over a human agent. Towards these ends, Ram seeks to de-exoticise the supernatural, and reground it in the context of the everyday entanglements between subjectivities, agencies and permeable bodies. She is critical, too, of classical academic forms of knowledge production that refuse to engage with such epistemically Other forms of understanding, and that in attempting to interpret such physical phenomena, look to locate the source of somatisation in social, cultural or psychological conditions— "anywhere but [in] the body" (Ram 2013: 210). As a part of Ram's phenomenological and feminist philosophy inflected argument for the facticity of possession, she proposes "mentalism"—an ally of biologism, and sharing its centric-ness. It is the assumption "that subjectivity is located entirely in the mind and takes the rest of the world, including one's own body, as an object for its consideration" (2013: 39).

The somatic facticity of worlds and entities that a sufferer believes in has several precedents in anthropological findings. Adler's (1995) analysis of Hmong explanations of the sudden nighttime deaths of more than 100 healthy adult Hmong refugees, freshly settled in the USA, is a compelling example. Adler interviewed 118 Hmong men and women in California, most of whom could not remember such deaths in the pre-Laotion war homeland, but who explained that angered ancestral spirits, feeling neglected without the due ritual and sacrificial offerings, had abandoned the head of the household, leaving them vulnerable to spirits of the night. Medical theory explains this as a 'nocebo' effect, that is, where beliefs engender illness (rather than remedy them, as with placebo). As Adler (1995: 1627) notes, the emphasised relationship between mind, body and spirit in ethnomedicogenic illness and healing is actually quite compatible with the holistic Hmong view of health. Recognising similar overlaps in spirit possession treatment in Brazilian Afro-American possession cults, Csordas wonders

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whether there is "a religious 'side' and a medical 'side' to the issue"; or if these are discursive perspectives on the same existential problem; and if a meta–discourse that encompasses both is possible (1987: 9–10).

It is worth acknowledging that in the important, critical scholarship of Evans-Pritchard (1976), and even contemporary, subtly biomedically-centric anthropologists like Kleinman (1980, 1987) and Budden (2010), their own faith is a significant driver of this tendency to posit biomedicine as knowledge and its Others as belief.[5] This faith is evident when Budden bemoans that the doctors who initially signaled a psychological issue in one of his informants, Souza, did not do more to pursue it (2010: 199). By framing Souza's medical frustrations and subsequent exploration of spiritual explanations for his condition as a product of misdiagnosis, Budden limits possibilities for understanding the growing relief Souza reports as he educates himself on the spirit world and begins practicing mediumship. "We are compelled by our own faith in biomedicine to wish for its benefits to be available to our hosts", muses Pollock (1996: 149), as he reflects on the ethics of his and his peers' compulsion to act as amateur doctors in the field, despite lacking both the training and the facilities to do so. Aside from the telling "we" and "our" by which Pollock (1996) assumes a unified perspective amongst anthropologists, he demonstrates that this blindsight is often the product of care, not bigotry, though it does connote disrespect.

Towards tipping the balance, Welch (2003) argues that the same rituals anthropologists have long identified in religious and spiritual healing, whose effects have been dubbed placebo, also animate western biomedicine at the point of the doctor-patient relationship. By "naming and circumscribing unknown elements of that experience and by enabling patients' belief in a treatment and their expectancy of healing from that treatment" (Welch 2003: 21), placebos are mobilised. Similarly, Edgerton (1980: 169) follows his description of *nganga* (spiritual healing) as an intuitive and experimental style of therapy, where the patient's faith is important enough

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[5] I make this claim with respect to faith and medical pluralism come into my project's focus in an Australian context, but an interesting point of comparison is the way that power figures strongly in Indian ayurvedic practitioners' discussions of Indian medical traditions' perceived and experienced belittling by 'Western' medicine, and the subsequent framing of the 'West' as having only recently awakened to the ayurveda's scientific rigor (Langford 2002). In these discourses, the value of Indian medicine is discursively proven by its acceptability to Western medical knowledge.

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that healers use props and tools to inspire faith, by pointing out that psychiatry does this also. By considering likenesses between the way that diverse modes of knowing and treating illness might be socially and morally legitimised in healing exchanges, comparisons like these reflexively critique dominant modes of knowledge, and go some way towards destabilising hierarchies of belief. Perhaps more sophisticated still are the arguments made for treating convictions about witchcraft (for instance) not as beliefs about the world but features of it—"self-evident and solemnly real" (Moore and Sanders 2001: 4).

Theorising plurality

I should make it clear at this point that my position on various paradigms for addressing mental distress is to approach each as legitimate in their own right, and to learn the value of each on their own terms.[6] This stance is influenced by the long-standing observation in medical anthropology of the entanglement between cultural understandings of bodies' order and disorder, and how conditions are experienced, expressed, and may be managed. It is also informed by principles of the broad decolonising knowledge literature and movement, specifically by the call to bring "sidelined [African] epistomologies" (Mamdani 1996: 13) back into scholarship concerning African worldviews (though this is not always straightforward, see Chapter Three). Popular epistemologies about epistemology are particularly relevant for the later chapters of this thesis. Writing about Cameroon specifically and generalising to other African countries, Francis B. Nyamnjoh (2001) distinguishes between two epistemological orders: the popular one and a dominant western export. The dominant western export is an order that approaches the world in Cartesian dichotomies: where the scientific, rational, natural real is opposed to the supernatural, irrational, spiritual unreal. The popular epistemological order of every day practice in Cameroon, however,

> builds bridges between or marries the so-called natural and supernatural, rational and irrational, objective and subjective, scientific and superstitious, visible and invisible, real and unreal; making it impossible for anything to be one without also being the other (Nyamnjoh 2001: 29).

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[6] On pages 39–41, I deal with some methodological challenges this approach raises.

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It is a "principle of simultaneous multiplicities" (Mbembe 1997: 152). This might appear compatible with perspectivism theory—an Indigenous ontological and epistemological framework that enmeshes people in complex relationships with enviroment and other beings (Todd 2016), that has been linked with the ontological turn in anthropology, primarily through Vivieros de Castro's work with Brazilian tribes (2004). However, as Henrietta Moore (1996: 4) points out, while some of the work reworking knowledge by African philosophers, scholars and theologians might resonate with other fields of scholarly thought without being intellectually dependent on those fields; born instead of lineages of philosophising and thinking particular to different times and places. In this thesis, I approach pluralism through Nyamnjoh and Mbembe as well as with Annemarie Mol's application of multiperspectivism.

In *The Body Multiple* (2002) Annemarie Mol elegantly mobilises the concept of multiperspectivism. Mol proposes that we study illnesses as practices that are enacted or done. She follows Vivieros de Castro's (2004) claim that worlds of knowing, experiencing and treating a condition are potentially multiple, but refines it for a medical setting by claiming these worlds or ontologies "are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices" (2002: 6). By foregrounding and attending to practice, multiple objects and worlds are brought into view. Importantly, Mol implements this analytical attitude in an allopathic medical setting in one Danish hospital, but as she observes, even within one category of medicine at one physical setting, many kinds of medicine are practiced and expressed. For instance, "the loss of blood pressure over a stenosis is not the same thing as the loss of blood vessel lumen that radiologists make visible on their X-ray pictures" though both go by the same disease name (Mol 2002: vii). Rather than "haunt[ing] us with the possibility that we, as well, live in multiple realities" where 'their' reality speaks to 'ours' (Hage 2011: 10), my Mol-inspired application to contemporary individuals' dealings with complex refugee-migrant health and care assemblages *demands* that manifold 'worlds' can be moved between simply, effortlessly and unintentionally.

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Analytical sensibilities: An overview

In this section, I want to introduce some of the literature on assemblages, affect and care that has been formative in informing my analytical attitudes in this thesis. There are other frameworks that can be called upon to examine the things I look at: post-colonial frameworks and neo-liberal frameworks, and I do draw on these. But I have ended up privileging modes of analysis that are attentive to the constant shifting of things, of things in flux, *even* as cumulative histories, powers, forces come to bear on what is expressed. To return to pluralism: it seems a benign term for the absolute polyphony of forces and agencies that come to bear on psychological and spiritual unwellness, and addressing it, for my informants. Understanding contemporary life means finding ways to attend to and speak of these forms of agency and striving that animate precarious and powerful institutions. It means developing attentiveness to its tensions and the kind of questions these raise. What *kind* of attentiveness suits such a project? What sensibilities?

Notes on studying care

Care inevitably runs through work that focuses on health, the politics of resettling refugees, community development, community education, notions of illness, wellness and what lies between. As with my approach to illness and knowledge (see above), and affect (see below) in this thesis, I have not tried to define what counts as care, but rather, sought to identify and attend to the range of forms and expressions that care can take. To borrow Mol's phrasing when she talks about studying illness; I have approached care as consisting of practices that are "brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices" (2002: 6). These practices occur at varied scales and are of varying visibility.

At a broad scale of governance and politics, there are practices in my field that resonate with what Miriam Ticktin (2011) describes as regimes of care—these are enacted within processes of humanitarianism that oppose more exclusionary politics and practices towards refugees and migrants. Ticktin writes specifically about a rule of exception written into France's strict and exclusionary immigrant laws. The exception grants legal residency to undocumented immigrants for whom repatriation would be potentially lethal due to life-threatening illness that could not be adequately addressed

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in their countries of origin, and to "exceptional victims" (ibid: 2) of gendered violence. Ticktin (2006, 2011) tracks how this clause, formulated as a channel for care in the face of strongly anti-immigrant sentiment and policy, shapes subjectivities and priorities throughout the networks it is enacted through, rendering some kinds of suffering bodies more worthy of humanitarian exception than others, and prompting NGO workers to express their compassion through a desire for the forms of suffering in undocumented immigrants they meet that that might allow them to support these clients in getting French residency. Ticktin's observations resonate with some of the scenes I study in Australia (a country addled by its own history of anti-immigrant sentiment—see Chapter One), where the community development sector enacts comparable paradoxes of care that ultimately reproduce inequalities (see Chapter Two). The concept of regimes or politics of care is also one where care's objective is a certain kind of bodily integrity (Ticktin 2011: 4).

There are inklings of this objective that cannot be overlooked in the "projects of inclusion" (Minas et al 2013) that I discussed earlier, that seek to improve refugee and migrant understanding of mental illness, and their access and desire to use health services in Australia. Lisa Stevenson (2014) argues that such regimes of care are not *care* but biopolitics. In her devastating ethnography of Inuit suicide in Canada's Artic, Stevenson speaks through scenes of mourning, absence and loss, tending to the myriad ways that Inuit people continue to matter, morally and spiritually, even after their elected deaths. *Care*, she says, is "the way someone comes to matter and the corresponding ethics of attending to the other who matters" (2014: 3); biopolitics is the work of governing bodies, community schemes and suicide hotlines, for whom "it is more desirable to have a live and slightly disturbed Eskimo than a dead one" (Subcommittee on Eskimo Housing Programs 1964: 8, cited in Stevenson 2012: 592). I draw on Stevenson's definition of care in the ways that I consider the forms care can take. I do not contest her important distinction between care and politics, however, for in the activities and desires that I observe, I find nuances that prevent me from delineating care from biopolitics cleanly. To consider care in these nuances, I have drawn on ordinary ethics (Brodwin 2013; Das 2012, 2015; Lambek 2010); a conception of ethics as grounded in the small, mundane acts of everyday life, replete as it is with struggles, contradiction, competing desires, limited time, limited resources and established frameworks and institutions through which ethics—and care—can be

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expressed (see also Meher, Trnka and Dureau 2017). Recognising and thinking about care through an ordinary ethics allows recognition of care acts that are subtle and compromised, beholden to broader powers and desires of the institutions and structures in which these small acts of care are expressed.

Assemblage thinking

In the process of addressing the experiences and questions my fieldwork raised, Biehl and McKay's (2012) framing of pluralism's many tensions has been critical. Biehl and McKay (2012: 1210) distill this multiplicity to "the tension between fragmentation and connectedness-in-the-making". The dynamic they speak of stems from a sense that we occupy a peculiarly fragmentary time—the world is in pieces (Geertz 2002), and all over people make friction-filled efforts to bridge difference and distance (Tsing 2005). This is an effect of those three stalwarts of contemporary life: globalisation, neoliberalism and colonisation. Consequently, the state crumbles and is remade via "para-infrastructures" (Biehl and McKay 2012: 1210)—non-state institutions that enact state-hood from a slight remove (like NGOs, humanitarian projects, technology and therapeutic policies) whilst informing unique forms of subjectivity.

It is easy to imagine many of the sites my fieldwork roamed through in these terms; Africare, other grassroots NGOs, multicultural festivals, and health education initiatives, for example, operated as para-infrastructures and were certainly intermediary nexuses of power. Take Africare, for example: reliant on state funding and interest, and therefore regularly competing with other community-serving NGOs for grants, they maintain a precarious state of power and inherit many of community development's objectives. If not volunteering and working in such social projects the people I worked most closely with were otherwise engaged with them. If not otherwise engaged with these projects, their engagement was sought by those who *were* workers or volunteers; and so, much energy went into recruiting participants from the community and delivering forms of information deemed necessary for members of those communities.

As I demonstrate in Chapters Three (The NGO Niche) and Four (Being and not being educated), these organisations' processes and their broader contexts lead to local community aid and education being valorised in ways that certainly shaped people's

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subjectivities. At the same time as these dynamics of power and histories of ethnic relations play out through projects like Africare, such projects also entailed the earnest and sincere *striving* for connectedness. We will see this in Africare's directors' goal to not only help their community settle in Australia, but also to let Australians see that they were contributing to society in a positive way. We will see it in the tightrope act played by people who eschew so-called traditional beliefs at the same time that they make exceptions for when such beliefs are valid (Chapter Four). These doings and undoings—connecting, reconstructing, deconstructing and desirous acts—point to the criticality of assemblages in my work.

Assemblage theory is a framework developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guittari (1986, 1987) to talk about the dynamism of systems and arrangements—from the body (see Mol 2002), to public health (Chenhall and Senior 2017; Duff 2014), to systems on a global scale (see Collier and Ong 2005). Deleuze and Guittari stress the connections and contingencies of parts of the assemblage—how these articulate—and highlight that none of these sites of connections are static; they are *dynamic*, made and remade by human activities and the collateral forces of these. The para-infrastructures (Biehl and McKay 2010) mentioned earlier are a specific type of assemblage. Assemblages are pertinent too for the ways that economies of care, and the expressed moralities surrounding care and suffering come about—a point made cogently in Ana Dragojlovich and Alex Broom's (2017) work, which contends that assemblages are shaped by affects. Dragojlovich and Broom seem to heed Deleuze and Guittari's early urgings (1986, cited in Biehl and Locke 2010: 337) that more than simply acknowledging assemblages in the worlds we engage critically with, we must attend to how "these configurations are constantly constructed, undone and redone by the desires and becomings of actual people—caught up in the messiness, the desperation and aspiration, of life in idiosyncratic milieus" (Biehl and Locke 2010: 337). These subjectivities reflect the larger systems they are expressed in, as those systems are made, remade and (less commonly) unmade.

My approach to these subjectivities also draws from Lancione's (2016) invitation to treat Deluezian assemblage thinking not as a theory but as an approach—a sensibility—to the messy and utterly complex structures, histories and materials of the world, and I explore this extensively in Chapter One. I find Lancione's proposition bears certain resemblances to the works of Anna Tsing (2005) and Donna Haraway

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(2016) who, through analytical use of friction and SF, respectively, cultivate generous and generative approaches the operations of power in local expressions of global inequality. Friction, for Tsing (2005), is the productive potential for dialogue and connectedness that occurs at sites of clashing knowledge claims, concrete problems, and the chaos and violence(s) (from subtle to explicit) of capitalism's spread. The frictions of these encounters produce gaps through which globally circulating knowledge can grow (Tsing 2005: 13). Haraway's signifier, SF, is an evolving category (first introduced Haraway 1989) that accumulates an array of genres, practices and processes: science fiction, speculative fiction, speculative feminism, speculative fabulation, string figures, science fact, and so forth. Haraway (2016) employs SF to stress our multispecies entanglements and to build skills to become-with others. She insists, invitingly, that "it matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. …It matters what stories tell stories" (2016: 35).

Haraway and Tsing enact approaches to commitments to forging connections, despite the historical rubble around them. I see this commitment as one I have in common with those I worked alongside and write of (perhaps as Tsing and Haraway intend). To be clear, connecting in spite of difference is not some great feat, regardless of what media and political moral panics about immigration and diversity contend. What I am interested in is the fact of historical rubble and fragmentations in assemblages; how these contribute to how differences are regarded and in this way alloy with people's agency. This approach has helped frame how I honour the spirit of connection that I was conscious of in my fields, without dismissing their relationship to the processes and assemblages through which marginality is created and sustained.

Affect

My point of entry to the assemblages each chapter considers is usually an ethnographic moment. These moments are of course attentive to lives of people in them, but as well as this, my ethnographic focus is trained on affective atmospheres and traces. Affect offers a way to bring the aforementioned tensions into focus. Kathleen Stewart's description of how she notes and treats affect is useful here. She writes that:

> [A]ffect came into view through a slowed ethnographic practice attuned to the
> forms and forces unfolding in scenes and encounters. …Anthropological objects

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became things that shimmered out of molten states or lay nascent in an
atmosphere (2017: 192)

It is worth noting Stewart's attitude here has affinities with Haraway's urging that to stay with the trouble, to even recognise trouble, we must attend to details (2016). Perhaps it is also important to note that Stewart's treatment of affect became important to my project when I read *Ordinary Affect* (2007) after several chapters had already been drafted.[7] Stewart's descriptions of the kind of phenomena that constitute affect, and the sensibilities towards them, seemed to resonate with the kind of material I was leaning on to move ethnographic fieldnotes into anthropological text (see also 'Writing Ethnography' later in this chapter). Affect then, retrospectively, became part of the way I moulded my arguments, evident in how chapters begin or end (in one case, Chapter Five) with detailed atmospheres as I try to conjure a sense of moments in which emotional forms and forces suddenly surface. As Stewart continues to explain the implications of prioritising this kind of attentiveness, she notes that it is not to enable seeing things as "messier" than earlier theoretical perspectives might have allowed, but rather to see "the singularities that circulated across the everyday…as a series of precisions" (2017: 193) that index the qualities and shape of wider emotions, histories and assemblages.

Navaro (2017) advocates approaching affect with fieldwork rather than theory (much like Stewart does too; a way of noticing). Stewart seems attentive to a different scale of phenomena than Navaro though, subtleties of atmosphere that have a 'precision', while Navaro, seeking frames of attentiveness born of her fieldwork in a precarious post-war state in North Cyprus, notes transcendence and serendipity as notable affects. This way, she points to its subjectivity, and problematises theorising affect as though noticing and interpreting it is somehow unsubjective. In fact, the literature on affect is pocked with contentions about what it is and is not. What is it about affect that makes it distinct from emotion, anyway? Some contend that there is a difference: that affect involves "vital forces insisting beyond emotion" (Gregg and Seigworth 2010: 1), that affect and emotion have a different logic (Massumi 2002). Ahmed (2014), in a reflective afterword to *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, suggests that for her work following words through histories and territories, emotion was a

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[7] Thank you, Laura McLauchlan, for this timely introduction to Stewart's work .

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default starting point, rather than chosen instead of or in opposition to affect (2015: 207). Yet, her examination of emotions has necessitated taking work on affect into her purvey. Ahmed's focus, she claims, is on the messy and the experiential; to impose conceptual distinctions on this, or to argue over the details of definition, threatens the scholarly capacity to describe and engage with the messiness of experience (2014: 210). Without collapsing one into the other, Ahmed articulates enough of a use-definition of affect in the context of her intentions and purposes, without being derailed by a definition debate regarding how these words are to be used in every instance (ibid, see also Dragojlovich and Broom 2017). Heartened by this rationale, I follow Stewart's fluid and evocative definitions of affect in this context to help distinguish and clarify some of the objects of my study; my efforts to do this are described more carefully at the end of the next section, on methods and ethics, which goes through the stages of 'Building a field', 'Doing fieldwork' and 'Writing ethnography'.

Methods and Ethics

Building a field

In September 2014, I moved from Melbourne to Sydney to begin fieldwork, knowing that first I would need to establish my field. I arrived in Sydney halfway into a temperate September, and my partner and I moved into a terrace house in Redfern, a suburb close to the city but serviced by many trains. Several months prior, in May, I had met with Elijah, the director of Africare, first amidst the hubbub of Africare's annual Harmony Day party, and then in the more sober surrounds of Africare's office where I tried to explain my project design so as to invite Africare's assistance and support. Elijah agreed to arrange for me to work closely with their caseworker Felicity and attend their events, so as to begin meeting their clients and building my contacts. As thanks, and since I would be around anyway, participating as I observed, I offered to help out with their website and with other incidentals in a voluntary capacity.

By September, Africare's circumstances had changed. Felicity, who was incidentally a Ugandan woman, had resigned and was replaced by Leela, whose passion and experience working in the migrant and refugee sector was hampered by the fact that as an Iraqi woman, she could not take for granted the kind of social and linguistic

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familiarity with Africare's clients that Felicity apparently had. To make matters worse, on Leela's first day of work, she was saddled with a bright-eyed fieldworker as interested as she was in meeting members of the community Africare served, but—being Indian-born, Aotearoa New Zealand-raised, with no prior friends or acquaintances in Africare's target group (and only recently moved to Sydney anyway)—was equally devoid of a starting point. My initial months of my fieldwork involved spending two days a week with Leela, on our own in Africare's office. She was busy—organising workshops and events, redecorating the office, attending Africare board meetings, and attending events with other organisations who shared Africare's agenda of serving the community—but clients from the community never dropped into the office and phone calls were all too rare. Leela and I bonded over self-deprecating jokes about our quest for this so-called community. In these spaces, engaged in these activities, I felt strangely aligned with Africare's directors' agenda; they sought to recruit clients, I sought to recruit participants. At that stage, I had set out to familiarise myself with the therapeutic landscape available to Central and East African migrants and refugees, but found myself in the bloom of social projects of community health education and community development around Africare.

I tried to make tracks out of this bureaucratic milieu and closer to more domestic and social spheres of people's lives. I especially sought places and events that might shed light on how people engage with contested healing practices, though I was not sure what these might look like. I arranged coffees, meet-ups, and interviews with people I had met and talked about my project with, many of whom were Africare's directors and their husbands, wives and friends. I made good use of google and Facebook, seeking people who might be interested in my project and introducing myself. Relationships took me to places, and sometimes into more relationships. I took up any invitations extended to me, and thus attended birthday parties, a wedding, a baby shower, dinners, picnics, religious conferences, book launches, public lectures, genocide commemorations, cultural performances, church and twice was hosted at people's houses in Goulburn and in Wollongong. Convinced that fieldwork is inherently serendipitous (see also Kohn 2010; Pieke 2010), I followed whatever trails appeared in my path: for a while, I attended an African church whose flyer I found while cleaning out Africare's filing cabinet, and for another time, attended a church I was invited to by a woman who briefly worked for an NGO run by one of Africare's affiliates.

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I introduced myself as a PhD researcher from the University of Melbourne every time I met someone new. With enough time with them, a fuller sense of the social positions I occupied would emerge, locating me at once as: a woman, in my early 30's, without some status markers of maturity (I was neither married nor a mother), but bearing other markers of status (I was doing a PhD, after all, and I was all too aware that my NZ citizenship afforded me privileges, comforts and rights in Australia that would be hard-won, if won at all, by many people I met). I am a migrant member of India's highly educated middle-class diaspora—I am not sure if (or how) some of these details transmit in my interactions with others, but I know my brown skin and racial, facial phenotype immediately marks me to those I meet with whatever each person in that moment might (or might not) accord these features; I realise this, even as certain privileges I possess allow me to ignore it often enough, too. A bit more background is necessary here: I was a child when my family moved from India to Aotearoa New Zealand, and so it was my parents who spent most of their adult life negotiating the compulsion to be model immigrants.[8] For the most part, they acquiesced. I imagine that this, along with some mix of my education opportunities, inclinations and the openness to social critique fostered amongst us kids at home, and helped by diminishing discrimination towards Asian and South Asian immigrants in New Zealand as the 90's moved into the naughties, have allowed me to cultivate and express more radically critical attitudes towards the structures and expectations of my society from a position of fairly comfortable privilege. Positionality, as Adrienne Rich reminds us, involves recognising one's own skin, "the places it has taken me, the place it has not let me go" (1984: 216). Nothing about my identity or my experiences made it make sense for me to examine a sensitive subject amongst the people I sought, through Africare, to conduct my fieldwork with. I had not visited their countries of origin, I did not speak their languages, and I did not have mental health experiences comparable to the ones I set out to study. Yet, as a fairly privileged once-colonised settler-migrant—fairly unintimidating and slight in manner—my mix of positions and political locations have also, admittedly, allowed me to expect to be able to go most places and join the company of most kinds of people, whether or not I already know them, even if just to be

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[8] Chapter One considers at length how this compulsion affected people in my field.

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a quiet additional presence. Perhaps this expectation (or, indeed, entitlement) made me especially notice some of the difficulties of building my field? As I go on to discuss, these positionality politics ultimately shaped my fieldwork and contributed to the way this project's focus developed in the writing.

Access—an irksomely honest word for the starting point of targeted relationships—poses distinct challenges in urban contexts. Access that feels difficult also makes one attentive to the work of forming relationships. I think of Stoller's observation that speaking Songhay and his experiences in Nigeria helped him build relationships with West African traders in New York, while cultural difference and race politics hindered this (2009: 57–60). In my case, lacking a personal familiarity with Central Africa did not seem to hinder relationships outright, though I felt conscious that centering my research project had a cooling effect on relationships I was forming—partially because I was unsure my verbose and careful descriptions of my research made good sense, and partially too because my register and vocabulary altered when trying to explain what I was doing. I noticed myself make this shift, from sounding as if I had stopped engaging candidly and begun rehashing protocol for an event I was responsible for health and safety at. I am sure this stemmed from my unfamiliarity with therapeutic landscapes in both Australia and Central Africa, and from approaching these carefully without a footing within them. As well as this, my inability to speak any of the languages many Central African people were most comfortable with did affect the extent to which I could befriend different people. My linguistic limitations meant I could not hang out with people who were not conversant in English nor French—these exclusions were noticeably gendered, classed and age-related in ways I detail on pages 38–39. More than a lack of personal familiarity with certain countries, though, it was my lack of religious faith amongst predominantly Christian people that seemed to pose something of a barrier in many relationships, and I discuss this at length in Chapter Five: Between God and the faithless fieldworker.

Non-place-based ethnography in a busy, cosmopolitan Australian city also shaped the form and regularity of access. In those first months, fieldwork opportunities punctuated long expanses of cancelled appointments and walking around various Western Sydney suburbs. I spent many days at my desk in Redfern, indulging the unwelcome luxury of writing very detailed fieldnotes, and scheming ways to build up my field. At the time, I was consoled by Gillian Cowlishaw's (2009) description of the

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irregularity of her fieldwork surrounding an Aboriginal oral history project in Mt Druitt, Western Sydney. Cowlishaw writes of being "nervous" to not have a "holistic grasp of an entity [she] could call the 'Mt Druitt Aboriginal community'" (2009: 10–11). Well aware (like Cowlishaw) that the imagined interactions and common interests of a group are a projection (as with Benedict Anderson's imagined communities [1983]), I could relate to the nervousness, and the sense of researcher anxiety around having such a contingent fieldsite, and such precarious access to it.

In spite of being dogged by these feelings, my decision to do this kind of fieldwork was set by the object of my study. To borrow Matthew Desmond's words when he writes about relational ethnography, this project involved "studying fields rather than places, boundaries rather than bounded groups, processes rather than processed people, and cultural conflict rather than group culture" (2014: 548). This style of ethnography inherently eschews any kind of assumption of coherence that might be innocently accorded to a place-based or group-based community (see also Cowlishaw 2009; Lancione 2016). Though arguably, coherence should not be assumed of any community, there is something distinct about the globalised and deterritorialised contexts Arjun Appadurai refers to as constituted by groups that have moved, regrouped, reconstructed their histories and reconfigured their ethnic projects (1991: 191). Fields are to be built, not found (see also Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Hannerz 2006; Nadai and Maedar 2005). Outside of people's homes and community gatherings based on common ethnic or professional and vocational interests, I operated in spaces that were presented as an intermediary. There was one participant with whom I met for coffee at the lounges of various marbled, five-star hotels in the city, for instance—these meeting places were their choice, and were in the opposite direction of either of our houses or places of work. In such occasions, it seemed my style of working involved meeting people in places that reflected their desires as well as their day-to-day lives.

Composing this field involved persistence but also delicacy, and this was a balancing act. There were weeks that began with two hard-won fieldwork engagements, and then a coffee date was cancelled, or an event postponed and anxious feelings would creep over me: *make things happen*, I would tell myself, and against other instincts, I would send another text, another email, or make another call to somebody who had not yet replied to previous prods. Most of the time, though, I tried not to pester people, partly because I was asking after sensitive subjects like mental illness and healing

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beliefs, but also partly because I was aware that people had full and busy lives, and I could not always be easily accommodated.

I was also wary of coercion, and mindful of its subtleties. Here's an example: Dina, who was crucial in guiding me, had introduced me to a few people she knew who she described as suffering from PTSD, and had told me about others, one of whom was her friend Esperance. As with other introductions, Dina and I had agreed that she would introduce me to Esperance for my research only after making sure Esperance really didn't mind. When I met her at a busy barbeque, Dina reported that Esperance was happy to help me and she pointed her out to me across a picnic table, a slight woman in a red dress: "Look Esperance, this is the researcher who wanted to interview you about mental illness", then to me, "I've already told her about you". I felt like my agenda was imposing and brash, more so when I thought I saw discomfort fleet over Esperance's features, and, after a brief, polite back-and-forth, she moved to the table behind Dina and I. I immediately decided to spare Esperance my research interests, but later, when I was leaving, and I chatted to her to say goodbye, I ended up taking her number and agreeing to call her sometime. Weighing it all up, I opted instead to feel things out the next time we happened to cross paths.

There are counter-points to this too. Lenny, for instance, knew about my project and knew that I was interested in his reflections on the long, painful depression he endured when only he—in a sprawling extended family—survived the massacre of his Tutsi household in Kigali in 1991. Wary of the subject's heaviness, and in my first arranged interview involving a story like this, I let our conversation ramble over the outer edges of the tragic truths that for a long time defined Lenny, unsure of how—or whether—to proceed. (This was a reticence that I look back on with regret. I worry it may have seemed like avoidance, like my wariness may have felt like a reluctance to fully engage with an exchange I had invited.) Eventually, Lenny leaned in and took the lead where I was too timid to: "This, what we're discussing right now, this is not what you want to ask me about. I need you to guide me. Tell me what you want to know" (see Chapter Six).

Certainly, my prioritisation of my interlocuters' privacy (particularly over sensitive, stigmatised matters) has limited this study's scope to those who expressed interest in talking to me, and to public events that fell (however loosely) into my study's scope. Of those who were keen to talk to me and spend time with me, I hope this was

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mutually beneficial in some small way (understanding, of course, that as the person building career-fodder from the relationship, I am disproportionately indebted). I believe several people were also interested in the questions I was pursuing about health, healing, beliefs and cross-cultural understanding (even if they might not be as interested in my interpretations of my time in the field, here). Many kindly and generously gave of their time as a favour, because I asked. I suspect some, particularly in the churches, mistook my air of searching for a spiritual hollowness that their God would salve. Some relationships bubbled along steadily; some intensified and then dropped off sharply; some comprised of one meeting only, and yet others deepened and at the time of writing this I remain in touch with these friends.

The people whose lives I write of could have identified at some point or the other as: artists, NGO workers, health educators, community leaders, migrants, musicians, students, refugees, residents, citizens; as African, Australian, African Australian, Italian, Rwandan, Burundian, Macedonian, Ugandan, Indian, Congolese, Pygmy, Banyamulenge. By this same token, I struggle to define my field cleanly. I did work in "a" community, but it cannot be defined by ethnic identity—"the Burundian community", or "the Rwandan community", or even "the Burundian, Rwandan and Banyamulenge communities"—nor can I describe it by a suburb, a district, or a particular kind of organisation or group. My field formed around the people I met in concentric circles surrounding Africare. Though I cannot easily define it, it was clearly a field. I took notice of this in May, 2015—nine months after beginning fieldwork—when some social loops seemed to close. For instance, I would find people I knew from various different places—this clinic, that religious function, the friends of those people—gathered together at one event, and it would be revealed that I had come to know a family. Elijah pointed out to me, at one stage, that I had attended everything that he had been to that month, and not always invited by him. This is not to say I had a handle on most people in the community, or even a representative sample of it (which I never sought). Rather, at that point I had begun to sense the context that was forming out of disparate pieces: a sense that the loose ends, the dead ends, the cold trails, the scattered details, and the fragmented groups (not "communities") had yielded something illuminating.

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Doing fieldwork

For ten months from September 2014 until July 2015, I was doing fieldwork. As noted earlier, my fieldwork was fairly irregular: there were some weeks where I had a fieldwork appointment five days a week, and other, weeks where I had only two or three appointments in all. Consequently, I wrote fieldnotes on a daily basis, and came to rely on being able to output the day's thoughts and observations in a thorough, immediate manner. Whether attending a public event, church or spending time at a friend's place around an organised interview, I took regular notes either in the notebook I carried around or into my cellphone as an email to myself, making no secret of this (though it is worth noting that in events like churches or workshops, I was on the sidelines or in a crowd when I was making notes). Often, I would take permission to write up as much as I could of conversations I was part of as we talked. This has aided being able to confidently write up longer conversations that were not recorded. I recorded several conversations too—these were generally set up as "interviews", though I went about them much like I did conversations, going in with questions or themes but allowing the content to take shape organically, they offered a formality to proceedings, and I often took notes while recording too. I set out to make notes on anything related to medical pluralism and mental, emotional and spiritual afflictions, but inevitably ended up following the leads I was pointed towards by those I worked with, all of whom were well aware of my interests, and helped guide the shape of this study.

Most of my participants could think and speak in multiple languages, including Arabic, Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwaanda, Xhosa, French, and English—only the last two of which I could overlap with. Most spoke at least some English. Consequently, I worked predominantly in English, with very few lapses into French with Burundian and Rwandan French-speakers to clarify words or concepts one of us was searching to explain better. My linguistic limitations designated the kind of depth I could speak to different people with, and excluded eavesdropping. There were a few occasions when the people I was around needed to discuss something sensitive, and did so in languages I could not access. There was a morning, for instance, when I accompanied Zaida, who I had come to know well, to her friend's house and watched cartoons with the friend's toddlers in the living room, while the two women spoke for an hour in Kirundi. They later told me the friend was thinking of leaving her husband. On another occasion, when the women in whose kitchen I was chatting over tea slipped into Kinyarwanda, then

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offered to drop me to the station, I gather they were confiding that it was not the most convenient of evenings for me to stay for dinner. This did not bother me: it is perhaps unbecoming on an ethnographer, but I was comforted by the fact that this boundary against my intrusion could be called on.

The major difficulties posed by the language barrier were that there were older people and several women with whom I could not comfortably talk. This suggests that there are definite reasons amongst the migrants and refugees of African origin whom I met that English-speaking is gendered and generational. An ethnographer more linguistically capable (or, dare I say, better prepared) than me could have transcended the field I was therefore bound to, within which I forge and further very specific questions. My language barrier also posed trouble when I needed help translating media that were helpful for my project but were in languages I did not know (like an SBS radio interview in Swahili and a YouTube video in Kirundi). A few times, people generously agreed to translate some media for me, listening and then translating on the spot while I recorded. This kind of gracious assistance has been invaluable.

Of course, as in all fieldwork, I benefitted enormously from people's time and care: the care that people will extend in the name of another's learning (whatever their reasons) becomes very apparent in this kind of research. As well as this, I noted that many people had worked on, or been subjects of, community research projects before. For two men, at least, Bede and Alphonso, this was not their first experience helping an anthropologist specifically. While working for a major international NGO in Ethiopia, Bede had helped out with a French anthropologist's ethnography of development and refugee communities: he shared her thesis with me, for my interest, and sympathised with the assorted pressures entailed by too much or too little fieldwork. Alphonso, a respected elder of a smaller ethnic community, had once facilitated several introductions to his community members for a Canadian anthropologist, who used parts of the eventual research to help swing Canadian political protection for five families. I was all too aware that the forms of scrutiny and attention that drive health outreach and social development initiatives shape researcher foci also, and that there is greater onus on some to be subjects than others.

There is one more key methodological and ethical aspect to the way I went about fieldwork for a project involving mental afflictions, and this has to do with the way I defined and dealt with this subject matter in the field. Some background: as was

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noted in the introductory vignette, I was deliberately vague in calling this condition that interested me an affliction. To call it 'mental illness,' a biomedical term, ropes the experiences described to the socio-pathological origins this discourse presumes. To call it 'psychological' distress, damage or impairment, does not do enough to problematise psychology's presumption of mental, emotional, social but never spiritual causation. To call it "affliction" seemed another way of saying 'conditions that *could* be interpreted as mental illness', leaving open other ways that those conditions could be interpreted while still encompassing psychological paradigms.

This looseness was imperative for establishing my study and subject, and for communicating to others, first at my University (including ethics committees), secondly when introducing my research project in the field, and thirdly as I write up—but between steps two and three, it raised methodological, moral issues. The difficulty was that as I practiced openness to the understandings of mental wellness and un-wellness that those I met brought to our encounter, I was conscious in at least one relationship that my diagnostic agnosticism, as I called it, was clouded by my growing wariness of that relationship. In this relationship, my attention as a researcher became wound up into expectations that this person[9] had of that attention. These were expectations that I was not able to fulfill and could not (despite my efforts) correct—including their recurring impression that my thesis would be about them exclusively[10].

In hindsight, engagement with this person was a source of strain early on. I confided as much in my fieldnotes, where these guilty admissions of strain are dotted through, flanked by plumper accounts of what they and I spoke of and the other thoughts this triggered. As their contact with me increased, through daily phonecalls, messages through text, Whatsapp and Viber, and requests to meet up, I struggled to manage the situation. By 'manage' the situation, I meant manage the agreement we were developing as new acquaintances; delineating the terms of our acquaintanceship as I saw them, and my capacity to reciprocate their invitations to connect. This would have

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[9] I choose this vague and distancing pronoun, and have stripped away other details, in order to seperate this experience with this person from their (anonymised, but as always, likely recognisable) character as it is written up elsewhere in this thesis.

[10] I attend to this fallout in a paper currently being co-authored with Melinda Herron (who brings a similar experience from a very different fieldsite); it is tentatively titled 'Boundaries, Intimacy and Coercive Fieldwork Friendships: A Treatise on Ethnographic Ethics and Morality'.

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entailed guiding the agreement and expecting that they would acquiesce, somewhat at least. I chastised myself for not doing this, and for instead managing merely my own ability to engage in a limited way by opting not to reply to every message nor to answer every call, but to do so sometimes so as not to be rude or dismissive. As anthropologists we often fulfill purposes in others' lives in way we had not anticipated. Granted, this is part of the fun, part of its beauty, part of the stringy binds that I believe function to keep our work rooted in empathy. But it can also be hard, demanding, and simply bring about challenges that are utterly social, yet, because of the niche nature of this discipline— being neither service industry nor friendship, not 'professional' in the conventional sense of the word—these challenges are not *only* social, they belong to a niche realm of social and professional.

When circumstances escalated somewhat, it lead to me confiding my difficulties in one of my other informants who knew this individual well, she, with great sensitivity and empathy (I felt) described this person as deeply traumatised, and suffering from anti-social disorder. My confidant indicated that what I found challenging about my relational dynamics in this particular relationship was due to their mental health issues. The spectre of mental illness, presented as unproblematised fact, raised its own distinct set of moral and practical questions. To what extent could a researcher, inclined, I was, to trouble diagnostic norms, rely on such information? To what extent could one fairly act on it? By trying to reciprocate this person's social demands of me, was I enabling them or merely enacting compassion?—was I being naïve, or human? To enter into fieldwork, is to enter into the world of complex humanity and sociality, rife with hard times, mental health crises and volatile coping mechanisms. How should ethnographers manage relationships that come to feel emotionally exploitative so as to protect the wellbeing of both participant and researcher? I cannot conclusively answer these questions; indeed, I don't believe they can be resolved conclusively. I maintain that such questions are important to think with and think through, and this grappling in spite of irresolution is ultimately a key part of this thesis' overall work.

Writing ethnography
When we collect content—however ordinary—from others' lives through conversations, participation, or simply by being around, their historicity is constructed in our record of those encounters. It is constructed once more in writing. Meanwhile, the

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lives and relationships informing this ethnography continue to develop and grow. And so I write recognising that ethnography is "from beginning to end enmeshed in writing" (Clifford 1988: 25), and that in spite of the freedoms this entails, I remain accountable to the lived worlds I interpret and represent here.

With the exception of politicians and people making public appearances associated with their published or exhibited creative work, I use pseudonyms for all the individuals represented in this thesis. I have also used the real names of larger established organisations, and pseudonyms for all the smaller, precarious organisations. At one stage, when Elijah suggested that Africare might benefit from our research relationship being an open one, a form of publicity, I told him I preferred the anthropological custom of protecting their identities. Our agendas differed wildly, I had said. My interpretations of their work were unlikely to help further their goals, and at worst, risked harming them. Indeed, some of the humanitarian, community development organisations whose practices I subject to critical analysis in here continue to grow, aspiring to better grants and bigger opportunities. Understanding their work and its context as I do in here is not conducive to these goals, because I (like much of the literature I draw on, for instance Fassin 2007; Ferguson 1994; Swidler and Watkins 2009) query the systems and ideologies within which these social projects are ensconced. While this critical position in essence punches up, the fact is that it is fledgling, aspiring groups like Africare whose practices I most closely scrutinise here. I have tried not to shy away from extolling the warped, vexed, tense and hilarious entailments of this scrutiny; I have tried to tend to them, to nurture their potentialities for philosophical depth and the textures they bring to other findings. I see them as at once generative and as a form of methodological honesty which I see no interpretive value in obscuring. In order to use these moments ethnographically *and* minimise harm to the real-life projects and people I describe, I have altered names, locations, affiliations and objectives of organisations in some stories. I have created new organisations to tell particular stories about, and blend identities to tell other stories.

I use similar disguises for individuals by altering occupations, origins, ethnicities, and social affiliations where these aren't pertinent to the story being told, and making composite characters out of people with related stories. Instances of the latter are flagged in the text and their inclusion justified; I tend to use these for one-off informants and casual acquaintances rather than with the 14 people I had ongoing and

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established relationships with. In cases of particularly complex or sensitive ethnographic material, I am deliberately vague about identifying features. Here, where stories must be tempered in the interests of privacy, I have looked to the stylistic techniques Kathleen Stewart flexes in *Ordinary Affects* (2007). Stewart's experimental book emboldens forms of ethnographic attentiveness that deprioritise narratives and identities. The text presents an assemblage of scenes; each one picks up, intensifies, and in moved on from without closure. Their conceptual force is reinforced by banal, momentary matters, and by the dense textures therein conjured by a very skilled observer of life. As noted earlier (in 'Analytical Sensibilities'), although what I take from this text stylistically is more modest, and used only occasionally, Stewart makes a compelling argument in favour of text that focuses on affects for representing ordinary life and its study.

There is a more nuanced level of moral reckoning in my writing methods, though, since many of the people I write about are, in the time and place of writing, politically vulnerable and scrutinised—as refugees, as part of populations labeled "culturally and linguistically diverse" (abbreviated as CALD) in Australia, as inheritors of the drawbacks of colonial inequality, and as the targets of post-colonial efforts to ameliorate these inherited inequalities. Knowledge and power are long-time bedfellows, and this thesis demonstrates the extent to which these legacies and their ongoing permutations continue to imprint identities and interactions. How then can my study contribute generatively to the order of things? As part of this, what ought I do to temper against essentialist readings of those I write of?

These questions are important. After all, part of the objective of projects like this is to craft ways of talking and understanding that move closer towards a synergy with their subject than existing ways of understanding that subject enable. For this project, with its complex and contingent subjects, that quest involves learning from scholars and theories that deconstruct stale and inadequate modes of representation and, hopefully, contributing to the generation of more respectful, productive representations. Of course, this is necessary not only for the way I describe people but also various practices, understandings and epistemologies. I now attend to how these are written in this thesis.

While this section is entitled 'Writing Ethnography' attitudes towards representation are engaged well before the act of writing itself. Early ethnographic accounts, prior to anthropology's reflexive turn, relied on problematic representational

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tropes which could be addressed by redressing literary techniques (Clifford and Marcus 1986). However, to attend to representation at the time of writing ethnography alone is reductive, says Aihwa Ong (1996: 61). Ong points out that decisions about representation are taken up when research questions and a desired field are selected. She is critical of post-colonial projects that implicitly represent modernity as a Western invention that non-Westerners inhabit (1996: 61), as well as of projects in which "the third world, colonised or decolonised, is primarily of interest when viewed as acted upon by the West, or places where western hegemony can be deconstructed" (1996: 62). Based on the latter points, perhaps Ong might be critical of this project: centered as it is on African migrants and refugees in Australia, and the therapeutic assemblages around them in which how distinct knowledge traditions—whose organisation has been shaped by colonial and post-colonial forces—come together. After all, even if my analysis does not categorise forms of knowledge as either Western-modern or non-Western-traditional, these categories are salient to many of the people I speak to (Chapter Three). In her own work, Ong proposes to decenter anthropology from its western vantage point and engage with forms of Chinese modernity, that is, forms of knowledge based in distinctly located histories and concerns (1996: 63). In my work, I will seek to decenter anthropology from its western preoccupations by embedding critical reflections on anthropological modes of knowing into written analysis, and by taking that which is presented to me as knowledge at face value. In this, I have found models in Navaro-Yashin (2012, 2013), Goslinga (2012) and Clifford (1996).

A striking feature of Yael Navaro-Yashin's (2013) sensitive ethnography of reincarnation amongst Arab Alewi on the Syrian-Turkey border (delivered as a keynote lecture the Australian Anthropological Society's 2013 conference) was that her analysis was deeply embedded in her ethnography. This circumvented dealing explicitly with hierarchies of knowledge and belief in the content of her talk. Instead, she positioned herself as a medium for her own experiences in the field, relating verbatim and at length various dialogues with Alewi men and women she met who were born with vivid memories of their past lives in nearby communities. The stories of reincarnation in these accounts Navarro-Yashin related always cited proof. Examples of proof included: the reincarnated person's inexplicable closeness to their mothers from a past life, and their intuitive knowledge of the family they had died out of, such that when reunited with these families, they could name the faded faces in the family's photo albums. Navarro-

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Yashin cited her informants' insistence that these were "facts" not "beliefs" (2013b: 10) and her talk did not question this premise. Neither did she address the distance presumed between beliefs or forms of knowledge. Placing these reincarnation events against the region's historical and continuing violence, she studied how the supernatural might be entangled in histories and politics of violence (Navaro-Yashin 2012, 2013). In representing her informants' stories without either compromising or deconstructing them, she enabled the possibility for their experience to be perceptible to her audience, without compelling (or trying to compel) this audience to *believe* it. You could say that she writes against the textual production of otherness (Goslinga 2012: 391).

Clifford suggests that this attitude, evidenced in ethnographic writing, stems from a discernment made by fieldworkers during fieldwork between "physical and hermeneutic acts of connection" (1997: 76). He refers to the difference between the tourist who superficially mimics or masquerades locals bowing at a temple in order to fit in with the practices surrounding them, and the outsider who learns over time the significance of the bow, drawing connections of meaning forged painstakingly through "language, co-residence, and cultural knowledge" (Clifford 1997: 74). The second approach, proposes Goslinga (2012), in her perceptive analysis, enables a more productive, self-de-centered position to be held. This is an approach that deals with the alterity on its own terms, not after "transmuting" (Goslinga 2012: 399) it into a crypt of deeper structure or meanings; in other words, it is an approach that does not try to manage out the excess.

Taken together, the approaches favoured by Clifford (1997), Navarro-Yashin (2012, 2013) and Goslinga (2012) point to ways that attitudes to alterity that are enacted during ethnographic fieldwork can be emulated in ethnographic writing. Due to this, Navarro-Yashin does not "transmute" (as Goslinga (2012: 399) puts it) the reincarnation stories of Arab Alewi in post-conflict Syria into a scholarly rationality that might be assumed to be appropriate to Australian Anthropological Society conference attendees. Information presented by her informants as knowledge is not interpreted and presented as belief. This epistemological approach places traditional, Western rationalities alongside 'alternative' rationalities rather than *instead of* them. This is instructive for my own project's approach to diverse practices and I have tried to write in ways that hold multiple realities together at once, even though my own positions, as the author, are inevitable centered (see Chapter Five: Between God and the Faithless Fieldworker).

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Relatedly, it is worth noting too that ethnographic writing may as well as evoking places, spaces, and moods, and as well as raising (and subsequently troubling) pertinent questions, has a processual role in the delivery of particular sorts of insight. That is, anthropologists lean on ethnographic writing towards making a certain sort of sense of things. To explain this better, I find Purnima Mankekar's writing of her use of ethnographic vignettes in *Unsettling India* (2015) useful. Mankekar eschews the role of ethnographic moments as an empirical record of context, or dialogues, or events, hoping instead that her scenarios "stage particular landscapes of affect and temporality that shaped the lives and imaginations of [the] men and women with whom [she] worked" (2015: 4). João Biehl's (2013a) argument for thinking of ethnography as being in the way of theory (rather than towards it) is also instructive here. He describes the value of an ethnographic sensibility that eschews ends for openings—that keeps "interrelatedness, precariousness, uncertainty, and curiosity in focus" (2013a: 575). Perhaps one can argue that ethnography has long strived for and evolved in this, certainly since the post-modern turn. At any rate, Mankekar and Biehl's articulations of methodological attitudes have helped me refine my own sense of what I hope to achieve in writing. So far, I described considerations to do with *how* to write. I turn now to briefly describe the processes informing *what* I write.

As suggested above, writing has been at once a product and a process of analysis. I began drafts by following the conceptual force of certain material from my fieldwork, writing about, into and around them. Sometimes it was a conversation, an encounter, an observation or some other sort of moment that stayed with me, or rearranged me, demanding to be written. Some such moments seemed to contain volumes worth unpacking (Chapter Two: 'The NGO Niche', Chapter Six: 'Care in the Long Aftermath'), while other times, it was a conversation in which my interlocutor and I raised and then addressed matters of pertinence with notable eloquence and depth (Chapter Five: 'Between God & the faithless fieldworker', Chapter Four: 'Modern Believers'). Sometimes, I would respond to repeatedly emerging phrases or attitudes (Chapter Three: 'On being (and not being) 'uneducated'', Chapter Four: 'Modern Believers'). Other times, it was a thing or series of things that evoked something in me, like awe or unrest (Chapter Two: 'The NGO Niche', Chapter One: 'A Topography of Frictions'). I would follow threads that emerged over engaging with this material

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through writing, and when such threads were not forthcoming, immersed myself in reading over fieldnotes and interviews, prodding them for openings and connections.

Thesis outline

The chapter order in this thesis is organised to mimic my own movement through fieldwork. This movement through the spaces each chapter deals with emulates not only my own movement socially through these fields but also the layers of understanding, however partial, that accompanied this arc.

Chapter One, 'A Topography of Friction', provides the lay of land. Scaffolded around an exploration of what it means to be 'African Australian', this chapter lets me make a series of introductions that provide exposition for this thesis: I will introduce the many arrivals of African people to Australia over time, from the men on the First Fleet to the men and women I met and worked with for this project, showing the ways that Australian governance and bureaucracies, both brutal and benign, have shaped the roles and spaces that African Australians can comfortably occupy. I will also introduce the cluster of tensions and frictions sparked by the scrutiny of cultural diversity in contemporary Australia, and by the histories of raced dynamics of power, which of course have continued pertinence. With the terrain thus introduced and unsettled, we move to the entry point of my fieldwork: Africare.

Chapter Two, 'The NGO Niche', grounds readers very close to Africare's operations in the sector of social services that addresses mental health issues amongst communities deemed 'culturally and linguistically diverse'. This chapter begins with a public complaint made by a woman from one of the so-called 'diverse' communities at a conference hosted and attended by a range of bigger, more established NGOs. The conference panelists shut down the woman with the complaint; the woman persisted, but the discussion was politely, but in no uncertain terms, dismissed. Building on observations developed in Chapter One, I track the affective aftermath of this scene to broader organising principles and processes in this sector. It is a sector characterised by sincere striving for health equity but beleaguered by deeply rooted inequalities. One effect of this is that the marginality of marginal groups is maintained and the roles these

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groups fill paradoxically reproduce their marginality. What, then, compels compliance with such roles? I attend to this question noting that here (as in some of the scenes in Chapter One) a critical analysis of this sector must be reconciled with the sincerity and creativity of people committed to participating in this sector.

Next, in Chapters Three ('On being (and not being) uneducated') and Four ('Modern Believers'), we move through layers of sociality and discourse around Africare and those running it. Chapter Three roves between private and public social spaces surrounding Africare, following the myriad evocations of the 'uneducated' in the community—an evocation I encountered often in conversations amongst Africare's directors and their friends, even though I never met the individuals this term described. As we will see in this chapter, ideas of who is and is not educated organise social gaps and marginalisation in a flexible, fluid, contextual way, since what it means to be 'educated' is versatile and slippery. I suggest how educated-ness, or the lack thereof, connotes *ideas* of difference that are always contingent. These ideas—even circulated at a discursive level—accumulate momentum and affect attitudes surrounding understandings of mental health and the industry of health awareness-raising initiatives that target people deemed 'marginal' service users. As I examine the salience of education, being educated and being educate-able, a sense of the importance of progressiveness and modernity—indeed, of *being* modern—emerges.

Chapter Four develops on the associations between education and modernity. Once more, I attend to the realm of conversations in order to formulate broader ideas about knowledge, plurality and mental affliction. Specifically, I focus on dialogues I had with people about the range of ways a given condition could be interpreted—from discerning possession from schizophrenia to mistaking poisoning as a curse. Across these conversations, disparate beliefs are talked about in creative and compassionate ways. The phrase 'modern believers' comes from an article by Stacey Pigg (1996) after which my chapter is titled. Following Pigg, and drawing from my interlocutors' ideas about the beliefs of others, it seems that a modern believer is one capable of making sense of the plurality of beliefs in the world around them. This reading is enhanced by a consideration of how the plurality-encompassing modern believers demonstrated in this chapter also align with African epistemological attitudes that Achille Mbembe has described as the "principle of simultaneous multiplicities" (1997: 152).

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The last two chapters, Chapters Five and Six, are oriented towards processes, affects and ideologies that are distinct to those that hold more sway in earlier chapters—though they help flesh out those earlier chapters' understandings, providing caveats and nuance to their claims. I intend for this text's design to deliberately circle back and interrupt itself, leaving theoretical narratives pluralistic, and this is committed to most overtly in Chapter Five, 'Between God and the Faithless Fieldworker'. This chapter is an extended reflection on my decision to disclose my lack of religious belief in predominantly Christian social contexts, and the questions this disclosure raised, both by people I met through my fieldwork, and subsequently, for me as I wrote up. It is grounded in the salience of religious faith in my field, and the implications of my lack thereof for this knowledge-making exercise. This chapter's refusal of closure comes from my efforts to stay close to my multiple commitments as an anthropologist—to the epistemic lineage from which my own understandings stem; to the ways that fieldwork can confound these; to that which I cannot know; to the parts of people's lives that they shared with me in the field. This seems a fitting precursor to my final substantive chapter, which deals most directly with plurality and mental unwellness.

Chapter Six, Care and the Long Aftermath, concerns the collective experience of violence in many informants' backgrounds. In this chapter, as at other points in this thesis, notions of mental illness slip in and out of relevance for people's immediate and embodied experiences of surviving violence. Chapter Six's reckoning with expressions of trauma amongst Rwandan genocide survivors, and the communities of care around them, points to plurality, even in the context of a condition whose source and meaning is generally acknowledged to be a result of witnessing abject violence. We will find that people turn to a range of ways to attend to the difficulties of survival, and while counselling therapy has been found to be an ever-present option in their social landscape, it is never forced. The chapter will explore how differences of opinion, when they emerge, tend to be smoothed over in favour of more immediate and responsive forms of care. The forms of care drawn out here have been gently underscored in the organisations and systems set up to systematically deliver care for marginalised groups (Chapter Two), in the informal forms of care those running Africare express amongst members of this marginalised group (Chapters Two and Four), and in the care expressed generally by and towards members of this group (Chapters Three and Four). Indeed, care is a low-key refrain throughout this thesis.

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Chapter One
A Topography Of Frictions

An arrival

You could say two of the first African Australians were African Americans. John Martin and John Randall. They docked on the shores of Darug country with the First Fleet in 1788, bearing the same plain name, common amongst slaves at the time, and the surnames of former masters. You could say they were refugees. Both had boarded England-bound ships in American ports to flee slavery, and in England, with no livelihood and few prospects, were arrested for petty crimes, then shipped off to penal exile. Australia. They arrived as prisoners.

It is said that in colonisation's early days, when they were still Crown prisoners, the two men escaped and sought acceptance amongst the Darug people, who I imagine were still reeling from this violent intrusion, but they were rejected. Randall's sentence expired in 1792. Martin, technically on a one-year sentence, would remain a prisoner for two years longer when his official papers arrived with the Third Fleet (Pybus 2006a). It is poignant, then, that from such tenuous beginnings as free men, John Martin and John Randall would ultimately find themselves favoured by Australia's colonisation.

The Empire's violence would multiply and diversify. In time, with force, country in the Aboriginal sense of a storied, spiritually invested place, inextricable from law and relationships (see Bird-Rose 1996; Grieves 2008; Yunupingu 1997) would come to be treated as land in the Empire-building sense of alienable, material asset: appropriated, divvied up, and allocated amongst the new settlers—even the two Black ones whose allotments were side by side in the area now formally known as Parramatta, Western Sydney.

Fast-forward a century or so. Knowledge of two men of African ethnicity amongst the first settlers is a nugget waiting to be discovered (often by the genealogically inclined, struck to learn of their African ancestry). Theirs was a story of raced dynamics begetting bittersweet victories. But even quieted histories have expression—and resonance—in time. So while we leave the story of John Martin and John Randall there—a bookend—it seemed a fitting introduction to this chapter.

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After all, this chapter's purpose is exposition—both of the contexts I study, and the conceptual concerns of such a study. Here, I seek to orient the reader to some of the tensions that run through this ethnography and demonstrate my approach to understanding them. The tensions I speak of have to do with multiculturalism, representation, belonging, historically inherited dynamics of raced power, politics of citizenship, class, diversity, modernity as well as those tensions surrounding the interpretation of these phenomena. It is a diverse set of concerns (hence introducing them in overview is fraught with lists), but a set nonetheless: they are all bundled into the opening prologue, for instance, and dispersed throughout this thesis. Here—in this thesis' first substantive chapter—I focus on the underlying tensions dotted through the social and therapeutic landscape that Africare's members negotiated. I attend to instances in which they emerge most saliently in my fieldsite, and ultimately, in the interest of framing what is to come as I attend to these tensions and frictions in the rest of this thesis, I show the theoretical conversations that inform my stance on their study.

To do this, I compile ethnographic vignettes of moments that deal, in some way, with what it might mean to be 'African Australian'. This exercise necessitates a shifting scale, moving between the intimate scale of fieldwork and the audacious scale required to describe complex historical, transnational moments. I begin with a descriptive section that introduces a range of arrival stories that I learnt from people of Central African origin spliced with overviews of the arrays of circumstances in their countries of origin that contributed to these shifts. Here, the bureaucratic and political processes involved with *becoming* African Australian, that is, gaining Australian residency and political protection, are also detailed, against a backdrop of Australia's dismal history with immigration and racial population control. As this section segues into one on *being* African Australian, titled 'Settlement Stories', I consider the implications attached to this shifted citizen status. What perceptions, expectations, subjectivities and identities are tied into it? What do people expect as African Australians? What is expected of them? Under what circumstances do expectations about what it means to be African Australian go unmet, and how does that bode? As part of considering this, I introduce one of the salient ways that people I met in Sydney categorised their expatriate community between more "worldly and affluent" refugees and UNHCR refugees who arrived in Australia after years in refugee camps. The sections on becoming and being African Australian both lay the grounds for discussions later in this thesis that deal with

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how marginal and central relationships are imagined and produced (see Chapter Two: The NGO Niche, Chapter Three: On Being (and Not Being) 'Uneducated').

After this, the chapter changes tact to consider the dynamics that play out through popular and public forms of inclusivity surrounding refugees and migrants of African origin. I do this through a close reading of the discourses surrounding a photo exhibition entitled 'African / Australian' by photographer Louise Whelan. As with other vignettes in this chapter, I use the photo exhibition to consider the roles and narratives that are open for 'African Australians' to fill within 'Australian' life, noting that the more prominent of these roles and narratives tend to commodify diversity. As well as this, though, I demonstrate how interpretations clash when trying to appraise phenomena like the 'African / Australian' photography series. This series consists of portraits of people who could be described, at least for the purposes of the series, as 'African Australian'. Photographer Louise Whelan's series was enjoyed by those who were in them, many of whom I spoke to, and by many audience members from various communities. Her pictures were described by many popular media sources as a celebration of multiculturalism, on one hand, and as exploitative, liberal elitism by many popular and scholarly cultural critics, on the other. I will reflect on these clashing interpretations of Whelan's oeuvre. I raise questions to do with interpreting my fieldwork friends and acquaintances' decisions and choices through a post-colonial theory lens when they do not seem to see their lives in those terms. In light of the accumulated sense of tensions and of marginality that previous sections have delineated and that subsequent chapters also involve, some other questions arise, such as: What can an anthropological perspective contribute or add in terms of framing dynamics of power in these situations? How closely can I kern to some of the post-colonial, critical theory perspectives that validate a critique of certain projects, institutions and systems whilst remaining loyal to the sincerity with which some of these critiqued things were taken up by those I worked closely to?

These questions, raised by my fieldwork, sat with me in some form from fieldwork's early days. I began to develop some clarity towards these questions reading Anna Tsing's *Friction* (2005). The book, which is told from near to Meratus Dayak people whose forests are being logged, is an 'ethnography of global connections' exploring and responding to the phenomenon by which "cultural diversity brings a creative friction to global connections" (Tsing 2005: x). Tsing's metaphors for friction

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as an analytic suggest interruption, pluralism and messiness. Of Tsing's work, Biehl and McKay (2012: 1213) write that:

> Tsing's reflexive method takes up and makes explicit the disparate relationships through which anthropological knowledges are brought into being. This approach highlights globalisation's scale-making projects as an object of analysis and develops a mode of ethnographic writing through attention to the diverse sites through which neoliberal politics are enacted.

I want to propose the subtleties I draw attention to highlight how a politics of belonging is constructed against the counter-politics of a challenge issued by a host country—through its policies and dominant practices—to just try and belong. This chapter's explorations demonstrate how friction might be a useful frame for the way that scholarly aspersions towards a phenomenon might rub up against the way the people most concerned by that phenomenon experience it. Friction is also useful for characterising the multiple histories that meet in any one of the encounters or events that this chapter consists of.

Histories, movements & restraints

Before one can court the identity suggested by 'African Australian', there is the bureaucratic, political, historically vexed process of being able to live in Australia to begin with. Though I did not specifically solicit people's arrival stories in interviews or conversation, they emerged on their own, often enough. It is important to note that categories of 'refugee' and 'migrant' are muddied by how these words' legal definitions may or may not align with the circumstances under which people move around. A person with the means to move country may do so for their own protection, for instance, appearing as far as semantics are concerned to be a migrant. The circumstances prompting people's moves, and the means available to each person and family when they did, varied widely.

Civil and political violence in people's former countries of residence, and the ongoing ramifications of this, was frequently a factor. People who became refugees as a result of the Rwandan genocides were granted the legal means to seek protection only after the violence had been brought to a close, as the international community failed to acknowledge the genocidal nature of the mass killings as they happened (Hehir 2013:

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207–215). For three months in 1994 in Rwanda, this brutal and swift genocide orchestrated by soliders, militia associated then President Habyarimana, as well as ordinary people, targeted Tutsi, Tutsi sympathisers, Hutu and Twa who did not participate in the killings, and political moderates. A death toll often cited by genocide scholars is 800,000 (Guglielmo 2016: 158), but other estimates vary[11] and the number and identity of the dead remains contested.[12] Liberty, a young teenager at the time, was one of those who survived the massacres. When she was still a teenager, she managed to fly on a borrowed passport to Europe. There, she eventually met her husband and set up a new life. She reminded me when narrating these events that in spite of her experiences, she moved to Australia with her family as a migrant from Europe—not as a refugee.

Amelie, a Rwandan woman, related a more complicated scenario. Amelie moved to Australia with a scholarship to pursue a post-graduate course at a Melbourne University. As she settled in, she helped found a community group for other Rwandans in the city with a particular focus on fostering peaceful relationships across ethnic differences that were exacerbated by their country's recent history. Through this, she became somewhat involved in local politics, advocating for her community. As she tells it, these activities brought her to the attention of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—the party that overthrew Habyarimana, and had run an austere but progressive-looking regime since. RPF party meetings were televised and a friend of Amelie's was surprised when Amelie was mentioned in one in relation to rebel political activity overseas; he reported this back to her. Her mother, still living in Kigali, reported strange incidences that suggested she was being watched too. They began paying attention to subtle background noises during their phone calls. As events piled up, it became increasingly convincing that Amelie's community work had been misconstrued as a political threat to the RPF. Due to this, Amelie found cause to seek protection in Australia. Her story resonates with more critical observations of the RPF's regime, which has been described as one in which 'sophisticated authoritarianism' (Straus and Waldorf 2011:

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[11] For instance, a UN report released in 1997 estimated 500,000–800,000 (Mamdani 2001: 283) whereas the official Rwandan government figure has been 1,047,017 (Gugleilmo 2016: 159).
[12] Particularly controversial is the disagreement on the number of Hutu dead and the suggestion that the RPF massacred encamped Hutu and minimised the event of the massacre and the number killed—this was argued most cogently in a controversial BBC Two documentary, 'Rwanda's Untold Story' (2014), produced and narrated by journalist Jane Corbin.

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13) underlies every other indicator of a conscientiously-governed country, such as low levels of crime, the world's most gender-balanced parliament, and pro-environmental measures like a ban on plastic bags and elaborate recycling policies. Elaborate networks of spies maintain information on Rwandans' public and private discussions and activities (Grant 2015, Purdeková 2011). Amelie explained that it was only after re-meeting some of her old friends, who were journalists in Rwanda, in Australia that she would learn the extent to which their news stories were audited and edited by state representatives.

I also met several people originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the distinct mountainous area between DRC and Rwanda, where Banyamulenge people live, who had spent many years in refugee camps in Tanzania, and had been placed in Australia through a special UNHCR settlement scheme. Banyamulenge in particular are persecuted (Thomson 2012). The DRC—a country rich in mineral and agricultural reserves—has been mined relentlessly since colonisation by a Belgian king in the 1870's, and warred over thrice in the past twenty years. In 1996, the Rwandan civil war spread past the border into the Congo, moved by coalitions between the warring Hutu, Tutsi, Rwandan and Congolese militia. The president at the time, Joseph Mobotu, had been president since 1964, after his mutinous rise from army chief to head of state by way of a USA and Belgian-backed coup that saw the nation's first democratically elected Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, assassinated. In 1997, Joseph Kabila dethroned Mobotu. One year later, in 1998, Congolese rebels teamed with Rwandan and Ugandan troops and attacked the DRC army. Seven foreign African countries waged in this war, the Congo as the battleground, until all but Rwanda retreated in 2003. Yet, the long conflict never completely desisted and came to a head once more when rebels sieged a capital city in North Kivu in 2012.

Throughout this period, an estimated 5.4 million have been killed in DRC (International Rescue Committee cited in Thomson 2012: 187). For a sense of how many have been displaced, consider that a refugee camp that opened in Tanzania in 1996 to meet thousands of Congolese refugees crossing the border into relative safety, had, in 2012, more than 63,000 refugees still living in makeshift camp residence (Thomson 2012: 187). Thomson's paper follows an envelope containing the carefully completed resettlement claim documents of one couple at this camp, Toyi and Mwitali's. She highlights the finessed transparency and rehearsed credibility that

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refugees must practice in response to meet the UNHCR's stringent and bureaucratic screening criteria and, by contrast, the opaque bureaucratic processes that determined whether and how families might be granted resettlement through the UNHCR program (see also McGranahan 2015; Ticktin 2006, 2011). Bede, who spent time at a similar (if not the same) Tanzanian camp, who I got to know during my fieldwork, understood these processes well—whilst awaiting his own resettlement, he worked out how to prepare the documents and frame claims in a way that might meet these stringent and specific bureaucratic criteria, and this way helped many families whose claims had been rejected, sometimes multiple times. He and his own family were resettled in Australia after ten years.

Outside of the UNHCR process, families were seldom resettled together at the same time. Angelo, a Burundian man, came to Australia two years before his wife and very young daughter were able to join him. Burundi was affected by the Congo's conflict spilling over, and its own unstable political situation switched regimes. Angelo had been captured and tortured over his presumed political allegiances. Telling me this at a café in Redfern, he traced the long, thin scars on his face and head. Some time after he was released, he travelled to Australia to present at a conference and took the opportunity to apply for asylum. He was granted it, and stayed. I first met him shortly after he and his family were reunited in Sydney.

Patrice, an agronomist, worked for the Burundian government when it was overthrown. As a state employee, the risks to him under the new regime were imminent. I do not know the conditions by which Patrice was able to find himself living in Australia, but when I first met him, he had been here for four years: he had a job as an orderly at a clinic, and had been steadily saving money to apply for an immigration visa through the Australian immigration process for his wife, Kuhsina, and five children (the youngest whom he had last seen as a baby) to join him. As he saved to meet the applications costs, their price-tag slowly climbed—the cost for a spousal visa doubled, from AUD2,315 to AUD4,630. At the same time, in early 2015 the stakes for all Burundian residents (Patrice's family included) spiked as Burundi became gripped by violent political unrest. It was an election year in which Burundi's President Nkurinziza, who had already served two terms, was prevented by mandate from running for a third. In April 2015, Nkurinziza announced his intention to seek a third term, sparking widespread civil demonstrations against this violation of the country's constitution.

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Protestors clashed violently with state police who were found, in a detailed report by Amnesty International (2015), to have used force and tactics tantamount to punishing activists for their political views, rather than simply dispersing the demonstrations.

This violence escalated during the rest of my fieldwork and continues to this day, even after Nkurinziza's dubiously gained third term that began when he was re-elected in July, 2015. Patrice, like so many others, worried daily for his family, including, of course, Kuhsina and their children of whom scattered news came while they moved around, trying to leave the country unscathed. Local Burundians organised several demonstrations to try to raise awareness of the under-reported civil violence, and to try to convince Australian elected officials to make a political stance on the situation. I return to detailing these efforts in more detail later in this chapter. For now, telling Patrice's story, it is enough to note that during one of these demonstrations at Parliament House, he was able to meet with an Immigration Minister and, as DFAT had recently declared Burundi unsafe for travel, he could negotiate to fast-track his family reunification visa. After this, Patrice emailed people he knew in Australia seeking donations towards the remaining visa costs (a total of AUD11,500). Their application was successful. Twenty-six of Patrice's Sydney friends accompanied him to the airport the night he would be reunited with his family after six years apart.

This mesh of stories demonstrate the diverse ways that people ended up living in Australia. In every instance, to some extent, negotiating the bureaucratic boundaries around international shifts takes skill, means and luck. We see this in the UNHCR settlement claims processes described in a Tanzanian refugee camp, and this is also the case when applying from Australia, as Patrice and other did. The directors of Africare and I discussed this one afternoon after a board meeting. We were sitting around two pushed-together plastic tables at a Lebanese kebab shop, across multiple chicken kebabs, hot chips, broad pizza slices and soft drinks, talking about the pro bono legal representation offered to people seeking asylum. Jebediah noted that nobody works for free; you, as a client applying to be recognised as a refugee, might pay nothing, but *somebody* is footing the bill for your refugee status legal case. Elijah laughed at how the 'free' lawyer you get sent to is actually *paid* by the same immigration body that's trying to protect its budget and keep people like you out!

"I could go to the lawyer and say, look, I've been in a military group with the rebels, and I don't want to kill people anymore so I have to leave", Elijah began. "They

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might say, 'Don't tell them that in the court, they won't accept anybody whose been involved in the killing. Tell me another story.'"

"Is that officially off the record, then?" I asked.

"No! The lawyer might tell you that [it is off the record] to gain your trust so that you then say *everything*, but they take notes and they'll pass it on to immigration, and you won't get accepted."

"You need to get a paid lawyer", Dina, on my left softly, sharply says. Indeed, acting on the understanding that only a paid lawyer would provide fair legal representation, many calls for donations circulated during my time in the fieldwork, as the community raised money for lawyers and family visas on behalf of others in their network. This way, wealth, or at the very least access to it, seem to be determining factors in having a decent shot at Australian protection through residency.

As the opening vignette makes clear, people of African descent have been part of Australia's settler population for as long as Anglo people have, albeit in much smaller numbers: an influx of convicts, slaves and indentured workers from Mauritius and Ghana (Anderson 1998), and East African and Carribean sailors who worked on trade routes from Africa and Asia into Australia (Ghosh & Goodall 2012 in Jakubowicz 2010; Pybus 2006). While their numbers were relatively small, it was enough to raise ire and worry of the sort that informed the establishment of the White Australia policy in 1900. Jakubowicz (2010) notes that Africans, specifically, were mentioned in debates about limiting immigration, though this policy sought to severely restrict immigration access to all non-whites. Lake (2004) has written about a dictation test created in 1897, which was used as part of Australia's Immigrant Restriction Act of 1901; authorities could administer the test in any European language, so could use Swedish or German, for instance, to deliberately exclude non-whites with fluent English. A Commonwealth Franchise Act followed in 1902. It explicitly excluded any "aboriginal native of Australia Asia Africa or the Islands of the Pacific except New Zealand" from being part of an Australian electoral roll. 'Native' African immigration would be barred until the White Australia Policy was formally dismantled with *The Migration Act* of 1966. Yet the Franchise Act was finally withdrawn in 1967 when a referendum greatly enabled by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activism (see Bandler 1989) would end up altering the Constitution, granting Aboriginal people equal recognition in constitutional matters to all others (this was previously withheld). I note this to draw attention to how the

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arrangement of Australia's ethnic groups are hierarchised, with Aboriginal people often facing worse legal, economic and social treatment than non-Anglo immigrants and refugees. Indeed, apart from Acknowledgements of Country at formal events, the sites that my fieldwork took me into were haunted by an absence of Indigenous epistemology and praxis. Following Povinelli (2011), Hage (1998) and Herron (forthcoming), I understand this as a reflection on how social spaces, networks and channels are constructed and ordered; how they carry the marks of history. It is not absurd to claim that migrants are positioned to inherit settler dis-acknowledgement of First Nations people, lore, law the settler-colonial world over, even as migrant and First Nations populations might sit side by side as the targets for humanitarian and state intervention.

Povinelli (2011) uses the phrase 'late liberalism' to describe the shifting politics marked by aforementioned legal revisions in the 1960s—the move from overtly colonial, racist and paternalistic statehood to more anti-colonial governance of difference. It is only after this period that Australia's ethnically African population begins to grow again. Drawing from figures held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Australia's African-born population over time, Jakubowicz (2010) describes this newly migrated population as having built up over a series of waves of migration from specific countries. It is possible that this several decade-long period of stringently limiting non-white (specifically African) immigration has given salience to the narrative that often underlies contemporary representations of African Australians, showing them to be a fairly new part of Australia's population. This narrative is what ultimately dominates relationships to the state that develop as people settle as citizens.

Settlement stories

Not all arrival stories are finite. Arrival trajectories are tenuous, and many are interjected, truncated, reversed, or otherwise rendered incomplete. A former Vice President from Burundi was appealing for asylum here, Jebediah told me; there was footage on YouTube of this ex-politician being kicked, beaten, and tortured, because of his political identity. Somehow, his application was denied. "And when you're denied", Jebediah explained, "there are no clues as the grounds of your denial. You're simply told *no*".

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"But I understand why", Jebediah (a Burundian man) added, in response to my refreshed outrage at Australia's draconian and cruel border control measures. "It is expensive to take people, and"—referencing the streak of budget cuts at the time, in 2015—"when the government is taking money away from their own people, why would they want to spend that on refugees who often can't find work for five to ten years, even?"

With this, Jebediah alludes to the state support that has had to be extended to refugee and migrant communities for whom the transition to living in Australia has been anything but straightforward. These difficulties and the corresponding state supports are well documented (see Chapter Two: The NGO Niche). Difficulties encompass employment, acculturation difficulties, health services, and misconceptions surrounding the legal culture of Australia (the illegality of spousal and child physical assault, and rights extended to women and children, particularly, for this, are often noted).

In his memoirs, 'Autobiography of a Pygmy' (Bacirongo and Nest 2015), Congolese entrepreneur, activist and (more recently) writer, Isaac Bacirongo, describes how such problems compounded for his family. Bacirongo, a BaTempo Pygmy whose tribe are indigenous to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was forced to leave the DRC under circumstances related to his activism. Bacirongo claims to be the only formally schooled person in his extended family and in response to the everyday stigmatisation he faced as a Pygmy, he helped establish the DRC's first Pygmy rights organisation. In demanding equal rights for Congolese pygmys, Bacirogno raised the ire of the government headed by Mobutu Sese Seko, on whose orders he was imprisoned and brutalised. Bacirongo, his wife Josephine, and their ten children moved to Australia in 2006. In his memoirs, Bacirongo writes about the intersection of inter-generational conflict with culture shock and domestic violence, describing how his daughter took out a restraining order against him over an incident in which her siblings assaulted her after she had been found to be drinking. He describes the mental illness suffered by his youngest son and the family's effort to help the boy alongside supports provided by the state. He also writes about years of struggling to find work; about the opportunities he did receive, often in government or humanitarianism and aid, and what was entailed in maintaining them.

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Speaking at a Rotary session in Bondi Junction following the launch of his book, Isaac Bacirongo told the group around the table of his flight from Congo to Kenya for safety.

> I had a brick house that was burnt in a deliberate fire, I was forced to sell my posessions for bribes…I am not like other refugees who come to Australia and for the first time have a hundred dollars in their pocket. …I feel sad sometimes because I had more in Congo than I have in Australia. It makes me wonder if being an activist and trying to change society was worth it.

A man who appeared Caucasian, who wore glasses and a beige woollen sweater, had a question for Isaac: "At what age did you start valuing material possessions?", he asked. Isaac explained that at school age he was sponsored by a Belgian man who paid his fees and gave him board. "I envied the white man's life…the Peugot that took us to school. It made me sad that his things were not like us, no doors on houses."

The same man asked, "Do you still think that?"

Isaac diplomatically replied, "I thought that way but…things happened, nobody can have the life that they want".

Later on in the questions, another man asked after Isaac's day job.

"For the past two and a half years I have focused on my book", Isaac replied. "I have no job."

"What about your wife?", asked the man.

"She is in family care", said Isaac.

Somebody else asked if the Congolese community in Australia had supported him, and Isaac declared that he has never received any support from the rest of the Congolese community. The slow succession of questions about Isaac's fiscal situation, employment record, and job prospects struck me as more interrogatory than incidental at the time. It seemed, from these questions, that Isaac may have made one sort of impression that evening—of a published author supported, for all his questioners knew, by welfare—that those asking after this might have been unable to reconcile this impression with an understanding of the difficulties many in similar circumstances to Isaac faced finding employment.

Employment, followed by housing, were the main problems faced by the people Africare aimed to help. As I detail in the next chapter, Africare's case-worker emphatically bemoaned that she could only connect people to employment and training opportunities if they had a permanent visa, and were hence legally eligible to earn in

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Australia. Yet so many families struggled because the ability to benefit from support in finding work often depended on having the right visa, which meant being officially recognised as a refugee, resident or citizen, rather than as an asylum seeker on a bridging visa.

Work prospects were also afflicted by discrimination. As we continued the same conversation relayed earlier, Jebediah told me about his meeting with a local area politician at one of Africare's previous board meetings to discuss employment. "[He] says it's a communication issue", Jebediah said, and explained how he had amicably challenged this. "I asked him, Can you understand me when I speak? He can. But it took me so long to find a job. It's not a communication issue."

Lenny was luckier than Jebediah, Isaac and many others. Explaining his career trajectory, he told me he came to Australia with groomed expectations: he knew he would have to relinquish a job with status and the prospect of using his MBA here, so he prioritised making money. Lenny worked in cleaning and hoped to start his own cleaning company. He joked that there wasn't much here for African people besides cleaning and aged care, and aged care was too hard. He remarked, on a sidenote, that since getting comfortable in his company, he had made a point of hiring Africans, one by one, to work at his company; "I wanted to change my colleague's impressions of my people…and I knew you can't do it by force! You can't force it! You need to go… softly…by stealth…" He explained how he would coach the new employees who are African on how to behave in the face of their non-African colleagues' and clients' ignorance: to just be respectful and polite, say please, say thanks, and let them (their non-African colleagues and clients) change with time. "I changed their minds strategically, one by one. Now I can speak openly with them about who I am, my experiences, my thoughts. It is a slow process but not impossible".

Arriving is fraught enough, but the journey upon arriving towards being and feeling accepted is, this way, a project most of those I met were circumstantially compelled to engage in one way or another. Through Africare, engaging with the appropriate means for acceptance was a priority. As Elijah told one of Africare's collaborators, "We want to show Australia what our communities are capable of. That they're not just coming here needing help and assistance they're achieving grand things, and maturing into conflict resolution and peace." This goal was certainly held dear by many who I met. As I go on to show in this chapter (and indeed, elsewhere in this thesis

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too (see Chapters Two and Three), the forms of scrutiny and the expectations exhibited by some sense of 'Australia' have definite effects in organising people's imaginations and positionality.

The (un)caring state

When Elijah talks about his community's reliance on state services and support, he refers to a services industry that provides somewhat unstable, yet somewhat consistent administrative, social support, community service and health care work opportunities for many. The migrant and refugee humanitarianism complex that straddles state and NGO sectors is an entrenched and sprawling system, both globally, and in its local forms in Australia (this will be discussed at length in the next chapter). Partly due to the existence of such services, there was a strong sense amongst some of my friends and acquaintances that Australia was a country that cared and would protect those who it had claimed. At this I think of Pascale's assurance at his son's birthday picnic, as he helped me chase paper plates and napkins taken by the wind, that the council would tidy the rubbish that was windily disseminating around the park. I think too of Elijah's contention, based on anecdotes from friends and articles he had read in the paper, that the media could be relied on to report acts of racism and discrimination, and that if discriminated against by an employer, potential employer or anybody else, one always had the power to recourse to this. And I think of Jebediah's exclamation of support for the red tape involved in organising a public demonstration while planning a rally to raise awareness of the atrocities happening in Burundi at that time: "It's Australia! Even at a protest they send police to protect you!" These men's expectant optimism makes sense as a matter of always juxtaposing their experiences here with other experiences as citizens elsewhere. It is also important to note that their attitudes in spite of the difficulties they had faced here may point to their affluence relative to others from their countries, as well as their trajectories. Neither of these men had spent time in refugee camps and their diasporic community in Australia was understood as split between those who did and those who did not. One social worker and artist (originally from Uganda) described it as a difference between migrants and refugees, saying: "There are affluent, worldly Africans who have come over here, the middle class, then there are the

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real, real, *real* Mccoy who've been in refugee camps for years and then come over here as UNHCR refugees". While I, in the small circle of friends I accumulated within my own linguistic and social limitations, perceived little difference between people from these two trajectories, it is worth underscoring that most of the people I spent time with, who appear most regularly in this thesis would probably fit the affluent, worldly and middle class category. Consequently, I was not able to witness in detail many of the ways that services and schemes that people might have invested faith in could fail them, but the efforts lead by local Burundians to drum up local political support against Nkurinziza is one significant such failure.

The dialogue around the situation in Burundi changed drastically over a matter of months. Earlier in 2015, as Burundians in Burundi began marching and demonstrating against Nkurinziza's declared third term, Jebediah, Dina, Elijah, Marcelle and other Africare directors found it refreshing, praising Burundi at a board meeting when the topic came up. "Burundi is more progressive than Rwanda will ever be at this rate, in terms of how openly people are speaking against the government—our people are no longer afraid", Jebediah had said.

Then, when the military began intervening on marches and killing protestors, things shifted. There came to be cause to be fearful. "It's worse in the country side" George told me when we met up around that time; George's wife Bette's brother's family was in the city, so even though their house had a grenade thrown at it and they evacuated and fled, they had since returned. "They may be better off than anybody living in the country side", George remarked. "We are very worried… the situation seems to be changing overnight. It is just like the way Rwanda was before the genocide happened."

"But—what? How?", I asked, confused. "This is a political division, right? You're either with the government or against it?"

"Yes but the government is twisting it. You can see it happening, turning it into a Hutu Tutsi thing".

For the past weeks, he said, he and Bette had been depressed. Each had a cousin who was a demonstrator and they hadn't heard from them for weeks. When they finally did, it was Bette's cousin making contact from Rwanda. They had closed the borders but he'd swum across a lake between Burundi and Rwanda and made it in. He no longer had George's cousin with him.

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At that stage, most independent media had been destroyed and most social media had been dismantled. There were few other means by which people could communicate. George and Bette, like others, waited for news in general and news of loved ones. Days go without it. What little was circulated consisted of text updates, photos and videos passed along through Whatsapp networks—these became personal news networks that people could personally disseminate to others they knew and trusted (not all Burundians were on the same page on this conflict—many supported Nkurinziza). These messages described, whether by words, video or image, altercations between civilians and uniformed state sanctioned groups that ranged from volatile to outright violent, and these altercations' aftermaths.

"We are in hell, Mythily". I was sitting with George at a café he often frequented at the start of June, 2015. He and other Burundians were co-ordinating a rally in the CBD the following weekend and he wanted to impress its urgency on me so that I came and brought friends. This was one of a series of efforts to raise their troubles with local media, local government, and the international community. Previously, the group had campaigned with high hopes at Parliament House in Canberra, but George was deflated by the results. "We met with the DFAT", he explained, " and asked them to take a stance against Burundi. …they said it wasn't really their area but we said, look, we're living here, we are citizens, and we still have ties to Burundi. It is important". This argument had little traction in the meeting. "We [also] really want to get it in the media", George said, "but when we talk to them about it you can see them glaze over. There's no story there. Just incidents. They're thinking about ratings." This way, the imperatives George and others had understood as latent in their citizenship, and in the category of 'African Australians' (which was jubilantly proclaimed in certain sectors) were rendered defunct. George's group was asking that the symbolism of their Australian citizenship be recognised as a link between Australia and their original countries, rather than simply an acceptance of 'foreigners' into a local political order. What they were asking for went beyond the 'multiculturalism' embrace of migrant citizens that is distinctly easier to fund and promote. With this, they met the limits of their citizenship.

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"African / Australians"

Here, I want open a parallel stream: this section discusses events than ran concurrent to the escalating conflict in Burundi, and the associated series of disappointments melded by stress and depression for Burundians in Australia. This juxtaposition is important for demonstrating the plurality in which narratives around the meaning of being 'African Australian' are organised, authored, collaborated on, critiqued and dispersed.

In February 2015, photographer Louise Whelan's 'African/Australians' exhibition opened at Sydney's Custom House. In the weeks leading up to the show, images from Whelan's African/Australians series had become ubiquitous around Sydney. They were emblazoned on bus shelters and billboards, they rolled passed my eyes as I scrolled social media, they appeared in in news stories, and were also piled up in the form of smaller leaflets in community centers, galleries and arts-centric cafes. In one of these images, a line of animated young girls were snapped part-way through theatrically planning their pose against a warm, brick wall—each wore a black leotard and a short wrap skirt in one of eight bright colours, and it was captioned 'Harmony Day at Cabramatta high school'. In another, a stylish young woman in leather shorts and a pink singlet momentarily clasped a wooden fence as she bent to adjust her heels; her yellow earrings featured a silhouetted kangaroo mid-leap (an iconic Australian road signage motif) and her shadow stretched amorphously behind her.

The Custom's House exhibition would not be Whelan's oeuvre's first show, though it would be one of the largest and most popularised. The portrait series depicts Whelan's sitters, all of whom are of African origin, either individually or with family or friends, going about their lives: a man flips on a trampoline in a Newcastle backyard while people mill in the background on the grass; a dapper couple pose in front of their Goulburn dwelling, she wears a shiny *pagne* (wrapper dress), he wears a gray suit; in a front yard, two women in patterned *pagne* walk across the yard while in the foreground, a man starts up the lawn mower. Consistent across these images, which have varying depth of colour and compositional flair, is a sense of juxtaposition of African and Australian lifeways—the sense of juxaposition seemingly assumed through overt visual symbols (lawnmower and *pagne*, for instance). This is the series' selling point, and is

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emulated in a few visual cues as, in one case, a close-up of a woman in a printed *pagne* outfit with a large Aldi shopping bag (presumably packed with groceries?) on her head.

I came to know some of Whelan's sitters through connections and friendships that came about doing this research (which is also, in its own way, portraiture, in that perhaps those who have read my renderings of them in various drafts feel as though they are looking at a sort of snapshot). None of the sitters I spoke to claimed to be anything but delighted to have participated in Whelan's project, and most cited the friendship that accompanied this project as a positive and ongoing outcome that eventuated from the collaboration (Whelan also attests to these ongoing friendships in interviews). I also saw Whelan taking photographs for events that her sitters were hosting in their personal or community leader capacities, suggesting that these friendships, like all friendships, had reciprocal advantages. I had not spoken with Whelan at any length, nor was her project part of my ethnographic focus. Yet in retrospect, I find myself interested in the work her photographs did beyond the networks of sociality and reciprocity in which they are created and enjoyed. It is in these broader discourses, removed from their originating relationships, that Whelan's photographs evoke meanings perhaps unintended by their makers yet indicative of the social compulsions surrounding their creation.

The media commentary surrounding 'African Australians' was generally a mirrored hall of favourability, with favourable reviews in popular and accessible mediums. Critiques of the show, which were cohesive and biting, seemed to be voiced amongst a group of more radical intellectuals, scholars and writers, including two published critiques (on the Daily Life website[13] and in Overland journal[14]), a range of Facebook commentary, twitter, and one unpublished review on a scholar's Academia page.[15] Perhaps this is because it seems petty go after an artist and the people who

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[13] Ruby Hamad wrote 'NSW State Library's panel on diversity fails to actually be diverse' for the Daily Life website. Available at: http://www.dailylife.com.au/news-and-views/dl-opinion/nsw-state-librarys-panel-on-diversity-fails-to-actually-be-diverse-20140319-353jh.html [accessed 4 Feb 2015]
[14] Qian and O'Shea (2014)
[15] Sukhmani Khorana posted a brief comment entitled 'Who Can Photograph Whom, and How: Review of Louise Whelan's 'Home - Photographs of Ethnic Communities'' to her academia profile. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/9294631/Who_Can_Photograph_Whom_and_How_Review_of_Louise_Whelans_Home_-_Photographs_of_Ethnic_Communities [Accessed 6 June 2017]

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participate with and support her, when similar critiques can be raised by examining more powerful people and institutions—by essentially studying up (after Nader 1972)? At any rate, during an exhibition of Whelan's photos at the State Library the previous year, in 2014, such critiques were brought out by the series' proximity to a panel discussion hosted by the State Library of NSW (ostensibly one of those more powerful institutions) entitled 'Multi-culturalism: What are we afraid of?' The presumptuous 'we' of this title (the 'we' that feared multiculturalism) was buttressed by the all-white Australian cast of panelists initially promoted for the event, prompting comedian and cultural critic Aahmer Rahman to remark on his Facebook page: "Four white people will be on a panel talking about 'Multiculturalism: what are we afraid of?' Apparently we are afraid of letting people of colour discuss race in a public forum" (cited in Hamad 2014).

The State Library's event page on Facebook attracted more critical Facebook commentary for their clumsiness, perhaps because of which they added two more non-white panellists, one at the very last minute; these new panellist's ethnic identities were emphasised in their press bios (which were ultimately not distributed as widely nor as officially as those of the initial panellists). This seemingly transparent effort to save face only added insult to injury. As Juliana Qian writes of the move in Overland journal:

> Too often marginalised people are invited to share their stories as illustration for someone else's opinion… We merely need to appear: it is our job to add some colour and to provide a referent as the object of, but not the author of, multicultural policy (in Qian and O'Shea 2014).

It was by association with this panel that Whelan's photographic series drew flak. Writing of the mono-cultural panel on multiculturalism debacle, cultural critic Ruby Hamad includes in her commentary a screenshot of one of Whelan's photographs as it was posted by the NSW State Library, on their Facebook, with the caption:

> 'This great image of Congolese children at wedding (Dapto, 2010) is just one of many fantastic photographs that will take you into homes and urban environments of both refugees and migrants now calling Australia home. Come and check it out during Multicultural March'.

Of this photo and caption, Hamad remarks:

> Whatever intention the photographer may have had is lost by the focus not on the children's humanity but on their blackness; their difference. As such, I can only read it that we are meant to find four children looking bored and surly at a wedding rather

remarkable because they are Congolese. Look, guys! Black kids hate dressing up at weddings too! Or maybe they just don't like people sticking cameras in their faces? Who knows? Let's organise a panel of white people and find out! (2014)

As Hamad notes, Whelan's intentions are lost in a Eurocentric framing and reception of her photos. Indeed, the myriad ways that Whelan's portraits are consumed is suggestive of how many kinds of interests they serve. Their appeal is as bright, wordless blurbs not only for the African Australians they represent, by also for non-African people who identify (in whatever way) as 'Australian' and who might find in the series an evocation of Australian character they can relate to. One blogger introduces Whelan's work as follows:

> Australia's reputation as a multicultural society has been tarnished in recent times by the antics of our politicians, yet Australians in general are a welcoming bunch who recognise the amazing contribution that migrants have made to our country over the decades.[16]

This way, part of the value of 'African / Australians' is in its suggestion of *Australian* Australians' celebration of migrants. The blog cited above describes Australia as a cohered, 'welcoming' entity and diminishes contrary evidence as the 'antics' of a few politicians—a departure from norms.

When diversity becomes a value, institutions are also presented as welcoming diversity through discourse that implicitly distinguishes between welcoming host and invited guest (Ahmed 2012: 42). Multiculturalism in this guise is a form of hospitality: whiteness at home welcoming others over (Ahmed 2012: 43). Such hospitality is conditional upon it being met with gratitude and integration (Derrida 2000: 73, Kuokken 2007: 131, Rosello 2001 in Ahmed 2012: 42–3), a part of which is "by 'being' diverse and allowing [nations] to celebrate their diversity" (Ahmed 2012: 43). These problematic values resound around Louise Whelan's 'African / Australian' series. It can be inferred in a write-up on I-D-Vice online, which remarks that:

> The rare and honest insight we get into the worlds of Louise's subjects acts as a broad kind of education that can only serve to help Australian communities coexist happily.

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[16] Photojournalism Now (2015) Friday Round Up – 13 Feb 2015. Available online at: http://photojournalismnow.blogspot.com.au/2015/02/friday-round-up-13th-february-2015.html [Accessed 3 Mar 2016]

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These sentiments echo logics underpinning the phenomena of cultural diversity 'holidays' (which will be described in Chapter Two, The NGO Niche): namely that for the un-Othered to learn about the Other can be a balm to ethnic and cultural tension.

Here, knowledge is treated as a way of getting better at 'diversity'. It is unclear exactly *how* this is the case—it might be that photo documentary of the 'African / Australians' variety helps counter negative and anonymising representations of migrants and refugees in other media. This is certainly one of Whelan's goals; it is mentioned in her artist statement for the show. To propose to improve relationships between migrants and locals involves confirming or acknowledging those distinct categories of people, and an ideological gap between them worth bridging. Yet the means of bridging—of representing the Other—is telling. There is no shortage of migrant storytelling projects coming out of Western Sydney, and Sukhmani Khorana (2015) wonders why such projects seldom find themselves on the kind of stage that bigger inner city institutions like the State Library provide, where *representations* of migrants and refugees by white artists like Louise Whelan and Wendy Sharpe are more commonplace. Khorana wonders too at the potentials in this: how

> this presumably middle-class, city dwelling witness to the photographs can almost play
> the role of the adjudicator of the show, and has the option of taking their experience
> beyond the gallery through informal endeavours such as talking to friends, or more
> formal ones like political protest and lobbying (2015).

(The rally raising awareness about Burundi in Sydney's CBD, perhaps?)

What of those who pose for the photos? As I observed earlier, Whelan's sitters whom I spoke to were proud to have participated in her work. Neither my critiques nor those I represent here can speak with clarity of the relationship between Whelan and her participants. More broadly, there are some lines of thought we can draw on though. The symbolic capital that is sometimes latent in Otherness, and how harnessing this capital can be an attractive strategy, particularly for people who can claim diasporic identity (Clifford 1997: 255, in Ang 2003: 2). This way, the very qualities marked out as 'different' that see certain groups marginalised from structures of white or Western hegemony, can be used to re-enter those hegemonic structures, albeit on specific terms. Following Ahmed's point (mentioned earlier) about welcoming host and gracious, invited guest, those terms would be: to accept conditions of hospitality, and enter as somebody willing to be welcomed.

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At the exhibition opening of 'African / Australian' exhibition, a melange of responses to the exhibition's conditional welcome would have been on display. As well as the general support for Whelan's series amongst sitters, one of the handful of speakers who appeared in the series gave a short speech that dug back at this underlying host and guest dynamic. Reading emphatically from his notes, he remarked "I am African Australian, it's documented….we are *Australian*, we are *here*…I paid for my immigration, so why should I thank you?" With this, he rejected the 'conditions' of any sort of culpability to Australians who were here before him but also claimed a love for *his* Australia: "Australia is like my mum…it keeps me alive, keeps me sane. You have no idea. You have no idea. You have no idea. It's a dream". His remarks interrupt the coherence of any singular perspectives of the project, pointing to a broader assemblage of intentions and interpretations within which all these positions interact.

Conclusion

This chapter has canvassed a range of frictions that emerge around the subject of what it means to be African Australian, to do with multiculturalism, cultural hierarchies and national histories. These frictions underscore the cosmopolitan and culturally pluralist therapeutic landscapes of the Sydney's refugee-targeted community health sector, as well as the broader fields and histories those landscapes entail, but they do so in particular ways around migrants and refugees from Central African countries. Subsequent chapters in this thesis focus on aspects of these local therapeutic landscapes specifically, and in close detail, drawing out the ways that agency, imaginations, the discursive organisation of categories of people, and attitudes towards medical pluralism are shaped through historical and moment-to-moment interaction with these landscapes. The array of tensions and issues undergirding my fieldsite, thus unsettled and exposed, sets us up for this thesis' following chapters, each of which builds on this unsettled topography.

Within this unsettled terrain, this chapter has raised several related points that are worth summarising, for these points are revisited and grappled with later on. The first is the demonstration of why when I consider some of the more popular, public activities promoting multiculturalism around Sydney's African community, I am

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compelled to reconcile critical analysis of these activities with the sincerity and creativity of people participating in these activities. In this chapter, this compulsion is perhaps most clearly evident in photographer Louise Whelan's own enacted commitment to relationships with those she photographs, and the warmth amongst Whelan's African collaborators (whose portraits comprise her work) for Whelan and the series itself—this mutual warmth, in spite of all the ways that the photo series can be understood as promoting the continued marginalisation of African Australians, albeit within a more harmonious guise. My reconciliation of these perspectives is partial; I acknowledge the diverse ways their co-existence can be interpreted but do not try to incorporate one into the other, choosing instead to consider what these frictions index. In this thesis are also the frictions between an analytical critique of systems impelling certain forms of subjectivity and the sincerity of the people trying to effect change through these very systems. Subsequent chapters grapple with this tension, perhaps most explicitly in the next chapter, The NGO Niche.

Relatedly, this chapter has also raised the distinction I make between dynamics (like those surrounding Whelan's photos), which I offer deconstructed critiques of, and the type of imperial, discriminatory structural exertions of power (like the aspects of Australia's immigration and refugee policy I describe) which I make more strident critiques of. These two sets of dynamics are arguably part of the same assemblage of suffering (Dragojlovich and Broom 2017) and of inequitable opportunities. However, I maintain this distinction of critique throughout this thesis. It is worth noting that this position that I maintain was not necessarily shared by those I worked with. At least once (and probably more than once) Dina had gently reminded me that I saw trouble in things she thought were "okay"—a tendency that perhaps pervades this chapter, which can be read as an interpretive pastiche. Once when Dina alluded to this tendency of mine, it was a small, throwaway moment where I had expressed strident critique of Australia's refugee policies. Tilting her head lightly, Dina responded with great tact: she said, "It's so funny to me over here people criticise everything so openly. You will see them on tv, being interviewed, saying 'fuck Tony Abbott!'" Perhaps Dina's response shows up how I am marked with having grown in a culture where critiquing up is valorised; where, as Dina noted, people can appear on television without worry for their safety critiquing the Prime Minister in no uncertain terms with limited concern for their consequential physical safety.

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The final critical point raised in this chapter is simply how subtle and nuanced a quality resistance can be. Let me explain: the dynamics I have described in this chapter are neither rare nor new. It bears noting that comparable dynamics played out in the post-colonial eras of many once-colonised or occupied Central African countries. Kasongo Kapanga has described the efforts made by Belgian authorities between World Wars One and Two to introduce Congolese art and culture to European audiences as reflecting "a burning desire to give proof of a humane treatment to the natives in contrast to the cruelty recorded in the early days of *L'État Indépendant du Congo* [the Independent Republic of Congo]" (2009: 34). Kapanga writes of an award-winning poem, 'L'elephant qui marche sur les oeufs' ('The elephant that walks on eggs', 1931), written by Badibanga—an elusive figure whose identity remains swaddled in mystery and debate. When the poem won a *Médaille Mazarin* from the *Academie Francaise*, this award was never claimed, prompting questions about whether Badibanga existed at all, and if so, whether they were one person or a group standing for a cause, making an elaborate point by way of this common, communal Congolese name and its association with award-winning poetry (Kapanga 2009: 34–35). The case of Badibanga is suggestive of how faceted resistance can be. It also shows how spaces of inclusion might offer opportunities for one kind of political subject to become another kind of political subject (see Sinha 2009): we see such opportunities play out over the arc of Chapter Two, The NGO Niche.

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Chapter Two

The NGO Niche

The micro and the macro

A motley group pressed into the elevator on the ground floor of the ████ Club. In the foyer on level 2, we diverged. Some turned left towards the spotty lights and tinkles of a pokies room. The rest of us, many of whom wore lanyards round their necks, crossed the foyer to the ████ Room for the day's workshop: 'Mental Health: A CALD perspective.' The workshop, organised by the ████ Migrant Resource Centre with their new collaborators, Partners in Recovery, sought to canvas the mental health issues faced by people described as 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (hence the abbreviation CALD, which in 1996 replaced NESB, as in 'non-English speaking background', as the official term used to talk about groups whose marginality from social and health services is understood to be linked to cultural and communication reasons (Sawrikar 2009: 5–6)). The MC opening the event noted the recent and severe funding cuts across the social services sector, saying this would make it harder to develop an evidence base to inform policies, thus making the pooling of knowledge amongst NGOs, as was planned for today, especially important.

One by one, speakers took to the podium: a family GP, a local politician, a social worker turned manager from TMHC (the Transcultural Mental Health Centre), a social worker turned manager from STARTTS (the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Trauma and Torture Survivors), and a senior coordinator from Partners in Recovery. Between them, they canvassed their what they had learnt about serving CALD communities through their respective organisations, and distinct ways that their service provision evolved to more sensitively meet their clients' needs: from the doctor helping families understand how to pay their electricity bill, through to the value, for TMHC and STARTTS, of recognising how clinical diagnoses of mental illness jarred with the manifestations of adjustment issues experienced by their clients.

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It was only when the audience was invited to ask questions that the scale shifted. People working 'on the ground' asked one urgent, practical question after the other, bringing the polymorphous scale of the system of migrant mental health professionals starkly into view.

"I mean they've never even seen a doctor about this", said a legal aid worker of the family of a client who had urgent legal problems and "obvious mental health issues—psychosis". Her question was simple: she and her organisation had tried unsuccessfully to engage with the client's family on his worrying state. What should they do now? One of the speakers offered that it was a matter of educating the family, "which I gather has already been happening but with no luck…" she said, trailing off. Another speaker re-iterated that it would be about trying to garner the family's support. "They don't really care", explained the woman from Legal Aid, sitting back down, "they just want this [legal] situation gone".

Attention drifted to the back of the room where a community support worker wondered if there was a way to translate his Burundian clients' legal documents into Kirundi so he would understand them in detail. One panelist, half-joking, advised against using Google translate because it's "too literal". Another panelist pointed out that this was a macro-issue and the way to solve it would be to advocate different communities to fill the gaps by recruiting their own members as translators.

Each of these points, even the well-meant jibes, prompted a caveat to spring to my mind. I knew, for instance, from trying and failing to translate a Kirundi text online myself some weeks prior, that Kirundi was not a language that Google offered translations from or to. I also knew of a Liberian acquaintance's recent deflation over working as a community interpreter: she had keenly signed up for this role for something to do, but seemed disheartened telling me jobs were so sparse because her community was so small; she had enjoyed her first job, but said her client was nervous because he knew who she was, even though she didn't recognise him.

The conversation in the room carried on as a string of semi-futile suggestions. One panelist remarked on the challenges of using community translators for legal letters anyway, given that there may be concerns around privacy. Another added, somewhat unhelpfully, that being Australia, formal communication from the court system would always be in English. Eventually the woman from Legal Aid turned around and told the

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man with the Burundian client, "We can always take it on and bring in translators that we pay for".

Responses were sought, and responses were given. The simple, practical questions offered from the floor prove the hardest to answer in simple ways. That they were asked at all demonstrates the relevance of efforts to promote mental health awareness and to enlist more translators and advocates from those targeted groups amidst Sydney's diverse societies. That they were asked so urgently demonstrates the tandem work of tackling problems that come up every day, and of pressing on with schemes, festivals, information sessions, and of putting word of mental health services into 'the community'.

The MC announced that they would take one last question. A petite woman stood up at the front and introduced herself as a representative from the Cambodian community. In faltering English she made a confident criticism of TMHC and STARTTS. She mentioned members of her community that had approached STARTTS and had no communication with them. She asked, "How can we approach GPs to help our communities?" She voiced other concerns too, but from where I sat, several rows back, I could only catch fragments and forthright tones.

The panelist whom this representative had addressed was polite but terse in her response. "I think we've talked about this before", she began. "It's not a question of resources, I think it goes back to training potential people from the community—you don't have enough community people or community translators". The representative responded with critique of *them* for not making an effort to get their people out and talking to *her* people, who were struggling. She was told, "Right now nobody is doing anything to reach in and nobody is doing anything to reach out". A voice piped up from further back in the audience: "It's the second generation to focus on—to educate them, train them up and put them in the community". This mix of diversions pressed on until somebody with a microphone tactfully reminded the room that these discussions could continue over tea or coffee, and we were all invited to enjoy the sandwiches and danishes that sat plumply on doilies in trays. Just like that, the intensity and focus of the discussion, however uncomfortable, was punctured. It would not continue over hot drinks, but would be replaced with small talk and civil politeness, for the two women locked in debate, the panelist and the Cambodian community representative, moved to different sides of the room. All the same, tensions lingered.

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I do not have the backstory to this small social drama, and without it, it is impossible to make narrative sense of it all, but this scene was arresting—a coagulation of factors that struck me, compelling sustained attention. It was partially the sense of a long unsummable injustice prompting the Cambodian community representative to stand and speak; it was the sense of her savvy command of that moment to push her cause; it was also the tension that arched across the room as she pressed on, even when rebuked; it was the rebuke itself, delivered so coolly, shattering the impression of linear compassion that the speaker delivering it had made with her talk. Theirs was an exchange of unmet expectations lodged in different orientations to time—the woman representing her community who was compelled by present-day urgencies amongst those she knew, and the woman heading the organisation that studies mental health transculturally who likely works in broad visions of work and progress that stretch through the present into future, hoped-for decades. There was also the more uncomfortable suggestion that by appearing and speaking pointedly of her community's difficulties with services represented on the panel, the Cambodian woman—a part of the cultural and linguistic diversity we had gathered to address—had disrupted an expectation that the day's conversations would be *about* not *to* that 'diversity'. It is tempting, here, to question and critique the panelist's seeming hypocrisy, yet I want to suggest that there were no villains in the room that day, and that instead, this scene illustrated a set of roles, relationships and gaps that characterise the NGO scene.

For all this, this story seems a fitting frame for a chapter focused on community-run organisations as they relate to both the communities 'on the ground' that they serve and the 'higher up' bureaucratic communities that fund, oversee and encourage them (which, technically, they also serve). These relationships between communities of service and communities of need are fraught by complex and intersecting factors, which I will flesh out one by one, demonstrating some of the ways that the roles, relationships and gaps that mark the opening vignette are sustained, and the way they shape the trajectories and desires of the actors involved.

To do this, I focus on the role of community NGO, which is facilitated to bridge the gap between communities of service and those of need. As my early days working with one such NGO called Africare revealed, the pressure to perform legitimacy within a bureaucratic, development-sector style frame can overwhelm organisations. Without demonstrating their relevance in these terms of legitimacy, none of their activities are

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able to go ahead. I develop these observations within a consideration of the NGO niche in the context of frameworks and activities that comprise the multicultural-Australia celebration. By this I refer to the state-sanctioned celebration of harmony amidst diversity that manifests as nationwide cultural festivals and harmony days, within which certain Australian residents perform their difference for other Australian residents to consume (Hage 1998; Phillips 2008). Here, I begin developing an argument about what kinds of ethnic minority subjects are desirable and what kinds are dismissible in this frame, showing the value and desirability of community run NGOs like Africare, and others too. This entails considering the position of the self-appointed community gatekeeper and the pressures this role entails, as well as how hierarchies might exacerbate community divisions across class lines. Finally, I consider the symbolic capital attached to having responsibility for a community-run NGO and how this can, in a roundabout way, relate back to mental health: I draw on Obeyesekere's (1990) notion of the work of culture to develop an argument about how the culturally valorised NGO niche can be used by people are at the helm of NGOs, who are affected in the same ways as their NGO's target clientele, and that this position can help make sense of their own experiences of loss.

The micro: Africare

Before I continue, it is worth clarifying how I classify the type of community organisation that I focus on in this chapter. The groups I look are those whose organisations seemed more closely modeled on those in the aid and development sector, staffed predominantly (if not exclusively) by members of the community they represent, and whose objective is to design activities for this group of people in response to prompts offered by council grants, and/or who self-designate themselves as gatekeepers to the community for health, education, political, and social initiatives. They are distinct from another kind of community group that is also formalised, with elected positions, but that help organise events in like weddings, annual religious conferences, commemoration events, all of which most members attend. These latter type of groups are nodes of international ethnic communities—like the Banymulenge community, or the Rwandan community—and they often also plan initiatives to help people from the

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wider community who are located elsewhere, in the homeland or in other places where diaspora/expatriate members live. It seemed that such groups formalised their leaders and processes in service of activities that generally involved or affected them all. They co-ordinate in the interests of their wider group, while the type of community group I focus on here positions themselves as a bridge between groups (see also Hiruy and Eversole 2015: 4). 'Community', then, slips between being an emic and etic category to talk about groups who are ethnically, culturally, linguistically distinct. In the word's usage in the fields I work, however, it also acts as coded language for 'non-white', connoting ethnic enclaves. Looking to throw this tendency as well as for utility, I deliberately use the word with an eye to its broader meaning, groups with a common interest, to talk about bureaucratic communities, funding communities, and so forth. Hence, I describe the layer of NGOs I focus on as coordinating to match one community's 'needs' to another community's 'services'.

Amongst Sydney-dwelling people of Central and East African origin, there were a handful of groups of community-run grassroots NGOs, that seemed to facilitate the kind of 'reaching in and reaching out' the woman with the complaint in my opening vignette was told her community needed. These organisations were incorporated and had certifications to apply for funding, but they functioned in a sector in which funding is tight and competitive. They were generally established and run by volunteers, driven by the volunteers' motivation, and carried by on patches of funding or resources (an office, computers, a council funded caseworker, if they were lucky) from local council or church groups, or other larger, more complex NGOs whose interests it was in to support such projects for their own activities (for example: STARTTS, Partners in Health). The grassroots NGOs I encountered hosted, between them, a swatch of activities to help members of their community find employment, retrain, learn English, teach their children Swahili, teach Australian cultural awareness, teach Australian civil law, promote mental health awareness, promote general health awareness, provide childcare for working parents, advocate for women's issues, and organise peace and reconciliation workshops for people after whom trailed the fear and mistrust born of ethnic and ideological civil wars in their home countries. As such, they occupied a niche space in addressing social exclusion.

This niche space really came into bloom in the mid-1990s, in response to the Australian government's outsourcing of public services to NGOs. Those smaller,

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grounded organisations, particularly those representing disadvantaged groups, seemed an efficient, local and direct way to effect beneficial change (Hiruy and Eversole 2015), and the shift to contracting them for government's social services was mirrored in New Zealand too. In a way, this reorganisation of how social services are administered in Australia and New Zealand, and the accompanying optimism towards NGOs' potential to facilitate that, seems to parallel the idealisation of NGOs by development agencies operating in the developing world (Fisher 1997). Indeed, as I find and go on to discuss throughout this thesis, many of the ways that development projects and their associated NGOs in places like Nepal (Pigg 1996), Malawi (Swidler and Watkins 2009) and Lesotho (Ferguson 1994) have been understood and critiqued quite easily come to bear when talking about community development projects in Sydney, Australia. An apt critique to begin with is based on Ferguson's (1994) fieldwork in Lesotho, through which he demystifies the phenomenon of there being and continuing to be countless development projects in the region, despite their consistent failings. Ferguson finds that development discourse—the language of progress and accountability, the appearance of action—operates in ways that fulfil its own aims and agendas, its own continuity. Maintaining this discourse (a project in itself) often supersedes a project's obligations 'on the ground'. In the process, grassroots NGOs and community groups can also be subsumed into this discourse and its disconnection to *actual* beneficial change for the people whose lives development is meant to improve. The critique that NGOs become governmental extensions rather than independent intermediaries has been made in New Zealand too (see Larner & Craig 2002; Aimers & Walker 2008; Cordery 2012). With this professionalisation of community organisation comes a submission to audit culture and its "rituals of verification" (Power 1997:123), which ultimately affects how members of those organisations construct themselves and their institutions as professional subjects (Shore and Wright 1997).

In Sydney, in the circles in which I moved, it was of utmost imperative to NGOs vying for funding to be able to demonstrate the legitimacy of their activities and their fund-worthiness. Tess Lea calls this "the fundamental narcissism of bureaucratic practices" (2008: 228) and I was afforded a glimpse at its backstage on my first day of fieldwork in Africare's office. Located in a complex of start-ups and offices without signage on their door in a Western Sydney suburb, the Africare office got good sun. It looked like any other office with prominent calendars, some artwork, and Health &

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Safety posters for heavy lifting and optimum computer desk posture on display. There were also filing cabinets stacked upon filing cabinets, and drawers stacked upon drawers, all of which were crammed with printing papers, information booklets from partner organisations, draft printouts, annual reports, serving bowls and dishes and other miscellany ranging from the homely (a knitted oven mitt) to the bizarre (a tiny plastic toy mouse). On closer inspection, signs of disuse were evident; the water cooler was empty and the microwave was not plugged in nor was it anywhere near a plug. At my previous meetings here with Africare's director, Elijah, with whom I had negotiated being able to use Africare as a springboard for my fieldwork, we had sat around a large wooden table beside a window at one end of the room. On this day, I saw this table over by another window, and on top of it were stacked six spare computers that I recall clustered on the floor under this window when I came in initially for meetings. The thought of Elijah setting up the office for each of our meetings made me doleful.

I would soon learn that the organisation had recently seen an overhaul of personnel: a new directorial committee (all volunteers) had been voted in, and they had hired a new council supported part-time caseworker, Leela. Leela, an energetic ▮▮▮▮ woman who was fresh out of a social services training diploma, effused warmth. She had applied for Africare's casework role when the previous caseworker resigned, and got it. Rumours abounded the team overhaul was a step in the right direction, and Leela was tasked with making this discernible by doing up the office. "It needs to look professional; it needs to *be* professional" she declared.

Leela's quest entailed refurbishing the office's homely donated décor, painting its odd mocha walls white, and installing an air-conditioner within a tight budget of $2,000. She took to the task with gusto. On many of the days I had organised to linger in the office in the hope of meeting "the community", Leela and I would search for office furniture and appliances. She had a clear look in mind; clean, slick and fairly impersonal. In one ▮▮▮▮▮ furniture store, we appraised a suite of leather sofas. The brown two-person couch was $400. The broader brown couch was $480. "I would advise you get that one", said the shopkeeper[17] to Leela in a hearty tone, "Arabs don't want to sit too close together". If she was bothered by his remark, it did not show, as

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[17] I do not know and cannot guess at this shopkeeper's own ethnic background or identity.

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Leela nodded half-heartedly and moved on to his other wares. We made some rounds and at the counter, the shopkeeper asked who we worked for.

"Africare", Leela told him.

"Who does your organisation serve?" he asked.

"Afri-care so African people", she said.

"How's it funded? Government or something?"

"Yes, we have grants, but we still don't have too much so we're looking for good prices". Leela spoke distractedly, with the air of somebody searching through their bag for something they've lost while they're talking to you.

"Yeaaaah, the Liberals don't throw money around", said the shopkeeper, folding his arms. "Can't see Tony Abbott throwing money at things. Labour would throw money away"—by sleight of talk he switched from throwing around to throwing away—"but the Liberals wouldn't. And I think it might be a good thing." He rose from his seat as he said this, and crossed his arms. Leela seemed not to notice all his digs. She good-naturedly bid him good-bye, and we left, with her summarising out loud the prices and the items she was interested in for the office for me to note down.

Doing up the office took weeks riddled with setbacks. Leela's original painter's quote was higher than the budget for the entire refurbishment, and she despaired. I tried to make her feel better by insisting that we could gather a team—all the committee members, for instance—lay down drop sheets and paint the office ourselves. "I've done it before!", I assured her, "we could save so much money and it'll look just as good!"

"No—it needs to be done the proper way", she replied. Similarly, she lamented that the free-standing air-conditioner she had purchased remained uninstalled. January had crept along, and in the rising heat of Sydney's summer, worsened by office's sunny vantage, this room was a baking workspace that only Leela and I seemed to use. This prompted the purchase of the air-conditioner which, at the end of January, remained on the floor beside Leela's desk. An accordion pipe arched out of its back and up to the sliding window, which was left ajar. The pipe pointed outside, wedged between window and sill. I had leant over and touched the window, which was tinted. It was hot. The air near it was hot. The old black computer on Leela's desk was hot, as was the air around that. The air conditioner's panel cited the temperature of its surrounds: 30 degrees. Yet, when I met Elijah in the office one evening, the room was cool and comfortable and the air conditioner was on: wedging its exhaust pipe in the sliding window was his solution

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to its installation, rather than a temporary arrangement. In spite of Leela's frustration with that set-up, it actually seemed to work just fine.

Minor differences of opinion like this between Elijah and Leela tended to show up his appreciation of her way of doing things, his sense that she was helping Africare immeasurably with her professionalism; from the sign-in sheets she made up that she required everybody to fill out when they came into the office for anything at all, to the refurbishment that she pulled off marvellously, that was revealed at a workshop one weekend. She had purchased a small new computer desk for herself, and set the six spare computers up on her old desk. She stapled a black vinyl covering to the old wooden dining table and arranged all the old chairs around it. A set of shapely plastic stacking chairs had been purchased to set out for workshops and easily pack away. The old plastic garden chairs were gone, as were the dresser drawers and small filing cabinets that were stacked around the room. In their place was one tall, lean shelf, with most of the relevant folders lined up on it. And there was a low coffee table with a low settee by the front door. Looking professional made a difference; it certainly saved Elijah the trouble of repurposing the office's contents to whatever impression it was meant to perform on any particular day.

This, like so many other stories about Africare's operations, calls to mind the classic development critiques about how so-called grassroots organisations can be subsumed into meeting their obligations to their funders, and meeting the competitive criteria for more funding, so much so that this takes priority over community needs. Africare was still a fledgling organisation. If we approach these sketches of their beginnings as a learning curve in their development as a community organisation, then it is easy to map onto it the macro-scale broad vision of CALD community care being an investment many-generations-long, as expressed by the presenters and some audience members at the 'Mental Health: A CALD perspective' conference that I write about at this chapter's beginning. In Africare's case, bureaucratic requirements require that they incrementally perform degrees of legitimacy in order to get more and more opportunities to realise the organisation's goals. And this would not change, would likely only intensify, as they evolved. The question remains of whether long-term investment is thwarted or at all aided by these expectations, performances and technocratic interventions, and if it is thwarted, how much? As I go on to demonstrate, the spaces and roles enabled for organisations like Africare are fairly constrained.

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Despite these constraints, the symbolic power and promise that such organisations can evoke within the community and social services sector is notable, and this can have far reaching, but not always intended, effects.

While I carry on exploring this further over this chapter, using Africare as an example, I do so while also showcasing and exploring the sincerity of those driving Africare. To these latter ends, it is worth noting here that there was a distinction between the activities Africare directors and committee members did through the organisation — many of which seemed to only lightly touch their community— and the forms of care they all enacted on an everyday basis towards others in their communities which could not enter into the accounts and tallies that the organisation kept to vouch for its relevance. For instance, I got to know that directors Elijah, Carmella and Dina would regularly visit families and individuals who came to Australia from refugee camps, detention camps, or via other channels of escape almost immediately after they had arrived in Sydney, helping welcome and settle them. I also learnt that Carmella and her husband Vincent regularly opened their home to others who were suddenly without a place to stay (whether through hardship, or fallen-through reliance on acquaintances who lived here, as in the case of one young man who moved to Sydney alone to study and was asked the leave the house that his family back in Kigali had arranged for him to stay at) sometimes for months at a time. These forms of assistance and aid did not fulfil Africare's governmentally aligned funders' interests, *especially* when such assistance was extended to people who did not have Australian residency or a permanent protection visa (which grants several of the same rights as to a resident).

The elusive community, or, community as capital

In some ways, arguments about the constructed-ness of NGO operations in metropolitan Sydney are a cousin to arguments about the constructed-ness of state-sanctioned celebrations of cultural diversity. Writing about Harmony Day, cultural festivals and the like, Melissa Phillips (2008: online) observes that "from the fact that it is officially endorsed and funded by government we can conclude that [these] de-politicised and de-historicised staged encounter[s] with the 'Other' [are] a preferred model for interaction". As Tofighian (2016) also points out, sharing culture for the benefit of the

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dominant culture sends the message that things are getting better with social cohesion and we just need to give it time; this is a Liberal view oriented towards multiculturalism as a context in which diversity can be consumed and otherwise 'safely' integrated. More broadly, if we lean into the interpretation that harmony days and the like institutionalise an absence of conflict, we can see how these activities may fit with a broader phenomena that Laura Nader calls 'harmony ideology' (1997, see also Nader and Grande 2002). As part of developing an ethnography of control, Nader describes processes geared towards "moving people to see harmony rather than justice as desirable" (1997: 711). She uses varied examples to explore this phenomenon, one of the most compelling being alternative dispute resolution; a legal conflict mediation process, which prohibits anger and controls how conflicts can be defined and expressed (Nader 1997: 714). What these examples of harmony ideology have in common is to demonstrate that processes of control are manufactured, and in doing so, cultural values—favouring harmony over justice, for instance—can be transformed,[18] and power balances maintained.

Indeed, harmony days and other officiated multiculturalism celebrations, like the African/Australians photo exhibition described in the previous chapter, parcel their projects in ways such that the 'Australian way of life' is unthreatened, indeed, enhanced. In the associated imaginary, the playing field need not alter to accommodate new migrants, rather, services and communities are tasked with the embodied labour of getting new migrants' play up to speed. This is a construction that enables narratives of Australia's progressiveness, however fictional that may be. This is succinctly

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[18] The preferencing of harmony over justice or equality is regularly evident in Australian public culture. The public response to journalist, activist and engineer Yassmin Abdel-Magied's tweet on Anzac Day, July 2017, is a memorable and dramatic example. Abdel-Magied had tweeted the Anzac Day phrase of remembrance, 'Lest we forget', along with the names of contemporary sites of human rights violations Manus and Nauru (where Australia has offshore immigration detention centers). Her comment was seized upon, and citizens, national newspapers, and even the Australian Prime Minister at the time deemed her 'un-Australian'. Her transgression, according to these responses, can be understood as one of calling attention to contemporary injustice instead of participating in culturally sanctioned expressions of peace and remembrance. While Abdel-Magied had many supporters in this fray, she also lost her position at ABC news and moved to the UK shortly after these difficult events. In a self-authored article, Abdel-Magied explores the issue that her identity as a Sudanese-Australian, and not participating in the citizen mould latently expected of somebody of her background, fanned the fire around how her remark was received: 'I Tried to Fight Racism by Being a "Model Minority" — and Then It Backfired'. *Teen Vogue*, 28 Sep 2017 (available online at: https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fight-racism-model-minority-yassmin-abdel-magied).

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summarised in an open letter written in 2014 by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a pdf of which is sported on the Africulture festival's website: "As a nation, we have found unity in our diversity, respect in our differences, and have built a modern nation on the idea that anyone can get ahead provided they are prepared to have a go".[19]

Relatedly, communities come together at Sydney's annual Africulture festival; as the festival's online 'about' section declares:

> The festival invites all communities to actively participate in the event and increase their network to the African community. Through the Africultures Festival, African and non-African communities have an opportunity to engage with each other, promoting links with the local businesses, organisations and service providers.

I went along on my own that day, expecting to bump into friends from Africare who would be performing with their dance troupe. The walk to the venue from Auburn train station felt festive; throngs of youth, families, couples, and other solo festival-goers made tracks through the suburban streets both to and from the venue, with those heading there bearing witness to festival souvenirs and teasers upon those headed from there: painted faces, savoury food smells floating out of white foam containers, coloured beads, and balloons bearing messages about the importance of dental hygiene (which we discuss more in the next chapter).

The festival space was composed of two stages, a big one in a large field and a smaller one directly out the back of the Auburn Community Hall, each encircled by sets of stalls. I entered the smaller field first, and made my way through the stalls, first a few selling outfits, beaded jewellery and art from Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, then around the wider wall, where a couple of services had stalls jostled up again more art and some t-shirts. One of the stalls was a new organisation called CADA, an acronym for Central African Development Agency. A varied set of wares filled their table: t-shirts and baseball caps with the organisation's insignia on it, a newsletter, flyers and an annual report. Just like a refurbished multi-purpose office, objects on a table demonstrated legitimacy too. Their flyers advertised training workshops they ran for not-for-profit organisations that might want to (as the flyers put it) "work effectively with African migrants and refugees", "learn more about ways of communicating with African

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[19] Available online at: http://www.africultures.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Letter-from-PM-Tony-Abbott.pdf [Accessed 15 July 2015]

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migrants and refugees", "be aware about some sensitivities when communicating with members of African communities". Aaron, the man at the stall, told me that although they were a new group, they had already run some successful workshops in Wollongong.

Their newsletter summarised their activities since they were inaugurated 12 months prior. It featured a series of colour photographs of groups of people, predominantly but not always African, with the CADA pop-up signage somewhere in frame: a non-African woman standing beside the sign on the street by a brick building; a group sitting around a wooden table strewn with pens, papers, water bottles, plates of food, with the sign in the corner behind them; a large group huddled around the sign, posing for a photo before a lushly grassed garden where (the caption explained) a barbeque was held to promote friendship and unity among Australian Africans as well as between African and non-African organisations. On one page, a testimonial from one of their workshops is quoted: "I have learnt a lot about Africa. Through CADA training, now, I can see that Africa is a continent not a country. Oh!"

That Africa is not a country is a fact that has become something of a figure of speech through much repetition, both joking and informative, to redress a tired tendency of glossing political, social and historical differences across Africa. Glancing over this flyer while the CADA representative, Aaron, reiterated that many Australians don't know that Africa is not a country, I could not help but wonder if this fact represented the actual dearth of knowledge amongst CADA's target participants? I asked Aaron about this. He chuckled and said "You'd be surprised!" Explaining my research, I expressed interest in coming to their next local workshop to take notes on the kind of training they offered and who they offered it to. I was added to their contact list.

Across the way from CADA and the bustling clothing and accessory stalls, there was a relatively unpeopled stall with a pale, pea green tablecloth and banner. Between here and there, a band was setting up and DJ music boomed to dancing children and cliques of tall, attractive youths. A McDonalds tent boasted a crowd, as did the long face-painting tables with brightly dressed kids with bright, glittery faces, and above the lot of them, carnival flags in red, yellow, purple and green hung limp in the blazing sun, summoned to occasional half-hearted flutters. In the midst of this scene, the pale green stall stood out. Its vertical banner—a tall replica of its flyers—said "Plant the seed to

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recovery, Western Sydney Partners in Recovery, Mental health program" above an image of a pair of Caucasian hands cupping dirt from which a sapling emerged.

When I walked over, the woman at the stall warmly told me about their services to help people with mental health issues transition back into their lives, and I told her about my research. I asked after the interest in her stall, was there much?

"A little… A little…", she said. Then: "This is still not something people talk about or are open about and we've noticed that."

"I've noticed that too", I enthused, "It's been really tough to find people in this situation for my research, partly because of that, I think".

"To be honest we haven't had much success connecting with the African communities", she noted, "but I connected with another organisation today that we might be able to work with on doing that better".

"Ah—who?", I asked.

She squinted across the lawn. "I can't read their name there, but they're just straight ahead, there"

"Is it, CADA?" I offered.

"Yes that sounds right. They sound like they'll be able to help us out…maybe even introducing us to their community, holding an information session or something with them…"

I could tell many more stories about people wanting inroads into a community to which they do not already belong, in order to work with or provide services to them, being palpably drawn to any hint of an opportunity to be introduced to 'the community' — and I include myself in that list. I recall, at the outset of my research when I was still designing my methods, trying to find a way begin forming relationships with Central African people in Sydney; a city I did not live in, and where I knew few people at all. I had typed "Congolese + mental health + Sydney + community" into an internet search field, and traced my way quite quickly, hit by hit, to Africare, and took it from there.

There are also stories to be told about the pressures on a community NGO to *produce* this community in need, which they position themselves as the gatekeepers to. Anxiety about Africare's seeming estrangement from its community had tumbled out of the new caseworker, Leela (who, incidentally, had no prior connection to the community Africare represents) shortly after her work began; how there were no clients (as in, members of the community who consult with them), no records of past clients,

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how she didn't *know* the community, so how could she take steps to resolve this without assistance? Leela, eager to fill her role handsomely, had inherited Africare's need for clients. "How do you know this lady?" she had asked me, when I mentioned Amelie, another Central African woman I intended to meet with for my study. "I want to meet her! Maybe she can be a client?", Leela had remarked. I told Leela that Amelie ran her own organisation with its own clients, so it struck me as unlikely she would want to be a client of Africare's, and attend their educative workshops, and solicit help from their caseworker, when she enacted these activities herself. Leela, who was on this day was gripped by the need to resolve the problematic dearth of clients, suggested that Africare could co-host Amelie's organisation's workshops with her.

Leela and Africare's directors worked hard for attendance numbers at their own workshops. At one women's health workshop scheduled for 11am on a Saturday morning in Africare's office, I was, at 10.50am, the only woman there. Elijah's phone rang; he answered and told the caller "You need to be here! Why? Because you are a woman, and I'm not!" At 11am, Africare's Women's Affairs Officer, Amanda, arrived and I heard her before I saw her: "Where are the women?" she exclaimed from the doorway. "You were supposed to bring two women!" Elijah shot back, laughing. Amanda sighed, taking a seat beside me, and began busily tapping into her phone.

I want to underscore here the unique difficulty faced by those who take up the mantle of community leader and gatekeeper, which is that in offering to bring the community to the opportunities they facilitate for their collaborators, and that their collaborators facilitate for them, they have to somehow deliver by bringing people to their events. The difficulty this entailed was a vexation Africare's management committee often pored over at their committee meetings, or in the lead-up to events. As was often noted in such conversations, many people worked on the weekends when workshops were held, or else busied themselves with families, friends and life in general. The prospect of attending council-run self-betterment, community education events perhaps was low priority. As well as this, I asked a friend who had moved over with his family from Burundi that year, "You know how you told me your community is distrustful amongst themselves? Does that mean they're less likely to go to an organisation run by people from their community?"

He wasted no time responding with, "Oh of course." He angled his head rhetorically, "[you saw] how many people came to that last workshop".

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"Yeah," I commented.

"It's because the leaders are Rwandan, Burundian. That's all."

Another angle of illumination on this situation can be taken from Hiruy's ethnographic investigation of the relationships between African NGOs and the communities they purport to represent in Melbourne, South Australia and Tasmania (Hiruy 2014, Hiruy and Eversole 2015). Hiruy and Eversole (2015) argue that in spite of spirited focus on and talk of community empowerment, the fact of government affiliated groups and more powerful NGOs favouring and building alliances with some grassroots NGOs over others, and assuming that those who claim to speak for wider communities really do, ends up producing a sense of disempowerment and disillusionment amidst people in these wider communities, who claim to feel overlooked and unable to have direct conversations with political bodies themselves. As Hiruy and Eversole put it: "the sentiment among disadvantaged communities was that NGOs are equally at fault: that they position themselves as gatekeepers to ensure that communication between disadvantaged communities and governments flows through them" (2015: 155). One wonders if perhaps the Cambodian community representative summoned by her experiences to address the panel directly during a CALD workshop could relate to this sense of ostracisation from those who were meant to serve her and her community, and was driven to make their collective grievances known directly and forthrightly instead?

Ultimately, in most of the Africare workshops I attended during fieldwork, Africare's board members and their spouses made up the bulk of participants. This way, those attending workshops and information sessions were not necessarily those in most need, but they provided a stand-in of sorts, filling seats and participating, which helped ensure continuity of the alliances between Africare and the groups that affiliated with them. After all, the community in need is an elusive commodity. It seems too that these NGO-related networks of noise and obfuscation help render it an elusive community. But it is not an imagined community.

Community, needs & desires

Overall, the pull to community-targeted, community-run events about healthcare and peace was understandably less alluring than more social, celebratory events (like the

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Africulture festival and Harmony Day parties) and of less immediate relevance to many people than the fairly rare event on employment opportunities or visa advice, which many perhaps felt was more suited to their needs. This way, funded community NGOs end up performing a delicate balance between activities that are encouraged by funders and collaborators—like health education and awareness-raising—and those that people in the community voice a need for, with visa assistance and employment opportunities high amongst those needs. The two are in fact linked. Leela often lamented that she had limited channels to direct Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders to when they phoned the office. The TPV, which was invented and introduced by Australia's Howard government in 1999, is a visa category that offers temporary Australian protection to recognised refugees fleeing confirmed persecution whose arrivals in Australia were "unauthorised". The visa lasts for a three-year period, after which TPV holders are expected to return home if the circumstances of their persecution have ameliorated, or re-apply for a TPV renewal. While this controversial visa has been dis-established and reinstated multiple times since being introduced, it remains active as of December 2014. Those holding this visa have limited mobility and rights; if they leave Australia they cannot re-enter again, they have no family reunion rights, and can access only some social services—like Medicare, Rent Assistance, Family Tax Benefit, Child Care Benefit, Early Health Assessment and Intervention Program, torture and trauma counselling, Centrelink job matching—and are allowed to work, but few employment opportunities exist for TPV holders. On top of this, very few organisations or services in the settlement sector are funded or even authorised to assist non-citizens and non-residents living in Australia. Meanwhile, unemployment is a fundamental setback that the few refugees and migrants who do approach Africare face. Yet, as Leela noted with regret, as long as so many of them held TPVs, there was nothing that she or Africare could do to help them.

More generally too, difficulties finding employment were rife amongst the people around and targeted by Africare. Telling me stories of his personal experiences with discrimination while job-hunting, Jebediah—an Africare board member, and former journalist and aid worker in Ethiopia who now worked in a factory in Sydney—related his conversation with local MP and Africare supporter, Chris Hayes, about this problem. He said, "Chris says it's a communication issue", and explained how he

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amicably challenged the politician on this. "I asked him, 'Can you understand me when I speak?' He can. But it took me so long to find a job. It's not a communication issue".

The politician's framing of Jebediah's problem as a 'communication issue' evokes once more the salience of the same assimilation ethos that drives multiculturalism parties like Africulture festival and Harmony Day. It is an ethos in which divisions between communities are staged—with an Anglo culture at the core and the cultures of "Third World looking Australians" (Hage 1998) at the periphery—so that their symbolic bridging may be enacted. Importantly, this bridging discourages pointing to deficiencies on the part of Australia's political status or cultural core; this assimilation ethos is a one-way street. It is for this reason, I expect, that MP Chris Hayes neutralised Jebediah's allusions to racism in the workforce. It is for this reason too, I expect, that the multicultural mental health symposium-goers shut down the woman who complained that her community was failed by local mental health services. This also points to the limits of the kind of inclusion that are sanctioned or enabled by many projects in this sector, or rather, misunderstandings about what kind of assistance NGOs are able and willing to extend.

In this respect, some of Africare's committee members expressed frank disillusionment towards the "social business" venture, Grameen group, that they hosted a community event with. Prior to this event, they had high hopes for the collaboration: Grameen provided mentorship and financial assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs, and its founder had made a rousing, inspiring speech at a business lunch Jebediah and Carmella were invited to. However Jebediah deemed the consultation event Grameen later held with Africare (which I did not myself attend) "discouraging". He elaborated on this for those of us who were not there:

> You know Theo wants to open a restaurant; he was told it was best if he became a partner in an existing restaurant and then applied for a grant. Who would expect you to be a partner if you're bringing nothing? And Solomon, he's started his cleaning business, but needs a few more things to be really operational; a mechanical cleaner, a van. He was rejected too. I feel like they are happy to support if you want to run a catering business out of your home, but open your own restaurant, out of the question.

Amanda countered him on this. "So it was not to your expectations, but they have to do that. They're a business. They're trying to make the fastest guaranteed return on investment". Jebediah chuckled, "Yes, yes, capitalism, I know, I just don't think it's a good alliance for Africare to have, but we'll see" he said with a diplomatic shrug.

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Jebediah and Amanda's exchange is poignant for how they recognise and excuse (respectively) the marginality-maintaining interests of services Africare might collaborate with. In the end, the collaboration with Grameen went ahead.

It makes sense that those running small, fairly new community organisations would join the cause of uniting their needy communities with services that could help them—even if those needy communities are difficult to define and to meet. It is not that this group's vulnerability is fictional and their troubles non-existent. Reports from health practitioners and community representatives tend to suggest otherwise. Indeed, the vignette opening this chapter itself registers that gaps gape on. However, the deep symbolic capital that comes to accumulate around community gatekeepers and aid industries more generally, combined with the void of alternative ways and spaces for certain people living in Australia to matter in (Chapter One), do their own work on the shape of community NGO trajectories and their organisers' desires.

The full array of complex, contradictory, intersecting desires and trajectories was all too manifest at a meeting between Africare's directors, Elijah and Thomas, and Georges, a community development project officer (who was also African) from a large, fairly independent organisation seeking to mentor and nurture the capacity of more fledgling community organisations like Africare. This meeting would determine whether Africare would gain Georges' organisation's mentorship, so it entailed a preliminary display of legitimacy (perhaps that is why Elijah invited me, a doctoral researcher aligned with their group, along?). The four of us sat around a low coffee table in a small meeting room on the ground floor of Georges' building. Georges introduced himself and this project, explaining that it was community driven, therefore, he explained, "we'll write what you think you need…we won't tell you what you need". In keeping with this, the meeting would involve not a needs assessment, but a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

We started with strengths. "Think of it in terms of what would wreck the organisation if it was taken away", Georges suggested.

Elijah responded quickly: "It's members".

"Why?", asked Georges.

"Because without them there is no organisation". Georges wrote this down and asked for more.

"We have an office and an address", Elijah offered.

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"Keep going, just list them", Georges said, head bent as he scribbled away.

"We have an active board", said Thomas.

Georges invited him to explain this.

"We have active communities under our community", he began, then explained that they were "communities you can count on because you need them for support or attendance of functions".

Eventually, Elijah mentioned their caseworker, Leela, which Georges re-framed as funding. Elijah and Thomas made a few more suggestions of the organisation's strengths: "…we have equipment for training", "…computers" (referring to the six that never got turned on), "social media and YouTube accounts…", "we have groups…like a youth performance group doing cultural dance".

"Any other groups?" Georges asked.

"We have the settlement services", Elijah replied.

"Oh, that's the same as the caseworker, right?"

"Yes."

When we moved on to the weaknesses, Thomas and Elijah were quicker and more confident composing a list: "the board's lack of managerial skills", "our lack of strategic plan as a document", "time management", "our website needs updating", "we're not successful at getting grants, we need better skills writing the applications", "our office location probably doesn't capture attention, we need to be on the ground floor". We moved through the analysis, with Georges interjecting occasionally to clarify or re-frame a point. Towards the end, as we listed threats to the organisation, Elijah confidently declared that unemployment was a threat.

Georges looked up from his notepad. "Can you explain that?", he asked.

"Yes, well, unemployment is the number one problem in our community", Elijah said, "and people keep wanting help with that instead of coming to our workshops".

"How is that a threat?" asked the bewildered Georges.

"It's a threat", began Elijah, "because if we can't help them with their number one problem why should they come to us?"

This might have been where Georges' community-driven obligations stalled. "I'm reluctant to make that a threat and not a weakness. Why don't you make it your number one focus? Shift your organisation to that. Make the community need drive

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your priorities…community consultations are meant to identify the needs of the community…that matter surpasses the activities of the organisation…that's what community driven *is*!"

Thomas and Elijah seemed unconvinced.

When we left, walking away, I told Elijah that I agreed with Georges, and I thought it was a good idea to focus more on employment. "We want a strategic plan", Elijah maintained, "all the rest can come after".

This story paints a particularly disparaging view of Africare, but to rest there would be too simple and only partial. This warrants some fleshing out: I could tell two stories about Africare and other organisations like it in their fledgling form. I could tell one story as an arts graduate groomed to suspect development and aid projects, and generally critical of efforts to enact a vulnerable group's imagined vulnerability and imagined needs, and then subject a group of marked people to those enactments. In that story, Africare meets the criteria of the self-fulfilling aid presence—from its fixation with appearances to its seeming deferment of meeting its community's actual and immediate needs through the organisation the way that many its members do as individuals, and as families, as part of their everyday sociality. In the other story I could tell, Africare's directors and committee members are themselves subject to many of the problems their agency seeks to resolve for others (even though arguably, they are more socially, financially and culturally comfortable in Australia than those others). There are extensive retraining courses that Carmella would have to complete in order for her medical training to carry weight beyond this diaspora community, in which "Dr" is used when introducing her at events and on the website. And Phillipe, also a director, could probably use an experienced set of eyes to go over the expensive, extensive paperwork he has been preparing to bring his wife and four children over from a temporary respite in Tanzania. Elijah and Thomas' answers during the SWOT analysis can be tempered by so many other moments in this ethnography that demonstrate that there is little reason to doubt that Africare's board's intentions are sincere. If anything, it is suggestive of how they themselves distinguish between informal acts of community care and the kinds of care or activities that garner a different sort of recognition. Caring constructively to be validated by the development industry subjects a person—a group of people—to certain pressures and there is a blue print of impressions to conform to:

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an impression of efficacy and professionalism, which an office, a PO Box, a steering committee, and a paid caseworker help to fulfil.

As well as this, the directors' involvement with this group is like a tagline to go with their name, and taglines give their names muscle, feet to stand on. People with names with taglines get invited to deliver keynote speeches at women's advocacy and refugee advocacy events, to speak for their community in the newspaper and on the radio. Names with taglines have a traction, a momentum of their own in cyberspace, which is the first place people go to find out about things they don't know about: once more, recall the simple Google search I made at the outset of my study that lead me to Africare.

Swidler and Watkins (2009) describe the promise inherent in NGO positions for the aspirational, ambitious individuals volunteering at them in Malawi. Their premise of examining the relationships between aid intentions and aid effects enacted through NGOs leads them to categorise the social landscape into three groups spanning Malawi's capital city and villages around it. The first group is the villagers (busy with farming, trading, fishing, labour, and other precarious subsistence activities, whom development projects are meant to help). The second is the elites in the capital ("capable energetic Malawians" who work with international experts to "devise policies and programs that, they expected, would transform backward, poor, and dependent village communities" (2009: 1182)). Meditating between the first two is the third group:

> the interstitial elites, those still based in villages or small trading centers, but with enough education and gumption to nurse the hope of finding a job in the formal sector rather than fishing or farming—[who] hoped that they might be able to parlay their years of volunteering with NGOs into a salaried position that would confirm their status among the educated and urban rather than the backward and rural (Swidler and Watkins 2009: 1182).

I cannot claim that the people creating, running, and gathering funding for Africare share all the socioeconomic qualities of interstitial elites in Malawi, or that the notion of "villagers", with all its baggage, has any significant bearing on my fieldsite. However the roles and relationships between the three distinct hierarchical strata that Swidler and Watkins describe in the Malawi NGOs correspond neatly to the roles and relationships around NGOs in Sydney: with communities of service, communities of need, and in between, the community NGO, gatekeeping and mediating relationships between the first two groups.

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As well as this, the promise latent in NGO involvement as a means to improved status (or at least an imagined improved status) is as salient in the Malawi scene as in Sydney. Where Swidler and Watkins write about interstitial elites who were villagers aspiring to "escape the subsistence framing and trading of the village" (2009: 1189) and enter "formal economies" (ibid) of the city, I write of ambitious, compassionate people who often have established professions and businesses in previous lives in other countries, who are aspiring to transcend the limited meaning of their meager employment prospects in a new country, and build bridges into a more socially invested industry as volunteers, helping others like them with the struggles of settlement and representing their community well to local people at the same time. As Elijah said of one of Africare's projects (quoted in Chapter One): "We want to show Australia what our communities are capable of. That they're not just coming here needing help and assistance they're achieving grand things, and maturing into conflict resolution and peace." In a culture in which NGOs are constructed as invaluable and imperative in these projects of community betterment, one of their unintended effects is the alteration and shaping of desires and aspirations this way (see also Swidler and Watkins 2009).

"Mama Nathalie"

In the last section of this chapter, I take this point about desires and aspiration one step further. To do this, I tell the story of Mama Nathalie. To me during my fieldwork, Mama Nathalie was a breath of fresh air in an NGO world because of her strident and eloquent critiques of this sector's activities. She could tell tale after tale of children who have been lost to families in her community amidst the upheaval of transitioning and resettlement—she spoke of teenagers who struck out and left their families, and were supported in this by state services who treated them as adult. She spoke of teenagers who were struck by disciplining parents, who then exercised their rights in this country to leave their families, or else were taken by Family and Community Services (FACS). █

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██ Her stories and her delivery were alive, rapturous, personal and maddening. An

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NGO worker herself, her claims drew an important link between the ameliorative efforts through which services both tried to support her marginalised community's involvement and contributed to their estrangement.

I had tried to meet up with Mama Nathalie for my project for a long time. The first time we met at a multiculturalism party right at the beginning of my fieldwork, she had pressed her business card into my hand. Hers was the only card I collected that day. It felt precious, ripe with prospects. She had made an impression on me. With calm conviction she had spoken eloquently of the schemes she dreamed up to help women like her turn their skills towards generating income. She seemed embedded in her society: a networker, a gatekeeper. She struck me as somebody warm enough to take on a wide-eyed ethnographer and pragmatic enough to do so without breaking her stride. The earliest stages of fieldwork are full of such rudimentary, optimistic assessments of the possibilities ahead. The ethnographer arrives exuding warmth willy-nilly, willing to build extensive relationships with whoever is ready to reciprocate, a compassionate strategy for building a field.

I kept her calling card safe. I tried again and again to meet with her once more, "to talk more about my project" and "to see if we could work together", but to no avail. Many months into my year of fieldwork I had given up, assuming she did not wish to or was unable to entertain me and did not want to express this outright. Then I watched the YouTube video in which she passionately decried Australian mental health services for taking African children away from their families, and criminalising the families that loved them. She echoed claims recorded by Georgina Ramsay (2016) who works with Central African refugee and migrant mothers who have had children removed by Australian child welfare. Ramsay's ethnography follows African women through the legal and bureaucratic micro-interventions of child protection cases in NSW and Victoria. She provides a basis to describe the grounds of these children's removal from their black mothers as often simply that they do not conform to agency's expectations for white neoliberal motherhood. The disturbing correlation to Australian state removal of Aboriginal children from their families in both the Stolen Generation era and in contemporary life is not lost on Ramsay nor on the mothers whose losses she moved close to (2016: 324). These mothers and Ramsay echo Mama Nathalie's impassioned calls for justice. I decided to call Mama Nathalie again; after all, I told myself, *she* had pressed her card into my hand.

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The next day I was in Mama Nathalie's brightly coloured office. ████

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██ She

invited me to take a seat on the couch and building into a rhythm of rapport, she started

to tell me stories that demonstrated her stake in my studies, and the knowledge she

could give me. I took my notepad out and asked if I may take notes. She said, "Of

course, this is research, you will need to document it all properly."

In the first story she told me, a boy was released from the hospital last week on

Thursday and he did not have a home to go to—"they just let him go, let him travel on a

train from Orange, Orange to Sydney, by himself. He's been hospitalised for 9 months

for mental health and he's just been left, like that. They didn't contact his family...

These caseworkers they don't care, it's a business, they just want the clients. Now he is

homeless. I spoke to him, Thursday I said you don't want to stay with your family, fine,

you sleep at my house—I am a community leader," she put a hand to her heart, "so I

can take people, you can stay with me."

She also told me an older story about a poor boy who got addicted to drugs and

was once again taken from his family "by force". She also said that the young people

want to leave their family, they are confused and they lie, and so I gather that the force

she refers to is directed at the family: the boys are taken against the family's will. She

exuded grief and thick critique at these Australian services, who, she said, ironically,

she herself works with. I explained that if I had records and concrete data about these

incidents, I would hopefully be able to say something about it in the context of my

research.

"I will tell you stories, I can tell you stories", she offered.

"I know, that's great", I said, "but I would also need something more to be able

to use this, like to meet with these families if they wouldn't mind meeting me, the

caseworkers, the clinics, and talk to them about these issues too".

She thought for a moment, then told me that one of the families would be fine to

meet, they were—as she put it—educated, they could talk to me and would understand

what I was doing. The other family, she said, was wary of her because they connected

her with the services that took their boy. ████████████████████████

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This meeting was the last time I would speak so candidly with Mama Nathalie. We were interrupted by a phone call, and some time into it, she showed me out, asking me to return the following day at the same time to talk to her more. When I tried contacting her to confirm this, and then to reschedule, I could no longer connect with her or strike up an exchange again by phone or by email. The sense of her grief and the scene of professional advocacy around her, which she had invited me into but briefly that day, struck me imperceptibly. For a long while after this meeting, it was difficult to know how to unpack and in any way evaluate it, yet it also refused to be ignored.

Drawing on arguments made over the course of this chapter, I want to suggest that the NGO industry is culturally valorised, and that people like Mama Nathalie can use their participation in this industry to help work through jarring troubles they have suffered (sometimes at this very industry's own hands). Obeyesekere's notion of the work of culture (1981, 1990) is pertinent here. With reference to young women in Sri Lanka who suffer trauma, and train as ecstatic priestesses in order to cognitively reframe their symptoms, Obeyesekere suggests that culturally valorised symbols can be co-opted to make coherence of debilitating cognitive experiences. The work of culture is in the process of endowment of public symbolic forms with other meanings, and involves movement back and forth, between "public and private" (1990: xix) as he puts it, in the transformation. Through their training, the Sri Lankan temple dancers encounter new meanings and knowledge of spiritual dimensions that helps them reframe emotional conflicts that expressed as symptoms of trauma in a way that diminishes those conflicts' harmful expressions whilst also elevating their cultural status, giving shape to more psychosocially integrated selves. Budden (2010) extends on the work of culture thesis. He draws on historical narratives from sufferers of "psychological distress" in Brazil who have engaged, to varying degrees, with mediumship or evangelical practices that have transformed their interpretations of what ails them, in some cases, made these more manageable (at least at the time of Budden's fieldwork). In both cases, symbols, once internalised, can offer a sense of psychosocial integration

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and can allow people to draw on these symbolic intimations to reframe and express their trauma.

I did not sustain the kind of engagement with Mama Nathalie to explore in detail how the psychoanalytical angles of Obeyesekere's theoretical proposition align with her story (or not). However, his line of thought seems to complement arguments offered by Swidler and Watkins (2009), and others too, pointing to the ways that operations with a practical objective, like community development, can not only be subsumed into their own bureaucratic discourses, but can also be energised as symbols, and this way become channels for meanings and desires that they were not necessarily designed to facilitate. It seemed that this was a quality at least some of Africare's directors recognised. I think here of Dina's poignant admission (told in casual tones) that one of her fellow directors was extremely enthusiastic about participating in their workshops. Of this person, Dina said that they:

> will be the facilitator, the translator—everything! …[they] would interrupt everything!—when [the facilitator] started giving out certificates at the end, [they] went up the front to be the first one and start distributing the certificates.

It was poignant because Dina made sure this director was able to continue doing these activities, and she worked with them to try to minimise them doing so in too disruptive a way: Dina would 'keep an eye' on them, calling them the night before a workshop to go over how they would participate. It seems worth underscoring the link, then, between the array of difficulties that grassroots community NGO directors themselves have experienced in the settlement process, and the sense of an ability to express and enact those difficulties constructively at the helm of their own NGO.

Conclusion

I only depict a very slim slice of a vast network and industry, here. But we see how between the roles, networks, campaigning, and busy activities of the NGO scene, there is also an estranged community, and a series of searches and stand-ins for this community. As I note towards the start of this chapter, the community 'in need' is not entirely invented. If we consider health alone, there is substantial evidence that people who were not born in Australia and who do not speak English fluently use health, illness prevention and mental health services disproportionately less frequently than

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Australian-born English-speaking people (Manderson and Allotey 2003; Allotey, Manderson and Grover 2001; Jirojwong and Manderson 1999; Stuart, Minas, Klimidis, and O'Connell, 1996). As well as this, several of the key issues noted over extensive consultations with 2,500 African Australians (not including the NGO groups) for *"In our own words" African Australians: A review of human rights and social inclusion issues* (Australian Human Rights Commission 2010) are precisely the types of issues organisations like Africare sought to address with their workshops and information sessions: mental health awareness, general health awareness, cultural adjustments, understanding of the law, and so forth. Yet, from where I stood alongside Africare's directors, the community 'in need' remained somewhat elusive.

The community in need that infuses this chapter has much in common with the uneducated members of the community that infuse scenes in the next chapter; both groups populate the discourse of those I spent most time with, and both groups are discursively simplified—depicted as caricatures but compellingly absent. One of the haunting questions in charting such complex assemblages as those surrounding the therapeutic networks of this chapter, and their effects, is: how does this happen? How—when states and centers of some power invest so many resources and originates so much ideology with one intention, of ameliorating the situation for some of its members—does the opposite occur? Part of what this thesis demonstrates is that there is no simple answer to this question. Rather, that a confluence of historical, bureaucratic and ideological forces produce an array of effects. We see, in the next chapter, how such forces come together to elevate the importance of education and of being 'educated', and how this buttresses awareness-raising development projects targeting migrants and refugees in Australia. This chapter has demonstrated some of the ways that the organisation of roles, relationships and networks in the social services sector targeting more marginalised (or, to use their terminology, 'diverse') groups contributes to producing and reproducing those gaps. We can build on this in the next chapter's examination of how conceptions of what it means to be, or to not be, educated also works on organising social gaps. An established literature studying and critiquing the development sector can be drawn on productively to help formulate this point of view. But on top of this, this chapter has shown us how moments in which people representing the social services sector are challenged by people representing the marginalised groups can fall flat. How, in spite of the accumulated meanings attached to

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running a community NGO and representing community, in the NGO niche, critics like Mama Nathalie at the end of this chapter and the woman voicing the complaint in the vignette at the start are unlikely to be validated by those they critique. Their complaints are acts of non-compliance, and in making them, they are refusing to participate in the narratives made for them (see also Chapter One). This refusal seems to result in a kind of abandonment. Though, if we can describe it as such, it is worth paying heed to Mama Nathalie's observation that this abandonment occurs in the same space as the humanitarian project involving NGOs and the tiers of efforts to reach out, from centers of funding, through larger complex NGOs and state services. It is abandonment at the site of ardent engagement.

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<center>**Chapter Three**</center>

<center>**On Being (and Not Being) 'Uneducated'**</center>

Uneducated others elsewhere

With striking regularity, people I spoke to during my fieldwork talked about uneducated people from their non-Australian countries who were both "back home" and here, in Australia. Often, this happened in serious tones when I introduced myself and explained that I was studying the diverse ways people deal with troubling mental and emotional states, and what options were available to relative newcomers to Australia for pursuing diverse kinds of help. "Ah yes", the conversation would normally go, "that is a big problem in our community". A series of points would then follow: that lots of people in the community suffer from trauma or depression, but that there is stigma about mental illness, and that being uneducated, those people do not know of or do not trust in psychology, even though there are so many services here in Australia. A few times I was told that the Rwandan and Burundian society here (who I spent so much of my time with) was split between more educated, cosmopolitan sorts who had been caught up in the war, and those whose journeys had been relatively less privileged, involving years in refugee camps: "they went straight from those rural villages, into war, into refugee camps and then to Australia—they come here, they've never even seen a microwave before—imagine!" An 'uneducated' couple with this less privileged background figured in a moving story a part-time social worker (himself Ugandan) told me about a man he had case-worked: it had emerged, he said, quite coincidentally and after two meetings with this man, that the man cared full-time for his paraplegic wife, yet did not think to mention this at all, let alone offer this information to show his entitlement to a carer's allowance and carer support. In such stories, a sense that those who were uneducated could be and ought to be helped came through.

One way or another, uneducated-ness would also be raised anytime I enquired pointedly after 'alternative' or 'non-Western' ways of addressing non-physiological troubles, or as I often worded it, the options available to people back home that were not so over here. "Well, yes, there are no witchdoctors in Australia", George replied,

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deadpan, before launching into an exasperated tirade about his fellow Burundians who still believed in witchcraft. George's rant, which passionately compelled our companions at the café that afternoon, Leonardo and Patrice, who were also Burundian, into agreement too, emphasised that uneducated people of course believed it, but "even *educated* Burundians, you won't *believe* how many of them *still* believe". In general, though, people I talked to said it was the uneducated amongst them who would know about the traditional spiritual healers I sometimes asked after—even those who claimed to be Christian.

As well as a cause for concern, these uneducated others were a source of bewilderment and gossip. They animated a story Elijah told amongst close friends, also African (and me: a Mumbai-born, Aotearoa New Zealand-raised, Indian woman), one Saturday afternoon while a cricket game played softly on the television in the front of the room. We had been talking about the ways gender expectations underscored relationships amongst couples we knew, and Elijah leaned in with a rousing commentary on the fishermen at Lake Kivu in the Congo, whose wives would hoist them onto their backs when they returned from a morning's fish, and carry them from the front doorstep, to the bathroom, where they would wash them down with a sponge, then carry them to the bed to moisturise their bodies with lotion—"it *is* true!", Elijah said when a few of us groaned and laughingly protested his story's outlandishness, "there was a documentary on TV in Rwanda about it!"

There is much variation in this pastiche of moments—varying tones, varying intents. Yet the person talking always uses the descriptor 'uneducated' with some authority, and those they speak of are at some distance from the speaker's purported social frame, and associated with orientations to the world that the speaker claimed not to share, and thus contributed to the denigration or pity of.

My ears began to prick anytime notions of being 'uneducated' or its opposite— its projected aspiration—being 'educated', came up. While I understood the element of self-representation in this convention, I also wondered at the substance of these claims. It is not that I doubted that people with certain sorts of experiences, exposure and trajectories would be disposed to certain difficulties in their lives in Australia. Rather, I was compelled by a sense that the discourse of 'uneducated others' had its own momentum, and was not an accurate descriptor.

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At first, I wanted to meet some of the people described as 'uneducated'; at the time, it seemed obvious to me that my research would be better rounded out if I could get past the hearsay and approach these maligned practices and beliefs that I sought to engage on their own terms through people who were more invested in them than the people I most often moved amongst. For a while I relentlessly asked around my friends and acquaintances if they knew people who spent time in refugee camps who they could introduce me to, or if they could introduce me to anybody who could tell me about firsthand experience with traditional healing for spiritual afflictions. I got few leads. After much prodding for connections to people who had spent time in the camps, several people promised to ask around for me, and two reported back with the name and contact directions of different women who they said would be happy to speak to me. One was a woman I already knew through one of the churches I attended for fieldwork, and I had already briefly met the other woman through her past involvement with the Africare organisation—that neither was a stranger to me demonstrates how inadequately this discursively exoticised category maps out onto actual people. All the same, I would not get a chance to speak more to the second woman. I messaged her on Facebook, and eight months later she replied. We had a brief exchange of messages then, cursory and courteous, and my proposition to ring her to talk more hung in the air. Meanwhile, Elijah rang me one day, jubilant that he had found me a traditional healer that a friend of his knew of, and he could take me to their practice in Canley Vale the following Thursday. Thrilled to think I finally had an in to a population central to my project yet absent from my circle of interlocutors, I was crestfallen when it turned out that the healer in question was a Chinese acupuncturist.

In hindsight, these fieldwork dead-ends are telling, though what they say is ambiguous. That it was so difficult for those helping me to connect me to the social worlds they talked freely about implied that their own relationships with those worlds and the people in it might be murky, *or* that describing people as non-modern in vague and abstract ways was quite different to legitimating those labels by way of introducing particular people to a curious anthropologist. I supposed that to do so risked disrupting relational proprieties. It also suggests that the facts of the difference between so-called 'educated' and 'uneducated' people might prove impossible to catalogue. After all, I did meet people here and there who had spent time in refugee camps, but they were not the people I was directed towards, perhaps because as radio jockeys, film-makers and

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entrepreneurs (for example), they defied the set of associations ascribed by the 'uneducated' or 'refugee camp' stereotype. For this, the term 'uneducated' operates similarly to differentiating discourses that Homi Bhabha (1994) describes as colonial, in that they represent an *idea* of difference that accumulates authority through repetition, though they are ultimately displaced from that which they purport to describe.

Moreover, an adjective like 'uneducated' is inherently relative; it evokes a different scale of reference every time it is uttered. Taken non-literally, though, it offers much more salience for thinking about what difference means to people, and how these meanings are negotiated. Transcending the hackneyed anthropological adage of comparing what people say to what people do, to such ends, conversations alone can be an important part of participant observation. People care who believes what (see also Pigg 1996: 161). Besides, these exchanges constitute acts of identification, self-identification and representation, and much can be negotiated within them.

As well as this, alongside my other arguments and reflections in this chapter, I hope some of the ethnographic moments showcase the desire amongst self-described 'educated' cosmopolitans to facilitate better lives for others within their community. For them, identifying themselves as better (off) than these others can happen at the same time as concern for these others, and for the ways that designated reorientations in their thinking might enable them to have healthier, easier lives. Indeed, as Stacey Pigg notes writing about this phenomena's expression in Nepal, one of the purposes of calling people 'uneducated' is to point to the web of social, political, historical and economic factors that inhibit some people's access to information, education and opportunity. "So speaking of villagers' ignorance can be intended as a condensed and oblique way of denouncing social inequality" (1996: 199), whilst also, I would add, distancing oneself from association with the lower echelons of that inequality.

As suggested in the previous chapter, those running Africare or involved in others kinds of social work certainly cared about inequality. They seemed to see themselves as a cultural bridge between their community and Australia's social and service communities. They worked to leaven the lacks in access, information and well-being. By occupying those bridging positions, whether as translators or social workers or running NGOs, they came to be treated as a bridge, at least on the side of the bridge occupied by Australian political groups and social services. On the other side of this bridge, it seemed the so-called community was diverse, wide-spread, and some would

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say quite fractured, which lent to the salience of notions like 'educated' and 'uneducated' in conjuring up a sense of how these divides were imagined.

In this chapter, I use the evocations of 'uneducated' and 'educated' as an entry-point to thinking about their wider social meanings and implications. This hinges on addressing a few over-lapping questions: who speaks of those who are 'uneducated' and who speaks of 'diverse forms of knowledge'? Under what circumstances are certain traditions raised as 'important'? When are they or other traditions raised as 'backwards'? How are certain qualities, or practices, or values re-inscribed as poles that people stake their identity in relation to?

This first part of this chapter speaks to these questions as I canvas the meanings that a term like 'uneducated' is stretched over, and build up a sense of its historically constituted, discursively validated salience. Here, I draw extensively on understandings of development and modernity to establish what is encompassed by discourses on educated-ness and uneducated-ness both in everyday life, and in relation to community projects to shape, shift and alter people's practices, and perhaps even their minds, through more formalised education. Ultimately, my goal is to make sense of how the salience of education and the capacity to *be* educated reflect something about power tussles and identity, and also something about the tenuous optimism invested in education as an actual means to moving forward in progressive and ameliorative ways.

A brief aside (on writing from alongside the 'educated')

Formulating this analysis forces me to also address how my approach relates to the ways that notions of who is and isn't educated are often talked about in anthropology. Quite often, the anthropologist who aligns with the so-called 'uneducated', is able to easily trouble the broad brush-stroke assumptions of those who describe them as such. An apt example of this is Christine Walley's essay (2002) on collisions between scientific and popular types of knowledge at a Tanzanian marine park. Despite the park's participatory goals, the knowledge of local Chole fishermen, who were employed as research assistants, was regularly undermined by the visiting scholars they assisted and by local scientists, experts and government officials. Walley (2002: 176) describes an awkward exchange with a Swedish marine scientist at the start of his five-week stint

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studying coral in the park. She ends up in a sort of debate, trying to assert the residents' concerns about dynamiting damage by relating their experiences and observations of it against the scientist's insistence that dynamite was not significantly impacting marine life in the area. Eventually, the scientist resorts to "open derision", saying "but, people here don't even know the coral is alive! How could they possibly know the impact of dynamiting on marine life!?" (Walley 2002: 176). Later, Walley relays this exchange to some of the fishermen working at the tourist camp. One of them is furious. Another patiently sketches a map of the reef and, drawing on the observations of this new scientist that had been gathered and disseminated as gossip through the camp, he circles the segment the scientist was studying. This area was not yet dynamited, he explained, and the scientist had not explored other reefs, hence the scientist's convictions. Walley finely illustrates the sophistication of Chole locals, arguing that "unlike national and international elites, [they] were noticeably eclectic in their knowledge practices, readily combining scientific with popular knowledge. Rather than emphasising presumed differences between types of knowledge, they instead underscored what they perceived to be the problematic relationship between the 'educated' and the 'uneducated'" (2002: 185).

This and other texts problematise the casual, everyday reification of higher-class knowledge by countering it with the factual value of its Others (like Ram 2013 and Tsing 1993). Walley notes that this tendency is part of anthropology's lineage, citing early-era scholars whose ethnographies demonstrated the sound reason of practices or beliefs that were commonly belittled (such as Evans-Pritchard 1937; Goody 1968, 1977; Horton 1967; Levi-Strauss 1966; Levy-Bruhl 1926, cited in Walley 2002: 292). This anthropological sensibility definitely informs my thinking and aligns with my personal orientations. Yet I cannot contribute to the collective argument of such texts because those I socialised closely with for much of my fieldwork would have described themselves (and, for the most part, each other) as 'educated'. In this, I relate to Pigg's comment that living in Nepal in the 1980's, she met many people who "described themselves and others in the modern terms [she] thought anthropological relativism should counter" (1996: 165). In fact, at the time of some of the conversations related in the opening of this chapter, a part of me was deeply perturbed by my interlocutor's dismissal of those who harboured so-called popular beliefs. It follows that I was also pinched by the belittlement of some traditions over others, and the myriad historically,

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socially, globally co-constructed plays of power refracted in that act. I worked hard not to voice my wish that my interlocutors were working to revolt against these categories instead of reinscribing them. These personal responses of mine represent yet another facet of the field of positions around this subject: the desire, drawn from anthropological tradition, to inscribe narratives that up-end elitist assumptions and othering. So you could say that for me in these exchanges, as for those who speak of uneducated others, something tied up in personal identity but also in one's desires for one's world is at stake.

Histories, hierarchies, tastes

What does it mean to be 'uneducated'? A slew of associations specific to my study have already been raised: rural, traditional, superstitious, old-fashioned, backwards, un-informed. More generally too, 'uneducated' is a familiar and wide-spread gloss for 'traditional', 'backwards' and/or 'poor'. Likewise, to describe somebody as 'educated' could be a comment on their formal schooling; to be a high school graduate, a tertiary graduate, a diploma carrier. But it also acts as a euphemism, signifying any of a range of values deemed 'modern', enlightened or progressive whilst being able to be hinged to the idea that somebody has or has not had a certain formal schooling experience. In *Keywords* (1983), Raymond Williams suggests that this is true to the word's original purpose in the 15th century of describing the rearing of a person. It was only subsequently, in 17th and 18th century England, that it got linked to formal education. Williams notes the classism in its contemporary use, whereby to be 'properly brought up' can mean whatever the word's user wants it to mean at any moment (1983: 112). Further, "the level indicated by 'educated' has been continually adjusted to leave the majority of people who have received an education below it" (ibid).

Zaida acknowledged some of these discrepancies while we sat on her cushions on the floor of her new, barely furnished house in Wollongong discussing her ongoing trials with a male acquaintance she had begun working for. His name was Jerry. He was a Burundian man who she, in her frustration at his continual (she believed, gendered) dismissiveness of her, and what she perceived as his incompetence with his business, describes as coming from an uneducated group. "I suppose that way I am not educated

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either", she mused. "I mean I can't read or write all that very well—I just memorise things at the café [where she worked]. I never *got* to go to school; my family were *so* poor. And then the war happened in Rwanda. But I always say I've studied hard in the school of life". I felt like I understood what she was trying to say, and tried to contribute to her articulation of it: "you've learnt something new everywhere you've lived and you're….informed…", I ventured. Indeed, Zaida's life was a pastiche of tastes and influences from her years living in Rwanda, then in France, and then in Byron Bay. Her anecdotes and general chat regularly incorporated an acknowledgement of these influences as we hung out—partly, perhaps, because I shared her interests in alternative music festivals, Rwandan history, vintage clothing, and green smoothie recipes. But perhaps, too, because we both verbalised our attention to our orientation to things in the world, and were interested in claiming this orientation, and discussing it. This, along with nurturing the flexibility of one's positions to the world (and providing a commentary on this too) is one hallmark of 'modernity' that stands in opposition to the fixed ways associated with 'traditionalism'. To be 'educated' is to see oneself as a flexible and agentive consumer[20] of life ways. Whereas those who *are* deemed 'uneducated' are comparable to the way people described as 'natives' were commonly imagined; as Appadurai puts it in his critique of these projected hierarchies in anthropology, they are not only from certain places but incarcerated in those places, and in the modes of thought inhabited in those places, even after they leave (1988: 27).

That night, Zaida made me a warm zucchini salad with rocket, fresh tomatoes, onions, coriander, mint, and chickpeas that had been fried in a spice blend her friends import from Kenya. As she was plating our meal, Jerry texted. He was outside her house and wanted to talk to her. (They were in the middle of a tense disagreement and she had been thinking about quitting her role in his business. I expect he came over to smooth things out.) I let him in and let them talk in the kitchen. Jerry's manner was calm as he repeatedly dipped out of their pleasantries to ask if she was okay. Zaida, polite but cool, insisted she was fine and spoke in oblique veils about working on her own business with her friend, gesturing to me, on the floor on her laptop, where I had been tasked with choosing wholesale items for her to stock her online shop with. She seemed to draw on what she understood as the main difference between herself and

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[20] In the sense inscribed by Michael de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988).

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Jerry to create a sense of their distance, and to communicate the fact that she did not need to rely on him. She refused to speak in Kirundi, always replying in English to his attempts at a private conversation in front of me. She made a point of showing him the artfully stacked and seasoned plates of dinner. He remarked, "no meat? No rice?", to which she replied that neither she nor I could eat that way everyday for every meal like Jerry and his family do; it was far too heavy, and then the conversation moved on.

Food is thus rendered un-innocent. This brief exchange around a couple of salads seemed to erect two positions; culture as fixed and culture as flexible, each peering at the other and deeming it deficient. Bourdieu's keystone arguments in *Distinction* (1977) about taste as a basis for class affinity and social judgement are highly relevant, here, demonstrating the extensive symbolic orders that notions of educatedness or the lack thereof can string together. As Bourdieu argues and as I will go on to elaborate, a big part of the ordering power of such affinities is in the broader social, political and economic validation of some tastes over others. Stoller's (2004) meditation on sensuousness might be of note here too. In what appears to be a poetically fleshed, West Africa-focused variation on Bourdieu's (1977) and Merleau-Ponty's (1962) arguments about how taste embodies relations of power and social context, Stoller writes about power, resistance, and their negotiation playing out through sensory regimes in Niger, shaping political subjectivities through regimes of affect. In a broader, differently-political frame, food can be seen to bear out affects, particularly where postcoloniality and notions of modernity are concerned.

Ham (2017) finds this in her investigations of *dawa-dawa*—a pungent, fermented paste, rich in fat and protein, that is laboriously extracted from the pod of African locus bean tree, and used in soup recipes. Many of the cooks and younger women Ham speaks to describe *dawa-dawa* as too traditional, preferring instead the more "modern"[21] neutral sensuousness of bouillon cubes, like those manufactured by Maggi. Of this, she remarks that "the tendency for younger women to quickly alert me to their preference to season their soups with bouillon cubes is a behavioral pattern making a more complex social statement" (2017: 251). Notably, Ham also muses on the potential for *dawa-dawa* to become marketed as a health food to more affluent social

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[21] Ham encases modern in double quotes (2017: 349) but it is difficult to place whether she treats these as scare quotes or to signal the recurrence of this word in her informants' discourse.

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sectors, in a manner similar to the revival of pungent fermented foods like *kombucha*. Crenn et al (2010) make a similar link between affluence and tradition in their study of exchanges around food between France-based migrants from Mali and Senegal who return home, and those at the home they return to: they describe families in Mali and Senegal buying imported goods from European stores for their relatives—croissants, jam, mayonnaise—but reporting that the relatives ask for traditional food all the time, instead. They write:

> The most educated migrants, just like what is currently taking place in France, turn back to "terroir" products, a quest for an exoticism which combines "authenticity" and "Africa", enabling them to assume a positive ethnic or national identity while resembling the elites of their country (Crenn et al 2010: 26).

While Crenn et al do not interrogate their use of 'educated' as a descriptor, and also write about how classed dietary moderations like adding vegetables and reducing sugar are tenuously negotiated amongst transnational families, this contributes to a discussion canvassing the textured ways that taste is classed and associated with classes of knowledge. Indeed, at least in Western traditions of thought, there are notions stretching back to classical Roman philosophy about food being educative, nourishing our "higher nature" as well as our bodies (Seneca 1962 2:281, cited in Stoller and Olkes 1986: 342).

Scaled down to such exchanges as the one that went on in Zaida's kitchen that night, it is possible that assertions of taste might merely reinforce each of our taste buds' respective de-politicised affiliations, though it is difficult to argue for that given Zaida's call to popular cosmopolitan Australian health-conscious valuations of lean salads over carbs, and my sense that she meant her comments to demean. I cannot comment on Jerry's stake in this subtle face-off, though there would be a distinction to make based on whether his personal preferences were oblivious to Zaida's posturing, or whether he understood her posturing and favoured meat and rice anyway with added willful defiance of her elitist dig. And so meat and rice become poles against which identity can be staked.

I am reminded of a moment of stillness on the morning of a busy day, eating breakfast—rice and chicken sauce [soup, curry]—in a Liberian acquaintance's light-filled living room in Mt Druitt before a wedding. A number of people were collected there, from out of town and locally, and Hassan had brought over for Teenesee a floral bowl of curry that he'd had an older woman he knew prepare specially that morning, knowing it was Teenesee's favourite sauce. As he served himself up a generous portion

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of white rice, which he flattened onto his plate before topping it with the chicken, Hassan exclaimed "this is how we eat—rice; day and night, breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's fine, great for us, we do fine, but you come here [meaning Australia] and they tell you to eat other carbs, eat less carbs". He was referring to the ways that notions of taste may be bundled in with notions of knowledge. He rolled his eyes.

This brings me to another distinction: it is between who feels compelled by their background, context and popular assumptions about it to clarify their identity around certain measures, and who does not. As with the women in Ghana who underscore to Ham (2017) their preference for Maggi bouillon over *dawa-dawa*, and with the Nepali people who speak skeptically of demons and shamans in direct response to Pigg—an American woman, the embodiment of modernity (1996: 161)—such pre-emptive posturing is a social convention that points to areas of personal reservation regarding how one's interlocutor would see oneself. Such posturing takes myriad forms, depending on a person's context and its touchy nerves. I myself can be apologetic about being *over*-educated: I often find myself pre-emptively telling others who are not involved in higher education that I worked for some years between all my degrees—a defence against the accusation I imagine them forming that I've swaddled myself into the Ivory Tower to avoid the 'real world'. While Hassan and Zaida expressed contrasting positions on meat and rice in these two instances, both use meat and rice as a reference point. They draw on an established set of meanings that are co-opted unto meat and rice as a staple meal to symbolically communicate who they are. I understand their reflex to take a position around meat and rice as a symptom of feeling and being treated as enmeshed in the global inter-relationships that frame the 'West' or the 'centre' as a standard to aspire to and the 'East' and 'South' and 'peripheries' as lacking and in need. This framing holds regardless of whether they endorse it or roll their eyes at it. It has especial salience for people whose identities might be bound up in being African (Crenn et al 2010; Ham 2017) (or Indian, or Nepali, or Indonesian, for instance), and all that might entail.

Colonial global relationships have imposed unequal and Eurocentric orders on the organisation of different forms of knowledge, historically, and these orders have a re-invigorated influence in the development sphere. This is why development is described as a "system of power" (Escobar 1995: 10) that creates forms of subjectivity "through which people come to recognize themselves as developed or underdeveloped"

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(ibid), that is, certain people are designated to a status that needs re-dressing through interventions like aid and education. Escobar's observations resonate with a range of places and societies that have been drawn into colonial, neo-colonial and developmental relationships with more powerful centers, from such broadly defined spaces as Asia and South Asia in relation to the West, to such specific ones as rural Australian towns in relation to Australian political and economic centers. Mudimbe argues that these colonial, development trajectories had a particular kind of history across Africa, which was subjected to a rush of colonial organisation entailing, at once: dominion of space and resources, integrating local economic histories into a Western perspective, and reforming African peoples' minds through Christianity at first, and subsequently other things too (1988: 15).

These all entail processes of border-making, between being developed and under-developed, modern and primitive, educated and uneducated, ascribing categories and aspirations onto people. More than this, Lancione (2016) notes the more sophisticated function of border-making when he writes about how a part of marginalisation is in drawing attention to the marginal and their marginality. It is "not that these people and spaces did not exist before the powerful oeuvre of border-making", he writes.

> But it is only through that oeuvre, which usually comprises more than one border and more than one margin, that their representation as marginalised with the attendant struggles and unbalanced power relations become visible, possible and take place (Lancione 2016: 1).

As we move on to examine notions of being educated or at least educat-able with relation to formalised training and workshops in subsequent sections of this chapter, Lancione's observations are particularly pertinent.

The importance of education

The first time I met Eliza, we had bonded over a particular type of concern for the environment. We crusaded into the night collecting litter around the youth hall hired for Africare's annual Harmony Day party as the dance floor reached its apex. She and I had crouched in the moonlight on the grassy banks around the hall, using wads of paper towel to move empty cans, bottles, plastic dinnerware and food discards from the

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mounds we had prepared earlier into a cardboard box to transfer to the bins. She blamed the crowd, "these African people! Well, not all of them. Most, though!" as we went about this work. She continued: "Even Carmella", who had booked the hall, "was saying 'ahhhh, I think it looks okay'—it's not okay! You can't come to a place that was perfectly *pristine* and leave it looking like this!" She tilted her head towards a group of men who were chatting between their vehicles in a carpark. "These guys think we're silly for doing this".

"What is it do you think? Like, a cultural thing?" I asked.

"Of course! But also, they're not very educated".

"I don't know", I said, thinking about all the large-group al fresco gatherings I had ever attended, "there are plenty of *very* educated people from all backgrounds who just don't give a shit, I don't know why."

"It's still education it means they aren't educated about the environment!"

Granted, Eliza's exclamations were made in passing in this annoying moment of handling the soggy dregs of no longer wanted meals. But her comments hit upon the promising notion that being informed in a particular way about something will change people's minds and behavior in relation to that thing. This notion underpins the endless swarm of educative initiatives that sustain social and community services for migrants, refugees and Aboriginal Australians, and usually in ways that overlook even the structural inequities (let alone other forces) that inform what people do and do not do. The links between approaches fostered by community development organisations towards these different groups, whether in Australia or overseas are of course, distinct and specific. But it is worth paying attention to a common emphasis on education—on changing minds. Chelsea Bond, a Munanjahli and South Sea Islander researcher and Aboriginal Health Worker, has written about the tensions involved in embracing the ideologies underscoring community health education work (2002, 2007). Reflecting on health work, she observes how much it is the case that educating and empowering people who are in disadvantaged positions are different acts. She writes:

> Each month, we would gather our 'culturally appropriate' flip charts, posters and pamphlets and teach the same old people about yet another 'health problem'. The theory was, that if we tell Aunty about good food, food safety and hygiene, then she would somehow obediently comply—regardless of the economic disparities of fresh foods in our community, water supply, availability of functioning health hardware and the social interactions, which hindered its application (Bond 2002: 17).

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To draw a distant comparison, in order to show the similar underpinnings, for a long time now, community mental health programs in Nigeria, for instance, have focused on re-diverting the more chronically ill away from traditional healers and towards psychiatric professionals (Edgerton 1980). Despite this growth of cosmopolitan medicine in African countries, overall, it is claimed that the traditional medicine movement has been more supported throughout Africa than in anywhere else in the world (Last and Chavunduvka 1986: 1), and an oft-cited practical reason for this is the prohibitive costs of Western medicine over natural, herbal products that are inexpensive and easier to source (Edgerton 1980; On'okoko et al. 2010; van Wolputte et al. 2002). In spite of these and other findings, the focus on education persists.

I will elaborate on this particular kind of education in the form of health workshops that Africare regularly hosted. First, though, it is worth noting that formal education more broadly is booming throughout Australian cities. Adult education is a bustling, lucrative industry with vocational workshops and short hobbyist courses, from life-drawing to taxidermy, on offer. Tertiary education shows no signs of losing stride as far as enrolments go; Sydney alone hosts five credited Universities, and smaller commercial colleges are constantly opening up and offering courses targeted at all slices of Sydney's diverse population. People can change their careers and upskill.

This general trend takes on a particular flavour for so-called CALD communities, introduced in the previous chapter as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse according to current labeling practices in health sector work. New to Australia, many people needed to re-qualify to work in their field or retrain to work in other, more accessible fields. Many people I met from Central Africa were training in (or had trained in and now worked in) aged care and community services. Training and education programs were also something that several smaller grassroots NGOs offered, particularly in training women with limited extra-domestic employment options to run childcare centers out of their homes.

As well as this, a few training programs that I did not attend were piloted with new migrant families providing overviews of health, social and legal frameworks in Australian life. Leonardo, a Burundian man introduced earlier, was a presenter at one of these series of workshops for other Burundians, and it was presented in Kirundi. He explained to me that some of the key sensitive cultural issues the program handled, such as domestic violence between spouses and towards children, which he (and others,

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anecdotally) claimed were normalised or at least kept private in the countries they had come from, were dealt with through recourse to the law. That is, the program's position was not to take a stance of cultural critique or judgement, but to point to Australian law as paramount, and the 'education' of the workshops involved providing information about the law. Without having attended the workshops, I cannot say how Leonardo's description of the facilitation angle played out, however I am interested in the prospect of these cultural education programs as a way of maintaining social order, not trying to critique or alter people's beliefs, values and practices, but provide them with information that might alter their behavior. Information, after all, is a form of knowledge.

At the handful of cultural events funded by these local community and social services, there is a consistent stream of health education and health information directed at migrant and refugee people. At a ███████ Harmony Day festival, one long trestle table hosted balloon animals next to a long trestle piled with friendly fliers: 'what is depression?', 'how to brush your teeth!'. At a massive annual Africulture festival, the HIV and Hepatitis Multicultural Health group had confident, attractive young people (like a young Congolese filmmaker with a huge social media following) hand out fortune cookies. Mine said: "Stop searching forever, happiness is just next to you", and on the other side of the scroll, "The only way to know if you have HIV is to have a blood test. Free and confidential HIV tests are available at sexual health clinics. The test is also available from your doctor. For more information go to: www.mhahs.org.au or call 1800 451 600". This occurs without any explicit comment that people are uneducated or ignorant. The latent expectation, though, is that people are *probably* uneducated, and *if* they are, then they *can* be educated.

Alas, within the reach of my study, I cannot say how many of the people targeted by these initiatives receive them. I can only say that I noticed that those who advocated for self-care, awareness-raising education are more likely to participate in the resulting workshops and seminars themselves. As I showed in the previous chapter, Africare's dedicated caseworker and board members worked hard to get people attending the handful of workshops and seminars they hosted every few months within their funding cycles. In general, most attendees were the organisers; the board of directors and occasionally their spouses. Writing about comparable workshops and training programs in Malawi, Swidler and Watkins make two points that have resonance

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here, too: first, that the continued attendance at these workshops fulfill an impression for groups like Africare's collaborators that people wish to attend them (2009: 8), and second, that attendance offers something "more precious" than tangible rewards, or knowledge—"a modern, educated identity" (ibid: 9). The Africare personnel who attended Africare's educative events all expressed vexation that so many others who could benefit from these events did not make the time to attend, or simply did not care to. Their discussions in this vein suggest that to be 'uneducated' also describes a set of priorities and values on which education ranks very low. This, combined with their enthusiasm for the workshops, implies that just as there seems to be social cachet around being educated, there might also be value in seeming to be educate-*able*.

Perhaps this is partially why the audience at a Women's Health Workshop held in Africare's office one sweltering Saturday nodded keenly at the presenter, Natalia's, comments on 'uneducated' others elsewhere. Perhaps it did not come across as condescending to them because it was a perspective people tended to share. Natalia, a Community Development worker, had said to the crowd: "Preventative health is really, really important. We do a lot of preventative education because we think people should be responsible for their own health. In many countries, people don't use preventative health; they're not educated". This is where the crowd nodded. "This country is rich and advanced in terms of preventative health, health and education" Natalia continued. "When I went back to Macedonia I wanted to see how people compared". She crinkled her soft features, looking pained. "It was *so* low. They're not educated. And they smoke. So many people, smoking. I asked them, do you get breast checks? And they said 'No'. They say, 'We don't think about that'. I see that and I feel so sad." She extended an arm upwards, levelling one hand with her highest reach and said "Australia is here", and with her other hand plateaued at her knee "Macedonia down here". At this, people nodded again.

It is possible to link some of these nods to more substantive indications that people in the room agreed with Natalia. I had been at dinner at Genevieve's home when she and her husband, George, bemoaned that "you only have one psychiatrist for all of Burundi…even though everybody in our country has some form of mental disturbance". Dina had told me about a research project she'd helped collect survey data at UNSW— she had been surprised and amazed that she and the other research assistants were told to report to the supervisor immediately if any participants suggest they have started

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thinking this life is not worth living. "In Rwanda this [feeling] would be normal! *Here,* somebody says that and you call 000!" There was a strong sense for Dina, Genevieve, George and others in their circle that once you are a citizen of Australia, Australia would really care for you. While this feeling pooled around healthcare, it extended beyond that too. As Jebediah exclaimed once at a meeting about a rally the Burundians were planning, to allay concerns I raised about participants still seeking asylum being politically outspoken: "it's *Australia*!—even at a protest they send police to protect you!" I had also heard at least two stories about employers who refused to hire people because of their dark skins. In one, the discriminated person was advised to call the media and report it to shame the company. In the other, the media caught wind of what happened, published a story, and put a big dent in the patronage of a Sydney CBD café whose manager thought an African barista would put off customers.

This was *Australia*! A lucky country. Just as the police presence at rallies were seen as care, these state-funded workshops and information sessions were a form of care, and the network of services were a form of care. So systems that lend easily to interpretations of bureaucracy, the patronisation of 'foreigners', and a police state, are as easily received *by* some as caring, concerned gestures that ought not be taken for granted.

Let us return to the Africare office that hot Saturday in November. Sunlight poured through the tinted windows that wrapped half the room, from corner to corner. We had opened these windows earlier. Sound and air had streamed in, so though it was far more comfortable, it was too noisy for the workshop. The windows were closed again. Natalia had a low, sweet, soothing voice. You could imagine that she might work well with very small children. Her women's health workshop was designed to not only inform but to inspire. An enlightenment narrative of health underscored the way she pitched changes at people; "I used to… but now that I know better, I… instead". All the same, much of the information she presented leapt out as being standardised for Caucasian, European people. For instance, her position on meat and rice.

The slide about diet flicked on, depicting two plates, side by side. One plate held a generous serve of rice, a huge hunk of meat, a small salad at the top. This was the plate to "avoid". The second plate, the one to aspire to, had a small chunk of meat, a similar sized portion of rice, and a large salad, bigger than the two other components

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combined. This passed without debate, but much later, when Natalia advised brown rice over white, somebody had asked what exactly is wrong with the white stuff?

"They remove the fibre from the grain", Natalia said.

"Ha. I really love rice—white rice", said Amanda.

"Have you ever tried brown rice?" Natalia proffered. There were a few snickers, which I took to mean that the discrepancy between white rice's softness and the granulated, chewy texture of brown rice was well known and that the white was favoured. "I used to buy only white rice", Natalia began, "but once I learnt, now I only buy brown rice".

There was another slide showing the sugar cubes in a Coke can, a 300ml bottle of Coke, and a 1L bottle of Coke respectively. "I never buy coke!" she declared, "I feel sad when I see people drinking it. Do you know the amount of sugar in Coke?"

"Yes", Genevieve offered.

"How do you know?"

"I looked it up."

"Do you buy it at home?"

"Yes", Amanda said, fearlessly. "Can't help it".

"You should buy juice instead though", Genevieve told Amanda, pointing to the back of the room where three 2L bottles of mango, berry and mixed fruit nectar sat on a low table, freshly purchased for today's gathering. Natalia turned to look. "Oh no! This kind of drink is very dangerous! It has very high sugar, very high. And even the fresh juice, this is also very dangerous. It is full of fructose." Natalia did not yet know about the cans of fizzy drink cooling in the fridge, also freshly purchased for today's event.

This way, subtle tussles peaked gently throughout the afternoon, much like in the mental health workshop I write about in the next chapter (though more subtly). At the end, while we sat around talking and eating the white rice, lettuce salad, grilled chicken drumsticks, fish curry and curry potatoes that Jeanette had cooked and brought over in a set of silver oblong al-foil serving trays, everybody seemed to agree it was a good workshop and they learned something worth attending for.

La Fontaine (1977: 66, cited in Crick 1982: 304) understands initiation rites as confirmation of the knowledge of those running them, and perhaps the same could be said of the health and cultural training workshops I write of here. Even though within healthcare, there is a strong sense that mutual education of both healers and marginal

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health-seeking communities is key. Everybody involved needs to be educated; the people working with CALD communities and the people *in* CALD communities. There were particular niche oppotunities I saw a few agencies, including Africare, trying to fill for training local community and social services staff to better target and work successfully with members of their community (see also Chapter Two). With so much invested in these educative, informative, culturally shaping social projects, is it worth examining some ruminations on how personal change really comes about, outside of these discourses. The final section of this chapter swerves to discuss how knowledge might be understood as wrapped up in enculturated and intergenerational processes, so as to flesh out the place of education as we have so far discussed it in the broader understandings of knowledge it fits within.

"You can't change beliefs"

Africare had pitched for funding from a local Council grant to train young people from countries affected by civil war in a range of expressive arts—song, dance, poetry— embedded with messages of peace. The plan was for the children to perform locally, thereby advancing their professionalism whilst spreading Africare's peace and reconciliation mission, which aligned aptly with the ideals of many grants issued by Western Settlement Services and Migrant Resource Centres. Africare won the grant, and Alain was tasked with bringing the scheme into bloom.

Six months into training, Alain reported back to the board meeting, with sincere concern, that things weren't all rosy. Attendance was low, with "only seven, or six, or five…sometimes only two!" children attending the training. Alain apologetically aired his impression that some parents feel that for all the project's budget, it is not providing enough for their children, but "unfortunately, with the Great Lakes[22] mentality, they won't be open to telling you the truth" he lamented. Empathy was forthcoming around

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[22] As in, the Great Lakes region of Africa. Here, Alain refers very generally to a mindset he attributes to Great Lakes people, perhaps not necessarily directly associating this mindset with all the countries surrounding the network of freshwater lakes and basins in Central and East Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Kenya and Sudan.

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the table, even after Genevieve's frank admission that sometimes, it was hard to convince her kids to attend "because they say the training is boring"—a prospect that Alain seemed most taken aback by. Ultimately, we agreed around the table that the project seemed to be butting up against generation gaps.

"Our background is so different", Alain mused. "In our country we had to memorise everything, whether we liked it or not, and so we grew to like it. Here, they improvise. They improvise around the materials, and it's good, but it means they're not interested in memorising".

"That's the culture", Patrice remarked, almost to himself, as Alain carried on.

"Even in the dancing, you can see they are not getting into the dancing". He stood and demonstrated the children's half-hearted side-step, complete with heavy shoulders and rolling eyes. "It's related to the way they live. Sometimes they dance, or they feel shy. Some of them have never danced!"

Elijah pointed out that in Africa, there are plenty of people who only ever dance in Church. "You play music outside of Church, they don't know what to do with it".

"Those are beliefs", said Patrice, pointing out the links between music, dance and God in one context, and the lack thereof in the other. "You can't change their beliefs". We all seemed to agree with him, though without giving up on the project, which was seen through to its unenthusiastic ends when the children enlisted by Africare ultimately dwindled away, and were replaced by a young and committed dance troupe from elsewhere in the community to perform at the peace group's scheduled debut event.

Similar sentiments came through in my conversation with Lucie. We were perched on the cream leather sofa at Joseph and Bea's house, as they entertained a host of friends after a Rwandan genocide commemoration at their church. It was not a sombre affair; this, perhaps, was partly Joseph's doing. He would stress to me later his disdain for commemorations that dwelt indelibly in the massacres. He was interested in grounding commemorative events in reminders of Rwanda's rich culture and traditions; in mourning whilst reaching out to a longer history, one you could—should—be proud of, and grasping that for strength (see Chapter Six). Joseph was tending with relish to a playlist of pop music from Rwanda. A tray of baked chicken wings was making the rounds, as was a tray of seasoned home-made potatoes wedges. Bea and more competent vegetable-choppers and meat-preppers than I were preparing more food in

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the kitchen and drinks, from rosé to soda, were on tap. I was meeting Lucie for the first time, and somehow, we ended up talking about the ongoing, implicit upper-hand Tutsis had over Hutu in Paul Kagame's Rwanda: where Hutu shame for the genocides, and Tutsi forgiveness, were re-inscribed repeatedly in public spaces.

"How can you tell the difference though?", I had asked, as she described some of the stigmas experienced by Hutu in contemporary everyday life.

"*You* couldn't tell, but I can tell. Someone like you if you were in Rwanda during the genocide you would've been killed instantly. Because your nose is like this"—she pulled her fingers away from her face as though tracing all sides of a long nose. "Hutu have noses more like this"—she flattened her nose against her face. "The Belgians went about entrenching these differences, if you're tall your Tutsi, short, Hutu, if you're light you're Tutsi, dark, Hutu, if you have this nose (pinch) Tutsi, this one (flatten) Hutu…"

Across the patterned rug, a three-year-old girl was pushing a six-year-old girl in a plastic car. The six year old, too big for the toy, dragged her knees and feet limp. "For these kids that isn't so much a part of their identity", says Lucie. "They wouldn't have the feeling of *I am Hutu, I am Tutsi*. It's good. It's not part of their mind. That's why I feel sometimes that this generation will be different. With us…it's been a part of our identity for so long. You can't change people's minds. You can educate but, you don't *really* know…."

"That belief may still be there", I offered.

"Yes. That why these children now are different. They've never categorised themselves that way. So hopefully….", she trailed off.

"Yeah", I said.

Conclusion

There are a number of ideas raised across these two vignettes that offer a poignant grounded nuance to the more established traditions of discursively ordering class and knowledge discussed over the rest of this chapter. The first is the sense of how what Patrice refers to as 'beliefs' and the enculturation or embodied knowledge that Lucie describes are stronger forms of conditioning than education. Patrice and Lucie's

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certainty of the innate and fixed nature of the beliefs they speak of is at odds with perceptions of 'belief' as a flexible and active quality. That is, belief not as a "stable and perpetual interior state", to borrow Thomas Kirsch's (2004: 699) words, but as a "practice of cyclically regenerating a condition of internalised 'believing'". This is further complicated by the implication amongst Patrice, Lucie and their social groups that in spite of uncertainty over the capacity of knowledge-shaping practices like education to engender certain changes, a vulnerable sort of hope remained instilled in education as a means of bettering social inequalities, racial and ethnic tensions, health disparities, and so forth. Perhaps, amidst the historically constructed and saturated salience of education, being educated and being educate-able there seem to be few other constructive notions to turn to.

I daresay the textures observed over much of this chapter—from the concerned, mocking, amused or disdainful tones with which people I spent time with spoke of uneducated others, to the workshops in which the presenter willed the audience, poised as uneducated (but educate-able!) to live healthier, like her—are not novel or unique. The Australian health sector evolves in ways that parallel contexts saturated by development projects, where it tends to be assumed that 'modern' and scientific forms of knowledge are lacking, and people's existing, faulty knowledge traps them in their lives (Walley 2002: 277). This is salient to the point of causing anxiety for those who position themselves as delivering the missing knowledge. We see this amongst the health workers in my previous chapter. It is described by Tess Lea (2001) when she writes about the bureaucracies surrounding Aboriginal health campaigns: of health professionals lamenting in training workshops amongst themselves that if Aboriginal people only *knew* how to recognise diseases they would act on that knowledge, of health worker Barbara scheming to draw on the visual enchantment of microscopes to teach Tiwi women on Bathurst Island about germs and hygiene. And it is described by Chelsea Bond (2002: 17–18), who like Lea, writes in wearied tones of the general cynicism amongst health workers towards interventions that address anything but the body. This way, the objective of filling gaps in knowledge persists in spite of the vulnerable certainty people at Africare might admit to having about formal education as opposed to other forms of knowledge accumulation or interventions to bring about beneficial change.

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The bewilderment that begins this chapter—a sector of people described by others in their community as uneducated—remains unresolved at this chapter's end, in that we never ultimately meet anybody who falls under the rubric of qualities that fall under the header 'uneducated'. Educated-ness or the lack thereof is, in this respect, a similarly immeasurable phenomenon as modernity: just as Raymond Williams writes that 'educated' describes a different standard every time it is uttered, Pigg points out that 'modernity' has the same effect (1996: 164), making both difficult to describe, let alone study. Yet both terms also have rich and textured discursive lives that seem to create and contribute to clear affects in how knowledge and people are ordered, and the processes of this ordering as they are negotiated in day-to-day life. The next chapter develops on these significances, but in ways that emphasise a flexible, malleable mind, one capable of holding multiple traditions of knowledge together, as the true hallmark of modernity—more than mere educated-ness.

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<center>**Chapter Four**</center>

<center>**Modern Believers**</center>

Rain dance

It rained hard the night of Angelo's fundraiser. He worried it would deter people from attending, which would jeopardise his objective. His plan was to raise enough money to supply a few new migrants, ideally fellow Burundian refugees, with driving lessons and licensing, which they could use to break into the Australian workforce. Angelo was lucky; the turnout was strong. As gales blew outside, people trickled into the church hall, filling the seats around the tables, ready to bid cash on the American auction. An assortment of donated items were up for grabs—from a home-cooked meal courtesy of Kawaiah, Angelo's wife, to an electric guitar. Angelo's fundraising goals would be more or less met, despite the rain, and he and I reflected on his project's good fortune weather notwithstanding as dinner was being served.

"I actually quite like going out in the rain sometimes", I offered.

"Sure. And of course *we* like the rain", he said in a ribbing tone, raising his eyebrows at me. He elaborated: "You know, rain dances and all". Angelo had long found my interest in 'traditional beliefs' amusing, and when we met, he would often teasingly offer me morsels of exaggerated or stereotyped 'traditional' culture, and enquire after what I had learnt about witchcraft. Once he was relaxed about his event, this evening was no exception.

"Nobody tells me anything about witchcraft, Angelo. Why don't you tell me something!" I asked, only half kidding.

"People believe all kinds of things", he responded, after chuckling at my display of frustration. "My people believe that if it's raining when your last-born is born, if you take the cloth off the baby and show its backside to the sky, the rain stops."

"Ha ha ha", I laughed uneasily. "Does it work?", I asked.

"Of course it doesn't work it's ridiculous!"

"Ah, but do you *know* it doesn't work?", I said, playing my part of the wide-eyed willing believer in our jokey dynamic.

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"I'll give you the clinical psychology answer", Angelo said. "If people believe it'll work then it'll work. The scientific point of view is of course it doesn't work."

"But if you take a scientific point of view then you don't believe so it won't work for you…"

He chuckled and said, "True. But it's important to learn what people believe."

I offer this very casual exchange as a bridge between the previous chapter and this one. Angelo's amusement at my interest in those practices relegated to the realm of 'uneducated' village folk, and his dismissal of such beliefs, is grounded in the kind of orientations towards educated-ness, uneducated-ness and class that I discuss in the last chapter. At the same time, his explanation that if people believe something, they are wont to interpret what happens to them in accordance with that, offers a means of making sense of perspectives that he personally dismisses.

With the framing phrase, 'modern believers' (see Pigg 1996), this chapter explores how people talk about their own and others' beliefs. None of the people I am going to talk about would have described themselves as 'modern' believers, or any particular kind of believers. But I focus, here, on the tendency amongst them to talk about the kind of believers that *others* were –the blind believers, uninformed, unenlightened, uneducated believers. The people I introduce or re-introduce in this chapter have rather disparate ideas about what is credible and what is not, but I hope to tease out what they have in common and enquire after what it means to *believe* in a 'modern' way (if modernity, in fact, has anything to do with it at all). Throughout the conversations in this chapter we also consistently see hierarchies of beliefs being constructed that locate Christian faith as somehow different to, and more credible than, 'traditional' African spirituality. This framing phrase 'modern believers' ultimately references both the salience of modern-ness in conversations about belief, and the salience of God amidst numerous other purported beliefs, the latter of which I discuss further in the next chapter, Between God and the faithless fieldworker.

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"Rough science" and the fate of a blowfish

I got lost on my way to CARMEC (the Centre for African Refugee and Migrant Education & Care) office. Mistaking the community hall on the corner of the road for the correct community building, I shoved open both doors and strode in purposefully. The foyer was cool and dark. Across the foyer, kitchen and bathroom doors were ajar, revealing clean, impersonally cared for spaces that users pass through. The main hall had wooden floors, a dark subdued blue skirting and pale subdued blue walls stretching to a ribbed tin roof, interrupted briefly with a row of high windows from which black curtains drooped, belying great distances between the parts where they attached properly to the rail. I was in the wrong place. I left, and as I tried to position the double doors as I had found them, a shrill alarm sounded. I waited for somebody to come running up but nobody did, so I just waited. People wandered calmly by, occasionally glancing over, while I just stood there, looking sheepish. A sign on the door said "Community Hall" and provided two phone numbers that took bookings. I tried both; an automated operator declared each disconnected.

After several thwarted efforts to meet up with CARMEC's director, Amelie, getting through to her on the phone that morning and being told to come to her office in an hour seemed too good to be true. In turn, the community hall's blaring alarm felt inevitable and apt—I projected that its shrill wail loudly declared, for all to hear, my failure to connect with 'the community'. This way, fieldwork too can take on superstitious inflections; an alarm or a fleeting conversation can act as signs that reassure, guide, or mock your processes. Likewise, a chance meeting that turns out to be fortuitous can feel like fate. Eventually, I explained myself to a spry man in a pale pink shirt. The alarm was left blaring as I followed him down the road to the correct building where Celeste and I would have a chance—she later suggested, fated—meeting.

This building was quiet, austere, and dimly lit. Though hardly a hub of activity this weekday afternoon, it housed numerous small grassroots NGOs and church projects in brick-walled offices. The woman in the office I was headed for was not the woman I had spoken to on the phone, but she had been told to expect me, and welcomed me with a smile. She—Celeste—was energetic with a warm manner. She worked here once a week.

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In this first hour-long conversation I had with Celeste, we touched on an array of issues to do with health and healthcare, skepticism and faith, and the clashing explanatory models said to characterise many migrants' dealings with Australian medical industries. The people I met through Africare, itself a grassroots NGO, seldom expressed any kind of misgiving towards Australian healthcare projects, certainly not outright critique. Given this, I was heartened by Celeste's willingness to call out, for example, the fixed indicators for sugar levels that Australian medical professionals relied on. "African people need a much higher blood sugar level, and their gap for what's 'normal' doesn't account for that", she told me. "Polynesians, and us Indians too, we have bigger builds." She told me about an Aboriginal woman in the bed beside her during her recent brief hospital stay who was asking for sugar in her tea and coffee, and was refused due to her high blood sugar levels; the woman went hypo, and then the staff reverted and began forcing her to drink an unappetising thick, sugary syrup.

Celeste grew up in Uganda. During Idi Amin's reign, her family shifted to Toronto—where other relatives were based. Later, Celeste moved to Sydney to be close to two siblings and their families. She was five months pregnant at the time. During her initial ultrasounds in Australia, the doctors informed her something strange was happening: her baby's legs kept growing on par with their age as a five-month-old, a six-month-old, a seven-month-old foetus, but their torso remained stuck at the size it was at five months. She was frightened and stressed, but when her daughter was born, she was perfect. The doctors here lacked "simple, basic sense" she said.

I for my part participated in earnest. To Celeste's stories about blood sugar levels, I expressed frustration that there was so much "progressive research" on these discrepancies "that people just don't seem to take on," as indeed, my preliminary reading (see for example Good 1986; Gozdiak 2004) and casual conversations about my thesis topic seemed to suggest. To her story of the misdiagnosed abnormality of her daughter as she gestated, I offered a misdiagnosis tale plucked from a journal article I am citing here, in which a young girl with an intestinal bug is mistaken as an anorexic (Manderson and Allotey 2003). The girl, who was already experiencing symptoms of the infection when she left a refugee camp in Sudan, found brief relief with medicines prescribed by a doctor in Egypt en route, but after consulting an Australian hospital some time upon arriving here, she was referred to a psychiatrist; she attended the meetings, much as she resented this stigmatising diagnosis, but the pains persisted

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(ibid). She eventually returned to the Egyptian doctor as an adult with savings from her first job, which is when the bug—*Helicobacter pylori*—was identified and treated (ibid). I narrated this second-hand story, a generalised undermining of local health professionals, to Celeste with zeal.

In Manderson and Allotey's paper, this and others stories' movement through a network points to the productive purposes of such gossip—a chattery means through which moral tales travel, simultaneously imparting warnings and wisdom, while also exploring common experiences in ways that forge closeness (much like what Celeste and I were doing in the above scene). Such stories reinforce participants' common status as part of a group who feel under-served or misunderstood by a country's hospitals; as outsiders to a system, yet insiders to this experience of it. Contrary to those I met through Africare, for instance, Celeste presented herself as a skeptical outsider to Australian medical norms. I suspect there may have been more at stake for Africare, an organisation supported by council rather than church funding, and beholden to certain expectations through it, and certain personal orientations amongst its members, in representing themselves as colluding 'insiders'. At the same time, although Celeste, myself as a medical anthropologist and the refugee women in Manderson and Allotey's (2003) article presented ourselves as outsiders to normative medicine, we do so within a context of *broader* inclusiveness in which critiquing 'the system' is a safe and viable position. Indeed, you could say that 'cultures of inclusion' encourage such impassivity, a salve to the notion of a powerful institution acting upon a voiceless minority (see Chapter Four). In critiquing, we were at least participating; we "accept[ed] the right to be so engaged" (Manderson and Allotey 2003: 18).

In these stories, the medical authorities in Australia bear rigid, ethnocentric, psycho-centric knowledge and are hence prone to misreading conditions that intuitive knowledge and common sense get right. Yet, as we moved to stories that set African witchcraft up against the casting out of demons in Celeste's church, intuitive knowledge compelled by God trumped the sinister 'rough science' of witchdoctors.

On the back of the story about the girl whose stomach bug was quickly interpreted as a mental illness, Celeste acknowledged that mental illnesses were common, and abuse and trauma were undeniably amongst the causes of it, but cited Africa's witches as a source of conditions that may *look* like mental illness. "We see it all the time, even here, people wandering in this zombie state. They stagger, their

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muscles are all stiff, they are depressed and unkempt". She explained how it worked: "people say it's a curse, and it is, but it's not a *spoken* curse". She flourished her fingers at her mouth; an emulation of mystery powers. "Usually the person wanting to inflict the curse will be shown the victim, they'll assess their age, weight, their disposition. They might use the gall bladder of a blowfish mixed with these potent herbs and bushes. In huge amounts it can probably kill you but in small amounts it will induce this state. And they know how much to give you. So it's not a spoken curse, it's medically induced."

"Right, like a craft," I offered.

"It's an art but also a science, a rough science".

I would later learn that the rough science Celeste cited was famously divulged by Wade Davis in the ethnographic classic, *The Rainbow and the Serpent* (1985). Davis, an ethnobotanist, travelled from Harvard to Haiti to investigate zombification. Armed with a pharmacological hypothesis at the outset (Davis 1985: 34–43), Davis traces an intriguing journey towards an explanation for zombification through botanical texts, *voudun* rituals in Port-au-Prince, and the lives of two men who claimed to have been made into zombies, one of who was also the star of a BBC feature made in 1981. The real star of Davis' book, however, is tetrodotoxin (TTX): a poison found in the skin, liver, ovaries and intestines of pan-tropical puffer fish (1985: 118). The symptoms of TTX poisoning, says Davis, include pulmonary edema, hypotension, cyanosis, hypothermia, nausea and vomiting (1985: 123); it also blocks nerve signals inciting a paralytic effect (1985: 172), such that an afflicted person is presumed dead, buried, and when exhumed and revived by their poisoner—the sorcerer—they already suffer oxygen loss but survive in this broken state. This way, Davis explains Haitian zombies as the product of a physiological cause that serves a historically informed social function of informal justice, and that is framed by cultural beliefs in voodoo more generally, suggesting a world "full of spirits" which he fleshes out with descriptions of, for example, the concoction of the zombie powder and of the exhumation of a child's body in a cemetery. He treats this world of spirits, though, as a non-empirical and unfalsifiable "closed system" of thought (Davis 1988: 54–55, cited in Brodwin 1992: 412), and those who believe it as having submitted, under "the weight of tradition" (Davis 1988: 54–55), to "an illusion of total comprehension" (Davis 1988: 182, cited in Brodwin 1992: 412).

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Davis has many critics. He is accused of focusing on the symptoms of afflicted persons without substantial enquiry into their mental and physical health otherwise, potentially missing other extenuating factors (Littlewood 2009: 243). He is accused, in general, of focusing on enlivening his pharmacological hypothesis to the point that his narrative deals inadequately with social meanings, the lives of those administering and suffering from the poisons, of relationships, social conflicts, experiences of possession and of healing (Brodwin 1992: 412). Further, not all his samples of zombie powder contained TTX (Booth 1988: 276), and no researchers, including Davis, had witnessed the powder's actual administration (Brodwin 1992: 412).

While Davis has been accused of peddling "bad science" (Booth 1988) and bad anthropology (Bodi 2011: 24), his provocative claims have enjoyed greater mileage than those of his critics. Davis' findings, distilled to a triptych of Haitian voodoo ritual, the voodoo priests, and the physiological element of 'zombie powder' laced with pufferfish poison, have contributed a key plot device to zombie genre canon. His book would quickly, in 1988, beget a fictional film also called 'The Serpent and the Rainbow' featuring Bill Pullman as a rakish anthropologist-adventurer named Dennis Alan (ostensibly a more swashbuckling, risk-immersed Wade Davis character). Beyond this film, Davis' findings have been alluded to in pop culture as varied as an X Files episode set around a Haitian refugee camp ("Fresh Bones", Season 2, Episode 16) in 1995, and an episode of Father Brown in 2016, in which a heartbroken man carries zombie powder from Haiti to stalk his ex and her new lover as their band travels Northern England ("The Wrath of Baron Samdi", Season 4, Episode 10).[23] In all these stories, the scientific rationale of poison undergirds the extravagant danger signalled by a sinister Haitian spiritual presence, making for eerie mysteries that *can*, with the right knowledge, be reasoned through and solved. It is a useful plot device: zombification is rendered exotic yet explicable.

I do not know the source of Celeste's understanding of puffer fish poison in relation to zombies, so I cannot claim that her explanation demonstrates the

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[23] This episode of Father Brown was my entry point into understanding the afterlives of anthropological knowledge that are discussed here. For this, I thank Sally Warmington: she had seen the episode and pointed out its resonance with Celeste's explanation when I presented an early rendering of the ideas in this chapter at a MARG (Medical Anthropology Reading Group) session at Melbourne University.

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popularisation of science, or how social scientific information trickles outwards from its source, a legitimised myth. Yet, if this was the case linking Celeste, Wade Davis and puffer fish poison, this would not be the first time that ethnographic information begat ethnographic information. The "peculiar and rotational temporality of knowledge" (Bessire 2014: 21) is especially discernable in the ethnographic record of groups of First Peoples, like the Ayoreo in Gran Chaco, where "ethnographers venture to the field only to confront obsolete anthropological models reanimated as social fact" (ibid). Anthropological knowledge is *known* to have ontological afterlives. And so it is not so surprising that Celeste's explanation shares similarities with Davis': Celeste, like Davis, frames curses as 'scientific' in terms of their somatic component as a means of understanding the witchdoctor's skills in terms of trickery. Wickedness and demons persist, vaguely, but alongside poisonous powders afflicting flesh. The two sets of causes are not reconciled. Nor, it seems, do they need to be—particularly if we recall Nyamnjoh's distinction between epistemological orders that require linearity, hierarchy, and opposition (the real or unreal, science or superstitions, for instance), and those orders, popular in Africa, that marry these oppositions, "making it impossible for anything to be one without the other" (2001: 29). Forms and orders of knowledge flow compellingly in these scenes.

Celeste also told me that the way to help people who suffer from this condition is by casting out the evil spirits, as they do in her church. "We don't beat them out or anything, it's not like the Catholic exorcisms", she explained. She said they simply pray to Jesus, and you can see the demon pass.

> "There might be convulsions and all that, some people who are very educated they're accustomed to having a lot of control over their body, they don't do it as much, maybe just a burp, or a cough. And the demon leaves."

It emerges from attending Celeste's church that, first of all, demonism is assigned to anything seen to be a blight on God's plan: in my time with Celeste and her church peers, I heard a range of afflictions, from schizophrenia to a fishbone stuck in a throat described as being demonic. Secondly, Christ's healing is deemed more powerful than the diseases and the demons He is called on to cast out in the Church. When you compare Celeste's explanations, curses are a 'rough science', which are rationalised with recourse to science, but God evacuating demons from people formulates its own meaning without recourse to alternative epistemic systems. It needs no translation.

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When people talk about their own and others' beliefs, different forms of knowledge come to be defined, and then prioritised and problematised in different ways. For Celeste, the range of possible ways to know an affliction co-existed within a spiritual framework. She acknowledged that biomedicine had its place, that demons were real, and that sorcery, with its scientific components, bore concrete effects. However, for her, these paradigms are encompassed by a framework in which Christ the healer is paramount.

And yet, forms of knowledge might have their place. I noticed for Celeste, who certainly vouched for religious ways of knowing in the time that I knew her, felt obliged to usher our conversation out of her office and into more appropriate spaces. Shortly after we had started to speak of demons and curses, Celeste gave me her card so I could contact her later to discuss more. The card bears only her first name and phone number; she distributes it at hospitals, "not pressuring anybody or anything", inviting people to let her pray for them over the phone, which she says can sometimes take hours before people are released (she has a phone plan with unlimited minutes). At this point, she reminded me, and perhaps herself, that she was not speaking in her professional capacity anymore. We were, after all, in the office of an NGO at which she worked. We had strayed a long way from discussing how my research might be supported by her organisation, or simply the fact that in secular Sydney society, religion does not always have a place in professional life.

Personal demons and real demons

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Stanley is Christian and African.[24] Throughout our conversation, he maintained, like many others I spoke to, that psychological perspectives and African spiritual perspectives fundamentally clashed. He noted that demons are salient in psychological perspectives too, but they are personal demons, spoken of in terms of fragmented

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[24] The person I refer to here as Stanley is deliberately introduced vaguely because this vignette reproduces a conversation we had 'off the record'.

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personalities and born out of trauma. "Psychology would try to reconcile those parts rather than casting anything out. I'm not considering it an external agent, but parts of the self shaped by trauma", he said.

"This is a fundamental difference, then," I replied. "The idea that things are part of you versus the idea that the things are external."

He agreed: "It doesn't give room to challenging people's worldviews. I personally believe it's internal, hence the link between thinking, feeling and behaving."

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██████████████████████████████████ He has heard about a man who went to counselling after Church failed to help him, and he was found to have schizophrenia, and when diagnosed he was treated. "But that becomes a generalisation," he added, "and people will assume then that all cases are a case of that".

This idea of an alternative healing paradigm being relevant only ever under exceptional circumstances, reminded me of a conversation with Pastor Lynette. Except that *she* had explained to me, in an interview after weeks of my attending her church, that most cases of depression were demonic, the work of Satanic spirits, though in secular people's extensive denial of this, these spirits are masked by all manner of discourse and reason. "People call it bad behaviour, or mental illness—there is a term for everything people experience but in reality it's really these Satanic spirits, and once you cast the demon out"—she snapped her fingers—"they are free". She observed that medication might address the symptoms of the problem, but could not tackle its source: "it numbs the problem, it drugs the problem, it blocks the problem, but it never removes the problem." Yet, she conceded that under exceptional circumstances, a person needed a clinical intervention. I asked how you could tell the difference between depression that was demonic and depression that was clinical. She said: "The Holy Spirit will let you know".

By deeming something generally untrue, but true under exceptional circumstances, Stanley and Pastor Lynette both demonstrate their awareness of a range

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of possible interpretations of a phenomenon, thus showing themselves to be unlike the rigid, fixed thinkers both have also spoken about: in Pastor Lynette's case, it was those whose faith was blindly inherited from family custom, who lack "a personal relationship with Jesus", whereas for Stanley, it was those who were unwilling to see counsellors, due to beliefs about what ailed them that in turn were due, he said, to "traditional, backwards thinking". In an era of increased hybridity and cosmopolitanism, in which diverse values and people meet and are forced to interact, Stanley and Pastor Lynette show themselves as agentic believers, with rational, reflexive awareness of how different paradigms fit together.

I want to briefly demonstrate the broader relevance of this, as well as some of the other attitudes expressed in conversation with Stanley and Pastor Lynette. I'll do this by drawing on snippets of local news stories on the tantalising subject of exorcism in Australia. Such stories vary; where the early 2000's saw numerous scare stories of religious exorcisms 'gone wrong'—producing grievous injuries or worse, fatality—there are numerous stories from the past several years covering the continued salience of exorcism in some local religious sects.

In news item on the ABC Australia website, the statements of two psychologists at the University of Wollongong are juxtaposed: the first says he does not personally believe in demons, but that exorcism might have a place for people who *do*, that if "that belief can be marshalled to help you overcome your distress then why not?".[25] He clarifies: "I wouldn't say it is the best call or should be the first call in terms of a way of dealing with psychological disturbance, but people should never underestimate the power of belief". The second psychologist, who is also a Catholic priest, does believe in "evil" as an entity. He is quoted by the article's author, Amy Simmons, as saying:

> As a psychologist I'd have to say that somebody who is giving out all the indications of being evil and bad…I would not automatically say that person is possessed…My first inclination would be that this person has somehow gone right off the rails. But I believe also that there are instances where people can end up being caught up in behaviours that are outside the realm of the normal, that they don't want, are not conscious of, that are

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[25] Amy Simmons (30 Jun 2011) 'It's real': Priest reveals exorcism rituals. Available online at: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-06-30/its-real-priest-reveals-exorcism-rituals/2777946 [Accessed 12 Jun 2016]

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not like them personally, and for which there is no explanation either in the physical world or in the world of medical and psychological and psychiatric science.

This second psychologist (and priest) came up again, five years later, in another ABC Australia online news story by Nick McLaren.[26] This time, to report that he psychologist was being investigated by the Psychology Council of New South Wales after airing his views on media personality Jonathan Safran's Triple R radio show. The author Nick McLaren reported that a complaint was lodged online through the Health Care Complaints Commission, querying whether it was legal for a NSW psychologist to 'promote' exorcism, and that an investigation followed this up. Knowledge of this turn of events goes towards explaining the reluctance amongst many whom I met to discuss their beliefs in exorcism and demonic possession in their professional guises. Interestingly, this second article from 2016 also featured some sound bites from a Catholic Bishop based in Wollongong who claimed that to his knowledge, the exorcisms the other priest referred to have never been performed. He added that Catholic priests perform exorcisms only under exceptional, rare circumstances: "The practice of exorcism is very rare and is used only with great care and caution…The church makes clear that exorcism is not a response to illness, especially psychological illness, which is the concern of medical science".[27]

A number of themes are consistent through all these stories: there are clear distinctions between religious and secular spaces, where the former is safe and the latter (which includes professional contexts) unsafe for spiritual beliefs. There are more arguments similar Angelo's at the start of this chapter—that beliefs, however esoteric, can be harnessed to help treat people. And there is a sense that the practitioner, rather than the practice, is key in a healing approach's efficacy and, in turn, a sense that a good exorcism practitioner is as exceptional as the circumstances under which a condition is demonic rather than mental, or mental rather than demonic, depending on your point of view. I am reminded, at this, of Macdonald's work describing the sceptically-inflected agnosticism that people in Chhattisgarh, Central India have towards local healers who

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[26] Nick McLaren (3 March 2016) Role of exorcism in Catholic Church highlighted after complaint against Wollongong priest. Available online at: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-03/role-of-exorcism-in-catholic-church-highlighted-after-complaint/7216312 [Accessed 12 Jun 2016]
[27] Ibid.

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extract stones, bones and rice that have been placed by witches into cursed people's bodies (2015). The healers rub a cut lime in downward strokes over the afflicted area, then suck the skin or reveal the offending object, extracted, in the flesh of the lime (Macdonald 2015: 488). One local healer claims there are many frauds in this profession, who store the offending items in their mouths and perform an illusion (ibid). Another healer expressed that the illusion itself was self-defeating:

> How is it possible to inject something like a stone or rice into the body and the person can't feel it? Even a pin prick on our body and we feel the pain. I think it's false. As far as lime is concerned, I think lime has got a power of healing. All small diseases come out if you roll lime on your body. If anything enters the body, everyone feels pain (Macdonald 2015: 489)

Another skeptical believer, who had himself attended numerous healers while seeking to salve a debilitating muscular atrophy in his legs, claimed he did not believe in the limes at all, rather he believed in the healer themselves. As Macdonald points out, "revelation, belief and unbelief involve a complex set of relations between revelation, contemplation and responding revelation" (2015: 489). In these assertions, despite their differences, skepticism and rationality play out in the sustenance of informed belief, yet, at the same time, certain aspects remain above question and need no explaining. These exceptional situations point to moments where the value of rationality, generally pervasive, gives way to faith.

Macdonald's findings and the conversations she documents speak compellingly to the conversations I relate here (and others much like them). She engages with the nuanced ways that skepticism and doubt do more than simply colour a person's regard of a questionable practice; they constitute positions *of* regard, in which a person is neither a disbeliever nor a devotee. In Macdonald's words on the Chhattisgarhi, both "to believe too much ('believing with one's eye closed') and to believe too little ('blind to belief') are excessive, unwise, and injudicious"[28] (Macdonald 2015: 497). This point is driven home through juxtaposing the Chhattisgarhi locals' skepticism with the motives driving Dr Mishra, a self-described rationalist and president-founder of the Blind Faith Eradication Committee, on behalf of which he conducts a science show in Chhattisgarh

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[28] In the original text, this section I quote is accompanied by the citation: Pigg 1996; cf. Desjarlais 2003.

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and other villages that out the healer's tricks as illusions. Missions like Dr Mishra's aspire to teach "reasoning" and impart to villagers (the 'uneducated') a "spirit of inquiry" (2015: 490), yet, as Macdonald argues, such missions' intended targets are engaged with "an alternative modernity or mode of unbelief" (2015: 497). This way, skepticism can be seen as an ethos.

David Graeber notes that in most places where phenomena that can be seen as 'magic' within the academe exist, such skepticism surrounds them (2015: 11). As he dryly observes:

> Most ethnographers have simply ignored such conundrums, or at best treated the skeptical discourse was somehow extraneous, foreign, a product of "Western" education, or otherwise as dross pasted over the real stuff (that is, whatever seems to most fly in the face of "Western common sense"). But in this case, the tension of the two contradictory perspectives pulling at one another is precisely what is constitutive of the world of *fanafody*, and everything associated with it. (Graeber 2015: 13)

Perhaps the positions put forth by Stanley and Pastor Lynette (and augmented by the priests, psychologists and bishop in ABC news stories) suggest an accumulation of experiences trying to address the conditions they and I speak of, that together have demonstrated that one cannot generalise about one healing practice over another; that there might always be exceptions. In acknowledging the veracity of both demons and mental illness, and citing the importance of a healer diagnosing the right affliction in order to help a person in an appropriate way, these individuals, in their own ways, recognise nuance without losing nerve. Regardless of their position, a sense of the limits of their espoused therapeutic beliefs plays a role in verifying those beliefs' integrity. This porousness of thought is, in fact, the very quality that Celeste and I deemed lacking amongst the Australian doctors who, in the anecdotes we swapped, upheld a sense of their own expertise and practice as being paramount, and seemed unwilling to entertain alternatives. It is this quality of making room for *reasonable* others *within limits* that, to some extent, marks a 'modern believer', whatever their core espoused beliefs. It is, to elaborate, the demonstration of the capacity to honour ways of thinking that are beyond one's own, in some way.

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Bracketing belief

In order to consider these observations further, I turn to another moment in which the tension between ideological positions simmered, briefly. We return to the Africare office that the women's health workshop described at the end of the previous chapter was set in. The office was set up for another health workshop, but this time it was a mental health workshop and this time, it was November, the early days of summer. We were crammed into rows of chairs facing the front of the room, where a projector was set up to display a powerpoint on the wall adjacent to the office door. The air conditioner was going—its exhaust pipe was still wedged between a sliding window to be held in place, but it worked. This workshop looked to be a success by Africare standards—the seats were almost full. It also looked poised to meet the board's oft-voiced desire to begin events on time, and indeed, shortly after the advertised start time of 12 noon, Kenny, one of Africare's directors, opened the workshop with a speech. He turned side-on in his chair to face the rest of the room, but remained seated, and his calm drawl climbed into the cooling air. "For those of us from an African background", Kenny began, "you'll know that if you invite people to a mental health workshop they will think you are saying they are a mad person." This drew some tittering. "It's still a stigma…yet, especially with our background of wars, conflicts…people have lost their jobs, lost their properties, people have lost their minds…we need help to learn to deal with the stresses".

This is a theme that ran through the workshop: that madness is real and undesirable, but milder mental illness is also real, though manageable and treatable, and quite unlike madness, and you should seek help for those stresses and depressions. When Kenny handed over to Paolo, the presenter that day, Paolo began by trying to underscore these distinctions, and as he did so, developing a rapport with the audience, he commented that "sometimes, people have funny ideas about mental illness, which are not true…like in Asian communities (that) believe in karma, you are born again, and you suffer because of your evil deeds in a past life. That's not true". I imagined I sensed some disquiet in the room at this. He carried on describing psychotic illnesses, and started fielding questions. There was a question about genetics and mental illness, then another question about psychosis, and then Jean Baptiste asked from the back of the

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room, in a voice that sounded like a challenge, "What about those guys who are so-called prophets?"

Paolo replied, "This is a religious thing, a spiritual thing, it is different. I shouldn't talk like this, but I will to make this point: you know the crazy people on the street corners? Like I say, I shouldn't talk like this. But you know they may be talking to themselves, or talking to someone, and there is nobody there? That is usually mental illness."

"What about sorcerers?" somebody asked.

"Saucers?" Paolo echoed, unsure.

And a group of people shouted all at once: "SOR-cerors!" "Sor-cer-ors!" "Witchcraft!"

Paolo understood. "Ah", he said, "well I don't personally believe in this, I am not personally religious, but there *are* people who are capable of more than most humans. But it is different to the man on the corner."

"The reason I raise this", said Jean-Baptiste, "is there is a man who bets, he is addicted to betting, he goes to the sorcerer and says 'tell me what to do?'…"

"My take on this is if going to the sorcerer helps this person solve the problem, great. But they are not professionals, so keep an open mind—if it doesn't work go see someone else", said Paolo.

Jean-Baptiste pressed on. "I can tell you too about a woman back home, in Rwanda, she might be looking for help getting married, she might go see a sorcerer just to hear what she can do—"

Paolo interjected: "This person doesn't have a mental illness—she just wants to find a husband!" This drew laughter, and then Paolo tactfully closed the hypothetical sorcerer consultation stories by saying, "Look, *I* am not a religious person, I respect others' beliefs as long as they don't hurt me. There *are* people who are capable of more than most humans, but have an open mind, if something does not work, go see somebody else, try something else". With this, having I suspect reached a sort of stalemate with the room over his initial dismissal of "funny ideas about mental illness, which are not true", Paolo moved on with his presentation.

As I greedily scribbled notes on this exchange at the time, I wondered at it. It seemed like what was explicitly said in the exchange masked its underlying meaning. If not, what was the connection between schizophrenia and consulting a sorcerer? Why

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had Jean Baptiste driven this inquiry when in all my other engagements with him, he expressed strong distinctions between the thinking and behaviour of educated as opposed to uneducated people (see Chapter Three, 'On being (and not being) educated'), and any attachment to black magic was generally associated with being *un*educated? Why had the rest of the room, most of whom I knew, and most of whom would align with Jean Baptiste on these points, pursued it too? It is possible that Paolo's off-hand comment had prompted Jean Baptiste to want to defend or protect his community from judgement. It seemed that just as notions of what it means to be educated constitute poles that people can stake an affiliation to (as I argue in Chapter Three), and thus represent themselves favourably amidst a set of references through, some of these poles can also then be used to test the flexibility, or the sympathy, of others.

My reading of this exchange is as follows: this workshop began, as most such workshops do, with an outsider to the community coming in to tell them about an issue that concerns them. The outsider revealed himself to have ideas that might stigmatise members of this group, and in response, the group closed ranks and took on ideas that they would usually be dismissive of, namely the viability of sorcery, that they have drawn on (in conversations with me) to create distinctions between educated and uneducated community members. Paolo's offhand comment in his effort to explain a point became provocation for the group to defend the beliefs attached to their tradition, which they temporarily, publicly adopted. Recalling my earlier argument about exceptions, and to put a twist on it, could Paolo's provocation have inspired one of those exceptional moments where a usually marginalised belief has its place?

This put an interesting angle on the workshop which, like the other workshops and community education initiatives that target migrant communities, could be seen as encouraging their audiences to be flexibly minded; that is, to being open to the suggestions made by these workshops that strive to inform their audiences on how to benefit from state services and opportunities, and stay on the right side of the law (see Chapter Three 'On being and not being educated'). In the exchange above, it seemed the workshop attendees were nudging Paolo, the presenter, into declaring his position on the beliefs said to be prevalent in their society that clash with the beliefs that he, as a community mental health educator, was there to represent. Paolo recognised this, and obliged. His declaration passed, and seemed respectful and appropriate in the context,

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but I want to examine it as an example of such statements within such exchanges more generally.

Based on his article on acknowledging difference in exchanges between secular and religious thinkers, Joel Kahn might categorise Paolo's response to the workshop group as bracketing. That is, a "strategic agnosticism on the part of the unbeliever in his/her interaction with believers" (Kahn 2011: 80). This is similar to the anthropologist's agnostic suspension of disbelief, albeit uninterested; entailing "polite disinterest" (Kahn 2011: 79) to the point of acknowledging the difference but avoiding having to explore it. Kahn recognises the respect attempted by those using such strategies in interactions between believers and disbelievers, but he does not see it resulting in actual respect for difference because, at worst, it can be taken as insulting and condescending for those whose beliefs are bracketed out of the interaction. After all, the result is that the secularity of a shared space is reclaimed. Kahn offers up an alternative: a direct engagement that entails not overlapping horizons, but a mutual shifting of horizons towards both types of believers being altered and finding new ground. I note that this horizon shifting is what some anthropologists attempt on behalf of academic ways of knowing in response to mystical phenomena in their fieldsites (see for example Ram 2013). The authors of such works each attempt to grapple with the mystical on its own terms. They do draw on various academic epistemological premises to do this, dismantling some and broadening others.

This contrasts to two other approaches to the mystical in anthropology: the approach characterised by the ontological turn, in which the world is not just experienced as different but *is* different from different ontological perspectives, and the approach of making sense of spiritual phenomena through familiar academic epistemes, often to do with sociality, power and politics. Evans-Pritchard's writings about the Azande are most often cited as an example of the latter: as he sees it, witchcraft provides Azande with a philosophical, rather than physical, causation story for sickness. He interprets witchcraft as an idiom for speaking of misfortune—from blights to infected, stubbed toes (1936: 19)—that answers the question, 'why me?' (Good 2010: 66), and accounts for the otherwise unknowable variables of chance and fortuity that the facts of a tragedy alone cannot explain. Evans-Pritchard is notable for relating the complexity and rationality of Azande's worldview at a time when the mystical was mostly written off as irrational superstition. Despite this, the following statement that

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opens his analysis is strikingly problematic (particularly with 80 years of hindsight): "Witches, as the Azande conceive of them, clearly cannot exist" (1937: 18). In a huge number of anthropological texts dealing with supernatural phenomenon, whether by students or established scholars, these words are cited as representing the tendency within the social sciences to eschew meaningful engagement with spiritual phenomena on its own terms. Consequently, Evans-Pritchard's Azande writings are treated something like a rabbit-duck illusion amongst anthropologists, a litmus test for transcending ones own cultural perspective—for whether one has been anthropologist enough. In this way, some of the debates around Evans-Pritchard's Azande writing take on moral intonations: Wade Davis' use of Evans-Pritchard when describing the illusions that Haitian voodoo believers unwittingly submit to ends up being the basis for Brodwin's critique of him (1992: 412). Similarly, in his Strathern lecture, 'Who's afraid of the ontological wolf' (2014) Viveiros de Castro criticises Graeber for continuing Evans-Pritchard's error of dismissing witchcraft, likening Evans-Pritchard's oft cited sentence to Graeber's saying: "Of course it would also be going too far to say that the fetishistic view is simply true: Lunkanka cannot really tie anyone's intestines into knots; Ravololona cannot really prevent hail from falling on anyone's crops" (Graeber 2005: 430, cited in Viveiros de Castro 2015: 15). Graeber's response to this is includes a brief aside of amused flattery at the comparison, since he "always believed that [Evans-Pritchard's] exposition of Zande witchcraft is one of the most brilliant analyses of ideology ever written" (2015: 2). Graeber goes on to carefully argue against "ontological anarchy" in favour of a theoretically relativist, ontological realism (2015).

Paul Stoller, in a book-long rumination called *On Being in Between* (2009), also considers some of the varied approaches to phenomena like Azande witchcraft, beginning with Evans-Pritchard's. Stoller culminates by praising Terrence MS Evens' meaningful but unresolved engagement with difference. He points out that Evens amongst Hauka's cosmologically-inflected social worlds found "a truth worth knowing" but "an inassimilable truth that was beyond our world, beyond our reason and exacted a fundamental cost" (2009: 24), whereby to attain that truth would not mean simply enriching oneself but transforming oneself. Perhaps this conceptualisation of truths as worth knowing of but not assimilating into resonates with bracketing?—even if that bracketing takes place in a community education mental health workshop, which as an institution posits that there are truths worth knowing *and* assimilating into.

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I indulge in this elaborate detour to demonstrate how thorny these mundane challenges of mutual understanding and mutual respect that crop up in health education are: issues of mutuality that emerged for me in the mental health workshop are also debated deeply and at length amongst academics whose work is the purposeful engagement with these questions, that pose a challenge across the board. What might seem like (but is not meant as) a critique of Paolo is contextualised in this longer philosophical unrest.

Conclusion

This chapter's charting of how people negotiate and manage diverse beliefs points to Charles Taylor's contention that we live in a secular age (2007). Taylor is interested in secularism in the sense of a society shifting from one where it is virtually impossible *not* to believe in God, "to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility amongst others" (Taylor 2007: 3). This sense of the numerous human possibilities for living and healing comes through in all the stories of this chapter as people explain their own clinical or religious or spiritual understandings of phenomena like mental illness to me, and perhaps more compellingly, as people offer explanatory models for understanding the ways that others think.

These everyday explanatory models have contributed examples in this chapter of the movement of ways of understanding across different spheres of knowledge production, from the seemingly unspecialised to the specialised (namely academic spaces). After all, other literary references that I draw on in this chapter demonstrate how academic epistemological practices are mirrored in the everyday ways that people try to explain or discuss traditional and/or mystical beliefs.

Arthur Kleinman (1980) is widely credited with developing the concept of medical explanatory models; Kleinman, as a physician and an anthropologist, argued that the way patients understood their conditions were important to their treatment, even understandings that might seem at odds with a biomedical scope. Explanatory models, as a concept for understanding and integrating people's personal, socio-cultural understandings of what ails them into treatment, are taught as a part of most medical school training. Notably, this has a transferable quality that operates within the stories

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in this chapter as beliefs in the mystical are at once dismissed, and reintegrated by drawing on everyday explanatory models for why those beliefs are maintained. In a way, through such discursive processes, practices like the casting out demons and consulting sorcerers are deemed outside of the scope of what is normal, and are *further* exoticised. As Graeber (2015) and Mcdonald (2015) suggest, however, such exceptionalism is rather the norm surrounding phenomena anthropologists might class as magic. Yet, it is curious to me—as somebody who would describe themselves as atheist—that witches are treated as magic, inspiring skepticism, by people who treat God as real. This points to how different intangible phenomena occupy very different kinds of realms as beliefs. The next chapter looks more closely at these distinctions.

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Chapter Five

Between God and the Faithless Fieldworker:

A point of departure

For distinct parts of my fieldwork, I participated in social contexts where it could be taken for granted that all present were people of faith. I was not, and was honest about this when asked. These honest accounts accumulated encounters in which I felt I was explaining myself at length at the expense of listening to others instead, and I present one such exchange, with Didier, at the end of this chapter. At the time, I was addled with doubt over my methodological practice in this respect. Should I have been a 'good' ethnographer, prioritised data, and not labored the workings of my own beliefs as extensively as I did—even though this felt to me like a stale formula? Is it a picture of 'bad' anthropology?; an unwillingness to engage fully with the anthropological project of living un-disruptively within a field—or participating with too much of oneself—of bringing prejudice into the field? This chapter is an extended reflection in response to these questions. In it, I critically dissect some of the methodological assumptions behind practices of non-disclosure in the field. I do not argue for disclosure, though I do explain why I practice it. Rather, I am interesting in assessing the value of the conditions created by the kind of disclosure I practiced. Ultimately, I explore the relationships between faith (and faithlessness), disclosure, data and methods; the co-created lines of enquiry they open, those they foreclose, and how the representation of these might inflect ethnographic writing.

Inevitable questions

As an atheist, I was a moral anomaly amongst my predominantly Christian field friends and acquaintances. My aspiration to be unobtrusive and 'open' in the field was tempered by a willingness to respond frankly when asked about my personal beliefs. And so the inevitable question—was I Christian also?—incited trepidation. My habitual reply—"I

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don't have a religion"—often belied a sympathetic tone. My tone was apologetic when it was assumed that I too followed the same God, that this much could go without saying, and I would have to clarify otherwise. Sometimes, I would elaborate the clarification with statements that I felt were more mitigating. "I am not Christian, but I think faith is a beautiful thing", I told an elderly Polish woman sitting beside me at a Church service that an NGO worker, Celeste, had invited me to attend. "And still you don't believe?", this woman asked sadly when I professed a scholarly appreciation of her faith and established that I had read parts of the Bible and attended Church at my Anglican high school. She then placed her hand in space above head height between us, then drew it to my heart, saying it was alright I believed in nothing for "an empty vessel is easier for the Holy Spirit to fill".

In another Church service that I was invited to, I explained in earnest to those who asked, "just because *I* can't see something, I know that doesn't mean it isn't true". With this statement, I meant to evoke something like cultural relativism—the sense that God was an aspect of the natural order of things that my perspective was not privy to (nor striving to be privy to). Perhaps due to the clumsy light-footedness with which I had communicated my lack of faith and interest, this lent easily to interpretations that I was still searching, seeking the truth. When the fact that I was not eventually and inevitably surfaced, that called for clarification too. Perhaps the most public instance of this was when a visiting Pastor, Prophet Eric from Michigan, presiding over Sunday service at the Apostolic and Prophetic Church I sometimes attended for fieldwork, singled me out and called me to the front of the room. We were in the service's final phase. Here, the jubilance and energy seeded by the youth band's triumphant music at the beginning, then sustained by the crowd's vigorous praise and the pastoral teachings (which were like lashes of poetry), would reach a higher cadence. Most of the crowd was on their feet and out in the aisles, with full-bodied worship, and Prophet Eric was singling individuals out and delivering prophecies. A prophecy—a divine insight into that person's spiritual struggles—invoked any evil energies in that person to leave them be, and Prophet Eric divined that I was falling into "a dark depression". I was summoned to the front, nearer to the stage, and he poured an oil onto my hair, while ushers swiftly prepared me for the evil's vanquishment; they wrapped a sheet around my waist, to protect my modesty in case I fell over in my skirt, and removed my glasses, to protect those from breaking. Unable to perform my role (and knowing that

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since I did not believe at all, let alone in this denomination, I could *only* perform it), the crowd and Prophet Eric waited and watched. I stood, nervous, my head bowed. I felt that it would be disrespectful to mimic the motions that were expected, but that my hesitation was also a form of disrespect. Moments later, with the energy of the room slightly deflated, Pastor Eric moved on. My glasses were handed back to me. The sheet around my waist was removed.

In yet other interactions, my godlessness was an intrigue, and conversations tilted towards discussing my faithlessness. "But let me ask you this", Elijah began late one afternoon after I had packed away my recorder after an interview with him. "There are moments where you are completely individual, all creatures come to that. At the end, it's there. Your friends can't touch you there. Your family cannot. It is [only] you. Now for a believer, in those moments, God is with you. I've always wondered how non-believers think about that time, if they think about it at all".

"I assume you're talking about death?", I had asked.

"Anything: death, other moments."

"This is going to sound bad…", I warned.

Elijah laughed. "No, it won't be bad, go on."

"Well, I find it really comforting that when I die, I just stop"

He laughed harder. "Life just stops, okay, fair enough".

"Well not all life, just—my life. The world goes on, and I…I just stop. I like the idea of that".

"Some people do feel that. You come, stay a while, you 'stop'", Elijah offered. He then explained that he certainly entertained debates within himself—he questioned the origin of things, the end of things, the existence of the afterlife. "But ultimately, in the absence of any concrete conclusion"—he put a fist to his heart—"I return to my belief".

It is worth distinguishing here the questions about my atheism that seemed to pave towards a conversion logic—for instance, 'how can you live a decent, moral life? What if you die a disbeliever and you are wrong?'—from enquiries after the interiority of atheism—if you did not *believe* then what did you *think*? What did that absence consist of? In the encouraging, inquisitive tones with which Elijah pressed me to elaborate on the absences I nursed, described above, such questions suggest that aspects of faithlessness might be most fascinating to a believer. The fascination is

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comparable—perhaps—to how often the entry point for social scientific research involves phenomena that the researcher encounters that poses a puzzlement—an interpretive challenge—like spirit possession (Ram 2013), falling in the spirit (Csordas 1990), or the absence of a social phenomenon so entrenched in the researcher's society it is believed to be ubiquitous (as with Helliwell's [2000] finding that her Gerai friends in Indonesia in 1985 could not relate to the concept of rape).

Well before accumulating a sense for the range of ways these exchanges about my own beliefs could go, my nerves would shoot in that initial instance between being asked and answering whether I was Christian too. Lying about this did not strike me as a viable option. For me, this honesty about myself was a basic respect and one I assumed was customary in our field. To be dishonest had a sour tint of inequality, and seemed to exacerbate the distinct power relations between researcher and the researched (Blanes and Oustinova-Stjepanovic 2015; Katz 1996: 172; Metcalf 2002; Oustinova-Stjepanovic 2015: 122). Even so, my truthful admission *felt* like coming clean about a lie, and I worried that it would hamper the relationships I was trying to build, often with people whose social world I had no prior engagement with. In a few cases, at least, this worry was warranted. For instance, I felt I was talking warmly to Theo when we were introduced after a Rwandan genocide commemoration at a church until Elijah came up and expressed gladness that we had met, telling Theo "I love her support of our community, she's always coming to our events!"

"Is she a saved sister?", Theo asked, directing this at Elijah.

I softly said "No" while Elijah declared "No!" with a laugh, and added, evoking the conversation relayed earlier, which we had then had recently, "she doesn't believe in *anything* and she can tell you all about that too!" On that note, Elijah bid us goodbye; he was on his way to the airport to welcome a new Rwandan family to Australia. In Elijah's wake, the tones with which Theo was telling me about his family's movements during Rwanda's bloodier years seemed to cool. Theo swayed the baby he was cradling in his arms a while, then asked me what my parents believed. I started to explain their respective journeys with Hinduism, making sure to stress their avowed respect for all religions, and before long, with the discreet and organic mutuality with which unwilling interlocutors reorient into different conversations in a crowd, Theo and I were no longer talking at all.

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Disclosure in the field

Similar such stories appear in the writing of a few other anthropologists. Ruy Llera Blanes (2006: 228) writes of outing himself as a disbeliever upon first meeting an elder man outside a *Filadelfia* church he spontaneously attended: the man turned his back on him, and "looking at the man's back with a silly frown on [his own] face, [Blanes] decided to leave" (2006: 228). Blanes also describes being taken aback when a Gypsy Pentacostal pastor he had worked with a while asked "are all you anthropologists atheist" (2006: 224); a question in which Blanes sensed two other implicit questions: "What are you…*really* studying among us?" and "How do you expect to describe our church with truthfulness if you don't believe in God?" (ibid). Meanwhile, Vincent Crapanzano (2010) tells in consoling detail of several uncomfortable witnessing and conversion attempts (on his wife and daughter too) across various Evangelical communities. Tactically speaking, such breakages and disjunctures were inconvenient. They fulfilled anxieties and stoked further concerns about being 'accepted' in ones fieldsite, evading "excessive proselytism" (Blanes 2006: 225), and collecting healthy data. Writing of deciding to disclose his atheism, Blanes surmises that he came to appreciate that beliefs and disbeliefs in fieldwork "are negotiated through a communicational process that is built on tensions, distances and proximities, and… anthropological production depends on those tensions in order to fulfil its strategies and expectations" (2006: 224). That is, these proximities and distances are continuously and varyingly co-created. Blanes' adapted his approach to these proximities and distances in his methodological processes depending on his fieldsite. They varied with context. He professed atheism in a fieldsite in the city in which he lived and had longer relationships with participants, but shifted to describing himself as agnostic when starting up a briefer stint of fieldwork in the new city of Lisbon.

The notion that honesty derails the direction of one's research is reflected in the deliberations that underscore decisions to be, or not to be, honest. Such notions are bundled into sets of assumption about how ethnographers study 'the other', and belie practicalities and desires of control of a study's focus and its unfolding. As well as this, there are latent assumptions that a controversial disclosure may be fixed into a methodologically unhelpful cultural interpretation. However, in making these

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assumptions, we may sometimes underestimate those whose words, gestures, everyday lives, loved ones, suffering, political orientations and so forth comprise the bread and butter of our work. Consider David Sutton's (1997) findings about being a vegetarian anthropologist, which I entangle here because my own vegetarianism was, like my godlessness, sometimes an intrigue for those I worked with (though it never proved insurmountable and was unfailingly accommodated at events I attended and when eating at people's homes[29]). Sutton (1997) writes of how his intention to carry on practicing his dietary preferences whilst on fieldwork in the Greek Island, Kalymanos, were met with reserve amongst department colleagues, one of whom told him he would have to find some other way of proving his manhood in this context where meat-eating and manhood were so intertwined (see for example Herzfeld 1985)—"at least you have a son and you can point to him and tell people you produced him without meat" (Sutton 1997: 5), this colleague said. Sutton calculated the potential toll of his implied lack of commitment to his fieldsite's social norms, in his colleagues' eyes—not to mention the polluting and impolite implications of refusing meat amongst his informants. However, he found that his diet was not criticised by Kalymnians, though it was a point of interest for them. Sutton finds that through his disclosures and the discussions that followed, he came to learn some of the finer nuances of meat-eating on the island; many men and women claimed to dislike the heaviness of eating meat (1997: 6), and the consumption of meat was linked by a few Kalymnians to decay and the ageing of the body, which in turn layered into recurring discussions Sutton encountered on the benefits of fasting.

Sutton's findings offer important inflections to the prominent heavier-handed tropes of Mediterranean masculinity, and they point, moreover, to particular limits that are set forth when ethnographers act on assumptions about how personal information might fly in the field. This too is not an unusual story of hitting upon an anthropologically-rich finding; the unexpected, inexplicable word use, or emotional response, or behavior that sets off a string of events that can be unpacked to reveal more richly layered material. Given the disciplinary willingness to let surprise and serendipity lead the flow of fieldwork, it seems incongruent that disclosing a clashing faith (or diet)

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[29] It is worth noting that I was not strict in my diet; I would gladly eat the 'soup' of a meat curry with rice or *injera* where that was the central meal, and enjoyed the salad, grilled potato and vegetarian curry dishes often available at events.

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would be treated as a practice to avoid. As well as this, it would be impossible to deny the thoughtfulness and care extended to so many anthropologists who take to foreign fields outside of their home turf, which demonstrate that accommodating 'difference' is a quality our informants share with us. As Crapanzano helpfully observes, "…fieldwork consists of encounters with others, who come to the encounter with their own prejudices and orientations, including the value they put on openness and closure" (2010: 58).

At this, I think of Leymah, a Liberian woman I spent some time with in Western Sydney, who asked me, after the Church service for a wedding she invited me to, whether I understood everything the pastor had said. I had understood the gist, if not word for word, and I told her this. She said that was "our English…we drop some words, half say some words, some words in other languages, but we understand each other". She claimed that if I spent enough time with her friends, I would learn to hear the words vocally gestured and piece together the meaning, and that this speech form acts as a kind of code or dialect for ministers. "It is something you have to grow an ear for", she added. I enthused to Leymah about the *way* that her ministers preached; specifically the power of the hypnotic, syncopated, rhythmic delivery of ministry by those who preach, and the accumulation of energy this style stokes for somebody like me who is unaccustomed to this style of worship. It is a way of speaking that has poetic power, the qualities that connect speech to gut and have a way of holding sway on what happens in your body responsively to the quality of the sound. It acts like a bassline or a drum beat, the part of music that makes you want to move with it. Leymah looked surprised, and said "Really? I was almost a little embarrassed in there for what it may appear like to outsiders!—like what if she doesn't understand? She must be so bored!" This exchange amused me. Leymah's unabashed thoughtfulness about my outsider-ness and how I may fit in extended to her buying me pasta the first time I came to her home in case I was not prepared to eat what she and her family usually eat. Our dissections of these assumptions and each other's concerns about being accommodating and accommodated was part of the context through which I pursued my research enquiries with her.

I want to proceed by further considering the methodological and epistemic implications of some of these co-constructed proximities and distances in the field, as Blanes (2006) put it. To do this, I reflect on the anthropological study of Christianity, and some of the contradictions, vexations, and concerns inherent in this fit.

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Anthropology and / with / of Christianity

Paul had invited me to a picnic with some of his oldest friends from Ethiopia and Burundi. One of his friends, whom he introduced me to, was an engineer and an academic. Explaining my research project to the engineer, Abder, I noted that one aspect of it had to do with how psychiatry and psychology work alongside faith to help people.

"What religion are you?" asked the engineer.

"I don't have a religion", I explained, and Paul's face fell, darkened with concern.

"You should", Paul said gently.

Abder seemed unperturbed. He coolly asked me, "How do you plan to understand how faith heals if you have not experienced faith?" (This echoes a question asked of Blanes, cited earlier.)

I attempted to explain my understanding at that time of the limits and potentials inherent in fieldwork. Abder's brother was a doctor and also an academic, though he lived in America, and we discussed research in more general terms for a while. Returning to my research topic, Abder explained that in his own experience as well as that of his brother's, "when people have hope, all the medicines and treatment can be more effective." He listed a few elements he found crucial to health: faith, hope, the power of the mind. And then added, "but it can work both ways—sometimes it is not your mind, but your body that will do it for you". He followed this up with a story:

> In Africa, some men are not very educated. There was a woman, my brother told me, who really wanted not to have any more children. Also she couldn't, she had some sort of a problem. But she couldn't tell her husband this, and he kept wanting to sleep with her, so that is how things were. Then something happened and suddenly, from the waist down, she was paralysed. There was no explanation, the doctors looked at her and she seemed all healthy, fine, nothing wrong with her, except she was paralysed from the waist down, you could cut her leg and she wouldn't feel it. Then, while they were examining her, they found this other condition that she had and the doctors spoke to her husband, explained that she couldn't have more children, and so he listened and … then she was fine!

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For a long time after the picnic I was a little mystified by Abder's story. I would read over my notes and interpret and re-interpret what Abder meant when he remarked, between talking about the power of a hopeful mind and delivering this story, "but it can work both ways". Eventually, I felt I realised the implicit suggestion was that for the women Abder describes as 'uneducated', it was not that God's presence in her mind or in the mind of her doctors lead to her condition, and the behavior affecting it, to be discovered; rather, that God had affected her body *so that* the condition may be discovered.

In hindsight, I treat Abder's story as something of a test he posed to me as to the limits of *understanding* how faith heals as a disbeliever. There is the challenge not only of identifying how faith is expressed in the story, but then of explaining how it could work this way. One strategy frequently adopted in interpreting such stories is the phenomenological strategy of suspending disbelief, such that the extraordinary story or event or explanation offered is taken on its own terms and interpreted in terms of what it suggests about larger comprehensive theories about a group's belief. Suspension of disbelief in some ways underpins relativism, though relativism produces certain stalemates by suggesting distinct, impermeable moral orders. It also implies a neutral beholder whose coherence in a relationship is difficult to imagine. Is there scope here to elude the capturing and classification of data, and thereby avoid the static reverence of relativism? Is it possible, perhaps, to do this in writing?

A point of contrast to this is the moral agnosticism whereby alterity is invited into one's own life. I think, here, of a memoir essay by Mary Catherine Bateson (1980) on her father's last days. Bateson describes her father, Gregory Bateson, as an anthropologist who characterised this position so fully that even on his death bed, he—a life-long atheist—experimented, welcoming a bevy of curative promises and taking on each with an open mind: homeopathy, wheatgrass juice, imaging therapy, until ultimately passing in a Zen Center in San Francisco (1980). Relativism is enabled, in some ways, by profound skepticism.

Yet, at the same time, the relativistic epistemic frame of anthropology as I understand and practice it jars uncomfortably with the monotheistic epistemic frame of Christian theology. Joel Robbins (2006) writes that the relationship between anthropology and Christianity is as vexed and complicated as the relationship between anthropology and feminism, which Strathern aptly characterises as entailing "an

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awkward dissonance" (1987: 276) in the seminal essay to which Robbins alludes. Robbins borrows Strathern's phrasing, pointing out the ways that anthropology, under-girded as it is by relativism and a European-scientific concept of temporality, essentially clashes with the Christian worldview. Indeed, as one former pastor said to me, when I gleefully pointed out that ideological syncretism has had a long history in many Christianised societies: "There's a theory that that kind of mixing is part of why people become dysfunctional. The theological perspective is that the worldviews are not able to be fully integrated. Because then it means that the Christian worldview is not fully understood." The absolutism of his perspective absolutely rejects the anthropologist's attitude. His position also evokes for me Charles Stewart's question (quoted but not cited in De Pina-Cabral 2001: 329): "Are the majority of anthropologists virtually card-carrying secularists?" De Pina-Cabral clarifies that to be secular is not the same as being atheist—a secularist might believe in God/s, but at the same time believe that the world is moving towards secularism; a vision that clashes with the theological desire that the people of the world ought to all believe in their God.

There are other arguments that suggest that a meaningful relativism can be accessed only across outlooks that bear religious, spiritual investment. Allegedly, as reported by Meyer Fortes in his reflection of anthropological approaches to African religions (1987: 288, cited in Blanes 2006: 224), Evans-Pritchard once informally accused his atheist Africanist colleagues of being incapable of understanding the religions they encountered in their fieldsites due to their lack of a worthwhile counter reference point. Indeed, in a lecture delivered in 1959, Evans-Pritchard described his colleagues' attitudes to religion as "hostile" (Evans-Pritchard 1962: 29) for treating them as superstitions. Evans-Pritchard allegedly waged that as a man of faith, a Catholic, he was better spiritually equipped to comprehend religiosity. However Fortes takes contention with this, arguing that anthropologists *had* to be agnostic if they were to be effective observers (1987: 288).

Joel Kahn's approach to this difficulty is illuminating. Kahn (2014) argues that in spite of post-modern and post-structuralist critiques stating that experience cannot be meaningfully transacted across ontological differences, this is not as relevant to ethnography's objective or potential. He contends that to access others' extraordinary worlds is fraught and anyway not as fertile a subject as much as the engagement with

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the political, ethical, moral and social dilemmas brought about by *ethnographic research* into others' extraordinary worlds (Kahn 2014: 239).

I want to consider some of the possibility for this by looking at a series of interpretive openings and their amendments that passed as I attended a service at a Pentecostal African Church.[30] The service unfolded as they usually did, in my admittedly limited experience, with the band rehearsing as people filed in and took to their seats. When the music formally began, the main singer, a tall slim woman in centre-stage, called us to our feet. The music started up from nothing to a roar, heavy with the pumping clash of cymbal drums. The crowd moved to the beat; *I* moved to the beat. I noticed the small sense of power triggered by movement: how dancing makes limbs limber; how even in my shy side-step, in the repeated motions of swaying, this volition accumulated; my weight shifted, left, to right, to left, to right, leg to leg with a flourish at the hips each time, which I felt in the bone rolling, right, then left, then right, then left, where I felt the skin on my waist stretch, and release, on this side, then that side, then this side, all while my weight is shifting leg to leg, alternating like the soles of my foot pushing against the foot. While this happened, I felt that my legs and hips were gathering momentum, coming into a life of their own. Limber limbs are better at submitting to the moment than static ones. It was easy for me to imagine that if I too prayed fervently, I too might be able to speak in tongues. For a faithless person like me this physicality is only physicality, and despite what I say about limbs taking on 'a life of their own', as far as I'm intellectually concerned, those parts are all me. But for somebody with faith, it seemed it was habitual to regularly attribute to God parts that I might have understood as parts of myself. This came through in the way one young woman (who took me under her wing when I started attending this denomination) explained why she first singled me out for her blog about Virtuous Women. She told me Jesus tells her who to pick while she's scanning the crowd. The distinction between attributing things as stemming from within oneself alone, or as stemming from oneself in an ongoing conversation with divinity (sometimes with interjections from demons) is an important one that recurred throughout my fieldwork.

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[30] In the vocabulary used in my field, 'mainstream' Churches meant Churches not run by African people, usually the mega-church Hillsong, which many attended.

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This distinction came up again when I attended a Christmas lunch with Celeste and the members of her 'mainstream' Church at the Merrylands Bowling club. I found Celeste on the third long, magenta-clothed table down the room, strumming on a ukulele. The tables were decked out with shiny, streamer-ribboned centrepieces and sprinkled with tiny glitter cut outs saying 'Merry Christmas' that gathered static off the fabrics they were on, and stuck easily to our sleeves and clothes. As we were eating, a conversation started up about fishbones stuck in throats. "What do you do about it?" asked Fidelia. "Rice—just swallow balls of cooked rice", Celeste offered. I told the table about the time I had a huge bone stuck in my throat and I stayed calm, tried to feel where it was, and plucked it out with my fingers. Notably, my story was about me triumphing over the problem by my own virtues. Celeste then told a story about her favourite toffee candy, a Fantail, getting stuck in her throat—literally stuck—for nearly a week. She explained that technically that we have a flap ("epiglottis" offered the Australian nursing student on the table) separating our windpipe ("trachea", interjected the nursing student) from the pipe we swallow food through. Fidelia was impressed at the design: "Oooh, God was so clever when he created us!" she remarked with awe. On removing the candy, Celeste said "I kept coughing and I could feel it….it was almost like something demonic, but then eventually, by the grace of God, it dislodged, just before I had to sing a solo performance!"

Bialecki's (2014) proposition that we regard God as a social agent is productive. Bialecki draws here on Object Orientated Ontology (for example Bennett 2010; Harman 2011; Morton 2010) to develop a framework that "makes it possible to ethnographically describe God as a social actor without adopting methodological theism" (2014: 32). At the same time, to not believe that the force reported is a social agent, but to go with the belief that one's interlocutor believes it is, raises its own set of questions, as Povinelli (1995: 506) notes when discussing with Marjorie Bilbil, at a land claim they attended, whether the land commissioner talking about the Dreaming really believed it too: what does this attribution say about *them?* What does it say about yourself?

All these lines of enquiry supply ways of connecting whilst fragmenting at the same time, and this is a persistent theme in this thesis. This series of enquiries do not close with this chapter. Instead, they persist through this thesis in other forms; in the subsequent chapter on agnosticism towards mental health status, and through discussions of educated-ness, faith, belief, scepticism, secularism and modernity in

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previous chapters. And so this chapter closes with an extended vignette that reverberates with the fractures and negotiations that characterise the set of enquiries voiced between me and those I worked with.

Didier & the book of lies

The second time I arranged to meet Didier, we attended a psychology and trauma seminar at STARTTS that I was going to as part of my fieldwork, and that Didier—who had left his postgraduate studies in psychology part way through the degree, and wanted to eventually resume and practice—came to in order to get a feel for some of the work being done in this area in Sydney. At the end of the presentation, as the audience and speakers mingled, Didier and I found ourselves in a discussion amongst a handful of psychologists and counselors about the "fantasy beliefs", as one of them put it, that some of their Christian clients had. In this conversational group of mostly younger women and Didier, a young man, and with the ice broken, it seemed it was taken as a given that none of us were religious, that it could go without saying. And so one person complained about two of her religious clients and their insistence on leaving their troubles to God's hands, while another person sympathetically talked about how she handled that particular problem professionally. Didier laughed politely at the ground. Later in the car as I drove him home, he told me he never believes people when they say they don't believe in God—that a part of him remained convinced they say that to appear edgy and unique. He explained that in his case, he had never met non-believers until coming to Australia; that professed non-believers in Burundi still *believed*, they simply did not attend Church.

The third time I arranged to meet Didier, we I had attended an evening information session at a 'city college' that Didier was interested in resuming his MSc from Burundi at. I had offered to accompany him there, and he said he would welcome my acting as a backup listener for the information delivered, in case there was something he missed amidst his multi-lingual thinking, in which the English mode is weaker than the Kirundi, Swahili and French. At the end of the session, Didier had asked how a qualification from this city college differed from a university qualification, and he was told, with emphatic conviction, that they were the same. After the session, as

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we wove our way to a place we could sit and talk, Didier asked me, whilst waggling the college's course guide: "Do you believe what they say about it being the same as university?"

I wrinkled my face. "….I don't know."

"You think they're lying", he suggested.

"I really don't know, aye? I am suspicious, but I am always suspicious of Universities", I offered. "At this stage, they just want to recruit. Do you feel like they're lying?"

"I don't know, it's possible".

We walked on. We found a row of tables on the quiet third storey of the Queen Victoria Building, above the Town Hall Station, and sat to pass the time before Didier was due to train to his evening cleaning job in the West. The café was long closed and the floor was unpeopled, though echoes rattled up softly from the busier floors below as people passed through to avoid the rainy night streets.

"Are you vegetarian?" Didier asked me.

"You're so observant! Yes I am", I said.

"And have you always been vegetarian?"

"No, no, I ate a lot of meat growing up, and I loved it. It was hard to stop."

Didier clarified, "So you've had the taste of meat. And then your mind changed and you left it?"

"Yeah, pretty much."

"So! Let me ask you this", he said grandiosely, chuckling: "Why??"

I laughed and leaned forward, wanting to answer as thoughtfully as he responds to my myriad questions. I said, "I guess it's like how we talk about beliefs. I have so much love and respect for animals. And the way we grow them to slaughter them, to kill them for food…it hurts my heart." I rotated his city college course guide on the table, and stood my hand on it; a five-footed tripod. "There are chickens, hens, that spend their whole lives in spaces this big, never knowing what sunlight feels like, what grass feels like, their whole lives are here, till they die so we can eat them. A whole life for us to eat them."

"Yeah I know, I know", he said, nodding somberly.

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"So I don't want to participate in it", I continued. "I don't want anything to do with it. I wish it didn't happen. But I couldn't judge somebody else for how they live their life".

He nodded, gravely. "I know, I know, it is sad. But I don't think of animals like this. I look at an animal and I see it as food, and I think that is for me. It is like rice, like beans."

"Yes, I understand, whereas I look at an animal and I think it is like you, like my brother, or like that woman over there", I said, and added, "that is a Christian idea is it not? And God gave man dominion over land and beast?"

Didier nodded again, looking down the way some serious listeners do, focused on listening to the source without the distractions entailed by engaging with faces. "Yes, that is in the Bible too." Then: "I admire this, that you feel this way but you don't impose your ideas on people. You don't judge others."

I laughed. "Well I can't! I have to respect everybody. The irony is that I respect all creatures, but that means that I also have to respect the creatures that don't respect all creatures!"

At this he laughed, then more seriously said: "You know, I had a very similar thought to this on the train over here tonight. I was thinking, God says you must love all people. But, oh my gosh", he feigned horror, "What about Osama Bin Laden? People who kill, people who murder, does this mean I love them too? How do I love people who hurt and damage like them? And then I thought, well if these people exist, then that means God has created them and placed them here—he is the creator, he created me, and you, and all of us, so if these people exist, then he has created them for some purpose. That is not mine to worry about, my responsibility is just to love".

"I love that. How beautifully put", I said, underlining the words as I wrote it down.

Didier shifted his weight as to gesture more freely (when Didier speaks passionately his hands come alive; he would throw his weight into his finger tips to emphasise a point). "I'll tell you how the thought came", he said, "If somebody is doing something good for us, we thank God for putting them in my way. I do this thing where I think one thought then immediately think another way, think that first thought differently. So if somebody has done something bad to us, we think, Oh, why has God put me in their way?... [the answer is] because I'm here to spread the word. And,

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Mythily"—he laid a palm on the table between us, as if locating the bridge between worlds—"Mythily, like you turned your mind from being—is there a word for people who eat meat?"

"You could say, non-vegetarian?"

"Okay, like you turned your mind from being non-vegetarian to vegetarian, I ask you, put your thoughts to turning your mind to eternity".

I chortled.

"No I am serious, do it—Mythily because you are a good person, I want you to believe in eternity! ...all you need to do is ask God to show you, to prove it to you."

"You can't make somebody turn their mind to it Didier! I'm so sorry, but you can't make it happen. I have to want in my heart to believe that, or I have to want in my heart to ask that question, but I don't. Somehow, nothing pushes me to ask that question of God, or of anybody".

He claimed that he could prove it to me, that I only needed to look at the Bible, which was historically true, and began telling me the story of King Solomon. "So this is the point", he said, having spoken effusively a while to these ends: "if the 70 or 80 years of your lifespan, compared to eternity, it's less than one day. It's not your first death you worry about—it's your second death, in eternity."

I was smiling with my lips sealed, amused—even endeared—by his argument, perhaps a bit smug, a bit patronising?

Didier exhaled with pursed lips, a tuneless whistle. The city college course book was on the table between us and he flattened a hand on it, then picked it up wearily. "You treat the Bible like it's this book, like it might not be true". He pantomimed turning the pages as a skeptic: "Hmm, maybe this is lying, I don't know, oh I think this page is definitely lying".

I laughed uncomfortably, and apologised.

That night, Didier would tell me another story. This one was about Elijah: with the might of his faith behind him, Elijah challenged the non-believers of a village to prove whose God was real by collecting ritual things for sacrifice and taking turns to ask their respective gods to set the heap alight. Elijah invited the village to go first. They asked their gods to set the sacrificial pyre on fire; nothing happened. They waited, asked again; still nothing. Then Elijah stepped up, asked his God to set the pile alight and the pile burst into flames.

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"That's how powerful he is, Mythily! Mythily, what would convince you that his power is real? What would have to happen to convince you?"

I glanced sideways at the escalator, ferrying nobody anywhere in the centre of this desolate mall. "Set fire to the escalator".

Didier seemed surprised, then annoyed. I immediately regretted the careless joke and said so.

"You have to ask for something in your heart", he said, "there must be something that would prove it to you".

"What would make you not believe?" I asked.

Didier cocked his head, then bowed it, deep in thought. We sat, silent, a long time, and the air softened. Downstairs, something clattered. Without changing his pose, Didier suggested, as if thinking out loud, "do you think this is the same question".

"Maybe?", I said.

The silence resumed.

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Chapter Six

Care in the Long Aftermath

Ihahamuka

Silence and speech interact in the previous chapter's open-ended exploration of plurality and faith. This exploration, as well as silence and speech, come together once more in this chapter's consideration of unrest and care. Earlier still in this thesis (Chapters Two and Four), I described the ways that everyday, inter-personal acts of care interrupt, and even rub up against, the formalised bureaucracies and institutions of care that my research roves over. These and other care-acts come more to the fore in this chapter, for this chapter is driven by my ethnographic notes to do with living in the long shadow of the violence that shredded through and beyond Rwanda in 1994; a violence that was retrospectively recognised by the international community as genocide, albeit too late for international intervention. Most of the ethnographic moments I draw on here are from a period of time bracketing April 2015, which was the 21st year since the genocide. Within Rwanda and throughout diaspora Rwandan communities, Aprils since 1994 are marked by formal commemorations and, for many survivors, episodes of embodied return to the sites of their trauma. Often, when speaking of these episodes and reaching for a word to describe them, 'manifestations' was the English word selected by many people I talked to. The Kinyarwandan word, *ihahamuka*, translates as 'without lungs', signifying the panic, fear and shortness of breath that characterises this condition, which is symptomatic of and specific to genocide survivors (see Hagengimana and Hinton 2009: 223). These manifestations, or *ihahamuka*, punctuate and puncture everyday life—often for the entire three-months anniversary period. In the aftermath of violence, bodies and lives are warped. The anniversary of violence may be an affective space in which the bodily, temporal and spatial registers holding moments apart may unexpectedly collapse. Care, of one another and for oneself, becomes a part of this. It has to.

One of the other themes that accumulates force in this chapter's stories is the multiplicity of ways that these phenomena are regarded and dealt with: there is a joke about people misinterpreting one of these manifestations as demonic possession; there

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is a psychologist and a doctor who feel that strangers and their aunt (respectively) should work with a counsellor, to try and address these symptoms of abject grief and loss; there are people who regard manifestations with shame; there are people who see them as normal, as part of a collective experience of an event so monstrous it is not communicable; there are people who feel that these expressions of grief allow them to be close to loved ones violently taken from them; and there are people who feel sympathy for that. This plurality of interpretations of these manifestations and the corresponding plurality of ways of attending to them, as well as to trauma more generally, occur within small clusters of people, and I find that the differences in points of view are mild points of conflict, if at all. Differences, when they emerge, tend to be softened, smoothed over. This too is a form of care.

I take a gentle approach to argument in this chapter by bookending more analytical discussions of this chapter's themes around a series of complex ethnographic moments and stories. First, I detail the manifestations and commemoration events, setting the ones I will talk about in their wider and historical frame. The ethnographic moments in the middle span two commemoration events, and time spent with two different Rwandan men who survived the genocide and were able to share with my research their understandings of what happened to them and how they have dealt with it. Care, memory and pluralism accumulate force over the course of these sections. Finally, I move into the space of a mental health workshop hosted by Africare during which clinical and community forms of care are discussed.

This chapter diverges somewhat from previous ones: it spends more time in spaces that are quite distinct from the NGO-related worlds that other chapters deal with, even though we step back into that world at points. In spite of this shifting of weight, the discussions in here are crucial to the story this thesis tells. They contribute an intimate understanding of the kinds of pain people I spent time with are going through and coping with. I also write about the ways that the relevance of the category of 'mental health'—when framed as a constructive and healing meaning-making process— appears, disappears, is challenged and is negotiated with relation to life in the aftermath of violence. And perhaps quite simply, but nonetheless importantly, these stories are the ones that the people I write of most wanted to tell in response to the fumbling research questions I presented to them in the field, when I claimed I was interested in mental

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health in their communities. These stories were not shared lightly. There's a moral compulsion to honour that.

Manifestations

In April 1994, Dina and her immediate family were living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They were spared that specific violence. Yet, having moved back to Kigali in the aftermath to be close to the loved ones who survived, and, as their lives went on, coming to love others who survived, families like theirs were not unscathed. Dina's husband, Lenny, was orphaned in 1994 at the age of 15. His family was massacred. "People go back to that period, to what happened", Dina said of the anniversary. We were nestled into her sofa with cups of tea. She told me how when she first began dating Lenny, he would lock himself away for those months, ignoring his course at the University where they met, ignoring her—"he would not see anyone…he wasn't even believing in God anymore!" Dina's aunt had also survived, and had recently moved to Australia. "When we do the remembrance thing, she would do this manifestation, like, really physical…I don't know if you've seen that".

At the time, as I told her, I had not.

"You can't imagine, Mythily", she had said, invoking the sense I often heard expressed amongst my Central African friends and acquaintances that the effects of war, distress and the political climates in their home countries could only be understood through direct experience, that the understanding born of this experience was incommunicable. Nonetheless, Dina tried to explain this aunt's manifestations to me: "She was 6 or 7 years old. Now she's 26, 27. And they had to hide in…in French they call it *le maree*…where they cultivate the rice. She spent 3 months hidden in there, in the water, day and night. Shaking and shivering". By Dina's admission the episodes took this aunt back there, as if she *was* there: "She speaks as if she was there, she says there are people that are coming to kill us, she says 'let's hide!'"

"Even for me I already have the nightmares, flashbacks", Zaida told me at a harmony day party that first week of April. "Some people didn't come [to this party] today because it's too much, they get nightmares and seizures", she explained. At the same time, she said, others welcomed this coinciding of harmony parties with genocide

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anniversary—"It gives people a distraction, lets them be with others who didn't share that same experience." Zaida was staying with Dina at the time, and she reiterated the value to her of this proximity—"[Dina] didn't have my experience…it means she holds a space for you outside of that". As we see later in this section, others too echo Zaida's articulated sense that during this period, especially, the company of those who don't share their memory and experience can be comfort.

Through such explanations, there is a sense of powerful relationships between bodies, time and memory marked by violence, such that a period of calendar time can also act as a trigger. One way of understanding this is by recognising how culture and myth inform how trauma is expressed, and, at trauma's source, how violence is inflicted. By plumbing history, medicine, myth and violence in Rwanda, Taylor (1999) demonstrates how terror is ritualised and characterised in very specific forms (see also Taussig 1987). Through his years of fieldwork on popular medicine in Rwanda, Taylor finds that the flow of breath and substance through the body—in respiration, reproduction and digestion—comprise a core symbolic logic. In Rwanda, this cultural logic of bodily flow, a "generative scheme" (1999: 102), can be discerned in beauty, somatic symptoms and in other ritual forms too; curses and ritual violence obstruct flow, while healing seeks to restore it (Taylor 1999). Bodies are "the ultimate source and destination of terror" (Taylor 1999: 183), and terror's ritual nature is seen in how some of the common forms of violence during the genocide, like mass drowning, like impalement from the genitals to the mouth, symbolise perversion of flow as they corrupt, maim, kill.

Taylor and his wife, a Rwandan Tutsi woman, were actually in Rwanda while this violence built up and when it broke out. They made a harrowing narrow escape. Taylor notes that "most" of the fifty or so Rwandan refugees he and his wife met en route out of the war zone were constipated (1999: 136). He offers this as an example of somaticising psychological distress in ways that make most sense culturally. Building on Taylor's work, Hagenima and Hinton (2009) read the panicked, shallow breath of *ihahamuka* as another example of this. From a trauma treatment perspective, even subtle visceral cues can trigger panic attacks symptomatic of PTSD sufferers—for one survivor seen by psychiatrist Hagengimana, bowls of rice recalled the maggots that swarmed on corpses that she was thrown into a latrine pit with until she was rescued. For others, foul smells, being involved in an argument, the April anniversary date, or

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any kind of strong emotion were amongst the myriad prompts that could trigger an episode (Hagengimana and Hinton 2009: 208–211). This literature combined with Zaida and others' claims show the salience of cultural materials, even conceptual ones like calendar time, in structuring pain and its triggers. Cultural materials and meanings show in the ways violence is coded and ritualised, and the ways trauma and healing are expressed. Yet, cultural materials can also be manipulated—by individuals, by groups, by states—and this manipulation is perceptible in public commemoration services.

Commemorations

In general, public memorials in the aftermath of mass violence are carefully designed and orchestrated feats. Commemorative material, the narrative about the war and its (supposed) conclusion, and how memory is articulated may be determined in alignment with state agendas. To understand the context of two Rwandan genocide commemorations I write about in this chapter, a historical overview is necessary. Tensions and inconsistencies surround interpretations of the genocide and its aftermath, yet statements from commemoration literatures could easily be woven together with statements from my interlocutors to formulate a sense of this tradition.

Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), came to power when (as official narratives decree) he and the RPF ended the 100-day long slaughter of Tutsis by Hutu extremists. In my field, some people would tell me how Kagame's reign reflected an alliance with a Tutsi-majority narrative that extolled the victimhood of Tutsis, particularly. DeMartini (2015: 434) also finds that Rwanda's post-genocide national identity privileges the Tutsi experience, so much so that this is framed as the country's common experience. Some, like a Tutsi woman introduced in Chapter Four ('On being and not being educated'), were wary of the perpetuation of a dynamic of Tutsi victimhood at Hutu hands, such as having a Hutu child symbolically apologise to a Tutsi child—both of whom were born more than a decade after the genocide—as part of a commemoration event. Initially, many commemoration events would also feature extensive, bloody video and photographic documentation of the violence, and were extremely triggering. "But these days they don't show those", Dina had explained. "They're trying to put up messages to tell people to move forward.

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…messages of hope, and faith, and trust". Phrases like symbolic violence (Vidal 2001), 'forced memory' (Buckley-Zistel 2003), 'enforced memory' (Lemarchand 2009), and forced forgiving on the part of both Hutu and Tutsis (Lemarchand and Niwese 2007:180) have all been used to critique the official commemoration events. Referring to such tendencies, Ibreck describes the state sanctioned commemorations as "as central to its policy of nation-building and genocide presentation, but [they] also serve the ruling party's purpose of building legitimacy and suppressing dissent" (2012: 98). Indeed, Grant (2015) cites commemoration participation alongside state activities like monthly community work and civic educations as one of the ways that the RPF regime co-opts Rwandans into its quiet authoritarianism at every level of local life—a quiet authoritarianism that she argues is met with quiet agency and quiet insecurity. These critiques form part of the complexity of Rwandan genocide commemoration practices. Yet, they cannot necessarily be applied to commemoration events organised by Rwandans in Sydney, which may be adjusted to represent other ways of remembering and moving forward.

"We do this not to scratch a wound"

I was invited to a commemoration service organised by one of Sydney's Rwandan community associations one Saturday morning in the second week of April. When I arrived, I joined the other attendees who had gathered in the bright car park outside the church to mingle and chat sociably, and then we filed in slowly, dispersing softly into the rows of pews closest to the altar and two tables. We were inside a cavernous Catholic church that evoked with architecture the sense of spectacle that the Pentacostal churches I was usually invited to evoked with music: it had swooping archways, and tall narrow wooded beams lined the walls, stretching upwards to a stony speckled ceiling from which skinny four-winged fans hung, far away, like fruit on a forest canopy. As well as religious spectacle, though, the act of remembering such violence in a designated way in a designated space bore powerful affective implications. The ceremony was simple. The MC, Olivier, invited those present to come up and take a small tea-light candle from the big table, light it, and move it to a table lined with pink roses; a process the crowd moved through thoughtfully and in silence. We had a period

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of silence. Two women took turns reading the stanzas of a poem called 'We remember you all', each stanza an ode to the type of life lost, by social relationship—the unborn, the newborn, parents, teenagers, newlyweds, elderly—and by death—those who were drowned, who were buried alive, who took their own lives first.

At some point during the ceremony, in one of the pews, a woman screamed. Her shrieks and wails cut through the thick silence. It erupted suddenly, and glancing over I could only make out flashes of red fabric amidst a huddle of people soothing her. Screaming, she was lead out by about six people, nobody rushing or hurrying things. Lenny, to my right, looked over and seeing my face, he squeezed my arm then whispered urgently to his wife Dina: "Tissues". She remarked "Oh", and moved to fetch some. Both were in practical form, attending to those who needed it. This is a role that is fulfilled by different people at different times, by whoever in the group has the capacity at a certain point to give that kind of care.

Dina would soon leave the church to be with the woman who was taken out. Later she would tell me about their conversation—"She was so surprised, she's been to many of these and been fine. She didn't expect it. She was saying to me she feels so embarrassed, I said no, don't be embarrassed, it's *fine*".

For the time being, she returned with tissues and Lenny pressed a wad of them into my hand, saying "Sorry".

"I'm fine, don't be sorry, thank you".

"Sorry", he repeated, sitting back. Still whispering, he told me the woman who was escorted out was, like him, another who was orphaned. He explained: "They see the killings again as if it is happening again, they can't help it…it seems real."

A moment's silence followed. The MC took to the stage once more, and said:

For those of you not from our community, what you are experiencing is how we all feel. It is challenging, but please bear with us…it is not strange, it is normal for all of us…we do this not to scratch a wound but to support one another. …The genocide claimed many victims and, you could say, those who remained are also victims. But we don't want to be victims forever.

He noted the availability of free counselling at STARTTS for "those who still live in 1994".

Afterwards, there was a lunch prepared for people at which they could mingle and be together. At the lunch I sat with a set of siblings, just out of their teens, of Rwandan origin. The brother explained that he had only been attending the

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commemorations for the past three years; prior to that, he did not understand it and tried to keep his distance, but in hindsight, he reflected that perhaps he should have involved himself earlier. This sense of a gulf between those who were there and those who were not resonates with so many philosophical reflections on pain. "To have pain is to have *certainty*, to hear about pain is to have doubt", notes Scarry (1985: 13). Pain constitutes a distinct world that is *apart* from the world (Jackson 1994; Scarry 1985). And so I was struck by remarks by people like Zaida about finding comfort in the company of those who did not have her experience, and did not share her world of pain. Olivier, the MC, would echo Zaida's sentiments when I met with him after eating. Also orphaned in 1994, he was adopted by a family in Australia, and moved here twenty years ago. He told me he understood it was challenging for an outsider and that most would feel like it might be best to let the community grieve alone, mourn together, that people would be put off attending "because you don't know how to be, but", he added "we get strength from those who didn't have that experience". Here, I was welcomed *for* being an outsider, which I also interpret as a means of dissipating any discomfort I may have had for imposing on such a sensitive event. This welcome is itself a gesture of care extended from those who knew a world of pain to those who did not, assuring the latter that their presence was valuable, and perhaps entailed a form of care itself. The woman in the red dress, who I had not met before, also pulled me close to kiss my cheeks and thank me for being there with them. She said, "Sometimes we feel bad because it can be so much for people to come here…what happened was so horrific, so horrible."

When I left the church that day, I worked hard not to go on a long walk and ruminate on the day without troubling myself to write furiously and fervently; I worked hard to, as I wrote in my notes that day, "pin moments of conversation and affect with their wings spread as if they were dead butterflies that I fished out of my short term memory cache". Writing about the writing of pain, and apprehending it, Veena Das describes the work of re-entering "scenes of devastation" and of "approaching the world through a kind of mourning for it" (2007: 39). Das (2007) elects to proceed in this stage of her book by writing scenes that open paths for understanding. I feel this strategy is appropriate here, and so we go onwards to Joseph's story, followed by Lenny's story, both of which continue to "open paths" (ibid) on care, commemoration, memory, and the appearance and disappearance of the concept of 'mental health' in this.

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Joseph: Remembering differently

I was invited to one more genocide commemoration service in 2015. This one was unofficial in that it was held as part of a local church's regular Sunday morning service. This church, which operated out of a warehouse space with a roller door in South Sydney, had an ethnically diverse congregation, very few of whom were African. But as I was told by the ushers charged with welcoming new members upon arrival, a couple of families attending this church were Rwandan victims of the genocides: "They've told us their story and we just want to honour them with this, today".

The church service proceeded in what I imagine was its normal fashion with music, readings and a sermon by the pastor—a jovial Caucasian gentleman with a ruddy face and dressed casually in jeans and a cotton shirt. Eventually, the pastor announced the anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, which they would be observing as part of this service. They screened a video that simple explained the genocide; its history, what happened, how it finally stopped. After this, the pastor invited the Rwandan congregants, Joseph and Bea, and their friend Dina, to the stage. They walked up from the back of the room, resplendent in bright *umeshanana* [a draped and pleated outfit, traditional Rwandan attire for women] and ascended to stand in a small huddle around the pastor. The crowd whooped and cheered. Turning to them, the pastor said: "A lot of us are just understanding what went on…so for a few minutes, tell us about your personal experience…."

Joseph took the microphone first and spoke matter-of-factly, his tone decisive and urgent. I began jotting down notes as he spoke, trying to capture as much as I could of what he said about being a soldier, and then being on the run, and wanting to but being unable to save his family as he made his way across Kigali to each of their houses. "The only thing I can say is that God gave me the power to forgive", he began, and the crowd clapped. He wasn't finished—

> but not forget. I want everyone to think of me everyday… I was shot at by a tank. …It came up and, shooting, I turned around and six people behind me were dead. …I woke, saw my friend say 'you know where to go, walk till you reach capital city'…that was 120 km away. I walked 100 km but they shot my arms and legs. I was just thinking, just let me reach Kigali. I reached Kigali but I didn't know where to go. To my aunt over

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there, or my sister there… I helped others out… After…when everyone finished I couldn't cry. … Forgive. Look at Jesus. That is me, Joseph.

Joseph delivered this looking and speaking as if directly to the pastor who had curved his own body intently into Joseph's gaze, nodding. Joseph's wife, Bea, went next with Dina translating. What follows is Dina's translation of blocks of Bea's words:

"My testimony is very, very long, but I'll try to cut it short. I praise God for keeping me till my age, and she's 26 now", Dina added.

When the genocide happened I was 5 about to turn 6, but I still remember. I had my sister who is 3 years older, about 9, she put me on her back. I remember when everything started we were at home it was a normal day with the family, but that day we had to leave everything behind. [There were] four children in the family but two brothers on Easter holiday. I ran away with my sister. One brother got saved by being put in a box with meat on top of him and clothes on top of that, and I just want to say that the person who saved him was in the different group, the killing group. Running through ten roadblocks with this box of meat and clothes. All the soldiers would ask what was in the box and he'd say just the meat and clothes. They'd lift the clothes, see the meat, and wouldn't check under that. This happened at many roadblocks along. My sister had a baby, two weeks old, she ran to the Catholic Church. There were so many people [hiding in the church]. Then the militia came and started killing everyone. So what she did, she put the baby under dead bodies. Then she did the same to herself, pulled the dead bodies on her. But she had to leave because they would come and check if you were dead.

Bea continued talking and Dina looked momentarily taken aback, and slowly said "Okay", then explained: "Okay so what happened then, her sister jumped out a window and ran away, the militia chased her, they took a machete and threw it at her, unfortunately, what happened is, it hit the baby".

"Far out" exclaimed a young man next to me.

Dina had her arm around Bea now. I noticed that Dina's husband Lenny, and Zaida and some others had left the room. Bea continued talking and Dina exclaimed, "Ah…that's bad. So, her sister said she saw how babies become killed, and, ah, it was very bad… hitting them against walls…" A box of tissues was rushed to the stage and passed to the two women. "Sorry", Dina said as she wiped her eyes, "She just said, they would cut breasts off the mothers and give it to babies"….

The pastor interjected—"What shall we do? Shall we pray for you guys? Let's pray for you guys" and a silence descended on the congregation. The stories hung

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heavily in the air. A tithings collection was making its way through the silent pews, and then with a somewhat abrupt shift, music was played and the group began performing a Rwandan dance, with Joseph performing a solo piece first, followed by Dina and Bea. Song after song played, dance after dance followed, and Joseph went about pulling people up from the crowd to dance with them. By the end, a significant fraction of the congregation was on stage, dancing.

At the end of the service, the crowd seemed fairly jovial, this energy perhaps restored by the dance. We poured out into the backyard for a lunch of Rwandan foods. On the way, through the foyer, a table had been set up with photos from Rwanda around it; a mix of historical photos of Rwanda's former royal family, environmental scenes, and everyday activities. There was a bucket collecting donations for an orphanage, and a table set up with Rwandan arts and crafts. The tone of the event was mixed enough for me to wonder how many hands had been involved in planning it.

I would later learn that Joseph had a lot to do with orchestrating this commemoration event. Or, as he would tell it, he designed the event but some requirements for the church hosting meant he had to compromise aspects of his vision—this sat at un-troubled odds with the church usher's framing of the event as the congregation's way of honouring their Rwandan members.

"They asked me to talk about the genocide, and I smiled", Joseph later explained to me. "That really moved me. …I told them my story first—actually, they didn't give me that much time then, I had to shorten it, make it", he made a compacting gesture, pushing his palms together and stopping short, like a clap that freezes before contact, "five minutes, ten minutes". Of the service he designed, he said: "I want to change the way people remember". He went on to explain that he wanted for people's memories to alight with due regard on the tragedy of the genocide, but not to dwell there. In this respect, he expressed critique towards the commemoration events community organisations usually held. He did not say this outright when I first interviewed him. That first time we talked about this, he told me he could not attend the official society's commemorations due to work rosters. Then, later on, some interview meetings later, he moved to expressing more critical positions towards that crowd and the content of their commemorations.

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"There are Hutu who cry and moan and you're meant to stand there knowing they killed your people and tolerate it all, and against the videos of people being massacred", Joseph said.

"They didn't show those videos this time", I said.

Joseph diplomatically assured me that they showed them the previous year. "My wife fell to the ground. She was holding flowers and she fell to the ground—I wasn't there but I came after she fell and I took her. Imagine seeing your wife fall like that in front of all those people! So shameful!"

Judging by the commemoration event Joseph designed, he sought for people's memories to extend back farther into the country's history and culture into those traditions that are beautiful, and to his mind, immovable. And so he organised for their dance group to dance after the video and the testimonies, dancing to a track of his cousin singing an old song about being strong. "Even after my mother's funeral, we cried our hearts out, then we came back home, we drank and we danced," he explained. He confided that it was difficult to get members of the Rwandan community dance troupe to play their part. Of all of them, only his wife Bea and Dina ultimately performed, but even Dina was initially skeptical—dancing was not a usual part of the commemoration. "I told her to come or don't come—I'll dance alone if I have to!" Joseph said he also bought the Rwandan food served that day himself, and was not reimbursed by the church. "Who cares", he declared, "I wanted people to enjoy the food. The church didn't put one dollar in to that. It was all me. But I made the Australians from the church serve the food. I didn't want any of my Rwandans serving that day—they were to eat, sit back, enjoy".

Joseph's commemoration event was also about placing people in the present, drawing their attention and efforts to solvable crises. As part of the church service, they raised funds for a Rwandan orphanage; one of three orphanages that Joseph visits and has an ongoing relationship with in his hometown. This was an endeavour that seemed to create an ongoing misunderstanding between Joseph and some of the church administration, which I was only privy to through Joseph's reported perspective. It is possible the confusion stemmed from his description of the orphans, referring to them collectively as "orphanage". Of course, the orphans were no longer children but young men and women in their twenties. Somewhat confused myself, I asked why they needed the money.

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Joseph responded: "They want to buy musical instruments, start a band, and I'm like, no, no, trust me, use the money and give it to the widows. The widows still need support running their households."

"…Hang on—so why isn't it a 'give money to the widows' fund?" I asked. "Why is it about giving money to an orphanage?"

"Because they are the orphanage—they know everybody all around, they will give the money to the widows".

As I probed further, it turned out that the young men he was in contact with were part of an informal orphans group, but they did not have nor need an officiated presence for this—there was no website, no *physical building* that *was* the orphanage. I suggested that this might be why his Church had doubts about sending the money and was asking him to provide an ABN, bearing in mind that in general usage, 'orphanage' means a physical building that orphans live in. These orphans, on the other hand, all lived in the same area, but in different homes, one with this relative, that one with another relative. The more Joseph revealed about his intended recipients of the donations, the more was revealed about the kind of assumptions that surround donating itself, and the donor's desire for perceptible suffering as verification of need, if nothing else. Joseph's depiction of the orphan community was, by contrast, unapologetically un-tinged with suffering. When his church asked for him to source a video that they could use to remind the congregation where the money was going, he claimed his vision diverged drastically from theirs:

> I want to make something that shows the city of Kigali—it's not what you'd think! It is beautiful! I want to show Kigali, the museums, the clean streets, I want to show the beaches, show people around my country, make them want to go. They [the Church] already know exactly what they want to show as the video—you know, *dirty*, children on the floor. I don't want to make my country look bad all the time. I want them to show my country looking like somewhere you want to go, then have this orphanage.

This fundraiser, along with selling the image of Rwanda as an idyllic place to travel to was characteristic of how Joseph configured the balance between remembering and moving on whilst sharing these processes with others who did not know what he knew—both the violence he and others survived, and the beckoning appeal of Rwanda the country, his home, in spite of its ugly, bloody periods. He spoke of his country's beauty and ugliness alike energetically, seeming to draw something out of being able to

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hold an audience with his dynamic discursive balancing acts; seeming, in these times, to be in the process of resolving the unsolvable out loud.

In the brief time that I knew Joseph, he discursively enthused his interest in both remembering and moving on abundantly, seeking and claiming the audience-ship I provided in our meetings—which often took me out of more broadly social contexts. One day, I had set aside time to have with Joseph to explain why I had been neglecting his requests to meet for the past week or so, and to explain why he should expect more of my unavailability in the future.

"I know it is disappointing that I can't see you very much, but I am just really busy", I had ventured. "I do not have this much time. I meet other people for fieldwork too, and spend a lot of time hearing their stories, and trying to meet more people too!"

"I know", Joseph began, "like I say, call me when you have a little time here little time between, I'll come see you".

"Yes but even too much of that, even every week, is too much for me", I replied.

"You know what the thing is; something happens to me when I am asked to talk about the genocide. … This topic—it touches my heart", he leaned forward as he said this, his fingers pinched to a scepter, pointing to his chest. "I come to life. I have so much to say. I know I talk a lot, my wife says I talk a lot, at work I talk a lot, but otherwise it is just *in* me, everything I saw. I want to share it…You are born with a happy life; you grow up with a happy life; you may never meet anything strange in your life", he added, pointing out that he perceived a value for his interlocutor too in the exchange. That sharing the contents of his heart was not just for his own benefit.

I gathered that with the videos for the Church and being invited by me to talk about a life tied inextricably to events of the genocide, Joseph felt subjected to the limits and agendas we—myself and the Church—brought to the dynamic. Asked to parcel into morsels something that to him was so momentous, and so meaningful, that he could say so much about, was almost an act of cruelty; his *experiences*, trimmed and pickled for consumption. He wanted an audience who would listen, and not necessarily as a one-time exchange but ideally ongoing—him telling, others listening, him telling, others listening, and even if it was the same stuff. He thought nothing of bringing me to his favourite cafe to walk me through the same hefty stack of family photographs he walked me through when I visited his family for dinner several weeks prior, and when we met in a park at his choosing shortly after that.

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As with Lenny, whose story we move to next, a psychological interpretation of Joseph's behaviour circulated in his social group. As Lenny tells it, he resisted this interpretation for a long time, but ultimately, a therapeutic intervention was one of a handful of things that helped him. From as much as I knew of Joseph's life, he roundly rejected anything of a diagnostic, formally therapeutic nature as he instead busied himself with projects that held holding on and moving on in a fine and delicate balance.

Lenny: First surviving then living

Very early in this chapter, in a scene in which Dina and I drank tea at her home and talked about Rwanda's past, she told me about her husband, Lenny, who was orphaned in the genocide, and recruited like many other boys even younger than his 15 years to fight in the rebel forces. Dina introduced me to Lenny and encouraged me to talk to him for my study. Unsure whether his willingness to participate matched that of his wife's on his behalf, I held back at first, but after meeting and talking a few times, we arranged for me to visit at their home to learn about his experience and his psychological and spiritual journey since then. Our interview was preceded by a conversation with his eight-year-old son, Samuel, that struck me as a poignant counterpoint. Samuel had just been at a birthday party, and declared it the best party he had ever been to in his life.

"What made it the best in your life?" Lenny asked, amused.

"Laser tag", Samuel declared with lit-up eyes. He explained the rules: how you get divided into two teams, red and blue, and you get a rifle, and an electronic vest, and you run around shooting each other.

Lenny chuckled. "You shoot each other?"

"Yeah. It doesn't hurt. You don't feel anything. But if you get shot you die for a few seconds, and then you come back alive and then you can shoot the other side again". Samuel added that the other thing that was great was that after laser tag they all got to play "a million" arcade games that you usually pay for, "for free".

"It wasn't for free!", his mother Dina laughed, "Jeremy's mother has already paid for it so you don't have to!"

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"I must say", Lenny said to me some hours later, when our conversation was well underway, "Samuel was one of my treatments. Dina was one of my treatments. If I hadn't met a psychologist and if I lived alone, I would have died."

The darkest period of Lenny's life after 1994 was also a period of time when he was enrolled at University in Kigali. He had met Dina and they were dating. Dina had a large family and encouraged him to spend more time with them rather than alone, and invited him regularly to spend time with her, her cousins, siblings, and so on. At the time though, Lenny said, "I didn't want to go where people would be, I didn't want to see people happy". He contemplated taking his own life. One night, when he had found resolve in this idea, he heard a voice boom through his house: "You will live". Mystified, he searched for its source and found nothing, but it changed him.

"Dina contributed, maybe 60% to my resurrection, if I can say that", he notes. It was Dina who coaxed him to talk to a counselor some 20 years after the genocide, when they had moved to Australia.

> I spoke to my psychologist, one day I said, 'what I hate, that's what I got', I remember I said to him, I hated the name of orphan, I hated that word, I remember when I was a kid I was asking 'what does it mean'? From the explanations I got, losing one parent or both. I really hated the word. The second thing I hated and I got was that I didn't want to be a refugee. I saw people on tv, living in small homes, sharing the smallest basic things—a refugee life was not a good thing to admire, and I got it. And the third one I told him…

He thought on it.

> Actually, let me tell you, since the genocide I forget things. Everything before the genocide I remember, but things that happened after 1994, I lose my memory. You told me the last time we met that you live in Redfern. And now I asked you again. This is behavior that came after the genocide. It really affects many things in my work, and living with people, socially. …it's hindering me from some opportunities. I'm saying that, because I told you I spoke to my psychologist about these things, and I told you three things, but I remembered two and forgot one.

I pressed him to tell me more about exactly what the psychologist did.

"They don't really do any special thing", he explained. "People just need somebody they can trust. You need somebody who doesn't question anything. As long as you know you go for…what I like is he gives you a chance to talk, and pays attention to what you're saying."

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"And that helped?"

"Yes…I can't say he did something special."

Retrospectively listening to our recorded interview, I am unnerved by a sense that I did not listen to Lenny's story with the attunement and humility it warranted: that I asked too many questions at certain times and was too shy to at others. Perhaps Lenny was uncomfortable too, and a recorded interview was not the optimum setting for us to have this exchange. Much later—in fact, after the Rwandan genocide commemoration that Joseph organised—Lenny I talked about how he went from surviving to living again.

That day, smiling and with the same enthusiasm with which he had once explained to me his plans for career progression in Australia knowing that cleaning and aged-care were the most viable professions that he, an African man, could enter here, he talked openly about depression, faith and the genocides. Reflecting on the stories told in the Church earlier, I asked him about the rise of Pentecostalism in Rwanda, and how people found faith in the church again after so many—including one of the speakers, Bea's, sister—sought refuge in its walls and were betrayed; massacred. Lenny explained that prior to the genocides, Catholicism was most prominent in Rwanda, but that because the Catholic iconography is so heavily focused on the Crucifixion and Jesus' death, it is all so focused on that point in time that we forget that He is all of life, that He lives on even today. So there is no need to fixate on that point in time because He is here *now*, and the crucifixion was but a moment in all of life. "Because God is alive, not miserable and suffering on the cross like that, who wants to remember the bad times…. We want to *live*, we move on—not stay in the tomb!...You can't walk with the dead!" Lenny enthused. He reminded me again how it was in 2002 that he became Christian again: "Remember? We talked about it? I was in my house, alone, I was going to kill myself and I heard a voice—*you will live.* I got up. I looked here", he mimed ducking around a doorway, "I looked there. There was nothing in my house. Just the voice. You can't say that somebody said something in another house and then I heard it, you can't say it was in my head—I wanted to die! …After that, I started to see all of nature and everything as beautiful. I would notice small flowers, down there, it is what God created and I am living in the creation, I *am* the creation…."

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Strange but normal

'Normality', for all its ambiguity, has conceptual salience in health education, particularly in efforts to de-stigmatise mental illness in communities for whom its stigmatisation is thought to be deeply problematic. This was a pertinent theme throughout the mental health workshop that we dropped into in Chapter Four ('Modern Believers') where the presenter, Paolo, tried to distinguish mental illness from mental health issues with reference to 'the crazy person on the street corner', citing that as an example of mental *illness*. Throughout the workshop, Paolo seemed to be fleshing out the line between normal problems that *don't* necessitate professional help as compared to normal problems that *do* necessitate professional help, and the line between *normal* problems that necessitate professional help and *pathological* problems. The group attending seemed to be interacting with these definitions, asking questions about which side of the lines they or people they knew fell into. For instance, when Paolo talked about stress, he delineated acculturation stress—"it's about normal, everyday stressors, like unemployment, racism, children growing up and feeling so far away from your culture". Amanda raised her hand to ask after the anxiety she often felt before events or meeting new people. "Is it anxiety or stress?" she asked.

"In the end do you do the thing?" asked Paolo.

"Yes".

"That's a good thing", Paolo said, explaining how a lot of these feelings are simply a part of living. "Life is not easy", he said. "To be mentally healthy is not *not* feeling anything—it's coping with life's stresses".

Similarly, when Paolo moved on to identifying depression indicators, he talked about "how you don't feel like doing things like you used to do". Dina asked about a friend of hers who had recently become a mother, and who now avoided social engagements. Was she, perhaps, depressed?

"Does she look after her kids?", asked Paolo.

"Yes, very well—I would even say she is a bit overprotective?", Dina offered.

"She is probably fine, I can't really say". He likened being asked questions like this to if he was being asked to diagnose this friend's sickness in the friend's absence.

This likening of mental troubles to physical illness is another intertwined pedagogical strategy used to normalise mental health issues and mental illness. The

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implicit understanding is that just as physical health issues can be treated and potentially healed, mental health issues—as a form of tangible un-wellness—can be similarly approached. I had interviewed several Africare board members who had attended the mental health workshop they had been funded to hold in Melbourne the previous year about it. When I asked 'what did you learn', and 'what do you think is important for others in your community to know', they all stressed these points about mental health issues being normal and treatable, much like a cold or a broken bone. It seemed that the 'take-home' message of these workshops had been successfully imparted, unless the success was that these points had been understood to *be* the take-home message.

The teaching that mental health is no different to physiological health is a pedagogical response in community health education to the perception that in some communities, the stigmatisation of mental illness is bedded in this Cartesianesque split between body, mind and spirit. In other words, it is the understanding that in those cultural explanatory models in which mental illness is stigmatised, the stigmatisation is tied to the non-corporeality of 'mental' illness, which places it in the region of inexplicable madness, vengeful spirits and curses,—even though these are often inflicted in bodily ways, through drinking poison, or through skilled manipulation of a victim's bodily substances (Taylor 1999: 114-115). I was often pointed to this stigma being the case amongst the community around Africare—as I note in Chapter Three ('On being and not being educated'), this was particularly said to be a characteristic of the so-called 'uneducated' amongst them. Kohrt and Harper (2008) demonstrate how this was also the case amongst some of their Nepalese interlocutors. In the long quoted passages that open their essay, two individuals and their families talked through the processes by which they had come to understand afflictions that they had. Between the two, this involved consulting pediatricians, gastroenterologists, a psychiatrist in a large hospital in Kathmandu, a clinical psychologist, a small local hospital, and traditional healers. Their dialogues showcased a discursive struggle to understand their respective conditions as part of divided self—body, mind, soul, and all resolutions to these struggles came by emphasising bodily "explanations of distress" (ibid: 464), thus evading the stigma of mental illness.

The operative salience of mind, body and spirit demarcations in some of these examples runs at a curious counterpoint to the tendency to treat such divisiveness as

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distinctive to Western medical thinking; a part of its Cartesian legacy that is persistent in psychiatric fields too, that contrasts with the more 'holistic' integration of these parts amongst many non-Western medical models (Lambek 1998; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Luhrmann 2001; Sinclair 1997). Luhrmann (2001) and Sinclair (1997) also discuss how Western psychiatrists are trained and operate in a healing profession where the body is perceived as real, but the mind less so (cited in Kohrt and Harper 2008: 464–465), which is part of what movements towards improved cultural competence amongst healers and health seekers try to address. Conflating this distinction, as the mental health education moments I write of in this thesis tend to, is a way to counter the irrelevance attributed to the 'mind', by emphasising the salience of its bodily-ness. It is, essentially, a logic in which existing mind-body-spirit configurations are often harnessed in order to limit stigma.

Within this definitional construction of mental illness and mentally ill health, some forms of mental illness are ultimately *more* marginalised by the community health education efforts I witnessed than others. Reflecting on mental health workshops they'd attended, many of those who I interviewed or chatted to continued to assert the "mad person in the village" motif as a totem of madness against which the 'normalised' mental health problems showcased in the workshops could be compared.

Within this entire discourse, which was particularly salient in the community around Africare, one clear point of contention concerned the notion of PTSD with respect to Rwandan genocide survivors. Survivors' expressions of experiential knowledge of pain and loss was minimally stigmatised, and was at once normalised and medicalised. Guglielmo (2015) argues that its normalisation has a lot to do with the corporeality of this particular psychological affliction—the embodied re-living of immediate experiences of violence overrides any moral uncertainty. As well as this, sufferers embody the memory of genocide itself, which places them inextricably in the historical narrative crafted by the state and shared by all Rwandans (see also Taylor 1999).

In these respects, the ambiguity with which survivors' affectedness was treated in the same mental health workshop at which 'normal' stresses were delineated from 'mental illness' is telling. Back in that workshop, the second presenter, a Congolese counselor named Arthur had taken over the session and asked if anybody in the room had witnessed or experienced a trauma flashback. Speaking exclusively of friends'

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experiences they had witnessed, individuals in the group took turns responding. Dina talked about a friend who experienced a flashback the past weekend. They were together at church, talking about witnessing and the friend entered a flashback for an hour: "she was telling us what was happening, 'my god, they are cutting my leg, oh no, they are cutting me', and she was shaking", Dina explained. "The people watching— *they* were traumatised!" she joked, "They were like we have to pray for her!" The crowd laughed. "[They were like] this is demonic!" Dina said, and the crowd laughed harder, perhaps at the perceived misperception of PTSD as something demonic, perhaps at recognition of this response in a church.

Elijah offered that his friend regularly experienced flashbacks at their Rwandan genocide commemoration events.

"Has your friend ever been to counseling?" Arthur asked.

"I don't think they want counseling", Elijah replied, "because that moment connects them to their loved ones"

"The body has ways of forcing us to address issues", Arthur gently countered. "It is possible that every memorial day their body forces them back to that moment".

Arthur advised those present to give people going through that experience some kind of interaction and bringing the experience to their awareness. Reflecting back on the commemoration event earlier that year (described earlier in this chapter), Dina said that when sitting with a friend who had been escorted out during a flashback, nobody present wanted to tell her what had happened, nor for how long her flashback went on. "That is a good thing I think", Dina said, "people don't want to talk about it—not to embarrass her". Arthur gently pointed out that this reluctance to address it with her might be a part of stigma too. Their exchange brings into focus that stigmatisations may sometimes be uncontested, and therefore even promoted, in the name of immediate in-the-moment care.

When regarding this gentle exploration of stigma between Arthur, Dina and Elijah, we can approach knowledge not in terms of who knows what, but in terms of what form knowledge takes (see Freeman and Sturdy 2014). Freeman and Sturdy (2014) suggest distinguishing knowledge that is embodied from that which is inscribed (in policy documents, for instance) and enacted (both embodied and inscribed). They use this schema to understand the movement of knowledge through policies, education and actions (see also Smith-Merry and Gillespie 2016). In suggesting that Dina's

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participating in stigma-promotion to protect her friend from shame is an act of care, am I denying that it might be a form of knowledge?—after all, both Arthur's interest in shifting social stigmas around *ihahamuka*, and Dina and Elijah's compassion for what manifestations might mean to those experiencing them stem from their respective compassions, and what these compassions are informed by. Knowledge of who might be adversely affected by having their conception of their experience interrupted must come into the plurality with which we approach others' suffering.

Conclusion

The social caregiving that follows mass violence is underemphasised in the literature, which more often focuses on pathways from violence to trauma (Wilkinson and Kleinman 2016). Care comes to the fore of this chapter, in terms of care for self and others. I find it a preferable framing here for what I elsewhere might deal with as 'healing'. Part of this stems from following the ambiguous framings my interlocutors have of the problems that assail the psyches and spirits of people from their countries (and in this I include all the countries relevant to this study). Their problems, unique to their national histories, are deemed at once chronic and normalised given their common histories and contexts. "Everybody in our country has some form of mental disturbance", George had said to me (see page 119). As the MC had told the crowd at the commemoration, in the wake of a woman's traumatic episode, "it is not strange, it is normal for all of us". Where healing implies a transition away from the abnormal, care is better for thinking about the banal and everyday ways that people acknowledge and try to productively address their own and others' pain.

When I first schematised studying 'mental illness' and 'alternative healing', I focused on types of healing that were discursively categorised within traditions as binary oppositions: formal and informal, traditional and modern, normal and taboo. Indeed, as we see in previous chapters, particularly those located close to the operations of governmental and non-governmental gap-bridging organisations (Chapters One, Two and Three), these binary traditions are still called upon to define people and to validate efforts made by some to reform the behavior and thinking of others, or simply to help others. Such discourses are smoothed over in the pluralism of this chapter. In spite of

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disagreements over how to interpret trauma, or how to treat it, there is no evocation of 'uneducated' others, for instance.

Ultimately, this chapter has brought out the banal and everyday ways that people care for themselves and one another: at memorials, and as discussed in workshops, but moreover in everyday life. We see it in the understanding exhibited towards those others' directives, to the point that Dina would dance at Joseph's commemoration event despite her discomfort at dancing on an occasion for mourning. To a great extent, the choices people make about how they go about dealing with their experiences are supported within their community. Formal knowledge—the type imparted in health workshops—is ceded to responsive and ongoing practices of care, which is answerable to distinct, personal, and deeply local forms of knowledge. For Lock and Nguyen (2011), the trauma-related suffering and caregiving evidenced in this are biosocial features, for a biosocial framework is needed to appropriately interpret and acknowledge an illness experience.

The clean demarcations of community mental health education are useful pedagogical initiations, perhaps, but in ordinary everyday practice, the lines between things are anything but clean. The conversations, explorations and everyday practices described in this chapter point to ways that the category of 'mental health' emerges at times and continues to have a strong influence on how various forms of suffering are apprehended, yet this category disappears for other lengths of time into the textures of lived life. It seems this category's coherence (if you can call it that) is atomised in the process. As Kleinman notes, writing of the future of medical anthropology of mental health—a distinct sub-field—

> What can be said here is that large-scale, long-term historical forces (including colonialism, racism, the programs of modernity, wars, mass migration, and globalisation) have combined with internal changes in psychiatry, psychology, global public health and anthropology itself to reshape a chaotic, plural domain (2012: 116)

The institutions through which people cope with violence—from memorialisations and community health through to smaller, more personal projects—must be collectively attended to, in order that we minimise the extent to which these contribute to intensifying the lingering effects of suffering.

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Epilogue

In the very beginning, pluralism was a subject of my study in terms of the stricter sense of medical or therapeutic pluralism, that is, the relationships between co-existing but distinct medical systems (see also Sharma 1992; Csordas 2006). In this thesis, I have demonstrated the extent to which historical scrutiny of cultural difference expresses in the therapeutic pluralism that I encountered around Africare. This contributes to understandings of the ways that delineations between modern/educated and traditional/uneducated have been historically produced by processes of colonisation and development, and I have shown how these processes continue to produce identity and relationships in distinct and specific ways in my fieldsite. Consequently, this thesis has captured some of the ways that different forms of knowledge and of care are hierarchised, intertwined, enacted and interrupted, and so often beholden to subtleties of historical and social context.

It seems fitting that a study of medical pluralism should end up being representative of plurality in form, too. More precisely: this is fitting in keeping with my objectives of treating ethnographic writing as a form of witnessing that allows the lives and knowledge(s) of our collaborators—those who we represent—to become forces of thought (Biehl 2013a). It is my hope that such an ethnography—in this case, dense with the negotiations of information amongst those I write of, those I cite and myself—imparts a sense of the historicised and socialised noise that comes with any exercise in understanding epistemologically loaded phenomena. I also hope to have imparted a sense of ease in this noise; such that having convictions without losing sight of this noise feels like a habitable space.

Perhaps appropriately for a study of jostling epistemological frames, this ethnography is densely storied. In writing it, I have deliberately favoured density, letting representations of spaces of affect lead my analysis (see Mankekar 2015; Stewart 2007). Each chapter has begun with an affective premise—caused by a compelling argument between people of unequal status (Chapter Two), or by the dissonance of disclosing my atheism to Christian informants (Chapter Five), for example. By investigating these affective premises, each chapter has built a textured study. These chapter-long studies have examined the refugee-migrant community health assemblage in terms of: historical

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context (Chapter One), NGO sector development (Chapter Two), education (Chapter Three), belief (Chapter Four), faith (Chapter Five), and care (Chapter Six). The textures built over these chapters have frayed ends and dropped threads. They eschew closings for openings (Biehl 2013a). I have done this over the narrative arc of the thesis too, where each chapter's chosen perspective underpinned those of the subsequent one, but sometimes the subsequent chapter carved out caveats to positions that were built in those before it. For instance, Chapter Five examined the persistence of Christian faith for many of those I worked with. This exercise might give pause to the substance of the previous chapter, Chapter Four, in which some of the same people story together their own and others' multiple beliefs, whilst also slightly mocking those others who believe in unseen and supernatural forces (belief in God is notably exempt from this mocking). Another example: Chapter Six, a consideration of care, accentuates community and immediacy in the face of traumatic recollection and health advice on how best to deal with this trauma. We have seen glints of these immediate, collective forms of care in many of the earlier chapters, yet in Chapter Six, at the end of this thesis, they are centred. I hinge my overall argument to these and other moments of care.

There are other implications for a text like this thesis that come through in texts I have looked to as models for storied density. I have taken cues from Anna Tsing when she reminds her readers that *Mushroom at the End of the World*'s (2015) flurry of short chapters "[mimic] the patchiness of the world [she] is trying to describe" (2015: viii) and "gesture to the so-much-more out there" (ibid). This is important for reiterating the partiality of my focus. Any research is always partial, but in this project, my linguistic and methodological limitations have meant that many Central African people who were part of the social worlds I inserted myself into are not well represented in this work. Most notably absent are women (like the wives of some of the men in my study) and elderly people, with whom I could not communicate with the limited language knowledge I brought to the field. This exact type of omission is, unfortunately, not uncommon; a critique of non-Africans' fieldwork in African contexts rightly made by Achille Mbembe (2001: 7). I have also looked to Lucas Bessire's (2014) guilt-seared reckoning with his fieldwork amongst Ayeoro people—a group who have borne the brunt of displacement in a particularly twisted way for being regarded as the last tribe to make contact with the rest of the world; a narrative that Bessire, who was there as an anthropologist, is somewhat complicit in. In his preface, Bessire claims that his writing

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stays "close to contents to unsettle ideal forms and unmask the inversions they propogate" (2014: xii). He writes: "there are no clear answers: the delirium of ethnographic experience is the central aesthetic and interpretive guide" (ibid). It is an approach that demonstrates how ethnographic writing can communicate non-linearly, akin to an art form, and this way, it can interrupt and give inflection to anthropology's conventions of knowledge (see also Biehl 2013b; Stewart 2007). This interrupted, unsettled way of knowing, charged with recognising the unjust conditions of many research relationships (on top of the unjust relationships we study), seems vital in contemporary anthropology—*especially* for projects like mine, that have, at the centre, groups of people who have long been subject to many kinds of colonising gazes, not least anthropological ones.

In my thesis, these narrative sensibilities and decolonising attitudes have allowed ambivalent endpoints to act as an argument against more simplified, summative understandings of others, *particularly* since these simplified understandings are shown, through the ethnography, to beget subtly, structurally violent effects. My ambivalence towards forming conclusive knowledge, framed as an act of care, is the argument that best responds to these findings.

I should note, too, that this particular form of ambivalence, to caring ends, comes through in my fieldsite repeatedly. There are multiple accounts of banal, everyday ways that notions of knowledge, or agreeing on a singular knowledge, are conceded to immediacies of relationships and creative, spontaneous acts of community care. I think, here, of people like Elijah, Lenny and Dina, all of who maintained that counselling would certainly help those who had survived Rwanda's genocides, and who noted, in conversations with me, the importance of countering stigma about mental illness—yet who also went along with some social stigmas in the immediate interest of caring for friends who were embarrassed by their symptoms of trauma and grief (Chapter Six). I also think of Dina recognising how important it was to one fellow community NGO director to be critically involved in running an externally facilitated workshops, and the implication from Dina, as she told me about this event, that she accommodated this director's desires in spite of how this could potentially interrupt the workshop's espoused goals (Chapter Two). I think, too, of the stand off between a mostly-African audience and an European-Australian facilitator that took subtle hold of a mental health awareness workshop, and how this reached a stalemate through the

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facilitator's concessions to his initial accidentally divisive statement that some claims to knowledge simply were not true (in Chapter Four). More broadly, too, I think of how people claimed strong convictions in some contexts but then these altered in their proximity to others whom those convictions might be disparaging of (see also Chapters Three and Four). As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, these gestures are forms of ordinary ethics—compromised, complex and a part of broader contexts of ambitions and interests. These gestures are also decolonising acts in that they demonstrate actors' straddling of multiple realities and epistemologies, against the more linear and hierarchised multiplicity that is dominant in these scenes by virtue of their context in community development (see also Nyamnjoh 2001). Yet by underscoring these care acts and bringing them to the fore, I seek to echo the volume that such gestures have as forms of care that run counter to the officialised forms of community care that are funded and enacted in the therapeutic landscape surrounding migrant and refugee health.

The question I turn to, then, in these parting thoughts is: what attitudes and positions from this thesis have pertinence beyond the specificities I write of, and beyond this project's methodological and ethical implications for anthropology? Admittedly, my research does not lend well to the kind of abstraction that might suit policy development or guidelines for, say, intercultural education and cultural awareness training. However, one of the values of ethnographic data is to draw out the unanticipated effects of the systems it examines, while also pointing to how that system's conventions of focus allow certain effects to get categorised as 'unanticipated' and 'unexpected'.[31] In the areas of the mental health and refugee care assemblage that I analysed, there are several such effects that seem to fall outside of the scope through which community development programs assess their work. One such effect is the symbolic salience of running NGOs and how this can contribute to gaps between community gatekeepers and the community they claim to represent (Chapter Two, see also Hiruy 2014; Hiruy and Eversole 2015; Swidler and Watkins 2009). Relatedly, I have shown how education, being educated and being educate-able also have symbolic salience (Chapter Three). Another effect, born of historically constituted emphasis on certain types of knowledge, and subsequent efforts to decentralise those initial

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[31] Tess Lea expressed this idea in Composting Feminisms Reading Group meeting, 5 Sep 2017.

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interventions, is to form cultures around what type of knowledge is appropriate in a particular context, as well as cultures of optimistic investment in awareness raising as the means to improve health inequity and harmony amidst diversity (Chapters One, Two, Three, Four and Six). I propose that these immaterial processes surrounding ambitions, desires, opportunities and optimism buttress the bureaucratic ones—the policies, the grants, the community aid bodies, the networks of aid—and this relationship propels why the category of 'mental health' has continued salience in driving policies and activities in the community development and therapeutic care landscape.

What do my claims mean for the NGO industry? I have not advocated any ways that the industry I observe should be altered. If this text does impart a sense of how to think and act in fairer ways, it is not by providing a set of instructions for any part of the sector I speak of, or a tidy theoretical model for interpreting the forms I describe. Bearing this in mind, I continue to hope the instances of humanist ambivalence I draw attention to, analysed this way, might be of some use to people operating in the community care sector. In this I am encouraged by the prospect of having a hand in leading the afterlife of this project's findings, following Bhrigupati Singh's (2017) account of holding a reading group on Veena Das' *Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty* (2015) with the psychiatrists at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Psychiatry Department. Singh describes the event as one in which anthropological and psychiatric bodies of knowledge met (2017: 154), crediting this meeting's fruitfulness to both the psychiatrists' willingness to inhabit anthropological complexity and Das' (2015) invocations of uncertainty across the various thresholds that mental afflication were dealt with for the poor urban families she writes with devastating acuity about. Singh considers that the style and content of these invocations were more sympathetic to the psychiatric faculty than potentially distancing culture-bound readings of mental affliction that many ethnographies of mental health tend towards. Two of the psychiatrists in this reading group, Drs Sood and Gupta, even write that while reading their assigned chapter of *Affliction* (2015), they "came across certain cultural issues that we have long been addressing without actually being particularly aware of them" (in Singh 2017: 164).

There is a promise, however tenuous, in Drs Sood and Gupta's remarks of the unpredicatable and generative ways that anthropological knowledge might interact with

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other bodies and forms of knowledge. That bodies of knowledge have unpredictable afterlives is evident in this thesis too (see also Bessire 2014), as is what I've described as the sumptuous promise of knowledge-sharing as a means to bettering inequities (Chapter Three). I feel the promise of Singh's psychiatric reading group is distinct to these because there were not outcomes to be attached to, rather, the privileging and embracement of what attentiveness across differently situated bodies of knowledge might produce (see also Tsing 2015); that courting "the openness to that which outpaces understanding" (Abbas: n.d cited in Das 2015: 4) might be a way forward.

Finally, beyond just the worlds of mental health and development, this thesis speaks to a much larger contemporary social issue of the toxic ways that plural knowledge claims are used in social life more broadly. I refer, here, to the phenomenon where balance is evoked for a semblance of equity, but ultimately detracts from and undermines equity itself (see also Hamad 2017; Schudson 2001). Platforms for addressing our differences are a huge part of public social life in Australia: besides the Harmony Days and multiculturalism festivals written of in this thesis, Australia has also seen forms of public expression of perspective taking place around the postal plebiscite on same sex marriage, and protest and counter-protest surrounding the rag-tag Reclaim Australia movement (its several scrappy rallies were met with more robust anti-racism rallies in towns around Australia at various points while this thesis was being written). I think too of the popularity of shows like Q&A, which features panelists discussing 'hot' topics from different perspectives, including those surrounding the issues mentioned above. Panel programs like Q&A provide platforms for debate that presume that an exchange of logics, located in different perspectives, is somehow productive. Having the attention and effects of entertainment, they contribute to a climate in which shallow forms of pluralism are fetishised. There is something antithetic to care and collectivity in the ways competing and diverse experiences of the world come together in these constructed forms that might be ultimately unconstructive, even destructive, in a supposedly secular, pluralist society.

With this counterpoint established, I am brought back into the worlds of this ethnography to my final point: the distinction I have maintained throughout this thesis between projects and practices that I suggest call for caring ambivalence, and those that do not. It is a distinction that can be described by pointing out that within neoliberalism's assemblages for suffering, some forms of suffering are inevitable, while

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others are the result of political and economic choices, deemed reasonable inflictions on those who consequently suffer (Cohen 2013, cited in Dragojlovich and Broom 2017: 2). This distinction occurred to me many times and in many ways over the many stages of this project, but I will tell only the very brief story of the day I met Angelo for coffee on his lunch break at a new (albeit temporary) job. It was November, 2016—well over a year since my fieldwork had been replaced by days of writing (or, trying to) and my relationships with Africare's affiliates had comfortably transitioned to intermittent exchanges over text and occasional coffee catch-ups, like this one with Angelo. It was a dark day. In the USA, Donald Trump had just been made president, further emboldening America's racist, misogynist currents, while bringing them into spaces where even more historically privileged groups could see them clearly. Angelo and I exchanged commiserations. We were both devastated by what the election outcome confirmed and what it entailed. Meanwhile, too, the situation in Burundi, where Angelo was from, had worsened. He spoke of the scarcity of reporting, of loved ones gone missing from whom there was no news, of protests he was organising locally, in Sydney, and of helplessness.

After our meeting, I had cycled home and tried to resume my work but, not for the first time, it was difficult to muster conviction about this project's purpose. This difficulty would resurface from time to time, once more, memorably, in July, 2017, when Angelo texted me the news of an amendment to Australian Citizenship requirements. The bill would tighten restrictions to both the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 and the Migration Act 1958, making it harder for people like Angelo on Refugee Protection Visas (which were already difficult to gain) to transition towards a legal status as Australians.

"This looks like bad news for many people…" I wrote back.

"Yeah", he replied, "everything is getting harder and harder".

This thesis has made a case for subtle practices in writing and in life that might contribute to decolonising knowledge and care (beginning by taking both terms to describe complex, contingent forms and acts). Holding to these intentions has not been a straightforward matter. In truth, intermittently, as I wrote this thesis, a sense of futility nudged away at me. It came from juxtaposing this project's attention to complex pluralist cares against the backdrop of stark and basic injustice that also comes into its focus. I have written about this backdrop in earlier chapters, charting Australia's

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tyrannical and racist history of border control (Chapter One) and the scarcity of funded support for those who lived in Australia as 'asylum seekers', that is, formally unrecognised refugees (Chapter Two). More than a mere backdrop, other basic injustices and inequities are embedded into most of the interpersonal discussions I describe. Yet, this is not where this study's analysis rests, and at times, it was difficult to hold focus on the more nuanced negotiations and resistances I privilege here, particularly as blatantly divisive structural, inhumane activities emerged and carried on. I end with this to underscore how critical it is that the nuanced work of interrupting knowledge and decolonising care run tandem to more clear-cut legal and political interrupting and decolonising acts.

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